

"Admiralty Administration, 1783 - 1806"

by

Patricia Kathleen Crimmin.

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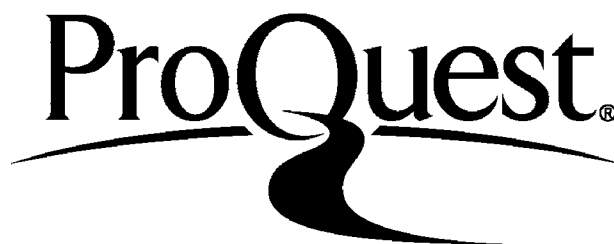
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Abstract.

This thesis examines the professional, political and social composition of the Admiralty Board, its secretariat, business and financial methods and office routine between 1783 and 1806. Membership of the Board was confined to younger sons of politically powerful aristocrats and seamen of political importance or professional reputation. Most civil lords moved to other departments after short terms at the Admiralty. For seamen a seat at the Board was often the culmination of a career. The secretaries and chief clerks, possessing a life time's experience of affairs, were of prime importance in office routine.

The Admiralty was an executive branch of government with extensive patronage but limited machinery. It controlled the weapon the Cabinet directed, but the feeding and clothing of that weapon was the responsibility of subordinate offices, chiefly the Navy and Victualling Boards, often virtually autonomous, on whom the Admiralty relied for professional advice.

The First Lord was an important Cabinet minister and the Admiralty co-operated with the major government departments. Personal relationships between departmental heads and secretaries, often made easier by a similar social background, were all important to facilitate business in the web of ancient government practice. Only occasionally did politics make the Admiralty a storm centre, leading to the downfall of ministries and the political ruin of the First Lord as in 1804-6.

The Admiralty's attitude to its employees was paternalistic. There was an improvement in conditions of work, pay and pensions by 1806 and a greater emphasis on regular attendance and efficiency by 1806, thanks to the reports of several Parliamentary commissions of inquiry into Admiralty affairs, and to the work of individual First Lords, especially Lords St. Vincent and Barham.

Preface.

Very little work has been done on Admiralty administration. There is no volume on the office in the government publication, The Whitehall Series, edited by Sir James Marchant, or in The New Whitehall Series, edited by Sir Robert Fraser.

The studies of naval administration by Sir Vesey Hamilton and Sir John Briggs are mainly concerned with the nineteenth century, Sir W. Laird Clowes' massive The Royal Navy, A History (1897-1901) gives useful lists of office holders and tackles the broad outlines of naval administration, but none of these are primarily concerned with the Admiralty. The works of J.R. Tanner, M. Oppenheim, and G.F. James and J.J. Sutherland Shaw, on naval administration, Admiralty personnel etc. deal only with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Professor M. Lewis devoted a section of his The Navy of Britain (1948) to the evolution of the Admiralty, and the prefaces to the papers of the First Lords of the period, published by the Navy Records Society, often give a useful survey of administrative problems and methods. The best account of the growth of the Admiralty is Sir Oswyn Murray's series of articles, intended as a separate volume, and published, uncorrected, in The Mariner's Mirror, vols. xxiii-xxv, Jan.1937-Jan.1939. But the account is incomplete and only one section, vol.xxiv.,no.3, deals with the eighteenth century.

Special aspects of naval administration have been studied

in R.G. Albion's Forests and Sea Power (1926), J. Ehrman's The Navy in the War of William III (1953), Piers Mackesy's War in the Mediterranean, 1803-1810 (1958), among others, and recently more research work has been done into special periods of naval administration, especially in American universities. A complete list to 1963 can be found in R.G. Albion's Naval and Maritime History: An Annotated Bibliography (3rd.ed., The Marine Historical Association, Mystic, Connecticut, 1963, pp.131-3.) One of the most recent British unpublished theses on this topic is a controversial study of the administration of the Fourth Earl of Sandwich 1771-1782, by M.J. Williams (1962, D.Phil.Oxon.). But naval, and particularly Admiralty administration, after 1783 has been neglected. This thesis attempts a partial remedy of this omission.

