

PARLIAMENT AND THE NAVY

1688-1714

Parliament and the Navy 1688 - 1714

In these years parliament, particularly the House of Commons, greatly increased its authority. Naval administration and naval operations provided many of the incentives and issues that led parliament to increase its power and status. Despite the diversity of personalities and political outlook within parliament the majority in both Houses was united in certain attitudes which governed their approach to naval affairs. These attitudes, a consciousness of England's vulnerability to sea-borne invasion, a belief in English sovereignty of the seas, are described in the first chapter. In the same chapter the ways in which these attitudes were modified by the developments between 1688 and 1714, particularly increasing parliamentary knowledge of naval affairs and political organisation, are considered.

The interplay between these attitudes, developments and the events of two wars provided the background to the legislation that affected the navy. The ways in which these laws were initiated and shaped by parliamentary activities are considered in the next five chapters. Each of these chapters deals with the contribution of parliamentary legislation to one aspect of naval administration - finance, provision of material, trade protection, manning and the maintenance of naval morale. The provision of money to the navy was the issue that interested most members of parliament and it was consideration of this topic that led to the most decisive acquisitions of parliamentary power. In a strictly naval context it was trade protection, most obviously the concern of a merchant minority, that led to laws which greatly increased the strength and responsibilities of ~~the navy at the~~ same time as they limited the authority of the monarch.

The ways in which consideration of naval issues educated parliament in the techniques of power are obvious and more tangible than the contribution of parliament to the growth of British sea power. The last chapter assesses the parliamentary contribution to the dominance at sea which the navy gained between 1688 and 1714.

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Abbreviations Used

Addit. MSS.	Additional Manuscripts.
B.I.H.R.	Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.
B.M.	British Museum.
Burnet	G. Burnet, A History of My Own Time. London, 1818.
Charnock	J. Charnock, Biographia Navalis. London, 1794-8.
C.J.	Journals of the House of Commons.
C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I.	Calendar of State Papers Colonial Series: America and West Indies.
C.S.P.Dom.	Calendar of State Papers Domestic.
C.T.B.	Calendar of Treasury Books.
C.T.P.	Calendar of Treasury Papers.
D.N.B.	Dictionary of National Biography.
Econ.Hist.Rev.	Economic History Review.
E.H.R.	English Historical Review.
Ehrman	J. Ehrman, The Navy in the War of William III, 1689-1697. Cambridge, 1953.
E.I.C.	East India Company.
Eng.Hist.Docs.	English Historical Documents. Eyre and Spottiswoode.
Grey	Debates of the House of Commons from the Year 1667 to the Year 1694. Collected by the Hon. Anchtell Grey. London, 1769.
H.L.B.	Huntington Library Bulletin. Harvard University Press.
H.L.Q.	Huntington Library Quarterly. San Marino, California
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission.
H.M.C. H.L.	Historical Manuscripts Commission House of Lords MSS. New Series.
L.J.	Journals of the House of Lords.

- Luttrell A Brief Relation of State Affairs
from Sept. 1678 to April 1714, N.
Luttrell. Oxford 1857.
- M.M. The Mariner's Mirror. The journal
of the Society for Nautical Research.
- N.M.M. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.
- N.R.S. Navy Records Society.
- P.R.O. Public Record Office.
- Queen Anne's Navy - Vol. CIII of the Navy Records Society,
ed. R.D. Merriman.
- Sergison Papers - Vol. LXXXIX of the Navy Records Society,
ed. R.D. Merriman.
- Vernon Letters Letters Illustrative of the Reign of
William III by J. Vernon, ed.
G.P.R. James. London, 1841.

Note on Dates

In the text all dates are given in the Old Style of the Julian Calendar but with the year reckoned as beginning on 1 January. Where there is a reference to a letter sent to the Continent, or from it, both Old and New Style dates are given, the former first.

PARLIAMENT AND THE NAVY

Between 1688 and 1714 the English navy became the most powerful in the world. In practically every session of parliament held between these two dates legislation was passed that directly or indirectly affected this growing navy.⁽¹⁾ Legislation is in some ways a crude measure of the persistent parliamentary attention to naval affairs that contributed towards this naval dominance. It ignores the debates, addresses and inquiries that occupied much time but led to no statutory action. Some aspects of this parliamentary attention and the repercussions on the navy are relatively easy to define. Parliament's influence upon naval finance, upon the provision of material such as ships, timber, sailcloth and cordage, upon trade protection, upon manning and the 'encouragement' of sailors provide convenient divisions of the involved relationship between parliament and the navy.⁽²⁾ Yet all of these divisions are inter-related and unified in that they are expressions of parliamentary attitudes towards the navy. These attitudes developed from what French historians call 'la psychologie collective' and modern sociologists describe as 'generalized beliefs'⁽³⁾ feelings and ideas associated with the navy

(1) See Appendix I. Indeed if money bills are included in this generalisation every parliamentary session saw naval legislation.

(2) Each of these topics forms a chapter of the study.

(3) N.J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behaviour* (1962) 16.

which were so widespread that they might be described as national.

To generalise about parliamentary attitudes towards the navy is necessary but difficult. Any generalisation must be qualified by time and by personalities. Although in the twenty-six years covered by this study the navy was always a major parliamentary interest there were variations in the intensity of this concern. Between 1688 and 1694, years dominated by an overall sense of crisis and fear of invasion, and punctuated by the failures of Bantry Bay and Beachy Head, the unexploited victory of La Hogue and the destruction of the Smyrna Convoy, the efficiency of the navy was of constant interest to parliament. This primacy of concern held true despite the competition of such issues as the constitutional settlement and the pacification of Ireland. From 1694 to 1697 the national danger was less and parliament's interest in the navy was more factional. Between 1697 and 1702, and in 1713 and 1714, the main parliamentary concern was to secure the smallest and therefore the cheapest navy compatible with national security. From 1702 to 1707 the presence of the Queen's husband, George, Prince of Denmark, as Lord High Admiral acted as a deterrent to parliamentary activity, especially in the Commons, but between 1708 and 1712 there was a revival of interest in the navy.

If there were twenty-six years and twenty-eight sessions of parliament to give variety of attitude towards the navy there were also many hundreds of members in the two houses of parliament in these sessions. Different regional, political, professional and economic backgrounds amongst these members produced a variety of attitude towards the navy. Sir Thomas Clarges, a hard-bitten 'Country' politician,⁽¹⁾ would not debate the navy from the same premises as Sir Gilbert Heathcote, a Whig financier with diverse trading interests.⁽²⁾ Elwill, a merchant like Heathcote, was a representative of the South West and of the trading interests of that area, and had, necessarily, a different background from which to form his opinions of naval efficiency.⁽³⁾ Nor was it unnatural for a man's attitude towards the navy to change in twenty-six years. In this way it could be held that between them Russell⁽⁴⁾ and Nottingham⁽⁵⁾ had in parliament during this period four attitudes, those they held in office and they held out of it.

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- (1) He was an M.P. from 1666 to his death in 1695, representing variously Southwark, Christchurch (Hants) and Oxford University. The best account of his parliamentary activities is by K. Feiling, who calls him, "that suppressed and prosaic figure"; see History of the Tory Party 1640-1714 (1924) 231 and passim; D.T. Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons 1663-74 (1966) 199.
- (2) See below p.230.
- (3) See below p.240.
- (4) For Russell, who became Earl of Orford in May 1697, see below pp.430-3.
- (5) Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, Secretary of State March 1689-Nov. 1693, May 1702-May 1704. He was a Tory leader until Dec. 1711.

After the recognition of this diversity there is still the need for generalisation in an attempt to explain why the institution that was parliament concerned itself so regularly with the intractable problems of the navy. It is this persistence, which found expression in legislation and in a confusion of debates and inquiries, that is worth explanation. It is the 'feeling' behind the persistence that explains much of parliament's persistence, the feeling to which George Savile, first Marquis of Halifax, referred in a pamphlet: "A Nation is a great while before they can see, and generally they must feel first before their sight is quite cleared."⁽¹⁾

In his terms the period 1688 to 1714 is remarkable for the dominance of 'feeling', or concern about the navy, and equally remarkable for the way in which the sight of parliament and the nation was partially cleared by increased knowledge about naval matters. In this chapter an attempt will be made to describe the 'feeling' of parliament towards the navy and then to consider the ways in which parliament learnt more of the navy.⁽²⁾

(1) A Rough Draft of a New Model at Sea (1694), Complete Works, ed. W. Raleigh (1912) 173.

(2) The consequences for the navy of this parliamentary education are considered in the conclusion.

Whatever the word used to describe parliament's attitude towards the navy - feeling, interest, or concern - one of the most fundamental factors in it was the belief that England rightfully controlled the seas adjacent to this island and that these seas were as much English property as the land itself. If any one belief may be said to have been common to all members of parliament between 1688 and 1714 it was this conviction on the sovereignty of the English seas. This conviction found its most influential expression in John Selden's book, 'Of the Dominion, or Ownership of the Sea.'⁽¹⁾ Selden defined the extent of the English seas with extravagant precision and justified English dominion over them by a wealth of legal and historical quotation. Views substantially the same as Selden's, often a paraphrase of his words, became common-place in seventeenth century English books on the sovereignty of the sea: books such as Sir John Borrough's 'Sovereignty of the British Seas,'⁽²⁾

(1) This book was first published in Latin under the title, 'Mare Clausum,' in 1635 and reprinted in 1636. An English version was printed in 1652 and 1663 and 'Comments' were printed in 1653.

(2) Published in 1651 and reprinted in 1686.

John Godolphin's 'A View of Admiral Jurisdiction,'⁽¹⁾
 John Evelyn's 'Navigation and Commerce,'⁽²⁾ Richard Zouch's
 'The Jurisdiction of the Admiralty of England Asserted,'⁽³⁾
 Alexander Justice's 'A General Treatise of the Dominion and
 Laws of the Sea,'⁽⁴⁾ and Charles Molloy's 'Treatise of
 Affairs Maritime and of Commerce.'⁽⁵⁾ In the last of these
 books English claims are expressed most arrogantly. From
 books such as these, but especially from Selden's
 convincing arguments, a belief in the justice of the English
 claims became widely accepted in England. An instance of
 Selden's influence and of the kind of evidence that nourished
 English pretensions is the cock boats of Edgar. Selden used
 as one historic proof of England's ancient authority over the
 seas the story of the Anglo-Saxon King Edgar's fleet of small
 ships, or cock boats, numbering 3,600 according to some
 writers, 4,000 or 4,800 according to others, with which he
 effectively controlled the seas around England.⁽⁶⁾ These

(1) Published 1661 and reprinted 1685.

(2) Published 1674.

(3) Published 1663 and reprinted 1686.

(4) Published 1705 and reprinted 1710.

(5) Published 1676; other editions appeared in 1677, 1682, 1688 and 1690. The whole subject of England's claims is dealt with in T.W. Fulton, *The Sovereignty of the Sea*. (1911)

(6) J. Selden *op.cit.* 258. Edgar ruled 959-975. For the historical justification of this fleet see T.W. Fulton *op.cit.* 27-8.

cock boats, usually 4,800 of them, appear again and again in pamphlets of the time linked to assertions of England's right to control the near seas.⁽¹⁾ Widespread acceptance of such ideas can be found in memorials to ministers, encyclopaedias of useful knowledge for country gentlemen and even in the papers of the early statistician, Petty.⁽²⁾

Naturally the belief was held by many members of the legislature and executive. Naval officers particularly were keenly aware by 1688 of the need to insist on the outward acceptance of these rights by foreigners, who were supposed to acknowledge them at sea by the dipping of a ship's flags. The public humiliation and imprisonment in the reign of Charles II of even senior naval officers who did not exact this salute had made them as a group extremely

(1) For example see:- A Satyr on the Sea Officers (c. 1691), Naval Songs and Ballads, ed. C.H. Firth (N.R.S. 1908) 139; England's Path to Wealth and Honour (1700), Somers Tracts (1814) XI, 374; Remarks on the Present Condition of the Navy (1700) 22; Present Condition of the English Navy (1702) 10; An Historical and Political Treatise of the Navy (1703) 4.

(2) G. Jacob, The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum (1717) 119; E. and J. Chamberlayne, Angliae Notitia (1704) 220; The Petty Papers, ed. Marquis of Lansdowne (1927) I, 220, 242; Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. I, Dominion of the Seas. Thomas Corbett, Deputy Secretary of the Navy, collected together, about 1727, several volumes of naval memorials, precedents and statistics; see D.A. Baugh, British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole (1965) 533-4.

zealous in this duty.⁽¹⁾ This zeal was carried into the period 1688-1714, sometimes with embarrassing consequences for a government that was anxious not to offend the precariously neutral Baltic powers. Shovell was involved in an episode in 1694 when he forced some Danish ships to strike their flag⁽²⁾ and reported it to the Secretary of State and Admiralty as an act worthy of praise, in that the affront occurred in the Downs, a place so English as to be, as it were, "their Majesties' bed chamber."⁽³⁾ It would seem that many members of both houses of parliament had as concrete and strong a belief that the seas were English. Certainly Louis XIV's alleged orders to his ships not to acknowledge English rights by saluting were considered important enough to be represented as one of the reasons for war in 1689,⁽⁴⁾ and the need to exact this salute was considered by the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty to be one of the decisive factors

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- (1) The Diary of Samuel Pepys, ed. H.B. Wheatley (1910) II, fn. 127-8.
- (2) S.P. Oakley, William III and the Northern Crowns During the Nine Years War (London Ph.D. 1961) I, 222-301. For Shovell see below p. 434.
- (3) C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 259; H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I 116; Documents relating to Law and Custom of the Sea, ed. R.G. Marsden (N.R.S. 1916) II, 1649-1767, 165. Shovell was particularly sensitive on this issue; The Tangier Papers of Samuel Pepys, ed. E. Chappell, (N.R.S. 1935) xxxvi.
- (4) The History of England by Mr. Rapin de Thoyras continued... by N. Tindal, III, (1747) 90.

in determining the strength of the fleet in peace time.⁽¹⁾ Pepys made mention of the parliamentary concern for this sovereignty⁽²⁾ and Selden's book was specifically quoted at least once in parliament, in the House of Lords in 1708.⁽³⁾ Such explicit evidence for the reception of Selden's theories in parliament is slight but ministers were very conscious of the nation's patriotic pride in English ownership of the seas.⁽⁴⁾ whatever their own doubts as to the legality of the claims or the practical sense in demanding acknowledgement of them.⁽⁵⁾ Parliament's persistent concern for the success of

- (1) P.R.O.Adm. 3/15, 1 Nov. 1699.
- (2) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R.S. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 53, 92, 226.
- (3) See below pp.215, 292.
- (4) Shrewsbury to Blathwayt, 14 August 1694, "the Nation is so concerned for anything that may prejudice that dominion on the seas," H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt.I, 166.
- (5) Doubts about Selden's theories grew in late seventeenth century England, because of the flaws in some of his arguments, the Mare Liberum by Grotius, the wild claims of some English writers, and the political dangers of alienating neutrals or even our allies, the Dutch, who were in fact if not in name the target of the theories. The most destructive criticism of Selden's ideas in England was the Observations concerning Dominion and Sovereignty of the Seas, by Sir Philip Medows (1689). He gave support to some who had already begun to question the whole structure of English claims; among them was Pepys, Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R.S. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 29, 31, 40, 48, 53, 156, 275, 322. For the decline of English belief in Selden see T.W. Fulton op.cit. 21, 517, 523.

the navy, its extreme sensitivity to control of the near seas, especially the Channel⁽¹⁾ and its generosity in money grants to the navy can all be related to the conviction that the seas were English property. The gentry of England, and parliament contained many such, were as a class highly conscious of the importance of property.⁽²⁾ To them the seas were as much a part of the kingdom as the common land and foreigners were trespassers.⁽³⁾

This sense of property was most powerfully reinforced by other feelings. The strongest of these was fear, fear of a French invasion. Most Englishmen in the early years of William could remember two successful landings on English territory, William's in 1688 and Monmouth's in 1685. They and their descendants were not allowed to forget the danger; invasion was again threatened in 1690, 1692, 1696 and 1708. The landing of small French raiding parties preserved the fear most sharply around the coasts.⁽⁴⁾ It was a fear made worse by the Catholicism of the French and Jacobites and the vivid seventeenth century experience and tradition of danger to England from Roman Catholic powers. In the language of

(1) See below p. 286.

(2) D. Ogg, *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (1963) 70; see below p. 233.

(3) It is in this sense that Steele's merchant, Sir Anthony Freeport, described the seas as 'The British Common'. *Spectator*, ed. C. Gregory Smith (1958) I, No. 2, 2 Mar. 1711, 8.

(4) H.M.C. Finch III, 176.

the pamphleteers, Louis XIV was the Pharaoh who might
 enslave the country,⁽¹⁾ a tyrant who could land on a Monday,
 celebrate Mass in St. Paul's on the following Sunday, and
 dissolve parliament the day after;⁽²⁾ and before long the
 estates of the gentry would be in the possession of men
 who spoke a strange tongue.⁽³⁾ These forebodings were shared
 by members of parliament; in 1696 Rooke envisaged a retreat
 to the mountains of Scotland before the forces of popery
 and slavery,⁽⁴⁾ and in the same year Roger Kenyon wrote,
 "God Almighty preserve old England from a French conquest."⁽⁵⁾
 When invasion seemed probable the fear produced a rare and
 transient unanimity in parliament;⁽⁶⁾ little else had such
 power.

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- (1) J. Whiston, *The Mismanagements in Trade Discovered* (1704) 7.
- (2) *The Apparent Danger of Invasion* (1701), *The Harleian Miscellany* (1810) X, 480.
- (3) *Remarks on the Present Condition of the Navy* (1700) 23.
- (4) Rooke to Trumbull, 9 May 1696, H.M.C. Downshire MSS. I Pt. ii, 660. Rooke was M.P. for Portsmouth 1698-1702. See below p.433.
- (5) R. Kenyon to P. Shakerley, 25 Jan 1696, H.M.C. Kenyon MSS. 397.
- (6) Burnet to Johnstone, 14 Oct 1690, N. Tindal op.cit. III, 160 fn., Hopkins to Byng, 11 Mar 1708, *The Byng Papers*, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1931) II, 83.

This fear guaranteed that the navy would never suffer dangerous neglect but further emotional and economic arguments ensured it a high place in parliamentary attention. When the threat of invasion was remote jealousy of the success in commerce of allies and neutrals was ever present. The Dutch particularly were the object of much of this jealousy⁽¹⁾ but so were Danes, Swedes, Portuguese and Genoese to a lesser degree.⁽²⁾ Moreover, however reluctant members of parliament might be to vote money to sustain a war, there is no doubt that the majority of them preferred to vote it for a naval rather than a land force. The distrust the English felt for armies was a product of their seventeenth century experience. Economic self-advantage strengthened the preference; soldiers were paid out of the kingdom, sailors spent much of their pay in it.⁽³⁾ In a wider economic context sailors created by war were a permanent national asset, and the trade protected by a large navy benefited everyone in the kingdom directly or indirectly.⁽⁴⁾

(1) D. Coombs, *The Conduct of the Dutch* (1958) 7, 37-41; Newsletter, 18 May 1689, H.M.C. Fleming MSS. 242; Correspondence of Col. N. Hooke 1703-1707, ed. W.D. Macray (Roxburghe Club 1870) Memorial to Torcy 18 Feb 1703 I 10, Memorial to de Noailles II, 86-7.

(2) See below p. 221.

(3) C. D'Avenant, *Discourses on the Public Revenues and on the Trade of England* (1698) in *Political and Commercial Works of C. D'Avenant*, ed. Sir C. Whitworth (1771) I, 405-8; Carmarthen to the King, 9 Sept. 1692, C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1691-2, 443, Secretary of Treasury to Navy Board, 20 Sept 1711, *Queen Anne's Navy*, 202.

(4) See below p. 233.

National pride and tradition also contributed to parliament's regard for the navy. The disconcertingly rapid creation of a powerful French navy was an affront to many Englishmen as well as constituting a national threat.⁽¹⁾ They conveniently forgot the decades of English naval impotence in the reigns of James I and Charles I and remembered instead the naval glory of Elizabeth's reign.⁽²⁾ The convictions Englishmen drew from this selective history were that England was by tradition, if not by right, a great sea power, that Englishmen instinctively understood the management of a sea war, and that properly managed, a sea war should largely pay for itself out of the spoils of the enemy.⁽³⁾

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- (1) H.M.C. Portland II, 108; H.M.C. Finch III, 189; R. Steele, *The Englishman*, ed. R. Blanchard, No. 27, 5 Dec. 1713, 129; Rooke to Shrewsbury, 10 Feb. 1696, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. i, 301.
- (2) "A spirit extraordinary stirring among our nobility and gentry in Queen Elizabeth's time towards the sea," Samuel Pepy's *Naval Minutes*, op.cit. 215; cf. *A Debate Between three Ministers of State on the present affairs of England* (1702) 25.
- (3) A Boyer, *Life of her late Majesty Queen Anne* (1721) I, 157; the vote of thanks by the House of Commons to Rooke on his victory at Vigo, C.J. XIV, 39; *Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. de Beer (1955) V, 516; Sir J. Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (1771) III, 6; C. D'Avenant, *Discourses on The Public Revenues and on the Trade of England*, op.cit. I, 408.

Any consideration of naval matters between 1688 and 1714 would have aroused feelings and beliefs of this kind amongst many members of parliament, though the strength of feeling or belief would have varied in time and man. These feelings would at all times and in most members have merged into one constructive conviction, that the navy should provide for the security of the realm, its people, religion, institutions and waters. The whole terminology of popular description of the navy is vividly expressive of this concern for security. The navy is, 'the best guard to England,'⁽¹⁾ 'the locks and bolts on the doors of their English Mansion house,'⁽²⁾ 'it is repeatedly the guard, national walls, 'our greatest security.'⁽³⁾ This identification of the navy with national security explains parliament's constant attention to naval matters, the lavish grants of naval

- (1) The Seaman's Opinion of a Standing Army (1698), A Collection of State Tracts (1705) II, 691.
- (2) Present Condition of the English Navy in a Dialogue (1702) 29.
- (3) A speech by Lord Haversham quoted in A. Boyer, A History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne (1722) 163; An Historical and Political Treatise of the Navy (1703) 13; The State of the Navy (1699) 14; G. Jacob, The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum (1717) 119; A Letter to a Country Gentleman.... (1698), Harleian Miscellany X, 362; H.M.C. Portland III, 515.

supply,⁽¹⁾ and the determination with which the war was prosecuted.⁽²⁾ These generally held beliefs and feelings provided the background against which parliament discussed the strategic uses of the fleet.

It follows from a description of this background that the basic parliamentary requirement of the fleet was defensive.⁽³⁾ Parliament's naval strategy was satisfied by the security that would be provided by the employment of the main fleet in home waters. This was an outlook on naval strategy that the ministers fully appreciated and which many of them probably shared. The instructions of the Lords Justices to the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty in 1696 on the deployment of the navy give clear indication of this attitude : the Admiralty was told that, "if there

- (1) "The great security the whole nation expects from the fleet, the care the parliament have always taken and particularly the last sessions for the augmentation of the strength at sea," P.R.O. Adm. 3/15, 1 Jul. 1699; cf. Sir Edward Gregory to Sergison, 23 Oct. 1697, Sergison Papers, 132; Anon letter to the King, Dec. 1694 (?), C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 364.
- (2) Ibid. 1694-5, 364; Berkeley to Shrewsbury, 16 Jul. 1696, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry, II Pt. i, 369; L'Hermitage Transcripts, 4 Jan. 1707, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 CCC ff. 27-8. L'Hermitage was a Dutch agent who provided the government of the United Provinces with reports on parliamentary activities.
- (3) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes op.cit. 75.

must be a want or failure in one part, it should be rather abroad than at home."⁽¹⁾ No majority in either house had the strategic knowledge or initiative to desire more constructive uses for the fleet. In parliament's eyes security was most obviously guaranteed by a powerful fleet riding in home waters.

Naturally, between 1689 and 1692, when the fear of French invasion was at its height, parliament could see no further than home waters as the theatre for naval action. Sir Thomas Clarges in November 1691,⁽²⁾ Robert Harley in November 1692,⁽³⁾ and Paul Foley in November 1693⁽⁴⁾ all proclaimed to the Commons the necessity of a strong navy. In 1691, with the defeat of Beachy Head unavenged and Ireland partially occupied by the French, problems of sea power dominated national thought.⁽⁵⁾

- (1) Minutes of the Proceedings of the Lords Justices, 7 Aug. 1696, C.S.P.Dom. Wm. III 1696, 330; cf. Bonnet Dispatch, 11/21 Nov. 1690, L. von Ranke, A History of England (1875) VI, 155.
- (2) Grey X, 177.
- (3) Ibid X, 268; cf. N. Luttrell, Abstracts of the Debates, 1692-3, ff. 54-8, 126-132.
- (4) Grey X, 311-2.
- (5) Carmarthen to the King, 22 May 1691, C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1690, 385; Sir Charles Porter to Nottingham, 4 Nov. 1691, H.M.C. Finch III, 296.

From 1693 and for the remaining years of the war the problem of security was less pressing⁽¹⁾ but a new problem arose for the government - how to employ the fleet actively enough to justify to parliament the money it voted for it.⁽²⁾ This problem had first arisen immediately after La Hogue, and in the belief that any action was better politically than none, the bombardment of French harbours was suggested,⁽³⁾ and a year later Russell informed the Commons of plans to land raiding parties of troops on the French coast.⁽⁴⁾ Such ideas were already current in the pamphlet literature and apparently popular with parliament.⁽⁵⁾ Thus in the years that followed, a generally unsuccessful policy of bombardment and raids was pursued.⁽⁶⁾ It was half-hearted on the part of

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- (1) Except during the invasion scare of 1696.
- (2) Trenchard to the Admirals of the Fleet, 9 Aug. 1693, C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1693, 257, and see below pp. 81-3.
- (3) Carmarthen to the King, 14 June 1692, A Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds 1632-1712 (1944) II, 208, 210; Godolphin to the King, 13 July 1692, C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1691-2, 366.
- (4) Bonnet Dispatch, 29 Nov./9 Dec. 1692, L.von Ranke op.cit. VI, 189.
- (5) E. Littleton, *The Management of the Present War against France Considered* (1690); E. Littleton, *A Project of a Descent upon France* (1691); C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 181. The attractions of such a policy were well described by Defoe in a letter to R. Harley, June 1704, *The Letters of Daniel Defoe*, ed. G.H. Healey (1955) 20. The idea of using the English navy in this way was common in the seventeenth century, as in J. Hagthorpe, *A Discourse of the Sea and Navigation* (1625). The provision of troops for Sea Service in the early years of Anne's reign is probably an expression of this policy; see below p. 374.
- (6) See below p. 262.

most naval officers, who loathed the dangers of inshore action. By 1696 most ministers had recognised the failure of the strategy. Shrewsbury observed that even when a town was in ashes the harbour could still be used. Godolphin's doubts on the policy had been growing since 1692.⁽¹⁾ The policy was abandoned and in 1696 there were long and frequent consultations on how to use the fleet effectively,⁽²⁾ the Admiralty being asked for an opinion for the first time since 1689.⁽³⁾ The activity against the French coast apparently satisfied parliament; there is no record of dissatisfaction and with security ensured this is not surprising.

Concurrently with this raiding policy a new naval strategy was adopted in 1694, in which year the fleet, under the reluctant Russell, wintered in the Mediterranean and re-established the policy of a permanent English fleet dominating these waters. This policy was William's⁽⁴⁾ and in Anne's reign it was Marlborough's determination that continued the policy. Practically everyone else of note, with the exception of merchants, disliked this distant,

(1) C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1691-2, 198-9; *ibid.* 1693, 102-3, 140.

(2) Minutes of the Proceedings of the Lords Justices, 11 June 1696, C.S.P.Dom. Wm. 1696, 221, 224. The French encountered the same problem; see J.S. Bromley, *The French Privateering War 1702-13 in Historical Essays 1600-1750*, ed. H.E. Bell and R.L. Ollard (1963) 209.

(3) Ehrman 603; see below p. 480-3.

(4) *Ibid.* 519-21.

dangerous duty that deprived England of security. Amongst the flag officers Russell, Rooke and Shovell were articulate in their doubts.⁽¹⁾ Ministers, among them Trumbull, Secretary of State 1695 to 1697, and Shrewsbury, Secretary of State from 1695 to 1698, had similar doubts, as had many others.⁽²⁾ In 1694 the argument was advanced in the Commons that this strategy endangered the nation and only benefited our allies.⁽³⁾ In 1707 the Mediterranean commitment was blamed for poor trade protection.⁽⁴⁾

The absence of any more general parliamentary opposition to the Mediterranean strategy can be accounted for in several ways. Members were generally ignorant of the number of ships left to defend the country and the government ensured

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- (1) Russell to Trenchard, 21 July 1695, P.R.O. S.P. 42/4, f.1,144; here he writes of the 'imaginary service,' performed by a Mediterranean fleet; Rooke to Shrewsbury 11 Oct. 1695, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II pt.i, 239; Shovell to Nottingham, 18 July 1702, C.S.P.Dom. Anne I, 190; Memorial on sending English Fleet to the Mediterranean March 1703, *ibid.* Anne I, 660.
- (2) Trumbull to Rooke, 30 Dec. 1695, H.M.C. Downshire I Pt.ii, 603-4; Shrewsbury to Stepney, 20 and 27 Oct. 1703, *Epistolary Curiosities* ed. R. Warner (1818) 99-100. The concern of the less informed is expressed in the Portledge Papers, ed. R.J. Kerr and I.C. Duncan (1928) 179; Vernon Letters I, 299; C.S.P.Dom. Anne II, 589-90.
- (3) Bonnet Dispatch, 23 Nov./3 Dec. 1694, L. von Ranke *op.cit.* VI 251.
- (4) Vernon Letters III, 287. See below p. 292.

that in a crisis, as in 1696, the Mediterranean fleet returned quickly to home waters. Thus the assumption of security was unchallenged.⁽¹⁾ Nor was there apparently any constructive, alternative strategy, especially when, in the early years of Anne's reign, the policy was successful. The terminology in which these victories are described suggests that the English became reconciled to the Mediterranean policy because they saw it as an extension of their dominion of the seas. Thus Malaga could be described as the battle that gave England, "the sovereignty of the Mediterranean as well as the British Seas,"⁽²⁾ and the capture of Gibraltar as a victory that extended "the English Empire of the Seas as far as the Mediterranean."⁽³⁾

Parliament's lack of interest in the employment of the fleet other than in the interests of security and sovereignty can be seen in the political treatment of the "Blue Sea" strategy. This theory of warfare was most brilliantly propounded by Swift in his pamphlet, 'The Conduct of the Allies.'⁽⁴⁾ He maintained that England's natural sphere of

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- (1) Although the Commons investigated the deployment of the navy in the crisis months of 1696 with great care; see below p. 271-2.
- (2) A. Boyer, *Life of her Late Majesty Queen Anne* (1721) I, 284.
- (3) A. Boyer, *A History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne* (1722) I, 284; cf. R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (1962) 336-7.
- (4) J. Swift, *The Conduct of the Allies and of the Late Ministry in Beginning and Carrying on the Present War* (1711), *Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. H. Davis (1951) VI, 8-11.

warlike action was the sea and that in any war her major contribution should be naval, with subsidiary combined operations against the colonies of her enemies. Swift claimed that William, Marlborough and the Whigs had disastrously and wastefully engaged England in a land war. Such was the power of his style that Swift gave definition to the strategy and associated a liking for continental land war with the Whig party for much of the eighteenth century.⁽¹⁾ The Whigs encouraged such an identification, especially in the last three years of Anne's reign, by criticisms of a Blue Sea policy, criticisms that owed much to the experience of such expeditions as Swift recommended.⁽²⁾

To credit Whigs or Tories with such definite views on strategy in William's reign or the early years of Anne's reign would be too sweeping. There was only spasmodic and minority interest in the merits or demerits of a Blue Sea

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- (1) J. Ralph, *The Other Side of the Question* (1748) 172-4; *Good Queen Anne Vindicated* (1748) passim; R. Pares, *American Versus Continental Warfare*, in *The Historian's Business*, ed. R.H. and E. Humphreys (1961) 130-2; H. St. John, *Viscount Bolingbroke, Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism*, ed. A. Hassall (1917) 116-122.
- (2) Col. L. Lillington, *Reflections on Mr. Burchet's Memoirs* (1704) 151-4; *Marlborough to Godolphin*, 19 May 1710, W. Cox, *Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough*, ed. J. Wade (1847) III, 37; *A Letter from an Old Whig in Town to a Modern Whig in the Country* (1711); F. Hare, *The Management of the War in a Letter to a Tory Member* (1711) 22-9.

strategy in parliament. Indeed the only approach to consistent and precise support for such a strategy seems to have been made by one man, a leading Tory politician, the Earl of Rochester.⁽¹⁾ His definition of the policy was most clearly given in his preface to the first Earl of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion.⁽²⁾ Events in 1691 and 1692 favoured the exposition of a Blue Sea strategy in parliament though the motives for the consideration were as much factional and economic as strategic.⁽³⁾ A debate in the Commons in 1691 came to no conclusion, probably because English dominance, and therefore security, was not yet established.⁽⁴⁾ As soon as this dominance had been established at La Hogue Rochester advocated a reduction of land forces in favour of an increased naval contribution to the war although he appears to have given no clear indication of how the

- (1) Laurence Hyde, first Earl of Rochester, son of Edward Hyde, the first Earl of Clarendon, and thus related to the two Queens, Mary and Anne; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1700-01, 1702-3. He was described as 'dur, opinatre, hautain, plein d'affectation, enteté de certaines maximes de sa facon, jugeant des choses uniquement par rapport à ces maximes,' Correspondence of Col. N. Hooke, ed. W.D. Macray (Roxburghe Club 1870) I, 16.
- (2) I, ix-x (1717 edn.) The first edition was in 1702.
- (3) See below pp. 102-3.
- (4) Bonnet Dispatches, 13/24 Nov. 1691, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 166, 169; Burnet III, 93; C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1690-91, 450, 465.

stronger navy was to be employed.⁽¹⁾ Most of William's ministers disagreed with his views⁽²⁾ and they attracted no parliamentary support in the following years of William's reign.

At the beginning of Anne's reign Rochester, as kinsman to the Queen and a leading Tory, was in a strong position and again he advocated a Blue Sea strategy. Again, in 1702, it was rejected by a majority of the ministers.⁽³⁾ Discussion of the strategy was not revived until 1707, a time when dissatisfaction with the military and naval conduct of the war was growing. In a pamphlet published in 1707, 'An Inquiry into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages,'⁽⁴⁾ the strategy received its most explicit geographic definition, with suggestions for squadrons to be employed in the Mediterranean, West Indies and Canada. There was some

- (1) C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1691-2, 410-11. The naval background to this debate can be found in Ehrman 398-403 and H. Richmond, *Statesmen and Sea Power* (1946) 69-70.
- (2) A. Browning op.cit. I, 499-500, II, 212-3; Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (1771) II, 6-10, 240-2.
- (3) J. Ralph, *The Other Side of the Question* (1742); N. Tindal op.cit. I, 545; A. Boyer, *Life of her Late Majesty Queen Anne* (1721) I, 55-6; G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Reign of Anne* (1967) 73.
- (4) *Harleian Miscellany* (1810) XI, 5-8.

debate on this strategy in the House of Lords but the greater issue of trade protection robbed the debates of consequence or urgency.⁽¹⁾

The use of Swift's writings to give the Blue Sea strategy a retrospective importance before 1711 is not supported by the evidence of any general interest in such a strategy, and his implication that the Tories were consistent supporters of such a policy receives little support. Even Rochester seems to have abandoned advocacy of a predominantly naval war and after 1706 was urging the use of more troops in Spain.⁽²⁾ Rochester's Tory associates were never remarkable for their consistent support of a predominantly naval war policy with much stronger squadrons in distant waters. Nottingham in 1695 and Granville, Howe and Sir Edward Seymour in 1702, all of them Tories of repute, argued in parliament against the use of the navy in a Blue Sea role.⁽³⁾ Parliament as a body had little interest in or insight into the strategic functions of the navy, outside considerations of security. Indeed the need for security

(1) A. Boyer op.cit. II, 35-8; see below pp. 288 et.seq.

(2) R. Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century* (1956) 136; G. Holmes and W.A. Speck, *The Divided Society, Party Conflict in England 1694-1716* (1967) 90.

(3) Bonnet Dispatch, 25 Jan./4 Feb. 1695, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 268, 270-1; Godolphin to R. Harley, 11 Sept. 1702, H.M.C. Portland IV, 46.

provided the argument most frequently put forward against a Blue Sea strategy. It was maintained that without military aid the Dutch would be conquered, and much though parliament might dislike such expensive military support, it did keep the French one remove away from the English seas. (1)

As the Marquis of Halifax had written in 1694, (2) 'feeling precedes' thought. In parliament's relationship with the navy, feeling, expressed in terms of sovereignty and security, preceded thought because in 1688 parliament knew very little about the navy and its administration. Parliament's acquisition of knowledge in all aspects of naval business is one of the most remarkable and important developments between 1688 and 1714. The paper evidence for this education is everywhere, in parliamentary papers, letters, pamphlets and petitions. How much the members of parliament learnt from these sources and others can be assessed by a consideration of the various sources which helped to educate parliament.

Of parliamentary ignorance of the navy in the early years of William there is no doubt. There was not even

(1) The French King's Memorial to the Pope (1688) 45; Burnet III, 93; Bonnet Dispatch 24 Nov./4 Dec. 1691, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 169.

(2) Quoted above p. 5.

any certainty as to the number of ships in the English fleet⁽¹⁾ and Russell wrote bitterly of those who judged "the wind and weather as the smoke of their tobacco drives."⁽²⁾ Pepys in his writings was eloquent to the point of tedium in his denunciations of parliamentary ignorance; in one such he wrote,

'The gentry of England consist either of persons untravelled and consequently ignorant or such as having travelled, minded nothing but the pleasures or vices of other countries; or else so many travelled gentlemen as sit in an English House of Commons could never have been so ignorant of what is extant in print of the government of their navy And from this ignorance of our Parliaments in matters marine, it follows that when to that ignorance is added either an artificial or real suspicion of misconducts and mismanagements in the navy, they know not how to judge when they have truth told them, but are apt to discredit any account that is given thereof.'⁽³⁾

Pepys attributed this ignorance partly to the small number of "sea representers" who sat in the Commons. He was right as far as naval officers were concerned; there were nine in the parliament elected in 1701 as opposed to

(1) Grey IX, 335.

(2) H.M.C. Finch III, 153.

(3) Samuel Pepy's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 356-7. Similar views are expressed *ibid.* 257, 260, 267, 277, 279-80, 283-4, 289, 293, 317, 332, 357, 358, 359, 395-6; The Tangier Papers of Pepys, ed. E. Chappell (N.R.S. 1935) 230.

thirty-nine army officers.⁽¹⁾ Even if this small group had been capable of instructing the Commons and the House prepared to listen, the complications of naval administration and action were such that it was generally accepted that a serious study of naval affairs would occupy the House for several months.⁽²⁾ The pressure of parliamentary business made such leisurely consideration impossible. The very nature of debate in the Commons made logical and persistent inquiry difficult enough. On 12 November 1691 the Commons were considering a relatively well defined issue, the lack of exploitation of the victory at La Hogue, but the debate was disrupted by interjections on transport ships, Newfoundland trade and the efficiency of the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty.⁽³⁾ A similar debate on 21 November caused Clarges to describe the proceedings as chaos.⁽⁴⁾ Anyone who has experienced the debates of large committees will accept that such gatherings are rarely effective in the education of their members in complicated topics.

(1) R. Walcott op.cit. 165. There were also eight office-holders with naval positions, *ibid.* 171. This figure can be compared with the 21 naval officers in the 1761 parliament, L. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (1957 edn.) 31.

(2) See below pp. 86-7.

(3) Grey X, 244-8.

(4) *Ibid.* X, 270.

Despite such obstacles parliamentary knowledge of the navy did increase, and as theoretically the source of all naval knowledge should have been the government representatives in the Commons, the role of the Court group in the education of parliament must be considered first. It was generally expected that officials in the House should support the Court viewpoint by their speech and vote.⁽¹⁾ The effectiveness of such speeches as a means of convincing and instructing the House varied. They could be strong emotional appeals, as when Sir John Lowther appealed for naval supply in a speech demanding sacrifice, fewer dishes on the table and fewer servants in the house, and justified such demands by reference to the crisis in the fortunes of the nation.⁽²⁾ They could, however, attempt to convince by reason and in such attempts fact and instruction were necessary. Russell and Papillon from 1689 to 1693 were particularly effective

(1) A.F.W. Papillon, *Memoirs of Thomas Papillon* (1887) 358; A. Browning *op.cit.* III, 178-84.

(2) Grey X, 30 cf. N. Luttrell, *An Abstract of the Debates 1692-3* ff. 100-1; see below p. 78.

in instructing the Commons in matters of naval strategy and administration.⁽¹⁾ Not all Court officials were as effective. Many of the lesser officials saw themselves as primarily members of the Commons and lurked quiet and uncomfortable in debates, afraid of losing their jobs if they supported the opposition and their status and friends if they supported the Court.⁽²⁾ Naval officers summoned by the Commons to give expert evidence or advice spoke with caution, knowing that ill-considered speech could prejudice their relations with the Admiralty.⁽³⁾

- (1) See below pp.78,461. Those officials most able to instruct parliament in the mysteries of naval warfare and administration were the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty and the Commissioners of the Navy. The great officer of state who traditionally controlled the navy was the Lord High Admiral. After 1688 his office was frequently put into commission and executed by a group of men known as the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty. They were the executive officers responsible for the administration and deployment of the navy. Although Prince George of Denmark became Lord High Admiral between 1702 and 1708 he was advised by a council. This body, the Prince's Council, was to all intents and purposes a Board of Admiralty. The Commissioners of the Navy made up a subordinate body, the Navy Board, which was responsible for the maintenance and financial accounting of the navy. For the changing status and relationship of these Boards see below pp.480-3. The Navy Board supervised the work of the subordinate Boards such as Victuallers and Sick and Wounded.
- (2) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes op.cit. 322; Grey IX, 415; *ibid.* X, 162.
- (3) Delavall to Nottingham, 9 Dec. 1691, H.M.C. Finch III, 306; Vernon Letters I, 74.

Such poor support and inefficient control of officials in the Commons is one reason why the Court sometimes failed to secure legislation on naval matters that was obviously necessary. Thus William's request in 1694 for legislation to aid manning had no result until 1696, and Anne's tentative request for increased spending on the navy in 1708 had no result at all.⁽¹⁾

Even without such weaknesses of personnel and organisation the Court would have found it difficult to convince or instruct the Commons. The arguments of Court officials were automatically suspect.⁽²⁾ Moreover, the Court was disinclined by tradition to give the Commons too much information;⁽³⁾ it was the responsibility of the agents of the executive to administer and such agents were responsible most obviously to the King. On a common sense level every official probably felt a wholly justified reluctance to provide detailed returns for parliamentary consideration. It was all too likely that they would be used in evidence against department or official. Returns presented to the Commons were usually *complex & sometimes confused.*

(1) See below p.352 and p.135 cf. H.M.C. Hastings II, 252; W.A. Shaw, Introduction, C.T.B. XXI Pt. I, xvi; P. Foley to R. Harley 17 Sept. 1692, B.M. Harley Loan 29/135.

(2) C.S.P.Dom. Wm. 1698, 423; see below p.76.

(3) See below p.110.

complex and sometimes confused. The complexity, certainly in naval returns, was usually a fair reflection of a complex administration but it is difficult not to believe that complexity and even confusion were sometimes a defensive device to prevent parliament understanding too much.⁽¹⁾ Evidence that government officials went further than this and suppressed evidence that might be of use to the Commons is rare but there is sufficient to show that this was done.⁽²⁾ However such falsifications, usually by omission, must have been few; the chances of discovery were too great.⁽³⁾ A safer way of thwarting a parliamentary inquiry was to disrupt the debate and the

- (1) Certainly Burchett was supposed to possess great skill in such matters, "for whoever conns the Ship of Admiralty the Secretary is always at the Helm, he knows all the Reaches, Buoys and Shelves of the River of Parliament and knows how to steer clear of 'em all he sits at the Board behind a great Periwig, peeping through it like a rat out of a butter firkin," Remarks on the Present Condition of the Navy (1700) 7. Josiah Burchett was Secretary to the Admiralty 1694-1742 and M.P. for Sandwich 1705-13, 1722-41, B.I.H.R. XIV (1936-7) 53. For instances when confusion rather than clarity might have been the motive behind naval returns see History and Proceedings of the House of Commons R. Chandler (1742) II, 392; W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B. XXI Pt. I, xvi and below pp. 260-1.
- (2) Vernon Letters I, 69-70; A List of Questions to be Answered, B.M. Harley Loan 29/35, No. 5.
- (3) See below pp. 38-41, 53-4.

Court could count on officials in both Lords and Commons with sufficient skill and experience to manage this, for example Priestman's provocative remark on merchant losses in 1692,⁽¹⁾ the opportune arrival of information on the Preston Conspiracy during a series of debates on Russell's failure to bring the French to battle in 1691⁽²⁾ or the attack on Norris in 1698.⁽³⁾ Indeed, allowing the Commons to investigate the faults of one man rather than the faults of a department was the surest way of ending an uncomfortable investigation.

Vernon described the technique:

'Parliaments are grown into a habit of finding fault, and some Jonah or another must be thrown overboard if the storm cannot otherwise be laid. But if the great Leviathan will be amused by an empty barrel it is a composition easily made.'⁽⁴⁾

The business of managing the navy was in fact so vast that it was always vulnerable in either its operational or its administrative activities.⁽⁵⁾ It was easy to

(1) See below p. 243.

(2) Grey X, 170 ff; S.B. Baxter, William III (1966) 493-4.

(3) Vernon Letters I, 405, 410; II, 85.

(4) Vernon Letters I, 405. James Vernon was Under Secretary of State 1690-97, Secretary of State 1697-1702 and a Teller of the Exchequer 1702-10. He wrote many and informative letters to his political patron, the Duke of Shrewsbury.

(5) Vernon Letters I, 267; Grey IX, 413.

provide a naval Jonah and whether they realised it or not, several naval officers and officials provided a sacrifice in the cause of executive peace.⁽¹⁾

Despite the inability or reluctance of the Court representatives to provide a parliament with the factual information necessary for debate, decision or legislation, this material was provided. Even a cursory glance at the Journals of either House or at the volumes of manuscripts presented to the House of Lords⁽²⁾ reveals the wealth of detailed and relevant information for the assessment of naval policy that came before both houses of parliament. The procedure for acquiring such information was well established in 1689 - initially a request from either House to inspect departmental archives, a request that was generally granted, and the committee appointed by the House saw the papers requested or transcripts of them. It was a procedure capable of infinite expansion. By 1693 it was customary for the Commons to appoint a day for a debate on naval business

- (1) Graydon, Whetstone and Hardy are three of the most senior who suffered in this way; see below p. 283 and pp. 434-5.
- (2) Calendared by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

early in the session.⁽¹⁾ To assist the debate papers were 'ordered' by courtesy of the King. At the beginning of the 1693-4 session, when consideration of the disaster to the Smyrna Convoy was a major concern,⁽²⁾ the Commons ordered as material for their debate copies of all the orders to the fleet during the summer, the stations of the main fleet, convoys and cruisers, and the decisions of councils of war, and asked that the Admirals of the Fleet and representatives of the Turkey Company should attend the House and that such Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty as were members of the House should be prepared to answer questions.⁽³⁾ Two days' notice was given of these requirements and most of the papers requested were presented to the House in this time ready for the debate on 15 November. In that debate the Commons asked for the evidence on the disaster currently being considered by a Committee of the Council.⁽⁴⁾ This was provided on 17 November with the remaining material from the Admiralty.⁽⁵⁾ The use the Commons made of this information can be deduced from the records of the debates.⁽⁶⁾ The information, full though it was, was

(1) H.M.C. Finch II, 232; P.R.O. Adm. 3/1 f.126;
Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, op.cit. I Pt.ii, 103.

(2) See below pp. 248-54.

(3) C.J. XI, 2.

(4) *Ibid.* XI, 3-4.

(5) *Ibid.* XI, 4-5.

(6) *Ibid.* XI, 6, 8-10, 12; Grey X, 311-29, 333-38,
347-8.

susceptible of varying interpretations as the Commons found when they pressed the Admirals questioned for decisive statements on the orders they had received, the victuals they had available and the strength of the wind. The Commons wanted straight, unqualified answers but throughout the debate on 22 November the Admirals hedged their answers with reservations. The debate ended with a plea for more fact. On 27 November, when the House returned to the subject, the Admiralty had provided a precise answer to one question - the fleet had on board victuals for 4-6 days - and the Commons resolved that this had been enough for it to stay longer than it had done with the merchant ships. The primary impression made by reading accounts of these debates is of parliamentary confusion and anger, confusion because of the number of side issues raised⁽¹⁾ and anger because decisive answers to questions were almost unobtainable, and this despite the unparalleled quantity of information before the House.⁽²⁾

In the following years the officials of the Navy Board found that the Commons made frequent use of the lists of men, expenses, ships, guns and victuals that they

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- (1) Some of them almost certainly to confuse the debate, for example the contribution of Sir Robert Rich, Grey X, 329.
- (2) The House of Lords considered similar evidence H.M.C. H.L.I, 93-295.

were required to keep for their superiors.⁽¹⁾ So frequent were these requests for information that it was a natural and unnoticed step to the next development, the assumption by the Commons that they could demand this information by right. From the middle years of Anne's reign information is asked of the navy without any reference to permission from the Queen.⁽²⁾ Gradually and unconsciously the Commons had assumed a direct relationship to the executive and a relationship that implied parliamentary authority over the executive.

This acquisition of knowledge was not inspired by any dispassionate desire for information or by the new statistical awareness that men like Petty and King were

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- (1) For example, in 1695 for the House of Lords, P.R.O. Adm. 7/333, ff.75, 76-9, 80-92 or for the Commons in November and December 1696, C.J.XI, 581-2, 590, 591, 598, 600-01, 617, 619. A version of the instructions to the Navy Board, those of 23 May 1702, is printed by G.F. James, Lord High Admiral's Council, M.M. 22 (1936) 427-9. Individual members of committees could consult such material, N. Luttrell, Abstract of the Debates 1692-3 f.102.
- (2) The first example is probably the request of the Commons for financial information on 10 Jan. 1709, C.J. XVI, 16, 24; cf. W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B. XXIII Pt.I, xxiv. In the earlier years of Anne's reign requests for information had often been met by a statement that the transcription of the papers necessary would take several weeks. H.M.C. H.L. V, 483.

displaying to late seventeenth century England. (1)

Information was required that it might be used in evidence against Court policies or officials. Patriotism and parliamentary opposition were practically synonymous terms. (2) Burnet summarised the motives and appeal of this Country antagonism to a government:

'In a House of Commons every motion against a minister is apt to be well entertained : some envy him, others are angry at him, many hope to share in the spoils of him,, or of his friends, that fall with him, and a love of change and a wantonness of mind, makes the attacking a minister a diversion to the rest.' (3)

The aim of such a Country opposition, whatever its motives, was never quite blind; information on whom or what to attack was usually available. In the debates of 1693 referred to above, the questions put by Sir John Parsons on victualling were pertinent ones, not surprisingly, for he had been a Commissioner of Victualling and was at that

- (1) A pamphlet by Petty, 'A Treatise of Naval Philosophy' (1691), The Petty Papers, ed. Marquis of Lansdowne (1927) I, lists the statistical information a king should have about the navy.
- (2) N. Tindal op.cit. III 303; R. Walcott op.cit. 94.
- (3) Burnet III, 75. In less dogmatic terms the opposition to the Court in 1694 of Edward Seymour and Jack Howe was attributed by Stepney to their being 'grumbletonians' because they were out of office, and that of Sir J. Thompson to his ambition to become a lord, The Lexington Papers, ed. H. Manners Sutton (1851) 15.

time a contractor for naval stores.⁽¹⁾ There were several members like him who knew something of navy methods because they dealt in naval contracts.⁽²⁾ The Commons would also contain a number of financiers, merchants and ex-ministers and officials whose specialist knowledge would be of use, but undoubtedly the most important guidance on naval matters came from naval officers and officials who, for a variety of reasons, were prepared to use their knowledge against the government. The usual motives for such assistance were disappointment and ambition. In this way the opposition to William's government profited by the help and advice of the greatest naval expert of the time, Samuel Pepys, who found that although the new administration had no use for his talents, Paul Foley and Robert Harley were very ready to hear his opinions. The connection was probably made when Foley and Harley were Commissioners of Accounts between 1691 and 1693.⁽³⁾ A later and anonymous pamphleteer claimed that Pepys, in order to distract them from investigation of his own accounts,

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- (1) See above p.36 Sir John Parsons was M.P. for Reigate and one of the victuallers who had been dismissed in 1689 for providing faulty provisions, C.T.B.X Pt. III, 1293; C.J. X, 293, 302.
- (2) C.S.P.Dom. Wm. 1697, 161; C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1700, 161.
- (3) See below p. 113.

first flattered them and then filled their pockets "with schemes relating to the navy."⁽¹⁾ Pepys, amongst the jottings he made for a never completed naval history, records meetings with the commissioners of accounts and Foley in particular,⁽²⁾ but there is no indication of the schemes, if any that he may have passed to them.⁽³⁾ It is almost certain, however, that his advice was of use to them in matters that concerned the navy. Both Foley and Harley received information as well from officials still serving in the administration, probably including Sergison, the Navy Board Clerk of Acts, especially between 1697 and 1699, when dislike of Orford's administration inspired the leakage.⁽⁴⁾ In a similar way Orford used his knowledge of naval finance to attack the Tory Administration in 1704,⁽⁵⁾ and amongst less informed naval experts who from jealousy or disappointment used their knowledge

- (1) Some remarks on the Bill for Taking, Examining and Stating the Public Accounts (1702) 5-6.
- (2) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes op.cit. 389, 400.
- (3) See below p.42 and p.247.
- (4) Vernon Letters I, 272; II, 395-6; Questions to be answered 1699? B.M. Harley Loan 29/35, No. 5.
- (5) See below pp. 131-4.

against the government were Captain George Churchill⁽¹⁾ and Admiral Killegrew.⁽²⁾

Without such advice from naval administrators or officers it is likely that such naval legislation as the opposition initiated would have been more ineffective than it was. Uninformed political jealousy based upon feeling rather than knowledge is a poor starting point for legislation. The dangers of such legislation can be illustrated by an Act of 1694. The habit of naval captains who acted as judges at courts martial of acquitting brother officers, out of sympathy or as an insurance for their own future, had, by this time, become notorious. The opposition group of which Paul Foley was a leader brought in a bill to stop this, and such was the general sympathy for some reform that the bill became law.⁽³⁾ The first clause of this Act stated that after 24 June 1694 any naval officer thought guilty of professional failure might be tried before the justices of Oyer and Terminer by the processes of common law instead of court martial. The Act did not, however, define who was to decide the court before which

(1) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes op.cit. 293-4, 322; see below pp. 244-5.

(2) See below p. 54.

(3) 5 W. & M. c 25, An Act for the better Discipline of their Majesties Navy Royal.

an officer would be tried and there was no doubt which court naval officers would choose. The Act was, moreover, an infringement of the prerogatives of the Lord High Admiral and, by implication, of the Monarch himself, yet this point was not apparently made in debate though it was one that would have weighed heavily with conservative members. Pepys described it as "a useless unintelligible Act," and held Foley and his associates to be responsible for its initiation and wording.⁽¹⁾ Such an Act - it lapsed after three years - was a natural consequence of uninformed and Country - inspired legislation. Yet the act can stand as an exception; the majority of the Acts described in the chapters that follow were effective to a greater or lesser degree, one indication of the growing parliamentary appreciation of the problems of the navy. The development of party politics contributed towards this increasing appreciation.

The degree of political organisation that existed between 1688 and 1714 is a subject of debate and seems

(1) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes op.cit. 388-9, 399-400. Bonnet described the Act as 'fort utile' when it was passed, Dispatch 24 April/4 May 1694, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 248.

likely to remain so.⁽¹⁾ It would seem that to describe the political groups in the early years of William's reign as 'parties', with all the precision that such a word involves, is rather too sweeping. In these years a shifting of groups against the background of the traditional antagonism of Court and Country seems a fair description of a confused and imprecise political scene. This confusion continues into the reign of Anne but increasingly the politicians led by the Whig Junto show those characteristics of organisation and loyalty that make a party. Comparable Tory development was slower. The Tories were a natural

(1) The two extreme viewpoints are those of R. Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century* (1956), who explains the political scene by Namier-style groups of kindred and clients, and J.H. Plumb who, in *The Growth of Political Stability in England 1675-1725* (1967), sees party principle and party organisation in parliament and country. The latter viewpoint is powerfully and convincingly supported by G. Holmes in *British Politics in the Reign of Anne* (1967) and by G. Holmes and W.A. Speck in *The Divided Society: Party Conflict in England 1694-1716* (1967). D. Ogg's *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (1963) gives balanced and uncombative conclusions. K. Feiling, *History of the Tory Party 1640-1714* (1924), has an older but still valuable outlook, and the classic 'Whig' interpretation remains G.M. Trevelyan's *England under Queen Anne* (1930).

majority in the nation, and usually in parliament, and they suffered from the natural reluctance of a majority of conservatives to copy the techniques of their political opponents. St. John, in the years after 1710, was their most effective instructor.

Between 1688 and 1694 party politics were in abeyance. William's ministry was a coalition made up of men representing most viewpoints and most political groups with Carmarthen as leader.⁽¹⁾ Non-party government appealed to William as it did to Anne. The years were ones of national emergency in which such political compromise was acceptable to many. As the sense of emergency faded Country hostility to the government, expressed by such men as Clarges, William Sacheverell and William Garraway,⁽²⁾ became more difficult to contain. The Ministry itself was weakened by the antagonisms of its leaders; the feuds between Carmarthen and Nottingham and between Nottingham and Russell. As early as 1692 a member of the Commons had advised William that if he wished to govern efficiently he must do so through

(1) K. Feiling op.cit. 275-6; D. Ogg, op.cit. 360. Thomas Osborne, Marquis of Carmarthen 1689-94, Duke of Leeds 1694-1712.

(2) For Clarges see above p.4. Sacheverell was M.P. for Derbyshire and Garraway M.P. for Sussex. All three are described in D.T. Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons 1663-74 (1966) 199, 201, 207. D. Ogg op.cit. 225, G. Holmes and W.A. Speck op.cit. 143-7; J.H. Plumb op.cit. 132-3.

ministers of one principle and one interest.⁽¹⁾ In order to manage his parliaments and obtain favourable votes of supply for his war policy William was forced to depend upon those politicians who favoured this policy. This meant depending on the Whigs and the appointment of Somers as Keeper of the Great Seal in 1693 can be taken as signifying William's acceptance of the need to rely on party support.⁽²⁾

After this Whig and Tory settled down to the political struggle that was to end with Whig victory in 1716. Between 1694 and 1700 Whigs dominated the government. The King's dependence on the party was ensured by the advice of Sunderland who saw more clearly than most the necessity for a government to secure the support of a united political group.⁽³⁾ The Whig leaders, Shrewsbury and the able politicians who were to become the Junto, possessed the status, following and political skill to manage government and parliament as the King wished.⁽⁴⁾ The

(1) N. Luttrell, Abstract of the Debates 1692-3, f210.

(2) G. Holmes op.cit. 55-6; J.H. Plumb op.cit. 132-3; S.B. Baxter, William III (1966) 270, 277-8, 295; G. Holmes and W.A. Speck op.cit. 8-9.

(3) Ibid 10; J.H. Plumb op.cit. 135; K. Feiling op.cit. 291; J.P. Kenyon, Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland 1641-1702 (1958) 256. Sunderland (1640-1702) was the second earl.

(4) Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, see D.H. Somerville, The King of Hearts: Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury (1962) 84-5. The Whig leaders were Somers, Wharton, Charles Montagu (later Earl of Halifax) and Russell.

numerical weakness of the Whigs had some compensations in that it compelled leaders and followers to appreciate the importance of party unity and organisation.⁽¹⁾

Powerful traditions and an astutely led opposition worked against the consolidation of a Whig party. The Whig tradition was one of opposition to monarch and government. It was difficult for some Whigs to accept as one of the conditions of party politics and discipline that they should have to support the government even though the ministers of that government were their own leaders. It was made more difficult by the development of an opposition group led by Paul Foley and Robert Harley which seemed to act on the old Whig principles of opposition.⁽²⁾ This fundamentally Tory group represented, as did the Junto led Whig party a political adaptation to the post-Revolution situation.⁽³⁾ It was an adaptation that the more orthodox Tory leaders, such men as Rochester and Nottingham and Musgrave in the Commons, found difficult to make.⁽⁴⁾ Their identification of their class and followers with the defence of the

(1) J.H. Plumb op.cit. 136.

(2) Ibid. 133; K. Feiling op.cit. 287, 291. For Foley see below p.244 for Harley below p.381.

(3) D. Ogg op.cit. 391-2, 444.

(4) Rochester and Nottingham are described above p.23 and p.4, Seymour and Musgrave below p.383 and p. 383.

monarchy and Anglican Church was total. The doctrine of Passive Obedience and Non-Resistance was the basic tenet of Tory philosophy. Yet they had acted against this philosophy in supporting the Revolution of 1688. They preferred to ignore the implications of this action.⁽¹⁾ Their refusal to rethink their philosophy and explicitly define their attitude to the Revolution eventually prevented them from enjoying the political dominance to which their numbers entitled them.⁽²⁾

The dominance of the Whig party in the years after 1694 was made possible by the patriotic support the government enjoyed from politically uncommitted members of parliament in time of war. The peace of Ryswick weakened this support. Peace also weakened the discipline of the Whig party itself. Many of its members cherished the right to make their own independent choice on each issue before parliament. The success of the Whig leaders had excited envy and opposition. Their political philosophy and methods were uncongenial to many. As a result their ability to manage the Commons

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- (1) G. Holmes and W.A. Speck op.cit. 103-4; G. Holmes op.cit. 58-60; W. Bisset, *Modern Fanatic* (1710); *Managers Pro and Con* (1710); *Doctrine of Passive Obedience* (1710); *Serious Advice to the Good People of England; Shewing them their True Interest* (1710); *True Genuine Tory Address* (1710)
- (2) D. Ogg op.cit. 476-7.

disappeared in the factious sessions between 1698 and 1700 and William was forced to form a Tory ministry.⁽¹⁾ Between 1700 and 1702 events in parliament, particularly consideration of the problems of the Succession, the Church and England's responsibilities towards Europe, forced many members to define their political outlook.⁽²⁾ The impeachment of the Whig leaders further united the Whig party.⁽³⁾ By the time of William's death in 1702 there were two political parties in England. It would be impossible to understand the politics of Anne's reign without an acceptance of the fact that there were Whig and Tory parties.⁽⁴⁾

Anne would have preferred a moderate, non-partisan government. The two men on whom she based her government between 1702 and 1710, Godolphin and Marlborough, had similar inclinations.⁽⁵⁾ Unfortunately for them all such a policy proved impossible. Anne herself was not neutral in the political issues that divided her kingdom. She was a natural Tory in her devotion to the

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- (1) S.B. Baxter op.cit. 359-61, 374, 377; D.Ogg op.cit. 442.
- (2) G. Holmes and W.A. Speck op.cit. 20-1; G. Holmes op.cit. 47-8, 63-4; J.H. Plumb op.cit. 71, 289. The political complexities of the period are illustrated in the detailed account of the election of the Speaker in Feb 1701, N.M.M. Sergison Ser/103 ff:62-4 cf. G. Holmes and W.A. Speck op.cit. 20, 23.
- (3) Ibid. 21; D.Ogg. op.cit. 459-64.
- (4) G. Holmes op.cit. 7.
- (5) Sidney, first Earl of Godolphin and John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough.

Anglican Church and her high concept of the status of the monarchy. These convictions gave a Tory bias to what was essentially a moderate ministry in the first year of Anne's reign.⁽¹⁾ The bias was sufficient to prevent the smooth functioning of the government. The Tory leaders, in the persons of Rochester, Nottingham and Seymour, attempted to dictate government policy in domestic and foreign affairs and win total control of the ministry.⁽²⁾ The removal or resignation of these three between 1702 and 1705 encouraged Godolphin to attempt a government made up from the moderates of both parties. The appointment to office of moderate Whigs like Cowper and Walpole and moderate Tories like Harley created an efficient government but one that was by definition precarious.⁽³⁾ Godolphin found, as William had done, that such a government had to contend with the inevitable pressures from the more extreme members of both parties and the divided loyalties and opposed principles of the members of the government itself.⁽⁴⁾ He found too that only the Whig party was wholehearted in its support

(1) G. Holmes and W.A. Speck op.cit. 27.

(2) K. Feiling op.cit. 367-70.

(3) William Cowper, later first Earl Cowper, became Lord Keeper in 1705, Robert Walpole, later first Earl of Orford, joined the Prince's Council in the same year.

(4) K. Feiling op.cit. 398-9; G.S. Holmes and W.A. Speck, The Fall of Harley in 1708 Reconsidered, Eng. Hist. Rev. LXXX No. 317 (Oct. 1965) 689-91.

of Marlborough's war policy. By 1708 Godolphin's moderate government was in ruins and from 1708 to 1710 the Whigs dominated again.

This domination had been reluctantly conceded by the Queen. By 1710, the imprudent Whig prosecution of Sacheverell, the war weariness of the nation, a growing discontent with both Godolphin and Marlborough, had convinced her that a predominantly Whig ministry was not in the best interests of the nation.⁽¹⁾ Robert Harley, as the Queen's chief adviser from 1710 to 1714, attempted to follow more moderate policies than many of his supporters in the strongly Tory parliament of 1710-13 would have wished. The need to end the war and secure a good peace preserved a semblance of party unity and Harley's dominance. After the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 an ill considered policy towards the dangers threatening a Protestant Succession when Anne should die split the Tory party and placed it under overwhelming disadvantages when George of Hanover became King.

[Party politics dominated the years between 1688 and 1714 and because of this parliamentary debate and legislation are permeated by the antagonisms of political groups. Although the efficiency of the navy was a national rather than a party concern it was not immune

(1) K. Feiling op.cit. 404-12.

from the effects of party rivalry. On practically every occasion on which the navy was discussed in parliament or laws were passed effecting it and for which sufficient evidence survives to base a conclusion it is possible to discern ways in which political attitudes determined the attitudes of men and sometimes the form of naval legislation. Even on an issue as politically neutral as the manning of the navy the speeches in 1703 on this subject show the infection of party bias.⁽¹⁾ Every naval issue that concerned parliament was susceptible to political interpretation and exploitation by party politicians.

Yet although these party politicians dominated the parliamentary scene between 1688 and 1714 less than half the members of the Commons consistently accepted the leadership of such men.⁽²⁾ In William's reign the Country tradition of political independence was strong. In Anne's reign the tradition lingered and even though parties were better defined each had on its wings individuals or groups whose sporadic loyalty earned them the name 'Whimsicals.'⁽³⁾ The majority of the Commons,

(1) See below pp. 383-5.

(2) G. Holmes op.cit. 116, 118; D. Ogg op.cit. 127.

(3) G. Holmes op.cit. 8, 248 ff.

made up of the politically uncommitted, represents the most nebulous, the most difficult to study yet, in some ways, the most influential of all the political groups in parliament between 1688 and 1714. The members voted from motives that must have been as diverse as the personalities who made up the group. One motive that involved many of them must have been concern for the national well being. In the crises that began and ended this period, that of the Revolution in 1688 and the Succession of 1714, a majority of the Englishmen involved in politics acted together to promote a national not a party policy. When the issue was obviously of national importance the politically uncommitted held the balance. Their influence on the less decisive political events between 1688 and 1714 is generally incalculable but when naval matters were discussed in parliament it must often have been important. The navy symbolised national security. No legislation or inquiry that concerned the navy was likely to be effective, no matter what government or party initiated the proceedings, unless some at least of the politically neutral members were convinced that action was consistent with the national good.

The political animosities of these years, between groups developing into parties or between parties,

produced in parliament and in the navy an environment of political dualism in which the discontented and ambitious and the men of principle could find a path for their ambitions or a focus for their loyalty.⁽¹⁾ For the navy this meant the infiltration of political animosity into every rank of naval administration. This in turn meant that whenever parliament considered the navy the opposition groups could draw on the advice of their own experts. Every party and political group had these naval experts. The Whigs had Orford and the whole constellation of flag officers he had favoured.⁽²⁾ The Tories had the rather unwilling Rooke.⁽³⁾ Marlborough and Godolphin had George Churchill and Captain Elkins,⁽⁴⁾ Nottingham had his cousin, Dering, in naval service, and the advice of Killegrew and Captain Price.⁽⁵⁾ Sir Joseph Banks spoke with the Seymour Group⁽⁶⁾ and St. John had his

(1) D. Ogg op.cit. 505.

(2) See below pp.430-2.

(3) See below p. 433.

(4) The Byng Papers, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1931) II, xiii; George Churchill was the Duke of Marlborough's brother; see below p.245.

(5) W.P. Aiken, *The Admiralty in Conflict and Commission 1679-1684; Conflict in Stuart England*, ed. W.P. Aiken and B.D. Henning (1960) 211; N.M.M. Southwell. Sou/1 f.273 Edward Southwell was clerk to the Privy Council.

(6) See below p.383.

Hovenden Walker.⁽¹⁾ Thus every administration had to take into account the presence of hostile experts when ever naval matters were under discussion in parliament. Russell's plausible explanation of how the wind had prevented him from leading out the fleet in 1691 was shattered when Killegrew produced his own journal to contradict Russell.⁽²⁾ The party leaders were the obvious recipients for the information from informers when they were in opposition; thus Wharton in 1703 received information about irregularities in the conduct of the Office for Sick and Wounded⁽³⁾ for the same reason as Harley and Foley received such information between 1697 and 1699.⁽⁴⁾

Just as the naval officers, although a minority in parliament, had an important influence on naval business in both Houses, so another minority group, far less partisan than the naval officers, had an importance far in excess of their numbers. The merchants in the Commons were about a tenth of the House but their

(1) The Walker Expedition to Quebec, ed. G.S. Graham (N.R.S. 1953) 14.

(2) Bonnet Dispatch, 10/20 Nov. 1691, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 164. After this they were open enemies, *ibid.* VI, 177; Luttrell II, 337; Reasons to Prove there hath been Negligence, Ignorance, or Treachery in the Lords of Admiralty.... (1693) N.M.M. CAD/D/20.

(3) H.M.C. H.L. V, 533-5.

(4) See above pp. 39-40.

influence was great in naval matters,⁽¹⁾ too great to please Pepys:

'I would observe how hard it is for anything to be well understood in the Navy when those that even our Parliament do commonly put most weight upon in their meetings upon the business thereof are so much mistaken as they have been (I mean our merchants).'⁽²⁾

Merchant opinion on naval matters was valued in the Commons because it was likely to be informed by relevant knowledge and because it was usually voiced with no bias as obvious as that of Court or naval speakers. Thus most committees in the Commons that dealt with naval matters included all members who sat for the City or the sea ports. Their influence on parliamentary legislation is particularly evident in trade protection, manning and the encouragement of seamen.⁽³⁾ Their power was very obvious to naval captains who failed in their convoy duties. If the Admiralty did not take action against them the merchants would carry the issue to parliament. Killebrew in 1690, the Marquis of Carmarthen in 1695 and

(1) A more detailed consideration of the numbers and influence of the merchants, particularly in relation to trade protection, is given below pp.224-30.

(2) The Tangier Papers of Samuel Pepys, ed. E. Chappell (N.R.S. 1935) 230; cf. Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (1771) I ii, 65.

(3) See below pp. 297, 385-6, 450.

Sir Thomas Hardy in 1707 are three examples of flag officers who suffered because of merchant complaint to the Commons.⁽¹⁾ The way the merchants used their knowledge and authority in the Commons is well illustrated by Sir Alexander Rigby's campaign in 1696 and 1697 against those members of the Board of Admiralty, particularly Sir John Houblon and Sir Robert Rich, who had been responsible for his not obtaining letters of marque.⁽²⁾ By organising statements and evidence from several other merchants, and including in his account many indications of the failures of naval organisation and hints at the ways in which Rich particularly used his position to make illegal profits, Rigby was able to convince the Commons that the Admiralty had been partial in the allocation of letters of marque.⁽³⁾ Rigby's ships were

- (1) Killegrew to Nottingham, 25 July 1690, H.M.C. Finch II, 384; Luttrell III, 506; S. Martin Leake, *Life of Sir John Leake*, ed. G. Callender (N.R.S. (1920) 155-8; for Carmarthen see below p. 264.
- (2) H.M.C. H.L. II, 14-17, 29-30, 307-13, 362. Rigby was M.P. for Wigan and a wealthy merchant with interests in Portuguese, Mediterranean and Turkish trade.
- (3) C.J. XI, 699. Rigby implied that an associate of Rich, one Aldred, collected bribes for Rich. The literature of the times contains many accusations against Rich; *Remarks on the Present Condition of the Navy* (1700) 18-19; H. Speke, *Some Considerations . . . concerning the Lords of the Admiralty; Present Condition of the English Navy Set Forth in a Dialogue . . .* (1702) 8, 13; H.M.C. Portland III, 500; Grey X, 273.

well looked after by the navy in the years that followed.⁽¹⁾
 The influence of the merchants in parliament increased throughout the period, and by the end of Anne's reign their importance in the Commons and for the nation was generally recognised.⁽²⁾

Court officials, Country politicians, naval officials and officers and merchants helped to instruct members within the Houses of Parliament but there were sources of information outside parliament. Newspapers, pamphlets, petitions and reports by experts increasingly provided such information about the navy. Information from such sources was in some ways easier to digest; it had the perennial advantage for the learner of written over spoken evidence; it could be consulted at leisure apart from the rush of parliamentary activity; it could theoretically reach all members of parliament, a major advantage when attendance in the Commons was seldom much above half.⁽³⁾

The government's failure in 1695 to renew Charles II's Licensing Act of 1662 allowed printers to publish without the control of a censor. This freedom in a

(1) C.S.P.Dom. Wm. 1697, 148.

(2) See below p. 305. R. Steele, *The Englishman* (1955) 15; J. Addison, *The Spectator*, ed. G. Smith (1958) I, 214; II, 19.

(3) L'Hermitage Dispatch, 2 Nov. 1696, B.M. Addit MSS. 17,677 QQ f.573; Eng. Hist. Docs. VIII, 956-7.

time of national unrest stimulated writing, particularly in the form of news-sheets.⁽¹⁾ The result was a flood of information which the government realised created public opinion on national and parliamentary events and provided a basis for criticism of the government.⁽²⁾ By 1710 the freedom of the press was such that the publication of ship movements was a threat to national security.⁽³⁾ The influence of these papers in shaping parliamentary opinion on the navy is diffuse but generally, between 1695 and 1712, they were helping to make the Englishman the best informed of any European national.⁽⁴⁾ Much in the newspapers was a mere catalogue of events but some contained the equivalent of present day articles on contemporary problems. The most obvious example of a newspaper influencing parliamentary action on the navy is when the House of Lords summoned the journalist Defoe to elaborate for it his scheme from the Review for manning the navy.⁽⁵⁾ The coffee houses at which these

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- (1) G.A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper* (1962) 6-17; G.S. Holmes and W.A. Speck, *The Divided Society : Party Conflict in England 1694-1716* (1967) 66-8; J.M. Price, *A Note on the Circulation of the London Press 1704-14*, *B.I.H.R.* XXXI (1958) 217.
- (2) H.M.C. Finch III, 50; Luttrell III, 176.
- (3) P.R.O.Adm. 3/23, 12 Aug. 1708; *ibid* 3/24, 24 Feb. 1710.
- (4) G.A. Cranfield *op.cit.* 187-8; M.A. Thomson, *Parliament and Foreign Policy 1689-1714*, *History*, XXXVIII (1953) 236; M. Foot, *The Pen and the Sword* (1957) 73-7.
- (5) See below p.442.

papers were collected provided a place for the discussion of events, and Burchett, Secretary to the Navy, was one naval official cautioned for speaking too freely in one. (1)

It is easier to define the value to parliament of the pamphlets written about the navy. Many of them were specifically addressed to parliament, particularly to members of the Commons, for example, the series devoted to the abuse of Q and R s, (2) and these, like Maidwell's proposals for a maritime school, (3) were certainly read by members and their proposals considered in parliament. There is evidence of broadsheets and pamphlets on trade and naval matters being distributed to members, presumably free of charge. (4) There is evidence too of members buying such pamphlets and of committees of the Commons calling on the authors to

- (1) Miscellaneous State Papers, ed. P. Yorke, Earl of Hardwicke (1778) II, 480; cf. H.M.C. Portland IV, 483.
- (2) See below p.456; many of the pamphlets mentioned are dedicated to parliament.
- (3) See below pp. 391, 398.
- (4) William Hodges claimed to have presented 500 copies of one of his pamphlets to the two Houses, Humble Proposals for the Relief of the Seamen of England (1695) 62. Richard Butler made similar claims for his broadsheet advocating a Registry of seamen, C.S.P.Dom. Wm. 1696, 115; cf. James Whiston's claims, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 QQ f.235.

explain their proposals. ⁽¹⁾ The value of many of these pamphlets as treatises of naval instruction for members of parliament can be seen in the fact that many of them were written by men well versed in naval affairs. Between 1690 and 1695 six important pamphlets were written suggesting some form of registration of seamen. ⁽²⁾ One was anonymous, ⁽³⁾ two were written by Captain George St. Lo, an experienced naval officer who as a prisoner of war had observed the working of the French system of registration. ⁽⁴⁾ Two more were by naval officers, one by Henry Maydman, who was a warrant officer with thirty years' experience as a purser, the other by John Perry, who had

- (1) J.H. Plumb, Sir Robert Walpole: The Statesman in the Making (1956) 83 fn. See the hand-written comments on the B.M. copy (816 m.7.) of St. Lo's pamphlet, Reasons Humbly Offer'd..... for reducing Seamen Wages (1693).
- (2) Reasons for Settling Admiralty Jurisdiction and Giving Encouragement to Merchants, Owners, Commanders, Masters of Ships, Material, Men and Mariners (1690), The Harleian Miscellany IX (1810) 465-475; H. Maydman, Naval Speculations and Maritime Politics (1691); G. St. Lo, England's Safety (1693); J. Perry, A Regulation for Seamen (1695); G. Everett, Encouragement for Seamen and Mariners (1695), Harleian Miscellany X, 221; G. St. Lo, England's Interest, (1698).
- (3) Reasons for Settling Admiralty Jurisdiction op.cit. This pamphlet was influential in other ways; see below, p. 473.
- (4) See below pp. 314-5.

the enforced leisure of a gaol sentence in which to write his pamphlet. The last author, George Everett, was a Thames boat builder with a knowledge of naval administration and a dislike of naval officials.⁽¹⁾

Between 1694 and 1699 the Chaplain General to the Fleet addressed three eloquent pamphlets to parliament, the most vivid and detailed accounts in print of the miseries of the naval sailor.⁽²⁾ It was in pamphlets that the administrative successes of foreign nations in their naval problems were described and sometimes related to the English situation, as was the French system of registration. There were many bad, ill-informed and biassed pamphlets but the general standard of knowledge and common sense in the better ones is high. From the numerous well-informed pamphlets it was possible to learn of the human and administrative weaknesses of the navy, the fundamental problems of English sea power, and sensible suggestions for their solution.

(1) Ehrman 595-7.

(2) A Humble Representation of the Seaman's Misery (1694); Humble Proposals for the Relief, Security and Happiness of the Seamen of England (1695); Ruin to Ruin after Misery to Misery (1699). He is identified as Chaplain General in the B.M. Catalogue, a more likely description than the conventional one as a merchant. (D.N.B.).

Petitions to parliament were in effect usually concise pamphlets formally presented to the Commons or Lords. Frequently they were supported by pamphlets but they usually had the advantage of being particularly sponsored in the House by a group of members. Thus they were generally considered by the House or a committee of members. The petitions from S.W. England on trade protection in 1705-6⁽¹⁾ and the merchant petitions of 1707, also for trade protection,⁽²⁾ are examples of petition campaigns that aroused the Commons to action. A series of petitions that had less obvious effects were those in 1695 and 1696 by the watermen's companies of the City and the Thames. They wished to be made exempt from the compulsory register of seamen that was being considered,⁽³⁾ and the Thames Watermen feared that in any scheme of this sort the London Watermen might gain control over them. Six petitions instructed parliament in the problems involved⁽⁴⁾ and pamphlets were available as well.⁽⁵⁾ This

(1) See below pp. 281-2.

(2) See below p. 291.

(3) See below p. 252.

(4) C.J.XI, 299, 300, 315, 387, 392, 429.

(5) The Waterman's Case in Relation to the Bill for Increase and Encouragement of Seamen; Some Reasons Humbly Offer'd for Rejecting the Bill Entitled, 'For Compelling of Fishermen to come into their Majesties Service'. (Both c.1695)

use of petitions to stimulate parliamentary action was nationally understood, sometimes very well organised, and as a device for securing the attention of the Commons especially, one of the most effective.

Another written source that sometimes had a wider audience than was originally intended was the report written by an expert on some aspect of naval activity. These were usually written for a particular member of the government at his request, as Gibson produced a Memorial on the Fleet probably at Trenchard's request in 1693.⁽¹⁾ The reforms suggested by Gibson, who had a wide knowledge of naval life and administration,⁽²⁾ would have transformed the life of the sailor and made the navy much more efficient.⁽³⁾ The Lords Commissioners of Admiralty and Pepys were amongst those who saw this memorial and some of Gibson's recommendations were carried out in William's reign.⁽⁴⁾ Similar reports by experts outside

- (1) Mr. Gibson's Memorial for the King, Oct. 5th 1693; Containing Remarks upon the Present State of the Navy, Private Correspondence of Samuel Pepys, ed. J.R. Tanner (1926) I, 118-26. Trenchard was made Secretary of State in 1693 and the memorial was probably written at his request.
- (2) He was an associate of Pepys and had been a purser, victualler, Judge Advocate and Clerk to Trinity House, N.M.M. Southwell, Sou/2, f.195; H.M.C. Downshire MSS. I Pt. II, 516.
- (3) See below Appendix IX.
- (4) See below p. 473-4.

the administration were fairly common in all aspects of government.⁽¹⁾ When specifically requested by a minister or official they were likely to be influential because they had a purpose and a sponsor; when hopefully produced by a writer with the aim of winning attention or office they were less likely to be effective.⁽²⁾ }

By listening to debate in parliament and reading outside, it was possible for a member of parliament during William's reign to acquire a more detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the navy in all its branches than ever before in English history. The teaching material for a naval education was available but the effectiveness of such an education depended, as ever, on the pupil and the incentive to learn. Some of the ways in which the knowledge available to parliament was refracted by personal interest and political bias can be illustrated by reference to the House of Lords. With a total membership of about 200 between 1688 and 1714, of whom no more than 70 were usually in attendance at Westminster,⁽³⁾ the membership of the Lords was more static than that of

(1) R.M. Lees, *Parliament and the Proposal for a Council of Trade 1695-6*, E.H.R. LIV (1939) 44.

(2) See below pp. 473-4.

(3) A.S. Turberville, *The House of Lords in the Eighteenth Century* (1927) 4.

the Commons. As a group the Lords were keenly conscious of their own status and of the privileges they possessed. Like the members of the Commons they shared in the interest in naval affairs and like the Commons only a small minority had personal knowledge of them.⁽¹⁾ The Lords, however, made better use of their experts than the Commons. These experts could speak with greater confidence in the socially homogeneous House of Lords and would be less on the defensive than naval officers and officials in the Commons. In William's reign Torrington, despite his disgrace in 1690, was most referred to for advice on the navy.⁽²⁾ In Anne's reign Orford was the obvious naval expert but his blatant Whig bias perhaps made him less generally acceptable. The purposefulness and organisation that are characteristic of investigation made by the Lords into naval affairs must owe much to the knowledge of these men. In contrast the Commons demanded evidence wholesale

(1) Apart from those named below only Charles Powlett, 2nd Duke of Bolton, and Thomas Herbert, 8th Earl of Pembroke, seem to have displayed a persistent interest in naval affairs.

(2) L'Hermitage Dispatch, 17 Jan. 1696, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 QQ f.209; H.M.C. Hastings II, 256.

(3) In 1693 he was helped in his consideration of the Smyrna disaster by Berkeley and Osborne, H.M.C. H.L. I, 96. For Berkeley see below p.262; for Peregrine Osborne, Earl of Danby and Marquis of Carmarthen 1694-1712 and 2nd Duke of Leeds 1712-1729, see below p.264.

and their inquiries often lost direction in the sheer bulk of written and verbal evidence.

Party feeling increasingly distorted the clarity with which the Lords considered naval matters, and Whig exploitation of their strength in the Lords during the early years of Anne's reign made every consideration of the navy a party exercise. The Lords already possessed bias enough, inherent in their aristocratic status, without the additional distortions of political allegiance. Their concern for their status displayed itself in sporadic squabbles with the Commons, such as those over the impeachment of the Whig ministers after Ryswich, the disbandment of the army or Irish forfeitures.⁽¹⁾ It was a concern strong enough to dominate any debate on naval matters that a majority of the Lords might consider a challenge to their position. Torrington found supporters in the Lords after his defeat at Beachy Head in 1690 because his punishment might demean the peerage as a group.⁽²⁾ In 1692 similar caste loyalty made a majority of the Lords support their man, Nottingham,

(1) A.S. Turbeville, *The House of Lords in the Reign of William III* (1913) 196-210.

(2) *Ibid.* 67-8; H.M.C. H.L. MSS. 1690-1, 93-4; H.M.C. Finch. II, 333-5; N.M.M. Southwell Sou/1, ff.105-8; Ehrman 359-66.

against Russell, who had the support of the Commons, in a dispute on the giving of orders.⁽¹⁾ This jealousy between the two Houses could lead to petty actions. In 1697 the Commons refused to allow those of their members who were on the Board of Admiralty to attend the Lords to give them information about the movement of the French fleet from Toulon to Brest.⁽²⁾ Probably the most serious consequence for the navy of this ill-feeling was the delay of legislation. Consideration of the naval legislation initiated by one House could be so neglected in the other that a session ended before the necessary readings had been completed.⁽³⁾ In this way action would be postponed for at least a year.

The complexities and inconsistencies prevalent in both Houses appear clearly in their respective treatment of privateers. Privateers had a relevance to the navy in that they took the sailors needed by the fleet. For this and other reasons the government was anxious to restrict their number.⁽⁴⁾ During William's reign there was a group in the Commons sufficiently powerful and persuasive to present almost annually bills making it easier for

(1) H.M.C. Kenyon, 269; Luttrell II, 637-8.

(2) C.J.XI, 749, 756, 757.

(3) See below pp. 68, 396.

(4) G.N. Clark, *The Dutch Alliance and the War against the French 1688-1697* (1923) 45-9; C.S.P.Dom.W.&M. 1694-5, 370; N. Luttrell, *Abstract of the Debates 1692-3* ff. 409, 417.

privateers to operate. The Lords as regularly opposed these bills and rejected them or by neglect let the ending of a session defeat them.⁽¹⁾ Whatever the motives for this opposition in the Lords, statesmanlike conviction that the government was right, or antagonism to the profit-making motives displayed by the Commons, the roles were reversed in the reign of Anne. Now, the Lords sponsored bills encouraging privateers, especially to the West Indies, and the Commons opposed them or let them lapse.⁽²⁾ The most likely explanation of this reversal is that the merchants had converted the Whig Lords who dominated the House of Lords and that the Tory majority in the Commons between 1702 and 1708 was prepared to support the government's view. The Whig Lords and the merchants were successful in 1708, when the Act for the Encouragement of Trade to America was passed.⁽³⁾ The inconsistent treatment by the House of

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- (1) An act of 1692, 4 W. & M. c 25, did something to encourage privateers but the resistance of the Lords to greater encouragement can be seen in 1694, H.M.C. H.L. I, 383-90; Bonnet Dispatch, 24 Ap./4 May 1694, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 248; C.S.P. Dom.W. & M. 1694-5, 370; C.J.XI, 66, 100, 144 or for 1695-6, C.J.XI, 366, 367, 368, 408; B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 QQ f.228.
- (2) C.J.XIV, 203, 204; H.M.C. H.L. V, 42-4, 208; Basset Transcripts, 6 Mar. 1703, P.R.O. 3/191 f.8.
- (3) See below pp.412-4; Addison to the Earl of Manchester, 20 Feb. 1708, The Letters of Joseph Addison, ed. W. Graham (1941) 93.

Lords of naval business is sufficient general evidence for the ways in which facts and issues connected with the navy were refracted in the minds of politicians.

There were many other viewpoints, some common to both houses. There were regional loyalties. In December 1691 Clarges and Seymour in the Commons argued that the strength of the army should be reduced. They found themselves deserted by their usual supporters from the South West of England because those members feared that a reduction of the English army would lead eventually to more powerful French naval action, and the coast of the South West was most vulnerable.⁽¹⁾ An extreme example of such regional loyalty is the nationalism of the Scottish peers who entered the House of Lords after the Act of Union. They voted for Kerr in 1708 because he was Scottish and despite clear evidence that he was guilty of demanding bribes.⁽²⁾ The interests of a 'country' or county or region were of great consequence to most members of parliament; these interests could at times appear more important to them than the needs of the navy.⁽³⁾

Yet when all allowance is made for the strength of

(1) Bonnet Dispatch 24 Nov./4 Dec. 1691, L. von Ranke, *op.cit.* VI, 169.

(2) *Court and Society from Elizabeth to Anne*, ed. W.D. Montagu, Duke of Manchester (1864) II, 271; see below pp. 284-5.

(3) See below pp. 187-9.

selfish and sectional interests involved in parliament's consideration of the navy a qualification is necessary. This was an age more openly emotional than the twentieth century. The House of Commons could sit numb and dumb at the news of military failure or its members weep publicly as they listened to speeches.⁽¹⁾ There is no reason to doubt that the fierce and chauvinistic patriotism that is so frequently expressed in letters and speeches was sincere. Behind the obviously selfish political and economic attitudes towards the navy in parliament there was still a strong patriotic concern. When the Earl of Sunderland,⁽²⁾ a devoted Whig, wrote in 1709 about the possible promotion of his party leader to the position of Lord High Admiral,

'I think this settling of the Admiralty right, in Lord Orford's hands, is a thing of so great consequence in itself, so national, and so great a strengthening of the Whig party,'⁽³⁾

it is too easy and too simple to emphasise the political implications of his letter, even though he gives the national good a precedence. Historians are trained to

(1) W.S. Churchill, Marlborough, His Life and Times (1947) II, 315;

(2) Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland.

(3) Sunderland to Somers, 8 Aug. 1709, Miscellaneous State Papers, ed. P. Yorke, Earl of Hardwicke (1778) II, 479.

suspect emotion, but there was strong national feeling and patriotic emotion in parliament whenever the navy was considered. Emotion and patriotism are neither so articulately described nor so sympathetically received by twentieth century analysts. Every act that parliament passed concerning the navy and every debate on the navy between 1688 and 1714 must have drawn support from this patriotism.⁽¹⁾

(1) Cf. the unconcerted opposition of the Country gentry to a small army in 1699, although this would cost them money, C.S.P.Dom. W. 1699-1700 27-8, 90; Correspondence of the Family of Hatton, ed. E.M. Thompson (Camden Society 1878) II, 238.

II

FINANCE

The following table shows the financial results of the company for the year ended 31st December 1954. The figures are in thousands of pounds sterling.

Particulars	1954	1953
Revenue	1,200	1,100
Cost of sales	(800)	(750)
Gross profit	400	350
Operating expenses	(250)	(220)
Operating profit	150	130
Finance charges	(10)	(15)
Profit before tax	140	115
Income tax	(40)	(35)
Profit after tax	100	80
Dividends paid	(20)	(15)
Retained profit	80	65

The above figures are based on the audited accounts of the company for the year ended 31st December 1954. The figures for 1953 are also based on audited accounts.

(i)

1688-1702

The navy, if it was to provide the security that parliament desired, needed money, equipment and men. It was the responsibility of parliament, particularly the House of Commons, whose money bills were not liable to amendment in the Lords, to grant the money that powered the ships of war. This financial relationship produced the most regular and most influential debate on naval matters. Such debate developed from what was, at least initially, a simple and generally comprehensible scheme of naval finance. The basic, annual grant of money in wartime was always related to the cost of one seaman per lunar month. The sum decided for this basic unit was divided into four unequal parts, one to provide wages, one for the maintenance of ships and shore installations, one for food, and one to provide munitions. The sum of these four divisions, Wages, Wear and Tear, Victuals and Ordnance, could easily be multiplied by thirteen to give the annual expenditure and then by the number of men serving to determine the annual cost of the navy. The total produced by this simple mathematical exercise was always the biggest annual grant to the navy. It was

often associated with two small grants, one termed the Ordinary, which represented the normal peacetime charge of the navy, and the other the Extraordinary, under which heading parliament granted sums for abnormal, major charges made necessary by war, such as new ships or new dockyard installations.⁽¹⁾

The financial initiative came always from the administration. Usually in the September before a parliament assembled the Navy Board was directed by the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty to provide an estimate of naval requirements for the following year. This estimate was a crude starting-point for the deliberations of Admiralty, Ministers of state and Monarch. It was no more than a starting-point because the Navy Board had no foreknowledge of the naval strategy planned for the year. The Board simply calculated the maximum number of ships that could be fitted out for the next year, assumed that each of these ships would be fully manned, worked out the cost, using the charge of a seaman per lunar month, and presented the total for discussion.⁽²⁾ Discussion

- (1) It was common, especially after 1702, to define the Extraordinary in this way, but properly all grants to the navy other than the Ordinary were 'Extraordinary.' Thus the Prince's Council could write in 1704, after it had given a detailed account of the Ordinary, "extra expense is according to the number of seamen the House shall think fit to give for the year 1705." N.M.M. Southwell, Sou/7 f.125.
- (2) For example, the Navy Board estimate for 1693, given in October 1692, N.M.M. Sergison Ser/101, f.563.

always reduced the total; the assumptions, both for the numbers of ships and men, were over optimistic. A smaller estimate, but with Ordinary and Extraordinary added, was then presented to parliament, usually in the early days of November.⁽¹⁾ This estimate was considered by the Commons, usually reduced in various ways, and the money granted.

The apparent simplicity of this process, both in its mathematical basis and the parliamentary reception of the executive's estimate, as so far sketched is false. Those members of parliament who, as individuals or as a committee, sought from motives of good husbandry, reforming zeal, party animus or patriotic interest to penetrate the intricacies of naval finance were soon frustrated. The navy was the largest spending institution in the kingdom. To the natural financial complications of size and diversity of business were added the complexities created by long administrative

(1) The entire process can be followed for 1693. In October 1692 the Navy Board calculated variously that the navy would require 45,249 men at a cost of £2,500,007. 5. 0. (P.R.O. Adm. 1/3567 ff.557-64) and 42,061 men at £2,323,870. 5. 0. (Estimate of charge of 1693, P.R.O. Adm. 8/3). By November discussion involving Secretaries of State and Commissioners of Admiralty had reduced the figure to 33,010 men costing £1,944,505. 10. 0. (N.M.M. Southwell Sou/1 f.265). On 25 Nov. Falkland presented the estimate for 1693 to the Commons. By now, with Ordinary and Extraordinary added, the request was for £2,077,216. 10. 0. (C.J.X, 711.) The House granted £1,926,516. 10. 0. (C.J.XII, 380-1).

evolution and the varying procedures of the subsidiary boards, such as the Victuallers, who paid out naval money. The only experts on naval finance were the administrative officials of the navy, who were not prepared by custom or able to reduce their accounts to readily comprehensible digests for parliamentary consideration. Pepys, in a paragraph probably written in 1693, summarised much of this background to parliamentary debate on naval finance:

'Ignorance only as to the knowing how to contradict or control any demand of money relating to the Navy is it, that hath always led our Parliaments to choose to lump it with the Court declaring expressly that they never found they got anything by looking into the court accounts.'⁽¹⁾

A consequence of such ignorance was a strong suspicion that some of the money voted for the navy was wastefully spent or embezzled by Court officials. This suspicion was exploited against the Court by politicians not in power, who on this issue could always count on widespread Country support, for however the Commons might be divided politically, all the members, as tax payers, were at least united in a very natural aversion to taxation.

(1) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner, (N.R.S. 1926) 333.

This negative feeling of ignorance and suspicion was, however, only one of the general reactions to demands for money. At odds with this Country reluctance to grant money was the parliamentary conviction that a large and efficient navy was necessary for national security and this made for generous consideration of naval demands. In fact the money the navy received during the reigns of William and Anne was the product of tensions between generosity and suspicion and between Court and Country. In the chapter that follows the ways in which these tensions shaped the various branches of naval expenditure, particularly in William's reign, are considered. Of these general feelings it is the more negative ones of ignorance and suspicion that are the most remarkable in that they help to create a desire for greater knowledge of naval finance, and by the institution of such financial devices as estimates, commissioners of account and appropriation, to increase parliamentary control of the navy. In Anne's reign the extent to which the Commons realised the implications of their new knowledge and authority can be assessed by considering parliamentary reaction to the growing debt that led to financial crisis in 1710.

The Court attitude to debates on money grants to the navy in this period is obvious and unchanging. Office

holders in the Commons represented the government's viewpoint and attempted to justify the sums requested and to bring on a speedy and favourable vote of supply. With this as a common aim the tenor of speech varied merely with the speaker and the times. In the session following Beachy Head Sir John Lowther could appeal emotionally to patriotism as the justification for generosity.⁽¹⁾ In this year even Sir Thomas Clarges could agree so far with him as to declare of naval expenditure, 'God forbid that we should cut the pattern too narrow.'⁽²⁾ Two years later, after La Hogue, there was considerable feeling in the House that this victory proved the fleet was strong enough and there need be no increase in the navy vote.⁽³⁾ Lowther acknowledged the strength of this argument but spoke for a stronger navy on the ground that reinforcement was necessary to protect trade and to provide more ships for the West Indies.⁽⁴⁾ Russell and Falkland elaborated his

(1) Grey X, 30. Sir John Lowther of Lowther, a follower of the Earl of Danby, first Lord of the Admiralty and a Court Manager in the Commons; A. Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds 1632-1712, (1951) I, 422, 484. See above p. 29.

(2) Grey X, 27.

(3) N. Luttrell, An Abstract of the Debates 1692-3, ff. 99-101.

(4) Ibid. 100-1.

statements.⁽¹⁾ They were successful and the House agreed to increase the number of men for the navy from 30,000 to 33,010 for 1693. The persuasive skill required of the Court speakers declined after 1695, when in all the war years that followed to 1712 both Court and legislature seem to have accepted a naval charge related to an unchanging figure of 40,000 seamen. Tact as well as skill was necessary if the money was to be speedily voted, and a quick vote was important to the government. Only when the vote was made would financiers make loans on the security of an assured tax and merchants feel it safe to contract for the next year.⁽²⁾ This need for a quick grant led to some ineptness by the Court speakers in 1691 when they attempted to hasten the debate by accusing Country speakers of obstructing the King's government by their long-winded consideration of naval finance. This gave Clarges and Sir Christopher Musgrave chances to make speeches pointing out the dangers of over-hasty grants of money.⁽³⁾ Clarges it seems was the

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- (1) Anthony Cary, fourth Viscount Falkland was a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty 1691-4. N. Luttrell, Abstract of the Debates 1692-3 f.98; Bonnet Dispatch 29 Nov./9 Dec. 1692, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 189 and see above pp. 29-30.
- (2) P.R.O.Adm. 1/3569 f.948; Remarks on the Public Accounts (1690); Grey X, 279-81; N. Luttrell, Abstract of the Debates 1692-3 f.31.
- (3) Grey X, 168-9.

master of telling phrase, it was not the task of the Commons he claimed to vote money 'as we pay bills at eating houses.'⁽¹⁾ Such lack of tact by Court speakers was rare; they could rely on a general sympathy towards naval supply.⁽²⁾

Parliament's generosity towards the navy is fundamental. In the period under discussion very nearly a quarter of the national expenditure was devoted to the navy.⁽³⁾ Observers as diverse as Pepys and Tallard marvelled at the prodigality with which parliament granted money to the navy.⁽⁴⁾ The motives for generosity in the early years of William's reign are understandable and these, coupled with the political and economic arguments that favoured a fleet rather than an army,⁽⁵⁾ gave the navy's demands for money an initially

- (1) N. Luttrell, Abstract of the Debates 1691-2 f.13.
- (2) In times of crisis events spoke for them; see N. Tindal op.cit. III, 128.
- (3) D.C. Coleman, Naval Dockyards under the Later Stuarts, Econ.Hist.Rev. 2nd Series VI (1953-4) 135-6.
- (4) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S.1926) 269; Tallard to Louis XIV, 9 May 1698, Letters of William III and Louis XIV 1697-1700, ed. P. Grimblot (1848) I, 467. Tallard was French ambassador in England.
- (5) See above p.13.

more favourable reception in the Commons than the estimates of any other spending department.⁽¹⁾ Lavish naval expenditure is a feature of the entire period. At no time in the war years was there a serious attempt to reduce grants to the navy. This basic goodwill is easily lost sight of in the attacks and investigations that naval finance attracted. They are peripheral: the right of the navy to vast sums of money was never challenged.

This generosity was, however, neither unthinking nor unlimited. It was a generosity that can best be partially defined by the negatives that limited grants of money. One of the most obvious checks to naval supply was a belief in the Commons that the country was not, in plain terms, getting its money's worth. Such value was most easily calculated in crude terms of tangible, major damage inflicted on the enemy. Strategic or tactical arguments justifying a bloodless exercise in sea power could be roughly received, as Col. Titus summed up the naval campaign of 1693: 'They (the navy) fiddled and danced at Torbay and we must pay

(1) Despite this the influence of the monarch or the monarch's favourite was able to secure more money for the army. For the war years of William and Anne the army received £51,044,458. 18. 3. and the navy £41,557,844. 4. 3., Tables of Net expenditure of army and navy 1688-1714, C.J.XXXV (1868-9) Accounts and Papers, Part 2, 7-53.

the music.'⁽¹⁾ Ministers and admirals were well aware of the need for action. Nottingham's plea to Russell, who was commanding the main fleet in 1691, that, 'barely to burn a French Tingenmouth sic: is too mean a project for such a fleet,'⁽²⁾ had as its background the knowledge that lack of naval gunfire in the summer led to verbal broadsides from Country members in the autumn. The summer-long evasion of the two opposing fleets in 1691 exasperated the Commons. Sir Thomas Clarges spoke for the Country members. Russell's argument that he had attempted to save money on maintenance costs once he realised that action was unlikely played into their hands.⁽³⁾ The monthly cost of each man in the navy was reduced as a result of these debates from £4. 5. 0. a month to £4. 0. 0.⁽⁴⁾ The reduction was just in the eyes of the Commons because, as little powder and shot had been expended in 1691, no grant was necessary for these items in 1692.⁽⁵⁾ There appear to have been similar financial

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- (1) Grey X, 316. Col. Silas Titus was M.P. for Lostwithiel.
- (2) 4 June 1691, H.M.C. Finch III, 95. Teignmouth was the Devon port burnt by the French after their victory at Beachy Head.
- (3) Ibid III, 252; Grey X, 163-7.
- (4) See Appendix II.
- (5) Bonnet Dispatch, 17/27 Nov. 1691, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 166.

adjustments when the Commons expressed their dissatisfaction at the bloodless cruises of 1693 and in 1703. (1)

As the finances of the navy were so closely related to the charge of one seaman for a month, the figure of 40,000, the number of men which parliament regularly voted for every war after 1694, (2) became in practical terms a limit on naval expenditure. The increase in the number of seamen from 7,040 in 1689 to 30,000 by 1692 was seemingly accepted without serious opposition. The attempt to raise this number to 33,010 for 1693 did meet with opposition, which was overcome by Court speakers. They claimed that more men would be needed for stronger trade protection, a larger West Indian squadron and for attacks on the French coast. (3) The bigger and final increase to 40,000 men appears to have aroused no opposition, possibly because in 1694 the Commons had become convinced of the need for much stronger trade protection. (4)

That this figure of 40,000 should never have been altered or even apparently debated in war years before 1713 is

(1) See below p.105 for the consequences of 1693, and below p.90 for 1703.

(2) See Appendix III.

(3) Bonnet Dispatch 29 Nov./9 Dec. 1692, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 189.

(4) See below pp. 247-9.

surprising. From the ministerial side the number may have had some relation to one of the early attempts to count the seamen of the kingdom.⁽¹⁾ More practically it may have been related to the widespread knowledge by about 1693 that it was becoming difficult to muster the number of seamen voted by parliament. Certainly no initiative for an increase in manpower would have come from the navy. The Navy Board, in particular, assumed that it had the right to muster as many men as it could procure, irrespective of the number voted by the Commons, a belief that was to clash with parliament's ideas on its own powers in the reign of Anne.⁽²⁾ One reason why it was never suggested in parliament that the navy should have more than 40,000 men may have been a fear that the demobilization of an excessively strong navy would cause trouble when peace came.⁽³⁾ Certainly by the middle years of Anne's reign the vote for 40,000 men was stereotyped and the tradition of a decade of war years had created an inertia in manning and

(1) See below p. 333.

(2) See below pp. 127-9.

(3) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S., 1926) 297-8; Queen Anne's Navy, 187.

(4) ...

(5) O.J.F.M., 1701-2, p. 171; 1 July 1693, ... 1700, 204.

(6) Memorial of the Admiralty, ... 1700, 204.

and finance that meant that with each year it became increasingly unlikely that the figure would be challenged. A more straight forward limitation on money grants to the navy was peace. Both wars were followed by prompt and sweeping retrenchment in which the Commons took a very close interest. In 1697, despite the King's pleas that a strong navy be maintained,⁽¹⁾ the seamen allowed for 1698 numbered only 10,000, with 15,000 for the following year and 7,000 for 1700.⁽²⁾ New posts that had been created since 1688 were searchingly scrutinised and the Navy Board had to fight hard for the extra clerks it had acquired during the war and still required for work on the enormous bureaucratic backlog that had accumulated.⁽³⁾ In the opinion of the Navy Board many of the economies were short-sighted. The maintenance of ships in Ordinary was prejudiced by the shortage of money and even their defence made hazardous because too few guard ships were provided.⁽⁴⁾ Occasionally the Navy Board was seen to be right, as when H.M.S. Carlisle exploded in the Downs because the post of Yeoman of the powder room had been abolished. Such yeomen were

(1) C.J. XII, 1.

(2) Ehrman 612-5.

(3) C.J. XII, 381-5; C.J. XIII, 73-5; P.R.O. Adm. 3/15
1 July 1699, p.m.; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1699-
1700, 294.

(4) Memorial of the Admiralty, 17 May 1701, C.S.P.
Dom. Wm. 1700-02, 326; Vernon Letters, II, 405.

re-instated.⁽¹⁾ At the end of the war, in 1713, similar retrenchment was carried out by parliamentary direction but with rather more wisdom and knowledge.⁽²⁾

This was the restrained generosity to which Court speakers could appeal, but against this readiness to vote money, their opponents could exploit the far more natural aversion to taxation. This was a feeling beyond party or faction although it was naturally exploited by both to question naval finance in ways that reveal many motives and shifts of emphasis. The peculiar complexity of naval finance reinforced any suspicions the Commons might have of the effectiveness of naval accounting or the honesty of naval officials. Naval finance was not susceptible of direct question and simple answer.⁽³⁾ The Commons had perforce to accept qualifications or excuses, like those made by Littleton, Treasurer of the Navy, who in 1709 pleaded that his accounts were difficult to check because, 'in many voluminous books.'⁽⁴⁾ The Commons might agree with Tallard that a thorough investigation of naval affairs

(1) Sergison Papers, 113.

(2) See below pp. 167-8.

(3) See below p. 132.

(4) C.J.XVI, 58. He was Treasurer 1699-1710.

would require five or six months⁽¹⁾ but their readiness to grant the money required was not increased by the inability of naval officials to give concrete and convincing answers to their questions.

Parliamentary treatment of the Ordinary reveals another restraint. This was the term that described the total normal peacetime charge of the navy in all its branches. The ambiguity of the term itself caused some confusion, and an understanding of the charges implied in the term was made more difficult by the way in which any miscellaneous item of naval expenditure which could not obviously be included in other accounts

(1) Tallard to Louis XIV, 26 Feb. 1699, Letters of William III and Louis XIV, 1697-1700, (1848) ed. P. Grimblot II, 289.

became a charge on the Ordinary.⁽¹⁾ Such difficulties do not explain the persistent failure of the Commons to allocate the money necessary for this item of the estimates. It was because the Ordinary was in peacetime paid by the King out of his own revenue that the Commons treated this item of naval estimates with so much suspicion. Parliament believed that over-generous grants to a monarch could lead to despotism and this traditional suspicion was linked to the Ordinary long after such suspicions had ceased to be justified. In 1689 the Commons were at least sure that the King must contribute from his own revenue the sum that had normally been devoted to the upkeep of the navy in peace.⁽²⁾ There remained the problem of deciding how much money was

(1) The Navy Board used the word as a technical and precisely defined term; other authorities, the Commons, even Treasury officials were confused by attributing an everyday and vague meaning to it. See H. Guy to the Commissioners of the Navy, 18 June 1694, C.T.B. X Pt. II, 659. The costs of Register Office, Sick and Wounded, prisoners of War, and Allowances to Sea Officers on Shore were charged to the Ordinary, see the Ordinary Estimate for 1705, C.J.XIV, 20. The clearest definitions of the scope of Ordinary charges are to be found in J. Burchett, A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea (1720) Preface, and any detailed account of Ordinary charges produced for the Commons, for example, C.J.XVI, 59.

(2) Grey IX, 178; H.M.C. H.L. I, 23, 25.

involved and as the King was to provide it a parliamentary committee naturally decided on the very high figure of £130,000 for his contribution.⁽¹⁾ This was so high, higher than all of the wartime votes for Ordinary between 1690 and 1712, that it was reduced to £100,000 for the years 1690 to 1693,⁽²⁾ possibly on a representation from the Treasury.⁽³⁾ By 1693, however, the Ordinary had become merged with the normal naval payments for the war and was no longer drawn from the King's revenue though the Commons emphasised that this was a temporary concession made because revenue took so long to reach the Treasury.⁽⁴⁾ Payment of Ordinary and wartime expenditure could not be kept in separate accounts and parliament was in fact paying the whole cost of the naval war.⁽⁵⁾ After 1689 the monarch never again paid for the armed services out of his own revenue.⁽⁶⁾

(1) C.J.X, 80; H.M.C. H.L. I 12.

(2) Ibid. I, 12.

(3) Ibid. I, 14-15.

(4) B.M. Harlean 1,898 f.30.

(5) Navy Board to Burchett, 31 Dec. 1697, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3583. The Navy Board was saying the same in 1710, Navy Board to Admiralty, 6 Dec. 1710, P.R.O. Adm. 3/25.

(6) B. Kemp, King and Commons (1957) 72-3; W.A. Shaw, Introduction to Volumes XI-XVII of the Treasury Books, C.T.B.XVII, x-xi.

Parliament does not seem to have been generally conscious of this acquisition of financial responsibility and power, only thus can the persistently low grants for the Ordinary be explained in the years before 1713.⁽¹⁾ The Commissioners of Accounts were responsible for reducing the £100,000 to £85,740 in November 1693, at which figure it remained for the rest of the war.⁽²⁾ For 1704 nothing was granted for the Ordinary, a surprising reversion to the financial suspicion of William's early years which can probably best be explained as a result of dissatisfaction with the campaign of 1703.⁽³⁾ In Anne's reign, after some fluctuations caused by the inclusion of the charge of the Register Office, £120,000 became the routine grant for the Ordinary from 1706 to 1711. This was at least £30,000 a year less than the real charge.⁽⁴⁾ Only with the coming of peace was the grant for the Ordinary made realistic, one of the signs that parliament recognised its financial responsibility and had out grown some of its seventeenth century suspicion.⁽⁵⁾

(1) W.A. Shaw, Introduction, C.T.B.XXII Pt. I xxi.

(2) H.M.C. H.L. I 14-15; see Appendix IV.

(3) See above p.83; the dissatisfaction is expressed Shrewsbury to Stepney 20 Oct. 27 Oct. 1703, Epistolary Curiosities, ed. R. Warner (1818) 99-101.

(4) See Appendix IV.

(5) See below p.168.

Suspicion of grants to the monarch was the apex in a hierarchy of suspicion which ranged the hierarchy of naval command from administrators and admirals to the dockyard worker taking home chips of government wood for his fire. Country members of the Commons were apparently convinced that whoever was in any way responsible for the distribution of the money they had granted was making an illegal fortune. It was a conviction based presumably on memories of previous wars, knowledge of the contemporary world or the ability to put themselves in the other man's position. During this period, in one session or another, naval finance concerned parliament because every rank of naval employee came under parliamentary investigation. Status in the hierarchy meant a difference in treatment and a different chance of successfully emerging from the investigation. At the highest levels the attack was likely to be persistent; inchoate Country suspicion would be given edge and duration by political enemies of the administration. The strength of these suspicions made this one of the most effective ways of attacking any ministry. At this level those accused had the advantage that political allies would rally in support irrespective of the morality involved. More importantly the quarry could retire into a labyrinth of figures and

tedious transcriptions leaving the accusers convinced of guilt but unable to prove it. At a lower level, that of naval officers, contractors and junior employees, once parliamentary attention was aroused, escape or help was unlikely.

The most persistent of these attacks was the series of charges made against Orford between 1698 and 1701. Orford, as victor of La Hogue, Treasurer of the Navy and Lord Commissioner of Admiralty, dominated the navy.⁽¹⁾ The early charges against him concentrated on his misuse of naval money and sought to show that his extravagant way of living and personal fortune were based on embezzlement. Naval money in effect provided a battleground for a political attack directed against Orford as a Whig politician by Harley and Foley.⁽²⁾

The attacks began in December 1698 with general accusations that waste of public money was the main cause of the navy debt and that specifically, Orford had made a fortune when he victualled the fleet in the Mediterranean during 1694 and 1695.⁽³⁾ Even Whig writers acknowledged that Orford had acquired great wealth in the Mediterranean but they claimed it had come as gifts from

(1) See below pp. 430-2.

(2) See above pp. 47-8.

(3) Vernon Letters II, 238-9, 245. The speeches of Harley and Foley echo the opinions of Pepys, Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes op.cit. 269.

foreign kings.⁽¹⁾ The problem of feeding a fleet far from its usual bases had involved Orford in far greater financial responsibility, and opportunity, than was possible in home waters, where the Board of Victuallers dealt with the routine of distribution and payment. Moreover the necessity of dealing with foreign contractors who were unused to the ways of the English navy made it impossible, so Orford claimed, for his agents to obtain the documentary proofs of many transactions which were required by the Victuallers. Thus the Victuallers were unable to pass his accounts and the King, accepting Orford's explanations, ordered the accounts to be exceptionally passed by the authority of his own sign manual. This evasion of the proper channels of accounting was, to the Commons, wrong and suspicious.⁽²⁾

In the Commons the attack concentrated on one apparently simple and decisive issue. If Orford had victualled the fleet at prices below the sums allowed him, sums calculated on the usual cost of victualling in home waters, then he had made an illegal profit because there was certainly no refund anywhere in his

(1) N. Tindal op.cit. I, 390.

(2) C.J.XII, 451-461. The material in the following paragraph is based on these pages.

accounts. He had allowed his pursers between 6d and 7d per man a day in the Mediterranean. If that was below the sum allowed him he had kept his sailors short of food and made a profit. A simple statement of the standard cost of victualling a man for a day was the single concrete fact the Commons needed. Yet this was just the fact that neither Mr. Auditor Bridges, whom they had appointed to consider Orford's accounts, nor Papillon, the first Commissioner of the Victuallers, could or would provide. Papillon, despite his Whiggish sympathies, had some justification. The cost of feeding a man in a given year depended on the state of the market, the harvest, the credit of the Victuallers; and the retrospective calculation of such a figure depended upon the fulness and accuracy of the Victuallers' accounts, which were renowned for the absence of both qualities. The apparently simple issue was further confused by disputes about exchange rates between English and Mediterranean currency between Reynolds and Doddington, respectively the agents of the Victuallers and Orford. Despite very detailed reports by Bridges in which he praised Orford's economy in feeding the fleet, the Commons were probably justified in feeling that the full facts had been withheld. On 15 March 1699 Orford escaped censure by the

narrow margin of 141 to 140 votes.⁽¹⁾

Even before this defeat Orford's accusers were already casting about for other weaknesses in his position. On 9 March the Commons asked for details of his contingent account in the Mediterranean and of letters that passed between him and the Commissioners of the Navy on this account.⁽²⁾ These accounts too had lacked authenticating receipts and had been passed by the King's sign manual. The opposition's success in uncovering damaging information about the administration of the navy in the sessions between 1698 and 1701 must almost undoubtedly have been due to the active help of naval officials, probably at Navy Board level.⁽³⁾ This attack on Orford's accounts led to a resolution in the Commons on 27 March condemning the passing of accounts by exceptional procedures.⁽⁴⁾

Despite this resolution the attacks on Orford had not damaged his reputation sufficiently to force his

(1) C.J.XII, 589; Luttrell IV, 493-4.

(2) C.J.XII, 557; Sergison presented them on 10 March, *ibid.* XII, 559-61.

(3) See above p. 40.

(4) C.J.XII, 618.

resignation. The attack on finance had failed so a more general series of criticisms condemning the general mismanagement of the navy was commenced in the Commons. These were organised in the form of an address. The address contained the charges against Orford's accounts already described and in all the other clauses Orford or his followers are implicitly accused of mismanagement.⁽¹⁾ The address was presented to the King on 3 April.⁽²⁾ In May Orford resigned all his naval offices. It was a petulant and reluctant resignation but such was the scope of his responsibilities and the inveteracy of his political opponents that it was obvious he would not be allowed to rest easy in office.⁽³⁾ The attacks on him in fact continued for the remainder of William's reign but although the well worn charges of naval peculation and mismanagement were constantly remade, they are of relevance only to a purely political account.⁽⁴⁾ The attacks on him in 1701 were the Tory price for helping the King's Ministers in the Commons.⁽⁵⁾

Those lower in the naval hierarchy than Orford had

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- (1) Ibid.XII, 618, 621.
 (2) Ibid.XII, 632.
 (3) N. Tindal op.cit. III, 390-1; Vernon Letters II, 280-1.
 (4) Details of these later attacks can be found in Vernon Letters II 395-6; C.J.XIII, 520, 544-5, 562; H.M.C. H.L.V 368-413.
 (5) Furley to Lord Shaftesbury, 15 Ap 1701, P.R.O. 30/24/20 f.22.

fewer perquisites and little hope of evading their accusers once they came under suspicion. Edward Whitaker was an example of such a victim to parliamentary suspicion of officials. He was solicitor to the Admiralty from 1692 to 1701; his duties mainly concerned the prosecution of pirates and embezzlers. He first came to the notice of the Commons in their consideration of Kidd's piracies and because of failure in his duty was dismissed.⁽¹⁾ Dismissal did not end his troubles. His accounts, 1,700 pages and several bundles of them, were carefully investigated, and items in his expense account, notably £137 for two dinners, led to the Commissioners of Accounts refusing to pass them. He had made enemies amongst his colleagues and the Whigs exploited his case as a reflection on the administration of the Admiralty in 1703. He was forced into bankruptcy in addition to being deprived of his office.⁽²⁾ Some of Whitaker's equals in the naval hierarchy were luckier than he in the friends they possessed, though probably no more honest. When George Everett

(1) C.J. XIII, 444.

(2) H.M.C. H.L. V-209-16; L.J. XVII, 278, 318, 320; B.M. Harley Loan 29/45 B, f.31; 1 Anne st. 2 c 16 (1702); C.J. XVI, 14, 151-2, 154-6; 7 Anne cxxxiv (Private Act 1708).

communicated information concerning fraud and abuses on the part of Navy Board officials to the Commissioners of Accounts in 1694, the Commissioners obligingly forwarded this information to the Navy Board, who thanked them effusively and prepared a most convincing refutation.⁽¹⁾ A year later another pamphleteer, Crosfeild, who claimed to be able to show how members of the Navy Board had 'advanced themselves from salaries of £30 per annum to vast estates,' found the Commissioners of Accounts, and later the House of Lords, disinclined to hear his evidence with any sympathy.⁽²⁾ The Board of Victuallers had few friends and many enemies but they were saved in the parliamentary investigation of 1704 by the confusion of their own accounts.⁽³⁾ Parliamentary interest in peculation extended to the humblest naval employee, though at the lowest level parliament had to act by directive and legislation rather than by individual investigation. The bill of 1698 to prevent

(1) N.M.M. Sergison Ser/100, ff 683-4. For Everett see Ehrman 595-7.

(2) R. Crosfeild, Great Britain's Tears (1695), Justice Perverted (1695); H.M.C. H.L. I 526-37; Bonnet Dispatch, 22 Jan/1 Feb. 1695, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 267; for the relationship of the Navy Board to the Commissioners of Accounts see above p.39.

(3) C.J.XVI, 514, 522-4; H.M.C. H.L. V, 416-21.

theft of naval stores apparently awaited the leisure of peace, like the attack on Orford, to become law.⁽¹⁾

By investigations such as have been described above, the ordinary member of the Commons might assume that he was doing something, perhaps much, to safeguard the nation's money and to inculcate habits of good husbandry at all levels in the administration of the navy. Such success must have been slight and the many hours of work spent in such activities can have achieved little but the ruin of a few unskilful or unlucky unfortunates and some unpleasantness and worry for the highest officials.

Suspicion of money grants to the Crown and of the agents of the Crown was a classic Country attitude, but essentially negative. Ignorance, and with it a lack of parliamentary authority over the agents of the executive, were the justification of such suspicion. Pepys saw clearly the consequences of this ignorance and how the business of the navy suffered 'from straitness of time and hurry of other business.' He saw no way of educating parliament to a proper appreciation of and sympathy towards the problems of the navy but by the

(1) See below p. 212.

establishment of a permanent committee, such as there was in France, totally devoted to naval affairs.⁽¹⁾ Yet without such a committee and despite the complexity of naval finance, parliament did progress between 1688 and 1714 from the negative 'Country' attitude to one that was better informed, more responsible, and of great importance to the future of both the navy and parliament. The progress was halting, at times apparently retrogressive, and many members must have been unconscious of this changing relationship. Between 1688 and 1714 parliament gained knowledge of naval finance through its development of estimates and commissioners of accounts and through appropriations;⁽²⁾

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- (1) See the quotation from Pepys above, p.76 Lord Baltimore said much the same to the Commons in 1740, quoted D.A. Baugh, *op.cit.* 422. See also Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 276-7.
- (2) Any understanding of naval finance between 1688 and 1714 must owe much to the introductions by W.A. Shaw to the Calendars of Treasury Papers and Books. Some of his conclusions and financial arithmetic have been corrected by J. Ehrman, *The Navy in the War of William III* (1953) and P.G.M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England* (1967). The debt to all three is especially great for the consideration of estimates, commissioners of accounts and appropriations that follows.

power and authority came with the knowledge.

In the first debates on naval supply in March 1689 the Commons was reluctant to vote money for vaguely defined numbers of men and ships.⁽¹⁾ Papillon reported from the committee that had considered the rough estimates of the force required and practically gave the Commons a lesson in naval accounts, commenting that the committee had found it difficult to work without clear indications of the ships and men that were to be employed.⁽²⁾ It was not until 1690 that the Commons were presented with estimates in the modern sense, in that they attempted to give a picture of the navy's requirements for 1691.⁽³⁾ They give a more precise forecast with more details than any that were to follow in the reigns of William or Anne.⁽⁴⁾ The House accepted

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- (1) C.J.X, 63, 65, 80-1, 102, 106; Ehrman 332-4; W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B. IX Pt.I, ccxxvi-cxxvii.
- (2) C.J.X, 80-1.
- (3) Ibid. X, 432.
- (4) In this estimate details are given of how men and ships are to be used for winter and summer fleets and cruises and convoys. In the years to come a global figure was given for men and ships. For the 1693 estimate see below pp. 107-9 for the 1694 estimate, C.J.XI, 6; for 1695, C.J.XI, 178; for 1696, C.J.XI, 345, and for 1697, C.J.XI, 569.

these estimates with apparently little debate.⁽¹⁾

The estimates for 1692, presented on 9 November 1691, were challenged in a far more serious way. Parliament was factious and the nation dissatisfied. William's ministry, nominally led by Carmarthen, was beset by strong groups of malcontent politicians, including the extremes of Whigs and Tories. Clarges, Seymour, Musgrave, John Howe, Paul Foley, Robert Harley and the friends of Orford were all to speak in debate against the Court.⁽²⁾ Their opposition was to be the more effective because the politically non-committed amongst the gentry in the Commons must have been conscious of the national discontent over taxation and the Dutch and the popular belief that the nation's money was being wasted. There is evidence of this discontent from many sources⁽³⁾ but none is more eloquent of the

(1) The comment by Burnet in a letter to Johnston, 14 Oct 1690, about the mood of the Commons - 'they dare not go back into their country if they do not give money liberally' - quoted in N. Tindal op.cit. III 160 fn., probably indicates the reason for lack of debate. It was the fear caused by Beachy Head rather than the lack of critical ability that let the estimates by without attack.

(2) A. Browning op.cit. I, 491; K. Feiling op.cit. 281-2; S.B. Baxter op.cit. 275-8; N. Tindal op.cit. III, 189.

(3) Sir Charles Sedley's Speech in the House of Commons (1691); Sir Charles Lyttelton to Lord Hatton, 19 Nov 1691, Correspondence of the Family of Hatton, ed. E. Maunde Thompson (Camden Society 1878) II, 165; R. Harley to Sir E. Harley, 7 Nov 1691, H.M.C. Portland III, 481.

parliamentary mood than a laconic word picture of the 1691-2 session of the Commons in the Southwell Papers:

'Parliament sullen - leading men not caring which way matters - others obstructing - great motive to see their money spent and exhausted so lavishly - that the money appropriated not accordingly disposed of universal silence as to management - great delays.'⁽¹⁾

The navy was a factor in this discontent. It had done nothing effective during 1691 in the eyes of the Commons.⁽²⁾ No sooner was the naval estimate presented on 9 November 1691 than Clarges and Musgrave directed the attention of the Commons to the necessity of questioning the numbers of men and ships and advised the members to investigate the proposed cost of £4. 5. 0., per man for each month, while Musgrave made a plea that their consideration be thorough and leisurely, with no pressure from the Court 'that, if we do not give speedily we obstruct the King's business.'⁽³⁾ A powerful committee was appointed and Robert Harley reported the

(1) Notes dated 15 Jan. 1692, N.M.M. Southwell Sou/1 f.203 cf. W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B. LX Pt. I, clxiii.

(2) See above pp. 82-3.

(3) C.J.X, 549, 552; Grey X, 167-9; Bonnet Dispatch, 10/20 Nov. 1691, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 164.

findings of this committee to the Commons on 14 November.⁽¹⁾ On 18 November the House voted £1,575,890. 0. 0., for the supply of the navy.⁽²⁾

There are no detailed accounts of the debate either in committee or later, when the House considered the estimates before a vote, but some indication of the findings may be deduced from a comparison of the estimate presented with the sums eventually granted, in the table overleaf:⁽³⁾

- (1) Robert Harley, M.P. for Radnor, Speaker 1701-5, Secretary of State 1704-8, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord of the Treasury 1710-11, Earl of Oxford and Lord Treasurer 1711-14.
- (2) C.J.X, 555.
- (3) In the State Papers Domestic of William and Mary, P.R.O. S.P. 32/4 f.124 is a pre-parliament, government estimate for 1692 and beside the items listed an account of what was granted and comments. This estimate provides the second and fourth columns of the table; the third column is based on C.J.X, 547. In the paragraph that follows use is made of the comments in P.R.O. S.P. 32/4 f.124.

<u>Heads of Expenditure</u>	<u>Pre-parliament Estimate</u>	<u>Estimate to Parliament</u>	<u>Granted by Parliament</u>
Ordinary	100,000	100,000	None
Men: cost } numbers }	1,823,250 (33,000 at £4.5.0.)	1,675,000 (30,000 at £4.5.0.)	1,560,000 (30,000 at £4.)
Extraordinary			
4 ketches	8,400	8,400	-
5 hospital ships	12,300	8,400	-
4 bomb ships	10,908	-	-
Plymouth (Dock)	23,406	15,890	15,890
Marines	30,000	30,000	-
4 x 4th rates	68,000	28,864 Half Pay	-
Total	1,926,560	1,855,054	1,575,890

The reduction of the estimate by about one sixth was achieved by giving no supply for the Ordinary⁽¹⁾ and making no grant for new ships of various types, or marines. The monthly cost of a sailor was also cut.⁽²⁾ These reductions are uncritical in a narrow sense; each item could be justified and must to naval experts have seemed

(1) In P.R.O. S.P. 32/4 f.124 there is written against the estimate for Ordinary, 'rejected as going to be provided out of the Civil List, as it is called i.e. the ordinary charges of government in time of peace.'

(2) See above p. 82.

necessary; for example, hospital ships were becoming increasingly necessary for morale and manning by 1691. The reductions were uncritical in another sense, too, in that if these charges were necessary the navy would have to hire the ships necessary and charge this to the already overladen Wear and Tear Section of naval expenditure. There seems to have been no attempt to seek explanation of the number of seamen required, though Clarges had specifically suggested that this should be done; indeed Treby stated a day after the Commons had voted naval supply, 'when you had the list (estimate) of the fleet you did it by the lump.'⁽¹⁾ Indeed the committee's and the Commons' consideration of the estimate seems to have shown little responsibility or intelligence. The cuts were the expression of a generalised dissatisfaction with the ministry and all its works and agents. Robert Harley, who led the committee that considered the estimates, implied as much in a letter;

'This morning I reported the estimates of the navy, and after long debate everyone of our resolutions was agreed to. Every question was carried against the Court. There was but one division, about four ships to be new

(1) Grey X, 178-9.

built, although thirty were ordered to be built last year, and the danger of the precedent of letting such things slip into the estimate carried it against the ships. (1)

W.A. Shaw attributed the reductions in the estimates to a new financial maturity and critical awareness on the part of the Commons. (2) It would appear however that political discontent was more decisive in 1691.

Such critical awareness was to grow quickly and by 1693 the treatment by the Commons of the naval estimate displayed an amazing advance in parliamentary technique. The motives behind the reductions may still have been factional and Country, but the treatment of the estimate is critical and expert in a modern sense. (3) The parliamentary estimate and the money eventually granted are summarised in the following table:— (4)

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- (1) To Sir Edward Harley, 14 Nov. 1691, H.M.C. Portland III, 482.
 - (2) W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B. IX Pt. I, cxl-cxli, see above pp. 102-4.
 - (3) A summary of the political situation during this session will be found below pp. 248-254.
 - (4) The figures used in this table and the arguments given in the paragraph are taken from B.M. Harlean 1,898 ff.29-30, papers certainly prepared by the Commissioners of Accounts (see below pp.111-4). The implication in these papers is that these were the arguments used in the Commons, and the sums eventually voted agree with the figures above, C.J.XI, 12; H.M.C. H.L.VII, 174.

<u>Heads of Expenditure</u>	<u>Estimate to Parliament</u>	<u>Granted</u>
Ordinary	85,740	85,740
Men: cost) number)	2,210,000 (40,000 at £4. 5. 0.)	1,861,483 (33,692 at £4. 5. 0.)
Extraordinary		
Freight	21,600	-
4 hired ketches	2,080	-
Hospital ship	3,900	-
Officers of Marines	22,812	-
debts -	-	52,777
wages debt	-	500,000
Total	2,346,132	2,500,000

The estimate was presented on 18 November 1693, considered on 23 November, and supply was voted on 25 November.⁽¹⁾ In that time the government was told that its estimate for men was based on the false assumption that the men of the main fleet would be used and in pay all the year. They would in fact be in service for seven months of the year; thus the number of men for whom a monthly rate

(1) C.J.X1, 6, 7, 9-11, 12.

was granted was proportionately reduced. The government or Admiralty was then accused of attempting to win from the Commons double charges in that the expenses of ketches, freight, hospital ships and marine officers should properly be included in the Wear and Tear section of the bulk cost of the men. There was also criticism of the inclusion in the estimate of the Ordinary as this was properly the King's responsibility. However, because revenue was taking longer than usual to reach the Treasury this was allowed.⁽¹⁾ Such generosity is surprising; even more so is the final sum granted, which was to make the total grant up to £2,500,000 and this £500,000 extra was to be allocated to the debt of seamen's wages. This grant meant that despite the reductions, the Commons were granting more money for the navy than had been requested. There is evidence in the way parliament dealt with this estimate of knowledge, initiative and responsibility.⁽²⁾

There is no more evidence as detailed as this for later parliamentary reception of estimates. The habit of diminution continued in William's reign but it seems that for Anne's reign the estimates were generally accepted

(1) See below p. 122.

(2) There is another comparison of estimate and money granted, for 1696, in B.M. Harlean 1,898 f.55.

and not subjected to such criticism as was evident in 1693. The estimates did not become more detailed and informative; this, from a ministerial point of view, would have made them more vulnerable. Once parliament had accepted a certain level of naval expenditure it was safer politically to accept this and if debt accumulated, hope that peace would come before the credit of the navy was lost.⁽¹⁾ The agents of the government at the Boards of Admiralty and Navy did not assume that the money granted by parliament defined the maximum of their annual expenditure. Despite this, and despite the fact that the form of the estimate did not develop towards greater elaboration after William's early years, the Commons through these estimates knew more about naval expenditure than they did in 1689. More importantly, the annual right and practice of consideration and general diminution of the estimate gave the Commons not only real, though limited, power but the belief that by allocating the money they were establishing a maximum of naval expenditure and controlling the strength of the navy. In this way the estimates did increase the status and authority of the Commons, at least in the minds of

(1) D.A. Baugh, op.cit. 461-7.

some members. The incompatibility of attitude between these members of the Commons and the agents of the government over the significance of the vote of supply that followed the estimates was resolved in 1710.⁽¹⁾

The second device by which the financial ignorance of the Commons was partially dispelled was the establishment of Commissioners for Taking and Stating the Public Accounts of the Kingdom. Financial statements by the Treasury or Admiralty were suspect to the majority of the Commons because they were made by agents of the executive.⁽²⁾ This distrust was probably aggravated by the expert competence of Treasury officials and the condescension of Court speakers.⁽³⁾ Confused financial debates between November 1689 and March 1690 had made the Commons aware of the necessity of a means of checking how the money they voted was spent. The idea of a group of parliamentary auditors with time and power to study the problems of finance was considered.⁽⁴⁾ Similar difficulties in the 1690-1691 session led to the appointment of a number of commissioners, all members of the

(1) See below p. 156.

(2) Grey X, 317.

(3) Ibid. X, 191.

(4) W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B. IX Pt. I, cli.

Commons, who were to have the authority to investigate the finances of all government departments.⁽¹⁾ In this session, after the defeat at Beachy Head, the belief that the money the nation had given was being ineffectively or wrongly spent was strong. This background feeling, similar to that of the 1691-2 session, is at least as important in the creation of the commissioners as any parliamentary instinct for power.⁽²⁾ Thus it is not surprising that the Commission developed more on the lines of an inquisition, as the 'spearhead of the Country Party Opposition,' than as a constitutional aid to parliamentary authority.⁽³⁾

The aim of the Commission was to investigate the finances of the realm. As Paul Foley and Robert Harley were the only two permanent members of the six commissions appointed in William's reign, it is not surprising that they dominated the Commission and its aims were never forgotten.⁽⁴⁾ Although the Commission was hampered by its

(1) C.J.X, 432, 523, 525, 528, 536.

(2) W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B. IX Pt. I, cxii-cxiii.

(3) W.A. Shaw, Introduction to Vols. XI-XVII of the Treasury Books, C.T.B.XVII, clv.

(4) The best short accounts of the membership, reports and working of the commissions are in W.A. Shaw's introductions to the volumes of Treasury Books, C.T.B.IX Pt.I, cli - clxxi; C.T.B.XVII, clv-clxxxii. Ehrman 467-9 disagrees with Shaw on points of detail and on the degree of partisanship in the reports of the Commissioners.

suspicious independence of Treasury help and procedure, and at times overwhelmed by the complexity of the financial system, its reports, especially the early ones, may have done much to educate those members of the Commons who possessed mathematical ability and intellectual stamina, in the intricacies of naval finance.⁽¹⁾ The contacts the Commissioners made with people such as Pepys, or the officials of the Navy Board, were influential in the relationship of parliament and the navy in William's reign.⁽²⁾ These contacts, combined with their authority to demand what documentary or verbal evidence they wished, gave them access to every branch of naval business. There can be no doubt that the knowledge gained by the Commissioners affected parliament's activity in all aspects of its growing knowledge of the navy. This was true not only of financial aspects such as estimates, the deficiency of funds and expenditure of money, but even of matters like the provision of cruisers and convoys.⁽³⁾ Their greatest contribution was not the discovery of abuses but the diffusion of knowledge, and possibly the most effective of their lessons was the persistent

(1) For example, H.M.C. H.L. I, 12-92.

(2) See above pp. 39-40.

(3) See above pp. 40-43 and below pp. 246-7.

production of financial abstracts which did try to show clearly how soon taxes reached the Treasury and how the income was spent. These abstracts, biased though they sometimes were, gave the members of the Commons a clearer picture of naval finance than they had ever before been given. They were relatively clear because they were produced by men who had themselves to master the subject. Undoubtedly they were considered more readily by the Commons because they were the product of such men and not of the Treasury.

Potentially the most useful device exploited by the Commons to give knowledge of and power over naval finance was appropriation, that is; the allocation of the revenue from specific taxes to a particular spending department or type of expenditure. This could give real knowledge and control of the way in which money was spent. In particular, for the navy it meant that the subordinate departments had to justify to their new masters, an investigating committee of the Commons, their reasons for allocating the money they received in varying proportions and priorities. Members of the Commons sat to be convinced; the onus of persuasion, justification and proof was on the department, with no cushion of Treasury officials to delay or distort the reply.

Appropriation had been applied to some taxes under Charles II but the strong belief that money was being wasted by misapplication led to the practice being more frequently, if sporadically, used in the early years of William's reign.⁽¹⁾ The consequences for the navy of appropriation can be seen most clearly by a consideration of the Wear and Tear section of naval expenditure, the section which maintained the fabric of the navy, both the ships and dockyards and the administration.⁽²⁾ In William's reign £4. 5. 0. was generally allocated each month for the upkeep of each man, which was unevenly divided among Wear and Tear, Wages, Victuals and Ordnance.⁽³⁾ Pepys thought such a sum excessive;⁽⁴⁾ so did the Commons in 1691, when their disappointment with the campaign led them to reduce the monthly rate to £4.⁽⁵⁾ Wear and Tear suffered the biggest reduction of 2s. 6d., which left it with £1. 7. 6., a month per man. This new establishment only lasted a year. The earlier rate of £4. 5. 0., was restored in December 1692. Some generosity

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- (1) W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B. IX Pt. I, clxxi; Ehrman 461-72.
- (2) For detailed lists of the charges on Wear and Tear see Ehrman 158-9 or C.J.XII, 629.
- (3) See Appendix II for the allocations.
- (4) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 333, 395.
- (5) See above p. 82.

after La Hogue was to be expected but the Commons apparently accepted the Court argument that the rising price of victuals made such an increase necessary.⁽¹⁾ It was one of the few arguments about naval finance that most members of the Commons could appreciate from personal experience. However, in the 1693-4 session the monthly rate was again altered and the share for Wear and Tear was reduced from £1. 10. 0., to £1. 8. 0; the share devoted to Ordnance was greatly increased, presumably to meet the expenditure on munitions for new ships. Through this division of money among the various classes of expenditure and by appropriating specific sums of money to each class, the House of Commons was in effect controlling the expenditure of the navy. This system of appropriation enabled the House to break up the bulk figure for the annual cost of seamen and analyse each division. Among these divisions the members of the Commons established a common sense order of priority. The importance of wages and victuals was obvious;⁽²⁾ if economies were to be made they must naturally come from the administrative costs under Wear and Tear.

(1) Bonnet Dispatch, 2/12 Dec. 1692, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 190.

(2) It was only in 1692 that the money for Wages and Victuals was reduced, see Appendix II.

The reduction of money to Wear and Tear in 1693 is interesting because Sergison, Clerk to the Acts of the Navy,⁽¹⁾ a dedicated naval administrator, and the man mainly responsible for the expenditure of the Wear and Tear money, wrote to a member of parliament, possibly Harley, instructing him in the importance of Wear and Tear expenditure.⁽²⁾ A topic as arid as Wear and Tear can never have had a more eloquent, even passionate defender. He demonstrated, justly, how the systematic payments, 'in course,' out of Wear and Tear organised by the Navy Board created a trust in the credit of the navy of which the beneficial effects spread far beyond the contractors immediately involved. It was the organisation of these payments that gave the navy its reputation of being an efficiently run business concern, so much so that in naval finance, 'the Wear and Tear is the foundation of all.'⁽³⁾ The letter was a clever one. There were references to parliament's great responsibility for the preservation of a strong navy; there was even a cautious

(1) See above p. 40.

(2) The letter is in B.M. Harlean 6,806 f.15 and Sergison's rough draft of the letter can be found in N.M.M. Ser/100 ff. 207-9.

(3) Cf. Ehrman, 487; see below p. 123.

warning of the political consequences if the nation misinterpreted the reduction of Wear and Tear -

'the notion that the people will receive of the Parliament's disregard thereto will create mighty suspicion as on Englishman it is also my wishes that men in power would please to apply themselves to support the Navy, which has always been reckoned the Wall and Bulwark of our Nation.'

One member of the Commons at least was learning from an expert the significance of Wear and Tear and learning in a context where political suspicion of the executive could be discounted. Certainly one agent of the executive was sufficiently aware of parliament's power to direct his considerable persuasive powers at a member of the legislature rather than his superiors. Such a relationship was the consequence of parliament's growing knowledge and authority.

Parliament's intervention in the more detailed aspects of naval administration was neither a systematic progression nor always of benefit to the navy. Appropriations in William's reign were usually detailed and specific.⁽¹⁾ For the navy the income from certain taxes was

(1) See 1 W. & M. Sess 2 c 1; 4 W. & M. c 1; 5 W. & M. c 1; 6 & 7 W. & M. c 3; 7 & 8 W. III c 5; 8 & 9 W. III c 24.

allocated to Wages, Wear and Tear, Victuals or Ordnance, and the Treasurer of the Navy had little financial freedom to support one branch of expenditure by the funds in his possession; parliament had decided how the money should be spent. In Anne's reign the Treasurer of the Navy had far greater financial flexibility because parliament gave up the device of specific appropriation and with it its insight into the subdivisions of naval finance. In the taxes voted under Anne the navy was given a general precedence over other spending departments but parliament did nothing by way of appropriation to ensure the supply of money to any branch of naval expenditure.⁽¹⁾ During the first session of parliament in her reign Anne thanked the Commons for the new latitude they allowed her in the appropriation of taxes.⁽²⁾ Even in William's reign parliament's interest in the divisions of naval expenditure never led it to a major initiative like the reorganisation of the quotas. Thus Wear and Tear was left with £1. 8. 0., a month until 1698. Despite Sergison's letter Pepys was probably right;⁽³⁾ such a share of the monthly rate was too generous. In the war years

(1) See 1 Anne Stat 2, c 17; 2 & 3 Anne c 18; 3 & 4 Anne c 3; 6 Anne c 27; 7 Anne c 31; 8 Anne c 14; 9 Anne c 16.

(2) C.J.XIV, 210; L.J.XVII, 321.

(3) See above pp. 117-8.

of Anne's reign the Navy Board managed to maintain the Wear and Tear and subsidise Victuallers from this fund on a share of £1. 7. 0. The Victuallers above all needed an increased share of the monthly rate but there was never any serious discussion of such a reform. A positive disadvantage of appropriation, at least in the early years of William's reign, was parliament's lack of concern for Wear and Tear. The money appropriated to this expenditure was frequently from a source of revenue that was slow in yield, or the money appropriated to Wages came from the funds of quicker yield, and Wear and Tear fought a losing battle with Victuals.⁽¹⁾ The worst example of this was in the appropriation to the navy of the Additional Duties on the Excise in 1691, a tax known as the Double Ninepences. The Treasury Lords might assure the Navy Board that this was a secure fund; the Navy Board and its contractors knew also that it was 'remote,' that the revenue due on it would not reach the Treasury for four or five years.⁽²⁾ By 1693

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- (1) Godolphin to the King, 22 May, 2 July 1694, C.S. P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 144-5, 209; Minutes of the Proceedings of the Lord Justices, 19 Sept. 1695, *ibid*, July-Dec. 1695, 68; C.T.B.IX Pt. II, 367; *ibid* X Pt.I, 154.
- (2) P.R.O.Adm. 1/3564, ff.9, 259; P.R.O. Adm.1/3568 f.694; Godolphin to the King, 2 Feb. 1691, C.S. P.Dom. W. & M. 1690-1, 241; C.T.B.X, Pt.I, 145.

the Navy Board's dependence on these remote funds for the payment of contracts on Wear and Tear had gone far to ruin the credit which the office had previously enjoyed.⁽¹⁾ In 1694 the East Country merchants who provided the navy with many of its basic stores refused to enter into new contracts.⁽²⁾ In this year many dockyard workers deserted in desperation at not getting their pay and the importunities of the Victuallers for money were such that an alternative of victualling by commission was seriously considered.⁽³⁾

The credit of the navy was saved in this crisis by the formation of the Bank of England.⁽⁴⁾ But in a more general sense the credit of the nation was preserved in William's reign by parliament's guarantee that it would supplement the deficiencies of any source of revenue and in one way or another ensure that the great debt that gradually accumulated for each spending department, but especially the navy, would be paid. The consequence of

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- (1) P.R.O.Adm. 3/8, 19 Ap.1693; P.R.O.Adm. 1/3568 ff. 688-94, 695, 778-9; Navy Board to the Admiralty, 28 Aug. 1693, C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1693, 289.
- (2) See below pp. 181-2.
- (3) Godolphin to the King, 24 Aug. 1694, C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 274.
- (4) Ehrman 490, 540-1.

this guarantee to the financial stability of the country were incalculable.⁽¹⁾ Such a guarantee had become essential. One of the most disquieting items of knowledge brought to the attention of parliament through its interest in finance was evidence of the extent to which the taxes it voted were deficient in yield. The cost of collection, corruption of officials, inexact computation of potential revenue, and the sheer time element necessary for money to be collected and forwarded to the Treasury meant that every spending department received less money in any given year than parliament would have expected.⁽²⁾ Before the war the navy had received its money in cash and paid out in cash.⁽³⁾ The mounting debt compelled it to pay in promises, promises in the form of tallies or tickets. While the credit of the navy was good and the likelihood of these substitutes for ready money being realised as specie within a short period of weeks or months was reasonable the system of payment was easily maintained. Credit was further strengthened by the inviolable habit of the Navy

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- (1) W.A. Shaw, Introduction, C.T.B. IX Pt.I, clxxix-clxxxii, Introduction, C.T.B. XVII, ccxxi-ii; C. Wilson, Anglo Dutch Commerce and Finance in the Eighteenth Century (1941) 91-2.
- (2) State of War for 1690, C.H.S.P.Dom. Wm. 1699-1700, 332-3; W.A. Shaw, Introduction, C.T.B.XVII, lxxxiii; D. Ogg op.cit. 407-8.
- (3) Sergison Papers, 29.

Board of paying its debts by order of their registration, 'in course.'⁽¹⁾ The weakening of this credit, with particular reference to Wear and Tear has already been described.⁽²⁾ As Sergison implied, this did give 'life to all other parts.'⁽³⁾ The debts of wages to hundreds of individual sailors were inconvenient but could be ignored - there was no chance of such debtors combining - and the Victuallers just managed from crisis to crisis. But the credit of the navy reached crisis point with a total debt on 30 September 1693 of £1,782,597. 0. 0.⁽⁴⁾ By far the greatest item in this debt was the deficiency of £1,483,804 between the money voted by parliament and the money received by the Treasurer of the Navy by 30 December 1692.⁽⁵⁾ The Victuallers, of necessity, contributed to the debt; it was impossible to victual the navy on an allowance of £1 out of the monthly rate. By the end of 1692 the Victuallers had spent £293,747. 9. 3½. over their allowance.⁽⁶⁾ The Commons considered the debt

(1) See above p.117.

(2) See above p.121.

(3) P.R.O.Adm. 1/3568 ff. 695-6; see above pp. 117-8.

(4) Estimates of Naval Debts, 1671-1718, 30 Sept. 1693, N.M.M. Sergison Ser/102, see Appendix V.

(5) P.R.O.Adm. 1/3569 f.219.

(6) Victuallers' Memorial, 18 April 1693, H.M.C. H.L.I, 271-274; P.R.O.Adm. 1/3569 f.219; A.F.W. Papillon, Memoirs of Thomas Papillon (1887) 358-9.

in 1693 and as well as granting money specifically to reduce the debt on wages, ⁽¹⁾ provided additional revenues to make up the deficiencies. ⁽²⁾ The later and more serious crisis of 1696, by which date the year's supply was almost totally mortgaged for past debts, was dealt with in a similar way. ⁽³⁾ By the end of William's reign this method of dealing with debt piece-meal as it mounted to a point of crisis, rather than by reform of the system, was well established. ⁽⁴⁾

By 1697 the developments described above - the consideration of estimates, the establishment of commissioners of accounts, the habit of appropriation and the consideration of debt - had theoretically given the Commons procedures whereby naval expenditure could be understood, and, by implication controlled. The implications of these decisive advances were obscured, for all but a tiny minority, by the tactical struggles. The attitude of the Commons towards naval finance was essentially defensive against the monarch and his ministers. The members of the Commons were not generally conscious of

(1) See above p.109.

(2) C.J.XI, 7, 11, 12, 15; W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B.IX Pt.I clxxxiii-cxcv.

(3) W.A. Shaw, Introduction C.T.B.XVII, lxxix-cvii.

(4) See below p. 159.

aggressive and strategic aims; their considerations of naval finance were not fused with major considerations of parliamentary status by any political philosophy.

There was no address or printed statement that summed up for the ordinary member of the Commons the significance of actions in regard to naval finance which must have been, in the memory of most, dispersed in time and subordinate to other issues.

(ii)

1702-1714

Parliament was eventually compelled to define its powers over naval finance in 1710. The debt of the navy, that grew unchecked in the years between 1702 and 1710, forced the definition. These years are remarkable in another way, because they saw the almost total abandonment by the Commons of the procedures that had been established during William's reign. The evidence for this is clear in the stereotyped votes for 40,000 men at a monthly rate of £4. 0. 0., £120,000 for the Ordinary and in the abandonment of specific appropriation. Parliamentary deference to a popular Queen and to her husband who was Lord High Admiral help to explain this hiatus; a parliamentary watchdog on the navy was unnecessary in this context. Inertia helped as well to keep naval finance static. In William's years a naval force had been created of a strength that satisfied parliament and was probably near the maximum that the nation could afford. Parliament was always pleased to leave matters as they were established by precedent. The government too was content to accept what was readily granted for the navy rather than provide an issue for

opposition by adapting naval grants to new circumstances. The government's lack of initiative between 1702 and 1710 is almost total in finance. Another barrier to change was that any potential reformer who did wish to establish the reasons why a financial procedure or quota or figure had been established in the past, in an attempt to question something now accepted, had far less evidence to work on than a historian can find today. Bromley wrote in 1703,

'For want of estimates and appropriations it does not so plainly appear for some years at the beginning of the Revolution as afterwards what the expenses of the army, navy and civil list were intended to be, at least not to me, after what searches I have been able to make.'⁽¹⁾

Thus the interest there had been in naval finance in William's reign, especially the early years, was non-existent in the early years of Anne.

The unresolved confusion of parliament's power over naval expenditure can be related to a single and decisive question: did parliament's grant of supply to the navy

(1) W. Bromley to R. Harley, 25 Sept. 1703, H.M.C. Portland IV, 67. Even the Navy Board's memory for this period was poor, P.R.O.Adm.1/3608, 12 Jan. 1707.

represent a maximum, or was the navy, as a spending department, entitled to exceed this grant? The Navy Board and Admiralty had no doubt as to the answer. The navy could spend more than the grant; indeed it was evidence of efficiency and patriotism if the naval administration could continue to fit out more ships and muster more men than parliament had sanctioned. Such officials would have reinforced their right to exceed the grant by showing that the sudden demands of war made it inevitable that they should sometimes overspend and incur a debt.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, they would have found widespread support for their attitude. They would have been justified, in the words of one pamphleteer, because

(1) As Sergison wrote in 1693, the care of the navy was in good hands, 'And it being in such hands where is the danger, will you not have new ships built, or more than you provided for kept at sea as you have had in this war, if the Provision be larger than the expenses, or the overplus laid apart to repair the fleet when the war is over,' Ser/100 f205; P.R.O. Adm.1/3606, 19 Nov. 1706; see below p. 166.