The years 1783-1806 have not been chosen arbitrarily. They mark the terms of Pitt's ministries; they include ten years of peace and war; they were a time when the nature and duties of public offices were being re-examined as a result of the administrative reforms launched in the 1780's. Though temporarily interrupting those reforms, the war ultimately acted as a vital catalyst in this change. Old methods were slowly being rejected and new ones tentatively applied. The Admiralty provided the battle ground on which the first, inconclusive struggle was contested. These years saw the apotheosis of the Navy in action and the humiliation of its administration, in 1805,

by the revelations of fraud and corruption at the heart of the system, ending in the final use of the seventeenth century weapon of impeachment against a First Lord. Above all these twenty three years are marked by several commissions of inquiry which act as points of alignment from which to take bearings. The period began with a commission inquiring into expenditure in public offices, including the Admiralty and some of its subordinate offices. It ended with a commission producing fourteen reports entirely devoted to naval matters. Perhaps no better indication of the importance of naval administration at this period is needed.

The main unpublished manuscript sources for this thesis have been the extensive Admiralty records at the Public Record Office. The records most frequently used were the series Ad.1 - Secretary's Department, In Letters, and Ad.2 - Secretary's Department, Out Letters, Ad.3 - Board Minutes. The Chatham and Dacres Adams papers were also very useful, and much relevant information was found scattered through the series of Indexes. At the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, the private papers of Lords Howe and St. Vincent and Sir Evan Nepean were examined and the series ADM/B+B.P. - Admiralty Board In Letters from the Navy Board, ADM/D. - the same from the Victualling Board, and ADM/G. - Victualling Board Indexes of Admiralty orders, together with the records of Halifax and Chatham dockyards, were consulted. The papers of individual seamen and politicians most frequently

consulted were the Bridport Papers, Martin Papers, Letter Books of Sir Evan Nepean, Melville Papers, the Stowe Mss., all in the Additional Manuscripts at the British Museum. At Warwick County Record Office the papers of Lord Hugh Seymour, part of the Seymour of Ragley Mss. collection, proved an unexpected source of information on relations within the Board and deserve closer study, and individual letters at the Gloucester Record Office, among the Ducie, Morton, Reynolds Mss. collection, and at the Bury St. Edmunds and West Suffolk Record Office, among the Mss. of the third Duke of Grafton, also proved of marginal interest.

The main published manuscript sources consulted were the publications of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, chiefly the Dropmore, Bathurst and Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Manuscripts, and the Parliamentary Papers at the British Museum which contain the reports of various commissions of inquiry. The publications of the Navy Records Society, especially the papers of the First Lords, Lord Spencer, Barham and St. Vincent, were especially useful. Other information was found in the Journals of both Houses of Parliament, in the Parliamentary Histories and Debates, in the newspapers of the period and the volumes of the Naval Chronicle and The Annual Register. The many contemporary naval histories and biographies, chiefly I. Schomberg's Naval Chronology and W.R. O'Byrne's Naval Biographical Dictionary, and J. Marshall's Royal Naval Biography were also useful.

Secondary works which I found most useful, apart from those

already mentioned, were articles on special aspects of administration in The Mariner's Mirror, Sir H. Richmond's Statesmen and Sea Power (1946), C. Lloyd and J. Coulter's Medicine and the Navy, vol.iii (1961), J.E.D. Binney's British Public Finance and Administration, 1774-1792 (1958), and D.M. Young's The Colonial Office in the Early Nineteenth Century (1961).

I wish to thank the library staffs at the British Museum, the Public Record Office, the National Maritime Museum, the Institute of Historical Research, the Royal Commonwealth Society, the London and Royal Holloway College Libraries, the Warwick, Gloucester and Bury St. Edmunds and West Suffolk Record offices for their help and courtesy. Mr. J. Ehrmann was kind enough to read parts of the manuscript and made several useful suggestions. My grateful thanks are due to the Council of the Royal Holloway College for granting me the Tutorial Research Studentship in History for three years, from 1962 to 1965, which enabled me to undertake this research. Finally, this thesis could not have been produced without the painstaking supervision and constant encouragement of my academic supervisor, Professor G. S. Graham of King's College.

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List of Abbreviations.

The following are the abbreviations most frequently used in this thesis, any others will be found in the bibliography.

Hist.Mss.Comm.	Historical Manuscripts Commission.
Mss.	Manuscripts.
Brit.Mus.Add.Mss.	British Museum Additional Manuscripts.
N.R.S.	Navy Records Society.
D.N.B.	<u>Dictionary of National Biography.</u>
p.a.	per annum.
n.te.	footnote.
Parl.Pap.,	Parliamentary Papers.
N.M.M.	National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
Ad.	Admiralty Records, Public Record Office.
ADM	Admiralty Records, National Maritime Museum.
H.O.	Home Office Records, Public Record Office.
F.O.	Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office.
W.O.	War Office Records, Public Record Office.
Stat.	Stationery Office Records, Public Record Office.

CHAPTER I.

The Membership of the Board of Admiralty.

The business of the Admiralty, according to the Commission of Inquiry of 1784, which enquired into taking fees and perquisites in public offices, was,

' to consider and determine upon all matters relative to your Majesty's Navy and Departments thereunto belonging; to give directions for the performance of all Services that may be required in the Civil or Naval branches thereof; to sign, by themselves or their secretaries all orders necessary for carrying their directions into execution and generally to supervise and direct the whole naval and marine establishment of Great Britain.'¹

Capable administrators were fully conscious of the magnitude of this task. ^{Sir Charles} Middleton's view was that 'a proper management of the Admiralty will lead to much improvement in the inferior boards.'² Even the eradication of abuses, which it was admitted prevailed in the service, was deemed possible if the Admiralty was in earnest.³ But much depended on the personnel of the Boards if effective reforms were to be begun, or efficient administration maintained.

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1. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices, etc; Report from the Commissioners, No.III. The Admiralty, pp.108-9;1806.vii.
 2. The Private Papers of George, second Earl Spencer, 1794-1801, Vols.I,II.ed.by J.S.Corbett, Vols.III,IV.ed.by Sir H.W. Richmond (London,N.R.S.1913-1924; hereinafter The Spencer Papers), I(vol.XLVI.),10,Middleton to Spencer, 19 Dec.1794.
 3. Ibid., II., The Correspondence of Admiral John Markham 1801-7, ed. by Sir C.R.Markham, (London, N.R.S.vol.XXVIII,1904; hereinafter Markham Correspondence), pp.12-13, St.Vincent to Admiral Markham, 14 Dec.1802.

In December, 1783, when Lord Howe became First Lord in Pitt's first ministry, there were seven Lords Commissioners of whom the First Lord was the most important, but any three of whom could form a quorum; two secretaries; one chief clerk, six established and eleven extra clerks, two marine clerks, since the marine establishment was annexed to the Admiralty; one head messenger and various inferior officers. Numbers increased by 1796, when there were fifteen extra clerks and a keeper of the minutes, and by 1805 there were six senior and ten junior established clerks, ten extra clerks, two marine clerks, a hydrographer and assistant, an Inspector of Telegraphs and one of Naval Works, with a small office staff, and a corresponding increase in domestic staff, plus a secretary and special messenger to the First Lord, and occasional extra clerks, employed temporarily and paid out of the contingency fund.

The First Lord of the Admiralty was always a Cabinet Minister, ranking next in importance to the Secretaryships of State ¹. He had a key to official despatch boxes and his own boxes for official correspondence.²

His selection therefore depended on political considerations as well as professional abilities. Of the six First Lords between December, 1783 and January, 1806, three were civilians,

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1. A. Aspinall, The Cabinet Council, 1783-1835, Proceedings of the British Academy, vol. XXXVIII (1952), 151 nte.
 2. The Later Correspondence of George III, ii.1793-1797, ed. by A. Aspinall (2 vols. Cambridge, 1962-1963; hereinafter The Later Correspondence) 541, no. 1501 21 Feb. 1797, 576 no. 1551 23 May 1797. Geo. III to Lord Spencer.