'the money given is more properly to be understood in the nature of a sum granted upon account, than as a sum fixed and limited.'⁽¹⁾

The treatment by the Commons of the growing naval debt between 1702 and 1710 is evidence that a majority of them thought of their grants to the navy in these terms.

The debt of the navy on Anne's accession, 8 March 1702, was reported to the Commons as £776,602. 7. 3. but by 29 September it had risen to £1,016,767. 3. 9.⁽²⁾ This

- (1) A Letter to a Friend concerning the Public Debts particularly of the Navy (1711) 1; A Letter to a New Member of the Honourable House of Commons (1710), Harleian Miscellany (1810) XI, 147; Burnet IV, 269. The first pamphlet cited above is by a Whig, the second by a Tory. Cf. Maynwaring to the Duchess of Marlborough, 15 May 1711, 'All the great successes of the war have been carried by these exceeding and extraordinary payments that they have censured. And the parliament always gives a discretionary allowance; and there was intimation in their debates, that if the money did not answer the service of the current year, there could be no doubt but everything would be made good that was laid out upon great and unforeseen services,' W. Coxe, Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough ed. J. Wade (1848) III, 213.
- (2) C.J.XIV., 21. Later estimates by the Navy Board held the debt on Anne's accession to be £942,658. 5. 6., Abstract of Money voted by Parliament 1702-5, P.R.O.Adm. 1/3603, 30 Sept. 1705. See below p. 145.

debt apparently occasioned no comment in the 1702-3 session although finance was generally considered in a debate on the public accounts.⁽¹⁾ There appears to have been no concern with the debt in the next session of parliament; indeed this is the only session of parliament in Anne's reign in which a statement of the naval debt was not, as a matter of routine, presented to the Commons.

By 29 September 1704 the debt of the navy was £2,226,864. 17. 10.,⁽²⁾ and in the 1704-5 session there was for the first time in Anne's reign an attempt to discover the reasons for the growth of the debt. The investigation was initiated and managed by the House of Lords as one branch of an enquiry into all aspects of naval activity, including trade defence and manning. There was sufficient justification for such a survey: convoys, cruisers and the main fleet had been ineffective in 1703, the debt was obvious to all, and Lord Haversham in one of his prepared fulminations could talk in the Lords of the 'vast and fruitless' expense of the fleet.⁽³⁾

(1) C.J.XIV, 188-190.

(2) Ibid.XIV, 399.

(3) E. Timberland, History and Proceedings of the House of Lords (1742) II, 65-6.

Yet the survey was a Whig attack on the Tory administration of the navy organised in the Lords because of the strength of the Whigs in this House and the fact that in Orford they had a knowledgeable leader on naval matters. The attack on the navy was also shrewd parliamentary tactics. It had an appearance of patriotic justification that would contrast with the reluctance of the Commons to question the department headed by the Queen's husband. The financial aspect of the attack might attract those members of the Lords who resented the authority of the Commons in such matters. The considerations of trade defence and manning are dealt with elsewhere⁽¹⁾ but the initial attack and most of the time spent on the navy was on finance. Papers giving details of the debt and Ordinary charge of the navy were demanded on 3 November 1704 and delivered by Burchett on 8 November. A select committee to consider these papers was formed on 14 November and Orford was appointed as chairman.⁽²⁾ The committee demanded more detailed financial returns, interviewed two Commissioners of the Navy, Sergison and

(1) See below p.280 and p.398.

(2) L.J.XVII, 571, 573, 578. Another committee was formed on 23 Nov, with Bolton as chairman, to consider some of the other points at issue, *ibid.* XVII, 584.

Lyddell, and was throughout its activities directed by Orford.⁽¹⁾ Even he, with his wide background of naval experience, was incapable of effective criticism of the financial evidence. Neither the figures provided nor the officials questioned made things easy for Orford. One important starting-point in any critical analysis of naval finance was the cost of the navy each year, yet when the two Commissioners of the Navy were asked this question their answer was, 'The real expense of the navy is nowhere to be had.'⁽²⁾ Technically they were speaking the truth - naval finance was not organised in neat annual compartments in the modern manner - but both could have provided Orford with an accurate answer. Their studiously unhelpful answer was natural from a Court official in such a situation. The papers provided for the Lords gave many facts but no concessions were made to simplicity or the reader's ignorance of naval finance. Despite these difficulties Orford persevered, demanding more papers and summoning Lyddell to his house for questioning.⁽³⁾ His report was considered by the committee

(1) Ibid. XVII, 622-4; H.M.C. H.L.VI 8-14, 28-35, 69-87.

(2) Ibid. VI, 9.

(3) Ibid. VI, 10.

and the House of Lords in January and February 1705 and a rather less sharply worded version presented to the Queen as an address.⁽¹⁾ The main financial points of the address were that in the last three years the navy had cost £2,186,375. 17. 4., a year, that the Treasurer of the Navy had spent £1,142,361. 2. 4., more than allowed by parliament, and that there were serious deficiencies in the money received by the navy. There was no implication of criticism in the statement that records the overspending; criticisms were directed only at excessive expenditure on flag officers and pensions. The sums involved in such expenditures were minute if compared with the figures given for overspending or deficiencies. The Queen's answer to the address was an acknowledgement lacking even the customary thanks.⁽²⁾ Despite this rebuff the committee continued work, mainly on manning, and concluded the session with a report that was largely a recapitulation of the earlier address.⁽³⁾ The investigation had been persistent but partisan. It is most noteworthy for the public declaration, which was unquestioned, of the Treasurer of the Navy's habit of overspending and

(1) L.J.XVII, 622-4, 627, 643-5.

(2) Ibid.XVII, 649.

(3) Ibid.XVII, 688.

that the navy was running into debt by virtue of this initiative and the deficiencies of the funds voted by parliament.

The subordination of the problems of naval finance to the political deference of the majority in the Commons continued in the next three sessions of parliament although the naval debt rose from £3,211,937. 2. 11., in 1706 to £3,562,751. 8. 4., in 1707 and reached £3,628,504. 16. 6., in 1708.⁽¹⁾ Despite this evidence and the implicit warning of the debates in the Lords in 1704-5 the Commons actually agreed to a resolution on 21 February 1706 praising the administration and by implication the financial organisation of the navy.⁽²⁾ Almost as surprising is the absence of any supplementary and extraordinary grant towards the debt such as had been common in the reign of William.

Concern over the debt became apparent in the 1708-9 session of parliament.⁽³⁾ By 29 September 1708 the navy

(1) C.J.XV, 226, 402; C.J.XVI, 17; see Appendix V.

(2) C.J.XV, 165. In 1707, although the Commons demanded the fullest financial statement on the navy so far produced in Anne's reign, their main efforts were devoted to a minute examination of the pensions charged on the Ordinary of the navy, C.J.XV, 426-32, 440, 441, 444.

(3) The Navy Board had already considered reasons for the debt, P.R.O.Adm. 1/3606, 19 Nov. 1706.

debt was £3,628,504. 16. 6.,⁽¹⁾ and it was obvious to Anne's ministry that the costs of naval warfare would rise sharply because of the increasing naval responsibilities in the Mediterranean. This led to what appears to have been the only ministerial initiative in naval finance between 1702 and 1710 but it was tentative and unexploited initiative. The Queen, in her speech at the opening of parliament, emphasised the financial implications of operations in distant seas and stated that this would cause 'extraordinary expense,'⁽²⁾ phrasing that implied an extraordinary grant in the technical sense. The debt also made some such grant necessary. The credit of the navy was again in doubt as it had been before, in 1693 and 1696, and as in those years the Navy Board was notifying its superiors of the dangers and difficulties it encountered with a course two years and four months in arrears, the yards unpaid for a year and a half, and contractors disinclined to help in the future.⁽³⁾ There

(1) C.J.XVI, 17; cf. P.G.M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England* (1967) 59-62, 360-1.

(2) C.J.XVI, 5-6.

(3) P.R.O.Adm. 1/3610, 25 Nov. 1708, 'forasmuch as the service subsists by the credit of this office, and that said credit is supported by the hopes of the dealers are in of having some extraordinary as well as an ordinary provision made for the debts of the navy in this session.'

is no evidence that Anne's servants in the Commons did anything effective to convince the House of the need for money even though the Commons did, at last, consider the debt of the navy.

The investigation had no sense of urgency. A committee was formed on 26 November to consider both Convoys and Cruisers and the debt.⁽¹⁾ The committee's report was considered on 24 March 1709.⁽²⁾ The report, as it stands in the Journal of the Commons, is a muddle. Unless a very lucid verbal interpretation was given when the report was presented, and the construction of the report implies that the committee had few if any members with such a gift, it is likely that the House was muddled, too. There is evidence of work and intelligence in the excellent introduction showing how the monthly rate was divided among Wages, Wear and Tear, Victuals and Ordnance. The report also contained the first attempt by the Commons to distinguish between men borne and men mustered, and a recognition of the financial implications of this fact; but there the value of the report ends. The recognition of the four sections of naval expenditure⁽³⁾ had in one way

(1) C.J.XVI, 18-19.

(2) C.J.XVI, 171-2.

(3) Which probably reflects the divisions of papers presented to them.

been fatal because it provided the framework of the report, in four separate subdivisions. There was no presentation of the overall picture of the debt or any clear statement as to its causes. Some of the minor reasons for the debt, such as victualling army forces abroad from naval supply, are mentioned, but almost as asides. The report contained no conclusions or recommendations; it would have been difficult to deduce anything constructive from it. It reveals strikingly the great limitations that still existed in the parliamentary understanding of naval finance. (1)

The uselessness of the report led to a request by the Commons that the Commissioners of the Navy should give their explanation of the debt. Sir Thomas Littleton, M.P.

(1) The committee did not even follow up the logic of its own discoveries. The members proved that the debt for Wages was bigger on paper than in fact because it was calculated on the assumption that 40,000 men were paid each year and the report showed that from 1702 to 1704 fewer men were employed. Thus the debts under Wear and Tear and Victuals, which were based on the same assumption of 40,000 men, were also exaggerated. The report reveals that the committee did not appreciate this and there is no evidence of the House realising the discrepancy.

for Portsmouth and Treasurer of the Navy, presented the House with a full and convincing explanation of the debt on 4 April 1709; the Navy Board had provided eleven causes, the Victuallers another ten.⁽¹⁾ The first of the Navy Board's reasons for the debt was the cost of maintaining more than the 40,000 men allowed by parliament each year. This priority, which implied that the cost of men in excess of 40,000 caused much of the debt, was a most interesting choice from several points of view. It was the most public demonstration that the Navy Board expected credit for mustering more than the men the Commons had voted. The officials of the Board were too shrewd to have placed this item first if they had feared blame.⁽²⁾ Of equal note, a parliamentary committee had demonstrated to the Commons less than two weeks earlier, that on average for the years of Anne the navy had not employed more than 40,000 men, and the Navy Board itself knew very well that even if as many as 43,000 men were mustered for a year, deaths and accidents would ensure that no more than 40,000 were ever paid.⁽³⁾

(1) C.J.XVI, 186.

(2) See above p. 84.

(3) Thus contemporaries and more recent historians who use the employment of more than 40,000 seamen as an explanation of the debt are wrong, cf. B.M. Lansdowne 829, f.128; Letter to a Friend Concerning the Public Debts, particularly of the navy (1711); W.A. Shaw C.T.B.XXII Pt. I, xxiii; C.T.B.XXI, Pt. I, xv; See Appendix III.

The most likely explanation of this inconsistency is that the Navy Board was giving the Commons the reasons that it hoped would be acceptable. Such an explanation is made the more likely in that none of the other ten Navy Board reasons for the debt mentioned the deficiencies of parliamentary funds, yet this was the major cause of the debt. The other reasons given by Navy Board and Victuallers sound impressive and are valid, but no attempt is made to allocate a proportion of the debt to each, and to appreciate them would require a thorough knowledge of naval administration. Many in the Commons must have found them puzzling and of little use in giving an understanding of the debt. The session ended without any constructive proposal on naval finances.⁽¹⁾

Between the end of the 1708-9 session and the meeting of parliament on 15 November 1709 the financial situation of the navy worsened and the Commons were presented with the routine statement of a debt for 30 September 1709 of £4,969,247. 2. 5.⁽²⁾ Godolphin's efforts to preserve the credit of the navy had become increasingly desperate.⁽³⁾

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- (1) The Commons found time, yet again, to consider the Ordinary, this time without asking the Queen's permission to order documents from the navy C.J.XVI, 54, 58.
- (2) C.J.XVI, 219; see Appendix V.
- (3) C.T.B.XXIII Pt. II, 4, 31; P.M.G. Dickson op.cit. 360-2.

Navy Office bills were at great discount and the Navy Board was compelled to accept tenders and material at prices far in excess of the normal.⁽¹⁾ A bad harvest and a shortage of ready money added to the financial strain.⁽²⁾ The Commons began another investigation, this time one that viewed the debt solely in the context of deficiencies of funds. Lowndes, M.P. for Seaford and Secretary of the Treasury, presented a very full and clear account of these deficiencies.⁽³⁾ As had happened before, the House appeared as interested in the marginal aspects of naval debt, the wages of flag officers, Victuallers, contingency accounts and the passing of the accounts of Treasurers of the Navy, as in the fundamental reasons for debt and a remedy.⁽⁴⁾ The Commons always responded more readily to a financial issue that promised evidence of speculation and fraud. In the absence of any detailed account of a debate on naval finance between 1702 and 1710 the reason for the persistent refusal by the Commons to take any legislative action on the navy debt must be assumed to have been a general assumption that parliament had

(1) See below pp. 150-1.

(2) Brydges to St. John, 8 July 1709, Letters from James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, to Henry St. John, ed. G. Davies and M. Tinling, H.L.B.IX (1936) 125.

(3) C.J.XVI, 238-9; Luttrell VI, 517.

(4) C.J.XVI, 237-8, 259, 266, 328-9.

guaranteed the money and that eventually debts would be paid. By the time the debt had grown really formidable the temptation to a hard pressed ministry not to provoke trouble by demanding more taxes must have become stronger with each year. In the session of 1708-9 it does seem that the problem of the debt was seriously debated but action deferred because it was better to suffer the financial disadvantages of the debt rather than to impose new taxes on a country already exhausted by the war. (1)

Whether active consideration of the debt could have been delayed in the next session is debatable, and irrelevant because even before the 1709-10 session of parliament had opened the saviour of naval credit had already appeared and spoken. Sacheverell's sermon on 5 November 1709 is conventionally the starting-point in the complex process that in the next year broke the political power of the Whigs and the Marlboroughs. By the time parliament assembled again in November 1710 an election had produced a strongly Tory House of Commons and Robert Harley led the ministry. Tory success in the elections can be attributed to two issues, one of which,

(1) A Letter to a Friend concerning the Public Debts, particularly that of the navy (1711) 4.

the idea that the Anglican Church was in danger, had been a theme of Sacheverell's sermon. The importance of this theme in the election campaigns was generally recognised and has been emphasised in subsequent historical accounts to such an extent that another theme in Sacheverell's sermon, and the second major issue of the election, has been comparatively ignored. In his sermon Sacheverell attacked Godolphin as 'Volpone,' an identification with a character in Jonson's play that carried with it implications of hypocrisy and financial corruption. The belief that the Whigs and Marlborough had profited vastly from their term of office was already widespread. In the context of a great national debt, it would be easier to substantiate charges of corruption than to produce evidence that the Church was somehow threatened. Harley, as even W.A. Shaw admitted, was an astute politician. He had a knowledge of finance and contacts with experts such as Serpison. He infinitely preferred the concrete evidence of debt and speculation, with all the 'Country' sympathy this approach would give him, to the atavistic issue of Anglicanism. Corruption and the debt provided a theme which under his direction was capable of infinite political variation. It was the foundation of his following in the Commons. As late as 25 November 1711 Bromley could describe the continuing political strength

Harley drew from the obsession with corruption that had been raised at the 1710 elections:

'Gentlemen were anxious to answer the expectations of those that sent them thither, and to act as becomes a House of Commons chosen by a spirit raised from an opinion of great corruption in the late administration.'⁽¹⁾

The Queen's speech at the meeting of parliament on 29 November 1710 made reference to the debt, specifically mentioning the debt of the navy.⁽²⁾ The Commons replied with an assurance that they would 'endeavour to trace the source of this great evil.'⁽³⁾ On 4 December the Commons learnt that the debt of the navy on 30 September 1710 was £5,655,535. 18. 0.⁽⁴⁾ A Commission of Accounts was appointed to conduct the investigation, and information for the commissioners and the House to study was rapidly produced.⁽⁵⁾

The eventual results of the investigation were politically disappointing. Harley, with great skill, was able to keep the issue of corruption alive and to use the debt variously against Whigs, Marlborough and the Dutch; and almost as a by-product to these political considerations

(1) H.M.C. Portland V, 116.

(2) C.J.XVI, 403.

(3) Ibid.XVI, 405.

(4) Ibid.XVI, 414.

(5) Ibid.XVI, 446.

the credit of the navy was saved: but the facts that emerged from a study of the debt were prosaic more than scandalous. Consideration of the debt was the most elaborate and probably the most effective lesson in naval finance the Commons received between 1688 and 1714. (1)

- (1) The most useful sources that give the reasons for and scope of the naval debt are, in chronological order:-
- (a) Memorial on the Victual Debt, 8 November 1705, Queen Anne's Navy, 277.
 - (b) Statement by Navy and Victualling Boards of reasons for debt, 19 November 1705, Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS.XI f.105.
 - (c) Navy Board to Admiralty, 19 November 1706, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3606.
 - (d) 4 April 1709, C.J.XVI, 186 (see above p. 138)
 - (e) Treasury Memorial to the Queen, 31 August 1710, B.M. Harley Loan, 29/40, ff. 77-8.
 - (f) Memorial to Harley, 10 January 1711, B.M. Harley Loan, 29/40.
 - (g) Navy Board to the Admiralty, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3615, 26 January 1711.
 - (h) C.J.XVI., 488-493.
 - (i) Copies of papers prepared by the Commissioners of the Navy and presented to the Commons 1710-13, N.M.M. Sergison, Ser./118.

The figure of £5,655,535. 18. 0. given to the Commons as the navy debt was calculated to shock. Although this figure was freely used in pamphlets and presumably in debate as a hard figure for the debt of the navy, it was possible to qualify it obviously and substantially even with the evidence before the Commons in December 1710.⁽¹⁾ There were tallies worth £492,617. 16. 9½. available for navy use and the Treasurer of the Navy and an ex-Treasurer, Littleton, had £92,286. 16. 7d., in their possession.⁽²⁾ Moreover, the Commons in 1710 were concerned only with the increase of the debt in Anne's reign. At her accession, they were told, the debt of the navy had been £1,849,406. 5. 8.⁽³⁾ That part of the debt that was caused by the

(1) C.J.XVI, 415.

(2) Ibid.XVI, 415.

(3) Why the Commons accepted this figure is a minor mystery. In the statement of debt presented to them in November 1710 the debt at Anne's accession is given as £184,700. 8. 1., a figure lower than those given earlier in the reign, see above p. 129. The figure of £1,849,406. 5. 8., was infiltrated into the mathematics of the debt by the Navy Board, N.M.M. Sergison, Ser./118 f.1; Queen Anne's Navy, 39. Presumably this figure made their explanations of the debt easier, but it made Harley's more difficult. The difficulties of any mathematical analysis of the debt by commissioners of accounts or historians are pointed by this multiplicity of starting points.

deficiencies of parliamentary grants could not rightly contribute to the debt. These deficiencies, on 30 September 1710, amounted to £1,350,908. 7. 6¾,⁽¹⁾ but this sum did not represent the total cost to the navy. The loss of credit caused by these deficiencies led naturally to an increase in the prices the navy had to pay. The cost of such increases was beyond calculation⁽²⁾ but delays in payment did cause two kinds of expenditure that could be calculated and should properly be added to the sum of deficiencies. The shortage of ready money made it necessary to pay interest on bills awaiting payment at a cost to the Navy Board of £242,265. 12. 0., and to the Victuallers of £209,239. 12. 6.⁽³⁾ Shortage of ready money made the Victuallers resort to short allowance grants in lieu of food and these cost £15,537. 17. 9.⁽⁴⁾ Thus the debt in Anne's reign that parliament had to consider, when those obvious items for

- (1) Navy Board Account 20 Dec. 1710, N.M.M. Sergison Ser/118.
- (2) See below pp. 150-1.
- (3) Godolphin to the Commissioners of Victualling, 20 May 1706, to the Commissioners of the Navy, 11 Sept. 1706, C.T.B.XX Pt. III, 647, 761; Treasury Warrant, 28 Sept. 1709, C.T.B.XXIII Pt. II, 375; Queen Anne's Navy 40; Debt of the Navy, 10 Jan. 1710, B.M. Harley Loan 29/40.
- (4) Queen Anne's Navy 41.

which the navy could not be held responsible were deducted, was a debt of £1,403,273. 9. 1¼., not one of over five million pounds.⁽¹⁾

Even this debt was not an entirely fair charge on the navy. Parliament had, by various acts and addresses, increased the charge of the navy and made no provision for the charges incurred. The first of these extra charges in time and cost was the establishment of the Register Office in 1696.⁽²⁾ Although the Office achieved practically nothing of value it cost in Anne's reign £299,493. 19. 10.⁽³⁾ Other expenses the navy met at the

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- (1) - Obtained by subtracting from the neat debt
 - 5,655,535. 18. 0., the figure
 - 4,252,262. 8. 10¼., which is the sum of:-

492,617.	16.	9½.	Tallies in hand
92,286.	16.	7.	Treasurers
1,849,406.	5.	8.	Debt 8.3.1702.
1,350,908.	7.	6¼.	Deficiencies
242,265.	12.	0.	Interest : Navy Office
209,239.	12.	6.	Interest : Victuallers
15,537.	17.	9.	Short Allowance

4,252,262. 8.10¼.

- (2) For the Register Office see below, pp. 355-66.
- (3) This figure for the cost of the Register Office is obtained by subtracting its debt on 30 Sept. 1702 from the total debt on 30 Sept. 1710. (C.J. XIV, 21; C.J. XVI, 415). By allowing the Commons to use the net debt in its calculations the Navy Board allowed the total figure of debt to be increased.

direction of parliament were £18,000. 16. 6. in premiums for naval stores,⁽¹⁾ £34,155. 0. 0. for prisoner of war bounty⁽²⁾ and £4,729. 10. 5. for raising men in the counties.⁽³⁾ Moreover, the Commons had three times addressed the Queen and requested extra naval expenditure. These charges, if the responsibility for naval finance was theirs, as they claimed in 1711, should properly have been provided for by a vote of additional money to the navy. These addresses cost the navy £134,232. 0. 0., to replace the ships lost in the Great Storm of 1703,⁽⁴⁾ £15,158. 0. 11. as pensions to the dependants of seamen lost in this storm⁽⁵⁾ and

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- (1) 3 & 4 Anne c9; see below pp.201-2. The Navy Board figure, used here, for this expense is higher than the £16,433 given for the cost of premiums quoted in R.G. Albion, Forests and Sea Power (1926) 418. The higher figure is used because it is the more contemporary.
- (2) 6 Anne c65; An Act for the better securing the Trade of the Kingdom by Cruisers and Convoys; see below p.450 Clause VIII of this Act ordered the Treasurer of the Navy to pay £5 for every prisoner.
- (3) 4 & 5 Anne c6, An Act for the Encouragement and Increase of Seamen; see below p.400.
- (4) For these charges generally, see Queen Anne's Navy 40-41. Address of the Commons 1 Dec. 1703, C.J. XIV, 240, 399.
- (5) Address of the Commons 1 Dec. 1703, C.J.XIV, 240.

£30,777. 13. 5.. as a reward for the sailors who fought at Malaga.⁽¹⁾ This financial generosity without responsibility is a good example of parliamentary confusion over its powers. By acts and addresses the parliament added £536,547. 1. 1., to the charge of the navy. In terms of the debt that was being considered in 1710-11 this reduced the navy's responsibility to £866,726. 8. 0 $\frac{1}{4}$.⁽²⁾

The merit of all the above figures is that they are all figures produced by the Navy Board for parliamentary attention and the Navy Board could justify them by receipts and vouchers. Further erosion of the debt becomes less sure mathematically and in part dependent upon the assumption that parliament supported the strategic developments of the war, particularly in Spain, and that this support implied that the navy was justified in meeting the increased expenses caused by the extension of the war. There is ample proof that parliament supported the extension of the war⁽³⁾ though it seems doubtful whether many, or any, of the members thought far

(1) Address of the Commons 2 Nov. 1704, C.J.XIV, 394.

(2) The figure is obtained by deducting the cost of parliamentary impositions, £536,547. 0. 3., from the figure of £1,403,273. 9. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$., on p. 147.

(3) G.M. Trevelyan, England Under Queen Anne (1946 edn.) II, 324-6.

enough ahead to see the financial implications of the strategy they supported. The financial implications were considerable. They involved the cost of moving naval stores to the Mediterranean, greater use of bills of exchange, the cost of extra staff in bases abroad. From departmental accident or convenience the cost of maintaining the garrisons of Gibraltar and Newfoundland both fell on the charge of the navy. Navy Board officials claimed that the additional expenses forced upon them by these expansions of the war cost £950,992. 14. 0.⁽¹⁾ If this charge could be accepted the debt was more than explained.

However, another and less well defined aspect of the debt must be considered. The navy debt as it increased in the middle years of Anne's reign had all but destroyed the credit of the navy and caused all naval costs to increase.⁽²⁾ By 1710 navy bills were at 35% discount and

(1) This figure was made up by the cost of -

Land forces	608,485.	7.	7.
Freights	153,472.	2.	4¼.
Salaries abroad	45,859.	12.	6¼.
Provisions abroad (over " England)	114,085.	7.	7½.
" "	29,090.	3.	11.
	<u>950,992.</u>	<u>14.</u>	<u>0.</u>

Debt of the Navy, 10 Jan. 1710, B.M. Harley Loan 29/40, cf. Burnet IV, 269.

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3610, 25 Nov. 1708.

contractors could expect to wait more than three years for payment.⁽¹⁾ Harley claimed that such discount was compelling the navy to pay two or three times the normal prices for the commodities it required.⁽²⁾ Certainly prices for basic naval victuals were generally halved with the re-establishment of naval credit and the institution of a new course in 1712.⁽³⁾ The Victuallers were the hardest hit by bad credit and poor harvest and

- (1) Sir William Beveridge et al, Prices and Wages in England (1939) I, 521-2.
- (2) Lord Oxford's Account of Public Affairs (1714), H.M.C. Portland V, 464. Harley became Earl of Oxford in May 1711.
- (3) The reduction in prices can be seen from a summary in the Sergison Papers, N.M.M. Ser/121, 19 Ap. 1714,

	1710	1713
Beef per cwt.	2. 0. 0.	1. 0. 8.
Pork per cwt.	3. 3. 0.	1. 8. 0.
Wheat per qtr.	4. 19. 0.	1. 5. 0.
Beer per tun.	3. 8. 0.	2. 4. 0.
Salt a way.	12. 6. 3.	8. 0. 0.

It is, however, impossible to ascribe the high prices in 1709 and 1710 wholly to the state of naval credit; these were years of bad harvests and general scarcity cf. T.S. Ashton, Economic Fluctuations in England 1700-1800 (1957) 16-7.

this department was a decisive contributor to the growing debt because the 19s. Od., they were allowed for each man each month was an unrealistic figure. In all but the best harvest years the Victuallers needed 23s. Od., to feed a man; in bad years 25-30s. Od., was necessary.⁽¹⁾ Between 1702 and 1710 the Victuallers spent £258,328. 18. 5¼d., more than their share of naval funds.⁽²⁾ Although the Victuallers were the hardest hit all branches of the navy suffered from rising prices. The increasing demands of a growing navy must have been a factor in those rising prices, as was the existence of war-time conditions. The cost of hemp doubled between 1691 and 1710, as did naval demands for it.⁽³⁾ The kind of naval war being waged was also more expensive in that it demanded more service from the ships and consequently high maintenance costs; a minor example of this growing cost of war was the increased use of tallow for cruisers.⁽⁴⁾ The basic monthly rate of

(1) P.R.O. King William's Chest, S.P.8/15 f.41; *ibid.* Adm. 1/3568 ff. 156-60; *ibid.* Adm. 1/3569 f.1, 112; *ibid.* Adm. 1/3570 f.650; C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 209; Queen Anne's Navy 306-8

(2) *Ibid.* 38. The Victuallers allocation of money for 1710 was spent by 5 April, C.T.B.XXIV Pt.I, 231.

(3) N.M.M. Sergison Ser/103 ff.409-11.

(4) P.R.O.Adm. 1/3615, 12 Feb. 1711.

£4 remained static in Anne's reign despite the many factors that reduced its value to the navy,⁽¹⁾ and there was no extraordinary grant to check the debt and encourage contractors, as had happened in William's reign.⁽²⁾

It was evidence such as has been summarised in the pages immediately above that the parliamentary Commissioners of Accounts had to study. Their task was made more difficult by a multitude of complicated detail, ranging from the charge of mathematics masters to a decision on which department was responsible for the pay of marines,⁽³⁾ before they could even see the outline of

- (1) The £4 monthly rate was not changed until 1797 when it became £7, J.E.D. Binney, *British Public Finance and Administration 1774-92* (1958) 142.
- (2) See above p.109.
- (3) For mathematics masters see *Queen Anne's Navy*, 313. The monthly cost and equipment of a marine was more expensive than that of a sailor, but no one seemed quite sure who was responsible for this charge, L. Edye, *The Historical Records of the Royal Marines* (1893) I, 313, 349. Sergison believed the navy was not responsible on this account, Sergison to Harley, 15 May 1711, B.M. Harlean 6,287 f.109. The weight of common sense opinion was against him; indeed in May 1703 the marines had been placed directly under the control of the Lord High Admiral, N.M.M. Southwell Sou/5 f.249.

their problem, but the way in which the vast figure of navy debt would melt away once logic or justice was applied must have been obvious very soon. Equally obvious must have been the fact that if the battalions of figures hid embezzlement, it would take longer than an impatient parliament would allow to find proof of frauds. The issue and the figures were too public for concealment; within a few months the Whigs, using the same Navy Board figures that the commissioners had, were able to produce a brilliantly lucid pamphlet which proved that the debt on the navy was a mere £5,474. 13. 11¼.⁽¹⁾ The Navy Board which included Harley's old confidant of William's reign, Sergison, provided all the evidence, and more, that was necessary, but it was an activity directed more to exonerating the efficiency and zeal of the office than to providing the kind of information that the politicians wanted to find.

While the debt was being studied matters were not going smoothly for Harley in the Commons. Many of his supposed Tory supporters wanted more radical action than he was prepared to support against the Whigs or more

(1) A Letter to a Friend concerning the Public Debts particularly that of the Navy (1711) 4.

legislation in the Tory interest.⁽¹⁾ An early indication of the kind of scandal expected from the financial investigation would be politically useful and on 3 January 1711 Harley announced that 'considerable abuses' had been discovered that involved a member of the Commons.⁽²⁾ The member was one Thomas Ridge, and it was hardly surprising that he was both a Whig and a brewer involved in Victualling contracts.⁽³⁾ The House considered the evidence against him on 15 and 27 February and learnt that he had defrauded the navy of beer to the value of £55,435. 10. 0.⁽⁴⁾ He was expelled the House and it was resolved that 'the said frauds and abuses have been one great occasion of the heavy debt that lies upon the navy.'⁽⁵⁾ It was a taste of the sort of party vengeance the House wanted but in some ways an unsatisfactory exercise. Ridge was a very minor Whig and with this calibre of prosecution another hundred victims would be necessary to explain the debt.

(1) K. Feiling *op.cit.* 430-3; G.M. Trevelyan, *op.cit.* III, 108.

(2) C.J.XVI, 446, 446-7.

(3) He was M.P. for Poole; *Lettres Historiques*, Vol. 39 (1711) 316.

(4) C.J.XVI, 498-502, 522-5.

(5) *Ibid.*XVI, 525.

The first report of the Commissioners of Accounts, presented on 12 February, was another disappointment.⁽¹⁾ The emphasis in the report was very obviously on those topics that were likely to be politically useful - the accounts of past Treasurers of the Navy, the activities of merchants (Heathcote was specifically named⁽²⁾) who managed rates of exchange, the transport service, the use by the land forces and our allies of navy money. The report is a reconnaissance showing lines of possible attack, an interim report promising the concrete accusations that the Commons wanted.

The most important work of the Commission came at the end of the session in an address that was presented to the Queen on 31 May 1711.⁽³⁾ The address dealt with the general causes of the debt. The principal statement was at once an accusation and a definition;

'in several years the service has been enlarged and the charge of it increased, beyond the bounds prescribed and the annual supplies granted by Parliament. To this new and illegal practice, we must in great measure, ascribe the rise and growth of the heavy debts that lie upon the nation ... this is a dangerous invasion of the rights of parliament.'

(1) C.J.XVI, 488-93.

(2) See below p. 230.

(3) C.J.XVI, 683-5.

This was the most unequivocal statement of financial authority yet made by parliament. By it the habit of the executive departments of spending more than parliament voted was retrospectively condemned.⁽¹⁾ As a constitutional declaration it is important but it was probably a second best to Harley and his supporters, who would both have preferred specific accusation to general condemnation.

In the same address the Commons reaffirmed parliament's responsibility for all national debt. Where the address made specific reference to the navy it was to emphasise the charges the army had contributed to naval expenditure, as part of the campaign against Marlborough, although these costs were a minute proportion of the naval debt.⁽²⁾ The abuses of victualling were mentioned but there was no reference to the parliamentary contribution to the debt, to the deficiencies or the debt before Anne's accession. The address was in fact a typical product of the period, a strange mixture of valuable constitutional advance and partisan bias. The report

(1) See above p. 84.

(2) £606,806. 7. 7., was attributed to the land forces, C.J.XVI, 684.

was clearly interim, with a reference to 'the frauds and depredations of such evil ministers' as a promise of renewed persecution when the evidence that had accumulated had been processed to give up its secrets.

In all the activities of the 1710-11 session of parliament the navy had been only a secondary aspect of consideration; the aim of investigation had been to uncover Whig fraud. Such essentially negative activities were necessary politically but Harley's retention of power depended on positive success in restoring the credit of the nation and navy. By the time he gained power in 1710 such credit, national and naval, had been practically destroyed by the weight of debt. In August 1710 naval bills which carried interest were selling at a discount of 33%, those without interest at 50% discount.⁽¹⁾ Bad harvests, exhaustion of war and a general lack of confidence, especially by Whig financiers, in the financial ability of a ministry led by Harley, made the situation worse by the end of 1710.⁽²⁾ Harley had to create confidence

(1) Anon to Harley, 18 Aug 1710, B.M. Harley Loan 29/40 f.76.

(2) W.R. Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint Stock Companies to 1720* (1912) I, 385, III, 292-3; W.A. Shaw, *Introduction C.T.B.XXV Pt. I*, xxv; M. Foot, *The Pen and the Sword* (1957) 138-41; Brydges to Harley, 21 Aug. 1710, *Correspondence of James Brydges to Robert Harley*, ed. G. Davies and M. Tinling, H.L.Q. I (1936-7) 460-1; J. Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble* (1960) 39.

so that the short term loans with which the war was financed would once again flow and the contractors would supply the government departments, knowing that they could soon be paid. A procedure for paying off a debt that had accrued because of deficiencies in the yield of revenue had been established in William's reign.⁽¹⁾ In the reign of Anne similar short term sinking funds had been established at intervals by act of parliament.⁽²⁾ By September 1710 Harley was already considering methods of paying off the debt, using these traditional methods, by allocating a specific number of taxes that would gradually pay it off.⁽³⁾ With an army and navy debt of over £9,000,000, equivalent to one and a half year's

(1) See above p. 124.

(2) These General Mortgages are listed by W.A. Shaw in his introduction to C.T.B.XXV Pt. I, xxiv-xxxv.

(3) The rest of the paragraph is based upon papers in the B.M. Harley Loan 29/40; particularly Debt of the Navy at Christmas 1710, f.86; A Scheme to Restore the Public Credit by providing for the debt of the navy, 22 Sept. 1710, f.78; George Caswall to R. Harley, 11 Sept. 1710, f.87; P.M.G. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England* (1967) 64-6.

supply, it was obvious that parliament would not be willing to vote taxes in sufficient quantity to pay off the debt quickly even if the country could support these taxes. Thus the payment had to be made as remote as possible. Interest of 6% in the period of waiting could be paid by continuing taxes voted in the 1709-10 session on wines, vinegar, tobacco, East India Company goods and whale fins. In the Harley Papers that deal with the debt certain maxims were stated - that the interest on the debt must be paid punctually at half yearly intervals and that naval supply and expenditure for each year must be adjusted to each other: the debt must never again be allowed to accumulate. Despite these maxims the traditional methods of solving the problem were inadequate by the end of 1710. In fact in the papers dealing with debt is one that outlined the method Harley was to use.⁽¹⁾ This paper listed the advantages that would follow if all the debts could be combined under the direction of a corporation or society. If the debts were united in this way the government would need to pay only one person, the treasurer of the

(1) A Scheme to restore the Public Credit by providing for the Debt of the navy, 22 Sept 1710, B.M. Harley Loan 29/40 f.78.

corporation, which would make for flexible and efficient administration. Accounting would be easier and it would be easier to borrow on stock rather than on tallies. Here was the embryo of the South Seas Company, by which Harley was to secure credit, liquidate the debt and win one of the greatest victories of his career.

On 17 May 1711 an act was proposed in the Commons which passed within two weeks under the title, 'An Act for making good Deficiencies and satisfying the public debts, and for erecting a Corporation to carry on trade to the South Seas.'⁽¹⁾ The later, tumultuous story of the South Sea Company has obscured the brilliance of this legislation as a solution to the problems of credit facing Harley in 1711. There were few acts more successful in Anne's reign.⁽²⁾ Anyone who could prove

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- (1) 9 Anne c15. C.J.XVI, 670, 671, 674, 676, 677, 678-9, 680-1; L.J. XIX, 313, 315, 322. The act also contained clauses to encourage fishery and to repeal the acts for registering seamen; see below p.366.
- (2) W.A. Shaw, Introduction, C.T.B.XIV Pt.I, xxxvii; J. Carswell, *The South Sea Bubble* (1960) 49 ff; W.R. Scott op.cit. III, 294-7; A. Boyer, *Life of Her Late Majesty (1721)* II, 352; Burnet IV, 269. The restoration of financial stability was not entirely the result of the act, lotteries helped to provide money, P.M.G. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England* (1967) 70-1, 363.

that the navy owed him money by producing navy bills could now exchange that debt for stock in the new company. That stock paid a guaranteed interest of 6% and was an attractive investment in its own right as the Company could hope for valuable trading concessions when peace came. The navy creditor could either acquire this stock, draw his interest and hope for good dividends from his investment, or sell his debt on the open market, where navy bills rapidly became marketable, the discount on them dropping rapidly by 20%.⁽¹⁾ Naturally the passing of an act was not the immediate end of the debt; its liquidation was a complex and lengthy task, South Sea Company stock was not quoted at 100 until 1715: but the problem of national and naval credit was well on the way to solution by the end of 1711.⁽²⁾

The political importance and consequences of the naval debt lasted beyond 1711. Walpole, who had escaped injury from his responsibilities as Treasurer of the Navy, was successfully attacked on his army foraging contracts in January 1712.⁽³⁾ In May 1713 a grant to Orford in 1710

(1) W.R. Scott op.cit. III, 295.

(2) Ibid. III, 296-7.

(3) J.H. Plumb, Sir Robert Walpole: The Making of a Statesman (1956) 178-84; C.J.XVII, 30.

was described in lengthy terms; ⁽¹⁾ the attraction of such matters for the Commons meant that the threat of prosecution was never absolutely dead. But the struggle for the peace as much as the complexities of the financial evidence saved the Whigs from worry over naval accounts in the session of 1711-12. The debt had its part in the struggle for the peace. On 18 February 1712 the House was shown how supporting our allies in Spain and Portugal had cost the nation £6,540,966. 14. 0. ⁽²⁾ In a representation to the Queen on the state of the war made on 1 March 1712, evidence such as this was exploited against the allies we were about to desert. ⁽³⁾ Earlier explanations of the debt, even the responsibility of the Whigs and Marlborough for it were conveniently ignored. It was alleged to be the Dutch who, by providing fewer ships for the allied fleet than they had promised, had forced our ships to undertake expensive campaigns in distant waters. This damaged the credit of the navy and

(1) C.J.XVII, 346.

(2) Ibid.XVII, 93. This was an impressive figure; its mathematical basis was ludicrous; for example, it assumed that every ship in the Mediterranean or the waters around the Iberian Peninsula contributed to this charge and was manned to the highest complement, N.M.M. Sergison Ser/118.

(3) C.J.XVII, 119-20.

debt mounted. The war in Spain had added to the debt. The ships we needed to defend our coasts and convoys were deployed to fulfil the tasks that were a Dutch responsibility. Thus the Dutch, in this cunningly contrived representation, became responsible for two major parliamentary grievances, the debt and inefficient trade protection. With this distortion the great debt of 1710 ended its political life. It had served Oxford well, helping him to beat the Whigs at an election, to rally his own supporters in the Commons, to threaten the Whigs, to establish himself as a brilliant financial statesman and to disparage his allies. The debt had also served the cause of parliamentary authority well.

The departure of the great debt of 1710 from the parliamentary scene did not deprive the Commons of issues concerned with naval debt. Despite the laborious investigation of naval debt and its causes, and despite the attempt by the Commons to limit and define the financial freedom of the navy, the demands of war and even of the peace that came in 1713, led to the navy's overspending as it had done since 1688. Thus the Commons had once again to consider the debt of the navy which although reduced by the working of the South Sea

Company, remained high by the standards of William's reign.⁽¹⁾ The reasons for the overspending were not new: the deficiencies of funds, the payment of premiums on naval stores, the long process of clearing the accounts of a Treasurer of the Navy, the inadequacy of the sum allocated to victuals, and the expense of marines. All these came, yet again, to the notice of the Commons as causes of debt.⁽²⁾ The most elaborate naval justification of the debt came in February 1714 in a memorial which is a miniature version of the elaborate accounts of 1710-11.⁽³⁾ There were some new causes of debt, especially those of a technical kind relating to the funding of debt with the South Sea Company,⁽⁴⁾ but the general causes are

(1) The debt of the navy was:-

£2,974,856.	17. 1.	on 30 Sept. 1711,
£2,527,119.	16.11.	on 30 Sept. 1712,
£2,045,624.	5. 8.	on 30 Sept. 1712,
£1,904,282.	16. 2.	on 1 Aug. 1714

(C.J.XVII, 19, 286, 288, 495; B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,439 f.120). These are the figures parliament saw; the real figure for debt, when tallies in hand were deducted, was always considerably less; for example, the real debt on 30 Sept. 1712 was £1,427,549. 19. 1½. See N.M.M. Sergison, Estimates of Navy Debts, 1671-1718, Ser/132.

(2) C.J.XVII, 99, 100, 287, 512, 520, 621-3; Queen Anne's Navy 47-8.

(3) Ibid. 55-7.

(4) C.J.XVII, 32, 148-50; C.T.B.XXV Pt. II, xxvi, 184-5, 565-6; Queen Anne's Navy 42-3.

unchanged. The navy continued to muster more than 40,000 men after 1710⁽¹⁾ and in peace mustered more than parliament had allowed when the threat in the Baltic of Charles XII's ambitions caused it to fit out, at the government's direction, fifteen ships manned to the highest complement at an estimated cost of £36,533.11.0.⁽²⁾ Such freedom of action had to be allowed: even before the peace Tory writers had been forced to use the arguments used earlier by the Whigs to justify naval overspending and a mounting debt.⁽³⁾ The only realistic attempt between 1688 and 1714 to calculate the cost of the navy on the basis of men actually mustered was made in March 1712 but in the next estimate the traditional pattern was followed.⁽⁴⁾ There are a few indications that naval officials did try to match expenditure to the sum voted⁽⁵⁾ but generally the weight of tradition and the peculiar circumstances of naval expenditure meant that the practical consequences of parliament's declaration of financial control as applied to

(1) Ibid. 56.

(2) Ibid. 57.

(3) 'An Estimate of the Debt of her Majesty's Navy (1711)' is a Whig pamphlet. The Tory reply, 'Observations on the Estimate of the debt of the Navy' (1711) contained statements such as, 'the expense of the year cannot be computed,' (p.3)

(4) C.J.XVII, 164.

(5) P.R.O. Treasury Minute Book, T.29.20 quoted by K. Darwin, John Aislabie (1670-1742), Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, Vol. 37, 271.

the navy were few.

The most significant innovation in naval finance brought about by the Tory ministry between 1711 and 1714 was a reassessment of the Ordinary. In April 1713 a committee of the Commons was formed to consider the Ordinary; the grant for 1713 had already been more generous than usual.⁽¹⁾ The officials of the Navy Board were called on to provide evidence and the committee presented a lengthy report to the House in May.⁽²⁾ The salaries and duties of each member of the naval administration, from commissioners to servants, were considered. Where money could be saved it was; John Fournier lost the sinecure worth £200 a year which he had held as Master Builder of Bomb Vessels since 1689. Much of the committee's time was taken up in hopefully examining the accounts of Orford and Walpole but despite this evidence of party bias the recommendations made were statesmanlike. There was no such sweeping and unrealistic reduction of clerks and offices as had been attempted after the peace in William's reign⁽³⁾ and

(1) C.J.XVII, 9; see Appendix IV.

(2) C.J.XVII, 344-7; Memorial from Admiralty to the Queen, 13 July 1713, B.M. Harley Loan 29/40, No. 13, f.69; N.M.M. Sergison, Ser/118, 30 Ap. 1713; N.M.M. Sergison, An Account of the Whole Proceedings of the Select Committee, Ser/121.

(3) See above pp. 85-6.

eventually the navy was granted £200,000 for the Ordinary.⁽¹⁾ The vote was a significant one. The Ordinary had always been particularly associated with parliamentary suspicion of money grants to the monarch. In 1713 the absence of complaint from the Navy Board is evidence that £200,000 was a fair grant of supply. It did bear relation to the upkeep of the navy in 1713. On the parliamentary side there was an assumption that such payments were the responsibility of parliament. It was an assumption expressed in a routine vote like the one for the Ordinary rather than a carefully worded constitutional declaration. Such declarations, like the one made on 31 May 1711,⁽²⁾ were sometimes in advance of feeling in the House. But explicitly or implicitly, between 1688 and 1714, the Commons had assumed control of naval finance. The control was somewhat precarious and would need time before it became for the majority of the Commons an unconscious assumption. The realities of this power probably outstripped the expert knowledge possessed by

(1) C.J.XVII, 351-2; B.M. Harley Loan 29/40, No. 13, f.69; the sum was granted against some opposition and was rather less than the naval estimate. The grant for 1714 was more generous and included an allowance for half pay, C.J.XVII, 537,530; W.A. Shaw, Introduction, C.T.B.XXVIII, xiv-x; A.N. Newman, Proceedings in the House of Commons, March-June 1714 B.I.H.R. XXXIV (1961) 211-3.

(2) See above p. 156.

the Commons but power and knowledge were linked, as they had been in so many ways since 1688. They had both resulted, more often than not, from factional and short-sighted incentives. Behind these motives, and frequently providing the real force of parliamentary interest, was concern for the navy. Despite financial crisis and endemic debt, parliament ensured that the navy had sufficient money to assert a dominance.

Material

Parliament's annual grant of money to the navy provided for the pay and victuals of sailors, the maintenance of ships, and munitions. The four divisions of naval expenditure were organised to these ends but neither parliament nor the naval administration considered that this routine grant of money was sufficient if it was necessary for the navy to become stronger. Thus parliament made provision for any necessary expansion by means of extraordinary grants of money. The capital investment in ships and improved dockyard facilities represented by these grants did not end parliament's concern for the physical fabric of the navy. The provision of certain commodities, vital to the navy, also involved parliament. For some of these stores England was dependent on foreign countries, and out of a concern with national security and the contemporary mercantilist theories, there came legislation that affected the navy.

The background to the extraordinary grants that provided more ships and bigger dockyards was in every way similar to the general background of financial supply described in the preceding chapter. The routine grant, calculated on the basis of the number of men who would

serve in the navy, and the extraordinary grant in any year were both usually the product of precisely the same debates. Of the two fundamental material requirements for naval security, ships and dockyard facilities,⁽¹⁾ the former naturally had priority. The most generous extraordinary grants for more ships were naturally made in time of crisis.⁽²⁾ The most spectacular accession of strength came after the defeat off Beachy Head in 1690. In the next session of parliament £570,000 was voted for the building of seventeen third and ten fourth rate ships, more than the navy had requested, and an increase in naval strength so spectacular that the money bill authorising the expenditure has been described as the 'first example of a naval defence act.'⁽³⁾ A similar sense of crisis after the discovery of a Jacobite plot in Lancashire led the Lords to address the King in February 1695 for a bigger navy.⁽⁴⁾ When danger was less obvious grants were less generous. William's plea, in his opening speech to parliament on 7 November 1693, for more ships was ignored.⁽⁵⁾

(1) A more detailed account of the expenditures involved in extraordinary grants is given in J. Burchett, *A Complete History of the most Remarkable Transactions at Sea* (1720) Preface.

(2) See Appendix VI.

(3) Ehrman 429-31; Grey X, 155; C.J.X, 432, 506, 525.

(4) L.J.XV, 498, 505, 509, 512, 513; H.M.C. H.L. I, 497-8.

(5) C.J.XI, 1. See below p. 252

A similar refusal to vote more money for ships in the session of 1691-2 enabled Court speakers in the next session to blame some of the failures in trade protection on shortage of ships.⁽¹⁾ One of the restraints on such votes was the tradition that it was the monarch's responsibility to provide ships from his own revenue. Despite the vote of 1691 the tradition was strong and powerfully expressed by Country members such as Clarges.⁽²⁾ In the early years of Anne's reign, when few of the parliamentary initiatives that implied growing parliamentary authority over the navy were maintained, there were no more grants of money to provide ships for the navy.⁽³⁾ Generally, however, in William's reign parliamentary concern for the upkeep and expansion of the navy was persistent and the grants of money for these purposes were lavish.⁽⁴⁾ It was this generosity that made the English navy the most powerful in the world, despite the losses caused by the action of the enemy and the sea.⁽⁵⁾

(1) N. Luttrell, *An Abstract of the Debates 1692-3* f.60.

(2) *Ibid.* f.102.

(3) See above p. 126. See Appendix VI. There was a grant in 1706 towards the cost of equipping eight new ships.

(4) See Appendix VI; Grey IX, 336; H.M.C. Kenyon 397.

(5) See Appendix VII. The navy became as powerful as the figures of the Appendix show despite considerable losses; in the first six years of William's reign 95 ships were lost, C.J.XI, 348-50; in the first four years of Anne's reign 64 were lost, C.J.XV, 410.

By the end of William's reign it seems to have been generally accepted by parliament that the navy was strong enough. The navy, however, continued to grow.⁽¹⁾ In the same way as naval officials considered they had the right to increase the muster of sailors above the number voted by parliament, so they continued to add to the strength of the navy by building, hiring and the purchase of prizes.⁽²⁾ This static period after the great expansion and initiatives of William's reign applies to nearly every aspect of parliament's relationship with the navy. As far as the provision of ships was concerned, it was probably produced by a belief that there were insufficient sailors available to man more ships and parliament's tacit acknowledgement of Prince George's responsibility for the navy during his tenure as Lord High Admiral.

The navy built up during William's reign was adequate to meet the needs of the French wars. The great increase in numbers was in ships of third rate and below. Although some flag officers saw dangers in the neglect of building first and second rate ships, rightly believing that victory in fleet action went to

(1) See above p.173. A summary of the ways in which the navy increased in Anne's reign is given in Queen Anne's Navy, Appendix V, 362-3.

(2) P.R.O. Ad. 8/3, 18 Oct. 1692. See above pp.128-9.

the side with the greater weight of broadside, it was the smaller ship that was more generally useful.⁽¹⁾

There was considerable and general feeling against the great ships because of a belief that they pandered to the vanity and despotism of captains.⁽²⁾ Certainly in Anne's reign, and often under William, the first rates were mainly used to muster reservoirs of men who could be deployed to man smaller ships. Even with the emphasis on building ships of lower rate it was in the smallest ships, those suitable for cruiser or convoy duties, that the most pressing and persistent shortages were felt.⁽³⁾ This shortage was not remedied in the eighteenth century. It was inherently difficult to get parliament to provide money for such ships, presumably because it was felt that the navy had sufficient financial latitude to provide these ships on its own initiative. In a wider sense parliamentary interest in

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- (1) Berkeley to Shrewsbury, 16 July 1696, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I, 369; Shovell to Nottingham, 18 July 1702, C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 190.
- (2) Diary of John Evelyn, ed. E.S. de Beer (1955) V, 10-11; H. Maydman, *Naval Speculations and Maritime Politics* (1691) 289; Ehrman 35.
- (3) H. Maydman, *op.cit.* 287-8; P.R.O. Adm. 3/1, f.52; H.M.C. H.L. I, 120; C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 220; *Queen Anne's Navy*, 84, 91.

the ships of the navy did nothing to improve the technical achievement of English ship builders, who remained staunchly conservative; indeed most of the third rates built as a result of the 1690 grant were dangerously overgunned.⁽¹⁾

Another and traditional way in which parliament could reinforce the navy was to encourage the building of stalwart merchant ships of large size. Such ships when used for trade were more capable of defending themselves and thus relieved men of war for duties other than convoying. They could also be used as men of war, their construction and armament being usually equivalent to that of a fifth or sixth rate naval ship. The years 1688 to 1714 were transitional in that they were among the last in which hired merchant ships were capable of fulfilling an operational naval role without major reconstruction.⁽²⁾ Ships hired with the particular

(1) G.P. Naish, *Ships and Ship Building*, in *A History of Technology*, ed. C. Singer et al., (1957) III, 482-97; G.S. Laird Clowes, *Sailing Ships: Their History and Development* (1932) 79-84; *Sergison Papers* 80-4; *H.M.C. H.L.* I, 124; *P.R.O. Adm.* 7/336, 31 Dec. 1702.

(2) Sir G. Callender and F.H. Hinsley, *The Naval Side of British History* (1954) 107; V. Barbour, *Dutch and English Merchant Shipping in the Seventeenth Century*, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* II (1930) 2, reprinted in *Essays in Economic History I*, ed. E.M. Carus Wilson (1961) 227-8; R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (1962) 312; Ehrman 32; R.G. Albion, *Forests and Sea Power* (1926) 76.

needs of convoy and West Indian services in view were an important source of naval reinforcement, particularly in the early years of William's reign.⁽¹⁾ A bill to encourage the building of such merchant ships as would be capable of duties like these was discussed by the Commons in January 1692 and in January and February of 1693. Difficulties of wording and definition, pressure of business and the lateness of the session when this bill was discussed prevented its becoming law then. The bill was again considered during the 1693-4 session of parliament, first of all in November, and in April 1694 it did become law.⁽²⁾ The bill which became law was substantially the one that had been considered in all three sessions of parliament. It would seem to have been a bill that was kept before the attention of the Commons by Country and merchant members. Three men particularly are associated with it at all stages, Hugh Boscawen, Sir Samuel Barnardiston and Sir Mathew Andrews. The first two were recognised Country speakers and Barnardiston was as well interested in the Levant trade.

(1) Ibid. 76.

(2) 5 W. & M. c 24, An Act for building good and defensible ships; in 1692, C.J.X, 618, 643, 649-50; H.M.C. H.L. MSS. 1692-3, 63-4; in 1693, C.J.X. 803, 806; in 1693-4, C.J.X1, 3, 46, 69, 154, 165.

Andrews was a trader to the East Indies. The House would naturally have been sympathetic to their arguments in the session after the destruction of the Smyrna Convoy in 1693,⁽¹⁾ and the government itself must have been aware that the navy was hiring merchant ships to supplement its force of smaller escort vessels.⁽²⁾ By the act all merchant ships of more than 32 guns which were built in the next ten years were to be allowed a remittance of one tenth on customs duties on the goods they imported on their first three voyages.

The ships that parliament provided, whether built specifically for the navy or hired, needed bigger and more elaborately equipped bases. New bases were especially necessary to meet the new strategic threat posed by a war with France; the bases in existence in 1688 were primarily designed to counter a Dutch threat.⁽³⁾ Plymouth Dockyard was created to meet the new problem, and parliament in the reigns of both William and Anne voted grants

(1) The political background to this session is considered in more detail below pp. 248-254.

(2) Luttrell III, 239.

(3) D.C. Coleman, Naval Dockyards under the Later Stuarts, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 2nd. Series, VI (1953-4) 134-5; Sir H. Kitson, *Early History of Portsmouth Dockyard, 1496-1800*, Pts. II & III, *M.M.* 34 (1948) 3-10, 87-95; G.J. Marcus, *A Naval History of England I, The Formative Centuries* (1961) 198; Ehrman 81-5, 415-29.

to equip this and other dockyards for the maintenance of the greatly increased navy.⁽¹⁾

Parliament's interest in the ships, the basic units of sea power, can be seen in the numerous lists it demanded of the navy which expressed this power in terms of vessels and guns. Such interest was a natural expression of parliamentary concern for the navy. Parliament's interest in the vast diversity of raw materials and manufactures that went to the making of the ships was naturally less, but the provision of some of these materials was forced on parliament's attention. Timber, tar, pitch, resin, hemp and canvas were needed in great quantities and for the provision of these vital commodities, because their supply in England was either inadequate or non-existent, the navy was dependent on foreign countries. Most of these commodities were produced in the lands around the Baltic, and their control of these strategic materials made it possible for them to increase the price practically at will. Vigorous action against such practice was prevented by both the demands of the war with France and the danger of driving these neutral powers into alliance with France.⁽²⁾

(1) See Appendix VII.

(2) See above p. 9.

Parliament's solution to this problem was to encourage by legislation the production of these commodities in England or in English territories. In this legislation the executive displayed more initiative than in any other aspect of legislation that concerned the navy.

The navy needed timber of many kinds in large quantities for both the construction and repair of ships.⁽¹⁾ England could not provide either the quantity or the qualities of wood necessary. The provision of some kinds of timber presented few problems. The main masts for the biggest ships, of a diameter of more than twenty-seven inches, were generally provided from New England. They were bought and transported to England for the navy by contractors like Sir John Shorter, William Wallis, Francis Collins and John Taylor.⁽²⁾ This source was never a major problem although the ravages of French and Indians and the inefficiency of convoys gave

(1) Ehrman 38-42.

(2) R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (1962) 96; C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1689-90, 169; C.S.P. Col.Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 215; *ibid.* 1708-9, 448; C.T.B. XXI Pt. II 253; Ehrman 59-61; for John Taylor see below p.182.

the Navy Board sporadic cause for concern.⁽¹⁾ Most naval timber, spars and planks of fir, pine and spruce as well as small masts, still came from the Baltic and Norway. The import of such timber represented the most considerable of all English imports in terms of volume. The naval contractors to the Baltic required a fleet of between twenty-five and fifty ships each year.⁽²⁾

Although the precarious neutrality of the Baltic kingdoms was the major threat to the supply of naval stores the navy had also to accept certain lesser disadvantages associated with supply from the Baltic. Most of the contractors for naval timber were also involved in the supply of Baltic tar, pitch, resin and hemp. The supply of all these items was dominated by a small number of merchants who were sufficiently astute and wealthy to act in concert in order to get better prices from the navy.⁽³⁾ Their action as a group can be seen in 1690, when they obtained interest on their hemp contracts,⁽⁴⁾ in 1691, when their delay in contracting

(1) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 301.

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3567 f 313; 1/3593, 5 June 1702; 1/3593, 24 May 1703; 1/3605, 14 June 1706; 1/3607, 8 May 1707.

(3) Ehrman 60-5.

(4) C.T.B.1X, Pt. II, 778; Sergison Papers 61-2.

and delivery was an attempt to secure better prices,⁽¹⁾ and in 1693, when they protested about the funds on which their tallies had been assigned.⁽²⁾ In this last instance they petitioned parliament about their grievances.⁽³⁾ For 1694 they demanded £26 a ton on their hemp contracts and the Treasury took advice on how to break this 'combination'.⁽⁴⁾ The Navy Board was advised to buy the hemp necessary on commission, a method that was generally unpopular because it removed the element of competition and might lead to higher prices, as the supply was under the control of one merchant, who made his profit from the commission granted by the navy.⁽⁵⁾ John Taylor, a naval contractor in American and Baltic timber, hemp, pitch, tar and resin, was chosen to supply the hemp.⁽⁶⁾ He was given favourable terms of

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- (1) Ibid. 64-5; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3564 f.403.
- (2) P.R.O. Adm. 3/8, 19 April 1693; N.M.M. Sergison, Ser/100 ff. 189-90.
- (3) C.J.XI, 126.
- (4) The combination was led by W. Gore, Gold, Martin and Joy; C.T.B.X, Pt.III,, 1382; *ibid.* XI, 11; Ehrman 64.
- (5) C.T.B.X. Pt.II, 630; Sir W. Beveridge et al, *Prices and Wages in England* (1939) I, 619-20.
- (6) Evidence of his contracts can be found for almost every year between 1688 and 1714. The officials of the Navy Board seem to have valued his efficiency and advice, see below p. 195. Taylor had a wide circle of political and commercial contacts, R. Walcott, *The East India Interest in the General Election of 1700-1*, E.H.R. LXXI (1956) 230, 233.

commission and excused duty on some of his American imports.⁽¹⁾ Taylor provided the hemp on commission for 1695 and 1697 as well.⁽²⁾ In Anne's reign there is no such obvious action of combination by the Baltic Merchants. Naval tar and pitch were purchased on commission in 1703 and 1705 but the reason for this is to be found rather in Swedish politics than the ambitions of the Baltic Merchants.⁽³⁾ There seem to have been rather more contractors in this period⁽⁴⁾ and this fact, together with the successful Navy Board resistance to any combination of merchants helped to maintain a fair price.⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) C.T.B.X Pt. II, 630, 643, 647, 651, 937, 951; *ibid* X Pt. III, 1095.
- (2) C.T.B.X Pt. III, 1382, 1384, 1386; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3574, f 751; C.T.B.XII, 30, 186.
- (3) See below p. 199.
- (4) J. Martin, E. Gould, N. Gould, J. Taylor and U. Hall, all of whom had contracted during William's reign, continued to supply the navy. They were joined by E. Haistwell, F. Collins, R. Knipe, W. Astell, Sir T. Webster, and others. There is a useful list of contractors in P.R.O. Adm. 1/3609, 17 April 1708.
- (5) The Baltic merchants were still capable of concerted action, as when they ruined one, Hester, who had attempted to monopolise the naval hemp contract, C.T.B. XXIII, Pt. II, 16, 430; C.T.B. XXIV Pt. II, 170.

Another minor problem associated with naval supplies from the Baltic was the build of ship employed to bring the imports to England. The contractors were frequently under pressure to employ ships of foreign construction, thus contravening the Navigation Laws. This pressure might arise simply from the necessity of meeting delivery dates with no English ships available. This problem was usually met by a petition to the Treasury asking it to pass down to the customs officials a request for leniency or to grant permission for a foreign ship to be used.⁽¹⁾ More seriously the pressure came from the Baltic powers, who themselves pursued a mercantilist policy for their own products and ships. Imports in such ships were more secure from French privateers and their use was frequently permitted.⁽²⁾ The extension of this process whereby ships were built or bought abroad for the import of naval stores, particularly masts, concerned parliament when the English owners of these ships petitioned parliament for their ships to be naturalised.⁽³⁾ Generally parliament was reluctant to qualify any of its legislation and this reluctance was especially strong about the

(1) C.T.B. XIV, 182.

(2) C.T.B. XIV, 182.

(3) For example, John Taylor's mast ship C.J.XII, 662.

Navigation Laws relating to ship building. In 1708 two naval contractors, Thomas and Henry Stiles, encountered opposition over the naturalisation of two mast ships.⁽¹⁾

In 1709 a similar petition inspired counter petitions from British ship builders, rope makers, blacksmiths, sail, rope and block makers, and the petition failed.⁽²⁾

An attractive solution to the problems of timber supply from the Baltic was to encourage the growing of English timber, a possibility that had been frequently and convincingly argued in print. In fact by 1688 English woodlands were quite inadequate to meet the demands of naval and mercantile marine, and even had a vigorous policy of encouragement been implemented in the early years of William's reign, it would have been irrelevant to the timber supply problem in the reign of Anne thanks to the slow maturity of timber in general and oak in particular.⁽³⁾ The most unusual feature of plans to increase England's timber supply in the reign of William is the initiative of the Navy Board. In one sense the initiative is unsurprising in that it was the executive

(1) C.J.XV, 520, 542, 580.

(2) C.J.XVI, 132, 135, 136, 148, 149, 150, 156, 158, 159, 165, 188.

(3) R.G. Albion, *Forests and Sea Power* (1926) Ch. III *England's Diminishing Woodlands* 95-132. The Commons considered the preservation of timber once in 1690, C.J.X, 480.

body most directly concerned with timber supply, but the authority and vigour with which this normally subservient and conservative Board prodded the Treasury into action, planned the legislation and criticised the effectiveness of Treasury speakers in the Commons, is remarkable. The Navy Board wanted to exploit the timber resources of the royal forests which were wasted because of inefficient administration. The New Forest particularly was admirably situated to supply the growing bases on the south coast.⁽¹⁾ During 1692 the Navy Board recommended to the Treasury, which administered the royal forests, that a policy of preservation be started and that a bill be passed through parliament authorising their plan. In the eyes of the Navy Board, certainly, the Treasury speakers in the Commons bungled the presentation of this bill.⁽²⁾ In February 1693 the Navy Board directed at the Treasury a letter and memorial which gave instruction in the vital importance of timber to the navy, marshalled the arguments that could be used to support legislation, criticised the past efforts of the Treasury, and 'humbly' advised, with great precision,

(1) R.G. Albion op.cit. 107-110; Ehrman 44.

(2) C.J.X, 803, 807.

how a new bill should be framed.⁽¹⁾

Navy Board criticism of the Treasury's presentation of the bill was perhaps rather unfair. The bill apparently encountered concerted and vigorous opposition from a small group in the Commons. The Duke of Bolton was Warden of the New Forest.⁽²⁾ Any scheme of enclosure for the preservation of naval timber would limit his authority and perquisites, amongst which were included the deer of the Forest. His 'friends' in the Commons, including his son, the Marquis of Winchester and his local ally Paul Burrard, argued that the bill was an encroachment on the rights of common of the local villagers.⁽³⁾ Their arguments and their votes must have contributed to the defeat of the bill.

The advice of the Navy Board about a new bill was ignored although Treasury and Commons knew that the shortage of wood was delaying the construction of new

- (1) Navy Board to the Lords of the Treasury, 22 Feb. 1693, N.M.M. Sergison Ser/102 ff.536-7; Memorial to the Lords of the Treasury on Oak Feb. 1693 N.M.M. Sergison Ser/100 ff.463-9; cf. Navy Board to the Admiralty 20 Feb. 1693, *ibid.* Ser/100 f.289.
- (2) Charles Powlett, 1st Duke of Bolton, was Warden of the New Forest, 1689-1699.
- (3) N. Luttrell, *An Abstract of the Debates 1692-3* f.337. Charles Powlett, Marquis of Winchester and later the second Duke, was M.P. for Hampshire 1689-98. Paul Burrard shared with the Duke of Bolton control of the two seats of Lymington (Hants.)

ships.⁽¹⁾ The financial crisis of 1696 was of greater help to the Navy Board than memorials. By 1696 the debts of the English naval timber contractors were so large that they refused to continue supplying the navy. The Navy Board, in desperation, sought and received permission to cut timber in the New Forest.⁽²⁾ More of this timber was needed in 1697⁽³⁾ and it was in the next session of parliament that legislation was considered to meet the demands from the Navy Board. The bill that eventually passed both Houses ordered that 2,000 acres of the New Forest should be set aside and enclosed as a 'nursery' for naval timber and that each year for the next twenty years another 200 acres should be similarly enclosed. There was opposition to the bill from those parishes which adjoined the projected enclosures, and from the Duke of Bolton, whose deer would find their grazing restricted.⁽⁴⁾ Both kinds of

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- (1) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner, (N.R.S. 1926) 384.
- (2) C.T.P. I, 557-8.
- (3) C.T.B. XII, 267.
- (4) 9 Wm. III c33, An Act for the Increase and Preservation of Timber in the New Forest; C.J.XII, 15, 44-5, 56, 75, 89, 117, 308; L.J.XVI, 254, 261, 264, 272, 276, 281, 282, 286, 291, 293, 298, 299, 300, 302; H.M.C. H.L. III, 174-80.

opposition apparently received sympathetic consideration from members of parliament who were themselves mainly landowners but without damage to the act.⁽¹⁾ It was the only long term legislative attempt to deal with the navy's problem of timber supply in the years between 1688 and 1714.⁽²⁾

The long delay between the Navy Board's recommendations in 1693 and the legislation of 1698 can perhaps be explained by the increasing interest during William's reign in the potentialities of the North American colonies as a source for naval stores, tar, pitch and resin as well as timber. It was generally accepted by the English that the colonies 'are to be valued as they are more or less valuable to England,'⁽³⁾ and they had long been recognised as a potential source of naval supplies.⁽⁴⁾ If the colonies could be encouraged to produce the naval supplies England needed the country would be released from a dangerous dependence on foreign powers and the effort of supplying these commodities would distract the colonists from

(1) R.G. Albion op.cit. 114.

(2) Ibid. 132.

(3) Hedges to Dudley, 1 Feb. 1706, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1706-8, 33.

(4) F. Bacon, Essays Civil and Moral XXXIII, Of Plantations (1924) 148-152. Bacon's views were quoted by Bellomont (see below p.194) 28 Nov. 1700, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1700, 673.

developing industries that might compete with English manufacturers.⁽¹⁾ A government circular letter to governors of colonies in 1691 asked for information about the likely quantities of naval stores that could be produced in North America. The answers were detailed and optimistic.⁽²⁾ In the next three years the Lords of Trade and Plantation received proposals for exploiting the colonies in the production of naval stores from more than a dozen persons, who claimed to represent among them practically every colony on the North Atlantic seaboard.⁽³⁾ The organisation of this supply was a

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- (1) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1708-9, 57, 259. The suggestion that American colonies should also construct ships for the navy was never seriously developed, *ibid.* 1706-8 257; *ibid.* 1708-9, 243.
- (2) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 528, 529, 535, 573, 575, 596.
- (3) For Massachusetts there were the powerful recommendations of Sir Mathew Dudley, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1693-6, 158, 218, 242, 253; P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080 f.945; for Pennsylvania Richard Haynes and John Taylor, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1693-6, 220-1, 254; *ibid.* 1699, 630, P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080 f.1015; for New England Sir Henry Ashurst and Sir Stephen Evance, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1693-6, 265-6; Acts of the Privy Council Colonial Series II, *op.cit.* 268-9; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1696, 309-10; P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080. f.1007; there were proposals from New Jersey, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1699, 631, 632; from New York, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3571, 23 Jan. 1693; 1/4080 f.903; from Boston, P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080 f.1071; from Maryland, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1693-6, 243-4, 265, 619; P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080 f.1071.

laboriously slow process. The delays caused by the slow process of communication across the Atlantic were lengthened by the caution of government officials, who feared the dangers of stockjobbing and the possible danger of monopoly should a charter be granted to incorporate the suppliers of naval stores from a particular colony.⁽¹⁾ The proposals themselves aroused bitter disputes among the colonies and even among representatives of the same colony.⁽²⁾ The Navy Board was unenthusiastic about all the proposals, agreeing that they would be 'beneficial' to the national interest but reporting, accurately, of them all that the prices quoted were higher than those the navy paid for similar Baltic stores.⁽³⁾ The delays discouraged some⁽⁴⁾ but in 1696 the interest in the possibility of naval stores from America increased sharply. In May came the appointment of Commissioners to the newly formed Board of Trade and Plantations. The members were particularly charged to consider the

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- (1) C.S.P.Col. Amer. & W.I. 1693-6, 253; *ibid.* 1699, 633.
- (2) C.S.P.Col. Amer. & W.I. 1693-6, 253, 266, 297; *ibid.* 1696-7, 55, 269, 627; *ibid.* 1699, 633.
- (3) *Ibid.* 1693-6, 244; P.R.O.Adm. 1/3571 f.319.
- (4) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1696-7, 43, 69.

possibilities of naval stores from the colonies.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, the cost of naval stores from the Baltic had sharply increased in recent years and our merchants had been badly and unfairly treated, particularly by the Swedes.⁽²⁾ In April 1696 the Commons ordered that a bill be framed to encourage naval stores from the colonies and Sir Rowland Gwynne was instructed to prepare it but work began too late in the session for the bill to pass.⁽³⁾ The most important contribution to the problem of naval supply was made by Sir Henry Ashurst and Sir Stephen Evance, who, imported into Deptford a quantity of mixed naval stores from New England, acting apparently on the encouragement of the Commissioners of the Treasury and Admiralty.⁽⁴⁾ The

- (1) Ibid. 1696-7, 1; C.S.P. Dom.Wm.1696, 154. Their first report to parliament emphasised the importance of this source C.J.XI, 595.
- (2) N.M.M. Southwell, Sou/4 f.201; E. Randolph's Memorial, 24 July 1696. He wrote of the Baltic powers, 'of late they have set the dice upon us and forced us to pay higher prices,' C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1696-7, 53-4.
- (3) C.J.XI, 559. A similar bill was considered in 1699, P.R.O. Adm. 3/15, 25 Nov. 1 Dec. 1699.
- (4) C.T.P. I, 518; C.T.B. XI, 6, 26, 102. Sir Henry Ashurst, M.P. for Truro and Wilton 1681-02, had diverse and important trading interests, see below p.198. Sir Stephen Evance had interests largely as a financier in trade to America and Spain.

Navy Board seems to have been ignorant of the scheme and objected to methods of payment. The cost of the cargo to the importers was £3,061. 15. 0. although their charges in New England amounted to only a quarter of this sum; the rest had been spent on commission, insurance, tonnage, interest, customs and freight, freight alone costing £1,850.⁽¹⁾ The cargo was inspected at Deptford by representatives of the Navy Board and three shipwrights. Most of the timber was found to be unfit but the pitch, tar and resin were declared serviceable.⁽²⁾ As a result of this disappointment four agents were appointed, two nominated by the navy and two by Sir William Ashurst, to visit New England and investigate the possibilities of naval stores.⁽³⁾

The cause of naval stores from the colonies received in 1697 its most able and enthusiastic supporter with the

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- (1) P.R.O. Adm. 18/74 f.525; cf. Taylor's bill for Baltic Stores, *ibid.* 18/74 f.148 and Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations II, 123-4.
- (2) C.S.P. Col.Amer. & W.I. 1696-7, 10; C.T.P.I, 517; P.R.O.Adm. 18/74 f.525.
- (3) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1696-7, 92; *ibid.* 1697-8, 235; Acts of the Privy CouncilColonial Series II *op.cit.* 303-4; C.T.B. XII, 210, 272; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1696, 309-10; R.G. Albion, *op.cit.* 243-4. Their reports were generally favourable, C.S.P. Vol. Amer. & W.I. 1699, 9, 449.

appointment of the Earl of Bellomont as governor of New York.⁽¹⁾ Once he was in office his reports to the Board of Trade and Plantations constantly advocated a policy of encouragement for naval stores. He estimated that pitch could be produced in the colonies and sold in England for £7. 10. 0., a last, against the Swedish price of £16. 0. 0., in 1699.⁽²⁾ He found that neither Admiralty nor Navy Board supported his activities and attributed their resistance to the bribes of the Baltic merchants who normally supplied the navy.⁽³⁾ There was probably some truth in his accusation. The Navy Board attitude to all these schemes was unchanging.⁽⁴⁾ Bribery, encouraged by a partiality towards their accustomed suppliers, was probably a factor in their unenthusiastic attitude. The

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- (1) Richard, Lord Coote, Baron of Coloony, Earl of Bellomont. He became governor of Massachusetts in 1695 and governor of New York in 1697.
- (2) C.S.P.Col.Amer. & W.I. 1699, 107, 150-4. A last was 14 barrels, about 1½ tons, *ibid.* 151.
- (3) *Ibid.* 1699, 360; *ibid.* 1700, 360, 579.
- (4) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3571, 22 Feb. 1694; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1696, 248; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3594, 26 Oct. 1702 - although the Navy Board accepted timber willingly enough, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3595, 18 March 1702.

Board was, however, acting responsibly in one sense: the American supplies must, by virtue of freight charges and American labour costs, be more expensive than comparable supplies from the Baltic. The Navy Board was charged with keeping the cost of navy contracts to a minimum.⁽¹⁾

Whenever financial subsidies to American contractors were considered as a means of equalising charges and of encouragement, the Board feared, and rightly, that their already strained Wear and Tear fund would have to bear the cost of these subsidies.⁽²⁾

(1) Sergison Papers, 62.

(2) Even if the Navy Board was guilty of conservatism and accepting bribes, their caution in believing the sound advice of John Taylor, in preference to some of the extravagant proposals that had plagued the Board since 1691, is understandable. He wrote in 1694, 'I was bred to the trade of importing naval stores and think I know more about it than the gentlemen who expect a charter I would gladly see this kingdom independent of Sweden and Denmark, but I must speak as a merchant who judges his trade only by the measure of profit; and then arises the difficulty how we shall bring bulky goods from a very remote part as cheaply as from a country near us.' He adds that labour in the Baltic is one sixth and transport one fourth to one fifth the cost of the American equivalent. C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1693-6, 263-4.

It was probably this resistance that led Bellomont to propose that suppliers of naval stores from America should be encouraged by Act of Parliament,⁽¹⁾ and probably his persistence and the support of the Board of Trade and Plantations that led to a consideration in the Commons in 1699 of a scheme to encourage American naval supplies, but with no effect.⁽²⁾ Both Bellomont and the Board of Trade and Plantations continued their advocacy.⁽³⁾ In October 1700 the Board advised the Lords Justices that the manufacture of naval stores in America should be encouraged 'almost upon any conditions,' and suggested that legislation by the English parliament was the only way to achieve this.⁽⁴⁾ Bellomont's part in the campaign lasted little longer; the ship he dispatched with sample naval stores was wrecked on the Cornish coast, much of the timber he had ordered to be cut in the interior could not be floated down the falls, and in March 1701 he died, so impoverished by personal expenditure on naval stores that his estate was insufficient to provide for his funeral.⁽⁵⁾ His enthusiasm for American naval stores was

(1) Bellomont to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 24 Aug. 1699, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1699, 405.

(2) P.R.O. / 3/15, 25 Nov. 1699, 1 Dec. 1699; Luttrell IV, 92.

(3) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1699, 470-3; *ibid.* 1700, 266, 357-60, 671; *ibid.* 1701, 7; C.S.P. Dom.Wm. 1700-02, 83; C.J.XIII, 301.

(4) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1700, 545-9.

(5) *Ibid.* 1701, 74, 108, 237.

matched in the next few years by the advocacy of Richard Haynes.⁽¹⁾ His proposals of 1700 are of some interest as, in association with Thomas Byfield, John Rolfe and Richard Martin, he claimed to have the support of 'some not accounted the meanest in the House of Commons.'⁽²⁾ The member for Aldeburgh (Suffolk), Sir Henry Johnson, a

- (1) Richard Haynes was a merchant with interests in the Newfoundland, Barbados and Pennsylvania trades and a naval contractor, *ibid.* 1700, 126, 128, 130, 163; Acts of the Privy Council Colonial Series II *op.cit.* 118, 159, 254.
- (2) Thomas Byfield was a trader to New England, New York, Carolina and Pennsylvania, *H.M.C. H.L.* VI, 93; *C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I.* 1699, 59; *ibid.* 1704-5, 579. Richard Martin was a naval contractor and trader to America but nothing seems to be recorded of John Rolfe's status. The M.P.s who were supporting these merchants are not certainly identifiable. In 1691 Byfield had owned ships in partnership with Gilbert Heathcote, who was certainly a well known member of the Commons, see below p.230. Acts of the Privy Council Colonial Series II 65. This joint ownership could have been no more than a transient partnership. However Heathcote and his brother Caleb, who was resident in New York, often worked together and Caleb formulated proposals for American naval stores about this time, *C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I.* 1701, 690; see below p.205. The Navy Board favoured the proposals from Haynes, *P.R.O.* 1/3597, 14 Dec. 1703.

famous ship builder, could have been interested in the project. Certainly his brother, Nathaniel, the Governor of Carolina, made proposals about American naval stores.⁽¹⁾ Another persistent advocate of America as a source for naval stores was Sir Matthew Dudley who, later in Anne's reign, was to owe his seat in parliament to the help of Charles Montagu, first Baron Halifax.⁽²⁾ Sir Henry Ashurst was another.⁽³⁾ Whoever the members of the Commons were who supported schemes for an American supply of naval stores they found that the caution or suspicion of government officials continued to check any developments. The only concrete advance in the following years was an improvement in the quality of tar, pitch and resin from the colonies.⁽⁴⁾

- (1) Luttrell V, 452; C.T.B.XX Pt. III, 629. Another influential merchant, Sir Batholemew Gracedieu, was also making plans to import naval stores from America in 1700. He was one of the leading Jamaican merchants and in these plans was in partnership with a Mr. Russell, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1700, 425.
- (2) Dudley was M.P. for Northampton 1706-12. He was mainly interested in the trade to New England.
- (3) See above p.192.
- (4) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1700, 425.

International politics were to be far more effective than enthusiasts or profiteers in promoting naval stores from America. Wars in the Baltic and the military and mercantilist policies of Charles XII of Sweden had already prejudiced the supply of hemp from the Baltic in 1701.⁽¹⁾ There were more difficulties in 1702⁽²⁾ but all of them were minor compared with the troubles of 1703. In this year the Swedish Tar Company instituted a policy by which Swedish tar might be sold only by Swedish nationals and exported only in Swedish ships.⁽³⁾ The price at which the tar and pitch were offered rose sharply from the 1702 prices of £11. 15. 0., and £10. 10. 0., for each last of tar and pitch to £18. 0. 0., and £17. 10. 0., respectively.⁽⁴⁾ A supply was obtained, with difficulty, from Holland and the southern Baltic states, but it was insufficient and expensive. Not all the naval stores bought by English

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- (1) R.G. Albion op.cit. 159-60. The best summary of Baltic politics and the consequences on English naval supply is the Memoir of Robert Jackson, English charge d'affaires at Stockholm 1703-10 and minister resident 1710-1717, 'Robert Jackson's Memoir on the Swedish Tar Company, December 29, 1709,' ed. J.J. Murry, H.L.B. X (1946-7) 419-428. Information on the problems over hemp supply in 1701 can be found in P.R.O. Adm. 1/3591, 25 July 1701; C.T.B.XVI, 47, 52, 55, 212, 219.
- (2) C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 33; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3594, 11 Sept. 1702.
- (3) Robert Jackson's Memoir, 424-5.
- (4) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3598, 5 Jan. 1704.

merchants reached England, much was sold to the Dutch, who offered higher prices than the English navy.⁽¹⁾

Alternatives to the Baltic supply were discussed as early as July 1703 in the Prince's Council and Privy Council.⁽²⁾ The Navy Board was asked for an opinion and it recommended the encouragement of American naval stores by act of parliament, but implied that the bulk of naval tar and pitch would always come from the Baltic, from Russia if not from Sweden.⁽³⁾ Discussion and departmental interchange of letters continued throughout 1704 while the price of tar rose to £36. 0. 0., a last.⁽⁴⁾ Two merchants, Gould and Hall, provided, on commission, as much of it as they could obtain for the use of the navy from the minor Baltic states.⁽⁵⁾

It was left to the commissioners of the Board of Trade and Plantations to make definite proposals. By

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3596, 7 July 1703.

(2) C.S.P. Dom. Anne II, 40, 53.

(3) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1702-3, 693, 766; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3597, 23 Oct. 1703, 14 Dec. 1703; P.R.O. Adm. 1/4089, 30 Oct. 1703.

(4) P.R.O. Adm. 3/19, 9 May 1704; P.R.O. Adm. 1/4089, 30 Oct. 1703; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3597, 14 Dec. 1703; C.S.P. Dom. Anne II, 573; Acts of the Privy Council Colonial Series II, op.cit. 464-9.

(5) C.S.P. Dom. Anne II, 539; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3599, 9 May, 1704.

May 1704 they had decided that premiums would be necessary to subsidise the cost of colonial manufacture of naval stores. These premiums would make up for the cost of American labour and the Atlantic freight and enable the products to compete with Baltic stores, at their usual price.⁽¹⁾ The Board consulted with merchants to decide upon an economically sound and just value for the premium and decided to recommend a sum of £3 for each ton of tar and pitch although the merchants wanted £4 a ton.⁽²⁾ It was finally decided in December that it would be necessary for parliament to allocate a fund for these premiums⁽³⁾ but it was apparently only after receiving a letter from Robinson forecasting even greater difficulty in supplying naval stores for 1705 that the Board began serious consideration of a draft bill.⁽⁴⁾ The bill was brought before parliament and passed both Houses, apparently without serious difficulty.⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1704-5, 129.
- (2) Ibid. 1704-5, 177; Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations I, 21, 30.
- (3) Acts of the Privy Council Colonial Series II, op.cit. 469.
- (4) Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations I, 77-8. Rev. John Robinson was English Envoy to Sweden.
- (5) 3 & 4 Anne c 9; An Act for Encouraging the Importation of Naval Stores from Her Majesty's Plantations in America; C.J.XIV, 463, 497, 547, 551; L.J. XVII, 674, 675. The only opposition seems to have come from the English copper manufacturers, who feared possible colonial competition. Copper and iron were therefore specifically excluded from the definition of naval stores, C.J.XIV, 506, 516.

Sir Matthew Dudley and Sir Gilbert Heathcote both served on the committee appointed by the Commons to prepare the bill.⁽¹⁾ Their arguments were perhaps responsible for the bill's provisions of premiums of £4 a ton for tar and pitch, although resin and turpentine received the £3 premium earlier suggested by the Board of Trade and Plantations. Another sign of compromise is that all these imports were to pay customs, although it had earlier been assumed that they would be free imports.⁽²⁾ The act also encouraged the growing of hemp and reserved for naval use certain types of timber and included clauses for the preservation of timber. The act was to be in force for nine years from 1 January, 1705.⁽³⁾

The immediate effect of the act was good; Swedish prices dropped to about £18 a last for tar and £12. 10. 0., for pitch,⁽⁴⁾ although it remained difficult to buy enough

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- (1) For Dudley see above p.198; for Heathcote see below p. 230 and above p.197
- (2) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1704-5, 177.
- (3) The Commons concerned themselves with colonial naval supply; such interest as there was in the House of Lords in the problem seems to have been directed at the possibilities of increasing supply from Russia, H.M.C. H.L. III, 293-6; *ibid.* VII, 321-2; *ibid.* IX, 13, 124, 343; N.M.M. Southwell, Sou/6 ff.225, 243; Luttrell V, 139.
- (4) Robert Jackson's Memoir, *op.cit.* 246-7; Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations I, 521. Useful summaries of the changing prices of naval stores will be found in N.M.M. Sergison Ser/103 ff.409-11; P.R.O.Adm. 7/336, 7 Jan. 1704; *ibid.* 1/3598, 5 Jan. 1704; *ibid.* 1/3599, 2 June 1704.

for the needs of the navy.⁽¹⁾ Despite the optimistic forecasts of the merchants and colonists, America did little to solve the immediate problem of supply. By 29 November 1707 America had provided only 548 tons of tar and 643 tons of pitch of a quality good enough to gain a certificate of soundness, which was not easily granted despite Board of Trade requests that leniency be shown to the first imports under the act.⁽²⁾ The quantity of naval stores exported from America was less in 1708 than in 1706 because of the Navy Board's refusal to relax their standards.⁽³⁾ The earlier naval suspicion of a subsidy scheme was justified; despite the act of parliament it was expected that the premiums would be paid from the naval Wear and Tear fund.⁽⁴⁾ The initial stages

- (1) Gould and Hall provided the tar and pitch on commission in 1705 and were given a reward of £200 for their efforts in buying hemp from Courland, Russia, Hamburg, Denmark and Bergen, P.R.O.Adm. 1/3601, 20 March. 1705; C.T.B. XX Pt. II, 278.
- (2) Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations I, 303-4, 309; C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1706-8, 275, 321, 338-9, 344, 401, 698. The navy needed about 3,000 lasts of tar and pitch, about 4,500 tons, *ibid.* 1710-11, 340.
- (3) *Ibid.* 1706-8, 274-5, 704; H.M.C. H.L. IX, 123.
- (4) See above p.195.

of colonial manufacture were hindered by the technical ignorance of the colonists about the manufacture of tar and pitch. This ignorance was partially remedied by the appointment of an instructor.⁽¹⁾ £10,000 was granted by parliament to provide him with assistance and the colonists with equipment.⁽²⁾ It was hard to maintain enthusiasm. By 1710 even those naval stores from the colonies that passed the fitness tests were being paid for in navy bills that were at 35% discount.⁽³⁾

In 1710 the Swedes made another attempt to monopolise the supply of tar and pitch to England, even going to the extent of stopping all communication between the two countries save that of their own messengers.⁽⁴⁾ The new crisis led to much discussion, and a suggestion was made by the Board of Trade and Plantations that a group of German refugees from the Palatinate, now in England, should be shipped to the colonies, where they would be taught to manufacture naval stores. The suggestion that these and earlier refugees should be sent to strengthen the colonies had been made before; some had indeed been sent, but in

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- (1) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1704-5, 464; Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations I, 123, 156, 183, 184.
- (2) 8 Anne c 14; An Act for continuing several impositions Clause XXXV.
- (3) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1710-11, 48; Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations II, 124.
- (4) Ibid. II 149-50; P.R.O. Adm. 3/24, 27 March 1710; P.R.O. S.P. 42/8, 4 April, 10 April, 1710.

February 1710 this idea was specifically linked to the naval supply problem.⁽¹⁾ Plans were made to transport 600 families of 2,300 people to New York. It was estimated that the 600 men could produce 7,000 tons of tar and pitch a year.⁽²⁾ Sunderland, as Secretary of State, was largely responsible for transforming the idea into reality, and Robert Hunter, the Governor of New York, and the Heathcotes were largely responsible for settling them.⁽³⁾ The scheme failed and the misery of the Palatines did nothing to solve the supply of naval stores.⁽⁴⁾

Another initiative by the Board of Trade and Plantations had at least legislative success. Bridger, who had been appointed Surveyor General of the Woods in

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- (1) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1706-8, 724-4; *ibid.* 1710-11, 45-7.
- (2) An Estimate of the sums necessary to settle the Germans at New York to raise naval stores, B.M. Harley Loan 29/288; C.T.B.XXIV Pt.II, 147-9.
- (3) I.K. Steele, *The Board of Trade in Colonial Administration, 1696-1720* (London Ph.D. 1964) 254, and generally 243-54; *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations II*, 81. Sir Gilbert and Caleb Heathcote, see above p. 197.
- (4) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1710-11, 141; I.K. Steele, *op.cit.* 244; H.M.C. H.L. IX, 120-1. A development of this policy was the suggestion in 1714 that disabled servicemen should be sent to the colonies to settle and produce naval stores, *Journal of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantation II*, 581.

America, frequently informed the Board of the waste of timber in the colonies, particularly of the white pine, so useful for masts.⁽¹⁾ His advice, including his draft for the necessary legislation, was passed to Dartmouth, the Secretary of State, in November 1710⁽²⁾ and a scheme for preserving American timber was considered in the Commons during the 1710-11 session, and passed.⁽³⁾ By this act the Surveyor General or his deputies were empowered to reserve for naval use any free growing tree of more than twenty-four inch diameter by marking it with a broad arrow. In the same session of parliament the Commons passed a bill the purpose of which was to encourage the production of naval stores in Scotland.⁽⁴⁾ It failed in the Lords, adding to Scottish disillusion at Harley's government. A similar bill received more cursory treatment in 1712.⁽⁵⁾ The Scots were at last lucky in 1713.

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- (1) C.S.P.Col. Amer. & W.I. 1708-9, 259; R.G. Albion, op.cit. 248-9.
- (2) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1710-11, 253; R.G. Albion op.cit. 249.
- (3) 9 Anne c 15, An Act for the Preservation of White and other Pine Trees, growing in her Majesty's Colonies for Mastings Her Majesty's Navy, C.J.XVI, 441, 446, 536, 628-9, 657, 659; Luttrell VI, 669; L.J. XIX, 293, 300.
- (4) C.J.XVI, 548, 567, 568, 576, 599, 614, 659, 682.
- (5) L.J.XIX, 285, 289, 291, 296, 303, 306, 307; C.J. XVII, 181; H.M.C. Portland V, 81; P.W.J. Riley, The English Ministers and Scotland 1707-1727 (1964) 172-7.

The 1704 act encouraging the production of American naval stores was due to expire by 1714, and warning of the consequences of allowing the act to lapse was given by Bridger and the reduced quantities of tar imported.⁽¹⁾ The act was revived and extended for eleven years and in it the premium system was extended to Scotland. This encouragement to Scotland was generous; the motives for it were as much political as naval.⁽²⁾

Between 1688 and 1714 the executive and legislature had acted with wisdom and foresight in their attempts to end Britain's dependence on foreign sources of naval supplies. The greater credit must go to the statesmanlike approach of the executive, in particular, the Board of Trade and Plantations. The legislation was flawed, especially by the failure to appropriate money for the payment of premiums. The suspicion of the Navy Board and maladministration in the colonies did much to reduce the effectiveness of the acts, in this period and later in the eighteenth century, but in general terms the legislation was successful, both in the short term in that it reduced

(1) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1712-14, 126.

(2) 12 Anne c9, An Act for continuing an Act made in the third and fourth years of the Reign of her present Majesty . . . and for encouraging the Importation of Naval Stores from that Part of Great Britain called Scotland. C.J.XVII, 403, 406, 420, 434, 436, 444; L.J. XIX, 592, 593, 596; P.W.J. Riley op.cit. 172-7.

Swedish prices, and in the later years of the eighteenth century.⁽¹⁾

There was another manufacture vital to the navy in which England was also at the mercy of a foreign seller. The best canvas for sails came from France and in time of war with France the Dutch supplied most of England's needs.⁽²⁾ The growing of flax had been encouraged in England since the sixteenth century but the English canvas was considered to be of poor quality and was not in quantity sufficient.⁽³⁾ War with France moreover meant greater demands for canvas because it involved more 'rough' weather cruising than the Dutch Wars, a fact that was recognised by the provision of higher establishment of 'suits of sails' for men of war.⁽⁴⁾ Schemes were current in the pamphlet literature for the encouragement of flax and hemp growing and the manufacture of canvas but it was not until 1696 that parliament considered the problem.⁽⁵⁾ Two acts with relevance to

- (1) D.A. Baugh, *British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole* (1965) 279.
- (2) Sergison Papers, 145; V. Barbour, *Dutch and English Merchant Shipping in the Seventeenth Century*, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* II (1930), 2, reprinted in *Essays in Economic History*, ed. E.M. Carus Wilson (1961) I, 235. John Taylor (see above p182) was one of the principal contractors for 'Hollands Duck;' in 1694 he supplied 2,500 pieces, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3572 f.1,041.
- (3) Sergison Papers, 145.
- (4) H.M.C. H.L. I, 125; Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. XV f.101.
- (5) W. Goffe, *How to Advance the Trade of the Nation*, *Harleian Miscellany* IV (1809) 387-8.

canvas were passed. In the first, an act which established duties on imports, one clause made it compulsory for the navy to pay 2d. a yard 'recompense' to any English manufacturer who supplied it with sail cloth of quality equal to foreign canvas.⁽¹⁾ The second act contained clauses that allowed the free import of flax and hemp from Ireland and allowed all English sail cloth that was exported to be free of duty.⁽²⁾ The motives behind these acts were generally economic and mercantilist rather than naval. It was a parliamentary session concerned with trade, one that saw the establishment of the Board of Trade and Plantations and the passing of a Navigation Act.⁽³⁾ These acts were part of a deliberate attempt to increase the manufacture of sail cloth in England and they appear to have given appreciable encouragement by affording the English manufacturers sufficient financial advantage over their foreign competitors.⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) 7 & 8 Wm. III c 10, An Act for continuing several duties granted by former Acts upon Wine and Vinegar and upon Tobacco and East India Goods and other merchandise imported for carrying on the War against France; clause XIV.
- (2) 7 & 8 Wm. III c 39, An Act for encouraging the Linen Manufacture of Ireland and bringing Flax and Hemp into, and the making of Sail Cloth in this Kingdom.
- (3) See L.A. Harper, *The English Navigation Laws (1939)* 59-60 and for the Board of Trade and Plantations below pp. 266-9.
- (4) English manufacturers of good quality sail cloth could now be confident of making a sale to the navy and a profit, C.T.P. I, 547; C.T.B. XI, 65; *ibid.* XIV, 249; Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland (1771)* II, 175.

At the beginning of Anne's reign the Commons considered additional methods of encouragement. The Marquis of Hartington and Mr. Topham were deputed to prepare a bill but it did not become law.⁽¹⁾ In the same year, 1702, there had been many complaints about English sail cloth by sea-going officers.⁽²⁾ Navy Board opinion was that much of the English sail cloth, especially that made by Sir Owen Buckingham, was of excellent quality.⁽³⁾ The numerous complaints of 1702 probably reflect bad storage during the years of peace. Despite the complaints and the failure to renew the acts encouraging English manufacture, the Navy Board was ordered to go on buying English canvas and to see that not more than half its supply came from abroad.⁽⁴⁾ The zeal of the Navy Board in

- (1) C.J.XIV, 46. William Cavendish, Marquis of Hartington and later 2nd Duke of Devonshire. In 1702 he was M.P. for Yorkshire and described as a 'junior minister,' G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (1967) 179, fn. 107. Richard Topham, M.P. for Windsor, was a lawyer and often associated with government measures.
- (2) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 29 May 1702; P.R.O. S.P. 42/6 f.256; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3593, 1 June 1702; C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 92-3.
- (3) Sergison Papers, 155-6; P.R.O. Adm. 3/18, 9 March 1703; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/105 Memo No. 6, 11 Oct. 1702. Buckingham was M.P. for Reading 1698-1701, 1702-8. He employed some 200 men in sailmaking and was a leading City Whig.
- (4) P.R.O. Adm. 3/17, 3 June, 8 Sept, 3 Oct, 1702; C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 99.

supporting English canvas manufactures is in great contrast to their attitude to colonial naval stores.

The supply of canvas apparently caused neither major problems nor parliamentary interest for the rest of the war. Canvas manufacturers seem to have flourished: a William Rayner supplied the Navy Board with 4,000 bolts of sail cloth a year: a Captain Smith was said to employ 5-6,000 canvas makers in Berkshire, Warwickshire and Middlesex.⁽¹⁾ A Treasury proposal, in 1711, that a bill should be passed compelling the navy to buy only English sail cloth was successfully resisted by the navy on the grounds that this would reduce competition and make for dearer canvas.⁽²⁾ In 1713 an act was passed which protected the English manufacturers against foreign competition and subsidised English exports.⁽³⁾ From the evidence given during discussion of this act in the Commons, the navy, by the end of the war, was using

- (1) C.T.B.XIII Pt. II, 394; *ibid.* XXIV Pt.I, 112; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3614, 21 Aug. 1710; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/57, 15 Aug. 1707; C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1704-5, 330.
- (2) Queen Anne's Navy 148-9.
- (3) 12 Anne c 12, An Act for the better encouragement of the Making of Sail Cloth in Great Britain, C.J.XVII, 351, 440, 445, 463, 464; L.J.XIX, 609, 610. There were petitions against the bill from importers of canvas, C.J.XVII, 432, 433, 440.

English canvas for most of its needs.⁽¹⁾ The exigencies of war, the executive and parliament had transformed the English canvas industry, and England's dependence on foreign supply was ended. In the war of 1739-48 all naval canvas was English and there were no serious complaints against it.⁽²⁾

In a more negative way parliament preserved naval stores by maintaining the laws against their embezzlement. The acts of Charles II and James II establishing penalties for the illegal possession of naval stores were revived in 1692 for seven years.⁽³⁾ There were sufficient examples of embezzlement in the next seven years⁽⁴⁾ to ensure the renewal of the acts in 1698 with increased penalties.⁽⁵⁾ The bills were government inspired but naturally congenial to majority feeling in the Commons. They are however of little significance when compared with the constructive and generally successful legislative attempts to solve the problems of naval supply.

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- (1) Ibid. XVII, 351; The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster 1665-1752, ed. J.D. Marshall (1967) 94.
- (2) D.A. Baugh op.cit. 227.
- (3) 4 W. & M. c 24, An Act for reviving, continuing and explaining several laws therein mentioned, which are expired or near expiring, cl. VIII.
- (4) P.R.O. Adm. 3/8, 3 Feb. 1693; C.J.XI, 63, 76, 168; Ehrman 595-6.
- (5) 9 Wm. III c 41, An Act for the better preventing Imbezzlement of his Majesty's Stores of War

Chapter IV

Cruisers and Convoys

(i)

1688-1702

When war began with France in 1689 escort vessels, 'convoys' as contemporaries called them, were automatically provided for the foreign trade. The Dutch Wars had shown the necessity for such protection.⁽¹⁾ The two French Wars that followed them rapidly demonstrated that convoys alone were insufficient. The fleets of merchant ships still needed their convoys but equally urgent was the need for 'cruisers'. Cruisers patrolled the home waters, safeguarding them for coastal trade and isolated merchant men. Their overall responsibility was territorial rather than the protection of a specific fleet although their duties included the convoying of coastal traders such as colliers. The realisation that both types of defence were necessary can be seen in the general use, from 1693, of the term 'Cruisers and Convoys' to describe the navy's responsibility for trade protection.

(1) For example, the list of convoys for 1673 in A Descriptive Catalogue of the Naval Manuscripts in the Pepysian Library, ed. J.R. Tanner, II (N.R.S. 1904) 83, or the more elaborate scheme, 'A List of His Majesty's Ships and present stations; March 10th 1672,' in the Foley MSS., Palfrey Scrapbooks, W.R.O. B.A. 3762/9.

The State accepted this growing responsibility without question and the merchants who benefited from the protection for their part assumed it,⁽¹⁾ without gratitude. The relationship of State and merchants in the provision of naval protection was businesslike; its contractual basis was stated in the preamble to Subsidy Acts, such as that for 1660, whereby tonnage and poundage was granted for the purpose 'of defending the seas against all persons intending or that shall intend the disturbance of your said commons in the intercourse of trade.'⁽²⁾ From the merchants there are explicit statements to show that they regarded protection as a service for which they paid. In 1707 Edward Gould, in evidence he was presenting to a committee of the House of Lords, referred specifically to the 1660 Act and showed that the State had failed to honour its side of the agreement in recent years.⁽³⁾ In 1704 merchants interested in the

(1) The merchants assumed state protection with the proviso that it must be effective. State protection was still sufficiently an innovation for alternative plans for protection, organised by the merchants themselves, to be considered whenever naval protection failed as it did in 1689 (Grey IX, 411), 1693 (Acts of the Privy Council of England. Colonial Series, Vol. II, ed. W.L. Grant and J. Munro 1910, 243) and 1694 (Luttrell III, 372).

(2) 12 Car. II c 4.

(3) 'Substance of what was deposed before a Committee of Lords on 2 Dec. 1701 (sic) by Ed. Gould - merchant,' P.R.O. Adm. 1/3863. Edward Gould was a merchant of sufficient status to act as spokesman for Spanish and Portuguese trades. He also traded to Italy and the Levant.

Jamaican trade refused to contribute towards the fortification of Crookhaven in Ireland, although this anchorage had already saved many of their ships, because they maintained that they were already paying heavily enough for protection.⁽¹⁾ The way in which convoys were allocated to particular trades in proportion to the customs these trades realised, and lists of shipping losses calculated, not in terms of the number of ships lost but in the value of customs lost, are evidence that state officials understood their responsibilities and the financial consequences of failure.⁽²⁾ Members of parliament showed that they too saw protection as a right and not a favour by their prosecution of Captain George Churchill and Commodore Kerr for demanding convoy money.⁽³⁾

The state had in fact incurred a responsibility it could not fulfil. In the early years of the 1689-1697 War English statesmen and naval administrators thought of

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- (1) Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations I, 67-8, 74; cf. C.J.X, 285.
- (2) C.S.P. Coll. Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 153; Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series, II, op.cit. 148; P.R.O. S.P. 8/8 f.30; Sir John Dalrymple, Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland (1771) I, Pt. II, 104.
- (3) Grey IX, 413, 430-1; for Kerr see below pp. 284-5.

trade protection in terms of their past experience during the Dutch Wars, although the situation had been transformed by the advent of France as the enemy and the expansion of English trade. In the summer of 1691 Russell was one of the first to emphasise the splendid geographic opportunities the French coastline gave to her privateers.⁽¹⁾ That this realisation did not come earlier can in part be explained by the natural priority of concern with Ireland and major fleet actions. In part it can be attributed to the Revolution of 1688. James II, the Earl of Dartmouth and Pepys had been aware of the dangers to trade that war with France would bring.⁽²⁾ This strategic awareness was lost in the disruption of naval administration that followed the change of kings. Certainly the geographic dangers to English trade in a French war were obvious enough; the great sweep of northern French coast line, with Dunkirk on one flank and St. Malo on the other, commanded the most crowded and vital of English shipping routes, that through the Channel. On the French Mediterranean coastline and in the French

(1) Russell to Nottingham, 31 July, 1691, H.M.C. Finch III, 189.

(2) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 37; The Tangier Papers of Samuel Pepys, ed. E. Chappell (N.R.S. 1935) 161.

American and West Indian colonies there were other excellent bases for privateers. When France, in the middle years of the 1689-1697 War, adopted a naval strategy that aimed at the destruction of English merchant shipping, she was exploiting enormous geographic advantages.⁽¹⁾

These privateer bases were incomparably placed for attacks on an English mercantile marine that had trebled in tonnage between 1629 and 1686.⁽²⁾ Much of the increase occurred in the transatlantic trade (with re-export of sugar and tobacco to Europe) and in the Baltic, Mediterranean and East Indian trade, all of them vulnerable

- (1) The most recent historian of this change in French policy sees 1695 as the decisive year but with increasing evidence of privateers from 1690; see J.S. Bromley, *The French Privateering War in Historical Essays presented to David Ogg*, ed. H.E. Bell and R.L. Ollard (1964) 206-9. Contemporary English realisation of the new strategy can be seen in Sir John Dalrymple *op.cit.* I Pt. II 65; Galway to Shrewsbury 25 July 1695, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I, 206.
- (2) R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (1962) 7 fn, 15-19. Other sources for information on this expansion are R. Davis, *English Foreign Trade 1660-1700*, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 2nd Series VII (1954) 2, reprinted in *Essays in Economic History* ed. E.M. Carus Wilson (1962) II, 257-273; P. Deane & W.A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959* (1962) 86; L.A. Harper, *The English Navigation Laws* (1939) 321-360; A.P. Usher, *The Growth of English Shipping 1572-1922*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* XLII (1928) 465-8.

to French attack. The expansion caused a volume of trade that was, from the naval viewpoint, incapable of rationalisation and thus defied any scheme of naval protection based on the available ships. Such a scheme would have had to comprehend climatic variables as diverse as the harvest times of tobacco and citrus fruits, the seasonal winds of the Indian Ocean, the onset of ice in the Baltic and the complications of the Newfoundland fisheries and their ancillary trades, apart from man-made complications.⁽¹⁾

The most obvious of these man-made complications was the inability of some English merchant groups to agree on an annual routine for the sailing of their convoys. Efficient and economic protection of the tobacco fleets between 1702 and 1707 was prevented because the Virginia and Maryland merchants could not agree whether one or two fleets a year was necessary. The merchants argued on selfish and economic grounds; the wealthy merchants wanted two convoys a year, as this diffused the arrival of the product on the London market and kept prices low; the shippers, the planters, especially the small planters, and

(1) The clearest picture of the seasonal complexities that governed English trade is found in R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry (1962)*, in the chapters dealing with the trade of various regions, X-XIII.

their agents argued for one convoy a year.⁽¹⁾ Other trades indulged in similar wasteful dissension; the Leeward Island merchants regularly opposed a mutual convoy and rendezvous with Barbados ships.⁽²⁾ The organisation of naval defence for the Barbados trade was itself prejudiced by argument similar to that which divided Virginia and Maryland traders.⁽³⁾ In another way the short-sightedness of merchants complicated the task

- (1) The division of merchants was complicated by the rivalries of London and Bristol but the fundamental reasons for disagreement were economic. Sir Richard Levett and Edward Haistwell, both London merchants, generally agreed with Yates, the spokesman for Bristol. For the course of the argument see C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W. I. 1702-3, 51-2, 57, 473, 476; *ibid.* 1706-8, 102, 122-3; Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations I, 226; C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 446. For independent opinion on the problem see C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1702, 491-2; *ibid.* 1702-3, 483-4; *ibid.* 1704-5, 142-3, 435; *ibid.* 1706-8, 57-8.
- (2) P.R.O. Adm. 3/19, 18 March 1704, 18 Nov. 1704; C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1702-3, 612.
- (3) *Ibid.* 1704-5, 249-50. This disunity had deeper implications. It meant that the King's attempts to placate the merchants by appointing some of them as Commissioners of Admiralty or Trade and Plantations would not necessarily gain him more friends than enemies. The animosity Houblon aroused in 1695 as a Commissioner of the Admiralty is a good example of this; see H.M.C. H.L. II, 307-313, 350-2, 362.

of protecting their shipping. The war was an obvious and frequently justifiable explanation of a decline in trade, but, for some trades, the war coincided with what would have been a period of stability or decline. Some decline would have been natural in the trade of the regulated companies for the Eastland, Russian and Levant trades, and the decline of the Newfoundland trade was apparent before 1689.⁽¹⁾ Some of the criticisms which representatives of these trades made against the navy between 1689 and 1713 were irrelevant to the work of convoys and cruisers.

The navy's task of affording protection was made more difficult because the ships at its disposal in the early years of the 1689-1697 War had been built in the belief that major fleet actions were the crucial function of a fleet. Smaller ships, of fourth, fifth and sixth rates, were necessary. They were needed for supporting fireships, intelligence duties, blockade, patrols against smuggling and treasonable correspondence, to escort not

(1) R. Davis *op.cit.* 22, 29; R.W.K. Hinton, *The Eastland Trade and the Common Weal in the Seventeenth Century* (1959) 159-60; C. Ernest Fayle, *Shipowning and Marine Insurance in The Trade Winds*, ed. C. Northcote Parkinson (1948) 26-7; A.C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (1935) 108; C. D'Avenant, *Discourses on the Public Revenues and on the Trade of England* (1698) in *The Political and Commercial Works*, ed. Sir Charles Whitworth I, 396-8.

only merchant ships but also recruits, packet boats and monarchs, to carry generals, ambassadors or even a nobleman's equipage.⁽¹⁾ There were never enough of them for these duties and the increasing requirements of trade protection. Yet even if there had been more of these small ships the merchants would still have had scope to complain of the convoys. The qualities of organisation, skill and patience required of a convoy commodore were immense. Leake was the best all round sailor of his age and exceptional in that he did not emphasise his difficulties in official correspondence yet his letters are nowhere more full of strain than when he is guarding a convoy of,

'180 sail and a great part of them leewardly Dutch fly boats, besides our storeships and transports which sail very heavily.'⁽²⁾

The skill in organisation required to muster them, the seamanship necessary to keep them concentrated for weeks on end despite a rudimentary system of signalling, the indiscipline of merchant captains and the disruption of

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 3/20, 11 July 1704.

(2) Leake to the Admiralty 16 Feb. 1708, H.M.C. H.L. VIII, 58.

weather and enemy involved qualities assumed by the merchants and difficulties never appreciated by parliament.⁽¹⁾ A successful convoy could be ruined in its last stages by merchant captains outsailing the escorts to make an early and profitable homecoming but the convoy commodore had no power to prevent this, as one was told by the Admiralty;

'The business of the convoy is to take care of her Majesty's subjects that will be taken care of, but not to force them.'⁽²⁾

For the naval captain convoy duty meant trial, tribulation and grave professional risks. Success was hardly won and generally unrecognised;⁽³⁾ the consequence of losses, was

- (1) Instances of the problems involved in convoying can be found in P.R.O. Adm. 1/2033, 17 Jan. 1704; P.R.O. Adm. 3/20, 14 Aug. 1704; P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 5 May 1705; R. Gibson, Reflections on our Naval Strength, Naval Miscellany II (N.R.S. 1912) 163; N.M.M. Southwell Sou/1 ff.159-61.
- (2) Edward Northey's Report 24 Nov. 1711, Documents relating to the Law and Custom of the Sea, ed. R.G. Marsden (N.R.S. 1916) II, 1649-1767, 222 and generally 220-222.
- (3) There are few examples of merchants thanking a captain for convoy or asking for the services of a particular captain. Most of these few examples come from the later years of Anne's reign, e.g. the Mediterranean merchants thanking Leake, B.M. Addit. MSS. 5443, Leake Papers IV 1708-12, f.138; the Levant Company asking for Capt. Cooper, 20 June 1710, P.R.O. Adm. 3/24; the Barbados merchants asking for Capt. Hamilton, 4 Jan. 1711 P.R.O. Adm. 3/25.

complaint, certainly to the Admiralty and possibly to parliament.

It was when such complaints became numerous that parliament concerned itself with trade protection. The most natural leaders in any such debate, whether their contribution was criticism, explanation or proposal, would be in the Commons, those members who were themselves merchants. Merchants were, however, in this period always a small minority of the House. Of 513 members (558 after 1707), 43 merchants were elected to the Commons in 1701,⁽¹⁾ 51 at the 1705 election⁽²⁾ and 60 in 1710.⁽³⁾ In the Lords very few were directly linked to trade.⁽⁴⁾ Such head counting seriously minimises the number of members who would be concerned with the efficiency of the convoy system. Members of parliament were expected to represent the interests of their locality and to enlist as much

- (1) R. Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century* (1956) 161-4.
- (2) E. Cunnington, *The General Election of 1705* (M.A. thesis, University of London 1938) 253.
- (3) M. Ransome, *The General Election of 1710* (M.A. thesis, University of London 1938) 201 cf. M. McHattie, *Mercantile Interests in the House of Commons* (Manchester M.A. thesis 1949); G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (1967) 164.
- (4) The peer most obviously concerned with trade was George, Lord Berkeley, 9th Baron and 1st Earl, 'the first peer of the realm to collect directorships' (K.G. Davies, *The Royal Africa Company* (1960) 163) with interests in the Levant, Hudson's Bay, East India and Africa Companies.

support as they could for any measure that concerned the constituency.⁽¹⁾ Thus John Ellis, a completely non-maritime administrator,⁽²⁾ found that his election at Harwich forced him to a concern for such new interests as naval promotion and fishery protection.⁽³⁾ Nor did the circle of interest in trade protection end with such duty interest for it extended into a vague penumbra of unnumbered members to whom foreign trade gave profit in some way. Few, if any ships represented the risk of an individual. Ship ownership was generally shared, the costs and eventual profits often being divided into

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- (1) For example, a letter to the M.P.s of Evesham in 1692 (E. Rudge and Sir James Rushout) telling them how to vote and requesting that 'you use your best interest in others, the members of the House of your acquaintance' Corporation of Evesham to their M.P.s, 30 Nov. 1692, W.R.O. B.A. 4221/6. Similar examples referring directly to trade can be found in the Letters and Papers of John Cary, B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,540, e.g. f.87.
- (2) John Ellis, an administrator with experience from 1672 as secretary to Secretaries of State, Under Secretary of State, Comptroller of Mint. M.P. Harwich 1702-5, 1705-8.
- (3) B.M. Addit. MSS. 28,893 ff. 16,24, 41, 45.

sixty-four, or sometimes as many as two hundred and fifty-six shares.⁽¹⁾ Personal investment, financial links, family alliance, particularly a concern for the trading interests of younger brothers, must have created in both Houses a group interested in the care of overseas trade which was far larger than the number of merchant members would suggest.⁽²⁾

The power of this nebulous group to direct debate, much less initiate legislation, was none the less small. They were linked by a common desire to have the seas protected for merchant shipping but separated by much

- (1) R. Davis op.cit. 82-3, 100; Lieut. Col. B.M.H. Rogers, Woodes Rogers Privateering Voyage of 1708-11, M.M. XIX. (1933) 205.
- (2) Evidence of such interest is easily found for most of the leading politicians. Robert Harley had a younger brother, Nathaniel, who was a merchant. Sir Richard Onslow's solicitude for the merchants in 1707 (see below p.294) could have contained an element of self interest; his son Thomas married Elizabeth Knight, the daughter of a rich Jamaica merchant. Sir Richard himself was interested in the Levant and African trades. Robert Walpole had the trade of his family and constituency as a basis for his interest (J.H. Plumb, Sir Robert Walpole 1956 I, 104-5). In the House of Lords Ford, third Baron Tankerville's interest in trade increased when his brother, Ralph, became Governor of Barbados (Vernon Letters I, 247-8).

else, even in their definition of what seas should be protected.⁽¹⁾ There was no common, linking organisation between trading groups, even the specific trades had not yet reached the stage of development where organization involved a recognised speaker for the interests of the trade in the Commons. Such organisation came in the decades after the Peace of Utrecht.⁽²⁾ Before this the

- (1) The most obvious rivalry dividing the merchants was that between the London merchants and those of the outports, particularly Bristol. Many instances of this rivalry can be found in the Letters and Papers of John Cary, B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,540. These jealousies can however be exaggerated; some London and Bristol merchants co-operated in trading ventures. One force making for greater unity was the existence of a few great merchants who, because of their diverse trading interests, linked the regional groups.
- (2) E. Donnan, *Eighteenth Century English Merchants: Micajah Perry*, *Journal of Economic and Business History* IV (1931-2) 96, 98; L.M. Penson, *The London West India Interest in the Eighteenth Century*, *E.H.R.* XXXVI (1921) 376-7; E. Cunningham *op.cit.* 255; M. Ransome *op.cit.* 201-2. The first London Directory was in 1734; see L.S. Sutherland, *A London Merchant 1695-1714* (1933) 4.

The election of an E.I.C. group in 1700-01 of between 36 and 84 members seems to have been exceptional, both in that a specific, crucial issue caused such effort and in that the E.I.C. was always an exceptionally strong and well organised trade. The divergence of numbers is a good example of the difficulty of counting heads and of the 'penumbra' of interested people linked to the hard core of those for whose concern there is ample documentary proof; R. Walcott, *The East India Interest in the General Election of 1700-01*, *E.H.R.* LXXI (1956) 223-239.

basis for such organisation existed in the coffee house rendezvous⁽¹⁾ and meetings to concert convoy petitions or evidence for parliamentary committees, but the expression of a particular trade's viewpoint in the Commons was the incidental responsibility of a conveniently elected merchant.

The effectiveness of any expression of merchant opinion in the Commons was further limited because merchant voice would automatically invoke a jealous 'country' opposition. The jealousy was partly caused by the natural antagonism towards the minority who appear to prosper in wartime. Bankruptcies were easily forgotten. The opposition owed more to the crude and well documented suspicion of the landed squirearchy towards the rich merchants, whose presence in society and parliament was a constant irritant to their dominance.⁽²⁾ The merchant reply to such opposition, that as they paid more taxes than the country gentlemen they had more right to a say in matters of state worsened the situation.⁽³⁾ A

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- (1) Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations II, 607.
- (2) Britannia Languens (1680) in Early English Tracts on Commerce, ed. J.R. McCulloch (1952) 285; Character and Principles of the Present Set of Whigs (1711).
- (3) William Cowper, later Lord Chancellor, expressed their attitude very well in the 1696-7 session, Vernon to Shrewsbury, 28 Nov. 1696, Vernon Letters I, 86; so, naturally did Sir Gilbert Heathcote; see the Wentworth Papers, ed. J.J. Cartwright (1883) 110.

good example of exploitation of this antagonism in connection with trade defence came in November 1692 when Priestman⁽¹⁾ disrupted a debate on this subject by the statement that if one merchant ship in three escaped, the owners would still make a profit.⁽²⁾ In the bickering that ensued the direction of debate was lost and Priestman received strong support. Sympathy with the complaints of merchants was generally weakened in this and later sessions of parliament by evidence given to both Houses of their lack of patriotism in smuggling and in collusive trading with the enemy,⁽³⁾

The voice of the merchants in parliament may have been made even weaker by the existence of party divisions

- (1) Henry Priestman became a second lieutenant on H.M.S. Antelope in 1671 and after varied service was a Commissioner of Admiralty from 1689 to 1699 and M.P. for Shoreham. He was a close professional and political confederate of Russell. (Charnock I, 400-02; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/106; Ehrman 343).
- (2) C.J.X, 707; Grey X, 264, 270-74; see above p.33.
- (3) The best description of collusive trade is by G.N. Clark, Trading with the Enemy and the Corunna Packets, E.H.R., XXXVI (1921) 521 ff. Examples of such trade coming to parliamentary notice are the Lustring Imports Scandal of 1698, C.J.XII, 224-34 and before the Lords a general survey of such trade H.M.C. H.L.VI, 210-221.

amongst themselves. It is possible to divide the merchants elected to the 1705 and 1710 parliaments into roughly equal groups of Whig and Tory.⁽¹⁾ However such divisions are attended by many qualifications and it is probably correct to assume that most merchants were moderates and predisposed to support any secure administration.⁽²⁾ Party propoganda, particularly that of the Tories between 1710 and 1712 and that of the Whigs from 1712 to 1714, exaggerated the correlation between merchant and Whig.⁽³⁾ Such an identification was given a semblance of truth for an earlier period because some of the most articulate merchants, particularly Gilbert Heathcote with his penchant for arousing 'country' animosity, were declared Whigs.⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) E. Cunnington op.cit. 254; M. Ransome op.cit. 201.
- (2) J.H. Plumb, The Mercantile Interest, The Rise of the British Merchant after 1689, History Today (Nov. 1955) Vol. V No. 11, 764; D.C. Coleman, Sir John Banks (1963) 100 and Ch.VIII, Business and Politics; W.A. Aiken ed., The Conduct of the Earl of Nottingham (1941) 55; G. Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne (1967) 164-9.
- (3) See ^{above} ~~below~~ p.44.
- (4) Hooke to Torcy, 12 Dec. 1705, Correspondence of Col. N. Hooke 1703-1707, ed. W.D. Macray (1810) 467; examples of Heathcote's verbal exacerbation of 'country' jealousy can be found in The Wentworth Papers 1705-39 op.cit. 110, and the Committee of the Whole House on Manning, 4 Dec. 1703, Queen Anne's Navy, 187, see below p.385. He was M.P. for London 1701-10 and a leading banker, merchant and Whig.

For these reasons the effectiveness of merchant representations in parliament about convoys and cruisers was weak. There were, however, other considerations which, given favourable circumstances, could amplify the merchant voice and make it decisive in either House when trade protection was being discussed. The most important of these considerations was the interest felt by practically every member of both Houses in one aspect of trade protection. The emphasis so far in this chapter has been on the provision of convoys. These were vital to the merchant minority, but the movement of trade in coastal waters affected nearly every member of parliament. This was the trade protected by cruisers. It was when the network of protection theoretically established by these cruisers failed, that merchant and the majority of the Commons shared a rare unity of complaint. No important English town was many miles from a navigable river; thus when coastal trade was stopped, river trade suffered and with it practically every English constituency, no matter how inland. Worcester's nationally famous cider reached London in Anne's reign by river wherry and coaster.⁽¹⁾ The coal and culm needed in the county came up the Severn ~~from~~ ^{from} ~~Deven~~ and South Wales.⁽²⁾

(1) R. North, *Lives of the Norths*, ed. A. Jessup (1890) III, 223-4.

(2) Account of the coals and culm belonging to Sir John Pakington, Russell Letters, W.R.O. B.A. 2309/55 (vi)

Thus even Sir John Pakington, county member from 1690 to 1722, High Church and Tory, not a character likely at first sight to be concerned with the defence of coastal shipping, had a direct interest in the efficiency of cruisers.⁽¹⁾ It was the national concern that he personified which, when joined to the wider and more specific concerns of the merchant members, helped to produce the cruiser and convoy legislation of 1694 and 1708.

Nor was a general parliamentary interest in trade protection the product of purely parochial and economic concern; the English claim to the sovereignty of the seas was nowhere more frequently mocked than by the activities of French privateers within sight of the coast.⁽²⁾ Such impudence touched a raw nerve in all Englishmen, to whom even the assistance of Dutch ships in protecting coastal waters was an affront.⁽³⁾ The protection of the coastal waters gave merchant minority and squirearchical majority in the Commons a common interest. Nor were the members

(1) His concern for the sea-ways leading to the Bristol Channel would have given him a rare community of interest with the iron masters of the Birmingham area. Much of the Swedish bar iron used for the manufacture of steel came up the Severn, H.R. Schubert, *History of the British Iron and Steel Industry* (1957) 326.

(2) For the importance of the English concept of the sovereignty of the seas see above pp. 6-11.

(3) Berkeley to Nottingham, 16 Oct. 1689, H.M.C. Finch II, 499.

of the Commons corporately so immune to common sense as not to realise that the losses of one section of the community meant harm to the country as a whole. Even the ships owned by merchants in foreign trade were property and property had high status in the eyes of any seventeenth century member of parliament.⁽¹⁾ Clarges expressed this aspect of the community of interest between the merchants and the rest of the Commons when he said in 1693,

'Land will be worth nothing if Trade be not supported By Trade London makes up your rents.'⁽²⁾

Patriotic and economic motives were not the only ones that might link merchants and country members. The discontent of merchant interests provided useful material for an attack on the ministry of the day. All the legislation of the period that concerns convoys and cruisers is partially a product of such an alliance of merchants and opposition. It was said of the Commons that,

'those that have been used to hunt hares and deer know little how to chase privateers and rovers.'⁽³⁾

(1) D. Ogg, *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (1963) 127.

(2) Grey X, 313.

(3) *Present Condition of the English Navy* (1702) 26.

At least there were always members of the Commons ready to draw on the expert knowledge of the merchants.⁽¹⁾ Merchant intelligence of French naval plans and movements was as good as that of the Admiralty and the necessity of frequent petition and appearance before parliamentary committees taught them how to marshal evidence. Their knowledge gave edge and direction to parliamentary attacks, which without factual assistance tended to be diffuse and sporadic.⁽²⁾

Thus it would seem that the effectiveness of the merchants in the Commons depended on the balance of forces working to make them at best a valued ally and at worst a contemptuously ignored minority. On balance their status improved during the period. The money that trade represented made successive ministries more prepared to deploy ships to help merchants.⁽³⁾ The jealousies between trades seem to have lessened. Above all they learnt to make their opinions better known in and out of parliament.⁽⁴⁾

From the beginning of the war in 1689 to the passing

- (1) Clarges used information provided by Newfoundland merchants in the naval debates of Nov. 1692, Grey X, 246.
- (2) Examples of merchant knowledge being used by the opposition can be seen in C.J.XI, 714, 715 (19, 20 Feb. 1697), H.M.C. H.L. VII, 187 (William Dawsonne's evidence, 31 May 1707) and below p.294; or more generally expressed N. Tindal, History of England (1745) III, 309.
- (3) G.D. Ramsay, English Overseas Trade (1957) 233, 247-8.
- (4) See above pp.54-7 and below p. 295-8.

of the first convoy and cruiser legislation in 1694 merchant grievances counted for little. The national emergency and the obvious need for a large fleet meant that the protection of foreign and coastal trades was a secondary consideration to all but those who suffered loss. The implications of the national emergency for trade protection were unequivocally expressed in the 1689 and 1690 sessions of parliament. In November, 1689 Sir Sam Dashwood⁽¹⁾ complained of the loss of seven ships from Barbados, to be answered by Papillon's declaration that,

'I've heard it said the fleet did better saving Ireland than seven sugar ships.'⁽²⁾

A year later the same attitude was expressed in more general terms;

'l'interest du commerce estoit infiniment moins de conséquence que le salut due Royaume.'⁽³⁾

It was as the sense of emergency faded, particularly after La Hogue, that merchants' opinion on convoys and cruisers received more sympathetic attention. They could with justification claim that the state had failed to protect

(1) M.P. for the City of London and a wealthy Barbados merchant.

(2) Grey IX, 414-5.

(3) Bonnet Dispatch, 11/21 Nov. 1690, L. von Ranke, A History of England (1875) VI, 155.

the nation's trade between 1689 and 1694.

Convoys had certainly been provided as a matter of course from the outbreak of war but with very limited success. During 1689 merchants estimated they had lost 100 ships although one specific list of losses accounts for only 62.⁽¹⁾ For 1690 a list survives naming 59 lost ships⁽²⁾ though in the Commons Charges claimed 1,500 had been lost.⁽³⁾ No estimates survive for 1691, which seems to have been a relatively good year.⁽⁴⁾ For 1692 parliament was told at various times that 100,333 and 1,500 ships had been lost in the year and 3,000 in all since the commencement of war.⁽⁵⁾ Pepys thought that merchant losses to the end of this year would have been 1,500 but St. Lo, whose estimates on other

- (1) C.J.X, 285; Sir John Dalrymple, *op.cit.* I Pt.II, 104; C.S.P.Col. Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 153.
- (2) P.R.O. S.P. 8/8 f.30.
- (3) Grey X, 264.
- (4) H.C. Foxroft ed., *A Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time* (1902) 361. The French navy was generally inactive and its crews weakened by sickness, D.Ogg, *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (1963) 358.
- (5) Grey X, 264, 270.

topics seem trustworthy, put losses for the war so far at 600.⁽¹⁾

The discrepancy between the highest figures, usually ones quoted to the Commons, and the lowest is obvious. The highest figures represent an exaggeration which can have done the merchants little service in the Commons. Such exaggeration was perhaps a method of gaining the attention of an unsympathetic audience. In these years the navy was trying to protect fewer than 2,000 sea going ships.⁽²⁾ The highest figures quoted would imply the virtual, if not reiterated, extinction of

- (1) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J. R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 27. In none of these estimates of losses is it clear whether ships taken and then ransomed are included. Although Pepys quotes St. Lo's estimate disparagingly, for St. Lo's reliability see below pp. 314-5.
- (2) A figure for the strength of the English mercantile marine is necessary to give some sense of proportion to the losses. The losses quoted above refer to the foreign trade and not to coastal shipping and a figure of not more than 2,000 ships seems a realistic one. It is not inconsistent with the numerous contemporary figures for convoy strengths and the allocations of men and ships for various regional trades (see below p.333). It is consistent with the fact that between 29 Sept.1691 and 29 Sept. 1692 647 English ships engaged in foreign trade arrived at London, (B.M. Harley Loan 29/284 f.46) Professor R. Davis writes of a mercantile marine of 'several thousands' in the years after 1693, (op.cit. 318) but the period 1689-93 was a period of contraction and restricted sailings. The severity of this contraction may be judged by the low customs receipts for these years, (B.M. Harley Loan 29/45 B f.10).

the English mercantile marine. There would be other evidence for this. The more modest figures quoted above, 62 for 1689, 59 for 1690, fewer for 1691 and perhaps nearer 100 for 1692 are almost certainly underestimates of the total losses for every branch of foreign trade; they make St. Lo's estimate feasible. This represents a heavy loss but it is a loss spread over four years and spread unevenly. The western trades to the Americas seem to have been particularly unlucky.⁽¹⁾ These were the trades whose captains were particularly tempted to break convoy near home, a criticism most frequently brought against the merchants in this period.

The organisation of a rudimentary convoy system was simple by comparison with the provision of an adequate force of cruisers in home waters. The coastal trade was represented by more numerous and individually less important personages. It lacked definition or tactical recognition and naturally earned the lowest priority in the allocation of ships. Indeed cruisers are not mentioned in the earliest scheme for naval deployment.⁽²⁾

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- (1) Of 59 ships listed as lost in 1690 29 were from the American trade and 21 from the ships serving Spain and the Straits, P.R.O. S.P. 8/8 f.30; see also C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 153; Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury (1890) I, 242. The trade to the eastern Mediterranean suffered losses but was most hardly hit by convoy delays, H.M.C. Portland II, 243.
- (2) P.R.O. Adm. 3/1, 8 April 1689.

Their inadequacy or absence is adequately demonstrated for the first phase of the war.⁽¹⁾ Even when ships were allocated to cruiser duties the very nature of these duties made the efficiency of these ships especially dependent on the qualities of the captain and his ship. The Admiralty, by insufficient supervision of the captains, lack of provision for cleaning the ships used as cruisers, and errors in their deployment, made the few ships thus employed more ineffective than necessary.⁽²⁾

Between 1689 and 1694 the interest of the Commons in these failings changed from the cursory. The first resolution touching trade protection came early in these years with the declaration on 14 November 1689,

'That the want of a guard or convoys, for the merchants, for the last year, hath been an obstruction of trade.'⁽³⁾

The resolution was the result of merchant initiative in a petition concerning their losses, and 'country' support,

- (1) H.M.C. Finch III, 15-16; C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 596; Viscount Lydney to Nottingham, 13 Sept. 1692, C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1695, 204; The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster 1665-1752, ed. J.D. Marshall (1967) 94, 98, 108.
- (2) Many individual examples could be found to substantiate these failings but the best anthology of cruiser inefficiency is the pamphlet, 'Reasons to prove there hath been Negligence, Ignorance or Treachery;' (Oct. 1693) N.M.M. CAD/D/20.
- (3) C.J.X, 285, 286; Grey IX, 412, 416; Sir John Dalrymple op.cit. I Pt. II, 103-4.

with the proposal actually coming from Clarges. The prescient request from Elwill,⁽¹⁾ the only merchant to speak in the debate, that the Commons should investigate the deployment of cruisers, was ignored. So was the resolution; 1690 saw no noticeable improvement in convoys, and trade protection achieved no significant exposition in the debates in the Commons in the sessions of 1690-91 or 1691-2.

When parliament met on 4 November 1692 the ministry had small hopes of an easy session, either in general terms, or, despite the victory at La Hogue, in any consideration of naval affairs. In effect the sea victory made criticism of the government more likely; it had ended the sense of emergency that restrained criticisms and this in turn weakened Carmarthen's grip on his collaborators in government. His relations with Nottingham were already strained. The removal of Marlborough early in 1692 ensured the opposition of his supporters, with little compensating increase in parliamentary support when Rochester and Seymour were promoted.⁽²⁾ Their associates in opposition, led by

(1) John Elwill, M.P. for Beeralston, who had interests in the trade to Holland and Newfoundland.

(2) Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester was re-admitted to the Privy Council in March 1692, Edward Seymour became a Lord of the Treasury in the same month.

Musgrave, Clarges, Foley and Harley, remained as opposition leaders in the Commons, uninfluenced by their conversion. The Whigs also were more antagonistic towards what was now a more Tory Ministry.⁽¹⁾ This opposition lacked any common or constructive principle but at least possessed, in the dilatory exploitation of La Hogue the shipping losses of 1692, a common ground on which to attack the naval policy of the ministry.⁽²⁾

Several of the leaders of these groups were concerned enough with trade to have made this a damaging feature of their attack,⁽³⁾ but there were too many other possibilities open to them for any concentrated attention to be paid to trade protection. In a confused session cruisers and convoys had sporadic attention but in a diffuse and badly co-ordinated series of attacks nothing positive was

- (1) A. Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds (1951) I, 497-501; S.B. Baxter, William III (1966) 300-01; K. Feiling, History of the Tory Party 1640-1714, 280, 284-90.
- (2) N. Tindal, The History of England by Mr. Papin de Thoyras continued by N. Tindal, III, 206; K. Feiling op.cit. 286; Ehrman 411.
- (3) Clarges had expressed his interest in trade in every session of parliament since 1689, Paul Foley's library and later activities reveal an interest, Harley had a brother engaged in trade; of the Country members John Hampden had recently published a pamphlet, 'Some short considerations concerning the State of the Nation,' which was largely concerned with trade (N. Tindal op.cit. III 225 fn-226 fn).

achieved. The struggle between Russell and Nottingham and the quarrel between Lords and Commons gradually dominated the session. The ministry had an uncomfortable session and depended for its limited success on the support of changing groups of moderates; for the merchants the session was unproductive.⁽¹⁾

The initiative had once again been theirs with a petition presented to the Commons on 16 November which complained of pressing, plundering of recaptured ships by the navy and the loss of 1,500 ships.⁽²⁾ The committee formed to consider this petition was strong in merchant representation and its chairman, Granville,⁽³⁾ reported to the House on 19 November after an examination of merchant witnesses and Admiralty papers. The committee found that there had been a lack of cruisers,

'either westward or northward sufficient for securing the ships outward and homeward bound.'⁽⁴⁾

This lack of cruisers was a recurring theme in all the naval debates of this session, the first time in William's

(1) A. Browning *op.cit.* I, 498; S.B. Baxter *op.cit.* 308; K. Feiling *op.cit.* 292-4.

(2) C.J.X, 701.

(3) For John Granville see below p. 346.

(4) C.J.X, 708; N. Luttrell, *Abstract of the Debates 1692-3*, ff. 50-1.

reign that cruisers achieved a parliamentary priority over convoys.⁽¹⁾ The cumulative effect of such comments was, however, lost in the distractions of the session. Any coherence a consideration of trade defence might have had was destroyed by the wrangling that followed Priestman's statement that the merchants deserved their losses and despite them were making profits. His attitude and the Admiralty itself had many supporters.⁽²⁾ Waning interest in trade protection was revived in January 1693 when it was revealed that one of the Commissioners of the Admiralty had shown an appalling ignorance of his responsibilities.⁽³⁾ When the Barbados merchants had requested protection for their ships they had been assured that the escorts for the Virginia ships would safeguard both trades, although the routes of the two fleets diverged greatly once out of the Channel.⁽⁴⁾ This information provided the stimulus for another debate, which was as inconclusive as those that had preceded it.

(1) Grey X, 269-74, 294-5.

(2) See above p.33 and Bonnet Dispatch 22 Nov/2 Dec 1692, L. von Ranke op.cit. 185. The belief that merchants were making such big profits that they could afford the loss of two ships in three seems to have been wide-spread, The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster ed. J.D. Marshall (1967) 106; N. Luttrell, Abstract of the Debates 1692-3, ff. 62-4.

(3) It was probably Sir Robert Rich.

(4) N. Tindal, op.cit. III, 230 fn; Grey X, 294-6.

There must have been some bitterness on the part of the merchants that yet another session had passed without sustained consideration of their losses. Yet it was possibly in this session that the first constructive step was taken to improve the protection of English shipping. Two notebooks of a dockyard commissioner survive from this period.⁽¹⁾ They probably belonged to Sir Richard Haddock and contain, besides routine letters for the years from 1691 to 1694, some copied papers. One of these transcripts is entitled, 'The Proposals of Admiral Russell, Mr. Foley and Col. Churchill for the defence of the coasting and homeward bound trade.' Russell's contribution to such a series of proposals is natural enough; for much of this period he was an admiral and the most influential naval officer.⁽²⁾ The Mr. Foley is undoubtedly Paul Foley, M.P. for Hereford City, Commissioner of Accounts and political associate of Harley. His interest in naval and trading matters is well attested in parliamentary and private papers.⁽³⁾ Colonel Churchill is certainly George

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- (1) Extracts from a Commissioner's Notebook 1691-1694, ed. Sir J.K. Laughton, *The Naval Miscellany II* (N.R.S. 1912) 139-145.
- (2) But he was not an admiral between 10 Jan. 1693 and 7 Nov. 1693 and for much of 1694 he was in the Mediterranean.
- (3) See above p. 39., D.N.B. and some of his private papers W.R.O. B.A.3762/1-9. A Thomas Foley entered the Commons in 1694 as M.P. for Stafford (later Baron Foley of Kidderminster) but he seems to have had no specific interest in naval affairs.

Churchill, brother to the first Duke of Marlborough. He had naval experience dating from 1666 but withdrew from the service early in 1693 because of dissatisfaction over promotion. (1)

The combination of a civilian and two naval officers in making these proposals is best explained in a parliamentary context. The proposals must have been made before 1694 because early in that year the Commons established the force to be used for trade protection. The most likely session before 1694 for such proposals is that of 1692-3. In earlier sessions trade protection had hardly been considered and in none of them was the lavish deployment of ships envisaged in all three proposals, likely. In this session the Commons appointed a committee on 16 November 1692 to consider the petition of the merchants and the whole business of trade protection. (2)

(1) George Churchill as M.P. for St. Albans was the only Churchill in the Commons at this time. There seems to have been confusion over his title. He was called Colonel Churchill as early as November 1692 (Grey X, 273) and as late as January 1694 (C.J.XI, 66) but is recorded as a major in November 1693 (C.J.XI, 14). There seems to be no justification for such a title in either Army or Marine commission lists. His brother, Charles, was a Colonel in these years but not a member of parliament.

(2) C.J. X, 701; see above p. 242.

Foley and Churchill were named for this committee and its membership included representatives of all seaports; Russell, as a representative of Portsmouth, could thus have joined them on the committee. The proposals contained in the Commissioner's notebook may then have been one aspect of the committee's work.⁽¹⁾ The three schemes vary in detail but agree in heavy protection for the Irish Sea and Channel.⁽²⁾ All three are, in the light of the war experience of later years, well considered. For Russell and Churchill their long naval experience is sufficient explanation of a valid scheme. That the civilian's, Foley's scheme bears comparison with those of the two professionals is surprising. An interest such as he possessed, in the generalities and parliamentary implications of naval affairs, would not extend to the minutia of ship disposition for trade protection. If,

(1) The editor of the note books, Sir J.K. Laughton, suggests they were compiled in 1691 but it is difficult to see how any civilian or naval officer would have allocated 45-50 ships to trade protection before La Hogue.

(2) A summary of the three proposals shows the general similarity and variation in detail:-

Rates	3	4	5	6	Total
Russell	3	11	16	20	50
Foley	3	16	14	12	45
Churchill	4	18	15	13	50

as is almost certain, he had assistance in compiling his scheme it may have come from the most skilled of naval professionals, Pepys, whose advice Foley and his colleague, Harley, were certainly receiving and using in this period. It was Foley's proposal that was to have significance in the next session of parliament.⁽¹⁾

1693 was a disastrous year for trade. The number of cruisers available was derisory, at no time and nowhere approaching the strengths the Admiralty had itself suggested in a plan of ship distribution for the year.⁽²⁾

- (1) See below p.255-7. It would have been possible for these schemes to have been drawn up in the first two months of the 1693-4 session of parliament after Russell had been reappointed Admiral and all three were still members of the Commons. There was in the months of November and December much parliamentary interest in naval affairs and trade protection. However there does not seem to have been any relevant committee that contained all three. The most likely committee to have concerned itself with cruisers and convoys was the one formed on 22 November 1693 to consider the petition of the merchants, it contains none of them (C.J.XI, 8-9). Moreover the introduction of Foley's scheme, after a proposal by Clarges, seems to have come as a surprise to the Commons, a surprise that is understandable if the detailed preparation had been completed during the 1692-3 session.
- (2) See Appendix VIII. Project for Ships to be employed 1693, Admiralty Office, 12 Nov. 1692, P.R.O.Adm. 8/3. For cruiser strengths in 1693 see N.M.M. PLA/P/5 (Phillips MSS. 88), which gives a monthly account of the cruisers, e.g. 11 in May, 3 in June. For the general shortage see H.M.C. H.L. I, 141; Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series II, 235.

Against this weak defence beat,

'le fureur incroyable pour la Course
 les corsaires malouins pullulent ... rien
 ne les arrête.' (1)

Letters from Harwich, Bristol and Scotland testify to the swarms of privateers. (2) Their activities menaced convoys, and complaints came from traders to the Canaries, the Baltic and the West Indies. (3) John Taylor, one of the most important contractors for naval stores, informed the Navy Board that their convoy arrangements were so deficient that Baltic traders were compelled to hire neutral ships to bring their goods safely home. (4)

This diverse dissatisfaction was trivial compared with the shock caused by the destruction of ninety two merchantmen; (many of them Dutch) of the Smyrna Convoy

- (1) C. de la Roncière, Histoire de la Marine Française (1932) VI, 163.
- (2) C.S.P.Col. Amer. & W.I. 1693-6, 181; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3569 f.879; Luttrell III, 122.
- (3) P.R.O. Adm. 3/8, 28 April, 2 June 1693; Edmund to Nicholas Lechmere, 6 Oct. 1693, Lechmere Papers W.R.O. B.A. 1531/16.
- (4) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3568 f. 415. Portuguese shipping was similarly increasing at the expense of English interests; see F. Prestage, The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, Trans. R. Hist. S. XVII (1934) 91 fn., and C.D'Avenant, Discourses on the Public Revenues and on the Trade of England (1698), in Political and Commercial Works ed. Sir Charles Whitworth (1771) I, 396.

in June 1693. A long delayed and numerous fleet of merchant ships bound for Spain and the Mediterranean sailed into a brilliantly organised trap; the existence of which, the merchants claimed, naval intelligence should have suspected.⁽¹⁾ The losses were widely felt and in their financial severity compared with those caused by the Great Fire of 1666.⁽²⁾ This catastrophe, coming as it did against a background of feeble defences for trade and the general incompetence of the last four years, explains the bitterness of Sir James Houblon, writing to Pepys about the losses;

'I will yet never forgive our ministers for this ignorance, malice or carelessness.'⁽³⁾

The merchant reaction was swift, better organised and more effective than any of their representations so

- (1) For accounts of the disaster see A.C.Wood, *History of the Levant Company* (1935) 111-12; Ehrman 500-02; H.M.C. H.L.I, 172-5, 197-251.
- (2) *Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. de Beer (1955) IV, 148; Nathaniel to Edward Harley 30 June 1694, H.M.C. Portland II, 244; R. North, *op.cit.* III, 186.
- (3) Sir James Houblon to Pepys, 17 July 1693, *Private Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Samuel Pepys 1679-1703*, ed. J.R. Tanner (1926) I, 69. Sir James Houblon was one of the most important traders to Portugal, Spain, the Mediterranean and East Indies. He later became a Commissioner of Admiralty (Ehrman 512).

far in the reign of William. Petitions on the losses were soon forwarded to the Lord Mayor and the Queen, Lord Berkeley presenting the latter on behalf of the Turkey merchants.⁽¹⁾ A committee of the Privy Council considered the complaints and during July forwarded the requests of various trades to the Commissioners of Admiralty for their consideration.⁽²⁾ In reply they stated that it was impossible to meet all the merchant demands.⁽³⁾ This unsatisfactory answer led to another exchange of letters between Trenchard, the Secretary of State, and the Admiralty, with an uncompromising Admiralty reply that both convoys and cruisers were necessary to protect trade and that such ships must be totally reserved for protection duties.⁽⁴⁾ This correspondence is

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- (1) Luttrell III, 141, 146.
- (2) Ibid. III, 195.
- (3) Memorial of the Commissioners of Admiralty to the Queen, 4 Sept. 1693, C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 311-12.
- (4) Lords of Admiralty to Trenchard, 11 Sept. 1693, S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 322. Thus it seems that it was from the Admiralty that the idea of the total reservation of ships for trade protection first came, an idea that later Convoy and Cruiser legislation made law. The Admiralty was not alone in offering advice. On 5 October Gibson presented his very full memorial to the King, Private Correspondence of Samuel Pepys 1679-1703 op.cit.I, 118-121. On 11 Oct. Perrot's scheme was forwarded to the Admiralty, a scheme notable for its recognition of the importance of clean ships and a squadron in the Soundings, P.R.O.Adm. 1/4080 ff.751-756. Other schemes may be discerned in William Bridgeman's Notebook (?), N.M.M. CAD/A/8, Sections C and D.

an indication that the government had realised the need for an organised and powerful defence for trade. On 18 August Godolphin, in a letter to the King, maintained that an excessively strong main fleet had ruined trade in the last two years and, 'when all is done the war cannot be supported unless trade is protected.'⁽¹⁾ It was also realised, not only that trade must be protected, but that parliament as well as the merchants must see that efforts were being made. The dismissal of Nottingham on 5 November and Russell's appointment as Admiral of the Red on 7 November were part of this process.⁽²⁾ So was Trenchard's instruction to the Commissioners of Admiralty on 7 November that they should consider what would be the best method for the organisation of cruisers and convoys.⁽³⁾ The knowledge that Barbados and Turkey merchants were preparing petitions for presentation to parliament was a spur to such activity.⁽⁴⁾

(1) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 275.

(2) Killegrew, Delavall and Shovell, the three Admirals who had served during the year as joint commanders, were dismissed on 6 November.

(3) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 393. In this letter he asked whether an act of parliament would help to promote manning but made no mention of parliamentary action in connection with cruisers and convoys. This letter can also be found in P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080 f.791.

(4) Luttrell III, 209.

William's speech at the opening of parliament on 7 November was a development of government policy. Some paragraphs of the speech were an attempt to associate himself with the national sense of grievance and to encourage co-operation from both Houses in the protection of trade by the building of more ships and the establishment of new bases in the south west.⁽¹⁾ William must have been well aware of the cohesive effect that the patriotic humiliation and devastating loss of property caused by the Smyrna Convoy might have on the opposition. Rumours about the establishment of a parliamentary Board of Trade with the authority to deploy ships and thus diminish his own powers must have been reported to him.⁽²⁾ Certainly apparent was the widespread dissatisfaction with his rule in England.⁽³⁾ To counter this he had won the support of the Whigs by the promotion of some of their leaders and could count on Carmarthen organising them and the courtiers to the best advantage in parliament.⁽⁴⁾ Such support was sufficient to ensure an easy passage for finance bills and to win the 1693-4 session an historical reputation for calm⁽⁵⁾ that is perhaps unjustified.

(1) C.J.XI, 1.

(2) Newsletter 12 Dec. 1693, C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1693, 426.

(3) D. Ogg op.cit. 387-88.

(4) A. Browning op.cit. I, 507-9.

(5) A. Browning op.cit. I, 506-9; S.B. Baxter op.cit. 315-6.

Despite the studious caution with which the Court attempted to guide the debates on naval affairs some of them on trade protection were as stormy as any in the reign of William. In the Commons the consideration of naval miscarriages developed on customary lines. On 13 November the House demanded documentary evidence on the whole course of the naval war in 1693. This was provided on 15 November and evidence from representatives of the Turkey Company heard. Debates continued throughout November, their scope being enlarged to a consideration of merchant losses throughout the war, by a petition presented for the merchants by Pembroke, Gold and the Houblons, towards the end of the month.⁽¹⁾ The debates continued in December but by now were concentrating on the failures of the Admirals and their superiors,⁽²⁾ a development of which the merchants had by now ample experience and which offered no obvious hope of improving the safety of their ships. The defeat of the motion condemning the three Admirals by 10 votes ended these

(1) C.J.XI, 2-9; Bonnet Dispatches 7/17 Nov, 12/27 Nov. 1693, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 217, 221-2; Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 331. Thomas, 8th Earl of Pembroke, a political moderate, who had been 1st Lord of the Admiralty 1689-92; probably Sir Edward Gold, a Mediterranean trader and John and James Houblon.

(2) C.J.XI, 21.

inconclusive debates. In the Lords the consideration of the Smyrna disaster was leisurely. A request for certain papers in the custody of the Commons led to a conference between the Houses and seems to have reminded the Commons of the issue early in January but their resolution to consider the matter again had no result.⁽¹⁾ Once again it seemed that the losses of the merchants had been buried in words and that to parliament these losses represented grievances for factional exploitation rather than for legislation.

This situation was changed suddenly and devastatingly on 17 January 1694. The merchants were not alone in their frustration; the Country opposition, the Tory groups and other opponents of the Ministry, such as Jacobites, had likewise had an unrewarding session, their only legislative success so far having been a practically completed Place Bill. In mid January this opposition had concentrated its attention on the finance bill whereby the Land Tax was to be levied. Sir Thomas Clarges in particular had been leading the attack on a bill that hurt him doubly, in pocket and in seeing his money go to a government and war that he detested.⁽²⁾ His attempts to amend the bill had been

(1) Ibid. XI, 46.