Lords Chatham, 1788-1794, Spencer, 1794-1801 and Melville, 1804-5, possessing the aristocratic connections and large estates necessary for entry into the Cabinet. Ability, even in such an office, was a secondary consideration, though because it would have been foolish and dangerous to neglect the needs of the service altogether, a compromise was usually made by the occasional appointment of a seaman or by supplying the civilians with sound naval advisers.

Seamen believed a professional sailor must best know the interests of the service, while a civilian would have to rely on naval advisors, and possibly confide Cabinet secrets to them in his need for advice.¹ But there were disadvantages in appointing seamen, chief being their purely professional outlook, their lack of administrative and political experience or connection and the professional jealousy aroused in the service by their appointment. Admiral Lord Keith was a possible First Lord in 1801, but was rejected because his 'juniority' cut across the service records of Admirals Gardner and Cornwallis.² Admiral Lord St. Vincent, on his appointment as First Lord in 1801,

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1. Autobiography and Political Correspondence of Augustus Henry, Third Duke of Grafton, ed. by Sir W. Anson (London, 1898; hereinafter Grafton Memoirs), p.259.
 2. Hist.Mss.Comm., Report on the Mss. of Earl Bathurst at Cirencester Park. (London, 1923; hereinafter Bathurst Mss.), p.46, Lord Harrowby to Lord Bathurst, 21 April 1805.

admitted that he had known many good admirals make wretched First Lords.¹

He and Lord Howe, though desiring the best for the service, were the most unpopular members of their respective governments. One reason for this unpopularity and inability to be as successful as administrators as they had been admirals, may have been their unfitness for the cut and thrust of political life. Accustomed to unquestioning obedience, they had often to persuade or cajole, against their nature, their civil colleagues, other boards and Parliament. This inability to adapt to political life was the chief objection to Admiral Samuel Hood's possible appointment in 1788. Though his professional abilities were unquestioned he was unpopular with the House of Commons, where his indiscreet speeches while under Opposition attack, would have been a serious liability as First Lord.²

Unfortunately few seamen had sufficiently strong political connections to prove an asset to the government. The three professional lords, Howe, 1783-1788, St. Vincent, 1801-1804, and Barham, 1805-6, had all been M.P.'s. Howe represented Dartmouth from 1757 to 1782, but was no partisan. St. Vincent,

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1. Letters of Admiral of the Fleet the Earl of St. Vincent, 1801-1804, ed. by D. Bonner Smith (2 vols. London, Navy Records Society, 1921, 1926; hereinafter Letters of Lord St. Vincent), I. (vol. LV) 377, St. Vincent to Lord Keith, 21 Feb. 1801.
 2. Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III, ed. by the Second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (4 vols. London, 1853-5; hereinafter Court and Cabinets), I. 368, Mr. W. W. Grenville to Marquis of Buckingham, 1 April, 1788.

a 'deadly Whig'¹. sat for Great Yarmouth, 1784-1790, when Lord Shelburne, his friend, brought him in for Chipping Wycombe with his own son. Barham was a Pittite, M.P. for Rochester, 1784-1790. He, like his predecessors, was only involved in politics through his association with naval affairs and lacked 'the connections which are so necessary to the support of a minister.'²

All were chosen for their professional abilities and reputation. Howe had half a century of naval experience behind him, marked by rigid conceptions of duty, the remaking of the signal book and a humanitarian regard for the common sailor. His acceptance of office sprang not from a desire for power, since he was unambitious, but from a devotion to service. The same might be said of St. Vincent and Barham though the latter had little service experience. He had, however, by the time he became First Lord, an unrivalled experience of naval administration and was the most valuable administrator of the period.

Lord Howe's period at the Board was a time of retrenchment which drew upon him the attacks of those disappointed or financially injured by such measures. He did not feel he was fairly supported by Pitt who was urging economies on all departments.

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1. Letters and Papers of Sir Thomas Byam Martin, ed. by Sir R.V. Hamilton (3 vols., London, N.R.S. 1898-1902; hereinafter Letters of Sir T. Byam Martin), III. (vol. XIX), 300.
 2. Brit. Mus., Add. Mss. 41365 (Martin Papers, vol. xx), f. 49: Admiral Lord Collingwood to Captain Thomas Martin, 28 Apl. 1805; Hereinafter Add. Mss. 41365.

'Mr. Pitt' he declared, 'talked of economy, but I practised it,'¹. but it was the practice which alienated so many. The First Lord did not agree well with Pitt and confidential correspondence between them was infrequent. The young Prime Minister and the old Admiral had little in common save a mutual aloofness of manner which enabled neither to recognise their mutual qualities. Between these marble figures bustled the jovial Dundas, always complaining 'he could never obtain any appointments from the Admiralty for his Scotch connections and dependants, and always carrying his complaints to Mr. Pitt of Lord Howe's intractable rigidity.'².

Isolated in the Cabinet, Howe came into conflict not only with the Navy Board, where he tried to reduce the number of commissioners, but with the service, since he tried to restrict promotion and reduce the half pay lists. In view of this unpopularity it was doubly unfortunate that Howe's relations with the Comptroller of the Navy, Sir Charles Middleton, later Lord Barham, were cool. Middleton wrote letters and memoranda on various topics which Howe did not want and to which he replied with cutting politeness.³ A temperamental difference was

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1. Sir J. Barrow, Life of Earl Howe, (London, 1838), p.192.
 2. Ibid., p.191.
 3. The Letters and Papers of Charles, Lord Barham, ed. by Sir J.K. Laughton, (3 vols., London, N.R.S. 1906-1910; hereinafter The Barham Papers), II,(vol.XXXVIII), 172-3, 179, 190 et seq.

aggravated possibly by Middleton's relationship with Dundas, and certainly by a tussle over Middleton's promotion. As a civil officer he had ostensibly renounced flag rank and its attendant privileges. But he refused to do so, contested for promotion to rear admiral, and despite the First Lord's protests, and with the influence of Pitt, carried his point and was promoted.¹

Such differences threatened to revive the political rivalries of the previous years and confirmed Howe in his desire to leave office and Pitt in his desire to replace him with someone more amenable and less controversial. It was also desirable to associate the Admiralty more closely with the administration than had previously been the case in Pitt's government.² Under Howe the Board was 'entirely separate from all others,'³ the technical nature of the work generally excluded outside interference and Pitt had little support from the Board.⁴

1. Ibid., 258-9. Middleton to Pitt, 23 Sept. 1787., The Later Correspondence, i. 1783-1793. ed. Aspinall ed 355, Geo. III to Pitt, 15 Dec. 1787.
2. Court and Cabinets, Buckingham ed., I. 368. Mr. W.W. Grenville to the Marquis of Buckingham, 1 Apr. 1788.
3. Ibid., 385, The same to same. 16 May 1788.
4. Hist. Mss. Comm., Report on Official Mss. of J.R. Fortescue preserved at Dropmore (10 vols. London, 1892, etc. Herein-after Dropmore Mss.), I. 326, Buckingham to Grenville, 26 Apr. 1788.

Howe's resignation in 1788 was one of several ^{ministerial} changes by which Pitt's first Cabinet was replaced in 1796. His brother's appointment was designed to strengthen his own hold on the work of the major government departments and Sir Charles Middleton and Admiral Samuel Hood were decided upon as Chatham's naval advisors, to reassure those who doubted the second earl's abilities.^{1.}

A confidential correspondence was carried on during Chatham's tenure of office, between Middleton, the Comptroller and Pitt.^{2.} The Prime Minister would visit the office to discuss naval affairs with the Comptroller,^{3.} and had periodic returns of the state of the Navy sent to him without reference to either the Admiralty or Navy Boards. While Middleton was Comptroller this state of affairs worked well; detailed letters and memoranda from him to Chatham were written for Pitt to see.^{4.} Even after his resignation in 1790 from the Navy Board, Middleton continued as unofficial advisor to Chatham and sent off his suggestions to the brothers alternately.^{5.}