(2) The rest of the paragraph is based on C.J.XI, 61-2 and a Bonnet Dispatch 19/29 Jan. 1694, L. von Ranke op.cit. VI, 232-233; L'Hermitage Dispatch, 29 Jan. 1694, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 00,157-8.

defeated. In retaliation, on 17th January he proposed that a clause should be added to the bill. This clause would appropriate money for the upkeep of a number of ships whose sole duty would be to cruise for the protection of trade. Convoys were not mentioned and the implication of his proposal was that the Admiralty should have no authority over the deployment of these ships. The debate was a long one, candles were brought in, and the courtiers argued lengthily against such an invasion of the Crown's prerogative. The proposal seems to have been a surprise to them; the best they could do was to obtain an amendment securing Admiralty control over the deployment of the ships in times of crisis. Another amendment, on the number of third rates to be included in the force, they lost by 125 votes to 81, and finally the bill passed its second reading.

That the opposition secured a majority on this issue after its earlier defeats implies an accession of strength. These extra votes may well have come from those whose concern over foreign and coastal trade had earlier been ignored; they may also have included the votes of the more republican Whigs, to whom such a measure would have been attractive. The Commons had decided that the force to be employed for trade protection should number 43 ships taken from the lowest four rates. The actual distribution of the ships among these four rates was the subject of

debate and amendment but the final allocations agree closely with the scheme drawn up by Paul Foley.⁽¹⁾ In Bonnet's account of the debate the impression is given that Clarges alone made the general and detailed proposals but Foley certainly contributed to the debate and was responsible for the detailed proposals of the numbers and kinds of ships to be used and for justifying these proposals to the House.⁽²⁾ Even without documentary support the correspondence between the parliamentary scheme for trade protection and the one attributed to him in the Commissioner's Note Books' would be sufficient evidence of his contribution.⁽³⁾ The co-operation between the group for

(1) See above p. 246.

(2) B.M. Harlean 1,898 ff. 34-5.

(3) In the table below is summarised the way in which the Commons decided, in January 1694, that the ships for trade protection should be allocated from third to sixth rate warships. Beneath this Foley's allocation and those of Russell and Churchill are included for comparison:-

Rate	3	4	5	6	Total
Parliament	4	16	13	10	43
Foley	3	16	14	12	45
Russell	3	11	16	20	50
Churchill	4	18	15	13	50

There is evidence of the debate that caused the amendment of Foley's scheme, particularly where it concerned the third rate ships, C.J.XI, 62; B.M. Harlean 1898 f.5.

which Clarges spoke and the group led by Foley and Harley had begun in 1691 and become closer with each succeeding session.⁽¹⁾ The cruiser and convoy proposals were one result of this co-operation.

The Land Tax bill still required a third reading. Some measure of the bitterness aroused by the debate on 17 January may perhaps be deduced from the resolution of the Commons, before the third reading on 22 January, that debates should be, 'grave and orderly'.⁽²⁾ The speakers for the Court were better prepared.⁽³⁾ Naturally they repeated the argument that such legislation restricted the rightful powers of the Crown. They also developed an appeal to patriotism by showing how the House of Lords would naturally resent the tacking of such legislation to a money bill and how an embroilment of the two Houses would delay the granting of money and thus damage the prosecution of the war. It was implied that the pretensions of the Commons in this matter were undermining the stability of the constitution. Russell, rather ingenuously, suggested that if the Commons insisted on passing the cruiser and convoy legislation they should

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- (1) The growing links between the two groups are clearly traced in K. Feiling, *op.cit.* 288-91.
- (2) C.J.XI, 66.
- (3) Bonnet Dispatch, 19/29 Jan. 1694, L. von Ranke, *op.cit.* VI, 232-3; L'Hermitage Dispatch 2 Feb. 1694, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 00 f.161; Luttrell III, 256.

tack it to a money bill of less consequence and Trenchard suggested it should be a separate bill. The supporters of the proposals urged the importance of trade, that experience in recent years had shown that a contrivance such as this was necessary to secure action and with sound use of their growing knowledge of the navy that even with the deduction of 43 cruisers the main fleet would still be strong enough. The verbal battle lasted five hours but the bill was passed at 7 p.m. by 187 votes to 123. The only Court victories were the addition of a clause that made it possible for the ships allocated as cruisers and convoys to revert to other duties in time of emergency and the abandonment of an idea of Clarges that the bill should stipulate how the ships would be deployed in five squadrons. (1)

The Privy Council considered the situation on the evening of 23 January but here, and in the debates in the Lords that followed, there was reluctant agreement that the bill must pass. (2) The money needed for the war had to

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- (1) Off Flamborough Head, the Downs, Guernsey, the mouth of the Channel and off Cape Clear. Bonnet Dispatch 19/29 Jan. 1694, L. von Ranke, op.cit. VI, 232-3; L'Hermitage Dispatch B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 00 f.157; Luttrell III, 256.
- (2) Bonnet Dispatch, 23 Jan./2 Feb. 1694, L. von Ranke, op.cit. VI, 234-5; L'Hermitage Disptach, 5 Feb. 1694, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 00 f. 169; L.J.XV, 348, 350.

be bought with 43 ships and the Land Tax Bill became law.⁽¹⁾ On 25 January William vetoed a Place Bill and the parliamentary tumult that followed this timely demonstration of his power is perhaps one of the reasons why the crisis over cruisers and convoys has been neglected in accounts of this session.⁽²⁾ Yet the measure was an important one. The Commons did not use the device of tacking lightly. That the members used this method in the interests of trade protection and that it involved a radical limitation of the royal authority shows the importance cruisers and convoys had attained by 1694. A precedent was established for such parliamentary intervention on trade defence which, reinforced by the more famous legislation of 1708, influenced parliamentary usage in the eighteenth century.⁽³⁾ Admittedly the establishment

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- (1) 6 & 7 W. & M. c 3, An Act for granting to His Majesty an Aid of Four Shilling in the Pound for one year. Clause LXXII appropriates ships to trade protection; LXXIII allows them to be used for the line of battle in time of emergency; LXXV stipulates that the Commissioners of Admiralty shall provide an account of the cruisers and convoys used each year for parliament.
- (2) Another reason may well be the fact that the provisions concerning cruisers and convoys are three clauses in a money bill of eighty five clauses.
- (3) D.A. Baugh, British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole (1965) 19.

of this force involved no strategic innovation⁽¹⁾ - the Admiralty and government had recognised the need for convoys and cruisers before 1694⁽²⁾ - but it is very doubtful whether so many ships would have been provided without the spur of legislation.⁽³⁾

As it was, a law had been passed that was very difficult to check. At least the merchants were now confident enough of their rights to insist on compliance with the law. On 9 April the traders of London, in a petition to the Commons, informed the House that none of the 43 ships had so far been appointed.⁽⁴⁾ The next day the Admiralty provided the House with lists of the cruisers and convoys ordered to sea since 25 January. The merchants were given a copy to study and told to return.⁽⁵⁾ The lists were impressive but utterly misleading. 59 ships were named as cruisers but 13 were employed in duties outside the definition of the act.⁽⁶⁾ 32 ships were named as convoys; of these 12 could more properly be described as convoying

(1) Ehrman 509.

(2) See above p. 247.

(3) See C.J.XI, 6, 18 Nov. 1693. The Admiralty estimated for the House that it would use 3,530 men for cruisers and convoys in 1694, that is, men sufficient for about ten fourth rates and ten fifth rates.

(4) C.J.XI, 154.

(5) C.J.XI, 155-7; see also Newsletter, 10 April 1694, C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1695, 252.

(6) Nine were being used to gather intelligence and four against French corn ships.

foreign rather than coastal trade.⁽¹⁾ The real number of ships on statutory duty was further limited because many of the ships were mentioned two or three times, once each time new orders transferred them to different stations or duties.⁽²⁾ A precise estimate of the ships employed is made impossible by the failure to name some ships, which makes it impossible to ascertain whether any given ship mentioned by rate only is additional to those named or one that has been mentioned already. The time lag between the dispatch of orders and the actual appearance of the ships on duty would further reduce the real number of ships in service. The lists in fact deceive; at first glance it would appear that the Admiralty was employing more ships on cruiser and convoy duty than parliament had ordered; in reality there were probably fewer than 43.⁽³⁾ If deception was intended it was successful. The merchants did not return.

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- (1) For troops (4), the Hamburg trade (2) and Norway (4).
- (2) For example, H.M.S. Saudadoes Prize appears twice, once as a convoy (13 Feb.) once as a cruiser (20 Feb.), and possibly once as a 5th rate. The Rupert Prize, Newcastle, Pearle, Norwich, Play Prize and Dartmouth all appear at least twice in the lists of orders.
- (3) A paper critical of the Admiralty lists was prepared, probably by the Commissioners of Accounts, but there is no record of its use in parliament, B.M. Harlean 1,898 f.42.

How seriously and in what ways the general activities of the navy suffered through the demands for cruisers and convoys after this session of parliament is hard to calculate. There is evidence that a shortage of small ships, of the rates required for trade protection, contributed towards the failure of the 1694 campaign when Berkeley's tour of bombardment against the coastal towns of northern France was certainly hampered by a lack of small ships with which to support his bomb vessels and machine ships.⁽¹⁾ A similar shortage hindered the effectiveness of bombarding squadrons in 1695.⁽²⁾ In a more general way the need for cruisers and convoys meant a reduction in the strength of every squadron and every major convoy. There is evidence of such reductions but the effects are incalculable.⁽³⁾ The test of a major naval confrontation was never applied to the parliamentary reservation of ships for trade defence; nor is there any

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- (1) John, Baron Berkeley of Stratton. He entered the navy in the reign of Charles II and became Admiral in 1693. C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1694-5, 176, 190, 212; H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt.I, 122; N.M.M. Southwell Sou/3 f.104.
- (2) Berkeley to the Lord Justices, 26 May 1695, C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-95, 478.
- (3) Sir Francis Wheeler to Lords of Admiralty, 19 Jan. 1694, *ibid.* 1694-5, 43; P.R.O.S.P. 42/4 f.311; Trenchard to Blathwayt, 28 Aug. 1694, N.M.M. Southwell, Sou/3 ff.321-2.

evidence that the quality of naval intelligence declined for lack of small ships. Certainly the necessity of providing 43 ships for trade defence in home waters, whether the full quota was provided or not, increased the nervous wear and tear at every level of naval administration,⁽¹⁾ but this of all effects is the most difficult to measure and in comparison with the numerous worries that afflicted the navy in the middle years of the war, was probably slight.

Neither foreign nor coastal trades seem to have suffered badly in 1694, the first year in which the new system of trade protection operated. There were convoy delays, isolated losses, as when the East India Company lost a very rich ship, and sporadic petitions for cruisers, but no general or heavy losses.⁽²⁾ 1695 was, however, another bad year. French successes affected the foreign trades unequally but traders to the East and West Indies,

(1) Lords of Admiralty to Trenchard, 14 June 1695, C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 178; P.C. Minutes, 11 April 1697, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. II, 458.

(2) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 147, 151; Diary of John Evelyn, op.cit. V, 174.

America and Africa claimed they had lost among them 84 ships.⁽¹⁾ The losses of Barbados merchants were largely due to an error by Peregrine Osborne, Marquis of Carmarthen,⁽²⁾ commander of the Soundings squadron, who withdrew into Milford Haven on sighting their fleet in the belief that they were French.⁽³⁾ Bristol merchants suffered with particular severity during the year and the coastal trade round Land's End was halted.⁽⁴⁾

- (1) This was an exaggeration. A study of the evidence these traders submitted to the House of Lords shows that this total has been inflated by including some ships lost in 1694 and by including some ships in more than one regional list of losses e.g. 7 Africa Company losses are also included in the Barbados list, H.M.C. H.L. II, 75-82, 87-89. See also C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1695, 53-4; Report of Barbados Merchants July 1696, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1696-7, 61-2; H.M.C. H.L. II, 64; K.G. Davies, *The Royal Africa Company* (1960) 207; P.R.O. Adm. 7/333 f.75.
- (2) Later the 2nd Duke of Leeds. A naval captain in 1690 he became a Rear Admiral in 1697.
- (3) W. Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy* (1898) II 486-7; *The Portledge Papers 1687-1697*, ed. R.J. Kerr and I.C. Duncan (1928) 209; Burnet III, 171-2; H.M.C. H.L. II, 69.
- (4) James Waller (Dept. Gov. of Kinsale) to Southwell, 21 June 1695, N.M.M. Southwell Sou/16.

These losses gave, 'great advantages to those who complained of the Administration.'⁽¹⁾ A restless antagonism to all that the Court attempted in the Commons was to be the most obvious feature of the 1695-6 session. Deep discontent with William's Dutch preoccupations, growing worry over the succession, both of these aggravated by the death of May,⁽²⁾ merged with more recent troubles, like the refusal of the Northern Crowns to salute our flag in English waters⁽³⁾ and the losses of the merchants, to produce a general dissatisfaction which parliament reflected. Although the election of 1695 had returned to the Commons a majority who favoured the continuation of the war, this majority, apart from voting money, was unstable and merged frequently and readily with the opposition to the Court on the Treason Bill, the Licensing Laws, the consideration of Welsh grants, coinage and the Council of Trade.⁽⁴⁾ It was an opposition with no outstanding leaders, many of the old 'Country' leaders, such as Clarges having died, and one without the definition

(1) Burnet III, 179-80; or for a similar opinion *ibid.* III, 172.

(2) S.B. Baxter *op.cit.* 333-4; N. Tindal *op.cit.* III, 309-10.

(3) L'Hermitage Dispatch, 21/31 Jan. 1696, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 QQ f.230.

(4) S.B. Baxter *op.cit.* 334-6; A. Browning *op.cit.* I, 527-32.

that party discipline or the mutual experience of several sessions in parliament could give. In Tindal's words, it was the opposition of these who supposed,

'that the character of a patriot was, without distinction of times or persons, to be ever against the Court.'⁽¹⁾

Before the session began the government attempted to reduce the impact of the merchants' complaints on the Commons. The cruisers and convoy legislation of 1694 had showed the danger of an opposition interest in such matters. The outlines of the government's plan were considered in the Privy Council on 12 November 1695.⁽²⁾ The losses during the year were to be blamed on the merchants for slipping convoys, an approach that in the past had generally secured some support in the Commons. More positively, a Council of Trade was to be established and it would consider the convoy needs of the merchants and advise the Admiralty on the allocation of ships.⁽³⁾ The Council of Trade was to be established by parliament and by initiating such a measure, the government would hope to limit any encroachment on the powers of the executive. As part of

(1) N. Tindal op.cit. III, 303.

(2) P.C. Minutes 12 Nov. 1695, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I, 255.

(3) For the background to the proposal for a Council of Trade see R.M. Lees, Parliament and the Proposal for a Council of Trade 1695-6, Eng.Hist.Rev. (1939) LIV, 38-47 and I.K. Steele, The Board of Trade in Colonial Administration 1696-1720 (London Ph.D. Thesis 1964) 32-3.

the attempt to show the government's real concern for trade the King was advised to make public his own interest in these affairs, as this would help matters in the Commons,⁽¹⁾ and in his speech on 26 November to parliament William asked both Houses to consider what laws might be necessary to encourage trade.⁽²⁾

In the session that followed the Court was successful in maintaining its concept of an advisory Council of Trade against an opposition that wished to give the Council the authority to control naval ships. Because the opposition wished the Council to control probably another 40 convoys in addition to the 43 cruisers established by the 1694 legislation,⁽³⁾ the debates on the Council of Trade concern the navy, but the link between debates and navy is a tenuous one. At no time in this period was a naval matter discussed in parliament in a completely objective way without politics or personalities distorting debates. The debates on the Council of Trade concern the navy in much the same way as a battleground is relevant to the war

(1) Trumbull to Shrewsbury, 16 Nov. 1695, C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1695, 101.

(2) C.J.XI, 339.

(3) This must be the explanation of John Cary's reference to 80 ships for cruisers and convoys, B.M.Addit. MSS. 5,540 f.92.

aims over which the combatants are fighting. The navy in this session was incidentally the battleground between legislature and executive. The debates were bitter, more so according to one writer than, 'in any parliament since that of '41.'⁽¹⁾ Throughout December and January in the Commons, arguments similar to those used in 1694 were reiterated.⁽²⁾ On one side it was maintained that trade had been so neglected in the past that it was now necessary to form a council, independent of the Court, with full powers to deploy ships so that losses on the scale of past years would become impossible. The Court replies dwelt upon the dangers of such a council, how its powers would grow, reducing the King to the status of a 'Duke of Venice.'⁽³⁾ No one, in any of these debates, seems to have

- (1) J. Harvey to Mr. Mercier 13 Dec. 1695, H.M.C. Downshire I Pt. II, 597.
- (2) C.J.XI, 335, 422-4, 440. The arguments are given in Burnet III, 180; Bonnet Dispatches, B.M. Addit. MSS. 30,000 A, ff.2-3, 7-8, 16; L'Hermitage Dispatches Addit. MSS. 17,677 QQ, ff. 180, 229; N. Tindal op.cit. 309-10: and generally considered in R.M. Lees, op.cit. 48-60. The House of Lords concentrated on an investigation of the Darien scheme and an elaborate consideration of the 1695 losses. Their investigations uncovered no obvious naval failure, H.M.C. H.L. II, 64-189.
- (3) Burke considered that such fears were justified, Ehrman 570-71.

considered whether the navy was strong enough or had the administrative capacity to provide enough ships and work for two masters. The issue was decided in the Court's favour largely by the revulsion of feeling towards William caused by the well publicised news of the Fenwick assassination plot,⁽¹⁾ and a Council of Trade was established to advise King and Admiralty on the allocation of convoys to foreign trade.

Despite the friction with the Admiralty the new Council worked well. In co-operation with the merchants it produced the first over all scheme of convoy organisation and this worked well in 1696 and 1697.⁽²⁾ The merchants had in fact reinforced the generally accepted responsibility of the state that planned their convoys and a law that allocated cruisers to safeguard home waters. These successes had been achieved largely despite the state,⁽³⁾ and with the help of parliament either directly, as in the 1694 legislation, or indirectly, through fear of such

(1) I.K. Steele op.cit. 42.

(2) Report to the Lord Justices on Convoys, 30 Sept. 1696, P.R.O. C.O. 324/6 ff.71-81.

(3) This being so, it is to the Tories rather than the Whigs that the merchants should have owed gratitude and political allegiance, because, if party names are to be used in the reign of William, Tory groups in opposition helped the merchants to both successes against the courtier opposition of Whig Ministries.

legislation in 1696. This conjunction of advice on convoys and legislation on cruisers does seem to have protected trade successfully for the rest of the war; the losses of 1695 and earlier years were not repeated.⁽¹⁾ It would, however, be unwise to attribute more than a share in the credit for this success to either better organised convoys or statutory cruisers. At last Admirals and Admiralty were cautiously accepting the fact that the menace of the main French fleet had lessened.⁽²⁾ Thus more ships were available for trade defence. The traders had been quicker in adapting themselves to the *guerre de course*. Much American trade now returned 'northabout', via St. George's Channel, thus avoiding the main danger from St. Malo.⁽³⁾ The Mediterranean trade developed 'runners', fast ships powered by sweeps as well as sails, that could sail independently of convoys and secure from privateers.⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) Merret to Popple, 24 May 1709, Col.S.P.Col. Amer. & W.I. 1708-9, 317.
- (2) Ehrman 603; G.J. Marcus, *Naval History of England* (1961) I, 210, records the fact with the wrong motives,
- (3) P.R.O. Adm. 3/12, 7 Aug. 1695; C.S.P.Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 138-9; *ibid.* 1696, 230.
- (4) Tolson to Thomas Hammond, 26 Oct. 1704, 'I find my ship to sail so that I fear none, if I have but sea room. I rowed her (at) two knots in a calm.' The *Papers of Thomas Bowrey*, ed. Lt. Col. Sir R. Carnac Temple, (*Hakluyt Society LVIII*, 1925) 208-9; see also Edward Gould's evidence 29 Jan. 1708, H.M.C. H.L.VII, 182.

Despite the growing security with which trade was managed after 1695 both Houses had developed a concern for the efficiency of cruisers and convoys. On 4 February 1695 the Commons had a clause added to the Land Tax Bill ordering that the Admiralty should present to the House each year an account of cruisers and convoys,⁽¹⁾ apparently because the Admiralty had neglected to provide the House with such an account for the past year. The analysis of this list when it was eventually prepared was so difficult and took so long that the Admiralty escaped criticism in this session.⁽²⁾ Accounts of cruisers and convoys were presented to parliament late in 1695 and in 1696. They formed the basis for searching interrogations of naval officials and officers by committees of the Commons and Lords.⁽³⁾ These encounters are notable for the expert and

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- (1) C.J.XI, 221. Such accounts were required by law 6 & 7 W. & M. c 3 clause, LXXV; see above p.259 fn.1.
- (2) A very painstaking and shrewd criticism of this list was drawn up by the Commissioners of Accounts. It analysed trade protection on a day to day basis and as well as more than fifty specific criticisms on points of detail it proved that between 1 Oct. 1693 and 1 Dec. 1694 10,413 days of cruiser and convoy protection were provided instead of the 16,985 the law required. There seems to be no record of the Commons using this analysis, B.M. Harlean 7,474 ff. 1-5.
- (3) For the presentation of lists see C.J.XI, 569,619. Copies of these lists may be found in P.R.O. Adm. 7/333 f.243; P.R.O. Adm. 7/334 f.56. The questions and answers based on the lists are scattered in both volumes but examples are P.R.O. Adm. 7/333 ff.57-63; P.R.O. Adm. 7/334 ff. 4,5,51-56.

confident way in which the interrogators are answered either verbally or in writing.⁽¹⁾ Reasoned and convincing attempts are made to show that such losses as the merchants have suffered are but a small proportion of the trade⁽²⁾ and some of the Commons may have been made to realise for the first time that protecting trade was more than politics and paper work but involved men, ships and above all, vast expanses of sea.⁽³⁾ Such contact seems to have been the first occasion in William's reign in which the naval views on trade protection were put to representatives of either House. Certain weaknesses in the system of trade protection were generally apparent. In the main they sprang from the weaknesses of men and material. The efficiency of a cruiser depended upon the

(1) For example, P.R.O. 7/334 f.17.

(2) 'The merchants do trade during this time of extraordinary action with almost as much freedom as in time of peace;' P.R.O. Adm. 7/333 f.91.

(3) As Berkeley wrote of the Soundings, 'A strong squadron in the Soundings looks well and pleases people on shore (but does not) secure our trade so much as is thought, for though the Soundings be a pass, it is a pass of mighty extent and our ships are foul;' Berkeley to Shrewsbury 1 Aug. 1696, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. II 376; the Admiralty said much the same to the House of Lords P.R.O. Adm. 7/333 f.91.

qualities of the captain and some lacked the skill and endurance required.⁽¹⁾ A cruiser that had been at sea a month stood little chance of catching a privateer one week out of St. Malo but there were no arrangements for the regular cleaning of the cruiser force.⁽²⁾ Squadrons of cruisers, such as the Soundings squadron, were subject to special difficulties. In 1696 and 1697 the defence of the Soundings was largely abandoned because the squadrons ran short of food.⁽³⁾ None the less these are merely defects of a system that by 1697 did provide substantial protection for the bulk of English trade and a system that was to act as a precedent for the wars of the eighteenth century.

With peace the navy reverted to more prosaic tasks, defending trade still, but now against pirates, not only

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- (1) An Essay towards Carrying on the Present War against France (1698?), Harleian Miscellany X, 376; R. Gibson, Reflections on our Naval Strength, Naval Miscellany II op.cit. 157; Luttrell III, 454.
- (2) Berkeley to Shrewsbury, 16 July 1696, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I, 369; Memorial by Tobias Bowles to Lord High Admiral, 24 July 1702, C.S.P.Dom. Anne I, 196.
- (3) C.S.P.Dpm.Wm.1696, 392; *ibid.* 1697 200, 276.

the traditional Algerine pirate but also the more modern western variety.⁽¹⁾ The Kidd scandal and the reports of the Council of Trade brought piracy to the notice of parliament but the act which was passed as a result of this interest did nothing to compel the navy to greater efforts.⁽²⁾ The activities of smugglers and foreign ships encroaching on English trade or fisheries were likewise dealt with by the navy in the normal course of its duties. One aspect of the smuggling did lead to parliamentary direction of the deployment of the navy in the same way as it had legislated over cruisers in 1694. By an act of 1698 the Lord High Admiral was instructed to appoint twelve small ships to stop the export of wool from Ireland to countries other than England.⁽³⁾

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- (1) G.N. Clark, The Barbary Corsairs in the Seventeenth Century, Cambridge Historical Journal, Vol.VIII No. 1 (1944) 22-25; P. Grosse, Piracy, M.M.36 (1950) 337-345; The Rise and Progress of Pirates, Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. VI ff.9-10.
- (2) 11 Wm. III c 7 (1700) An Act for the more effectual Suppression of Piracy.
- (3) 10 Wm.III c 16 An Act to prevent the Exportation of Wool. Clause XVI establishes two fifth rates, two sixth rates and eight sloops for these duties.

(ii)

1702-1714

When war came again in 1702 the lessons on trade protection afforded by the 1689-97 War were still sufficiently fresh for there to be a practically unanimous English appreciation of the measures necessary. In May the House of Lords advised the Queen that the French naval preparations showed the enemy was embarked on a 'piratical war' against our commerce and that it was necessary to consider means of defence.⁽¹⁾ In June the Privy Council demanded a weekly statement of cruisers from the Admiralty.⁽²⁾ In July Marlborough, from the Hague, was confirming the need for such defence.⁽³⁾ George, Prince of Denmark, and as Lord High Admiral the titular head of the navy, and his Council, were receiving similar advice.⁽⁴⁾ This Council's apparent appreciation

(1) L.J.XVII, 147.

(2) Nottingham to Burchett, 30 June 1702, C.S.P.Dom. Anne I, 146.

(3) Quoted J.H. Owen, War at Sea Under Queen Anne (1938) 34.

(4) C.S.P.Dom. Anne I, 45, 196.

of the needs of trade can be seen in the scheme for naval dispositions in 1703 that it forwarded to the Secretary of State, Nottingham, at the end of 1702. There were 167 fighting ships to be deployed; 110 of them were allocated to trade defence, although the scheme was obviously tentative because, as the Council pointed out, if this number of ships were devoted to trade defence, the main fleet would be dangerously weak.⁽¹⁾ The lavishness with which trade was to be protected is in great contrast to the forces thus employed between 1689 and 1693, although there was not in reality such a great difference between the early years of the two wars, for the 1702 scheme remained a paper aspiration. A Mediterranean fleet was necessary for strategic and economic reasons,⁽²⁾ and commercial and political pressures at home soon disrupted the pattern of defence as planned by the Prince's Council,⁽³⁾ and the defence of English trade between 1702 and 1707 was badly managed.

(1) Prince's Council to Nottingham, 2 Dec. 1702, C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 325-7.

(2) Merret to Council of Trade and Plantations, 29 Jan. 1702, C.S.P. Col.Amer. & W.I. 1702, 52-3.

(3) For example, losses from collier convoys and pressure from London merchants forced the Prince's Council to increase the strength of the convoys from four to six ships as early as 21 July 1703, P.R.O. Adm. 2/365, 21 July 1703.

Major failures worthy of public comment were infrequent, but characteristic of this period were frustrating convoy delays and hindered coastal communications. During 1703 practically every foreign trading group complained at least once about convoy delays.⁽¹⁾ Even though the merchants were themselves responsible for some delays,⁽²⁾ much blame must be attributed to the Prince's Council for its lack of organisation and foresight.⁽³⁾ The other aspect of naval defence, the deployment of cruisers against the 'little pilfering privateers',⁽⁴⁾ was equally faulty. The strength of the three main units of defence in home waters, the Soundings squadron, the Irish Squadron and the Collier convoys, was generally maintained but at the cost of the screen of cruisers that defended the rest of the coast. The number of these

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- (1) C.S.P. Dom. Anne II, Barbados complaints 368, 352, Africa 352, Lisbon 367, 368 (five in all) Maryland 351.
- (2) See above pp. 219-20.
- (3) An indication of this is the list the Council sent to Nottingham in Dec. 1704 of the cruisers and convoys for 1705 (P.R.O. Adm. 2/365, 2 Dec. 1704). It is an impressive list though it has small relevance to the ships actually employed in 1705. It is, moreover, an exact copy of a list earlier submitted for 1702 (C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 326-7).
- (4) N.M.M. Southwell Sou/7 f.1.

cruisers fell well below that maintained in the last years of the 1689-97 War and the Channel itself was particularly neglected.⁽¹⁾ The anger at these varied failings and the consequent losses was more difficult to justify before parliament than a disaster of Smyrna Convoy dimensions, but they provoked a growing and widespread dissatisfaction. The first months of the war, 1704, and the last months of 1705 seem to have been the worst periods for shipping losses before the mismanagement culminated in the disasters of 1707.⁽²⁾

Parliamentary reaction to these failings is surprisingly slight after the sustained interest the Commons had shown in trade protection between 1693 and 1697. One reason for this is once again the reluctance of a predominantly Tory Commons to criticise a ministry dominated by their own leaders or a Council for naval

(1) See Appendix VIII.

(2) Burnet IV, 75; A. Boyer, *History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne* (1722) 212, 309; N. Tindal *op.cit.* IV Pt. I, 611, 715, Vol. IV Pt. II, 729-30; Luttrell V, 453; T.S. Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England 1700-1800* (1957) 58; T.C. Smout, *Scottish Trade on the Eve of the Union 1660-1707* (1963) 256; W.R. Scott, *The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint Stock Companies to 1720* (1912) I, 372.

affairs controlled by the Queen's husband. The nature of the grievances was not material for parliamentary interest; the grievance aroused by delayed convoy or the temporary disruption of trade along a stretch of coast faded with the arrival of convoy or cruisers. There was little patriotic incentive or factional profit in criticising one aspect of a navy which on the big issues, at Vigo and Malaga, was obviously doing its duty. In the House of Lords there were proportionately more opponents of the ministry. The Junto Whigs all held their seats here. They too realised the futility of attacking the management of the navy without a major issue on which to rally sympathy. By a series of investigations they sought to secure enough evidence for such an attack and at the same time served notice of their strength and opposition. Thus parliamentary interest in cruisers and convoys between 1702 and 1707 was desultory, with Lords rather than Commons taking the initiative. There was, however, in both Houses a progressive increase in concern that reached a climax in the session of 1707-8.

The new tolerance in the Commons was present from the very first weeks of the 1702-3 session. On 26 October the Queen was thanked for her care of the trade, ⁽¹⁾the first

(1) C.J.XIV, 9.

and only time between 1689 and 1713 that the state was thanked for this duty. The only other aspect of trade defence considered in this session was the protection of the collier convoys and this interest was soon directed towards the activities of merchants who monopolised coal.⁽¹⁾ A resolution that more convoys should be provided for this trade was acted on by the Admiralty⁽²⁾ but the difficulties of protecting the colliers led the House of Lords to consider the matter again in the 1703-4 session.⁽³⁾ Towards the end of this session, in March 1704, the Lords investigated the strength of cruisers and convoys and asked for a greater force to be used.⁽⁴⁾ The address was generally regarded as an oblique attack on the Lord High Admiral and his Council by the Whigs and no action was taken on it.⁽⁵⁾ The Lords returned to the same issue in the 1704-5 session with similar effects.⁽⁶⁾

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- (1) Luttrell V, 319, 322; H.M.C. H.L. V, 227-239; R. Smith, *Sea Coal for London* (1961) 18, 35-6; C.J.XIV, 19, 63.
- (2) See above p. 276. The extra convoys were provided at the expense of the Russia trade, an indication of the hierarchy of priorities on which protection was allocated, P.R.O. Adm. 3/18, 27 July, 1703.
- (3) L.J.XVII, 391, 395, 461; H.M.C. H.L. V, 229-31.
- (4) L.J.XVII, 466, 470; H.M.C. H.L. V, 469.
- (5) A. Boyer, *Life of Her Late Majesty Queen Anne* (1721) I, 238-9.
- (6) *Memoirs of the Late Rt. Hon. John, Lord Haversham* (1711) 7; A. Boyer, *A History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne* (1722) 163-177; L.J.XVII, 584, 622-4, 627, 643, 649.

Merchant losses in 1705 were more serious and were concentrated in the late summer, and were thus a fresh and relevant topic for parliamentary consideration. The Commons ignored them but in the Lords Wharton and Somers started a debate on them at the opening of the session with a precipitancy that is tactically similar to their more effective campaign in 1707.⁽¹⁾ Their complaint was reinforced by unexpected support from the Tories, Rochester and Guernsey, who were expressing this dissatisfaction with an increasingly moderate and Marlborough-dominated ministry in the guise of concern over trade. The opposites did not work well together and for the third successive year the Whig attack came to nothing.⁽²⁾ In the same session the Commons took their first positive action in Anne's reign on trade protection. The complaints of the Newfoundland trade were always sympathetically received in the House, both because it was believed that this trade provided men for the navy and because the south west of England, which dominated the trade, was heavily represented in the Commons. Petitions from several of the towns involved in the trade led to a Commons resolution blaming the poor organisation

(1) L.J.XVIII, 7; see below p. 291.

(2) N. Tindal op.cit. IV, 678-9; Memoirs of the Late Rt. Hon. Lord John Haversham, op.cit. 29.

of convoys for the decline of the trade, and a suggestion as to the future strength and departure times of the convoys.⁽¹⁾ These were late again in 1706 and more petitions from the south west caused the Commons to consider the matter again in the 1706-7 session.⁽²⁾ In this session the Portugal traders also petitioned about delayed convoys.⁽³⁾ The obvious reluctance of the Commons to investigate these repeated naval failures is the more remarkable because by 1706 there was general concern at the state of English trade.⁽⁴⁾

Events in 1707 made parliamentary consideration of trade protection inevitable despite the Lord High Admiral's marital status. The shipping losses of 1707 lacked the dramatic impact of the Smyrna catastrophe in 1693 but hardly a month of the year went by without serious losses, involving many areas, and hitting most severely the most important branch of English overseas trade, that to the Iberian Peninsula, a branch that had so far been particularly fortunate in both wars.⁽⁵⁾ In February a provision fleet for

(1) C.J.XV, 118, 121, 124, 146-7.

(2) C.J.XV, 253-4.

(3) C.J.XV, 284.

(4) Mémoire de Mareschal de Noailles, Dec. 1706, Correspondence of Col. N. Hooke, ed. W.D. Macray (Roxburghe Club 1870) II, 86-7.

(5) J.O. McLachlan, Trade and Peace with Old Spain, 1667-1750 (1940) ix; V.M. Shillington & A.B. Wallis, The Commercial Relations of England and Portugal 254-5.

the forces in Spain was broken up by Du Quesne-Mosnier and some fourteen ships were taken.⁽¹⁾ In May, off Beachy Head, de Forbin destroyed the two escorts in charge of a large fleet of Portuguese and West Indian merchantmen and captured over twenty of them.⁽²⁾ In July, Captain Sir Thomas Hardy, as commodore in charge of several escort vessels incurred the displeasure of the Portuguese merchants by not attacking a force of French ships sighted from his convoy.⁽³⁾ In October Du Guay Trouin and Forbin defeated the escort vessels in charge of a large convoy off Plymouth and captured about fifteen merchantmen.⁽⁴⁾ The destruction of this convoy was the greatest French privateering success of the war. The French dominance in the Channel that this victory ensured enabled them to capture ships returning from the Mediterranean, the West Indies and Newfoundland.⁽⁵⁾ In the

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- (1) J.H. Owen op.cit. 61; H.M.C. H.L. VII, 188; Evidence of Wood, P.R.O. Adm. 1/5114; Luttrell VI, 147.
- (2) C. de la Roncière, op.cit. VI, 441-4; L'Hermitage Dispatch, 27 May 1707, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 CCC ff.107-8; Evidence of W. Wood, P.R.O. Adm. 1/5114; Luttrell VI, 187.
- (3) J.H. Owen, op.cit. 209-13; Luttrell VI, 222; H.M.C. H.L. VII, 105, 110, 195-6, 221-4.
- (4) C. de la Roncière op.cit. VI, 450-454; Luttrell VI, 225-6; J.H. Owen, op.cit. 220; Addison to the Earl of Manchester, 28 Oct. 1707, The Letters of Joseph Addison, ed. W. Graham (1941) 79-81.
- (5) Evidence of Wood, T. Palmer and N. Winter, P.R.O. 1/5114; H.M.C. H.L. VII, 181-183.

same month a fleet from Hamburg was scattered in the mouth of the Thames by a storm and the privateers profited by its dispersal.⁽¹⁾ Earlier, in northern waters, the Russian traders suffered private catastrophe when sixteen of their ships were captured after their escorts had turned homewards.⁽²⁾ The Africa Company with a very bad record of losses in the past two years, contributed one ship to the toll of 1707.⁽³⁾ In the West Indies another aspect of trade protection had caused trouble when the senior naval officer at Jamaica, Captain Kerr, had made such exorbitant demands for convoy money that he had been

- (1) Addison to the Earl of Manchester, 28 Oct. 1707, *The Letters of Joseph Addison*, op.cit. 79.
- (2) J.H. Owen op.cit. 200; Luttrell VI, 199; H.M.C. H.L. VII, 100-01, 105, 111-13; *The Byng Papers*, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1930) 247-8; Dawson's evidence P.R.O. Adm. 1/5114.
- (3) K.G. Davies op.cit. 208; W.R. Scott op.cit. I, 374.

refused and three rich sloops had been captured.⁽¹⁾ Beside the well documented disasters to the foreign trades information about coastal trade is uneven but there is evidence of successful privateer pressure from Land's End to East Anglia.⁽²⁾ Although 1707 is not associated with a major fleet action or major disaster, it deserves to rank with 1690 or 1941 as one of those rare and decisive years when the English people felt that their command of the Channel was lost.

- (1) Kerr's activities were the subject of lengthy investigations by both Houses. The investigations took place at the same time as the more important naval debates of the 1707-8 session; L.J.XVIII, 348, 393, 395, 404, 405, 439, 449-50; C.J.XV, 527, 546-7; H.M.C. H.L. VII, 100, 103-10, 168-70, 181.

Another consideration, that of trade from Jamaica to the Spanish West Indies, occupied the Lords especially during the 1707-8 session, in the same months as they considered trade protection. The traders to Jamaica, ably led by Sir Gilbert Heathcote and Sir Batholemew Gracedieu with Whig support, were successful in obtaining far greater freedom of trade by the Act for the Encouragement of the Trade to America (6 Anne c 37). This act is considered below p. 412. For the considerations of trade involved see C. Nettels, *England and the Spanish African Trade 1680-1715*, *Journal of Modern History* III (Mar-Dec 1931) 1-29; *Paper on W. Indies and Barbados*, H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry I Pt. II, 739-42; *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations* I, 355-56, 394-96; I.K. Steele *op.cit.* 186-194.

- (2) C. de la Roncière *op.cit.* VI, 456 ff; J.H. Owen *op.cit.* 57; H.M.C. H.L. VII, 134-7; evidence of Thomas Ripon, Thomas Palmer and others, P.R.O. Adm. 1/5114; *La Clef du Cabinet des Princes de l'Europe* VII (1707) 53-4, 296, 399-400, 429; *ibid.* VIII (1708) 123-6.

It was the immediate nature of the affront, almost as much as the losses, that seems to have struck merchants and members of parliament alike. Whatever the precise definition of the seas over which England claimed sovereignty, no Englishman doubted that it included the Channel. Stories of a French man of war at anchor in Torbay or of daily sightings of privateers from Eastbourne and Beachy Head figure in the later evidence presented to parliament not just as vivid detail but as expressions of patriotic humiliation that could count on a response.⁽¹⁾ If losses in English waters were such as to arouse parliamentary sympathy out of proportion to the intrinsic value of the captures, it is also true that losses in home waters were harder blows to the merchants than losses in far waters. Ransom was a common means of saving the French privateer that captured an English vessel some trouble and the English merchant some of his profit, and was more common than an ordinary capture followed by the English ship being sailed to a French port.⁽²⁾ But in home waters the ransom demanded was high; the harbours of France were so near that the privateer could conduct its

(1) H.M.C. H.L. VII, 135, 190; Evidence of Thomas Ripon, 2 Dec. 1707, P.R.O. Adm. 1/5114.

(2) Evidence of Thomas Ripon, *ibid.*

capture to port and be back on station within a day. The ransom demanded in the Channel was so high that it robbed the English merchant of his last chance of profit.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, a loss in home waters aggravated the grievance felt by a merchant. Loss in far waters was cushioned by uncertainty, time and the knowledge that the over all financial loss would be smaller. The proximity of success followed by loss in the very waters that the merchants considered should be practically English territory made a loss here worse. As far as the merchants can be seen to have had any aim in the parliamentary session of 1707-8, it seems to have been to make public their grievances and by winning sympathy, compel the Prince's Council to make better provision for trade protection. In particular they wanted more cruisers in home waters and a more efficient organisation of convoys.⁽²⁾ There seems to have been on their part no animosity towards the Prince's Council, or its acknowledged leader,

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- (1) Evidence of Thomas Ripon to the House of Lords, 2 Dec. 1707, P.R.O. Adm. 1/5114.
- (2) Petition of 154 London Merchants, presented to the House of Lords, 19 Nov. 1707, H.M.C. H.L. VII, 99.

George Churchill; ⁽¹⁾ certainly there was none towards Prince George.

The recent political past and the precarious balance in the government of Moderates, Whigs and Tories made it natural that the Whigs should champion the merchant complaints and that this sympathy should be most warmly demonstrated in the House of Lords. Anne's government had come to rely increasingly on Whig support and Whig officials. The Whigs now wished for the reward for such support in the promotion to office of more Whigs, including some of the Junto leaders. ⁽²⁾ The aim of the Junto was to exploit the naval failures of 1707, an issue on which it could expect patriotic support from the political neutrals, and by the threat of an adverse vote against the Admiralty, to gain further promotions preferably at the expense of Churchill, whose place could

- (1) The furthest merchants would go in outright condemnation of Churchill was to claim that they 'thought' he had made certain statements, H.M.C. H.L. VII, 105, 185, 185-6. The only real sharpness of complaint against the Prince's Council seems to have been directed against a plan to make even Mediterranean 'runners' galleys sail in convoy, H.M.C. H.L. VII, 190.
- (2) The political crisis of 1707-8 has received very full historical consideration, see G.M. Trevelyan op.cit. II, 312-33; W.S. Churchill op.cit. 296-316; R. Walcott op.cit. 125-54; G.S. Holmes & W.A. Speck, The Fall of Harley in 1708 Reconsidered, E.H.R. LXXX No. 137 (Oct. 1965) 673-91.

be filled by Orford.⁽¹⁾ The Tory attitude, in so far as one existed in Lords and Commons was analogous to the Whig; here was a political issue that could be used to embarrass the government and compel it to buy Tory support by giving Tory leaders a greater part in the government. Tory exploitation of the issue would of necessity be restrained by the realisation that their part in any attack must not lead to the Whigs benefiting, and as a party they had no one with the experience and reputation of Orford in naval matters. The government, at this period of Anne's reign made up largely of moderates, who worked well with Godolphin, was concerned to remain independent of both parties, and like the parties, viewed the merchants' complaints in political terms, with defence of this independence and the Queen's husband, rather than shipping, as first priorities. An obvious and well tried method of dealing with such attacks was to blame the merchants for the losses by accusing them

(1) This is a simplification in that it represents the policy of the Junto; other Whig attitudes developed during the session. The Whigs could also expect some support in the Lords because previous addresses of the House on naval matters had been ignored. The House was frequently reminded of this, L.J.XVIII, 333, 426, 430, 432-3, 443, 466-72.

of slipping convoy.⁽¹⁾ It was supported by determined efforts to win the support of moderate Whigs and Tories to the Court.⁽²⁾ Against this severely political outlook of the three major political groups who would hear their complaints before parliament, the merchants could count on one major circumstance in their favour; the political balance in 1707, as in late 1693, did impose on all political groups a consideration of their complaints and this was some guarantee that the parliamentary neglect of 1702 to 1707 would not be continued.⁽³⁾

- (1) What seems to be Harley's brief as a Court speaker shows that the Court planned to use this argument, B.M. Harley Loan 29/40.
- (2) A good example of such efforts is the attempt made to detach Lord Shaftesbury from his allegiance to the Whig Junto. Godolphin's scheme was described to him as a government of men, 'who have never been on the stage in either party;' it was hinted that he might become a Secretary of State, Sir John Cropley to Lord Shaftesbury, 15 Dec. 1707, P.R.O. 30/24/20 f.136 (2). Sir John Cropley's letter of 30 Dec. 1707 shows the success of this policy on moderate Whigs, *ibid.* f.141 (2); see also ff.137, 139, 140. Attempts to gain merchant support can be seen in *The Norris Papers*, ed. T. Heywood, (Chetham Society IX, 1846) 161. The list of merchants to be considered for places in the Council for Trade and Plantations is perhaps another sign of possible Court patronage, H.M.C. Buccleuch & Queensberry II Pt. II, 738.
- (3) Edwin to Lord Manchester, 6 Feb. 1708, *Court and Society from Elizabeth to Anne*, ed. W. Montagu, Duke of Manchester (1864) II, 276; Sir John Cropley to Lord Shaftesbury, 15 Dec. 1707, P.R.O. 30/24/20 f.136; *Basset Transcript*, 28 Dec. 1707, P.R.O. 31/3/194 ff. 130-35.

In this situation the initiative politically was with the Whigs and in the House of Lords they seized this initiative with the directness and preconcerted aggression in debate that was one of their attributes as a party. After hearing the Queen's speech that opened the session on 6 November 1707, Wharton interposed and instead of proposing the customary vote of thanks, launched into, 'an elaborate harangue,' on the mismanagement of the navy. Somers supported him, as did the Tories, Buckingham, Guernsey and Rochester. The attempt of a placeman peer, Stamford, to restore the debate to its customary lines, was defeated, one comment being that addresses on the navy had been frequently ignored in the past.⁽¹⁾ The topic was considered again on 12 November and then, on 19 November, Wharton presented a petition from the merchants. Debates on both days were marked by heat rather than light⁽²⁾ and the only constructive result was the formation of two committees of identical membership, one to consider the petition, under the chairmanship of

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- (1) L.J.XVIII, 333; A. Boyer, *History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne* (1722) 309. For the neglect of earlier addresses see above p.280.
- (2) L.J.XVIII, 338, 341-2; A. Boyer *op.cit.* 309-11; W. Coxe, *Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough*, (1848) II, 185-88; Luttrell VI, 233, 236.

the Duke of Bolton, the other, under Halifax, to consider the encouragement of privateering in the West Indies.

Bolton's committee demanded from the Admiralty and received from the merchants a great mass of evidence.⁽¹⁾ The depositions of the merchants were heard with a courtesy notably superior to their reception in the Commons.⁽²⁾ On 17 December a report was sent to the Admiralty setting out the failures of convoy timings, intelligence and deployment of ships, particularly the lack of cruisers in the Channel.⁽³⁾ The answer was received on 9 January and was far from apologetic.⁽⁴⁾ The Admiralty claimed that a large fleet in the Mediterranean, insufficient men, money and ships, and the chances of weather were valid excuses for many of the so-called mismanagements. This unrepentant answer led the Lords to reconsider the evidence, recall merchant witnesses and address the Queen this time, on 25 February 1708, with a

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- (1) L.J.XVIII, 351-2, 357, 359, 359-60, 362. Much of this evidence is printed in H.M.C. H.L. VII, 99-226 but these accounts can be supplemented by the depositions presented to the House of Lords on 2 and 7 December in P.R.O.Adm. 1/5114 and P.R.O.Adm. 1/3863.
- (2) Burnet IV, 173.
- (3) L.J.XVIII, 366-92.
- (4) Ibid.XVIII, 405-22; Burnet IV, 174.

more strongly worded account of the mismanagement of her navy, but stressing that this was no reflection on the Lord High Admiral.⁽¹⁾ The address was answered by the Queen in the same sparse wording of earlier replies and apparently treated with the almost traditional neglect,⁽²⁾ a neglect that could be justified in that by now events in the Commons had made the activities of the Lords irrelevant to the organisation of trade protection.

It was to be expected that the Whig championship of the merchants would be less well organised in the Commons, where there were more Tories and where the Whigs lacked the leadership of a senior or Junto party leader. A petition of merchant complaint was read to the House on 15 November which emphasised the disastrous results of so few cruisers in the Soundings and Channel.⁽³⁾ A committee was formed to consider the petition and the House gave the topic frequent attention in November and December.⁽⁴⁾ Sir Robert Onslow was chairman of the committee that heard the

(1) L.J.XVIII, 425, 429, 466-72, 482-3.

(2) L.J.XVIII, 491.

(3) C.J.XV, 404-5; Luttrell VI, 234.

(4) C.J.XV, 435-6, 437, 438, 452, 465, 471, 472. In the same months the House was also considering the collusive trade in French wine, not a study calculated to nourish sympathy for the merchants, *ibid.* XV, 435, 437, 439, 453, 464.

evidence of the merchants and he won notice for the way in which he defended them from heckling interruptions.⁽¹⁾ Onslow was a Whig yet it was Hampden rather than he who constantly attempted to reach a conclusion critical of the Admiralty.⁽²⁾ Apart from Hampden the rest of the House showed an obvious disinclination to do more than listen in a reasonably sympathetic way to the complaints against the navy.⁽³⁾ This apathy cannot be simply attributed to the restraint of the Tories through fears for Orford's promotion or the political dangers of attacking Prince George's department. There was great difficulty in proving conclusively that Churchill or the Prince's Council was actually responsible for particular losses. The complications of doing this were recognised by both merchants and the Commons.⁽⁴⁾ Nor were the merchants united or sure of a remedy for the losses they had suffered.

- (1) A. Boyer op.cit. 312.
- (2) Vernon Letters III, 293. Richard Hampden, M.P. for Wendover, a kinsman and adherent of Wharton.
- (3) Vernon Letters III, 286, 293, 294; A. Boyer op.cit. 312; Addison to Lord Manchester, 16 Dec. 1707, Letters of Joseph Addison op.cit. 83.
- (4) Vernon Letters III, 293; Bashet Transcript 28 Dec. 1707 P.R.O. 31/3/194 f.134; Sir George Cropley to Lord Shaftesbury, 15 Dec. 1707, P.R.O. 30/24/20 f.136 (2).

The complaint of the Russian merchants over their losses was separately and convincingly answered.⁽¹⁾ Sir Gilbert Heathcote, who had supported Dawson of the Russia Company, alienated some members by the extravagance of his speech and hardly strengthened the unity of the merchants by proposing a resolution restricted to the Jamaican trade, the one that most concerned him.⁽²⁾ Heathcote's vehement loyalty to the Whig cause was too partisan in that most of the merchants were perturbed at the political exploitation of their losses. Tory merchants, like the two Hernes⁽³⁾ and, more significantly, moderates like the Heysham brothers,⁽⁴⁾ made it very clear that the Prince's Council was not the object of their attack; they wanted protection, not revenge.⁽⁵⁾ This divergence of aim amongst the merchants themselves is the best explanation of criticisms that they managed their

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- (1) Vernon Letters III, 283; Lord High Admiral to Byng, 28 Nov. 1707, The Byng Papers, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1930) 247-8.
- (2) Vernon Letters III, 286.
- (3) Frederick and Nathaniel, cousins, M.P.s for Dartmouth. They were interested in trade to Newfoundland, East and West Indies and America. They were both generally Tory but Nathaniel became Whimsical in 1713.
- (4) Robert and William, M.P.s for Lancaster. They were interested in trade to Africa, Barbados and America. Of the two Robert seems to have been the more active and wealthier, thus he probably made the significant proposal in this session, see below p. 297.
- (5) Vernon Letters III, 287.

case badly.⁽¹⁾ A poorly managed attack stood little chance against a determined and powerful defence, backed, according to Burnet, by bribery and promises of promotion from the Court.⁽²⁾ George Churchill himself defended the actions of the Prince's Council ably and aggressively, even telling the Commons that important naval work was hindered by the documentation required for their investigation.⁽³⁾ He was very well supported, and the Whig attack itself weakened, by the verbal assistance or neutrality of a group of Whigs represented by Robert Walpole, Sir Joseph Jekyll, and Sir Peter King.⁽⁴⁾ These Whigs, from a mixture of motives - jealousy of the Junto, patriotism, the direction of their political masters, traditional 'Country' opposition, or concern for their own posts⁽⁵⁾ - helped the Court in debate. Out of

(1) Burnet IV, 173.

(2) Ibid. IV, 173; see above p. 290.

(3) Vernon to Shrewsbury 4 Sept. 6 Dec. and 13 Dec. Vernon Letters III, 283-4, 287, 293.

(4) Ibid. III, 287, 293; R. Walcott op.cit. 131-34, 140, 149-50; G.S. Holmes & W.A. Speck op.cit. 680.

(5) The moderate and 'country' revulsion of Whigs from the Junto leaders is well expressed in a letter from Molesworth to Lord Shaftesbury 18 Dec. 1707 P.R.O. 30/24/20 f.137. The transient opposition of the Whig inclined or Whig magnates, the Dukes of Newcastle, Somerset and Devonshire, is seen in Sir George Cropley to Lord Shaftesbury 30 Dec. 1707 ibid. f.141 (1)-141(2).

the confused and bad-tempered debates came at the last a studiously innocuous resolution from Onslow's committee on 18 December, recommending that there should be a 'sufficient' number of cruisers to protect trade in home waters.⁽¹⁾ The House accepted this resolution as part of an address on the navy.

Thus ended the political attack, but on their own initiative, the merchants had gained a security for their trade far stronger than a mere resolution. In one of the more violent debates, on 6 December, one of the Heyshams had recommended that a number of cruisers be specifically allocated to trade defence.⁽²⁾ This was an excellent compromise suggestion; it was free from political accusation, it involved no more than an indirect reflection on the Lord High Admiral, and it was sanctioned and softened by the precedent of the 1694 legislation. A small committee was formed to consider the suggestion and the proposed

(1) C.J. XV, 472.

(2) Vernon to Shrewsbury, 6 Dec. 1707, Vernon Letters III, 286.

legislation that emerged passed both Houses without difficulty.⁽¹⁾

The act was substantially the same as the cruiser and convoy clauses in the 1694 Land Tax Bill.⁽²⁾ It was generally known as the Cruisers and Convoy Act, an accurate enough title in the priority it awarded to the cruisers; indeed the emphasis on cruisers was so great that the Cruisers Act would be a better title. In this emphasis it reflected both an awareness of the deficiencies

- (1) C.J.XV, 485, 495, 517, 529, 541, 543; L.J.XVIII, 474, 481. The committee consisted of nine members. Three were merchants, Heysham (probably Robert), Sir Gilbert Heathcote and John Ward, a Hamburg merchant. Ward was politically moderate but had supported Heathcote's attack on the Admiralty (Vernon Letters III, 283). There were three government members, the Attorney General, Henry Paget and Walpole, the last two both being members of the Prince's Council. William Farrer, a Junto Whig and lawyer, Francis Scobell, a kinsman of Seymour and Onslow were the remaining three members.
- (2) 6 Anne c 65, An Act for the better securing the Trade of this Kingdom by Cruisers and Convoys. The most obvious similarities are the allocation of 43 ships and the reservation that in emergency they might be withdrawn from such duties (Clause II) Clause I allocated the ships and stipulated they should be careened; Clause III dealt with the appointment of a superintendent Clause IV with the annual parliamentary account; Clause V with the appointment of ships.

revealed by the 1707 losses in home waters and the general interest of the majority of both Houses in coastal trade. The main differences between the legislation of 1694 and 1708 were such as would make cruisers more effective and perhaps show the influence of the merchants on the committee that prepared the bill. Although the number of ships to be employed was the same as those appropriated in 1694 it was a more powerful force because it contained a larger proportion of ships of the higher rates, a reinforcement made necessary by the squadronal tactics of the French privateers in 1707.⁽¹⁾ It was stipulated that an official of senior status should be appointed to be superintendent of cruisers, minor officials in harbours should record the sailing and arrival of cruisers, ships should be careened three times a year (without reduction of the number in service), and parliament should be given an account of the ships employed early in each session. The first of these additions ensured that

(1) The table below summarises the ships appointed by the 1694 and 1708 legislation;

Rate	3	4	5	6	Total
1694	4	16	13	10	43
1708	6	20	13	4	43

parliament would be able to find the man responsible if necessary, the last that parliament would be able to check that 43 cruisers were used. Twelve of the ships were specifically allocated to duties on the northern coasts of Great Britain which resulted in the Scottish coastal trade receiving more effective protection than ever before. If one merchant can speak for them all the act was popular; in February 1708 a Liverpool merchant wrote, 'It is a good bill and I hope it will be of service.'⁽¹⁾ Five years of war remained to test it.

The act was speedily implemented by the navy. Officials to supervise cruiser captains were appointed and more ships employed in coastal waters than ever before in the reigns of William and Anne.⁽²⁾ Powerful squadrons in the Soundings and off Dunkirk and a thicker screen of cruisers round the English and Scottish coasts meant that from 1708 the navy generally provided nearly as many

(1) T. Johnson to R. Morris, 12 Feb. 1708, The Norris Papers, ed. T. Heywood (Chetham Society IX, 1846) 167.

(2) For officials and ships see P.R.O. Adm. 3/23, 31 Mar, 22 May 1708. One clause of the act seems to have been ignored: no specific official was made responsible for cruisers and convoys. The tradition of the Admiralty and Navy Boards was one of collective responsibility.

ships for these duties as parliament required.⁽¹⁾ Apparently, too, these measures were effective. The complaints of the merchants became few and there is considerable contemporary testimony to the freedom with which British trade operated after 1707.⁽²⁾ The Cruisers and Convoys Act is not in itself the only reason for this testimony. Events in the Mediterranean, the destruction of the French fleet at Toulon and the capture of Minorca, eased the strain on the navy. At home Orford at last regained control of the Admiralty after Prince George's death in 1708. His determined attempt to reintroduce method and plan into the provision of convoys and Leake's efficiency at sea also helped trade protection.⁽³⁾ Modern historians

- (1) See Appendix VIII. The lists prepared by the Navy Board usually show more ships than the 43 required by law but achieve this by including ships that are not strictly cruisers or convoys, see below P. 517.
- (2) Du Guay Trouin, 19 Nov. 1709, quoted C. de la Roncière op.cit. VI, 469; Admiral Vernon to the Admiralty, 24 Nov. 1745, quoted H.W. Richmond, *The Navy in the War of 1739-48* (1920) II, 116 fn; N. Tindal op.cit. II, 117, 143; S. Martin Leake, *Life of Sir John Leake* (N.R.S. 1920) 241, 400; Burnet IV, 201-2, 227.
- (3) P.R.O. Adm. 3/24 passim.

have generally accepted these reasons and the supporting evidence as proof that British merchants had little justification for complaint about losses after 1707.⁽¹⁾

The most convincing and important evidence to the contrary is the work of Professor J. S. Bromley, who, from the Records of the High Court of Admiralty and, especially, the French Prize Courts, has provided the first reliable figures for allied shipping losses between 1702 and 1713.⁽²⁾

These figures do not show any great lessening of merchant losses after 1707; indeed 1711 was the most disastrous year of the war.⁽³⁾ There is no recorded parliamentary reaction

- (1) J.A. Williamson, *A Short History of English Expansion: The Old Colonial Empire* (1930) 335; J.U. Nef, *The Rise of the British Coal Industry* (1932) II, 385; *Queen Anne's Navy* 340; G.N. Clark, *War Trade and Trade War 1701-1713*, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* I (1927-8) 264; R. Davis *op.cit.* 328; *The Trade of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. W.E. Minchinton, *Bristol Record Society* XX (1957) xfn.
- (2) J.S. Bromley, *The French Privateering War 1702-13 in Historical Essays 1600-1750* ed. H.E. Bell and R.L. Ollard (1964) 203-31.
- (3) In particular Professor Bromley writes of these figures, 'This argues only a very limited success for the new emphasis on trade defence in British naval policy which followed the Cruisers and Convoy Act of March 1708,' *ibid.* 229; see also 215, 219 fn. This opinion is confirmed by the year 1711 proving a very bad year for the export of wool; see T.S. Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England 1700-1800* (1957) 58.

to such losses; the debates that preceded the 1708 Act were the last in Anne's reign concerning trade defence.⁽¹⁾

The conflict of evidence and the lack of parliamentary response to the losses of 1711 are susceptible of explanation. It has been seen how on the three occasions when merchant grievances contributed towards action on trade defence, in 1694, 1696 and 1707-8, this was the result of parliamentary sponsorship by a party or groups of the merchant case. Such sponsorship would have been inexpedient in the 1711-12 session either for the Whigs, whose activities were concentrated against the Peace, or for Oxford's Ministry, whose supporters had been led by St. John to attack merchant influence. Nor would the sympathy of the non-merchant, politically moderate, member have been engaged by the losses of 1711. This sympathy, the product of the inconvenience consequent on a disruption of the coastal trade and some patriotism, an apparently decisive factor in the legislation of 1694 and 1708, would not be strong in 1711. In one way, at least, the Cruisers and Convoy Act worked well - the coastal trade was protected - and the link between

(1) There were merchant complaints in 1711 but they were not considered by parliament, Burnet IV, 273.

merchant and ordinary member of parliament was not present. Most of the 1711 losses occurred in the Mediterranean. The privateering ports that most nearly concerned England, St. Malo, Brest, Dunkirk and the Breton harbours, had fewer successes after 1708.⁽¹⁾ The contemporary evidence that is practically unanimous on the success of the navy in defending trade from 1708 to 1713 reflects a satisfaction that the home waters were secure.

In the years of war between 1688 and 1714 British merchants had lost more than 10,000 ships⁽²⁾ yet the French *guerre de course* failed in its strategic aims. This failure must in part be attributed to the parliamentary pressure of 1694 and 1708 that compelled the navy to employ more and more ships for the defence of trade. The motives that impelled parliamentary action were confused and frequently selfish yet the parliamentary obsession with the protection of home waters was strategically sound. In Mahan's opinion,

'The greatest strength of British sea power in the classical period had lain in the fact that it was able to compress all its manifold

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- (1) J.S. Bromley op.cit. 215. The ports of the Calais-Granville coastline increased their captures but mainly at the expense of the Dutch, *ibid.* 231.
- (2) *Ibid.* 213-6; R. Davis op.cit. 315-8. This figure includes all sizes of ships in both wars but excludes ships ransomed.

offensive and defensive functions into a single task of relatively limited dimensions, the establishment of the 'command' of the Narrow Seas of Western Europe.'⁽¹⁾

This rationalisation of the problems of the defence of British trade that had seemed impossible of solution in 1688 was helped by parliament's Cruisers and Convoy legislation. The Western Squadron, which was the pivot of British naval power, has as its ancestor the Soundings Squadron, which emerges and increases in strength between 1688 and 1714. Admittedly the Soundings Squadron established in these years was defensive in function⁽²⁾ but one of the precedents upon which the sea power of the eighteenth century rested had been established. Also established by 1714, by right of frequent usage, was the right of the merchants to be heard in parliament.

- (1) A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower upon History* (1957; 1st. pub. 1890) 196.
- (2) One consequence of parliamentary interest in cruisers and convoys was a reluctance of naval officers employed on such duties to use initiative when a chance came to damage the enemy Sir Robert Sutton, 12 Feb. 1711, *The Dispatches of Sir Robert Sutton, 1710-1714*, ed. A.N. Kurat, Camden Soc. 3rd Series Vol. 78 (1953) 42; P.R.O. Adm. 3/25, 26 Sept. 1710, 24 Oct. 1710.

Manning

(i)

1688-1702

In 1709 a sea cook, Barnaby Slush, wrote,
'Good mariners grow not up like mushrooms,
at once, without any care or culture.'⁽¹⁾

Probably most members of parliament would have agreed with him. They would have recognised, as Slush did, that the creation of such a class of men was a lengthy process and that there was little point in legislation that concerned the 'increase of seamen' during a war. The war would probably be over before such legislation could be effective. The members, as estate managers of the realm, had exercised their good husbandry in the years before 1688 by framing laws such as the Navigation Acts which encouraged the development of a sea-faring class. The fading memory of the Dutch Wars and a high opinion of their own work in creating seamen supported a parliamentary assumption that there were enough seamen for war and trade. Sir Thomas Clarges expressed this

(1) B. Slush, *The Navy Royal or a Sea Cook Turn'd Projector* (1709) 44.

assumption in the Commons in November 1689⁽¹⁾ and the majority of speakers in debates on manning in 1703 seem to have shared his belief.⁽²⁾ Pamphlet expression of the same opinion is common between 1688 and 1714.⁽³⁾ Three of the pamphleteers who expressed this opinion, St. Lo, Crosfeild and Defoe, were consulted by parliament about manning the navy.

Two other aspects of manning, the process whereby a proportion of the seamen were transferred from civilian to national service, and their fair treatment in the navy so as to keep them contented and effective defenders of the realm, were the responsibilities of the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty. The first was obviously an administrative exercise not likely to concern parliament. Sir Robert Haddock recorded current opinion on the second aspect in 1690: 'Being asked what was proper to encourage seamen, he says that belongs to the Admiralty.'⁽⁴⁾

(1) Grey IX, 412.

(2) See below p. 382.

(3) R. Crosfeild, *England's Glory Reviv'd* (1693); G. Everett, *Encouragement for Seamen and Mariners* (1695), *Harleian Miscellany* (1810) X, 227; G. St. Lo, *England's Interest* (1698) 26; *A Letter to a Member of Parliament concerning Marines* (1699), *A Collection of State Tracts* (1705) II, 680; *An Inquiry into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages* (1707) *Harleian Miscellany* (1810) XI, 11; B. Slush *op.cit.* 18; D. Defoe, *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1728) 125-6.

(4) H.M.C. H.L. MSS. 1690-1, 249.

Yet increasingly between 1688 and 1714, parliament found that it did have to concern itself with all three aspects of manning. 'Increase of seamen,' 'the speedy and effective manning of the fleet,' and 'the encouragement of seamen' became unexpectedly not only subjects for debate but the objects of legislation.

The comforting belief that there were enough sailors was based on no sure numerical foundation. Statistics were in their infancy. There was no generally accepted figure for the population of England. Gregory King estimated it in 1688 as 5,500,000,⁽¹⁾ Houghton as 7,055,706 in 1696⁽²⁾ and Petty at 6,000,000.⁽³⁾ Modern demographers have added their estimates but there can never be precision as to the number of people from which parliament was to muster its navy.⁽⁴⁾ A modern and authoritative source gives the population of England in 1701 as 5,826,000.⁽⁵⁾ Irrespective of any demographic trend the

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- (1) Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State and Condition of England, quoted in English Historical Documents (1953) VIII 1660-1714, ed. A. Browning, 515.
- (2) E. Chamberlayne, Angliae Notitiae (1704) 48.
- (3) The Petty Papers, ed. Marquis of Lansdowne (1927) I, 208.
- (4) These estimates of English population are considered in Population in History, ed. D.V. Glass & D.E.C. Eversley (1965), Part II, particularly papers by D.V. Glass and H.J. Habakkuk.
- (5) P. Deane and W.A. Cole, British Economic Growth 1688-1959 (1962) 6.

population would have risen by about 1,000,000 in 1707 at the Union with Scotland.⁽¹⁾

There is wider variation in the estimates of the numbers of seamen, partly because contemporary accounts rarely define accurately what they mean by a sailor. Estimates can include all or some of the major classes of seamen, coastal, collier and overseas. King thought there were 50,000 common seamen in England, Dennis estimated 60,000 and Slush 40,000.⁽²⁾ The best demonstration of contemporary uncertainty came in a Commons debate in December 1703 in which estimates ranged from 25,000 to 80,000.⁽³⁾ Modern historians consider there were about 50,000 English seamen and with one exception,⁽⁴⁾ would consider this number insufficient to man navy and merchant ships in time of war.⁽⁵⁾ The widespread contemporary belief that there were enough sailors and the general modern belief that there were not enough makes it necessary to consider the main sources of sailors.

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- (1) T.C. Smout, *Scottish Trade on the Eve of the Union 1660-1707* (1963) 2.
- (2) *English Historical Documents VIII*, 517; J. Dennis, *An Essay on the Navy* (1702) 38; B. Slush *op.cit.* 18.
- (3) *Queen Anne's Navy 1689-1702*; see below pp. 381-6.
- (4) A.H. John, *War and the English Economy 1700-63*, *Econ.Hist.Rev.* 2nd Series VII (1954-5) 340-1.
- (5) D. Ogg, *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (1955) 295; R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (1962) 323; *Sergison Papers*, 164; Ehrman 111.

As a starting-point there exists for the London overseas trade a list which trade by trade, enumerates the numbers of English ships and men which left the port between 1 December 1702 and 1 December 1703.⁽¹⁾

Trade	Ships	Men
East Country	67	960
Portugal	175	2,074
Africa	48	1,359
Barbados and Leeward	85	1,691
Virginia and Maryland	125	2,489
Mediterranean	50	1,590
Holland	47	237
Ireland and Scotland	28	311
East India	21	1,800
Newfoundland	7	125
Total	653	12,636

A rather earlier list exists for the year 1701. This was compiled by the Commissioners of Customs from the reports of their London Surveyors, who visited ships to issue Algerine passes. This gives a total of 560 English ships employing 10,605 men.⁽²⁾ Professor R. Davis

(1) P.R.O. C.O. 388.9 Pt. I f.19; B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,439 f.104.

(2) P.R.O. C.O. 388.9 Pt. I, f.19.

has calculated that this figure would be an underestimate of total London overseas shipping by some 24%, mainly because it did not include ships engaged in trade to North-West Europe, which would not need Algerine passes.⁽¹⁾ If to the total of men in the 1701 list were added the number of men from the 1702-3 list in trades unlikely to need Algerine passes,⁽²⁾ the overall total of London sailors in the overseas trade would be 12,113.⁽³⁾

It would therefore seem from these two lists that the overseas trade out of London employed rather more than 12,000 sailors. However, before this figure can be accepted, certain qualifications must be made. Normally in lists such as these the Commissioners of Customs concerned themselves only with English seamen but by law each ship was allowed a quarter of foreign seamen amongst the crew. In practice, however, it seems that masters

(1) R. Davis op.cit. 402.

(2) This would make a total of 1,508 men; 960 on East Country voyages, 237 to Holland and 311 to Ireland and Scotland.

(3) The estimate is consistent with the figures for English ships, their tonnage and the men employed in the London overseas trade between 1695 and 1701 which are given in a list prepared for the Lord High Admiral by the Commissioners of Customs, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3863, 20 Jan. 1702.

generally manned their ships with crews that were 90% English.⁽¹⁾ Any reduction of the 12,000 total to allow for foreigners would probably be balanced by the numbers of English seamen abroad during the entire year in which a list was compiled, on African or Indian voyages.

Another factor that might inflate numbers in the 1702-3 list is that it might contain ships, and therefore men, that made more than one journey a year.⁽²⁾ These trades, however, are ones which employed small numbers of men and the general accuracy of the figures for these trades is confirmed by convoy lists during the war.⁽³⁾ The agreement between the figures for the 1701 and 1702-3 lists is surprising in that the first records traffic in time of peace and the second was compiled during a war. Despite these qualifications it does seem probable that the London overseas trade employed somewhere in the region of 12,000 sailors.

The outport tonnage in 1686 is compared with that of London by Professor Davis in the proportion of 71:119.⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) L.A. Harper, *The English Navigation Laws* (1939) 322. Examples of this practice can be seen in the Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series, II, 1680-1720 ed. W.L. Grant and J. Munro (1910) 178 and in P.R.O. Adm. 3/4 passim.
- (2) R. Davis *op.cit.* 398.
- (3) See above p.181.
- (4) R. Davis *op.cit.* 398.

If this is taken as a basis for calculating the number of seamen employed in the outports it is necessary to find $\frac{71}{119}$ of the London total of 12,000. This gives 7,100 seamen. From these calculations it would appear that the overseas trade employed 19-20,000 sailors. Petty estimated the number of sailors in this branch of the trade as 20,000⁽¹⁾ but this figure is well above Merriman's estimate of 11-12,000.⁽²⁾

The collier trade, particularly that between London and Newcastle, had long been recognised as a valuable source of sailors.⁽³⁾ The ten voyages a year along a dangerous coast were a forcing school of maritime education and the 'Colliers' Nags,' with their nostalgia for a diet of Newcastle Ale and salmon, were highly prized in the navy.⁽⁴⁾ Their value was unquestioned, their number is much more debatable.

The most authoritative contemporary estimate of their number was made by Captain George St. Lo.⁽⁵⁾ St. Lo became widely and rightly recognised as an expert on the

(1) The Petty Papers op.cit. I, 238.

(2) Queen Anne's Navy 170.

(3) J.U. Nef, Rise of the British Coal Industry (1932) I, 238.

(4) Ibid. I, 396; R. Smith, Sea Coal for London (1961) 16-17; R. Davis op.cit. 399; E. Ward, The Wooden World (1707) 97.

(5) R.D. Merriman, Captain G. St. Lo, R.N. 1658-1718, M.M. XXXI (1945) 13-22.

problems of manning. He had the necessary qualifications—service as a naval officer between 1678 and 1689, three years as a prisoner of war between 1689 and 1692 in which he was able to observe the French system of recruiting, and experience in naval administration as a Commissioner of the navy from 1693 to 1712. He could write forcefully and coherently. His pamphlets, especially those on manning, are factual and obviously the result of careful and lengthy study. For collier numbers he drew on the experience of a friend, one Captain Banks, who had personally acted as convoy to the colliers and who declared that there were 470 colliers engaged in trade between London and Newcastle, and another 70 based on Sunderland.⁽¹⁾ St. Lo considered that these represented half the colliers of England. On average they were about 200 tons burden and each could provide the navy with four men. Thus the 1,080 colliers could provide 4,320 seamen. St. Lo seems to be assuming that the navy could take half the collier seamen; a 400 ton collier required sixteen men, one of 200 tons, eight men and one of 100 tons, four men.⁽²⁾ He implies a collier force of 8,640 men,

(1) G. St. Lo, England's Safety (1693) Somers Tracts (1814) XI, 64..

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 3/1 f.69.

half of them operating along the English coast north of London.

Several contemporary estimates of collier ship numbers are near St. Lo's figures. In 1702 a petition of the north-eastern ports claimed that they sustained 600 ships.⁽¹⁾ A shipping list of 1701 gives eight east coast ports 568 ships,⁽²⁾ another gives 366 ships,⁽³⁾ and a pamphlet credits the east coast with 600 ships.⁽⁴⁾ For the western coal trade there is an estimate of 400 ships.⁽⁵⁾ The best contemporary support for the accuracy of St. Lo's figures for men comes from the Admiralty belief that the colliers could provide between 4,000 and 6,000 men a year for the navy.⁽⁶⁾

Some detailed information on the subject of collier numbers is to be found in the first book of Admiralty Minutes.⁽⁷⁾ Between 16 May and 5 August 1689⁽⁸⁾ the Board of

(1) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1700-02, 495.

(2) J.H. Andrews, *English Shipping in 1701*, M.M. XLI (1955) 233.

(3) E. Hughes, *North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century* (1952) 201.

(4) *Tack About* (1703) 20.

(5) J.U. Nef *op.cit.* I, 238.

(6) H.M.C. H.L. VII, 522.

(7) P.R.O. Adm. 3/1 ff.69-181.

(8) On 16 May 1689 detailed lists, naming ships, destination and men, first appear in the Minutes. At the beginning of August these lists are discontinued and the practice of granting protections for six months instead of specific voyages becomes common.

Admiralty granted protections for 2,610 seamen to the masters of 424 collier ships. The average crew strength was 6.2. Thirty-six of these ships or masters, involving 385 men, appear twice in the lists; thus the actual number of seamen involved would be 2,225. These figures are not estimates; they are the total of collier seamen granted certificates of protection in a period when seamen in the Thames area were at the mercy of the press without such protection. They are lower than St. Lo's estimate of collier seamen, but they are calculated for a period of a year in which London's imports of coal were below average.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, French privateers disrupted the collier trade in this period and the Minute Books show that voyages along the coast were taking double the normal time.⁽²⁾ Thus it would appear that St. Lo's estimate of collier sailors is not incompatible with the figures calculated from the Admiralty Minute Book although his estimate of 8,640 is perhaps rather generous. This varied evidence would justify a belief that English collier seamen numbered some 7,500.⁽³⁾

(1) J.U. Nef op.cit. II, 381; E. Hughes op.cit. 160.

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 3/1 f.68.