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1. Court and Cabinets, Buckingham, ed., I.384-7, Grenville to Buckingham, 16 May, 1788.
 2. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., II.176-8, 194-208, 213-215, 216-231, 260-263, 265-270, 273-275 et seq.
 3. Letters of Sir T. Byam Martin, R.V. Hamilton, ed., III.381.
 4. P.R.O. 30/8/365, ff.38-39, 1 Oct.1788., The Barham Papers, J.K. Laughton, ed. II.328-30, 24 Sep. 332, 13 Dec.1789.
 5. Ibid., 351-3, 17 May, 1790., P.R.O. 30/8/365, ff.47-8, 7 Oct. 1793, ff.62-3, 27 Jan.1794.

Personal differences within the Board prevented Middleton's appointment to it¹. until 1794, so it was fortunate that he was unofficial advisor to Chatham whose abilities had been over-rated, and who resembled his more famous father and brother in nothing but looks and extreme hauteur. Like many persons of this type he had an inflated idea of his own abilities and while possessing neither 'activity experience, ardour, nor any of the qualities that usually produce success,' was resentful when Wellington was given command in Spain. To soothe these ruffled feelings he was given command of the Walcheren expedition in 1809, a costly failure, productive only of clever epigrams and bitter feelings. An officer at Ramsgate once remarked that 'if you pass his window in his hours of leisure, you will see him yawning or with a book over which he is sleeping.'²

Yet Chatham could not be ignored; his very faults made him someone to be considered. His indolence, which allowed others to take control, frequently delayed business.³ He often kept officers waiting because he found it hard to get up.⁴ Sir Charles

1. Court and Cabinets, Buckingham, ed., I 397, Grenville to Buckingham, 23 June 1788.
2. A. Brett James, 'The Walcheren Failure', pt.i, History Today, xiii.No.xii, (Dec. 1963), 812.
3. Hist.Mss.Comm. Report on ^{the} Mss. in various collections. Vol.VI. (London, 1909), Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss.P.365, Lord Hood to Commodore the Hon. William Cornwallis, 2 Feb.1791.
4. The Farington Diary, ed. by J.Greig. (2nd edn., 8 vols. London, 1922-28), i.54.

Middleton was always urging a methodical system of work which though difficult to maintain, would be easier than leaving things to chance.¹ Like Middleton, Admiral Samuel Hood, senior naval lord, was often irritated by Chatham's lack of comprehension of the urgency and energy needed in war and preferred advice from the Mediterranean where he was commander in chief. Both he and Middleton tried to pump some energy into the First Lord, and with Pitt, formed a triumvirate at the Admiralty, of which Chatham was the figurehead. But just as no-one imagines the master of the ship to be the gaily painted figure on the prow, however ferocious, so no-one was deceived by the appointment of one whose outward mask was mere gilding on a character 'almost proverbial for enervation and indolence'.² As a result of these faults other ministers notably Dundas, took over his functions. Thus it was Dundas who settled Lord Hood's instructions in 1793 and arranged to correspond with him through Nepean.³ Similarly Dundas and not Chatham wrote to Grenville on the unfit state of Portuguese ships, Britain's proposed allies, in 1793, though Dundas was then staying with Chatham.⁴

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1. P.R.O. 30/8/365, ff.73-4, 17 June, ff.102-3, 24 Sep.1794.
 2. The Annual Register, vol.L1, 1809. 223.
 3. Dropmore Mss.II.407, Henry Dundas to Lord Grenville, July 1793.
 4. Ibid., 416, 18 Aug.1793.

Chatham did not resent this usurpation of his duties, but his successor did, and his political associations made it difficult to ignore his views. When the war revealed Chatham's incompetence and a change at the Board was accounted 'indispensably necessary',¹ Lord Spencer was chosen as First Lord, despite inexperience, because of his political connections. He was not a brilliant debater; hard working, amenable and known to favour Pitt, Lord Shelburne's bitter, accurate wit dubbed him an 'excellent chairman of Quarter Sessions.'² But he had an experienced Admiralty Board on whom he, and more important, Pitt could rely. However Spencer was not the complacent puppet Chatham had been; he got rid of those board members, Hood and Middleton, who were expected to advise and control him, and replaced them by weaker professional lords, more acceptable to him.

The Earl might have served as a model of the typical eighteenth century aristocrat. A Whig family tradition extending over a hundred years had brought large estates, great wealth and membership of the ruling caste. One sister was the lovely Duchess of Devonshire, the other the Countess of Bessborough, both noted Whig beauties and hostesses, and Lady Spencer, daughter of the first Earl of Lucan, was a woman whose wit and

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1. The Later Correspondence, Aspinall, ed., ii.278-9, No.1170, Pitt to George III, 8 Dec.1794.
 2. Sir Denis Le Marchant, Memoir of John Charles Viscount Althorp, Third Earl Spencer, (London, 1876), p.10.

intelligence made her house an intellectual centre. Spencer's interests were reflected in his magnificent library, one of the finest in Europe, in his trusteeship of the British Museum for forty years, and in his expertise in national and local politics, in which he took an active part until his death.

By hard work Spencer gradually achieved knowledge of naval affairs. As a keen politician he valued the claims of patronage the office bestowed and was a welcome change to Chatham in his courtesy and punctuality in replying personally to even the humblest letter. This smoothed the path for him and made him acceptable to and admired by the bulk of naval officers.¹

But Spencer was not a forceful character. True, it was difficult for any minister to stand against the dominance of the Army represented in the Cabinet by the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary at War, the Commander in Chief and the Master General of the Ordnance, especially a young and inexperienced minister like Spencer. He possessed a strong sense of duty which carried him through the difficulties of office, but he seems to have suffered from an underlying sense of inadequacy in professional matters and from a dislike of offending anyone. It is significant that he fainted with relief on hearing the news of the victory at the Nile, the triumphal end to the

1. Brit.Mus., Add.Mss.51724 (Holland Papers vol.clvii), No.9. f.12: T. Lloyd to Spencer, 27 June 1795. Warwick County Record Office, Seymour of Ragsley Mss., The Papers of Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour, 1759-1801; hereinafter Seymour Papers, CR114A/348, Admiral George Berkerley to Lord Hugh Seymour, 2 Sept.1798.

hazardous plan of sending a squadron into the Mediterranean while danger threatened at home. ^{His feeling of inadequacy} ~~The first~~ he gradually mastered and by 1801 he was respected by the body of naval opinion, but this victory was only achieved after hard work and the constant effort was engaged in only from a strong sense of public duty. 'Public benefit,' he wrote to Lord Camden,

'can alone be the object which is aimed at by it (his acceptance of office), for I am very far from entertaining an idea that any private comfort or satisfaction can arise from it I hope you will believe that I have not been very forward to seek my present situation, and that if the necessity of some such measures had not appeared very urgent, no consideration upon earth should have tempted me to agree to it.' 1.

These are the words of a conscientious but pessimistic man, and Spencer's doubts and hesitancy were revealed many times during the war.

He leaned heavily on his naval advisors. There was a frequent almost daily correspondence between him and Lord Hugh Seymour, a junior naval lord. On 7 May 1795, he wrote to Seymour hoping the latter would return to London, as he, Spencer, was not 'quite confident enough of my own information on many of these matters not to be fearful of getting into some scrape or other about them'². In like manner he was timid of setting up his

1. The Later Correspondence, Aspinall, ed., ii.279 nte.17 Dec. 1794.

2. Seymour Papers, CR114A/325, no.13.

professional ignorance against the Navy Board's experience.¹

In many respects Admiral Earl St. Vincent resembled Howe. Both had earned their earldoms by famous victories, both were at the head of their profession, devoted to the service, possessed of experience extending over forty years, and unquestionably honest. St. Vincent's reputation was founded on strict discipline, economy and a grasp of naval strategy then unequalled. Neither was an easy colleague to work with and both aroused strong political and professional enemies who drove them from office as a result of the stringent economies they practised.