(3) Alternative methods of estimating the number of collier seamen based on the ratios of men to tonnage or men to ships are unsatisfactory. Collier tonnage is generally underestimated, R. Davis op.cit. 404, while many estimates of the number of collier ships are too large, J.U. Nef op.cit. I, 173; II, 95.

Colliers were merely part of a coastal trade that by virtue of England's geography and poorly developed inland transport, was a flourishing industry that employed many men.⁽¹⁾ Generally in the term coastal trade can be included both the coasters that transported a host of commodities round the coast and the fishing smacks. These fishermen did not provide a major source of naval seamen. There was general reluctance to draw men from an occupation that so obviously helped to feed the nation,⁽²⁾ and except in times of crisis or severe local shortage of men, fishermen were spared the rigours of a full press.⁽³⁾ More practically, as many of the fishing smacks were small and a deed of ownership served as a protection, they could spare few men. In part they worked for their relative immunity by providing the navy with an auxiliary labour force that was seasonably employed in the dockyards in fitting out the fleet.⁽⁴⁾

(1) See above pp. 231-2.

(2) Descriptive Catalogue of the Naval MSS in the Pepysian Library IV, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1923) xlvii; J.R. Hutchinson, *The Press Gang Afloat and Ashore* (1913) 95-7; P.R.O. Adm. 3/20, 17 April 1705. See below p. 320.

(3) *Ibid.* 3/8, 13 Feb. 1693.

(4) C.J.XI, 97; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3595, 18 Jan. 1703.

There is a list for 1709 giving the shipping tonnage of the outports.⁽¹⁾ Inaccurate though this list may be in detail, it does show that the east coast possessed two thirds of English coastal shipping. This disproportion must reflect the collier trade of the eastern coast and probably the total collier trade represented less than half the coastal shipping. There are no estimates of men involved in the purely coastal trade but between 10,000 and 12,000 is in keeping with this proportion. This is at first sight a small number, but small ships and their ability to make many short journeys throughout the year make it a credible figure.

From this patchwork of calculation it would seem that the seafaring population of England numbered about 40,000 men: 20,000 from the overseas trade, 7,500 colliers, and 10-12,000 from the coastal trade. If this figure of 40,000 be taken as a working estimate of the maritime manpower it still does not express the total manpower available to the navy.

In the eyes of contemporaries one very important source of sailors would seem to be missing. The overseas fisheries, especially that associated with Newfoundland,

(1) B.M. Addit. MSS. 11,255, quoted in T.S. Willan, *The English Coasting Trade 1660-1750* (1938), Appendix 7.

were generally considered to be major sources and nurseries of sailors. They have in fact been included in the general totals for overseas trades. As a source of men they were, by 1688, of secondary importance. In 1684 the Newfoundland fisheries involved 43 ships and 1,489 men.⁽¹⁾ During William's reign the trade was allowed 600 men but rarely seems to have needed so many.⁽²⁾ In Anne's reign there was an increase in numbers but generally French raids and convoy difficulties between 1688 and 1714 seem to have accelerated the decline of what was already a wasting trade.⁽³⁾ Yet there remained obstinately fixed in the minds of many Englishmen the conviction that,

'la pêche est le véritable principe de commerce et l'unique moyen de devenir puissant sur mer,'⁽⁴⁾

and that the Newfoundland trade was the basis of a very large number of seamen.⁽⁵⁾

- (1) H.A. Innes, *The Cod Fisheries* (1940) 102.
- (2) *Acts of the Privy Council of England. Colonial Series, Vol. II*, ed. W.L. Grant and J. Munro (1910) 282; *C.T.B. X Pt. II*, 576; *Pt. III*, 1289.
- (3) *C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1710-11*, 284; H.A. Innes, *op.cit.* 111.
- (4) *Correspondence of Col. N. Hooke*, ed. W.D. Macray (1810) I, 10.
- (5) W. Wood, *A Survey of Trade* (1722), quoted H.A. Innes *op.cit.* xxi; *Britannia Languens* (1680) 311; *The Trade with France Considered* (1713) 8.

Other semi-maritime sources seem to have been more important. The watermen of London were the most accessible and numerous of these auxiliaries. They were generally thought to number 6,000.⁽¹⁾ The maritime ability of these inland oarsmen might be debatable but there is no doubt that their own Company thought their occupation, 'one of the best seminaries for breeding up youth to the sea,'⁽²⁾ or that the Admiralty was practically obsessed with the belief that a drastic conscription of watermen would do much to solve the problem of naval manpower. Watermen were certainly numerous and they were vulnerable to the press. As a result the Company of Watermen agreed to provide a quota of 1,000 men each year for the navy.⁽³⁾

There were also the land bargees of the West the keelmen of Newcastle, and the coal-heavers, bargemen and lightermen of the Thames. The Admiralty, on the basis of protections issued, calculated that there were in these categories another 3,000 potential sailors.⁽⁴⁾ Their geographic dispersion and absence of company organisation

(1) G. St. Lo, England's Safety (1693) 25.

(2) The Waterman's Case (c. 1698).

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 24 Dec. 1695, 30 Dec. 1696; ibid. 18/74, f.65.

(4) P.R.O. Adm. 3/12, 20 Jan. 1696; ibid 7/336, 21 Jan. 1696.

made it more difficult to demand a quota from these groups but they too represented a reserve of partly trained sailors. (1)

Another source, this time of trained seamen, was Scotland. The navy had no right to press Scotsmen but Scotland, with a population of about one million, was a tempting source of additional manpower. It became routine for the English monarch to request 1,000 men annually from the Privy Council of Scotland. It was a large number from a country of few ships and small crews. In 1692 it apparently involved a quarter of all Scottish seamen, and another eighth was demanded in 1693. (2)

From these peripheral sources the navy could apparently obtain without difficulty some 2,500 men (1,000 from the London Watermen, 1,000 from Scotland, and perhaps 500, with less certainty, from the other, more scattered sources). The first two sources were also called upon to provide similar annual levies, though quality and quantity declined.

(1) R. Gibson's Memorial in J. Charnock, History of Marine Architecture (1800) I, lxxvi; T.S. William, River Navigation in England 1600-1750, 110-1.

(2) The Old Scots Navy 1689-1710, ed. J. Grant (N.R.S. 1914) 114.

So far the sources considered have had in common a salt or freshwater provenance and thus recruits had at best, great experience, at worst, a smattering of knowledge likely to be relevant and useful in naval service. There is one other major source of naval recruits, numerically the most important, landsmen. No doubt the navy would have liked to man its ships with experienced or semi-experienced crews. This was recognised as being an impossibility. It would have been possible only through the abandonment of much of the overseas and coastal trade. It was accepted in the navy that during the expansion caused by mobilization for war, at least a third, and possibly a half, of the crews would be inexperienced landsmen. St. Lo defined as the necessary qualification of a sailor,

'that he shall understand the mechanic part of a sailor, which is to reef and furl, and take his trick at the helm, and be a man at all calls, properly called haul-boiling.'⁽¹⁾

He considered that if half the crew had these esoteric abilities it was sufficient. Gibson agreed with him.⁽²⁾

(1) G. St. Lo, England's Safety (1693), Somers Tracts (1814) XI, 56.

(2) R. Gibson, Reflections on our Naval Strength (1692), The Naval Miscellany II ed. J.K. Laughton (N.R.S. 1912) 161.

The Royal Africa Company and privateers commonly manned their ships on the basis of half landsmen and half seamen.⁽¹⁾ It would seem that naval ships were often manned on the same basis and that only when the proportion of landsmen exceeded a half did captains complain.⁽²⁾ This was the most effective way of breeding seamen. The navy itself manufactured sailors, for

'a cruising man of war in two months time ploughs more sea, and wanders further between Heaven and Earth, than a merchant ship does in a year.'⁽³⁾

To the raw recruits there would have been added at the outbreak of war the unnumbered but veteran group of retired seamen who would have been given renewed economic opportunity with the expansion of the navy. It was, however, the influx of landsmen and the transformation of those that survived into able seamen that enabled the nation to sustain a war of long duration.

- (1) K.G. Davies, Royal Africa Company (1960) 209; Documents relating to the Law and Custom of the Sea II, ed. R.G. Marsden (N.R.S. 1916) 172.
- (2) D. Hannay, Naval Courts Martial (1914) 74; J. Dennis, An Essay on the Navy (1702) 2-3; C.S.P.Col. Amer & W.I. 1693-6, 124.
- (3) G. St. Lo, England's Safety (1693) 25.

From the sources listed above the navy was mustered for war. There now appears to be some justification for the belief that there were enough men in the country to meet the navy's wartime demands; certainly there were for a war of short duration. By 1690 the navy was employing about 30,000 men although parliament did not vote this number before 1692.⁽¹⁾ In theory such a force was readily available. If a figure of 5,000 is assumed as representing a normal peace-time strength, this would have meant the addition of 25,000 men.⁽²⁾ A third of these might have been landsmen, which leaves about 16,700, 2,500 of whom might have been recruited from the semi-maritime sources. Therefore the navy would have been satisfactorily manned by an influx of some 14,000 sailors out of a sea-faring population of 40,000, which would have meant the navy taking one trained seaman in every three.⁽³⁾ The nation

(1) See Appendix III.

(2) The fleet before 1688 seems to have consisted of between 3,000 and 5,000 men although the Commons in 1689 assumed a peacetime strength of 7,040; Calendar of Pepysian Manuscripts II ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1904) 7; C.J.X,80.

(3) There is justification in reducing this figure further. So far the discussion has been concerned with the availability of seamen and by implication of the ordinary crew member. Two or ^{no} three thousand of the 30,000 men employed in 1690 would have been commissioned officers. The supply of officers is a separate problem (see below pp.423-8) but in this context the presence of officers within a naval force of 30,000 men would have further reduced naval demands for ordinary seamen.

was in fact capable of sending out even more powerful fleets. For fourteen of the years between 1688 and 1714 parliament voted a force of 40,000 men for the navy. For fifteen of these years the navy actually signed on a force in excess of 40,000, in 1695 by as many as 8,514.⁽¹⁾

Undoubtedly the naval force in these years strained the manpower resources of the nation. The casualties of two long wars and the necessity of meeting the challenge of the French threat to the mercantile marine with more ships could be partly met by the recruits from a new generation, by using a greater proportion of landsmen, and by devices such as a relaxation of the Navigation Laws.⁽²⁾ Yet there was no cause for alarm despite vexatious regional shortages of men. Certainly the government never seems to have abandoned an optimistic outlook on the number of seamen. Such statistical investigations as it initiated confirmed this optimism. The most thorough investigation into the number of seamen at the beginning of Anne's reign led the government

(1) See Appendix III.

(2) See below pp. 337-8, 340, 386, 392-3.

to assume that there was 65,000 seamen in England.⁽¹⁾ This was the figure given by the commissioners of Greenwich Hospital from work on their records of the monthly contributions of merchant seamen to the Chatham Chest⁽²⁾ and the tonnage of merchant shipping. They considered that there were 50,000 sailors in the overseas, coastal and collier trades, 5,000 in the auxiliary trades such as watermen and fishermen, and 10,000 in the navy. As far as any figure represents government opinion in Anne's reign this seems to be the one.⁽³⁾ Other government attempts to estimate the number of seamen in the realm were not always so encouraging and there were enough of them to give room for doubt.⁽⁴⁾ None the less the main government interest in legislation on manning the fleet was in making the process of manning more efficient or the life of the naval seaman happier and thus retaining his services. Both approaches assume that there are sufficient sailors. Innumerable memorials and

(1) B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,439 f.164.

(2) See below pp. 356.

(3) See below p. 382; Queen Anne's Navy 186.

(4) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3863; 29 Jan. 1702, 29 July 1702; B.M. Harley Loan 29/284 f.46.

representations from the flag officers imply a similar conviction.

It was the gap between the body of potential sailors and their acceptance aboard a man of war that caused the feeling of insecurity in the government and among flag officers which led to much parliamentary activity and some of the confusion as to whether there were enough sailors. It was the responsibility of the navy to deal with the mechanics of manning the ships. Its use of the press-gang and the embargo made the manning of the fleet a national and parliamentary concern.

The legal justification for pressing was uncertain but it was generally accepted.⁽¹⁾ Few, though their number increased, saw it as a device so brutal and dangerous to individual freedom as to merit parliamentary attention.⁽²⁾ There were certain accepted limitations; an aggrieved lieutenant, who was tried before the Lord Mayor of London, revealed some of them when he pleaded that the

- (1) Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. X Raising Seamen; P.R.O. Adm. 7/334 f 143; English Historical Documents X, 1714-1783, ed. D.B. Horn and M. Ransome (1957) 874.
- (2) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 267; R. Crossfield, England's Glory Reviv'd (1693); Piracy Destroy'd (1701) 3; G. Everett, Encouragement for Seamen and (1695), Harleian Miscellany (1810) X, 222.

man he was prosecuted for pressing 'was neither house-keeper, freeman, apprentice, shopkeeper or a money'd man.'⁽¹⁾ Other employees usually spared the press were husbandmen, fishermen, customs men, servants, and naval auxiliaries such as contractors' crews, ballastmen and chaulkers. For some, recognition of a calling was sufficient to give security from pressing; others needed a paper certificate. Such protections were limited in number. They could be obtained at a cost of from 5s. 6d., to £1. 1l. 0d., for each man needed by a reputable trader but they were exchanged, illegally, at prices higher than this.⁽²⁾

The embargo theoretically immobilized trade and put the crews of merchant vessels at the mercy of the press gangs. As a means of manning the fleet it was capable of much variation, in that the embargo could be restricted, or expanded to include all types of overseas trade as well as coastal trade. The embargo became parliamentary business because of its disruptive effect on trade.

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 27 Feb. 1705.

(2) Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. XIII f.186; P.R.O. Adm. 3/23 7 Jan. 1708; Papers of Thomas Bowrey ed. R. Carnac Temple (Hakluyt Soc. 1927) 171; D.E.W. Gibb, Lloyd's of London (1957) 15.

When England went to war on 7 May 1689 the manning of the fleet seemed to provide no problems. There was a rough and ready but effective system of manning the fleet; there were enough men for the kind of naval war that contemporaries could envisage; and between 1689 and 1692 manning caused no difficulties. From this point of view these years have a unity in that there is not only an absence of naval complaint about manpower but also positive evidence that the fleet was well manned, in a series of letters. On 23 June 1690 the King was informed that

'the fleet is now so well supplied with seamen that I hope they (the marines) would not be much missed on shipboard.'⁽¹⁾

In 1691 the fleet was satisfactorily manned by the first week of March⁽²⁾ and on 30 April the press was suspended because the fleet was 'completely furnished with seamen.'⁽³⁾ Perhaps an increased proportion of landsmen in 1692 is implied by a description of the fleet as being 'indifferently well manned' but there was obviously no shortage.⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) A. Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds 1632-1712 (1944) II, 167.
 (2) Ibid. II, 199; C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1690-1, 300.
 (3) Luttrell II, 218.
 (4) Memoirs Relating to Lord Torrington ed. J.K. Laughton (Camden Soc. 1889) 53. See Appendix III.

The members of the Navy Board were probably right in assuming that the number of experienced sailors had actually increased but this was a rather one-sided view.⁽¹⁾ As events in the Commons were to show, the successful manning had been achieved at some cost to trade and in 1692 there were some delays in manning.

None the less it presented no serious problems in the years from 1689 to 1692 and it was mainly the complaints of merchants that made manning a parliamentary issue in this period. In 1689 volunteers flocked to naval service and the embargo that had been enforced was greatly relaxed by the end of April.⁽²⁾ Exceptionally, parliament was in session throughout much of the manning season, which usually occupied from February to May, but it was only after it assembled for the winter session on 23 October 1689 that there was discussion about anything to do with naval manpower and this concerned a relatively minor issue. Naval captains had been pressing the crews of merchant ships to such an extent that the safety of the ships on the last stage of their homeward journey was imperilled. Merchants could cite two culprits in this matter, Captains Avery and Nevill, and they were summoned

(1) The Sergison Papers 172; cf. Samuel Pepys's *Naval Minutes* ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 268.

(2) C.T.B. IX Pt. I, 96-7; P.R.O. Adm. 3/1 ff.107, 128, 138.

to the bar of the House of Commons and questioned, but suffered no further punishment.⁽¹⁾

While parliament was debating, the navy was deciding that it needed 32,842 to man the 91 ships available for 1690.⁽²⁾ To meet this greater demand for men, Scotland was asked, for the first time in William's reign, to provide 1,000⁽³⁾ and the activities of the press gangs were extended to inland counties. The Earl of Shrewsbury, as Secretary of State, appealed for the support of 'gentlemen of estates and authority' to make their work effective.⁽⁴⁾ Despite this, merchants still found it easy enough to obtain seamen, especially if they had powerful friends. The Hudson's Bay Company was granted protection for 100 men thanks to the efforts of one of its governors, John Churchill.⁽⁵⁾

After the battle of Beachy Head the navy utilized to the full every method of manning.⁽⁶⁾ The contributions wrung from the collier fleets were to make the price of

(1) C.J.X, 288, 313, 336.

(2) H.M.C. Finch II, 263.

(3) The Old Scots Navy, ed. J. Grant (N.R.S. 1914) 55.

(4) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1689-90, 500; *ibid.* 1689-90, 516-7; H.M.C. Fleming 317-8.

(5) E.E. Rich, Hudson's Bay Company, (1958) I, 280.
John Churchill, later first Duke of Marlborough.

(6) The Conduct of the Earl of Nottingham ed. W.A. Aiken (1941) 79; Luttrell II, 134; C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1699, 612.

coal high in the coming winter.⁽¹⁾ This naval priority in the supply of seamen could not last unchecked. Trade and the customs drawn from it were too important to be permanently obstructed. The merchants had to be allowed a share of the sailors and the realisation of the necessity of this led to a remarkable experiment in state control of the available maritime manpower. In October 1690 Nottingham, acting on the King's instructions, attempted for the first time in this period to discover the number of seamen in the kingdom.⁽²⁾ Parliament had voted 29,026 for the navy in 1691. Once the navy had been manned to this strength the remaining sailors of England were to be shared amongst the merchants.⁽³⁾ The customs officials, in consultation with the merchants of London and the outports, began to allocate quotas of seamen to each trade before Nottingham's investigation was complete.⁽⁴⁾ The number allocated to each trade and port was based upon the customs each trade provided and the number allowed was greatly below the needs and expectations of the merchants.⁽⁵⁾ Not surprisingly the attempt to estimate the number of seamen in the kingdom

(1) The Portledge Papers, ed. R.J. Kerr and I.C. Duncan (1928) 103-4; Luttrell II, 187.

(2) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1690-1, 143; C.T.P. I, 157.

(3) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1690-1, 127.

(4) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1699, 612.

(5) Ibid. 1689-92, 320.

failed. The customs officials, to whom the task was delegated, found the complications too great despite earlier experience of such attempts.⁽¹⁾ They failed too in their attempts to limit the overseas trades to the quotas of seamen that had been established. Slack supervision in the outports, fluctuations in the volume of trade, and variations in the times of sailing in different trades made efficient national control impossible.⁽²⁾

The parliament that assembled on 2 October 1690 was primarily concerned with naval matters and the recovery of maritime dominance lost at Beachy Head. One reason for our failure was held to be our haphazard methods of manning, which enabled the French fleet to gain the initiative by being at sea earlier than the English. Our methods were contrasted with the French system of conscription, which was described as 'their exquisite method of enrolling mariners.'⁽³⁾ In the absence of such a system the majority of the Commons had no hesitation in awarding the navy precedence over the merchants in the

- (1) Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. X f.59; P.R.O. C.O. 388.9 Part I f.19.
- (2) See above pp. 218-9.
- (3) Reasons for Settling Admiralty Jurisdiction Offered to H.M. and Parliament (1690), The Harleian Miscellany IX (1810) 467.

acquisition of sailors. The issue was debated on 11 November, the majority contending that,

'l'interest due commerce estoit infiniment moins de conséquence que le salut du Royaume, et que par cette raison il valoit mieux, qu'aucun navire marchand ne se mit en mer et retenir tous les matelots.'⁽¹⁾

Against this it was argued that trade was a necessity to the nation, that financial ruin and colonial disaster would follow a ban on trade. Montague drew up an address, expressing the views of the majority, which asked that not more than 500 English sailors be allowed abroad in trade, a derisory number.⁽²⁾ The King in reply said that he had allowed only those ships vital to the nation to sail, and trade by trade listed 718 sailors involved.⁽³⁾ The dissatisfaction of the merchants at address and reply is understandable; it is not surprising that one of them, unnamed but important, according to Bonnet, expressed the dissatisfaction in these intransigent terms:

'que si le commerce ne peut pas compatir avec la guerre, et qu'on ne puisse pas faire l'un et l'autre ensemble, c'en est fait de l'Angleterre, et qu'il faudra bien tost se résoudre à

(1) Bonnet Dispatch 11/21 Nov. 1690, L. von Ranke, History of England (1875) VI, 155.

(2) C.J.X, 467-8; C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 367; *ibid.* 1699, 617.

(3) Bonnet Dispatch 5/15 Dec. 1690, L. von Ranke *op.cit.* VI, 157.

envoyer des Députés en France, pour y
demander la paix. (1)

Merchant dissatisfaction was supported by constructive proposals. They suggested that an effective way of obtaining more sailors would be to allow the crews of English ships to contain more than a quarter of foreign seamen allowed by the law. (2) A petition requesting such a change in the Navigation Acts had already been presented to the Commons on 31 October by the West Indian, Baltic and Newcastle merchants. (3) A committee was formed and a bill based on the proposal was read for the first time on the 14th of November and the second time on the 18th. (4) On this second reading the committee that had considered the amendment of the Navigation Acts was merged with another committee that had been set up on 15 October to consider a bill for 'more speedy and effectual furnishing of the Navy in time of war with seamen and for pressing.' (5) This earlier committee, which met under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Howard had prepared a bill which had been

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- (1) Ibid. VI, 156. Other reasons for merchant dissatisfaction are dealt with above p.240.
 (2) Ibid. VI, 155.
 (3) C.J.X, 457.
 (4) Ibid. X, 457, 465, 468, 470, 471, 474.
 (5) Ibid. X, 442.

read for the first time on 29 October, and its second reading, on 18 November, coincided with the second reading of the bill to suspend part of the Navigation Act.⁽¹⁾ The proximity of two bills, each of which sought to deal with some aspect of manning, presumably led to a reappraisal of aims and a merging of committees. As a result the proposals to amend the Navigation Acts gained precedence, presumably because it was simpler to amend a law than to initiate legislation on such a complicated issue as manning. The merit of simplicity would have ^{been} enhanced if, as is likely, one of the reforms of the manning system discussed had been that of the introduction of some scheme of registration on the French model.⁽²⁾ The combined committees, from now on described as the 'Committee for the suspension of the Navigation Acts,' reported to the House on 5 December; their bill was ingrossed on 20 December, read for the third time on 23 December and passed to the Lords on that day.⁽³⁾ There is no detailed account of debate at any stage in the development of this bill but a paper exists which summarises the arguments used in the Commons against the

(1) Ibid. X, 455, 467. Sir Robert Howard, Auditor of the Exchequer, was a leading member of the Commons and veteran intriguer.

(2) See above p.334 and below pp. 355-6.

(3) C.J.X, 495, 514, 523.

suspension.⁽¹⁾ The main point made is that foreign seamen, if they predominated in the merchant service, by their readiness to accept lower wages would drive out the English seamen, with all the disastrous consequences to the nation that the destruction of this class would entail. Other arguments were that the foreign seaman's diet of stock-fish, groats and rice would not provide a stimulus to English husbandry and that he would impoverish the kingdom by taking his pay abroad.

Sir Richard Haddock used the same argument, that allowing more foreigners into merchant service would eventually destroy the strength of the English seamen, when he was consulted about suspending the Navigation Acts.⁽²⁾ Merchants, who also gave evidence to the Lords, declared that trade would be ruined unless they were allowed to employ more foreigners. They asked that three quarters of a crew should be foreign and the Lords accepted this proportion. They also made other amendments to the bill from the Commons, reducing the duration of the suspension from the length of the war to 29 September 1691 and adding penalties for those who concealed sailors.⁽³⁾

(1) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1690-1, 201.

(2) H.M.C. H.L. MSS. 1690-1, 248-9; Haddock was Controller of the navy 1688-1714 and had vast and diverse naval experience, Queen Anne's Navy 6-7.

(3) C.J.X, 534.

The Commons accepted these amendments with the exception of the nature of the penalties for concealment. Disagreement on this issue led to two conferences between the Houses, in which the Lords insisted on their penalty of a fine instead of the gaol sentence proposed by the Commons for those who hid sailors. The Lords maintained that gaol meant a waste of seamen, in that those who concealed sailors were themselves likely to be sailors.⁽¹⁾ The result of this squabble was that the chance of the bill's becoming law was lost as the parliament was dissolved rather earlier than usual, William being anxious to set out for the Hague.⁽²⁾

It would seem from the lack of urgency that William's ministers were not strongly in favour of it, presumably because they did not consider such legislation necessary. The casual approach of the House of Lords, the members of which were, at this time, inclined to support the government against the more radical proposals from the Commons, confirms this impression.⁽³⁾ It seems likely that the bill was a product of merchant initiative and country support. The sense of crisis when parliament met for the first time

(1) Ibid. X, 535-6.

(2) S.B. Baxter, William III (1966) 292.

(3) See above pp. 64-9.

after Beachy Head, particularly the feeling that the fleet was not getting to sea early enough in the campaigning season, would make manning a useful issue for the discontented politicians who tried every way possible to attack 'Carmarthen's ministry.'⁽¹⁾ The arguments detailed in the government paper mentioned above are the kind of argument that would be used to sway uncertain country members whose support both court and opposition politicians needed.⁽²⁾

Despite the failure of this bill parliament did achieve one measure that should have helped manning. The price of coal in London was high and causing concern. As a result, an act passed both Houses which suspended any restriction on the proportion of foreign sailors employed in the collier trade. The act received the King's assent on 20 December⁽³⁾ and the naval authorities seem to have acted on the assumption that the crews of colliers were immediately liable for pressing.⁽⁴⁾ A belief that the use of these collier seamen would solve problems of manning may well have contributed to the lack of urgency shown in

- (1) A. Browning *op.cit.* I, 481-5; see above p. 44.
- (2) There were other attempts in William's reign to modify the restrictions of the Navigation Acts on the employment of foreign seamen, C.J.XI, 283, 291; L.J.XV, 520; see below p. 343.
- (3) C.J.X, 514; 2 W. & M. Sess. 2 c 7.
- (4) See below pp. 341-2.

dealing with other bills on manning. There was also in this session the first indication that both Houses realised that the care and morale of seamen had some relevance to manning. The Commons suggested to the King that volunteers might be encouraged by a bounty system and the Lords inquired what measures would be necessary to encourage sailors generally.⁽¹⁾

Even before the parliamentary session ended the race to muster the English fleet as early in the year as possible had begun. All the usual methods were used, the press, for the first time in William's reign, being used so ruthlessly as to excite opposition.⁽²⁾ Two regiments of marines were formed. The formation of such units was a direct aid to naval manning. These troops reinforced the numbers and the feeble musketry of English seamen. They also provided a disciplined force that could be used to suppress disorders amongst the sailors.⁽³⁾ But the process of manning received a severe set back in April. The price of coal had remained high and in

(1) C.J.X, 533; H.M.C. H.L. MSS. 1690-1, 249.

(2) M. Beloff, *Public Order and Popular Disturbances* (1928) 127.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080, 16 Feb. 1691; H.M.C. Finch II, 20; C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1690-1, 211-2; *Descriptive Catalogue of Naval Documents in the Pepysian Library*, IV, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1923) xix.

February the Lord Mayor had complained of this.⁽¹⁾ On 23 April there was a proclamation forbidding pressing from colliers until 20 July 1691. Apparently the recent act opening the collier trade to foreigners had not yet become effective. This protection of collier seamen not only deprived the navy of a major source of men but also encouraged desertion. Russell wrote bitterly to Nottingham on 6 May,

'The late proclamation, forbidding all pressing men out out of colliers, proves already fatal to the fleet, for no men that have been put sick on shore ever return, but so soon as they can crawl from their sick quarters get up to London, and the profit of one voyage to Newcastle answers the loss of five months pay in their Majesty's service.....and if some means be not found to stop this, we must either let the men die miserably on board ship or absolutely disable the fleet.'⁽²⁾

By the end of the year the discrepancy between numbers borne and numbers mustered, much of it due to desertion, was higher than ever before.⁽³⁾ Yet the usual methods, in particular a severe press of the homeward bound merchant fleets, manned the navy though there was little action.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Luttrell II, 187; E. Hughes, *North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century* (1952) 160.

(2) H.M.C. Finch III, 50.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3564 f.527.

(4) Luttrell II, 243.

The lack of action greatly perturbed parliament after it met on 22 October 1691. In a debate on 9 November the inactivity was criticised and Clarges asked whether it was necessary for all men in the navy to be sailors. He also asked for an examination of this point and manning problems generally.⁽¹⁾ In this session, however, it was naval finance and naval inactivity in the last campaigning season that dominated parliamentary attention.⁽²⁾ A bill specifically for the registration of seamen was considered then abandoned.⁽³⁾ On 29 January 1692 West Indian merchants petitioned again for the suspension of the Navigation Acts. A bill was drafted to this effect which quickly passed through all its stages in the Commons.⁽⁴⁾ It was defeated in the Lords, presumably for the same reasons as had led the Lords to talk out a bill in the previous session.⁽⁵⁾ In the meantime the navy was attempting to solve the growing problems of manpower and manning, by the revolutionary innovation of keeping the men in permanent pay and service all

(1) Grey X, 168.

(2) See above p. 82.

(3) C.J.X, 542, 635.

(4) Ibid. X, 649-50, 653, 657, 661, 671.

(5) L.J.XV, 520. See above pp. 338-9.

through the winter.⁽¹⁾ Men were becoming more important than money. The obvious advantage of this system was offset by a general loss of morale amongst seamen, who were deprived of leave and the opportunity to take a winter job. Desertion doubled as a result.⁽²⁾

Obtaining men for the navy in 1692 was more difficult than it had been since the outbreak of war. The expedients used are evidence of this. 8,100 men were demanded from the inland counties.⁽³⁾ Merchant ships were allowed to leave England only after their masters had delivered to the navy one man for every seaman they carried overseas.⁽⁴⁾ Scottish seamen were illegally pressed and the complaints of the Privy Council of Scotland answered with the declaration that the war concerned 'almost all Christendom' and a request for another 1,000 men.⁽⁵⁾ Pressing and the embargo so disrupted the corn trade to Ireland that there was fear of famine there.⁽⁶⁾ On 30 April the press was ordered to operate regardless of protections; watermen and crews of coasters were specifically mentioned as a profitable target.⁽⁷⁾ Russell blamed for the

(1) Sergison Papers, 165, 172.

(2) N.M.M. Sergison Ser/100 ff. 579-582; *ibid.* Ser/102 ff. 30-2.

(3) *Ibid.* Ser/100 ff. 127-41.

(4) E.E. Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company, Letters Outward, 1688-96* (1957) xxiii.

(5) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1691-2, 105.

(6) *Ibid.* 1695, 181-2; *ibid.* 1691-2, 233.

(7) *Ibid.* 1691-2, 263; P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080 f.135; H.M.C. H.L. MSS. 1692-3, 224-6.

necessity of this desperate step over generous grants of protections and the lack of co-operation of the civil authorities.⁽¹⁾ As a result of all these measures, for the first time in William's reign more than 40,000 men signed on for naval service.⁽²⁾ The naval authorities were not yet satisfied. They could and did claim that the fleet that fought at La Hogue was short of men, but they calculated deficiencies from the highest possible establishment of men.⁽³⁾ By now the very intensity with which the navy had applied the traditional methods of manning over a period of four years had made a very wide public conscious of the defects of the system, and naval officials themselves were dissatisfied with the enormous administrative effort necessary to fill the men of war.⁽⁴⁾

The advantages of an alternative system were becoming increasingly widely known. The French system of naval conscription had been favourably described in pamphlets in the first years of William's reign.⁽⁵⁾ One Englishman

(1) Ibid. 1692-3, 226, 231.

(2) See Appendix III.

(3) H.M.C. H.L. MSS. 1692-3, 227-30. There were 5,119 men short, about one man in six below highest complement. The actual discrepancy was 5,632 but some ships had more than their proper complement, the total number in excess of this being 513.

(4) P.R.O. Adm. 3/8, 5 Dec. 1692; C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1691-2, 432, 480; Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (1771) II, Pt. III, 10.

(5) See above p. 334.

who had the chance of seeing it in operation whilst recovering from wounds in captivity was Captain George St. Lo. In August 1692 he presented to the Privy Council his proposals for raising 20,000 seamen without need of pressing. His scheme was not a direct imitation of the French model but involved each merchant registering his ship and surrendering one man for each 50 tons, or £5 in lieu.⁽¹⁾ He printed similar proposals in 1693 in pamphlet form.⁽²⁾ The scheme was sufficiently attractive for the Privy Council to recommend that it should go before the Commons.⁽³⁾

On 2 December 1692 Major Vincent presented a bill to the House of Commons,

'for more speedy and effectual furnishing their Majesties' Navy and Merchant Ships with Seamen.'⁽⁴⁾

On 6 December Granville presented a bill for

'the more speedy raising of Seamen for their Majesties' Service.'⁽⁵⁾

Both bills were read for a second time on 8 December and

(1) Luttrell II, 576.

(2) G. St. Lo, *England's Safety* (1693).

(3) Luttrell II, 576.

(4) Henry Vincent, M.P. Truro 1685-7, 1689-1713, later Commissioner of Victualling C.J.X, 731.

(5) John Granville, younger son of the Earl of Bath. He represented Cornwall in parliament and the South West generally in debate, Grey X, 295. He was frequently associated with the policies of Clarges and Musgrave, K. Feiling *op.cit.* 291; C.J.X, 734.

together committed to a large committee headed by Russell.⁽¹⁾ Of the two the one initiated by Vincent is the more likely to have been based on St. Lo's scheme. The wording of both implies that it was still the mechanics of manning about which parliament was concerned and not the supply of men. No more is heard of either bill.⁽²⁾

It was to become increasingly difficult for parliament to ignore problems of manning. Although England had begun the war with sufficient sailors to maintain a large fleet, the manpower situation had been in some ways changed by the events of the first four years of war. At the same time as the navy expanded to meet the double threat posed by French seapower - invasion and the destruction of commerce - other factors were limiting the supply of English sailors. The first of these was mortality: firstly, the straightforward, persistent, normal mortality of shipwreck, accident and storm; secondly, the destruction of disease; and thirdly, the casualties of war. Instances of all these causes of death are to be found in the period 1689-92. 600 men were lost when the ships Coronation and

(1) Ibid. X, 735; N. Luttrell, An Abstract of the Debates 1692-3 f.160.

(2) In a more traditional way parliament in this session did something to increase the supply of sailors in an act to encourage the trade to Greenland, 4 W. & M. c 17.

Harwich were lost in 1691.⁽¹⁾ Disease caused the greatest loss of manpower; it has been maintained that, 'the naval manning problem arose principally through losses from disease.'⁽²⁾ In 1689 Torrington lost 553 men through death and 2,558 through sickness.⁽³⁾ The French were the least effective killers. Another source of wastage was the loss of morale which made men increasingly reluctant to serve in the navy. They could still follow their occupation in security from the press by serving abroad, where the English sailor was highly regarded.⁽⁴⁾ In less security they could join the growing number of privateers.⁽⁵⁾

The erosion of the manpower available to the navy was partly balanced by the contraction of trade. Some branches of the overseas trade declined directly because of the war; others were already in decline and war

- (1) Diary of John Evelyn, ed. E.S. de Beer V (1955) 69.
 (2) J.J. Keevil, *Medicine and the Navy 1200-1900* (1958) II, 209.
 (3) W. Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy* (1898) II, 362.
 (4) W. Hodges, *Humble Proposals* (1695) 4; J.R. Hutchinson, *The Press Gang Afloat and Ashore* (1913) 48-9.
 (5) G.N. Clark, *The Dutch Alliance and the War against French Trade 1688-97* (1923) 205; J. Le Pelley, *The Privateers of the Channel Islands 1688-1713*, M.M. XXX (1944), 34.

accentuated this process.⁽¹⁾ Theoretically, sailors for whom the Baltic or French trade could no longer find employment would be available for naval service.⁽²⁾ Also, with each new summer campaign another age group of youngsters would be available and perhaps eager to join the navy. The accession of strength represented by this young group would be partly balanced by the smaller number of aged leaving the service. There is much vividly worded evidence that could be used to show that the available numbers of English seamen declined in the last years of the war and created a problem of supply. Navy Board figures show that such a picture would be false.⁽³⁾ The number of men signing on for naval service increased steadily and attained in 1695, with the figure of 48,514, the highest level between 1688 and 1714. There appears to have been no problem of supply but naval authorities were too cautious and too ambitious ever to declare that they were satisfied. Manning each year involved a struggle for men. This struggle was so obvious to naval officials and to the

(1) R. Davis op.cit. 22; R. Davis, *English Foreign Trade 1700-44*, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 2nd Series, XV (1962-3) 295.

(2) W.S. Unger, *Trade Through the Sound in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* *ibid.* XII (1959-60) 212; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3568, f.415.

(3) See Appendix III.

public that it became generally recognised that the process whereby men were mustered aboard ship needed reform. The close connection between this administrative procedure and the basic number of seamen made it easy to confuse the two issues and easy for members of parliament and writers to assume that the real problem was shortage of seamen. Neither the government nor the navy seems to have been guilty of this confusion.

At the end of 1693 a series of letters and meetings shows that the government realised the problems of manning. It recognised that the naval priority in demands for manpower above the needs of the merchants, however justifiable this had been in times of crisis, was no longer possible. Trade paid for war.⁽¹⁾ Men were necessary for both. On 7 November 1693 Trenchard, a Secretary of State, asked the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty to consider not only a scheme of trade protection but also means of obtaining sailors, 'and whether it may be requisite to have a Bill prepared for the parliament in order thereunto.'⁽²⁾ In the process of consultation that

(1) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 275; see above p. 233.

(2) Ibid. W. & M. 1693, 390; P.R.O. Adm. 1/4080 f.791.

followed, the Navy Board, after listing the number of times it had given advice on this topic, went on to list the traditional ways of obtaining sailors. The Board concluded that the vigorous prosecution of all these methods, reinforced by greater concern for the welfare of the sailor, would be sufficient to man the fleet.⁽¹⁾

A meeting of flag officers and captains agreed in principle with this opinion. The problem of manning, in their eyes, was not a shortage of men; it was caused by desertion, insufficient co-operation from the civil authorities, and too many protections.⁽²⁾ Thus the answer to Trenchard was a plea for greater powers for the press gang. These powers were to include the right to press Thames watermen and mercantile experts such as surgeons and gunners. Money left at the residence of a sailor was to make him liable for service. The dangers of this provision were to be met by the help of parish officers. The one mitigating feature of this stringent press was that all who volunteered were to be exempt after a number of years' service.⁽³⁾ In effect the three major bodies of naval experts, Lords

(1) Ibid. 1/3573 ff. 901-7.

(2) H.M.C. H.L. I, 146-7, 150-1. It was the advice of flag officers that probably led to the disuse of embargo as a means of getting seamen. They seem to have condemned the embargo as an ineffective means to this end, B.M. Addit. MSS. 34, 350 f.3.

(3) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 440.

Commissioners of the Admiralty - Navy Board and a group of senior serving officers - saw no reason for legislation; there were men enough - all that was necessary was a lessening of the restrictions in obtaining them.

The result of Trenchard's initiative in the 1693-4 session of parliament would seem to have been a government-sponsored bill that attempted to establish a register of Thames fishermen. As representatives of these fishermen claimed that there were 10,000 of them government control of such a large source of skilled seamen would have been most valuable to the navy. Although this number is almost certainly exaggerated, the fishermen offered to provide the navy with 1,000 men a year if they were granted similar powers of organisation to the Thames Watermen. The idea of such a compulsory registration excited considerable opposition, some of it from groups such as the Kentish fishermen who feared the loss of their independence, some of it probably from members who disliked any form of compulsory registration.⁽¹⁾ The dangers of such registration were well described in several pamphlets.⁽²⁾ The opposition was strong enough to prevent the bill becoming law.

(1) C.J.X1, 22, 45-6, 59, 87, 97, 125, 139, 145.

(2) See above p. 62.

In the next two campaigning seasons, those of 1694 and 1695, manning continued to cause difficulties.⁽¹⁾ The complaints of the flag officers become numerous⁽²⁾ but need to be treated with some caution. Frequent complaints about a shortage of men were a convenient excuse for inactivity and future failure.⁽³⁾ Frequently it was not so much a shortage of men as a concern about their quality that prompted the naval officers. Such concern might be a reflection of the increasing proportion of landsmen on the ships. Rooke was the most articulate grouser in this vein and 'mob' the word he used most frequently to describe his crews.⁽⁴⁾ The press that did much to provide this 'mob' was becoming increasingly unpopular. Many were wrongfully pressed, many were stupidly pressed, and if the more obviously physically incapable had not been sent home before embarking, Rooke's

- (1) For example, the delays over manning and Berkeley's shortage of men in 1694, C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 194, 240; *ibid.* Wm. 1695, 241; P.R.O. S.P. 42/3, 22 April, 9 June 1694. Some of these shortages can be attributed to the increased demands made by trade protection; see above p. 262.
- (2) H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry, II Pt. II, 154, 218, 236-7; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1695, 5, 20, 41, 52.
- (3) D. Hannay, *Naval Courts Martial* (1914) 19; D.A. Baugh, *op.cit.* 166. Kirkby attempted to explain his desertion of Benbow in action by lack of men, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1702, 578.
- (4) H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. II, 218, 301; H.M.C. Portland II, 109.

letters could have become frenetic.⁽¹⁾ Unrest, even pitched battles, too often attended the press gangs in their progressions.⁽²⁾ Corruption and disrupted trade were the normal concomitants of the press.⁽³⁾ Increasingly the press was condemned as something that 'will not do in this age.'⁽⁴⁾ Other methods were just as suspect. In 1695 the cost of paying bounties to volunteers was £10,825. 1. Od., and, as the Navy Board pointed out, many of these men might have joined or been pressed into the navy irrespective of reward.⁽⁵⁾ Keeping ships in pay all winter as a means of retaining men was generally recognised as uneconomic and inefficient.⁽⁶⁾

It was against this background of dissatisfaction, at the annual struggle to man the fleet and at the cumbersome methods of obtaining men, that government and navy combined to obtain legislation that would solve the

- (1) P.R.O. Adm. 3/12 passim.
 (2) M. Beloff, *Public Order and Popular Disturbances 1660-1714* (1938) 127; Luttrell III, 52.
 (3) H.M.C. H.L. II, 315; C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 281; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3574 f.341.
 (4) R. Crosfeild, *England's Glory Reviv'd* (1693) preface; cf. P.R.O. Adm. 7/334 f.143.
 (5) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3580 f.89.
 (6) Luttrell IV, 110; see above pp. 343-4.

multiple problems of manning. The solution was the 'Act for the Increase and Encouragement of Seamen,' or, as it was commonly to be called, 'The Registry Act.'⁽¹⁾

The act had French ancestry. Their scheme of maritime conscription had greatly impressed the English; its advantages had been well described by several pamphleteers,⁽²⁾ two of whom, Captains George St. Lo and John Perry, had seen the system working while prisoners of war.⁽³⁾ Great emphasis was placed in the pamphlets on the money that would be saved and the benefits to merchant and sailor that the system would bring. Some of them had been circularised to members of parliament and certainly some members, including Russell, favoured legislation on the French model.⁽⁴⁾ The Commissioners of Admiralty and the Navy Board had discussed manning during 1695, sometimes with Sir Charles Hedges, as Judge of Admiralty, in attendance.⁽⁵⁾ In December the Navy Board submitted a report on the outline of a register scheme to

(1) 7 & 8 Wm. III c 21, 1696.

(2) See above p. 60.

(3) G. St. Lo, England's Safety (1693); J. Perry, A Regulation for Seamen (1695).

(4) G. Everett, Encouragement for Seamen (1695) 8; B.M. Lansdowne, 1,152 B, f.272.

(5) P.R.O. Adm. 3/12, 15 Sept. 1695.

the Admiralty, which forwarded it to the Council.⁽¹⁾
 A bill drawn up on the basis of this report and Sir Richard Onslow⁽²⁾ and Sir Rowland Gwynne,⁽³⁾ both Whigs with some standing amongst country members, were able to pilot the bill through the Commons for the government. The aims of the bill were declared in debate to be twofold: it was designed to create a list of sailors and to assure for those maimed in service or too old to serve longer some form of security.⁽⁴⁾ The threat of French invasion was sufficiently strong to make the Commons alive to the necessity of a strong and loyal force of sailors. Hardly any issue connected with the navy had been the subject of more pamphlets or, thanks to the activities of the press-gangs, been brought to the attention of individual members so vividly. Presumably for these reasons the passing of the bill has left no record of sharp debate.

Clause IV was the basis of the act. By this clause it was established that seamen between the ages of 18 and 50 years might register without charge at the Navy Office or offices to be established. These

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 2/363 ff. 120-6.

(2) Sir Richard Onslow, M.P. Surrey. He had been Commissioner for Admiralty 1691-3, see below p.386.

(3) M.P. for Brecknockshire.

(4) L'Hermitage Dispatch, 31 Jan. 1696, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 QQ f.232.

registered seamen were to receive £2 a year as a bounty and were to be further encouraged by favourable treatment in promotion and in acceptance at Greenwich Hospital of themselves or their dependants. They were to be allowed the privilege of assigning two out of each six months' pay to their dependants while serving abroad. They were also to receive a double share of prizes and to be exempt from minor civil offices. Participation in these privileges was limited to 'capable' seamen, a definition that included 'watermen, fishermen, lightermen, bargemen and keelmen.' The wording of the act implied that the privileges were being extended to an elite group whose service was vital to the nation. Another indication of this attitude was the limitation on number: the registration was to be 'in course' and was limited to 30,000. In the event of war the navy would draw from this force as many seamen as it needed. The number was of some significance. It implied that the authorities assumed a force of English sailors in excess of this and assumed also that 30,000 trained sailors would be enough or more than enough for the navy. Since 1694 parliament had regularly voted 40,000 men; there was still to be a place for landsmen.

The act included penalties for evasion but the main tenor was of encouragement. As well as the benefits mentioned above, any one who wished to learn the trade of the sea was granted two years' freedom from the press, a

lucrative privilege if one went to school on a collier, provided the seaman apprentice could produce two responsible people to swear he was a landsman and not a sailor. Any person who recruited two seamen and caused them to register was to be given freedom from the press himself. It was also ordered that all merchant seamen should contribute sixpence a month from their wages towards the cost of Greenwich Hospital. In return the facilities of the hospital were to be available to them. (1)

The act was an impressive and generous piece of legislation. It did much to remove the grievances that had antagonised the professional sailor in naval service. It would save time and money by giving the government control over a large body of sailors and make the press largely irrelevant. Merchants with the remainder of the seamen and their money, would be able to organise their trade without the disruption of press or embargo. On paper it did provide a solution to all the problems of manning that had plagued nation and navy.

A brisk attempt was made to make the act effective. The Lords Justices ensured that the Commissioners of Admiralty were aware of their responsibility and of the need for prompt action. (2) While a Register Office and a

(1) See below p. 384.

(2) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1696, 212-3, 261.

staff to operate the new law were being organised Customs House officers were to be held responsible for any immediate action.⁽¹⁾ Four commissioners were appointed in May to organise the work of the Registry and by the end of July their administrative plans were complete.⁽²⁾ Preparations for the return of the fleet in the autumn of 1696 were well organised. Proclamations and summaries of the act were printed and posted, and captains of all ships returning to port were ordered to read one of these summaries to their crews.⁽³⁾ The act required that each seaman who registered should present two certificates of his place of abode signed by a J.P. Stamped letters of attorney had been prepared so that seamen who wished to register could be freely supplied with two of these forms and quantities of them distributed to the homecoming ships. Despite great administrative difficulties,⁽⁴⁾ especially over the collection of the monthly sixpences from merchant sailors, and doubts about the meaning of the act, even to the extent of queries as to whether commissioned and warrant officers were permitted to register,⁽⁵⁾ the

(1) Ibid. 1696, 299.

(2) Mathew Aylmer, George Byng, John Hill and Thomas Baker. P.R.O. Adm. 1/3997, 8 May 1696; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1696, 303.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3997, 8 Aug. 14 Aug. 1696.

(4) Memoirs relating to Lord Torrington, ed. J.K. Laughton (1889) 79.

(5) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3997, 23 July, 14 Oct. 1696.

Commissioners for the Registry Office had worked efficiently. Moreover, they were optimistic; one of their worries had been that by registering warrant officers wrongfully they might deprive a seaman of his place in the fortunate 30,000.⁽¹⁾ By 17 November they had registered 3,801.⁽²⁾

Now difficulties began to multiply. Officials of the Cinque Ports claimed that any attempt to register seamen within their jurisdiction was a breach of their ancient privileges, and prevented officers of the Registry Office from working.⁽³⁾ More seriously, the favour with which some sailors had viewed the scheme was seriously prejudiced when they discovered that registration did not protect them from the injustices of naval service, particularly turnovers.⁽⁴⁾ Captain Henry Robinson of H.M.S. Hampton Court wrote a long letter of complaint to the Commissioners of the Registry Office. Firstly, he complained that only fifty stamped forms of attorney had been supplied to his ship when he could have used two hundred. Secondly, he reported that now some of the

(1) Ibid. 1/3997, 14 Oct 1696.

(2) Ibid. 1/3997, 17 Nov. 1696.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3579, 26 Oct. 1696; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1697, 28.

(4) For turnovers see below pp. 457-60.

registered seamen had been turned over and the result of this on the rest of his crew was for them to declare,

'they'll be damned before they will be registered and others that is registered swears they'll burn their certificates.'⁽¹⁾

One marginally literate group of registered seamen was so moved by the injustice of being turned over that they composed their own letter of complaint, a labour that to judge from the appearance of the letter must have annoyed them almost as much as being turned over.⁽²⁾ Another weakness became apparent on 23 January 1697. On that day was reported the first instance of the abuse of a Register certificate to escape the press gang. A registered sailor in hospital had loaned his certificate to a friend and there was no penalty clause in the act that might be used to punish him.⁽³⁾ Other instances soon followed.

On 2 December 1696 the House of Lords demanded from the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty an account of the working of the Registry Act.⁽⁴⁾ The reply came on 10 December and the Lords were told that 4,656 men had registered, but that 911 of them were commissioned or warrant officers.⁽⁵⁾ Included in the reply was a list of

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3997, 18 Dec. 1696.

(2) Ibid. 1/3997, 15 Jan. 1697.

(3) Ibid. 1/3997, 23 Jan. 8 Feb. 1697.

(4) L.J.XVI, 28-9.

(5) H.M.C. H.L. 1695-7, 341.

obstructions that were hindering the working of the act: they included doubts over the provision of hospital treatment, difficulties in the collection of sixpences from merchant seamen, the necessity of two certificates of abode from each seaman, and difficulties over the age limit and rank of those who wished to register. An act was passed clarifying the doubtful points and including a penalty for all who loaned or sold their certificate of registration.⁽¹⁾ The offender was to have his name struck from the register.

Even with this reinforcing legislation the Registry failed. The reasons are many. The need to solve a problem decided the timing of the act but to inaugurate a major reform after seven years of war had done much to alienate the sailor from naval service, was not favourable to its success. Far more important than timing was the ineffectiveness of the act. Most important, and fundamentally damning, the bounty for registration was not paid.⁽²⁾ Regular and continued payment over a long period might have created confidence. As it was, payment

(1) 8 & 9 Wm. III c 23.

(2) C.J. XIII, 131; The Case of the Registered Seamen (c. 1700); J. Dennis, An Essay on the Navy (1702) 37; An Historical and Political Treatise of the Navy (1703) 9.

was irregular and for some, non-existent. The 'encouraging' reforms of the act - the assigning of money, prompt pay for dependants, favourable treatment at Greenwich, at turnovers, in promotion - were never carried out.⁽¹⁾

The responsibility for the failure of the act is widely diffused. Some of it belonged to parliament in that it did not specifically allocate money for the upkeep of the scheme. Although the House of Commons was definitely informed of this weakness, the financing of the Registry was left to the Treasurer of the Navy and the Navy Board.⁽²⁾ The latter had many pressing claims on the money at its disposal, and all these claims were for services much more obviously the responsibility of the Navy Board. The reluctance of a hard pressed organisation to spare money for a new, unwanted and unsupported spending unit is understandable; so is the Board's determination to avoid the work and responsibility involved.⁽³⁾ Yet it alone had the experience, organisation and records necessary to make the Register work efficiently. With the

(1) J. Dennis, *op.cit.* 37; Tack About (1703) 5-6; Inquiry into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages (1707), Harleian Miscellany (1810) XI, 19.

(2) C.J.XIII, 131.

(3) H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I, 291; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/102 ff. 275-6.

economy necessary to a peacetime establishment, the merging of the responsibilities of Sick and Wounded and Registry Offices into one authority weakened the status and efficiency of the new Registry.⁽¹⁾ No authority superior to the Navy Board or Registry Office applied the consistent administrative pressure that might have overcome the difficulties. Administratively the Registry officials faced many problems. Few of the sailors were householders.⁽²⁾ To keep a check on the whereabouts of a largely mobile group, which was the essence of the act, was beyond the administrative capacity of the time.

As well as these difficulties of finance, lack of co-operation from the Navy Board, and administration, the Registry faced some positive hostility. The Watermen of London had consistently opposed the scheme.⁽³⁾ It was too likely to cause a curtailment of their own Company's privileges and lead to a tighter control of all seamen. Despite the voluntary nature of the act, the King ordered all those employed on the Thames, including his own oarsmen, to register. They disobeyed and fought a wordy war against the Registry.

(1) C.J.XIII, 131.

(2) G. St. Lo, England's Safety (1693), Somers Tracts (1814) XI, 59.

(3) C.J.XI, 387, 392; L'Hermitage Dispatch, B.M. Addit. MSS. 17,677 QQ f.219.

'His Majesty's Watermen upon meeting with any others who have registered themselves do commonly call them slavish dogs with diverse other reproachful words not only to the great discouragement of them but preventing others to register themselves.'⁽¹⁾

The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports encouraged resistance to officials of the Register Office within his jurisdiction despite the wording of the Register Act and the opinion of the Solicitor General.⁽²⁾ In the maritime parishes registered sailors who legally claimed their right to exemption from minor parish office were not popular with other parishioners or the local J.P. Despite their legal justification several registered seamen were successfully prosecuted for their refusal to stand their turn of 'watch and ward.'⁽³⁾ Merchants were unlikely to support a scheme which by increasing government control over seamen lessened their own chance of securing the men they needed.⁽⁴⁾ To some the restriction of individual freedom and the French ancestry of the scheme

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 7/334 f.64.

(2) Ibid. 1/3997, 29 April 1698; 7/333 f 253.

(3) Ibid. 7/334, 21 Oct. 1698.

(4) The Norris Papers, ed. T. Heywood, (Chetham Society IX 1846) 147.

were sufficient grounds for opposition but it is likely that more selfish motives are hidden behind the frequent attacks on the Register ostensibly for these reasons.⁽¹⁾

By 1699 some were convinced that the act was a failure.⁽²⁾ Parliament, however, retained its faith in it for several more years. In December 1697, when the Commons had been considering the expenses of the navy in order to economise as much as was possible, the Register Office had been retained and a vote on its continuation passed by a good majority.⁽³⁾ Realisation that the act was ineffective was gradual and reluctant. Sporadic interest in the accounts and the numbers of men registered demonstrated the failure,⁽⁴⁾ as did the immediate manning problem at the outbreak of the War of Spanish Succession. It was not until 1710 that parliament could bring itself to repeal an act that had failed, and produced not sailors but 'much charge, vexation and trouble.'⁽⁵⁾

(1) Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 360; Tack About (1703)1; An Inquiry into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages (1707), Harleian Miscellany (1810) XI, 19; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1698, 129.

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3997, 2 Jan. 1699.

(3) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1698, 129.

(4) C.J.XIII, 369; *ibid.* XIV, 102; *ibid.* XVI, 28, 96.

(5) 9 Anne c 15, Clause lxiv; see above p.161.

Peace solved the problem of manning. The number of men to retain in service might have become an issue in an economy-minded parliament but the security represented by a strong navy seems to have checked debate on this issue in 1697. On 17 December the House of Commons accepted the number of 10,000 men for the peacetime navy.⁽¹⁾ This was enough for sixty men of war and considerably stronger than the navy in peace before 1688.⁽²⁾ Parliament would apparently have been ready to accept a navy of 12,000 men.⁽³⁾ The memory of past emergencies that made the need for a strong navy acceptable in 1697 faded in the faction fights of the next two sessions of parliament. The Whig leaders of the ministry were divided amongst themselves and unable to control their followers in the Commons, much less the ordinary members, who in peace had no external threat to check their country animosity against William's government.⁽⁴⁾ This animosity was exploited by the political opponents of the government. In 1698, when the provision of two marine

(1) C.J.XII, 13; Luttrell IV, 320; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1697, 516, 518.

(2) See above p. 325.

(3) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1697, 516, 518; Luttrell IV, 320.

(4) S.B. Baxter, William III (1966) 360-4; 374-7; D. Ogg, England in the Reigns of James II and William III (1963) 440-4.

regiments was debated, these opponents and the Country members claimed that they represented an indirect means of increasing the number of men already voted and that they were a threat to the liberty of the nation because they were as much soldiers as sailors. The contribution marines made to the navy was vigorously described by Sir Robert Rich, Colonel Churchill and Sir Richard Onslow, with such efficiency that the marines were accepted by the Commons.⁽¹⁾

Yet the marines could be used as soldiers or sailors and as such appeared to many to represent a threat to English liberty. In 1699 the international situation was threatening enough for the Commons to debate whether 12,000 or 15,000 men were necessary for the navy and to decide by 189 to 184 on the higher figure.⁽²⁾ Then, by a debate on whether to include the words 'for the sea service' in this provision, a proposal that was defeated by nine votes, they confined the 15,000 to seamen and allowed no marines.⁽³⁾ The tactical efficiency of the navy was sacrificed to political fears. Annoying though this defeat was to the government, the number of men voted was

(1) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1698, 129. Rich is considered above p. 56 Churchill above p. 245 and Onslow below p. 386.

(2) Vernon Letters II, 246-8; C.J.XII, 517-8; Luttrell IV, 484.

(3) C.J.XII, 518; Letters of William III and Louis XIV, 1697-1700, ed. P. Grimblot (1848) II, 291; Luttrell IV, 485, 479; Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. XVI f.18.

generous, and daunting to the French.⁽¹⁾ By the end of 1699 the international situation, that is, the health of the King of Spain, had improved. The government hoped for a navy of 10,000 men: it obtained 7,000.⁽²⁾ }

Two other aspects of the peacetime years are worthy of note. Parliament continued its traditional methods of 'breeding' seamen. By 'An Act to encourage trade with Newfoundland' one man in every five on a Newfoundland ship had to be a landsman, who would by experience become a seaman.⁽³⁾ There were also acts encouraging the Africa trade and one improving the administration of Thames watermen and lightermen. The other interesting aspect of parliamentary activity in the years of peace is the frequent demands made by the Commons for information about the navy. Several factors must have contributed to this thirst for statistical details but the threatening international situation, and a desire for assurance about the navy's state of readiness, and a hope that such returns would provide material for political attacks on the government, must have been amongst the most important. There is no other period between 1688 and 1714 in which the Commons received more

(1) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1699-1700, 67; Letters of William III and Louis XIV, 1697-1700, op.cit. II, 299. Burnet III, 244.

(2) Vernon Letters II, 390.

(3) 10 & 11 Wm. III c 14.

detailed information about the structure, cost, deployment and strength of the navy.⁽¹⁾

War nearly came in 1701. In February 30,000 men were voted for the navy. Lists of the ships and men available were quickly compiled for both Houses of Parliament.⁽²⁾ A detailed and anxious check was kept on the slow increase of men. The King was provided with weekly lists showing the increase.⁽³⁾ By May it was obvious that the French were not preparing for war and many men were disbanded, most of them without pay.⁽⁴⁾ The crisis had revived, in some, concern for the supply of sailors. Burchett, as Secretary for the Navy, apparently on his own initiative, secured the co-operation of the customs officials in an attempt to find out the number of English sailors.⁽⁵⁾ The investigation was not sufficiently advanced to survive when war came again.

(1) C.J.XII, 369-73; *ibid.* XII, 381-5; *ibid.* XIII, 114-6; *ibid.* XIII, 339-343; *ibid.* XIII, 348-9; *ibid.* XIII, 368-72; *ibid.* XIII, 671-6; Luttrell IV, 594.

(2) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1700-2, 296, 299-302; H.M.C. H.L. IV, 160.

(3) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1700-2, 239, 240, 242, 267, 270, 273, 277, 283, 291-2, 294.

(4) Luttrell V, 46.

(5) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3863, 9 Feb. 1702.

(ii)

1702-1714

War had been likely in 1701; it was imminent at the beginning of 1702. Parliament showed its appreciation of the situation by voting 40,000 men for sea service on 9 January 1702.⁽¹⁾ The routine proclamation asking for seamen had been issued a day earlier.⁽²⁾ Magistrates and others in the inland counties and Ireland were circularised in February.⁽³⁾ But the men were slow in mustering. Experience of the last war was too fresh in the minds of officials, officers and men. Benbow expressed this feeling in a letter to Vernon as he worked to fill 389 vacancies in his squadron against the apathy or obstruction of the civilian authorities.⁽⁴⁾

On 2 May 1702 came the formal declaration of war and an immediate embargo.⁽⁵⁾ Cargoes rotted while the press gangs hunted for sailors, respecting neither privilege

(1) Luttrell V, 128; C.J.XIII, 665.

(2) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1700-2, 485.

(3) Ibid. 1700-2, 259; P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 11 Feb. 1702.

(4) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1700-2, 263.

(5) Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series ed. W.L. Grant and J. Munro (1910) II, 394.

nor protection.⁽¹⁾ Aggressive groups of potential naval seamen fought off the press gangs; some were spared the necessity of fighting by the protection of the very officials who should have helped the press.⁽²⁾ The unfortunates and the weak - Worcester provided two lepers and 'other aged and infirm'⁽³⁾ - trudged under guard to the ports. There were not enough even with such second rate recruits.⁽⁴⁾ Once the squadrons had been dispatched, one to Cadiz and the Mediterranean, one under Leake to Newfoundland, one to the West Indies,⁽⁵⁾ there were ships left that could have been used to defend the coast but not enough men to fill them.⁽⁶⁾

The difficulties of the press gangs rather than the complaints of the merchants seem to have brought an end to the embargo. On 9 June the Lord High Admiral petitioned that it be lifted as it was driving sailors into hiding.⁽⁷⁾

- (1) C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 51, 54, 81; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3593, 29 May 1702.
- (2) Ibid. 2/365, 12 June 1702; P.R.O. S.P. 42/6, f.248.
- (3) C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 199-200.
- (4) See Appendix III.
- (5) J.H. Owen, War at Sea under Queen Anne (1938) 72-3; C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 49.
- (6) Ibid. Anne I, 151; P.R.O. Adm. 2/365; 12 June 1702.
- (7) P.R.O. S.P. 42/6 f.276.

Lowther gave the reasons for the failure of embargo:

'the high wages offered in war time always bring out men whom neither the press gang masters nor the civil magistrates can find. When I was in the Admiralty we always thought that the best way to get men was to keep the coast trade open and get men as they came to the ports.'⁽¹⁾

The Prince's Council was already considering ways of manning the fleet in 1703. It was calculated that if the fleet were manned to the highest complement, there would be a need for 53,806 men.⁽²⁾ The meaningless nature of such a figure is proved by the way in which the Council, undeterred by the vast discrepancy between it and the 30,973 men mustered for 1702,⁽³⁾ proceeded to advise the Queen on how to man the navy for 1703. The series of long memorials the Council presented neither contain any new ideas nor doubt that the navy will find enough men.⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 89; cf. B.M. Addit. MSS. 34, 350 f.3.
- (2) C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 406.
- (3) See Appendix III.
- (4) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 9 Dec. 12 Dec, 24 Dec. 1702, 5 Feb. 1703; *ibid.* 3/17, 12 Dec. 1702; *ibid.* S.P. 42/6 f.480, 42/7 f. 12; *The Journal of Sir John Rooke*, ed. O. Browning (N.R.S. 1897) 252.

While these matters were being discussed parliament had assembled on 20 October 1702. It rapidly resolved on 40,000 men for naval service in 1703⁽¹⁾ but not before it had discussed the high price of coals in the London area. The reasons for such prices were high wages, agreements between colliery owners and London lightermen, and the embargo. The Commons resolved that it was necessary 'to allot a competent number of seamen to the colliers, press free, and to have a competent number of ships appointed for convoys and cruisers.'⁽²⁾ The resolution was incorporated as a bill, which happily for the navy did not go beyond the first reading and thus a major source of recruits was preserved.⁽³⁾ Another provision had some bearing on the problem of manning. In this session and for the next few years the Commons made financial provision for Regiments for the Sea Service which were to be maintained on army funds. These regiments were apparently to provide a striking force for any descent on enemy territory.⁽⁴⁾ Such a policy would have been

(1) C.J. XIV, 11; Luttrell V, 255.

(2) C.J. XIV, 19.

(3) Ibid. XIV, 63.

(4) Luttrell V, 487.

congenial to, and was possibly inspired by, the leading Tory statesmen of Anne's first Ministry, particularly Rochester and Nottingham.⁽¹⁾ These troops could have provided cheap and unskilled labour aboard naval ships but in practice they became garrison troops, especially in the West Indies. Here they were lavishly used to supplement ships' crews weakened by disease.⁽²⁾

1703 was not an easy year for manning. An attempt to make merchants in the overseas trades provide men for the navy before their ships could obtain clearance from English ports failed.⁽³⁾ Moreover the navy lost many men 'discharged dead' although no major fleet action was fought. Some died from the cramped conditions that came from using men of war as troop transports and allowed disease to flourish.⁽⁴⁾ Martin reported 1,500 deaths in the Mediterranean squadron⁽⁵⁾ (as opposed to 614 in 1702).⁽⁶⁾ Whetstone lost 844 in the West Indies from death or desertion.⁽⁷⁾ The Great Storm cost the nation 1,519 naval

(1) See above p. 24.

(2) C.T.B. XX Pt. II 7 fn. 9 fn.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 3/18, 6 March, 18 March, 1703; *ibid.* 7/336, 19 March 1703.

(4) C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 532.

(5) J.J. Keevil, *Medicine and the Navy 1200-1900* (1958) II, 213.

(6) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3595, 22 Jan. 1703.

(7) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1702-3, 169.

seamen.⁽¹⁾ The very abilities of the English seamen were further weakening manpower resources; in Russia Czar Peter was conscripting one man in nine of English crews for service in his own ships.⁽²⁾ Worst of all in some ways, the desertion rate appears to have been high, although this can only be tentatively deduced from the variation between the numbers of men borne and mustered.⁽³⁾ At the end of the year there came the usual consideration of the manning situation. When consulted, the members of the Navy Board returned what was, for them, a stock answer. Any problems were in their opinion a direct result of an unhappy departure from the 'ancient rules' of the navy and they cited twenty earlier letters that elaborated this conclusion.⁽⁴⁾ The result of the deliberations between the Navy Board and the Prince's Council was a pessimistic memorial to the Queen blaming the high wages offered by merchants for the difficulties but offering no constructive or original suggestions for their solution.⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) Life of Captain Stephen Martin, ed. C.R. Markham, (N.R.S. 1895) 73 fn.
- (2) P.R.O. Adm. 1/1436, 11 Aug. 1703.
- (3) See Appendix III.
- (4) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3579, 4 Nov. 19 Nov. 1703; *ibid.* 3/19, 16 Nov. 1703.
- (5) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 20 Nov. 1703.

Parliament met on 9 November 1703 and the Queen's speech contained the words

'I heartily wish some easy, and less chargeable method could be found for the speedy and effectual manning of the fleet.'⁽¹⁾

The naval authorities had offered no suggestions; the Register Act had failed; in effect the government was asking for the advice of both Houses of Parliament. At the same time as this advice was requested the government was considering methods of manning that it could itself recommend to parliament during the session.

The 'chargeable' nature of manning, as far as it had penalised trade, had been evident, if incalculable, for many years. On a lower level the cost of obtaining men for the navy was high in terms of money. In 1698 St. Lo had calculated that the total cost of manning in a war year was £36,003. 10. Od.⁽²⁾ This sum was spent in paying Vice Admirals of counties for their contribution in men, paying captains a fixed sum according to the rate of their ship, and for the 130 strong fleet of pressing tenders.

(1) C.J. XIV, 211.

(2) G. St. Lo, England's Interest (1698) 12-15.

The rest of the sum was spent on bounties, on reimbursing the Watermen of London for transporting their quota of men, and on various smaller accounts. The number of pressing tenders was probably rather exaggerated.⁽¹⁾ Otherwise the estimate seems to have been accurate and St. Lo's statement was certainly the one most readily available to the public. The best confirmation of his estimate was given in a Navy Board letter to the Prince's Council in July 1706.⁽²⁾ The average cost of manning over the three years 1703-5 was about £25,000. In December 1707 some aspects of manning costs were given in greater detail in a Navy Board letter to Burchett.⁽³⁾ The letter showed that in 1702, 1703 and 1705 the navy had received 308 men from the Lord Lieutenants and Vice Admirals of the counties.⁽⁴⁾ The average cost of the men obtained from this source, usually amongst the worst obtained, was £1. 13. Od. Such men were expensive, and in general the Queen's epithet 'chargeable' was well chosen.

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3604, 6 April 1706.

(2) Ibid. 1/3605, 27 July 1706.

(3) Ibid. 1/3608, 24 Dec. 1707.

(4) Cf. C.T.B. XXI Pt. II 342; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3604, 6 Jan. 1706.

The Commons considered manning as a result of the Queen's speech and a committee was formed under Conyers.⁽¹⁾ The deliberations of this committee on 27 November and 4 December 1703 are of very great interest for any consideration of naval matters in Anne's reign because notes of these discussions survive in the Sergison Papers at Greenwich.⁽²⁾ They are important not only because of the information they contain but also because they reveal an understanding and knowledge of the problems of naval manning far greater than could be assumed from other sources. They show too the way in which party attitudes coloured even such an apparently neutral topic as manning. The way in which the government, particularly in the person of Harley, shaped the discussion and directed it towards legislation would in its own right make these notes of value.

(1) C.J.XIV, 240; Luttrell V, 363. Thomas Conyers, M.P. for Durham and equerry to Prince George, the Lord High Admiral.

(2) The notes are printed in Queen Anne's Navy, 184-8. However, the transcripts here printed are neither complete nor always accurate and the account of the discussions given in the following pages is based on the original source, N.M.M. Sergison, Ser/103 ff.450-6.

Twenty-one members of the committee were recorded as speaking on these two days. One, John Smith, spoke four times and five of them twice.⁽¹⁾ Most of the speakers can be identified with a political party or occupational group.

The five members of the Court group contributed ten speeches. Obviously they attempted to direct the discussion and among them they suggested various solutions to the problems of manning. Smith, who opened the debate on both days, was a Whig, but a Whig who was already closely associated with the government in the person of Godolphin.⁽²⁾ As one of a group who earned the title of 'Lord Treasurer's Whigs', he was later to become Speaker and Chancellor of the Exchequer. His obvious task of directing discussion, suggesting issues and defining the problems, was the sort of parliamentary exercise that was to qualify him for this later promotion. He was supported by two speeches from James Brydges, another Whig who had close associations with Godolphin.⁽³⁾ Court

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- (1) Brydges, Harley, Heathcote, Manley and Moore spoke twice.
- (2) John Smith, M.P. for Andover.
- (3) James Brydges, M.P. for Hereford, later first Duke of Chandos. He was a member of the Prince's Council, G.F. James and J.J. Sutherland Shaw, Admiralty Administration and Personnel 1619-1714, B.I.H.R.XIV (1936-7) 23. He frequently left meetings of the Prince's Council at this time in order to attend parliament, P.R.O. Adm. 3/19, 24 Nov. 1703.

opinion was expressed most cogently by Robert Harley, the Speaker of the House.⁽¹⁾ He it was who most tersely summarised the issues before the House as being concern for manning in the future, efficient manning of the fleet in the present, and the retention of the good will of the sailors by fair treatment. Lowndes, the Secretary to the Treasury,⁽²⁾ and Sir Charles Hedges, Secretary of State, also spoke.⁽³⁾ Another member, 'Clerke', is also recorded as speaking. As there was no member of the House with this name it was probably George Clarke, Secretary to Prince George and Joint Secretary to the Prince's Council.⁽⁴⁾ No details are given of his speech.

The impression given by the Court speakers is that they were attempting to assess the opinion of the House. Smith, in the first speech, suggested that the chief object of the debate was to provide information and that there need not be a resolution. The first three Court speakers

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- (1) M.P. for Radnor, later first Earl of Oxford. He, a moderate Tory, was working in close concert with Godolphin.
 - (2) William Lowndes, M.P. for Seaford.
 - (3) Sir Charles Hedges, M.P. for Malmesbury.
 - (4) George Clarke, M.P. for Winchelsea.

emphasised how much had already been done to encourage sailors, an emphasis that was presumably necessary because any incautious comment on naval matters might be interpreted as criticism of the Lord High Admiral. The tentative nature of the discussion, particularly on the first day, can be seen in the way in which Court speakers suggested possible methods of solving manning problems - amendment of the Navigation Acts to allow the employment of more foreign sailors, better pay for naval seamen, limitation of the pay of merchant sailors, use of parish poor, use of informers to procure seamen. The Court speakers did not act in complete concert. They disagreed amongst themselves even on the question of whether or not there were enough sailors.⁽¹⁾ Smith's statement in his opening speech on the second day recommending the greater use of foreign seamen was opposed in the next speech by Harley. The Court had made no attempt to brief or employ those flag officers, like Rooke or Churchill, who were members of the House. Their absence was noted by Onslow.⁽²⁾

Six of the speakers were Tories, all of whom were associated with the person and policies of Sir Edward

(1) Brydges maintained there were enough sailors for navy and mercantile marine; Lowndes disagreed.

(2) See below p. 386.

Seymour. Technically Seymour was a Court member; he held office as Comptroller of the Household and he was at this time the senior Tory member in the Commons. His status in the House came from long political experience, strongly expressed Tory principles, and considerable electoral influence in South West England. His contacts in this area and with merchants, and his affectation of nautical manners, made his contribution to discussion a potentially valuable one.⁽¹⁾ One of his associates, Sir Jacob Bankes,⁽²⁾ was the only member with experience as a naval officer to speak during the two days of debate. The other Tories, all of whom frequently supported Seymour in the Commons, were Sir Christopher Musgrave, Jack Howe, John Manley and Francis Scobell.⁽³⁾

Although Seymour was an office holder he was by November 1703 already identified, by his violent speeches in the Commons, as a leader of opposition to some of the members of Anne's government. It was a government, in his opinion, insufficiently Tory in its policies and excessively dominated by moderates and Godolphin and

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- (1) G. Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (1967) 169, 271, 275. He was M.P. for Exeter.
- (2) Sir Jacob Bankes, M.P. for Minehead, Charnock II, 306.
- (3) Musgrave was M.P. for Totnes. John Grubham Howe, M.P. for Gloucestershire, was usually known as 'Jack' Howe. There were four Howes in the 1702 parliament. Jack was the most vocal and an extreme Tory. The speech of the Howe in the debate on manning is in keeping with such a character. Manley was M.P. for Bossiney and Scobell M.P. for Grampound.

Marlborough.⁽¹⁾ Certainly there is little evidence in his speech or the speeches of his associates on 27 November and 4 December 1703 of any statesmanship or co-operation with the Court. The two most sensible suggestions to come from them were one by Seymour that ways of encouraging sailors should concentrate more on care for their families, and Musgrave's suggestion that it would be possible to work out the number of merchant seamen from the monthly contributions of sixpence they were required by law to make to Greenwich Hospital.⁽²⁾ Much of the rest of these Tory speeches consisted of cheap party invective that contained nothing constructive. Seymour himself stated that there was no real shortage of seamen but that where there were apparent shortages

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- (1) G. Holmes *op.cit.* 73, 90, 195-6, 275-6; K. Feiling *op.cit.* 369-70.
- (2) By the Registry Act; see above p. 358. Musgrave was unduly optimistic in thinking that either the compliance of merchant seamen with the law or the administrative capabilities of the officials at Greenwich would have made it possible to deduce the numbers of merchant seamen. There has been a modern attempt to use the figures of monthly contributions as a measure of trade, R. Davis, *Seamen's Sixpences: An Index of Commercial Activity 1697-1828*, *Economica N.S.* XXIII (1956) 328-339.

this was because merchants monopolised the supply. Bankes supported him.⁽¹⁾ Almost inevitably it was Heathcote who answered this charge.⁽²⁾ Howe suggested that means should be devised whereby gamesters and servants could be mustered. This and several of the points made in other Tory speeches were calculated to appeal to Country members.⁽³⁾

Seven merchants spoke in the debates, a very high proportion of the merchants in the House.⁽⁴⁾ Their speeches taken together are an impressive example of the articulate and informed contribution they as a group could make to parliamentary debate. The seven were Sir Francis Child, Sir Robert Clayton, Sir Thomas Davall, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, Arthur Moore, John Pery and Sir Charles Turner.⁽⁵⁾ Among them they represented very considerable

- (1) There is slight evidence that merchants did conceal seamen for their own use, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3615, 29 Jan. 1711; Hudson's Bay Record Society, Letters Outward 1688-1696, ed. E.E. Rich et al. (1957) xxiii.
- (2) See above p. 230.
- (3) J.J. Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth Century England* (1956) 2-5.
- (4) See above p. 224.
- (5) Child was M.P. for London, a banker and one of the biggest buyers of Navy Bills, B.M. Harley Loan 29/40, 6 Sept. 1708. Clayton, M.P. for Bletchingly, had diverse industrial and commercial interests. There was another Clayton in the Commons, William, M.P. for Liverpool. It was probably Sir Robert who spoke. Davall was a London merchant with trading links with the United Provinces. He was M.P. for Harwich. For Sir Gilbert Heathcote, see above p. 230. Arthur Moore, M.P. for Grimsby, had interests in the East Indian and coastal trade. John Pery, M.P. for New Shoreham, traded with the E. Indies and Russia. Turner, M.P. for Lynn, brother-in-law to Robert Walpole, had interests in the Baltic trade.

trading experience and their various opinions have a coherence lacking in the other groups. In their opinion there were not enough seamen and the most useful remedy for this would be to allow more foreigners to serve in English ships. Moore condemned the use of parish poor as seamen. Several of them spoke intelligently and accurately on the reforms necessary to make seamen readier to serve in the navy.

Only two speakers do not fall conveniently into the three groups of Court, Tory and merchant. One was Sir Richard Onslow, a Whig with trading interests and experience as a Commissioner of the Admiralty.⁽¹⁾ His speech was mainly, and rightly, concerned with the evils of turnovers as a deterrent to naval service. The other speaker was Sir Thomas Crosse, a London brewer, who seems to have been Tory in outlook.⁽²⁾

As well as discussing manning the committee consulted expert opinion. Customs officials were asked to provide an accurate estimate of the number of seamen in the country.⁽³⁾ Two members of the committee attended the

(1) He was M.P. for Surrey; see above p. 356.

(2) He was M.P. for Westminster and was later to be a director of the South Sea Company.

(3) P.R.O. C.O. 388.9 Pt. I f.19. Merchants too were consulted, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1702-3, 861.

Prince's Council and the Commissioners for the Navy were ordered to produce proposals for the increase and the encouragement of sailors.⁽¹⁾ The members of the Navy Board were reluctant to comply, insisting that such proposals were properly the responsibility of the Prince's Council.⁽²⁾ None the less they provided the committee with numerous and detailed suggestions for the improvement of manning.⁽³⁾ Their paper on manning was to become the basis of two acts of parliament.⁽⁴⁾ The most important recommendations were that parish children should be apprenticed to the sea and that adults who volunteered as seamen in merchant or coastal trade should be protected from the press. The suggestion that parish children should be used as naval sailors had never been made before by the Navy Board and appears to be totally opposed to their past policy. Numerous suggestions from the Board since early in William's reign had generally recommended a return to the old and successful usage of the navy, particularly annual payment of crews. It seems likely that the suggestions had come from the government by way

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 3/19, 9 Dec. 1703; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/103 f.444.

(2) Ibid. Ser/103 f.445.

(3) Ibid. Ser/103 ff.445-9.

(4) 2 & 3 Anne c 6 and 4 & 5 Anne c 6.

of the Prince's Council⁽¹⁾ but there is no evidence in any of the numerous meetings on manning in 1703 that the Prince's Council had taken the initiative in suggesting parish children as a source of supply.⁽²⁾ Harley had been the first to suggest this scheme, in parliament on 27 November.⁽³⁾ It was an idea that had long been current in pamphlet literature and one likely to be attractive to country gentlemen.⁽⁴⁾ It was an even more attractive idea when Lowndes and Howe, in the discussions of 27 November and 4 December,⁽⁵⁾ increased the potential scope of this non-maritime source by suggesting that 'troublesome men in the parishes' and idlers should also serve. However, it was Harley who gave the idea of exploiting the parishes for the benefit of the navy its clearest definition in these discussions.

The idea, elaborated by the Navy Board, came before the Commons again on 16 December 1703 among twenty-two

- (1) The suggestions might have been put to the Navy Board on 16 November 1703 at one of the rare meetings of Prince's Council and Navy Board. The Prince himself attended this meeting, P.R.O. Adm. 3/19, 16 Nov. 1703.
- (2) See above p. 376.
- (3) Queen Anne's Navy, 185.
- (4) H. Maydman, *Naval Speculations and Maritime Politics* (1691) 242-8.
- (5) Queen Anne's Navy 186-7.

resolutions from the committee on manning.⁽¹⁾ Anthony Hammond, who reported the findings of the committee, was himself a Commissioner for the Navy.⁽²⁾ These resolutions were referred to a new committee, under the chairmanship of Hammond, which consisted of fifty-two named members and all who represented seaports or were merchants.⁽³⁾ A bill, based on the resolutions, passed both Houses rapidly and with no recorded difficulties.⁽⁴⁾

The basic idea of the act was that boys should be apprenticed to the sea. One of Hammond's resolutions proposed that boys who were an expense to their parish should be apprenticed to the sea from 10 to 21 years of age. Demographically this was a sensible proposal. A great proportion, probably nearly a half, of the population of England in the late seventeenth century was under nineteen years of age.⁽⁵⁾ Any legislation based on the age groups from 10 to 21 years of age stood a good

(1) C.J.XIV, 249-50.

(2) Hammond was M.P. for Huntingdon and a Commissioner for the Navy 1702-8.

(3) C.J.XIV, 284.

(4) 2 & 3 Anne c 6; An Act for the Increase of Seamen. C.J.XIV, 282, 299-300, 310, 353, 354; L.J.XVII, 392, 431, 433, 434, 455, 457.

(5) P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (1965) 103.

chance of success. The apprentices were to be liable to pressing only from the age of 17 years and free of payment to Greenwich until that age. All ships were to carry a quota of these boys according to tonnage. A recording and administrative system was to be created to control these recruits and to ensure their eventual entry into the navy. One of the resolutions was a recommendation that instruction in navigation should be encouraged.

The act followed the pattern of the twenty-two resolutions closely. The main amendment had been to raise the age of Greenwich payments and liability to pressing from 17 to 18 years. Ship masters were also to be encouraged in their task of training the boys by being given the right to take the wages of boys taken for naval service if these boys were capable of acting as able seamen. There was an addition to the resolutions. In order to keep the price of coal in London low, it was decided that colliers should be allowed free of the press a master, a mate, a carpenter and one seaman for every hundred tons' burden. This meant practical immunity to the collier of 200 tons. Anyone who pressed a protected member of a collier's crew was to be fined £10. The Lord Mayor of London and the Alderman had attended parliament to complain of collier convoys and pressing in November 1703.⁽¹⁾ As a result of this complaint the protection of

(1) Luttrell V, 360..

collier crews became an ironic addition to the bill on manning. A Newcastle sailor was more valuable to the navy than a parish lad or a vagabond, however sturdy.

No mention was made in the act of the need to encourage education in navigation. This matter had earned separate treatment as the result of a petition by a Lewis Maidwell on 18 December.⁽¹⁾ He asked for permission to found a School of Navigation. A committee was formed to consider his scheme and a bill to establish such a school presented by Lowndes on 2 March 1704. The session ended before the bill could be read a second time.⁽²⁾

This act for the 'increase' of seamen represents a change of government policy and the change is a puzzling one. The act attempted a long term administrative reform which aimed at creating or 'breeding' sailors in the best parliamentary tradition. It was irrelevant to the immediate needs of the navy and to the request in the Queen's speech at the beginning of the session, which was for a more efficient way of manning. The act did not

(1) C.J.XIV, 254.

(2) Ibid. XIV, 365; H.T.A. Basonquet, *The Maritime School at Chelsea*, M.M. VII (1921) 323; see below p. 398.

provide this; the boys to be apprenticed were debarred from naval service until they reached the age of 18 years. The legislation is puzzling because it does not meet the problem and it represents a break with the manning policy under William, when the emphasis was on encouragement rather than the increase of sailors. There does not appear to be any sudden government conviction that there were not enough sailors to man the navy and mercantile marine which would explain the change of policy. The inappropriateness of the act to the needs of the navy is probably best explained by the government's misunderstanding of these needs. The act seems to have owed more to the government than the navy in its inception.⁽¹⁾

The act becomes more understandable when it is seen as merely a part of the parliamentary legislation on manning in this session. At the same time as Hammond's committee was working on the bill for the increase of seamen, the first committee on manning, that with Conyers as chairman, had been working on the problems of manning.⁽²⁾ In the discussions of 27 November and 4 December six speakers had suggested that the merchants should be allowed to employ a greater proportion of foreign

(1) See above p. 376.

(2) See above p. 379.

seamen than the law allowed.⁽¹⁾ A bill suggesting that half the crew of an English ship should be foreigners instead of the quarter hitherto allowed was introduced into the Commons on 27 January 1704.⁽²⁾ Doubtless the arguments used on both sides were similar to those employed in 1690.⁽³⁾ There is some evidence that there was still opposition to increased use of foreigners and that the merchants had hoped for the legal right to more than half a foreign crew,⁽⁴⁾ but no detailed evidence of the debates remains. The bill had passed both Houses by 21 March.⁽⁵⁾

The act for the 'Increase of Seamen' was to become effective on 25 March 1704. On 31 March the Prince's Council met to consider the new act and decided that orders must be given to every captain 'strictly to comply' with the protection of collier seamen.⁽⁶⁾ The next day the Council considered the opinion of its legal adviser,

(1) Heathcote, Howe, Lowndes, Manley, Moore and Smith.

(2) C.J.XIV, 309.

(3) See above p. 338.

(4) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1702-3, 206.

(5) C.J.XIV, 316, 318, 334, 352, 370, 387; L.J.XVII, 478, 481, 503; 2 & 3 Anne c 13.

(6) P.R.O. Adm. 3/19, 31 March 1704. The Prince's Council had met during December 1703 and January 1704 to consider the practical difficulties of manning for the coming year. No new approaches were suggested, P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 10 Dec. 1703, 1 Jan. 1704; *ibid.* 7/550A, 3 Jan. 1703.

Mr. Eltrick, the Councillor for the Admiralty, as to whether the new law protected an experienced sailor who bound himself as an apprentice. Mr. Eltrick was of the opinion that such an evasion of the purpose of the law would not give protection.⁽¹⁾ His learned opinion was almost undoubtedly technically correct but the Prince's Council, in asking for his advice, had shrewdly discovered a practical weakness of the law. Clause XV stated that anyone who apprenticed himself as a sailor was to be free of the press for three years. The aims behind this clause were to encourage landsmen to learn the trade of the sea and to protect youngsters one or two years younger than eighteen who were sent to a ship as apprentices. At eighteen they would have become liable to pressing before their training was complete. By virtue of this clause an experienced sailor claiming ignorance of the sea would on registration as apprentice receive a free protection from the Lord High Admiral. On 14 January 1706 the House of Lords was told of the effect of this on the navy:

'Old men used to manage the colliery, but since the last act they take our best men and not cripples and boys that used to serve them. They, by that act, are empowered to take apprentices for three years. They abuse the

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3667 f.27.

power given them by taking seamen of 30 years of age, and they lend them to merchants and we cannot meddle with them. The colliery used to breed seamen, but now breeds none, and is no nursery to the fleet.'⁽¹⁾

Thus an act intended to improve manning had some serious adverse effects, not only in terms of men lost but perhaps more seriously in the unfairness that enabled some sailors to flaunt security and high wages in the faces of their less astute comrades. On the positive side the act did send an unknown number of boys into service with the navy. The legislative attempt to set an age limit to these recruits was administratively unworkable in the early eighteenth century. Boys must have represented an incalculable proportion of the growing number who signed on for naval service in the later years of Anne. Their presence is vividly but unstatistically recorded by one seaman, who lamented,

'the pestilential inconvenience of pestering up a ship with such swarms of nasty, stinking, blackguard boys.'⁽²⁾

The acts considered above were not the only contribution parliament made to manning in the 1703-4 session. An act was passed which enabled debtors to be

(1) H.M.C. H.L. VI, 387.

(2) B. Slush, *The Navy Royal or a Sea Cook Turn'd Projector* (1709) 39.

freed from prison if they consented to enlist in army or navy.⁽¹⁾ This act was apparently of little use to the navy; most of the debtors chose the army.⁽²⁾ In the House of Lords a far more radical measure was considered. Here a bill for a general and compulsory register of all seamen was discussed. Granted the failure of the existing scheme of registration this was the only logical way in which the state could have controlled the seamen of England. Compulsory registration could have provided the basis for an organised allocation of sailors to navy and mercantile marine. Theoretically, with such an organisation, it would have been possible for each man to serve a fixed period in the navy before being released to enjoy the more lucrative service of merchants or collier owners. The justice of such a scheme would have gone far towards ending the unrest in the navy and the difficulties of manning. In all probability the administration of such a scheme would have been beyond the capacity of any early eighteenth century government but the administrative problem never arose because although the bill passed the Lords it was ignored by the Commons.⁽³⁾ There would certainly have been opposition to

(1) 2 & 3 Anne c.10.

(2) Letters of Capt. W. Aston, P.R.O. 1/1436, 23 May 1704; *ibid.* 7/336, 2 Feb. 1706.

(3) L.J.XVII, 421, 434, 535.

such a radical proposal implying, as it did, sweeping government powers over seamen and an infringement of the right of merchants to hire men as they pleased. There is no doubt that the bill was associated with the Whig Junto in the Lords and it was probably initiated by them. Whig flag officers, such as Byng and Jennings, and Burchett, the Secretary to the Admiralty, supported the scheme.⁽¹⁾ In the early years of Anne's reign the Whigs used their strength in the House of Lords to launch a series of attacks on the government, particularly its handling of naval affairs.⁽²⁾ The vulnerability of the Prince's Council to political attack, both because of its failings and because of the association of Prince George with its policies, was enhanced because, in Orford, the Whig party had a leader in the Lords of great experience and national reputation in naval matters. In the Lords the Whigs could threaten the government and demonstrate their own political strength by an interest in naval matters.⁽³⁾ The political significance of this interest was limited by the presence of a

- (1) H.M.C. H.L. V, 535-44; J. Burchett, A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea (1720); see below pp. 431-2.
- (2) See above p.68.
- (3) See above p.131.

predominantly Tory House of Commons. Thus the bill for a compulsory register was not considered by the Commons in 1704 and when the Lords addressed the Queen on 2 March about a shortage of 6,000 men in the navy, she could afford to return a 'dry' answer and take no action.⁽¹⁾ Her reply was the last reference to manning in a session of parliament that was more concerned with manning than any other between 1688 and 1714.

In the parliamentary session of 1704-5 neither House paid much attention to manning. The Commons voted the usual 40,000 men. Another attempt to establish a School of Navigation failed.⁽²⁾ A select committee of the Lords considered manning but only as one aspect amongst several naval matters. Defoe was questioned by this committee about the scheme for manning he had published in the Review and the House of Lords requested an account of men actually mustered, but naval finance dominated the attention of the House.⁽³⁾

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- (1) L.J.XVII, 466; E. Timberland, History and Proceedings of the House of Lords (1742) II, 71. The address was an expression of party opposition and the figure of 6,000 men short, on which it was based, was meaningless. Any authority on naval matters, such as Orford, would know that many men who had been paid off would soon remuster cf. the figure of 1703, C.S.P. Dom. Anne II, 288-92.
- (2) Proposals Reviv'd, of Establishing, and Supporting a Public School, designed, amongst other Improvements, for the Sea Service (1705). See above p. 391.
- (3) L.J.XVII, 584, 672; H.M.C. H.L.VI, 116, 223-6; see above pp. 131-3.

The recommendations of the senior naval officers for manning in 1705 contained no new suggestions, if their advice that Ireland be exploited for recruits and the army be forced to give up seamen is excepted.⁽¹⁾ A harder attitude is also noticeable. Shovell suggested the ending of the clemency shown to deserters at courts martial.⁽²⁾ A pamphlet by the Marquis of Carmarthen advocated very severe legislative measures.⁽³⁾ Apprenticeship to colliers, marriage to obtain the protection of the title of householder, the holding of minor civil office, the pretended ownership of vessels based upon forged papers - all such devices to evade naval service would have been stopped on his advice. The privileges of the Cinque Ports, the Mint and the Savoy would have been suspended and J.P.s would have been fined for non-co-operation with the naval authorities. There is evidence that the traditional methods of obtaining men were pursued with great vigour and increased efficiency in this year.⁽⁴⁾ Implicit in the actions and suggestions to

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 10 Dec. 1704.

(2) Byng Papers, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1930) I, 65.

(3) K. Osbourne (sic), A Copy of the Marquis of Carmarthen's Method for the Speedy Manning (1705). Peregrine Osborne, later 2nd Duke of Leeds, served in the navy. He became a Rear Admiral in 1697. See above p. 264.

(4) P.R.P. Adm. 1/3608, 24 Dec. 1707; *ibid.* 20/98 Pt. 2. No.. 4869.

do with manning there was still the belief that there were enough sailors; the only reform necessary was to devise a method that would bring them into the navy more efficiently.

This belief seems to have inspired the main item of legislation on manning in the 1705-6 session of parliament, 'An Act for the Encouragement and Increase of Seamen.'⁽¹⁾ This act seems to have been initiated by the naval authorities and to have been presented to the Commons with government backing.⁽²⁾ The number of men actually employed in the navy between 1703 and 1705 had remained obstinately below the numbers for the last war years in William's reign.⁽³⁾ The act sought to remedy those grievances that deterred seamen from remaining in naval service and thus reduce desertion.⁽⁴⁾ Before the bill was considered the Commons gave evidence of their increasing knowledge of the problems of naval manpower by demanding the number of men employed by the navy from November 1704 to November 1705. The figures they received were for crews at highest complements.⁽⁵⁾ The House was sufficiently aware of the

(1) 4 & 5 Anne c 6.

(2) P.R.O. S.P. 42/7, 5 Jan. 1706.

(3) See Appendix III.

(4) The best indication of desertion rates is the discrepancy between numbers of men borne and mustered; see Appendix III.

(5) C.J.XV, 17, 18-20.

inaccuracy of such figures to ask for and get another series of monthly figures, extending this time from January 1702 to December 1704, showing numbers of men borne.⁽¹⁾ On 23 January 1706 the House of Commons gave permission for a bill to be prepared that was not only to encourage seamen but was also to be 'for the better and speedier manning of Her Majesty's Fleet, and for making provision for the widows and orphans of all such and for the support of all such.'⁽²⁾ Seven men were deputed to draft a bill and together they made up the most professional and expert group that had yet been appointed in Anne's reign to draft naval legislation. Six of them were flag officers, the seventh, Henry Paget, was a member of the Prince's Council.⁽³⁾ They were also to consider the repeal of any acts that were ineffectual, presumably a recognition that the Register Act had failed. The bill became popularly known as 'Shovell's Bill' and he presented it to the Commons on 17 February 1706.⁽⁴⁾ The House needed to be constantly reminded of the existence of the bill.⁽⁵⁾ This

(1) Ibid. XV, 112.

(2) Ibid. XV, 107.

(3) The flag officers were Alymer, Byng, Churchill, Jennings, Shovell and Stafford Fairborn. Paget, M.P. for Staffordshire, and three of the officers were of the Prince's Council, Queen Anne's Navy, 11, 355-6.

(4) C.J.XV, 132; Luttrell VI, 23.

(5) C.J.XV, 149, 157, 162, 168, 177, 193, 194-5.

reluctance may be attributed to the fact that it contained suggestions for a general and compulsory registration of all sailors. One merchant at least reported back to his constituency that everything must be done to prevent legislation on these lines by postponing discussion.⁽¹⁾ Luttrell reported that the bill would probably be postponed until the next session.⁽²⁾ Parliament's interest in manning was regained by a speech by Shovell on 11 March. In this he told the Commons that the navy was 17,000 short of its target of 40,000 men, that 6,000 of these were protected but that the navy needed most of the remaining 11,000.⁽³⁾ These were the most frightening figures recorded as having been spoken in the Commons on manning in the reigns of William and Anne. Although Shovell regained the interest of the House, legislation came only at the cost of

- (1) Thomas Johnson, M.P. for Liverpool and a West Indies trader, *The Norris Papers*, ed. T. Heywood (Chetham Society IX 1846) 147.
- (2) Luttrell VI, 23.
- (3) *Ibid.* VI, 25. It is likely that several thousand seamen were protected. The Navy Board, the Commissioners of Customs, Trinity House and Ordnance issued several hundreds of protections each, irrespective of those protected by act of parliament or for the overseas trade, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3604, 6 April, 1706; *ibid.* 1/3607, 8 May 1707; *ibid.* 3/1 f 25; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. III 1697, 167; Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. X ff.46-7.

abandoning the scheme of compulsory registration. By the time the outline of a bill was reported to the House on 14 March 1706 it was an 'encouraging' bill that contained no reference to a registration.⁽¹⁾ This bill was passed to the Lords on 18 March.

The Lords had themselves been considering naval manning. With the permission of the House of Commons Byng, Churchill, Jennings, Shovell and Stafford Fairborne had attended the House of Lords on 14 January.⁽²⁾ They explained the mechanics of manning to the Lords, complained of the high wages offered by merchants and suggested as their remedy that 'the seamen ought to be encouraged.' The protection granted to colliers was also criticised.⁽³⁾ Byng described the benefits of a compulsory register. The House of Lords considered manning again, with Torrington in the chair, when he placed before the committee of the whole House some proposals he and the Prince's Council had considered for improving the 1703 Act for the Increase of Seamen.⁽⁴⁾ The Lords did not take up the subject again until they were called upon to deal with the bill to encourage

(1) C.J.XV, 194-5.

(2) L.J.XVIII, 61.

(3) H.M.C. H.L. VI, 386-7; L.J.XVIII, 55.

(4) H.M.C. H.L. VI, 387.

seamen which came from the Commons a few days before parliament was dissolved. The bill was passed but the Lords showed dissatisfaction with it and perhaps at the haste with which they were compelled to consider it, by appointing a committee. This committee was to draw up an address requesting the Queen to appoint people

'to consider of the most effectual means for manning the fleet, for the encouragement and increase of the number of seamen, and for the restoring and preserving the discipline of the navy.'⁽¹⁾

The committee that drew up this address was predominantly Whig and represents another of their attempts to criticise the government through the navy. The Queen's answer was shortly formal.⁽²⁾ The address and answer are similar to those that closed the session 1703-4.⁽³⁾ Orford, in returning to the Lords from presenting the address, made a speech in which he commented upon the haste with which the act had been passed, and implied a failure on the part of the government and naval administration because it had been necessary

'so late in the year of having resort to the extraordinary assistance of parliament for that purpose.'⁽⁴⁾

(1) L.J.XVIII, 160.

(2) Ibid. XVIII, 160.

(3) See above p. 398.

(4) L.J.XVIII, 161.

Shovell's Bill became law with effect from 25 March 1706. The main reform, contained in clause X, was a declaration that all naval seamen turned over from one ship to serve on another should be paid their wages from the first ship within a month. The rest of the bill is strangely unimpressive, presumably because the main reform, a compulsory register, had been lost in the Commons. The committee of naval officers responsible for drafting the bill had accurately identified turnovers as a major grievance of the seamen but to assume that the reform of this grievance would be sufficient to improve naval recruiting seems to be unduly optimistic.⁽¹⁾ The other reforms were comparatively minor: the 1703 act for the Increase of Seamen was modified by forbidding experienced seamen to apprentice themselves to the collier trade, and masters of ships could now refuse to take parish boys as apprentices below the age of 13 years.⁽²⁾ Severer penalties were introduced for Watermen who hid to evade the press, a measure that reflects the obsession of the naval authorities with this source of men. The procedure whereby men were recruited in the inland counties was improved and an attempt made to win the co-operation of the parish

(1) See below pp. 458-9.

(2) See above pp. 393-4.

constables by paying them £1 for each man secured.⁽¹⁾ Such provisions reflect the annual recommendations of the flag officers on manning. They assume there were sufficient English sailors to man the navy and that changes in the procedure of manning would quickly fill the ships of the fleet.

For 1706, if the ships were to be manned to their highest complement, the navy required more than 50,000 men.⁽²⁾ The usual difficulties, complaints and failures attended attempts to attain even the middle complement.⁽³⁾ Against this, by now common, background George, Prince of Denmark and Lord High Admiral, acted on the address of the Lords suggesting that a bill be prepared that would give some 'extraordinary assistance' to manning.⁽⁴⁾ In April the experts, serving flag officers, Torrington and Orford, were summoned to give George their advice.⁽⁵⁾ They met to consider how to man the fleet, how to increase seamen and to consider how their suggestions should be presented to parliament. To do this the experts asked for the

(1) This provision was ineffective. Men from the inland counties were few and expensive, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3610, 10 Dec. 1708.

(2) C.J.XV, 227.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 19 Feb. 1706; P.R.O. S.P. 42/7, 5 Jan. 1706.

(4) Luttrell VI, 29; see above p. 403.

(5) P.R.O. Adm. 2/365, 30 April, 1706.

information that had been requested in the past. They asked for the numbers of 'seamen, fishermen, watermen, bargemen, lightermen, coalmen and others employing themselves upon water,' also for the tonnage and number of ships.⁽¹⁾ By 29 October the draft of a bill was ready.⁽²⁾ It was, on paper, an answer to all the associated problems of manning and in theory the only logical answer. There was to be a compulsory register of seamen, as had been proposed earlier in Anne's reign.⁽³⁾ The conditions and privileges of registration were to be made so attractive that every seaman, and landman too, would accept enrolment gladly. The men were to be paid a bounty and the Lord High Admiral was to decide what proportion would serve each year in the navy. The administration, documentation and mechanics of the scheme were minutely detailed.

The government made no use of this preparation in the 1706-7 session of parliament. Neither House displayed any interest in manning and apparently the government was not sufficiently worried about it to take the initiative and use the draft bill that was ready. It was not until

(1) Ibid. 7/336, 17 May 1706; C.T.B. XX Pt. III, 675.

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 29 Oct. 1706; H.M.C. H.L. VII 524-6.

(3) See above p.401 and p.402.

the session of 1707-8 that the House of Lords again took up the problems of manning but it did this in such a way as to imply that it had forgotten the earlier address.⁽¹⁾ The House called for papers on the numbers of ships, and of men mustered and turned over, and on 22 December formed a select committee to consider ways of manning the fleet.⁽²⁾ The committee was specifically required to consider how far the protection of collier crews had hindered manning. This committee met on 29 December with Townshend in the chair and called for Byng and Jennings to give evidence. It was an interesting selection of flag officers; both, like Townshend, were Whigs: both of them were supporters of Orford and apparently highly regarded by merchants.⁽³⁾ The proceedings when they attended the committee were opened by a reading of those paragraphs from the 1703 Act for the Increase of Seamen which protected collier seamen.⁽⁴⁾ Byng and Jennings then explained the disastrous effect of these clauses on the navy - how by them the best sailors in England now worked on the colliers, that these colliers,

(1) See above p. 403.

(2) L.J.XVIII, 351-2, 359, 362, 399.

(3) B.M. Addit. MSS. 31, 958 ff.45-9; the evidence of W. Wood, P.R.O. Adm. 1/5114; see below pp. 431-2.

(4) H.M.C. H.L. VII, 522.

which once provided 4-6,000 men, now only provided the navy with 300 men a year. Their criticisms widened in scope when they complained of various authorities protecting 5,000 seamen and that the practice of turn-overs frightened foreigners away from naval service and our own sailors into Dutch employ. The result of these abuses was, in their opinion, that the navy had only 15,000 skilled seamen, and unless matters improved it would only be able to operate effectively for another two years.⁽¹⁾ The two of them were told to consider a bill that would improve the manning situation.⁽²⁾ On 5 January 1708 Jennings presented thirteen proposals to the House of Lords.⁽³⁾ On 7 January Townshend and the committee accepted six of these proposals as the basis of a bill.⁽⁴⁾ Three of the proposals, dealing with excessive protections, the active support of Lord Lieutenants in securing sailors, and a bounty, were not considered worthy of legislation but were to be the subject of an address. Four of them were rejected. Three of these called for an immediate embargo, an act of parliament which would fine anyone who concealed

(1) There is evidence that the proportion of boys and marines amongst crews was causing concern, *Memoirs Relating to Lord Torrington*, ed. J.K. Laughton (Camden Soc. 1889) 171.

(2) H.M.C. H.L. VII, 522.

(3) H.M.C. H.L. VII, 518, 522-3.

(4) L.J.XVIII, 403.

a sailor, and a discontinuation of the practice whereby captains were allowed servants. The fourth of the rejected proposals is the most interesting and one that might have done much to solve the problems of manning. It proposed that the wages given by merchants should be limited to thirty shillings a month and an increase in naval wages to twenty-six shillings a month, with twenty-eight shillings to every quarter gunner, the number of whom was to be greatly increased. This is one of the few occasions between 1688 and 1714 when the possibility of making manning easier by raising the wages of the seaman was suggested. Higher wages and a general registry were probably the only two reforms that individually or together would have made the manning troubles of the entire eighteenth century very much fewer.

The bill based on the six remaining proposals was considered by the Lords in January 1708. It was another of the bills based on the assumptions that some encouragement and fewer protections would solve the problems of manning. Protections for collier seamen and watermen were to be restricted, permanent convoys were to be provided for the collier trade, and no volunteer or foreign seaman was to be turned over.⁽¹⁾ The bill was considered several

(1) L.J.XVIII, 426, 427.

times in committee and read for the third time on 24 January.⁽¹⁾ During the course of the debates reference was made to the earlier address about manning and the draft bill for a general registry was considered and then abandoned.⁽²⁾

In the Commons the bill that had come from the proposals of Byng and Jennings was read for the first time on 26 January and it was agreed by 132 votes to 107 that it should be read a second time.⁽³⁾ On the second reading it was defeated.⁽⁴⁾ The reason for the defeat, according to Vernon, was that it repealed an act made to protect collier seamen.⁽⁵⁾ Certainly the Commons were reluctant to admit faults in their legislation; the maintenance of the Registry Act, despite its admitted failure, is evidence of this. There must, however, have been other reasons for the defeat of this bill although many members representing the East coast ports and London must have been opposed to any measure that might have disrupted the collier trade. The bill was one of the few on naval matters in which the Lords had taken the

(1) Ibid. XVIII, 426, 427, 430, 432, 434, 435; H.M.C. H.L. VII, 518-23, 524-6.

(2) L.J. XVIII, 432.

(3) C.J. XV, 515.

(4) Ibid. XV, 520.

(5) Vernon Letters III, 327. Presumably this was a reference to the act of 1704; see above p. 390.

initiative but antagonism to it for this reason was probably slight. The bill may have seemed to many members of the Commons to be the product of party ambition rather than a considered attempt to solve the problems of naval manning. In this session of parliament the Whig party had made a great effort to win a larger share of the government and this effort involved an attack on the government's conduct of naval affairs, particularly its failure to protect trade.⁽¹⁾ This bill appears to have been part of the Whig attack. It was drafted by a committee which had as chairman one of the Whig leaders, Townshend. It was based on the advice of Whig flag officers, and no attempt had been made to secure the opinion of any of the Prince's Council. Indeed Byng and Jennings had refused to be members of this Council.⁽²⁾ Their proposals contained no suggestion for a general registry although they had advocated such a scheme in 1706.⁽³⁾ This might represent either a change of opinion or political calculation that such a reform was unpopular and therefore inexpedient. The identification of the Prince's Council with such a reform during the debates was

(1) See above pp. 288-97.

(2) See below pp. 431-2.

(3) See above p.402.

possibly a political move to discredit the Council.

The failure of the bill from the Lords was not the only damage naval manning was to sustain in the 1707-8 session of parliament. The London and East Coast colliers had retained their protected position and the American merchants were to improve their trade at the expense of the navy. Sickness in the Americas could gravely weaken naval squadrons and single ships. In order to remain effective or to be sufficiently well manned to manage the return journey to England, men of war frequently had to press men from the colonies they guarded or the merchant ships they were to convoy. They were allowed to press the inhabitants of colonies with the governor's permission although this was rarely and reluctantly given. The alternative, pressing from merchant ships, was allowed in moderation.⁽¹⁾ By the 'Act for the Encouragement of the Trade to America' pressing was forbidden in American waters from 20 January 1708.⁽²⁾ This act too was initiated in the House of Lords and was drafted, organised in both Houses and supported by Whigs. In the Lords Halifax seems to have been the manager

(1) C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 720.

(2) 6 Anne c. 64.

of the bill with help from Jennings and Dolben.⁽¹⁾ In the Commons the committee formed to consider the bill consisted entirely of Whigs but for one neutral merchant.⁽²⁾ In an emergency the act ordered merchant ships to give up one fifth of their crews to the navy.⁽³⁾ It also laid down that twenty foreign ships should be allowed to act as privateers in the Americas, that in American waters English privateers might carry up to three quarters foreign seamen, and that any foreigner who had served two years in a British merchant or naval ship might become a naturalised British subject. The practical ban on pressing reduced the navy in the Americas to impotency. Ships had to return to England as soon as sickness and desertion reduced their crews to near the level necessary to manage the ship homewards.⁽⁴⁾ Not even colonial governors had power to mitigate the effects of the act.⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) See above p.292; H.M.C. H.L. VII 227-8. Dolben was M.P. for Liskeard and a devoted Whig, *The Wentworth Papers* ed. J.J. Cartwright (1883) 73.
- (2) C.J.XV, 454. Alymer, Byng, Dolben, Jennings, Sir Gilbert Heathcote and Sir Richard Onslow were the Whig members of the committee. Heysham was the merchant; see above p. 295.
- (3) 6 Anne c. 64, clause XIII cf. P.R.O. Adm. 3/23, 21 April, 1708.
- (4) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1708-9, 67.
- (5) *Ibid.* 1708-9, 473.

Between 1708 and 1713 the act crippled the operations of the navy in American waters and also, by the immunity conferred upon merchant seamen, made this trade a popular refuge from the press for skilled seamen.⁽¹⁾ Thus the act not only limited the manpower available to the navy but, like the collier trade with its high wages and security, also provided another glaring example of injustice to annoy the naval sailor.

The 'Act for the Encouragement of Trade to America' was parliament's last specific contribution to the problem of manning the fleet. The navy was left to cope with the problem, the recent legislation and the French for the remaining five years of war. The greatest crisis for manning came when the French threatened an invasion of Scotland in 1708. A powerful squadron was quickly mustered to defeat them. The manning was successful, thanks to the popularity and efficiency of Leake and Byng and the opportune arrival of merchant fleets whose crews could be pressed.⁽²⁾

There was no originality about naval manning in the years that followed; the best and considered advice of the

(1) Ibid. 1711-12, 102; The Walker Expedition to Quebec 1711, ed. G.S. Graham (N.R.S. 1953) 316, 357; P.R.O. S.P. 42/8, 24 March 1710; R. Pares, The Manning of the Navy in the West Indies, in The Historian's Business and other Essays, ed. R.H. and E. Humphreys (1961) 190-1.

(2) Burnet IV, 184-5; P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 27 Feb. 1708.

flag officers was that manning should be conducted 'as hath been done some years since.'⁽¹⁾ Thus the traditional methods were followed and apparently with success. Flag officers still complained⁽²⁾ but the numbers of men entering the navy increased, and remained steadily well above 40,000.⁽³⁾ The ease with which the navy maintained these satisfactory figures is in some ways surprising, as they were achieved after years of war, each one of which had taken its toll of seamen. The contribution parliamentary legislation made to this achievement must be debatable. By allowing more foreigners to serve in English ships and by organising the supply of parish boys parliament had provided the navy with additional sources of seamen. The benefits this legislation conferred were in part balanced by the restrictions parliament placed on recruiting by protecting collier seamen and merchant crews in American waters. The effect of parliamentary legislation would seem to have been that it made available for naval use large numbers of recruits but that many of these were not the able seamen the navy would have liked. The calibre of these recruits, perhaps luckily for Britain, was never tested by main fleet action.

(1) Ibid. 2/366 f.133.

(2) S. Martin Leake, *Life of Sir John Leake*, ed. G. Callender (N.R.S. 1920) 169, 318-9.

(3) See Appendix III.

Although parliamentary legislation helped the navy, the satisfactory manning situation between 1708 and 1713 must have owed as much if not more to the bad harvests and economic exhaustion of the country. When jobs were short the navy did not suffer from shortages of men.⁽¹⁾ Between 1709 and 1711 particularly, Britain suffered one of the worst periods of economic crisis it was to know in the eighteenth century. There had been unemployment troubles in the country as early as 1707⁽²⁾ but bad harvests in 1708 and 1709 and a severe contraction of trade after 1709 created an economic crisis that must have helped naval manning.⁽³⁾ Between 1709 and 1711 the numbers of men who signed on for naval service were very high indeed.⁽⁴⁾ The similar rise in numbers towards the end of the war in William's reign must be attributable to a similar combination of legislation and economic crisis.

The manning problem between 1688 and 1714 was a problem of manning rather than manpower. It was the merchants and the complaints of flag officers that did most to bring these

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- (1) Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. X f.9.
 - (2) La Clef du Cabinet des Princes de l'Europe VII (1707) 200.
 - (3) Ibid. XI (1711) 341; T.S. Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England 1700-1800* (1957) 16-7, 57-8.
 - (4) Ibid. 187; see Appendix III.

problems to the notice of parliament and government. The government's attempts to put the whole system on a good basis - the Register and apprentice systems - failed. Both were administratively difficult to organise and both encountered opposition. Opposition to the one measure that might have solved the problem, a compulsory Register, was sufficiently powerful to prevent any legislation on these lines. The two bodies advocating reform were divided in attitude and aims. The senior naval officials believed there were enough English sailors to man the navy but wanted a more efficient means than the press to muster them. They also wanted sweeping powers that would enable them fully to exploit the various classes of seafarer and watermen. The merchants were not convinced England had enough sailors to man navy and mercantile marine but were naturally suspicious of any reform that would give the navy a priority over the nation's resources of men. Neither group had sufficient evidence to convince parliament to support one or other approach and there was never a crisis of manning sufficiently acute to convince parliament of the need for radical reform.

The
Encouragement
of
Seamen

The naval service for which the English seaman volunteered or for which he was pressed was a hard one. King calculated an annual peacetime mortality rate of 6.25%.⁽¹⁾ The great storm of 1703, or the faulty navigation of 1707 that set Shovell's squadron sailing on to the Scillies, reach the history books because many men, including great names, died. The story of Captain Martin's Atlantic voyage of 1703-4, in which his ship encountered a water spout, extraordinary thunder and lightning and an 'ordinary' gale, just survives in the historical record, as did his ship.⁽²⁾ Nearly as many naval ships were lost through storm or accident between 1702 and 1713 as by enemy action.⁽³⁾ This was normality. So it was when disease decimated a ship's crew. Storms and disease, shipwreck, accidents caused by men and faulty equipment, these provided the continual background of strain to naval life.

War did not increase the incidence of such hazards

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- (1) G. King, Natural and Political Observations, in G. Chalmers, An Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great Britain (1802) 418.
- (2) Life of Capt. S. Martin ed. C.R. Markham (N.R.S. 1895) 84-5.
- (3) R.C. Anderson, A Note, M.M. 22 (1936) 240.

though it subjected many more thousands of men to such risks and, in some ways, aggravated them. The increasing claims of trade defence meant more ships at sea later into the winter season and the time of storms. English warships were notoriously overgunned.⁽¹⁾ This led to cramped mess-decks, with attendant discomfort and danger to health for the men, and women, who sailed in them.⁽²⁾ Crowding was frequently made worse by the use of men of war as transports, and the soldiers brought with them fresh and therefore virulent land-bred disease.⁽³⁾ On crowded ships status-conscious captains found space for their train of servants at the expense of the seamen.⁽⁴⁾ Nor would normal shipboard life be sweetened by the sullen sweepings of the press.⁽⁵⁾ Longer voyages to foreign stations became more frequent and this as well aggravated the accepted dangers of sea life. The increasing number of new ships that joined the navy

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 3/17, 7 Dec. 1702.

(2) There were women aboard most ships, *The Byng Papers*, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1930) I, 17-18; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3601, 12 Feb., 20 Feb. 1704; *ibid.* 1/3603, 5 Sept. 1705.

(3) H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. II, 269; C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 532.

(4) Mr. Gibson's Account, in J. Charnock, *History of Marine Architecture I* (1800) lxxxix.

(5) J.R. Hutchinson, *The Press Gang* (1913) 312-3.

between 1688 and 1714 brought with them new hazards; the incidence of sickness was always higher in new as compared with older ships.⁽¹⁾

Such hardships were generally accepted by the sailors and were of no interest to parliament. It was manifestly a parliamentary responsibility to pass laws that would 'increase' the number of seamen in the kingdom but to legislate for the conditions of naval service was to take over the duties of the Commissioners for the Admiralty and Navy. None the less parliament did have to pass laws whose declared aim was to 'encourage' the seaman. Compassion or a desire to control the navy played little or no part in such legislation. Encouragement was found to be necessary, as the grievances of the seamen increased after 1688, if the navy was to be fully manned. The basic motive of all such reforming legislation was the need for efficient national defence. A subsidiary motive in much of this legislation was political. The role of the seaman as the country's defender and the many grievances under which he suffered made legislation ostensibly for his benefit a convenient and effective method of attacking any administration.

(1) Augustus Harvey's Journal, ed. D. Erskine (1953)
45.

Whenever parliament was led to consider the conditions of naval service it generally interested itself in one or other of the two classes of seamen, either the commissioned officers or the majority, made up of warrant officers, able seamen, ordinary seamen, marines and boys. Commissioned officers provided 5-6% of the crew in most rates of ship. Another 15% was provided by officers' servants and warrant officers; 40% of the crew would be able seamen and the remaining 40% were ordinary seamen, marines and boys.⁽¹⁾ The years between 1688 and 1714 saw most important developments in the status and composition of the officer class in the navy.

These developments and the reforms and regulations associated with them created the professional officer who was to be the backbone of the English navy. The reforms of pay, training, promotion and superannuation were almost entirely the work of naval administrators.⁽²⁾ Parliament's contribution to such executive reforms was negligible and such interest as was bestowed upon officers was mainly financial or political.

(1) N.M.M. Southwell Sou/16 f.45; Dennis, *An Essay on the Navy* (1702) 2-3; Ehrman 459.

(2) M. Lewis, *England's Sea Officers* (1939) 55-7, 78-84, 122-6, 194-207; Ehrman 452-61; J.S. Bromley, a review of *Queen Anne's Navy* ed. R.D. Merriman (N.R.S. 1961) in *E.H.R.* LXXIX No. 312 (July 1964) 561-2.

One of the most far-reaching reforms of the period was the establishment of half pay for officers in time of peace. This was achieved by doubling the wartime pay in 1694 and assuring officers by proclamation on 22 February 1694 that the navy would retain the services of those who served competently, when peace came, at half their wartime pay rate.⁽¹⁾ The reasons given for this generosity were that the pay of English officers before 1694 was lower than that of officers in most European navies and that a higher wage would make it unnecessary for them to resort to such devices as the carrying of merchants' goods to augment their wages.⁽²⁾ More practically, the increase and the promise of security when the war was over was a recruiting device.⁽³⁾ The navy was finding it difficult to find enough officers for its increasing number of ships. The initiative for the reform came from the Admiralty and the continuity of service it made possible did much to make a profession of service as a commissioned officer in the navy.⁽⁴⁾ It was calculated

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- (1) Sergison Papers 265-7; M. Lewis op.cit. 66-70; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/100 ff 423-449.
- (2) Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. XI, ff. 4-8.
- (3) J.J. Keevil, *Medicine and the Navy 1200-1900* (1958) II, 279.
- (4) Sergison Papers 267-9; *Queen Anne's Navy* 317, 327.

that the new wage rates would cost £60,938 a year in time of war, and as one of the navy commissioners, Sir Edward Gregory, wrote in 1697, it would require 'a very kind and good humoured parliament' to vote money for officers who were technically unemployed in time of peace.⁽¹⁾ The Commons did consider half pay in 1699 and 1700 as part of their investigation of ways in which the cost of the navy might be reduced. Naval arguments that it was essential for the security of the kingdom to retain the services of competent naval officers had limited success. The navy was allowed £18,113 for half pay, enough to retain the services of 180 officers.⁽²⁾ Despite this restriction of half pay to a small number, such payments became an accepted feature of naval service in Anne's reign.⁽³⁾ Undoubtedly parliament accepted the increase in wages more easily because it was a charge on the Ordinary of the navy, a branch of naval finance that many members must still have assumed was a charge on the monarch's revenue rather than a parliamentary responsibility.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Ehrman 458-9; Sergison Papers, 272.

(2) C.J. XIII, 75, 317.

(3) D.A. Baugh, British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole (1965) 104-6.

(4) See above pp. 88-90.

There is much evidence for the shortage of officers between 1689 and 1694 that provided the major justification for an increase in pay. Associated with this evidence and with the measures to improve officer supply there is frequent expression in letters and pamphlets and in parliament of suspicions about the loyalty, efficiency and honesty of the officer corps.⁽¹⁾ Some such suspicion was natural enough in the crisis atmosphere of these years. National security very obviously depended on a navy that was controlled by able officers untainted with Jacobitism and it was patriotically proper to voice any doubts or fears. Yet, when every allowance has been made for the sense of emergency, naval officers as a class are subjected to such scathing criticism in these years and later that it is difficult to believe that exaggeration or political and class jealousies are satisfactory explanations for the attacks. In actual fact there does appear to be much justification for criticism. One little remarked aspect of the naval expansion of these years is the recruitment

(1) Grey IX, 335-6; Luttrell II, 74, 324, 335, 354; H.M.C. Portland III, 449; H.M.C. Fleming 306, 317; H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I, 88, 218, 227; The Portledge Papers 1687-1697 ed. R.J. Kerr and I.C. Duncan (1928) 76; Memoirs of Thomas Earl of Ailesbury (1890) I, 291; Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 339; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. & M. 1694-5, 132. G. Savile, first Marquis of Halifax, A Rough Draft of a New Model at Sea (1694), Complete Works ed. W. Raleigh (1912) 168-179.

of many officers, some of them young, some of them with little maritime experience, and most of them with no appreciation of the regulations of the navy, much less with any of the professional attitudes that the naval administrators and some flag officers were seeking to inculcate. Between 1689 and 1694 the officer class of the navy underwent a reform and an expansion that almost totally changed its membership. The reform was the result of an attempt to purge the fleet of all officers who might still be loyal to James II. Of the 60 captains commanding ships in the fleet James II assembled under the command of Lord Dartmouth in 1688 to meet the threat of William's invasion, 39 did not serve in the war of William's reign. Of the remaining officers 9 had received promotion to post rank under Charles II and 8 were in command of ships of less than the sixth rate.⁽¹⁾ The impact of the expansion can be assessed from a list presented to the Commons on 2 February 1699 which named the commanders of every ship of the first four rates employed during the war and gave the date of each commander's first commission.⁽²⁾ This shows that 60% of the officers named were first

(1) This analysis is based on the list of captains given in E.B. Powley, *The English Navy in the Revolution of 1688* (1928) 57-9. George Legge, first Baron Dartmouth, has been added to the list.

(2) C.J.XII, 478-9.

commissioned between 5 November 1688 and 31 December 1692. 23% of them had been first appointed to naval service in the reigns of Charles II and James II. The most articulate critics of naval officers in the reigns of William and Mary were the governors of the American colonies. The badly defined administrative relationship between governor and naval officer was not calculated to make for friendly co-operation⁽¹⁾ but the reiterated complaints about the corruption, cowardice and lack of breeding of the naval officer become credible in the context of a rapid and unselective recruitment.⁽²⁾ The widespread concern over the calibre of the naval officer class had apparently much justification. This means that some at least of the parliamentary interest in the reputed failures or failings of individual naval officers was not, as can so easily be assumed, merely the expression of political animosity. Politicians who mounted a party

- (1) The relationship would be made worse by the emancipating effect the Atlantic had on anyone, whether he was a naval captain or a merchant, who wished to break the law, C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1699, 212-3; *ibid.* 1700, 512. Moreover, the captains sent to the colonies were often men with little influence at home and with small hopes of promotion.
- (2) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1689-92, 504; *ibid.* 1693-6, 666; *ibid.* 1699, 212; *ibid.* 1700, 19-20; *ibid.* 1712-14, 146-7.

attack on an issue involving naval officers or naval operations could count on a sympathetic response from a parliament that was rightly convinced that there was much scope for investigation, reform and even punishment amongst the officers of the navy. (1)

Inevitably naval officers became involved in the party struggle of the times. Many of them were the products of the aristocratic and county families which dominated parliament, and were of a class and status that made it practically impossible for them to remain aloof from political partisanship. (2) Not all of them were as devoted

(1) The dissatisfaction with this new breed of officers helps to explain two very common themes in contemporary writing - the repeated assertions firstly, that the discipline of the navy declined after 1688, and secondly, that the Puritan outlook and morality that had once been a feature of the navy also disappeared in William's reign. There is rather more to such complaints than an unreal hankering after 'good old days'; P.R.O. Shaftesbury MSS. 30/24/20, f.99; Vernon Letters II, 180; E. Ward, *The Wooden World* (1707) 15-25; J. Woodward *An Address to the Officers and Seamen* (1704); B. Slush, *The Navy Royal or a Sea Cook Turn'd Projector* (1709) A.3.

(2) S. Martin Leake, *Life of Sir John Leake*, ed. G. Callender (N.R.S. 1920) II, 352, 400; *History of England* by Mr. Rapin de Thoyras, continued by N. Tindal (1747) III, 332.

to the cause of a party as Aylmer, who in 1710 took the squadron under his command into Weymouth harbour in order to influence an election in favour of a Whig colleague,⁽¹⁾ but the conditions of their service, as well as the tension of the times, inclined most naval officers towards political allegiance. Senior officers knew that in battle their success and safety depended on the devoted support of their subordinate officers in the line of battle. Benbow is the most obvious example of an officer who suffered, fatally, because of weak support from his fellow officers. Before his death he had time to write a letter in which he deduced as a lesson from his own experience that no naval captain should go into action unless the supporting ships were directed by blood relations; only in this way might he be sure of help.⁽²⁾ A more common method for a flag officer to ensure support in battle and around the council table was for him to build up in the navy a following of able young officers whose interests he promoted. Such groups commonly developed a political bias, on principle, as a reaction to the reward or lack of reward accorded by the administration to the leader of the group, or simply in the

(1) C.J.XVI, 558.

(2) C.S.P. Col. Amer. & W.I. 1702-3, 86 cf. D. Hannay, Naval Courts Martial (1914) xvii.

hope of reward and promotion.

The political infiltration of the navy is clearly seen by a study of the career of Russell. This tubby, red-cheeked man was a member of a powerful and influential family, and within the navy he secured immense prestige by his excellent seamanship and his victory at La Hogue.⁽¹⁾ He was a leading member of the Whig party, an excellent patron and implacable enemy who saw most clearly the need for a senior naval officer to secure a devoted following amongst his junior officers. One of the factors that prevented his accepting command of the navy in 1690 after Torrington's defeat at Beachy Head was a belief that he did not yet possess such a following.⁽²⁾ He rapidly and successfully rectified this weakness in his position. An incomplete list exists of the captains of the navy for March 1692 with an entry beside each name showing by whom they had been recommended for command.⁽³⁾ Russell had been responsible for twenty-three promotions although his

- (1) The most perceptive descriptions of Russell are in Ehrman 270-2; *The Conduct of the Earl of Nottingham*, ed. W.A. Aiken (1941) 66 fn.; Burnet III, 216; W. Coxe, *Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough* (1847) I, 259-60; B.M. Harlean 6,760 f.20; H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I, 327.
- (2) A. Browning, *Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds 1632-1714* (1944) II, 176; Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (1771) II, 147, 173; H.M.C. Fleming, 306, 317.
- (3) P.R.O. Adm. 8/2, 24 March 1692.

influence in the navy had become dominant only since 1690. His nearest rival as patron, Torrington, responsible for eighteen promotions in the list, was now in disgrace. In the years that followed his victory at La Hogue he consolidated his position to such an extent that almost every aspect of the naval service was controlled by his followers. Their power was so great and at times so selfishly exercised that in 1699 parliamentary pressure forced Orford's resignation.⁽¹⁾ There is evidence that William himself had begun to resent Orford's domination of the navy.⁽²⁾

Orford was to be in administrative control of the navy for only a period of twelve months in the reign of Anne, between November 1709 and October 1710. Yet he had worked so well between 1692 and 1699 that his influence on the navy was still immense. He had gained a following which included many of the most able of the new generation of captains, men like Aylmer, Byng and Jennings. Aylmer suffered unemployment for ten years because of his devotion to Orford. Byng twice and Jennings once, refused

(1) See above pp. 92-6.

(2) M.A. Lower, *Some Notices of Charles Sergison, Esq.*, *Sussex Archaeological Collection XXV* (1873) 65-9; *Vernon Letters I*, 291, 299.

(3) *Memoirs Relating to Lord Torrington* ed. John Knox Laughton (Camden Soc. 1889) 65-6; *The Byng Papers* ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1931) II, 189.

promotions out of loyalty to Orford. The Whig domination of the navy by Orford and his followers lasted throughout Anne's reign. In August 1711 an expert on naval affairs,⁽¹⁾ probably acting on the instructions of Oxford, using a printed list of the captains of the navy, entered beside each name a symbol showing the political sympathies of each officer.⁽²⁾ There were 185 names on the list: 91 were described as Whig, 69 as Tory,⁽³⁾ and this was at a time when Tories had dominated the naval administration for eight of the last nine years.

Orford's dominance of the navy meant that for many members of parliament any consideration of naval affairs would be in terms of party politics rather than an objective consideration of what was best for navy and nation. Naval finance excited most attention in parliament when investigation promised proof of the corruption of a party member. The attack on Orford's management of the navy in 1699 was a political attack. The interest shown by the House of Lords between 1702 and 1708 in naval failings in finance, trade defence and manning were party manoeuvres in

- (1) Sergison was writing to Oxford about this time and had the necessary knowledge. The writing on the list is similar to his.
- (2) B.M. Harley Loan 29/40 f.98.
- (3) Eighteen of the captains were described as being 'of no consequence', three were on half pay, and four were in retirement.

which the Whigs were using their power in that House and Orford's name against the government of the time.

In similar political manoeuvrings which concerned the navy the Tories were at a disadvantage. They had no party member who possessed anything like the ability, political astuteness or national prestige of Orford. Rooke was the most prominent Tory sympathiser amongst the senior officers, and although the Tories attempted to exploit his victory at Vigo as party propoganda against the Whigs and Marlborough, he had neither the reputation nor the devotion to politics and his party of Orford.⁽¹⁾ George Churchill, who managed the navy for George, Prince of Denmark between 1702 and 1708 was an enthusiastic Tory and on occasions an effective speaker in the House of Commons.⁽²⁾ Despite his power and the opportunities it gave him, he lacked Orford's ability to attract a following. As a result the Tory party, in naval matters, represented a minority group for a change, and their political outlook, except when Whig failings in administration gave them an opportunity, was primarily defensive.

(1) H.M.C. Portland IV, 137; A. Boyer, A History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne (1722) 36; J. Macky, Memoirs of the Secret Services (1733) 119-121; Letters of Daniel Defoe, ed. G.H. Healey (1955) 59-61; P.R.O. Basset Transcripts 3/191 f.3.

(2) See above p. 296.

The 1711 list of captains and the description of the political infiltration of the senior ranks of the navy are inaccurate in that both imply that practically every naval officer had a political and party bias. There were naval officers, as in the political world generally, who resolutely refused to adapt to the world of party politics. Two of the most able officers, Shovell and Leake, were studiously neutral in politics.⁽¹⁾ Their abilities were sufficient to secure promotion for themselves but such neutrality was a hindrance to most careers. Orford had ensured that politics and promotion were to be linked together in the navy of the eighteenth century.

Thus it would seem that parliament's attitude towards the officers of the navy contained but a small element of encouragement. The grant of half pay was balanced by a suspicion of officers as a class, and the importance of politics in deciding the chances of promotion complicated the life of a naval officer. They suffered too from the nature of the service. When things went wrong in any branch of national affairs and parliament was interested,

(1) Secret Memoirs of the Life of Sir Cloudsley Shovel (1708) 129; The Conduct of the Earl of Nottingham op.cit. 120; S. Martin Leake, Life of Sir John Leake II (N.R.S. 1920) 352, 370.

both Houses wished to identify the culprit. It was difficult to convince either House that the vagaries of wind and weather, men and ships were legitimate excuses for failure. Such defence was made more difficult because few ministries went to great lengths to defend a mere naval officer. One man's career was a small price to pay if it diverted the attention of an irate House from the politicians themselves.⁽¹⁾ Although Whetstone exceeded his instructions in convoying the trade to Russia beyond the Shetlands in 1707 this conscientiousness was of little service to him when the merchants sailed on without him and were attacked by French privateers. He was courtmartialled and not employed again.⁽²⁾ Complaints from merchants and in the House of Commons contributed to this disgrace. Sir Thomas Hardy suffered in a similar way and for similar reasons, although he, thanks to Leake's generosity, was employed again.⁽³⁾

Once the shortage of officers had been solved in the early years of William's reign, it was the majority of the seamen who provided national problems. The problems concerning the mass of able and ordinary seamen became so

(1) The Byng Papers, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1930) I, x-xi.

(2) Ibid. I, 247-248; see above p. 284.

(3) S. Martin Leake, Life of Sir John Leake (N.R.S. 1920) 155-8.

great that parliament was compelled to take action over them. Although they stemmed almost entirely from the grievances of the seamen, parliament tackled them with little sense of compassion or humanity. When it took action to 'encourage' the seaman, parliament did so from one of two motives or a combination of the two. Either legislation was passed as a means by which to make the task of manning easier and more efficient, or it was initiated by an opposition group in order to embarrass the ministry in power. Although there was recognition by individuals of the sufferings of naval sailors, as when Herbert asked for more effective medical services in 1689,⁽¹⁾ or in the manning debates of late 1703,⁽²⁾ parliament showed no corporate compassion. There were many difficulties in making the life of the seaman a better one. These difficulties and the fundamentally inhumane attitude towards them that parliament as an institution displayed, meant that much of the legislation planned to improve the life of the sailor was ineffective.

There was no lack of readily available information from which a member of parliament could learn of naval life. Apart from personal knowledge a series of pamphlets

(1) C.J.X, 142, 218-20. Arthur Herbert, later Earl of Torrington; see below pp. 460-1.

(2) See above pp. 384-6.

was published between 1688 and 1714 which vividly and accurately described those features of naval life that made the press necessary and volunteers reluctant to join the navy. Sober administrative reports, the evidence of officers and seamen before both Houses of Parliament, petitions, even the ballads of the time substantiated the statements of the pamphlets.⁽¹⁾ The grievances of the seamen can most conveniently be divided into four groups: those which arose from his life aboard his ship; those which arose from his pay and the manner of its payment; those that concerned him in adversity, especially when he was wounded, sick, or a prisoner of war; and those which struck at his dependents.

The hazards of ordinary maritime life did not rank as a grievance in the opinion of most seamen. What did become a grievance in William's reign was the officer class, especially their failure in what the modern services would call man management. Monson, in the time of James I, had noted that

'The seamen are stubborn or perverse when they perceive their commander is ignorant of the discipline of the sea and cannot speak to them in their own language.'⁽²⁾

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- (1) A list of the most useful pamphlets and reports is given in Appendix IX. These sources are the basis for the generalisations in the following pages.
- (2) Naval Tracts of Sir William Monson, ed. M. Oppenheim (N.R.S. 1912) III, 437.

The led, or the taught, expect to be led from superior knowledge; a reversal of this natural order is subversive of discipline and, in war, dangerous. There is evidence enough of professional incompetence,⁽¹⁾ nor is this evidence surprising with the great influx of new officers into the navy between 1688 and 1693. The blustering ignorance of officers who could shout 'Haul up that whicham there!' did not make for good morale.⁽²⁾

Over the centuries the conduct necessary for an officer has become a generally recognised code of behaviour.⁽³⁾ The late seventeenth century was a period of nascent professionalism as far as the navy was concerned. Officers still broke even the commonsense rules that gain respect and make leaders. There were cowards, and officers who fought publicly one against another on the ships of this period.⁽⁴⁾ Many captains cheated their crews of their meagre share in prize money.⁽⁵⁾ The possibilities of gaining money from the seamen's pay

- (1) D. Hannay, *Naval Courts Martial* (1914) 12; Samuel Pepys's *Naval Minutes*, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 339.
- (2) *Tangier Papers of Samuel Pepys*, ed. E. Chappell (N.R.S. 1935) 225.
- (3) *Debate on Clause 64 of the Army Bill* (1955) *Hansard* Vol. 536, No. 29, 1997-2020.
- (4) *Barlow's Journal*, transcribed by B. Lubbock (1934) II, 548; B.M. Harlean, 6,806 f.33.
- (5) *Vernon Letters* II, 180; there are many instances of such fraud in the letters of the Prize Commissioners to the Admiralty, P.R.O. Adm. 1/3661-2.

tickets were numerous and widely exploited. Most seamen accepted discipline as necessary but it was expected to be a just discipline. There was enough despotically administered and cruel punishment awarded for it to constitute a grievance.⁽¹⁾

Rather surprisingly, swearing figures more than cruelty as a grievance in the pamphlets. It is difficult to believe that it shocked many. It was probably the contempt in the voice that rankled rather than the words themselves, the contempt that a new breed of officers did not attempt to disguise. This attitude, joined to professional and moral failings, made for a powerful and emotive sense of grievance, a mixture of fear, contempt and hatred.

Another grievance was food. The navy sailed on its stomach. Naval rations were adequate and the naval administrators recognised its importance by consistently allowing the Victuallers to spend more than their allocation of money.⁽²⁾ Unfortunately the sailor did not always receive the rations to which he was entitled. The government's habit of ordering the deployment of squadrons

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 1/5256, 16 Sept. 1695.

(2) R.C. Holmes, *Sea Fare* M.M. 35 (1949) 140; Ehrman 121; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/100 f.402; R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry* (1962) 144, 366.

at short notice and expecting their prompt victualling at seasons when some types of food were unobtainable was one cause of this.⁽¹⁾ The financing of victualling was peculiarly sensitive to the recurrent shortages of money, and neither the financial system of the Victualling Board nor the humble status of many of its suppliers encouraged a stable system of credit such as tided the Navy Board over many crises.⁽²⁾ These were minor and administrative difficulties when compared with the basic and practically insoluble problem that faced the Victuallers, that of preserving masses of perishable foodstuffs in the period before refrigeration. The Victuallers started their war in 1689 with appalling blunders. They issued food so bad that dogs died of eating it.⁽³⁾ This was a failing spectacular enough to concern parliament, and the Commons sent the Victuallers to the Tower.⁽⁴⁾ This was not an extravagant reaction; the bad victuals had affected the morale of the fleet, and the high sickness rate of the summer must have been, in part, a consequence of them.⁽⁵⁾

(1) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1697, 235.

(2) Ehrman 144-8.

(3) Grey IX, 441; H.M.C. Finch II, 232, 235, 241.

(4) C.J.X, 282-3, 305, 333; Grey IX, 276, 441-6.

(5) T. Van C. Min Heer's Answer (1690) Somers Tracts X, 316.

Complaints of victualling continued but rarely with the same vehemence as in 1689. There were enough of them in 1693 for the House of Lords to investigate the methods of the Victuallers.⁽¹⁾ The third occasion when parliament interested itself in victualling, in 1703, was more obviously an interest springing from political considerations, in that it was initiated by the Whigs of the House of Lords, and as such, formed one of their many attacks on the Tory administration of the navy in the early years of Anne's reign.⁽²⁾ None of the parliamentary investigations achieved any reform that was of benefit to the sailor except in so far as they frightened the Victuallers into greater efficiency.

Dissatisfaction caused by bad officers and bad food was of relatively minor importance when compared with the long list of grievances associated with a seaman's pay. The English able seaman was paid twenty-four shillings every four weeks and the ordinary seaman nineteen shillings. As food was provided freely, these wages compared favourably with the 1s. to 1s. 4d. a day of the rural labourer or the eightpence a day of the footsoldier, who

(1) H.M.C. H.L. I, 157-165, 251-4, 265-77; C.S.P. Dom. Wm. & M. 1693, 287.

(2) Ibid. Anne II, 204; H.M.C. H.L. V, 269-274; B.M. Addit. MSS. 9331 f.162; P.R.O. Adm. 3/19, 1 Nov. 1703.

had deductions made from his wages for food.⁽¹⁾ Merchant seamen received about 24s. Od., by the calendar month and the French ordinary seaman in naval service about 13s. 10d., a month.⁽²⁾ What made the English seaman's wage rate unfair in time of war was that the scarcity of men compelled merchants and collier owners to raise their monthly rates as high as 55s. Od.⁽³⁾ Wages of more than £6. 0. Od., were not unknown in the collier trade when the press was particularly active in the Thames.⁽⁴⁾

The discrepancy between naval wages and the wartime wages offered by merchants was so obvious and so pernicious to recruiting that measures for redressing it were considered by parliament. In William's reign a committee of the Commons considered a scheme by St. Lo for restricting the wages of all seamen to 30s. a month.⁽⁵⁾ A more comprehensive scheme by Defoe was considered by the Lords in 1704. This proposed a general mobilisation of all seamen, who, as public servants, would then be allocated to public or civilian service. The seamen's support for this nationalisation was to be gained by prompt and equal

- (1) T.S. Willan, *Some Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire Wage Rates 1697-1730*, E.H.R. LXI (1946) 249; R.E. Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne* (1966) 128-9.
- (2) C.S.P. Dom. Anne II, 256.
- (3) R. Davis, *op.cit.* 134-6.
- (4) R. Crosfeild, *England's Glory Reviv'd* (1693)
- (5) G. St. Lo, *Reasons Humbly Offered* (c.1693)

pay, half pay during unemployment and financial support for the wounded.⁽¹⁾ A project a year later by the Marquis of Carmarthen contained proposals similar to St. Lo's for limiting the wages of merchant seamen.⁽²⁾ No records remain of the parliamentary discussions of these proposals but the main reasons for their rejection are clear: expense, the insuperable administrative difficulties and the degree of state control.

The major grievance associated with pay was the irregularity with which payment was made. In the earlier naval wars of the seventeenth century, with the smaller fleets and summer campaigns, there had been delays in pay, but now, because war had grown in time, space and the numbers involved, the delays were longer and involved more men. It was generally accepted that wages should be paid at least once a year. In William's reign most ships were paid off once a year but there were for many ships very considerable delays before payment, by no means all of them caused by service in distant waters. The crews of H.M.S. Greenwich and H.M.S. Ruby were paid on 1 October 1694 and

(1) Letters of Daniel Defoe ed. G.H. Healey (1955) 73-7.

(2) T. Osbourne, A Copy of the Marquis of Carmarthen's Method for the Speedy Manning (1705); H.M.C. H.L. VI, 223-6; see above p.399.

not again until 10 January 1699.⁽¹⁾ Peace made it possible to pay off most of the arrears but by 30 September 1710 the pay of most ships was more than two years overdue. One, H.M.S. Dunkirk, had been paid last on 1 January 1704.⁽²⁾ Delays in payment of naval seamen were common knowledge. Sullen crowds of seamen on Tower Hill, their wives mobbing Whitehall, and pamphlets and petitions to parliament would ensure that many members of both houses knew of the problem.⁽³⁾

Two petitions to the Commons, in February and March 1709, complaining of delays in seamen's pay, provoked parliamentary action.⁽⁴⁾ In March and April the Commons debated a bill for Regulating Seamen's Wages.⁽⁵⁾ There is little indication from the records of the debates on the proposals made by the bill but it is possible to reconstruct its main outlines from the writings of Sergison.⁽⁶⁾ Public notice was to be given of when ships were to sail and of the fact that money was available for payment. The seamen

- (1) Ehrman 132; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3591, 24 Sept. 1700; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3592, 4 March 1702.
- (2) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3594, 10 Oct. 1702; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3597, 10 Dec. 1703; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3615, 6 Nov. 1710.
- (3) C.J.X, 47; C.J.XIII, 563-4; H.M.C. Portland III, 505; Luttrell III, 174; Luttrell IV, 418.
- (4) C.J.XVI, 86, 116, 156.
- (5) C.J.XVI, 159, 162-3, 187.
- (6) M.A. Lower, Some Notices of Charles Sergison, Esq., Sussex Archaeological Collections XXV (1873) 72-4; C.J.XVI, 27-8; Queen Anne's Navy, 13.

were to be paid some of their money before sailing so that they could, if they wished, provide for their dependents. The chance of payment for those who missed the major paying off on the ship's return was to be widely publicised. The bill was probably drafted by Dolben, a Whig, who had played a major part in the framing of the bill to Encourage Trade to America.⁽¹⁾ The proposals for regulating seamen's pay were poor ones. The administrative difficulties would be great, particularly the correlation between the available money and the departure of ships, and some seamen would certainly desert on receiving the first instalment of their pay. In Sergison's opinion the proposals were unintelligent and intended as an insult to and attack upon the officials of the Navy Board.⁽²⁾ The bill did not become law.

Wages were only part of the earnings in any seventeenth century occupation and often not the most profitable part. For perquisites the labourer had his feasts and the merchant seaman the right to bring home some cargo. For the naval seaman there were the bounty if he volunteered, promotion, rewards and prizes. It was

(1) See above pp. 412-4.

(2) M.A. Lower op.cit. 73-4.

an impressive list on paper, so much so that a good case could be made out for preferring naval to merchant service.⁽¹⁾ The bounty could mean an additional £2. 0. Od., a year to anyone who volunteered early in the year. The chances of promotion to commissioned rank for a sailor were becoming smaller but it was the possibility of reward or prize money that theoretically represented a major inducement to enter naval service.

Rewards were of two sorts - those paid out after a great victory and those for smaller, tactical successes on a squadron basis. The two wars started well for fleet rewards. It was necessary for William to encourage the navy on which he depended and which had enjoyed much attention from James II. The battle at Bantry Bay was generously rewarded.⁽²⁾ In 1692 La Hogue was, from every point of view, worth generosity and the seamen received a month's pay for their part in it. Sailors who succeeded in the dangerous business of burning the grounded French ships shared another £355.⁽³⁾ After this the change in French strategy meant the lessening of chances of rewards

(1) R. Elton, *Proposal for the Encouragement of Seamen* (c.1705) 4; Barlow's *Journal* op.cit. II, 423, 426; G. Everett, *Encouragement of Seamen and Marines* (1695), *The Harleian Miscellany* X, 227-8.

(2) H.M.C. Fleming, 242.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 20/60 f.714.

for fleet action. In a year's expenditure by naval officers from 1 April 1693 to 31 March 1694 the total for all rewards was £385. 17. 7d.⁽¹⁾ The sack of the treasure fleet at Vigo provided many seamen with great rewards but all of them illegal, and for Malaga, the last chance of fleet reward, the sailors thought themselves shabbily treated.⁽²⁾

Every admiral or commander of a squadron had a contingent account from which to meet miscellaneous emergency expenses. From this petty cash reserve, and it was seldom more than this, the squadron commander could provide extra money for his surgeons or fresh food, entertain or meet small emergencies, for instance replace the slops a boat crew had lost in action.⁽³⁾ It was also the source from which officers and men could be rewarded. Berkeley in 1694 considered that this reward fund was necessary to create bravery.⁽⁴⁾ Some officers, Benbow amongst them, donated ^{their} ~~his~~ share of prize money as an encouragement to ^{their} ~~his~~ men, but there were few officers as generous.⁽⁵⁾ In practice the contingency account came very

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 20/60, Abstract of Russell's Ledger.

(2) H.M.C. Portland IV, 142; B. Slush, The Navy Royal or a Sea Cook Turn'd Projector (1709) 23.

(3) C.T.B.XIV, 175, 198; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3583, 9 Feb. 1698.

(4) C.S.P. Dom. Wm. & M. 1694-5, 176.

(5) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3662, 2 May, 1695.

near to being the commander's expense account. Certainly there was never enough money to make rewards a vital and effective factor in improving the morale of the seaman.

Prize money was the greatest lure. It was a lure because the value of a lucky capture could be enormous. One intelligent aspect of legislation was the recognition of this and an attempt to improve the seaman's share of a prize.⁽¹⁾ In 1692, in 'An Act for Continuing the Act for prohibiting all Trade and Commerce with France and for the encouragement of Privateers,' a third of the value of each prize was allocated to the crew, a third to their dependents and a third to the King.⁽²⁾ This improved the seaman's share and the initiative for the improvement came from the government, though in parliament it owed something to the support of those members who were doing what they could to improve the profits of privateering. By arguing that sailors deserved greater rewards they strengthened their own case in favour of the privateers.⁽³⁾ To encourage the capture of less valuable and more heavily defended enemy men of war, prize money was to be increased

(1) Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. VI ff. 88-92.

(2) 4 W. & M. c 25.

(3) H.M.C. H.L. I, 384-9; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/101, 14 May 1692.

by an award of £10. 0. Od., for every gun they carried. At the beginning of Anne's reign sailors were further encouraged when she allowed her share of all captured vessels to go towards the prize money, and at the same time the captors were allowed the right of pillage from the gun deck upwards,⁽¹⁾ which made custom legal.

Such increases in prize money might have led Queen and parliament to believe that the sailor was being generously treated. This was untrue. The seaman's share of prize money was very small and he was often swindled out of it.⁽²⁾ The money, eroded by legal charges, was paid to the captain for distribution amongst his men.⁽³⁾ By the time the money reached the captain the complement of his ship had probably changed. One seaman pamphleteer claimed that seamen received a share of a few shillings each from prizes worth many thousands of pounds.⁽⁴⁾ The record of the Prize Office show he was not exaggerating. One captain received as his share of a prize £60. 1. Od., and £40. 14. Od., to share among his crew.⁽⁵⁾ The obvious

(1) Corbett MSS VI op.cit. f.92.

(2) B.M. Harlean 6,287 ff 108-9.

(3) Legal charges of £593. 15. Od., were paid on a prize worth £3,253. 5. 10d., P.R.O. Adm. 1/3662, 30 Oct. 1705.

(4) B. Slush op.cit. 23.

(5) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3661, 30 May 1698.

and well reported unfairness led to the addition of clauses to the Cruisers and Convoys bill of 1708.⁽¹⁾ By these the prizes became the sole property of the captors and in addition the Treasurer of the Navy was to pay into the prize fund £5. 0. 0., for every man aboard a captured ship. The clauses were suggested by a merchant and parliament had apparently sufficient sympathy with the sailor to incorporate them in the bill. They were modelled on the Dutch practice.⁽²⁾ Even this encouragement was of small benefit to the seamen; the flag officers successfully argued for an interpretation of the clauses which was in practice most favourable to their own interests, and the legislation did relatively little to increase the sailors' share.⁽³⁾

A sailor's chance of reward and prize money was uncertain but there was certainty that the pay he eventually received would be less than the just rate. It would have been reduced by a variety of deductions. He could be compelled to provide himself with clothes, slops

- (1) 6 Anne c 65 clauses vi-xiii; see above pp. 298-300.
- (2) John Ward, M.P. for Bletchingley and a trader to the East Indies and Hamburg, Vernon Letters III, 326, 338-9.
- (3) B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,443 f.19 cf. H.W. Richmond, *The Navy*, in Johnson's *England* ed. A.S. Turberville (1933) I, 39.

as they were called, from contractors who held a monopoly of their provision.⁽¹⁾ His officers were required to see that clothing was purchased only from these men, at prices higher than those usual for clothing.⁽²⁾ The cost would be entered in a slop book which was checked by three officers, the contractor would be paid, and the amount be deducted from the seaman's wages.⁽³⁾ There would also be deductions of twopence a month towards the pay of surgeons and for medical comforts and of fourpence for what spiritual comfort the chaplain might provide. On smaller ships which did not carry surgeon or minister sixpence was still levied and went into the Chatham Chest. All seamen paid another sixpence towards this fund for wounded and dependents. This meant that automatically each seaman forfeited one shilling a month.

It was general too for each sailor to allow the purser sixpence a month 'necessary' money for him to provide equipment such as wooden dishes, candles and lanthorns.⁽⁴⁾ The seaman could also obtain his tobacco

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- (1) The Treasurer of the Navy deducted poundage from the contractors' accounts. These defalcations were stopped after parliamentary investigation in 1699-1701, C.J.XIII, 167, 265-6, 343, 369-72.
- (2) W.G. Perrin, Seamen's Clothes, M.M. 4 (1914) 148-9; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3583, 16 Feb. 1698; B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,439 f.93.
- (3) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3583, 16 Feb. 1698.
- (4) Naval Tracts of Sir William Monson ed. M. Oppenheim IV (N.R.S. 1913) 141.

from the purser and its cost would be automatically deducted from his pay. He was allowed a maximum of two pounds in weight each month at a price that was not to exceed 1s. 8d. a lb.⁽¹⁾ He could also equip himself with second-hand clothes when illness or action depleted a ship's complement, and again no money passed but the sum was debited to him in the 'Deadman's Clothes' column of the pay book. It was also possible to pay for hired 'beds' in the same way.⁽²⁾

Thus, of the able seaman's twenty four shillings one would go for Chatham Chest, surgeon and chaplain. Several of the other deductions could further reduce his pay, and for misconduct he could be fined by his captain. A good example of what these deductions could mean is the account of one William Chalk, an ordinary seaman.⁽³⁾ For service during the years 1695, 1696 and 1697 at the usual rate of nineteen shillings a month he earned £31. 3. 0d. He actually received £19. 3. 11d. The deductions which reduced his pay were:-

a fine	1.	0.	0.
slops	5.	9.	0.
Deadmen's clothes		4.	6.
tobacco	1.	16.	8.
Purser		2.	6.
Chatham Chest	1.	11.	9.
Greenwich Hospital		14.	11. (4)

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 20/60, No. 3.

(2) Ibid. 20/60, No. 3.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 30/4 f.29, No. 496.

(4) As Chalk was not present when his ship was paid off he finally received the money on 2 April 1706.

This is an interesting but rather extreme example of deductions. There were few fines, only about a third of the sailors seem to have bought slops, and only about a fifth, tobacco, but none could escape the loss of wages to the Chatham Chest, the surgeon and the chaplain, and for many of them their real wages were further eroded by the mechanism of payment.

In theory the ship to be paid off was met by a Commissioner of the Navy and four or five clerks who, over a table, paid to the men the sums due against their names in the ship's books. The theory also assumed a supply of ready money for the pay table: in practice this became increasingly rare. The seaman was paid by ticket. This was in effect a promise to pay him his wage at some future date, usually in London. It was a poor substitute for hard cash. Naturally the sailor sought to convert the ticket into money but as government credit deteriorated, he found the gap between the nominal value of his ticket and what he was offered by the ticket buyer increasing. In 1695 a discount of three shillings in the pound was common; seven to eight shillings was known.⁽¹⁾ Tickets were

(1) W. Hodges, *Humble Proposals* (1695) 16, 52.

paid in the process of time by the clerks of the pay office in London. Here one could always ensure prompt payment by paying the clerk poundage. It was possible here and aboard ship that the clerk would deduct from the pay at source the debts of the seaman's dependents and receive poundage for his trouble from the creditors.⁽¹⁾ Some sailors granted the pay clerks power of attorney to draw their wages, thus ensuring quick payment and perhaps saving themselves a journey to London. Not surprisingly, many of these clerks advanced themselves 'to great estates' at the expense of the seaman.⁽²⁾

In the middle years of William's reign the Treasury, using the knowledge of Richard Gibson, tried to reduce the delays and fraud associated with naval pay.⁽³⁾ In 1698 parliament increased the penalties for anyone found guilty of forgery in connection with sailors' pay and made it cheaper for widows to obtain the pay of their naval husbands. It is possible that a series of petitions from seamen about pay and its delays inspired this reform.⁽⁴⁾ In March 1702 a proposal for the reform of pay procedure was

(1) Sergison Papers 52.

(2) Account of Many Frauds (c. 1699).

(3) N.M.M. Sergison Ser/101 ff.204-225, 231-61, 263;
P.R.O. Adm. 1/3566 ff.932-6.

(4) 9 Wm. III c 41, clause iii; C.J.XII, 46, 96, 125,
199, 273, 274.

drafted as a bill and passed to the Navy Board for criticism. It was proposed to set up a Society for Discounting Seamen's Tickets. The Society was to take up any tickets offered to it and pay them at a lower rate of discount than on the open market, on the understanding that the government would refund the money for these tickets to the Society. The Navy Board, rightly, condemned the proposals. If the money was available to pay the Society, why should it not be paid directly to the sailor? Moreover, they pointed out, no civilian body had the knowledge to assess the validity of the demands for payment and it would give many opportunities of defrauding the navy to unscrupulous officers.⁽¹⁾ Nothing came of this bill and at no time between 1688 and 1714 does parliament seem to have debated with legislative intent the normal delays of seamen's pay. Lack of money would over much of the period have barred the way to constructive reform, and granted money, the traditional methods of pay would have worked. Such logic would have been of little comfort to the sailor.

Two devices by which pay was delayed became notorious. They were Q and Rs and turnovers. Each is particularly

(1) N.M.M. Sergison Ser/103 ff.181-8, 213-224; B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,439 ff 123-5; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3592, 25 March 1702. Other proposals for improving the method of payment were made; see C.S.P. Dom. Wm. 1697, 24; *ibid.* Anne II, 255-6.

characteristic of one war, Q and Rs of the Augsburg War, turnovers of the Spanish Succession War.

R was an abbreviation for 'run' and it was placed beside the name of any man missing from a sequence of three musters.⁽¹⁾ It usually signified desertion and was an old and accepted naval custom. On 23 March 1691, on the advice of the flag officers at Chatham, an Admiralty order instituted Q, an abbreviation for 'query'. It was meant to give the seaman the benefit of any doubt as to his absence from musters, particularly the many sick who had been landed during the campaigns of 1689-90.⁽²⁾ In practice a Q or R, once placed against a seaman's name, however valid his excuse for absence, became permanent and a justification for not paying him or his dependents.⁽³⁾ A spate of pamphlets and petitions instructed parliament in the grievances associated with these 'two fatal ruiners of the poor seaman's pay.'⁽⁴⁾ The Lords considered the problem in April 1699 and the Commons in February 1700.⁽⁵⁾

(1) H.M.C. H.L. III, 421.

(2) Sergison Papers 199-201.

(3) Ibid. 321.

(4) C.J.XIII, 72, 163, 739; Great Britain's Groans (1695) 1; W. Eccles, Reasons for taking off the Qs and Rs (1699); J. Dennis, Reasons Humbly Offer'd (1699); Some Further Reasons Humbly offered by the Sailors (c.1699).

(5) C.J.XIII, 165; H.M.C. H.L. III, 421.

They found that the device was administratively essential if the navy was to keep a check on its men and not be defrauded.⁽¹⁾ The letters did not again interest either House and ceased in Anne's reign to be a major grievance, largely because naval officers refused to apply the system according to the letter of Navy Board instructions.⁽²⁾

While Q and R faded as a major grievance another device attracted to itself as much, if not more, dissatisfaction. Turnovers were a useful and sometimes indispensable method of partially solving two common problems, shortages of men and money. The practice was simply one of transferring men from a home-coming ship to one needing to be manned for fresh service. Their payment could thus be deferred to the next home-coming. It was an administrative god-send but it bore terribly hard on the men. Navy Board, officers and pamphleteers were united in condemning the practice.⁽³⁾ It was a grievance in five separate and individually disastrous ways. It added to the delays of being paid. It deprived the seaman of leave and contact with families or, if he was single, of the chance to spend his hard-earned pay.⁽⁴⁾

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 3/15, 25 Jan. 1700.

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3604, 14 Feb. 1706, 5 April, 1706.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 7 March, 1706.

(4) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3592, 13 Feb. 1702.

It deprived him of his chance of bounty money by making it impossible for him to rejoin in the January or February after he had been paid off.⁽¹⁾ It destroyed the relationship between officer and men by delivering them to a new master.⁽²⁾ This hit at the most useful element in the navy, the veteran volunteers who at worst knew the ways of a given captain but at best had volunteered to serve with him out of knowledge and respect. Lastly, and worst, the uncertainty of his term of service hung naggingly over every seaman. Homecoming meant, not pay and leave, but a quick turn round and another voyage, and perhaps even another. It was described as 'the Perpetuity of the service with regard to the Common Crew.'⁽³⁾

Yet turnovers, of necessity, soon had a hold. They were common by 1693 and admirals were already warning the Admiralty of their ill effects.⁽⁴⁾ At the beginning of Anne's reign, when manning was particularly difficult, they were more common than ever before.⁽⁵⁾ Parliament saw the

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 7/336, 21 Nov. 1702.

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3597, 4 Nov. 1703; Ramblin' Jack, The Journal of Capt. John Cremer, transcribed by R. Reynell Bellamy (1936) 55.

(3) B. Slush, The Navy Royal or a Sea Cook Turn'd Projector (1709) 79-80.

(4) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 330; N.M.M. Sergison Ser/100 ff. 579-82.

(5) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3594, 5 Nov. 1702, 31 Dec. 1702; C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 65.

problem, or some aspects of it,⁽¹⁾ and in the 1705 act for the 'Encouragement and Increase of Seamen' it was stated that every man turned over

'shall be paid his Wages which shall appear due to him in the Ship from which he was turned over, before such Ship to which he shall be turned over do go to Sea, either in Money or by Ticket, which shall entitle him or his Assigns to payment within one month after the said Ticket shall be presented to the Commissioners of the Navy at their Office.'⁽²⁾

Turnovers were not declared illegal - that would have been impracticable - but at least a great grievance associated with them had been recognised and purposeful legislation applied to its redress. This clause is one of the very few examples of legislation seeking to encourage the sailor which combines humanity and intelligence.

The Navy Board attempted to perform this statutory duty. In 1709 £41,567. 7. 5¼d. was paid out to men turned over.⁽³⁾ Sailings were delayed because of the legal necessity to pay these men.⁽⁴⁾ From June 1710 it became common for a specific sum of money to be included in

- (1) Turnovers were condemned at the Manning Committee meetings of late 1703, Queen Anne's Navy 184-8.
- (2) 4 & 5 Anne c 6.
- (3) P.R.O. Adm. 20/98 Pt. 3.
- (4) Byng Papers, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1931) II, 289; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3614, 6 Sept. 1710.

weekly issues to the Treasurer of the Navy for these payments.⁽¹⁾ The effort was great but the difficulties many and naturally the demands of war took priority and the success of the legislation was limited. Turnovers without pay became illegal on 25 March 1706. On 6 June 1706 the Navy Board reported that men turned over from H.M.S. Barfleur to H.M.S. Dreadnought had not been paid before the latter ship sailed.⁽²⁾ The non-financial disadvantages of turnovers remained, and until the end of the war the practice was a major, perhaps the worst, grievance of the naval sailor.⁽³⁾ The afflictions so far described are numerous but they were inflicted on a tough breed of men serving their country in time of crisis. Something may be excused in such circumstances. The deficiencies of the system take on far more bitter connotations when related to men no longer hale and hearty but maimed or old through naval service or prisoners of war because of it.

Like victuals, the treatment of sick and wounded made an early impact on the House of Commons. On 18 May 1689 the House passed a vote of thanks to Herbert and the fleet.⁽⁴⁾

(1) C.T.B. XXIV Pt. I, 27.

(2) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3605, 6 June 1706.

(3) Life of Capt. Stephen Martin ed. C.R. Markham (N.R.S. 1895) 110; S. Martin Leake, Life of Sir John Leake (N.R.S. 1920) II, 361; Queen Anne's Navy 185; B.M. Harlean 6,287 ff.104-6.

(4) C.J.X, 138.

He replied on 21 May and asked that attention should be given to the care of the wounded.⁽¹⁾ A committee was appointed to consider the problem on the same day and Papillon reported from it on 15 July.⁽²⁾ The committee had concentrated its attention on the resources and activities of the Chatham Chest, set up in the time of Elizabeth. Rents from lands and contributions from sailors enabled the officials responsible for managing the fund to pay 650 maimed or aged pensioners sums of money towards their maintenance. Papillon reported the financial and administrative inadequacies of the fund. The House resolved that more money should be allocated to the relief of the sick and wounded and that an imposition on documents used by merchants should be used to augment the funds. Another committee of the Commons considered the matter in the next session but nothing really effective was done.⁽³⁾

In the years that followed the plight of the sick or wounded sailor became more acute. The wounded from Beachy Head were appallingly treated. Many died in the streets.⁽⁴⁾

(1) C.J.X, 142.

(2) C.J.X, 218-20.

(3) C.J.X, 308.

(4) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1690-91, 170; H.M.C. H.L. I, 172.

The body charged with their care proved inefficient. The Board for Sick and Wounded was starved of money and weakly directed and supported by its nominal superior, the Navy Board.⁽¹⁾ As the navy expanded and the numbers of sick in need of treatment increased, the employment of squadrons in distant waters, particularly in the West Indies, aggravated the difficulties of the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded.⁽²⁾ It is against this background that the foundation of the hospital at Greenwich in 1694 can be seen, not as unnecessary luxury, but as a necessity that would at once help to solve the problem of the sick and wounded and demonstrate the concern of the nation and the government at their plight. The hospital was as much a device to bolster morale and aid manning as any act for the increase and encouragement of seamen.⁽³⁾ Although parliament passed legislation that provided money for the upkeep of the hospital and to increase provision for aged ex-servicemen and their dependents, there was no urgency and little interest in such matters.⁽⁴⁾ The work of the naval administration in providing a fleet of

(1) Queen Anne's Navy, 217.

(2) J.J. Keevil, *Medicine and the Navy* (1958) II, 180.

(3) Cf. Ehrman 137.

(4) 7 & 8 Wm. III c 21; 8 & 9 Wm. III c 23; 10 Anne c 27. Greenwich provided few places for seamen before 1714, J.J. Keevil op.cit. II, 199-200.

hospital ships was a more effective reform and one that did more than Greenwich to prevent a repetition of the mass desertion that had been one crew's reaction to the news that it was to be employed in the West Indies.⁽¹⁾

Being a prisoner of war was to be condemned to a kind of living death. Pay ceased from the day of capture, which drove at least some of the wives of prisoners to petition parliament, unsuccessfully, for relief.⁽²⁾ In periods when the system of exchanging prisoners was working well, that is, when the navy needed men badly, the stay in a French prison was short.⁽³⁾ The prisoners who were released quickly were lucky: their treatment in France was harsh. The conditions, involving vile food, Irish warders and forced marches, were designed to save money and compel as many of the prisoners as possible to volunteer for the French navy.⁽⁴⁾ Knowledge of these conditions was a real deterrent to recruiting.⁽⁵⁾

- (1) J.J. Sutherland Shaw, *The Hospital Ship 1608-1740*, M.M. 22 (1936) 422-6; Ehrman 372, 444-5; *The Old Scots Navy*, ed. J. Grant (N.R.S. 1914) 375.
- (2) C.J.XV, 495.
- (3) O. Anderson, *The Establishment of British Supremacy at Sea and the Exchange of Naval Prisoners of War 1689-1783*, E.H.R. LXXV (1960) 77-89.
- (4) H.M.C. H.L. VII, 150-3; C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 266-9; R. Lyde, *A True and Exact Account of the Retaking of the Ship called the Friend's Adventure (1693) in Stuart Tracts 1603-1693* ed. C.H. Firth, 479; G. St. Lo, *England's Safety (1693)* 51-5.
- (5) P.R.O. Adm. 1/3573 f.907; C.J.XV, 532.

For the married man who cared for wife and family many of the grievances described above were harshly magnified. Credit buying, at inflated prices, was a commonplace in those towns or districts where seamen's wives were concentrated. The Manning Committee's discussions in late 1703 show that there were members of parliament aware of the problems of naval families.⁽¹⁾ The practice of turning men over delayed their pay reaching their families, and the legislation passed to ensure that they were paid at turn over did nothing to solve this problem. The shopkeepers and creditors of naval families themselves petitioned the Commons about their hardships in March 1709.⁽²⁾ This petition and the financial pressure behind it probably contributed towards the bill that was considered in this session for a reform of the methods of payment⁽³⁾ but nothing was achieved. Nothing could have added more to the fund of human misery aboard ship and in the sailor's home than these long and uncertain separations, and the denial to the married seaman, and in some measure

(1) Queen Anne's Navy 186-7; see above pp. 384-6.

(2) C.J.XVI, 156.

(3) See above pp.444-5. Other reforms had been suggested:- G. Everett, Encouragement for Seamen (1695) Harleian Miscellany X, 226; Tangier Papers of Samuel Pepys ed. E. Chappell (N.R.S. 1935) 227; H.M.C. H.L. II, 219. A measure of relief in the Registry Act was never implemented; see above p. 357.

the bachelors, too, of the right 'to taste the sweets of liberty on shore.'⁽¹⁾

Uncertainty must have been commonplace to the wife of a serving sailor. News of ship losses came slowly and many wives cannot have known with certainty on which ship their husband was serving. His death would end uncertainty but create another series of problems, notably, obtaining his back pay. One important advantage naval had over merchant service was the grant to a dependent of a man killed in action of a sum equivalent to eleven months of his pay with an additional third of this for each child.⁽²⁾ This was generous. In 1709 the widow of an able seaman drew £35. 4. Od.; of this £13. 4. Od., was in her own right, and she received £4. 8. Od., for each of her five children.⁽³⁾ The delay between death and payment seems to have been about two years and surprisingly few seem to have claimed this money.⁽⁴⁾

With grievances such as have been described it is surprising the naval seaman remained so docile. There were mutinies but they remained scattered in time and place;

- (1) The Petitions of the Seamen to the House of Commons and the Board of Admiralty, 18 April 1797, English Historical Documents XI, No. 545, p. 878.
- (2) C.J.X, 128. There was also money in the Chatham Chest for widows, P.R.O. Adm. 18/74 f.154.
- (3) P.R.O. Adm. 20/98 No. 3,493.
- (4) P.R.O. Adm. 20/60 No. 665.

poor communication and wide-spread illiteracy would help to isolate sedition.⁽¹⁾ There were rumours of successful Jacobite infiltration of a discontented fleet but they came to nothing.⁽²⁾ The most serious consequences for the navy of all the ills of the seaman were the difficulties of manning and the high desertion rate. The naval administration initiated many and valuable reforms. Lack of money prevented their greater effectiveness. Parliament generally ignored the grievances of the seamen. It could afford to; the seaman was to endure the miseries of naval life until the Mutiny on the Nore in 1797. Yet there were members of parliament who showed knowledge and sympathy, even compassion for the sailor.⁽³⁾ The legislation on turnovers must have owed something to this feeling as well as to a desire to facilitate manning, but if one is to generalise about a parliamentary attitude towards the life of the ordinary and individual sailor, the best description of that attitude would be that corporately parliament did not comprehend the life that was described to it in ways written and verbal.⁽⁴⁾ When Haddock wrote to

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- (1) D. Hannay, *Naval Courts Martial* (1914) 23-5, 115-128; P.R.O. Adm. 7/334 f.86 C.S.P. Dom. Anne I, 593; Vernon Letters I, 286; B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,443 f.183.
- (2) *Byng Papers* ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1932) III, xxxiii; B.M. Addit. MSS. 5,443 f.183.
- (3) See the accounts of the committee on manning in late 1703, *Queen Anne's Navy* 184-8.
- (4) Parliament and naval officials seem to have believed from about 1706 that their actions had affected great and effective reform, C.J.XIV, 102; P.R.O. S.P.42/7, 5 Jan.1706; P.R.O. Adm.7/336, 7 Jan. 1706.

the Navy Board in 1692 about 'the poor dogs' who had been fighting so bravely, the Board in reply remonstrated with him about the noun he used. It could not comprehend the sympathy and comradeship implied in the rough wording.⁽¹⁾ Over a hundred years later a naval chaplain watched and later described how a seaman fell overboard and was rescued from the brink of drowning. He pondered in his diary on the 'insensibility' of this man and of the lower classes of society generally.⁽²⁾ His own upper class lack of sensitiveness towards the lower class was similar to the corporate attitude of parliament towards the naval seaman between 1688 and 1714.

(1) Sergison Papers 37, 39.

(2) Edward Mangin's Journal in Five Naval Journals (N.R.S. 1951) 27.

The Navy and
Parliament

Between 1688 and 1714 the British navy became the most powerful in the world. The connection between this achievement and the parliamentary investigation and legislation that affected the navy is obscure. The role of government, naval officials and naval officers in promoting the rise to power was in some ways surprisingly small. Frequently the navy seems to be no more than the passive recipient of parliamentary decisions. One reason for this was that naval interests were not effectively represented in parliament. The ways in which parliamentary legislation that concerned the navy was initiated illustrates this.

The government's record in planning and carrying through naval legislation was bad. In naval matters the main efforts of the Court speakers in the Commons were directed to securing a favourable vote of supply. Apart from this their efforts were more defensive than constructive. Legislation on manning and on the supply of timber for the navy suffered badly because of poor co-ordination and lack of persistence from the Court representatives.⁽¹⁾ The skill with which Harley piloted the bill for the Encouragement and Increase of Seaman

(1) See above pp. 185-7, 402-9.

through the Commons in 1703 was noteworthy but it was the exception.⁽¹⁾ The drafting of many bills, for example, the Registry Act of 1696⁽²⁾ or the Seamen's Pay Bill of 1709,⁽³⁾ shows insufficient appreciation of the problems involved and is a consequence of insufficient liaison with subordinate officials. Navy Board officials had a very poor impression of the legislation produced in an attempt to solve some of their problems.⁽⁴⁾ Conversely, officials at this level rarely had the confidence or incentive to worry the government into taking action. The Navy Board's most consistent contribution when asked for advice was a lament for the 'good old days' of naval administration before 1688. Only over the dangerous shortage of naval supply in timber, tar and hemp did the Navy Board and the Board of Trade and Plantations take the initiative and worry the government into legislation.⁽⁵⁾ The suggestions for legislation that came from the Admiralty were usually too

(1) See above pp. 379-89.

(2) See above pp. 358-64.

(3) This bill was inspired by the opposition but the government did not at first appreciate its administrative flaws, see above pp. 444-5.

(4) Sergison to Harley, 15 May 1711, B.M. Harlean. 6, 287 ff. 95-108.

(5) See ~~above~~ pp. 185-9, 200-2.

sweeping and politically unrealistic.⁽¹⁾ Despite the disadvantages under which Court speakers laboured in the Commons⁽²⁾ there is no doubt that better use could have been made of naval officers to push naval legislation, if they had been given a lead from above. Both Russell for much of William's reign, and Shovell, under Anne,⁽³⁾ despite their contrasting styles of speech, could win sympathetic audiences for their views on the navy.

It follows from this negative attitude on the part of the Court that a surprising proportion of naval legislation began its parliamentary career as recommendations from opposition politicians. This proportion included most of the important acts connected with naval finance and trade protection. In William's time it was the Commons who displayed the initiative in criticism and legislation; in Anne's reign it was the Lords who took over this role though with rather less constructive legislation to show for their opposition. Legislation of this sort, that was initiated in the ranks of aggrieved politicians, had to be attuned to the prevailing mood of parliament and this acted

- (1) For example, their request for sweeping powers of conscription, C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1693, 440.
- (2) See above pp. 31-2.
- (3) Shovell was M.P. for Rochester 1698-1701, 1705-7.

as a restraint. The moderation of many in either House of parliament, joined to the undeniable defensive skill of most Court groups in their policies of amendment and delay, acted as a check on extreme legislation. The passing of the 1694 clause establishing cruisers and convoys or the establishment of the Board of Trade and Plantations shows how this clash of opposition and Court created acts of parliament.⁽¹⁾

The printed sources from which members of parliament could learn of the navy made small direct contribution to legislation, although they did create a background of knowledge. None of the pamphlets that advocated a registry provided a plan for the 1696 act that established the registration of seamen. Most of the pamphleteers envisaged a compulsory register, of men or ships, not the voluntary register that was established, and only one gave any detailed consideration to the benefits for sailors who registered.⁽²⁾ Many of the pamphlets dealing with naval affairs contained little more than a reiteration of the

(1) See above pp. 254-8, 267-9.

(2) Reasons for Settling the Admiralty Jurisdiction, Harleian Miscellany IX (1810) 465-475; see below p. 473.

wrongs the seamen suffered and the wrongs naval officials and officers perpetrated. All this could do was to provide a background to legislation such as the registry pamphlets provided. An exception to this generalisation was the anonymous pamphlet, published in 1690, entitled, 'Reasons for Settling the Admiralty Jurisdiction'. Several of the recommendations in this pamphlet became fact, amongst them a registration scheme, freedom of those registered from parish office, a more equitable sharing of prize money, the prohibition of English seamen from serving abroad, and better provision for the Chatham Chest. No other pamphlet was so successful in forecasting, and perhaps moulding parliamentary action.

Presumably fewer of the handwritten memorials on naval problems survive than the more numerous pamphlets. On the evidence of those extant they were more effective than the pamphlets in establishing a basis for legislation. This is natural enough in that the most important of them were produced by experts outside the administration for ministers with specific naval problems in mind. The dividing line between these memorials and the reports drawn up by naval officials and officers is a vague one. Gibson's memorial for Trenchard⁽¹⁾ contained suggestions for the civil trial of

(1) See above p. 63.

naval officers, for the employment of merchants as Lords Commissioners of Admiralty, for an increased share in prize money for ordinary seamen, for reform of methods of paying off, and for a more lavish provision of medicine chests in the fleet. All these suggestions were acted upon by the navy at parliament's direction or on the initiative of the administration.

Inevitably parliament's growing knowledge of the navy and the more frequent naval legislation initiated by politicians who were not members of the government led to changes in the relationship of monarch, parliament, Admiralty and Navy Boards. Between 1660 and 1688 the navy had enjoyed the particular interest and generally able direction of two monarchs. From 1688 to 1714, at a time when it increased greatly in size, the two monarchs who ruled England were not specially interested in the problems that faced the navy. In these years, particularly between 1689 and 1693, events forced on parliament an awareness of naval problems even in aspects of naval business, such as manning, which had not traditionally been parliament's concern. The very size of the navy by the middle years of William ensured that even when the pressure of national crisis slackened, it should remain a major parliamentary concern. Every naval failure, administrative or operational, served to keep the interest alive. Insensibly knowledge, concern and repeated attention to naval matters

combined to give parliament a heightened authority over the navy.

There were some members of parliament, in both Lords and Commons, who hoped for a state in which parliament would be predominant. There were even 'republicans' in both houses, whose nominal allegiance to the Whigs was more a source of weakness to the party than of strength. In the naval context operational failure, maladministration and the dissatisfaction of the sailors did lead to appeals to parliament to take over the direction of the navy:

'God bless our noble Parliament
 And give them the whole government
 That they may see we're worse than ever
 And us from lawless rule deliver,
 For England's sinking unless they
 Do take the helm and better sway.'⁽¹⁾

The greatest obstacle to the acquisition of such control as was envisaged by a minority was the disinclination of the majority in parliament or nation to consider anything so radical. Court speakers knew the strength of this conservative deference to the King's powers and prerogatives and on occasion exploited it most effectively.⁽²⁾ This conservatism was eroded, not by radical philosophy but by

(1) The Sea Martyrs (1691), Naval Songs and Ballads, ed. C.R. Firth (N.R.S. 1907) 143; cf. Present Condition of the English Navy in a Dialogue ... (1702) 29.

(2) See above p. 268.

a 'Country' determination to correct faults, to ensure that they should not reappear, and to find the person responsible for the failure. The navy, with an unavoidable plethora of faults and failures, contributed notably to the erosion.

The real precedents for parliamentary intervention in naval affairs came in the early years of William's reign. Naval failure and national crisis enabled the enemies of William as a monarch to combine with the enemies of his government with the probability of general parliamentary support. The King's right to choose his own executive officers was challenged in 1691 because of Russell's ineffective use of the fleet in the summer of that year. One of the things that prevented the Commons pressing for the right to appoint admirals was a speech by Guise⁽¹⁾ in which he informed the House that although it had the liberty to question the King's servants, it had no right to prejudice his right to name them.⁽²⁾ Presumably this was close enough to the constitutional truth as many of the Commons saw it for the attack to fail. A more serious attack developed in the next session of parliament, again

(1) Sir John Guise was M.P. for Gloucestershire.

(2) Bonnet Dispatch, 6 Nov. 1691, L. von Ranke op.cit., VI, 162; S.B. Baxter, William III (1966) 492.

out of a naval failure, this time the failure of Admiralty or Admiral Russell to achieve a damaging blow against the French in the months after the victory at La Hogue. Diverse political dissatisfactions contributed to the attack⁽¹⁾ and it was this diversity that did much to help William, the Tories blaming Russell, the Whigs blaming Nottingham, and this quarrel being complicated by each House championing its respective member. All that came out of the early demands that the Commons should have the satisfaction of replacing either Nottingham as Secretary of State or Russell as Admiral was an address in which the King was 'humbly advised' to create an Admiralty of experienced and expert naval administrators⁽²⁾ which was defeated by 135 to 112 votes. Robert Harley lamented that only seven or eight speakers were prepared to question the King's powers and they were opposed by the whole weight of the Court speakers.⁽³⁾ There were no more assaults as direct as this on the King's right to nominate his principal executive officers. The Commons learnt to achieve the removal of an unpopular naval official or administrator by harrying. In this way Orford was

(1) See above pp. 102-3.

(2) C.J.X, 775; G.F. James, Some Further Aspects of Admiralty Administration 1689-1714, B.I.H.R. XVII (1939-40) 21.

(3) H.M.C. Portland III, 509.

compelled to resign in 1699.⁽¹⁾ The possibility that the Commons would conduct the war on land and sea faded with the sense of crisis.⁽²⁾ Yet events continued to provide reasons for parliament to acquire new knowledge and powers. The parliamentary conviction that although the nation was paying for the war it had no insight into, and implicitly no control over, the spending of its money, led to the institution of commissioners of account.⁽³⁾ A similar conviction that the protection of English trade was badly managed led to the King's losing control of one fifth of his fleet.⁽⁴⁾ No one acquisition of authority was decisive, far less revolutionary, but in the department of the navy, as in other departments, parliament was establishing a new relationship with the agents of the executive. The exercise of authority, particularly by the Commons, was insensibly changing the status of parliament in the minds of its members and of government officials. Frequent and close contact marked on the parliamentary side by a decreasing deference towards the administrators and the monarch was changing the balance of political power in favour of parliament.

(1) See above pp. 95-6.

(2) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1690-1, 465.

(3) See above pp. 111-2.

(4) See above p. 259.

There were still very real limitations to parliament's power over the navy. The tradition of initiative was with the government. The 'mysteries' of government and administration were still obstacles to effective parliamentary participation especially in issues that involved the armed forces or foreign policy. In these matters officials had the advantages of knowledge, continuity of office and the widespread recognition that it was the right of government to act decisively in a crisis without waiting to refer to parliament.⁽¹⁾ Parliament's ability to influence, guide or direct government action was limited by the nature of its membership and existence. The long periods of a year in which parliament was not in session reduced the effectiveness of its interventions, inevitably many of its pronouncements were retrospective. Changes in the personnel of the Commons at an election made more difficult the transmission of new attitudes. There were few leaders, particularly in the early years of William, who possessed sufficient authority, courage, knowledge and ability to lead the Commons in an effective way against the government. When the Commons met on 7 November 1691 to consider the failings of the navy Russell

(1) See above p.166.

announced that he was prepared to answer any question about his management of the fleet.⁽¹⁾ There was silence for half an hour. Then Clarges entered the Chamber. He expressed amazement that no one had found anything to criticise and launched a very specific and detailed attack on the management of the fleet in the summer of 1691. Inspired by his example an attack on Russell developed but in the absence of men like Clarges it would seem that the authority of the government was secure. Increasingly party groups, by providing support, organisation and knowledge, made criticism in the Commons effective. Even with such organisation an emotional incentive, such as would be provided by an operational or administrative failure, was usually necessary to stir the House. Danger provided the strongest emotional incentive and it is in the years of national crisis between 1688 and 1693 that most of the precedents for the intervention in naval business occur.

Despite these limitations parliament's power over the navy grew between 1688 and 1714. This acquisition of power was made easier by the weakness of the Board of Admiralty. In part this was caused by the King's need to

(1) N. Luttrell, *An Abstract of the Debates* 6 Nov. 1691-4 Nov. 1692, ff. 4-5.

gain political support by the allocation of offices, and the Admiralty in commission provided seven places. The King was the more ready to award Admiralty posts as payment for political services because increasingly from 1688, the Secretary of State directed the navy strategically⁽¹⁾ and the Navy Board directed it administratively. William himself accelerated the decline of the Admiralty, the members of which alienated him in the early years of his reign by their inefficiency and lack of secrecy and the arrogance with which the members disputed with Mary over the appointment of an admiral in 1690.⁽²⁾ By the middle years of his reign the Lords Commissioners of Admiralty had little real power and in the opinion of Pepys were treated contemptuously by the 'cabinet'.⁽³⁾ This contempt was not confined to the council chamber but widely expressed in attacks on the, 'fresh water Lords', who made up what was 'a nursery for young, and an asylum for

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- (1) M.A. Thompson, *The Secretaries of State 1681-1782* (1932) 78-88.
- (2) Schomberg to the King, 27 July 1689, C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1689-90, 201; S.B. Baxter op.cit. 306-7; Ehrman 354-60; D. Ogg op.cit. 335-6; G.F. James op.cit. 22-5.
- (3) Samuel Pepys's *Naval Minutes* op.cit. 319-20; C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 478; *ibid.* 1697, 253.

old politicians.' (1) By the nature of their appointment the Lords Commissioners brought to the Admiralty their political allegiances and intrigues, which made them vulnerable to parliamentary criticism. They were difficult masters to the hard-working professionals of the Navy Board. The relationship between the two boards, on which the efficiency of the navy depended, was at times practically hostile. In 1699 one member of the Admiralty, Lord Haversham, gave up attending joint meetings of the two boards because of a quarrel with a member of the Navy Board; eventually William had to order him to attend meetings. (2) The incompetence, weakness and

- (1) B. Slush, *The Navy Royal, or a Sea Cook Turn'd Projector* (1709) 21; *Memoirs of Thomas Earl of Ailesbury*, (1890) I, 242; Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (1771) II, 175; *The Seaman's Opinion of a Standing Army* (1689), *Collection of State Tracts Published* (1705) II, 687; S. Martin Leake, *Life of Sir John Leake*, ed. G. Callender (N.R.S. 1920) II, 400; G.F. James and J.J. Sutherland Shaw, *Admiralty Administration and Personnel 1619-1714*, B.I.H.R. XIV (1936-7) 12.
- (2) Haversham was made a Lord Commissioner of Admiralty in June 1699. The details of his quarrel with Lyddell, Commissioner of the Navy, can be found in P.R.O. Adm. 3/15, 23, 25, 31 Oct. 1699, 2, 5, 29, 30 March. 1700; P.R.O. Adm. 7/335, 27 Feb. 1700. Haversham had used or encouraged a clerk in Lyddell's office to make what other Navy Board officials described as 'frivolous accusations' against Lyddell, *Sergison Papers* 56-7 Haversham described Lyddell's counter-accusations as 'brutish'. The working together of the two boards was naturally disrupted by the quarrel and the King ordered Haversham to attend, N.M.M. Ser/103 f.147, 22 May 1700.

factionousness of the Admiralty administration could not be a secret in the close political society of late seventeenth century England. Parliament constantly wished to identify the men responsible for a failure; too frequently the Admiralty provided an obvious and static target. The state of the Admiralty led to parliament's by-passing this Board on a number of occasions and demanding from the Navy Board the answers to various naval questions. In this way they received expert and detailed answers and incidentally impressed their authority on yet another branch of the executive.⁽¹⁾)

A by-product of all this parliamentary interest in the navy was a great increase in paper work. At Navy Board level it involved much searching, summary and transcription by a staff that was already overworked.⁽²⁾ At Admiralty level the awareness of parliament encouraged the preparation of defensive lines of memorials and returns. As Vernon described their activities,

'the way they are running into of making memorials on all occasions this is one of the faults of our Winter Esquires which have set people upon turning all

(1) See above pp. 138, 167, 386-8.

(2) Sergison Papers, 48-9; H.M.C. Buccleuch and Queensberry II Pt. I 291; C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1694-5, 22; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3573 f.747.; P.R.O. Adm. 1/350 f 227; H.M.C. Portland III, 503.

their thoughts how they shall justify themselves if they are attacked and upon whose shoulders they will put the burden. '(1)

On another level again it led to a cramped clerk to the Commons petitioning for more space so that he could exist with the growing accumulation of records. (2)

The awareness of parliament's interest went downwards from the administrative to the operational ranks of the navy. Every flag officer and captain realised that added to the dangers of war and sea was the danger that failure or political enmity might bring a parliamentary investigation which could be as professionally fatal as any of the more traditional hazards. Shovell, who despite his rough professionalism had some gift with words, summed up the danger:

'there is no storm as bad as one from the House of Commons.' (3)

Leake was practically the only senior flag officer to escape damage at the hands of parliament. (4) Even victory was not necessarily a safeguard; parliament could always envisage a victory more decisive, as Russell found after La Hogue or Byng after foiling the invasion attempt of 1708.

(1) Vernon to Blathwayt, 25 June 1697, B.M. Addit. MSS. 34, 348 f.51 cf. Vernon Letters I, 110.

(2) C.J.XVII, 250.

(3) Vernon Letters I, 146.

(4) The Byng Papers, ed. B. Tunstall (N.R.S. 1930) I, x-xi.

To summarise the impact of parliament on the personnel of the navy between 1688 and 1714,⁽¹⁾ it would seem that by 1714 naval officials and officers recognised parliament's power, though parliament itself had not fully realised the authority and status it had won by this infiltration into every aspect of naval activity. The naval officials particularly must have been uneasily conscious of two masters, and the decision on how to allocate loyalty must at times have called for nice judgement,⁽²⁾ but parliament had secured at least an equality of status with the monarch. Such duality of control did not impede efficiency; generally parliamentary interest must have made for greater naval efficiency. Parliamentary attacks on the conduct of naval affairs were frequent, sometimes savage, and occasionally quite unjust.

- (1) In this as in all aspects of the relationship between parliament and the navy the pace of development was slower in the years between 1702 and 1708, when George, Prince of Denmark, was Lord High Admiral. At his death the impetus of the interventions resumed unabated.
- (2) As in 1704, when the Whig Lords in the House of Lords tried to outflank the Prince's Council by summoning the Navy Board to give them information. The Navy Board kept faith with its superiors in the executive and blocked the Whig interrogation; see above pp.131-2.

Savagery and injustice, moderately applied, are probably greater spurs to efficiency than moderation and fairness.

Yet such incentives to greater naval efficiency can have made only a marginal contribution towards Britain's rise to naval dominance between 1688 and 1714, and it is this dominance which is the most important naval development of the period. It was to last for two centuries and provide the basis of industrial and imperial supremacy. Many explanations have been given for it. Some historians have seen British naval supremacy as an undirected and spontaneous exploitation of geographic and economic advantages.⁽¹⁾ Other historians have seen the explanation in the activities of the state; this viewpoint is most tersely expressed by Professor G.S. Graham:

'Britannia's sceptre was the product of
Whitehall and Westminster.'⁽²⁾

If there is substance in the latter explanation parliament's legislation for and interest in the navy between

- (1) 'The English and the Dutch were alike in this, that their naval development was instinctive,' A.D. Innes, *The Maritime and Colonial Expansion of England under the Stuarts 1603-1714* (1931) 247. This is an extreme statement of this deterministic theory but, expressed in more cautious terms it has many adherents cf. A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower upon History 1660-1783* (1957 edn.) 25; Ehrman, 175.
- (2) G.S. Graham, *Empire of the North Atlantic* (1950) ix.

1688 and 1714 should be of significance. There are, however, other developments in seventeenth century England and Europe that need consideration before the contribution of parliament to British naval supremacy can be assessed.

Between 1688 and 1714 both the French and Dutch, our strongest naval rivals, failed to match British expansion in terms of ships. The French failed because they adopted the strategy of attacking merchant shipping rather than British fleets; the Dutch because their major effort was devoted to the creation of armies that would secure their land frontiers. Both remained powerful at sea and British naval dominance was still a matter for vigilance and struggle, not yet a cause of national complacency⁽¹⁾ but by 1714 Britain was clearly the strongest sea-power.

Geographic and economic factors must have played an important part in this acquisition of power. The geographic advantages of good harbours and mercantile experience provided the foundations of British sea-power. Yet such foundations had been present before the seventeenth century and only towards the end of that century did they

(1) C.R. Boxer, *Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800* (1965) 105, 275; C.H. Wilson, *The Economic Decline of the Netherlands*, *Econ. Hist. Rev.* IX (1939) 2, reprinted in *Essays in Economic History I*, ed. E.M. Carus Wilson (1961) 254-5; G.M. Trevelyan, *England under Queen Anne* (1948) I, 248; G.J. Marcus, *A Naval History of England, I, The Formative Centuries* (1961) 196; C. Lloyd, *The Nation and the Navy* (1954) 88.

support a naval force that dominated the seas. Commercial developments based on these natural resources, provided an economic basis from which this naval force could grow. The fishing fleets, the mercantile marine and the coastal trade had always provided England with a supply of trained seamen.⁽¹⁾ The development of a coastal trade for the transport of coal during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries greatly reinforced this supply⁽²⁾ and the great expansion of English overseas trade between 1660 and 1688 increased the numbers of seamen and ships and the dependence of the nation on mercantile profits.⁽³⁾ These developments were not entirely 'instinctive'; parliament contributed to them by legislation, particularly by the series of Navigation Acts.⁽⁴⁾ The influence of English merchants on government policy grew at the same time. The peculiar importance of London to English trade and the proximity of the City of London, the centre of trade to Westminster, the centre of government, favoured their

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- (1) T.S. Willan, The English Coasting Trade 1600-1750 (1938) 1; A.P. Usher, The Growth of English Shipping 1572-1922, Quarterly Journal of Economics (1928) XLII, 467.
- (2) J.U.Nef, The Rise of the British Coal Industry (1932) I, 124, 240.
- (3) R. Davis, English Foreign Trade 1660-1700, Econ.Hist. Rev. 2nd. Ser. VII (1954) 2, reprinted in Essays in Economic History, II op.cit. 257-72; H. Richmond, Sea Power in the Modern World (1934) 33.
- (4) L.A. Harper, The English Navigation Laws (1939) 366-9.

growing power,⁽¹⁾ so too did the dependence of the government in wartime on the short-term loan as a means of finance.⁽²⁾ A great and vulnerable mercantile marine and the French attack on it in the years after 1693 was to produce the most decisive parliamentary legislation effecting British Naval dominance.⁽³⁾

That such naval dominance did develop in the years between 1688 and 1714 can, in the last analysis, be attributed to men, who by their ability to grasp the chances of war made the British navy supreme. Certainly in this period Britain was fortunate in her sea captains. The abilities of Leake, Russell, Shovell, Byng and Rooke have been overshadowed by the legend of Nelson but they, and many of their subordinates, were brave and skilful seamen. The duration of the naval dominance they achieved, implies however, that the reasons for such dominance lie deeper than the skills of individuals,

(1) G.D. Ramsey, *English Overseas Trade* (1957) 248; L. Stone, *Social Mobility in England 1500-1700*, *Past and Present* No. 33, April 1966, 28-29; E.A. Wrigley, *London's Importance 1650-1750*, *ibid.* No. 37 July 1967, 44, 58-70.

(2) See above p. 79.

(3) See below p. 492.

however gifted.⁽¹⁾ At least one contemporary considered that the toughness and courage of the ordinary English seaman was an important element in this dominance and attributed these qualities to a hardy physique and good food.⁽²⁾ A weakness of this explanation, as of others, is that it does not show why it is that British dominance should have been won in the years between 1688 and 1714.

Since there is no economic development in England that can satisfactorily explain the decisive change in naval power in these years and since the relative decline of French and Dutch naval power does not of itself explain the expansion of the English navy it would seem that the explanation must be sought in the government's reaction to the wars of these years. No member of the executive seems to have formulated a considered policy of naval expansion. Only two men, William III and the Duke of Marlborough, seem to have had the authority and understanding to direct the activities of the fleet with strategic shrewdness. In

- (1) The contrary view, that such skill was fundamental, is expressed in W.M. James, *Influence of Sea Power in the History of the British People* (1948) 22; J.B. Wolf, *The Emergence of the Great Powers 1685-1715* (1951) 14; G.M. Trevelyan, *England under Queen Anne* (1948) I 248.
- (2) Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS. X, f127. Until the diet of the Englishman has been more intensively studied this assertion, and the implied superiority of the English to Continental diet, must remain doubtful.

all other aspects of naval activity control was frequently indecisive and unco-ordinated. Such policy as is discernible seems to have been the product of circumstance.⁽¹⁾ The naval legislation initiated by the executive between 1688 and 1714 shows this. Nearly all this legislation concerned the problems of providing materials such as timber and tar for the navy, manning the fleet and 'encouraging' or improving the conditions of seamen.⁽²⁾ Expert opinion was practically unanimous in condemning this legislation as ineffective.⁽³⁾ Although some of these acts were well considered and far-seeing none of them can have contributed in any but a minor way to the gaining of naval dominance.

It was in securing the money necessary for the expansion of the English fleet that the executive made its greatest contribution to this dominance; but the credit for this decisive generosity rests as much with the legislative as with the executive. Ministers of state and the majority of the Commons, divided though they might often be over political issues, were at least united in a

(1) Cf. P. Mackesy, *The War in the Mediterranean* (1957) viii.

(2) See above, particularly pp. 207-9, 354-6, 400-5.

(3) Sergison to Oxford 15 May 1711, B.M. Harleian 6287, ff. 95-109; Sergison to Oxford, 8 April 1712, B.M. Harley Loan 29/40, No.11; Samuel Pepys Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner, (N.R.S. 1926) 267, 300; B. Slush, *The Navy Royal or a Sea Cook Turn'd Projector* (1709) 211.

consciousness of England's vulnerability. It was as much the money requested by the executive and regularly voted by the Commons as geographic and economic factors that created naval dominance. The naval legislation initiated by members of the Commons seems to have been of little value to the navy, with one exception. This, the cruisers and convoy legislation of 1694 which was repeated in 1708, established a large force of forty-five men of war which was to be devoted to the protection of trade.⁽¹⁾ The need to meet this statutory imposition and to maintain a main fleet provided incentives that created a fleet stronger than that of any rival. It was England's vulnerability as a nation and trading centre that explains her rise to naval dominance. Fear for country, religion and trade, dangers that united conservative squire and wealthy merchant, made the latent factors of geography and economy decisive between 1688 and 1714.⁽²⁾ Fear made an English and then a British parliament persistently concerned with naval matters. One of the earliest and one of the most lucid analysts of sea-power, A.T. Mahan, considered that six conditions were

(1) For the reasons for such legislation see above pp. 247-55.

(2) H. Richmond, *Statesmen and Sea Power* (1946) 59; E. Robson, *The Armed Forces and the Art of War*, *New Cambridge Modern History VII, The Old Regime 1713-63* (1957) 173.

necessary for the acquisition of naval supremacy. They were geographical position, physical conformation, extent of territory, number of population, character of the people and character of the government.⁽¹⁾ Of these he considered the last to be of greatest importance. In his words,

'the conduct of the government corresponds to the exercise of intelligent will power, which according as it is wise, energetic and persevering, or the reverse, causes success or failure in a man's life or a nation's history.'⁽²⁾

Between 1688 and 1714 parliament, which was an increasingly active participant in government, provided energy and perseverance. There was less wisdom and such as appears in the legislative record is frequently a by-product of faction, but the perseverance is undoubted. Feeling, in particular fear, inspired the persistent concern but by the later years of Anne emotion was giving place to a conscious recognition of the importance of sea-power to Britain. Events towards the end of Anne's reign, the debate between maritime and military policies, made vivid by the person of Marlborough, the activities of the Whigs

(1) A.T. Mahan op.cit. 25.

(2) Ibid. 50-1.

and the writings of Swift and Addison helped the nation and parliament to accept as part of the national outlook a belief in the primacy of sea-power.⁽¹⁾ Characteristically Anne expressed the new outlook,

'Our situation points out to us our true interest; for this country can flourish only by trade; and will be most formidable by the right application of our naval force.'⁽²⁾

With its concern and with its guineas parliament had helped to make the British navy dominant. Conversely the navy had in the same period helped parliament, particularly the House of Commons, to assume greater authority in the government of the country. A year before Anne spoke the words quoted above she had said something as significant and revealing in that it records a major advance in parliamentary power. In April 1713, in a speech in which she was commenting on the peace her ministers had secured, she said,

'What force may be necessary for securing our commerce by sea, and for guards and garrisons, I leave entirely to may parliament.'⁽³⁾

Such abandonment of power would have been inconceivable from William III or any earlier monarch. Parliament's new status, illustrated here by their power to decide

(1) E. Robson op.cit. 173; A.T. Mahan op.cit. 51, 53.

(2) C.J.XVII, 474.

(3) Ibid. XVII, 278.

military strength, had developed between 1688 and 1714 as a result of intervention in every branch of government activity. The navy had been in 1688 not only one of the largest government departments but also one particularly in the control of the monarch. From a variety of motives parliament had acquired knowledge of and power over the department of the navy. Two other great areas of executive authority, the army and foreign policy, remained very much in the power of the executive but the members of parliament considered that they, as true born Englishmen, had a natural understanding of naval matters.⁽¹⁾ Events, particularly the threat of invasion and failures of trade protection and naval credit, made it impossible for parliament to neglect consideration of naval affairs. Such consideration was an education in the techniques of power. Parliament's growing control over finance, over the agents of the executive and over national policy owes much to the specifically naval aspects of these advances.⁽²⁾ Britain's dominance at sea and parliament's dominance in Britain were intimately connected.

(1) C. D'Avenant, Discourses on the Public Revenues and on the Trade of England (1698), The Political and Commercial Works, ed. Sir. C. Whitworth (1771) I, 408.

(2) B. Kemp, King and Commons (1957) 5.

Appendices

Appendix I

The Principal Acts of Parliament that affected the navy 1688-1714. (1)

1. 2 W. & M. Sess. 2 c 2 (1690) An Act concerning the Commissioners of Admiralty.
2. 2 W. & M. Sess. 2 c 7 (1690) An Act for reviving a former Act regulating the Measures and Prices of Coals. (340)
3. 2 W. & M. Sess. 2 c 11 (1690) An Act for Appointing and Enabling Commissioners to Examine and State the Public Accounts of the Kingdom. (111-3)
4. 4 W. & M. c 24 (1692) An Act for revising, continuing and explaining several Laws therein mentioned, which are expired or near expiring. (212)
5. 4 W. & M. c 25 (1692) An Act for continuing the Act prohibiting all Trade and Commerce with France and for the Encouragement of Privateers. (67-8)
6. 5 W. & M. c 24 (1694) An Act for building good and defensible Ships. (177-8)
7. 5 W. & M. c 25 (1694) An Act for the better Discipline of their Majesties Navy Royal. (41-2).

(1) The references and descriptions given are those from Statutes of the Realm, printed by order of the House of Commons under the direction of J. Raithby. The figures in brackets indicate those pages in the text where the acts are considered.

8. 6 & 7 W. & M. c 18 (1694) An Act for granting to his Majesty certain duties, clause xix appoints cruisers and convoys. (254-63)
9. 7 & 8 Wm. III c 10 (1696) An Act for continuing several duties. (209)
10. 7 & 8 Wm. III c 21 (1696) An Act for the Increase and Encouragement of Seamen. (354-60)
11. 7 & 8 Wm. III c 39 (1696) An Act for encouraging the Linen Manufacture of Ireland and the making of Sail Cloth in this Kingdom. (209)
12. 8 & 9 Wm. III c 23 (1697) An Act to enforce the Act for the Increase and Encouragement of Seamen. (361-2)
13. 9 Wm. III c 33 (1698) An Act for the Increase and Preservation of Timber in the New Forest in the County of Southampton. (188-9)
14. 9 Wm. III c 41 (1698) An Act for the better preventing the Imbezzlement of his Majesty's Stores. (212)
15. 11 Wm. III c 13 (1699) An Act for continuing several laws. (212)
16. 2 & 3 Anne c 6 (1703) An Act for the Increase of Seamen, and the better Encouragement of Navigation, and the Security of the Coal Trade. (379-92)
17. 2 & 3 Anne c 13 (1703) An Act for raising Recruits ... and for dispensing with Part of the Act for the Encouragement and Increase of Shipping and Navigation during the present War. (392-3)

18. & 4 Anne c 9 (1704) An Act for encouraging the Importation of Naval Stores from her Majesty's Plantations in America. (200-2)
19. 4 & 5 Anne c 6 (1705) An Act for the Encouragement and Increase of Seamen, and for the speedier Manning of her Majesty's Fleet. (399-402, 459-60)
20. 6 Anne c 64 (1707) An Act for the Encouragement of the Trade to America. (412-4)
21. 6 Anne c 65 (1707) An Act for the better securing the Trade of this Kingdom by Cruisers and Convoys. (297-300)
22. 9 Anne c 15 (1710) An Act for making good Deficiencies and satisfying the public Debts; and for erecting a Corporation to carry on a Trade to the South Seas. (158-162)
23. 9 Anne c 22 (1710) An Act for the Preservation of White and other Pine Trees growing in her Majesty's colonies (206)
24. 12 Anne c 12 (1712) An Act for the better Encouragement of the Making of English Sail Cloth in Great Britain. (212)

Appendix II.

The Distribution of the Monthly Rate per Man among
Wages, Wear and Tear, Victuals and Ordnance.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Monthly Rate</u>	<u>Wages</u>	<u>Wear and Tear</u>	<u>Victuals</u>	<u>Ordnance</u>
1688	4.0.0.)				
1689	4.0.0.)				
1690	4.5.0.)				
1691	£4.5.0.	1.10. 0.	1.10. 0.	1. 0. 0.	0. 5. 0.
1692	4.0.0.	1. 8. 6.	1. 7. 6.	19. 0.	0. 5. 0.
1693	4.5.0.	1.10. 0.	1.10. 0.	1. 0. 0.	0. 5. 0.
1694	4.5.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 8. 0.	1. 0. 0.	0. 7. 0.
1695	4.5.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 8. 0.	1. 0. 0.	0. 7. 0.
1696	4.5.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 8. 0.	1. 0. 0.	0. 7. 0.
1697	4.5.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 8. 0.	1. 0. 0.	0. 7. 0.
1698	4.0.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 7. 6.	1. 0. 0.	0. 2. 6.
1699	4.0.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 7. 6.	1. 0. 0.	0. 2. 6.
1700	4.0.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 7. 6.	1. 0. 0.	0. 2. 6.
1701	4.0.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 7. 0.	19. 0.	0. 4. 0.
1702	4.0.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 7. 0.	19. 0.	0. 4. 0.
	"	"	"	"	"
1714	4.0.0.	1.10. 0.	1. 7. 0.	19. 0.	0. 4. 0.

The most useful sources of information on the division of the monthly rate are; H.M.C. H.L. VII 173-7; C.J.XVI, 171-2; Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett

- (1) The Navy Board in March 1689 hoped for a monthly rate of £4.0.0. per man but in April the Commons granted £4.5.0. which it considered necessary in time of war (C.J.X, 65, 80). As the sums of money granted to the navy in the early years of William's reign were not appropriated there is no clear indication as to how the monthly rate was divided before 1691.

MSS. X1 ff 101-2; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3592, 4 Jan 1702; P.R.O.
Adm. 1/3603, 30 Sept. 1705; Ehrman, 484; Queen Anne's
Navy, 36.

Appendix III

Men Voted, Borne and Mustered.

	<u>Voted</u>	<u>Borne</u>	<u>Mustered</u>
1688		12,714	
1689	7,040	22,332	
1690	21,695	31,971	
1691	29,026	35,317	
1692	30,000	40,274	
1693	33,010	43,827	
1694	33,692	47,710	
1695	40,000	48,514	
1696	40,000	47,677	
1697	40,000	44,743	
1698	10,000	22,519	
1699	15,000	15,834	
1700	7,000	7,754	
1701	30,000	22,869	
1702	40,000	33,363	30,973
1703	40,000	40,805	33,896
1704	40,000	40,433	31,081
1705	40,000	43,081	36,646
1706	40,000	46,125	39,091
1707	40,000	45,055	40,274
1708	40,000	44,529	42,072
1709	40,000	47,647	42,406
1710	40,000	46,493	42,872
1711	40,000	46,735	43,516
1712	40,000	38,106	35,991
1713	30,000	21,636	19,725
	(6 months)		
	10,000		
	(7 months)		
1714	10,000	13,098	12,062

It is a relatively simple matter to compile a list of the seamen voted by parliament for each year's service between 1688 and 1714, although even for these figures many of the printed sources are at variance for the years 1688-1695. To compile lists of men borne (on the ships'

books) and the men actually present aboard (mustered) is far more difficult. Such lists can never be more than approximately accurate. At best they can indicate, in terms of man power, the expansion, stabilization and contraction of the navy and the discrepancy between the number of men signed on and that of those actually serving.

The most full and apparently authentic lists of seamen borne and mustered are usually those compiled some time after Anne's death. Contemporary lists, usually in runs of only a few years, are scattered throughout the Navy Board papers and elsewhere. Where two accounts of the same years exist they rarely agree. The reasons for such disagreement and for inaccuracy are numerous. Ships were not mustered regularly and the muster masters charged with this duty met with obstruction from ships' captains. There was a considerable time lag between a muster and the compilation of annual returns for the navy. Such compilations involved great clerical effort and were not considered worthwhile by the officials of the Navy Board. They, more than anyone else, knew that the hazards of war and sea prevented some returns of men borne or mustered from ever reaching their office. They knew of the obstacles to accurate statistics caused by the transference of men from one ship to another, desertion, death and falsifications. Their own policy in compiling lists of

men borne and mustered seems to have been generally consistent, they took an average for a year from the monthly returns and marines at sea and on shore were included in their figures.

The most useful sources of information about the numbers of seamen employed in the navy are:-

1. A List of Men Voted and Men Borne (and men mustered 1711-14) 1688-1714, Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section) Corbett MSS.XI ff.108-9.
2. Men Voted and Borne 1689-1714, Accounts and Papers Pt. 2, 1868-9 C.J.XXXV, 693.
3. Monthly list of men borne and mustered from 1701-11 for the Commissioners of Public Accounts, Navy Office, 5 Sept. 1711, B.M. Addit. MSS. 5, 439 ff. 94-8.
4. P.R.Q. Adm. 1/3603, 1 Dec. 1705.
5. The Sergison Papers in the National Maritime Museum have much scattered information, especially useful are N.M.M. Ser/101, f.103; Ser/102 ff.30, 94-5; Ser/105 No. 37; Ser/111; Ser/112; Ser/118.
6. Men Borne and Mustered 1702-6, C.J.XVI, 172.
7. Men Voted 1688-97, H.M.C. H.L. VII, 173-8.
8. Men Voted 1689-1714, G. Derrick, Memoirs of the Rise and Progress of the Royal Navy (1806) 290-2.

These sources are the basis of the table above.

Two additional points may be made about the manning of the navy. The first concerns the number of men necessary for the crew of a single ship. Each ship had three establishments, the highest, middle and low. The crew of a first rate, such as H.M.S. Victory would be

quoted at 754, 650,544, a third rate such as H.M.S. Expedition at 476,398 and 322 for the three complements.⁽¹⁾ The difference in numbers between a fleet or squadron manned at highest and low complements was therefore considerable. The 130 ships of the fleet in February 1701 needed 43,000 men at highest complements, 36,000 at middle and 28,000 at low complement.⁽²⁾

The low complement represented the minimum number of men required to sail and, in desperation, fight a ship. Captains complained bitterly if ordered to sail while manned at low complement.⁽³⁾ Middle complement represented the generally accepted level at which a ship was considered manned and capable of effective action. In the Dutch Wars this had been the standard fighting strength.⁽⁴⁾ After 1688 although these middle complements were adequate in home waters they provided no margin for the inevitable sickness that would weaken a crew in far waters.⁽⁵⁾ Highest complement was an ideal: like most ideals it was rarely attained.

Secondly it would appear from the table above that between 1708 and 1711 the navy mustered and therefore paid

(1) C.J.XIII, 349.

(2) H.M.C. H.L. IV, 160.

(3) C.S.P. Dom. Anne II, 251-2; P.R.O. Adm. 7/335, 12 Aug. 1701.

(4) C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1690-1, 300.

(5) Ibid. W. & M. 1693, 330; *ibid.* Anne II, 251-2.

between 3,000 and 3,5000 men more than the 40,000 voted by parliament. These extra men represented little extra charge on the navy, as is made plain by a letter in which the Queen was assured that,

'a considerable number of Your Majesty's ships have been employed abroad, where, when men die there are no opportunities of getting others in their room it is probable that the number of men actually borne for wages hath not exceeded altogether as much is aforementioned.'⁽¹⁾

The navy did not suffer financially but the mortality rates amongst those squadrons of the navy that served abroad must have been shockingly high.

(1) P.R.O. S.P. 42/8, 19 Dec. 1710.

Appendix IV

Naval Estimates and Parliamentary Grants for the Ordinary of the Navy 1688-1714.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Grant</u>
1688		
1689		130,000 (on civil list.)
1690		100,000
1691	100,000. 0. 0.	100,000
1692	100,000. 0. 0.	-
1693	100,000. 0. 0.	-
1694	85,740. 0. 0.	85,740
1695	111,012. 0. 0.	85,740
1696	135,958. 3. 5.	85,740
1697	183,884.18. 7.	85,740
1698	200,000. 0. 0.	174,078.19. 4.
1699		220,000. 0. 0.
1700	246,069. 7. 1.	184,342. 0. 0.
1701	219,275. 7. 3.	190,353. 0. 0.
1702	178,038. 2. 9.	129,314.10. 3.
1703	159,085. 2. 2.	129,314.10. 3.
1704	168,887.19. 6.	-
1705	137,026. 8. 5.	100,000. 0. 0.
1706	148,014. 8. 6.	120,000. 0. 0.
1707	139,179.17. 6.	120,000. 0. 0.
1708	149,425. 4. 6.	120,000. 0. 0.
1709		120,000. 0. 0.
1710		120,000. 0. 0.
1711	175,890.16. 9.	120,000. 0. 0.
1712	180,000. 0. 0.	175,890.16. 9.
1713	231,311. 7. 0.	200,000. 0. 0.
1714	250,490. 0. 3.	245,700. 0. 3.

The figures in the table above are generally to be found in the Journals of the House of Commons. Other sources have sometimes been used, particularly for the years 1698 to 1700. In these years there was considerable

doubt whether the costs of the Register Office and Marine Officers were properly a charge on the Ordinary. The report of the Commissioners of Accounts, H.M.C. H.L. I 12-19, is a convenient source of explanation for the problems associated with the Ordinary between 1688 and 1691, and see below pp. 87-90.

Appendix V

Naval Debt 1689-1714

<u>Year</u>	<u>Sergison</u>	<u>Parliament</u>
1689	567,542.18.11.	
1690	1,070,799.10. 3.	
1691	1,483,444. 0. 0.	
1692	1,506,782. 4. 0.	
1693	1,782,597. 0. 0.	
1694	1,931,246. 0. 0.	
1695	2,222,986. 0. 0.	
1696		
1697	2,522,523. 0. 0.	
1698	2,368,037. 0. 0.	
1699	1,440,368. 0. 0.	
1700	1,542,840. 3. 3.	
1701	1,499,880.13. 9.	1,049,439.11. 6½.
1702	2,091,189. 8. 6.	1,016,767. 3. 9.
1703	2,326,817.14. 4.	
1704	2,762,035. 2. 5.	2,266,864.17.10.
1705	3,236,468.13. 4.	2,641,037.17. 1.
1706	3,545,935. 4. 1.	3,211,937. 2.11.
1707	3,784,947. 7. 0.	3,562,751. 8. 4.
1708	4,306,509. 3. 8.	3,628,504.16. 6.
1709	5,079,209.15.10.	4,969,247. 2. 5.
1710	5,747,822.16. 3.	5,655,535.18. 0.
1711	7,231,788. 9.11.	
1712	2,527,119.16.11.	2,527,119.16.11.
1713	2,045,624. 5. 8.	
1714		

The debt is given as it stood on 30 September of each year. The estimates of debt in the first column are those of the Navy Board. All but five of them come from the Sergison Papers, Estimates of Navy Debts 1671-1718, N.M.M. Ser/132. The other five come from N.M.M. Ser/101 f 507. The figures in the second column are those for 30 September presented to the Commons and are from the Journals of the

Commons. The naval estimates from the Sergison Papers do not include cash and tallies in the hands of the Treasurer of the Navy or some charges, such as that of the Register or Marine Officers, which the Navy Board did not consider a naval debt.

Appendix VI

Extraordinary Grants to the Navy

1689	For the expenses of war	700,000
1690-1	For new ships	79,892
	" " "	570,000
	" Plymouth Docks	8,116
1691-2	For Plymouth Docks	15,890
1692-3	For Plymouth Docks	23,406
	" 4 Bomb ships	10,908
	" 8 4th-rates	68,400
1693-4	For Naval Debts	552,777
1694-5	For 4 2nd-rates	70,000
	" Marine Officers	16,972
1695-6	For new ships	204,259
	" Marine officers	16,972
1696-7	For Registry	59,485
	" Marine Officers	16,972
1697-8	For Naval Debt	700,000
	Marines	55,520
1698-9	For Paying off	300,000
	Officer Bounty	18,000
	Extra Repairs	290,000
1699-1704	No Grants	
1704-5	For stores and Portsmouth Dock	50,000
1705-6	For ships' stores and Portsmouth Dock	28,238
1706-7	For Portsmouth Dock	10,000
1707-8	For Portsmouth Dock	10,000
1708-12	No Grants	

1713	For Half Pay	17,000
1714	For Naval Debts Chaplains	300,000 3,000

Lists of extraordinary grants are to be found in:-
 C.J.XV, 441-4; C.J.XVI, 238; P.R.O. Adm. 1/3608, 23 Jan.
 1708; H.M.C. H.L. VII 173-8; C. Derrick, Memoirs of the
 Rise and Progress of the Royal Navy (1806) 290-2.

Appendix VII

The Strength of the Navy 1688-1714

There are many lists, in print and in manuscript, giving the numbers and types of ship that made up the navy. Few of the lists for any one year are identical. The reasons for such variation, apart from simple inaccuracy, are many. The strength of the navy was constantly changing; increasing by construction, rebuilding, purchase and hire, diminishing by misadventure or action. Frequently the lists fail to specify whether or not they include all the ships available in whatever state of repair or just the ships in sea pay.

By 1688 it was becoming common to grade ships in terms of guns and men, and ships of the four strongest grades, or rates, were ships that could take their place in the line of battle.⁽¹⁾ The smaller ships, of fifth and sixth rates, were too lightly armed for the line and were used mainly for scouting and trade protection. The ships of these six rates provided the real strength of the navy. They were assisted in some actions by specialist craft such as bomb ships, machine vessels and fire ships. The fighting ships were supported by a variety of other vessels. The lists

(1) Ehrman 1-6.

of the period usually record advice boats, brigs, hospital ships, hoys, hulks, ketches, pinks, pontoons, smacks, store ships, towboats and yachts.⁽¹⁾

The table below is based upon lists which give the numbers of ships available for service, that is ships in good repair which only needed men and stores to become operational. The numbers of the ships of the six rates are distinguished separately. The specialist support vessels are included in the total figure for auxiliary vessels. The years for which the strengths of the navy are given were selected to show the variations in the strength of the navy and on the basis of reliable lists.

(1) Most of these, and the fighting ships, are well described and excellently illustrated in B. Landstrom, *The Ship* (1961).

<u>Year</u>	<u>SHIPS of the LINE Rates</u>						<u>Total</u>	<u>Specialist Support Craft and Auxiliaries</u>	<u>Total Vessels of Navy</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
1688	9	11	39	41	2	6	108	65	173
1692	9	11	39	40	9	6	114	59	173
1695	7	10	47	51	33	37	185	110	295
1699	6	14	45	64	34	18	181	85	266
1702	7	14	47	61	31	15	175	94	269
1707	7	13	43	64	42	30	199	80	279
1714	7	13	42	69	42	24	197	28	225

The sources of the figures above are:-

1688: Ehrman 625

1692: C.S.P. Dom. W. & M. 1691-2, 546.

1695: H.M.C. H.L. I, 472.

1699: Ibid. III, 309. (1)

1702: C.J.XV, 410 cf. Queen Anne's Navy, 363.

1707: C.J.XV, 418.

1714: Queen Anne's Navy 363.

(1) This list includes some ships that, by peace time standards, needed major repairs.

Appendix VIII

Cruisers and Convoys in the reigns
of William and Anne

The table that forms the substance of this appendix gives the number of operational cruisers and convoys on 1 November for some of the war years between 1689 and 1713. The figures are based upon the monthly lists prepared by the Navy Board.⁽¹⁾ These lists record the stations and duties of ships on the first day of each month. The November lists were chosen because they record the strengths for October, one of the busiest months of the year for home coming merchant shipping and the coastal trade.⁽²⁾ The List Book for the period 1688-91,⁽³⁾ the first of the series, is inaccurate, and the use of many small ships on duties connected with the war in Ireland makes it impossible to separate the ships employed on

(1) P.R.O. Adm. 8/2-11.

(2) Tables based on the lists for July and February show, for July, figures that are generally rather smaller than those for November, the figures for February are very much smaller. Naval officials appreciated the seasonal sparseness of trade and reduced the number of ships accordingly, parliamentary legislation takes no cognisance of this factor.

(3) P.R.O. Adm. 8/1.

operational duties from those protecting trade. During 1712 most ships employed as cruisers and convoys were also used on quarantine duties in an attempt to prevent a 'plague' from the Baltic from reaching England.⁽¹⁾

The confusion in the List Books in describing the overlapping duties of ships employed in the defence against French privateers and Baltic disease makes it impossible to extract accurate figures for cruisers and convoys.

Under the column in the table entitled, 'Convoys and Squadron Cruisers' are numbered the ships employed in groups. Such groups or squadrons include the Newcastle Convoy for the colliers, the Soundings, Irish⁽²⁾ and Dunkirk squadrons.⁽³⁾ Under the column entitled 'Detached Cruisers' are numbered the ships, or pairs of ships,⁽⁴⁾ stationed round the coasts of Great Britain. These are

- (1) There are many references to this 'plague' and the quarantine in C.T.B. XXVI and C.T.B. XXVII Pt. II.
- (2) The ships based on Ireland were frequently employed in transport or communication duties at the orders of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland but the lists do not record the extent of these activities.
- (3) A squadron blockading Dunkirk was more common in the early months of the year.
- (4) Fishery protection was frequently conducted by pairs of ships.

the real guardians of the coastal trade. Ships employed on continental convoys, naval duties such as reconnaissance and gathering intelligence, those on 'private service', or 'attending' the Channel Islands, small ships of less than 6th rate like ketches and sloops or ships entered in the List Books as being 'ordered to' duties of trade protection are not included in the table.⁽¹⁾ This definition of cruisers and convoys is consistent with the wording of both the 1694 and 1708 legislation and with contemporary interpretation of the legislation.⁽²⁾

	<u>Convoys and Squadron Cruisers</u>	<u>Detached Cruisers</u>	<u>Total</u>
1692	9	6	15
1693	11	14	25
1694	11	9	20
1695	16	19	35
1696	24	17	41
1702	17	3	20
1703	11	10	21
1704	17	11	28
1705	26	12	38
1706	18	11	29
1707	15	16	31
1708	22	12	34
1709	23	25	48
1710	16	25	41
1711	16	25	41

(1) Ships employed in all these ways and sloops and ketches are frequently included in Admiralty lists of cruisers and convoys presented to parliament.

(2) B.M. Harl. 7474 f.2.

Appendix IX

Contemporary Sources for the Life
of the Seamen

The most useful sources from the very considerable evidence in pamphlets, letters and reports are listed below. The persistence of the grievances is indicated by including one source before and one after the period under consideration.

1. Anon, An Essay on the Navy (1702).
2. Anon, An Inquiry Into the Causes of our Naval Miscarriages (1707), Harleian Miscellany XI.
3. G. Everett, Encouragement for Seamen and Mariners (1695), Harleian Miscellany X.
4. R. Gibson, Mr. Gibson's Memorial for the King (1693), Private Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Samuel Pepys 1679-1703, ed. J.R. Tanner (1926) I, 118-125.
5. W. Hodges, Humble Proposals for the Relief, Encouragement, Security and Happiness of the Loyal Courageous Seamen of England (1695).
6. W. Hodges, Humble Representation of the Seaman's Misery (1694).
7. - Naval Songs and Ballads, ed. C.H. Firth (N.R.S. 1908).

8. S. Pepys, Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, ed. J.R. Tanner (N.R.S. 1926) 268.
9. S. Pepys, Tangier Papers of Samuel Pepys (1684), ed. E. Chappell (N.R.S. 1935) 225-7.
10. - The Petitions of the Seamen..... 18 April 1797, Eng. Hist. Docs. XI, 877-8.
11. B. Slush, The Navy Royal or a Sea Cook Turn'd Projector (1709).

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 II 4 Nov. 1692 - 7 Nov. 1693.

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Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury.

Rawlinson MSS. A.245
 D.966

A. Hammond.
 " "

British Museum

Additional MSS.

5431-5435
 5437-5443
 5540
 17677

22186
 22265
 28055
 29591
 30000

31958
 34348
 34350

Leake.
 Leake.
 John Cary.
 Netherlands transcripts of de l'Hermitage.
 Sir Henry Johnson.
 Strafford.
 Godolphin.
 Hatton Finch.
 Prussian Dispatches of F. Bonet.
 Sir G. Byng.
 Vernon
 Southwell.

Egerton MSS.

2521

Haddock.

Harlean MSS.

1898

4188

Naval and Financial.
Proposals to Encourage
Seamen.

6760

6806, 6287, 7471-4

Characters of Officers.
Miscellaneous naval and
parliamentary papers.

Lansdowne MSS.

829

1152B

West Collection.
William Bridgeman.

Loan 29/

Harley Family, Duke of
Newcastle.

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

PHB/17

Berkeley's Letter Book
1695-6.

CAD/D/20

Charges of Neglect in the
Administration of the Navy
1693.

PLA/P/5

Disposition of ships 1693.

Ser/100-36

Miscellaneous Letters and
Papers of Sergison.

Sou/1-18

Southwell Papers.

Ministry of Defence Library (Naval Section)

Corbett MSS.

Northamptonshire Record Office

Duke of Buccleuch Loan.

Admiralty Office Papers, 1695-6.

Miscellaneous State Papers Vol. I, 1652-1707.

Secretary Vernon's Letters.

Public Record Office

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1/3661-2	Prize Office.
1/3666-7	Admiralty Solicitor.
1/3863	Customs.
1/3997	Register Office.
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2/363-366	Secretaries of State.
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7/333-338	Memorials and Reports.
7/550	Miscellaneous Lists.
8/1-12	Registers and List Books.
18/74	Account Books.
20/60	" "
20/98	Ledgers.
30/2-4	Arrears.
30/8	Bounty.

Colonial Office

324/6	Plantations and Convoys.
388/9	Customs and Plantations.

State Papers

8/1-18	King William's Chest.
42/2-8	Naval.
42/204-5	Entry Books.

Transcripts and Collections

30/24/20-1	3rd Earl of Shaftesbury.
31/3/191-4	Basset Transcripts.

Worcestershire Record Office

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B.A. 2309	Russell MSS.
B.A. 3762	Palfrey Collections (Foley MSS.)
B.A. 4221	Sir James Rushout.

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