Like Howe, St. Vincent's relations with his Prime Minister were unsatisfactory. Though there was no open hostility, there was lack of confidence on Addington's part. Many years later he considered the First Lord had been able but an 'ungenerous minded man and a very unsafe one to be connected with in politics.'² This was in contrast to Addington's statement to the King that St. Vincent had, 'no political convictions whatever and that he would not hesitate to give a fair and firm support to the measures of your Majesty's Government.'³

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1. C.N. Parkinson, Edward Pellew, Viscount Exmouth, (London, 1934), p.124.
 2. Brit.Mus., Add.Mss., 41378 (Martin Papers, vol. xxxiii), f.61; hereinafter Add.Mss.41378.
 3. Aspinall, The Cabinet Council, 151.nte.

Addington certainly found St. Vincent too forceful a colleague to be comfortable and when he became a government liability and the point of attack for all critics, dropped him with few qualms.

While Henry Dundas, now Lord Melville, was First Lord, Sir Charles Middleton was his naval advisor, and succeeded him in 1805. Middleton's appointment seemed a confirmation that Pitt was hostile to naval reform and caused the resignation of Addington, now Lord Sidmouth. Pitt persuaded him to continue in office on the assurance that these fears were groundless and that Middleton's appointment was temporary.¹

Middleton himself was not anxious to take office but he thought his years of service and experience deserved a peerage. Between 14 and 22 April several letters passed between him, Melville and Pitt on this topic. Middleton was prepared in return for a peerage, to take office and remain Chairman of the Commission for Revising the Civil Affairs of the Navy which Pitt had established. This would increase the Commission's prestige and enable its recommendations to be more speedily carried out. Once this was done and the Navy rescued from the precipice on which it stood he would resign.² He had never cared for outward shows of

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1. Hon.G.Pellew, Life of Lord Sidmouth, (2 vols.London,1847), ii.364., Bathurst Mss.,p.46, Lord Harrowby to Lord Bathurst, 21 Apl.1805.
 2. The Barham Papers, ed.by J.K.Laughton,III,(vol.XXXIX),72-3, Middleton to Melville, 16 Apl.1805. P.R.O.30/58/6,f.46. Middleton to Melville, 14 Apl.1805, f.48. Middleton to Pitt, 15 Apl 1805.

office and now proposed to give up the First Lord's house and live with Admiral Gambier, even offering to serve without salary. He finally accepted office on 22 April as Lord Barham.¹

The members of the Admiralty Board can be divided into civilians and seamen. Between 1783 and 1793 the former outnumbered the latter by five to two. With the outbreak of war this proportion was reversed at first in favour of the seamen, but after 1795 there were four civilians and three professionals, and after 1804 numbers were again reversed in favour of the sea lords, four to three. But there were other divisions, less obvious, but more important at that time, of wealth, position, and birth. Today, with weaker class barriers and dissolving family ties, membership of the same profession is a strong bond; it was not so in the eighteenth century. Then class and family were the cement which held together the social structure, so that men of the same social group had more in common with each other, even if in opposition, than with members of another class who held similar views.

Since political influence was a natural concomitant of social prestige, the Boards of this period are divided into those members who had political influence and those who did not; into those who occupied and controlled seats because of family connections, and those who occupied them on Government approval, or through Government support.

1. Ibid., f.53. Middleton to Pitt.

One of the new Admiralty lords in December, 1783, was John Jeffries Pratt, later Viscount Bayham. He was the son of the first Earl Camden a famous lawyer and lifelong friend of the elder Pitt. As a reward for his father's services in various high offices, Pratt was appointed one of the tellers of the Exchequer in 1780, a post he held for sixty years. Throughout his career in the Commons he sat as M.P. for Bath, where his father controlled one seat. His opinions were not highly regarded and Canning described him as 'useless lumber in the ministry.' Even in his early career he was criticised for hesitation. He was 'not the most decided character in public or private matters', and the tribute of a friend is hardly more flattering. In 1795 Lord Charlemont described him as 'plain, unaffected, good humoured man of pleasing conversation and address, and though in understanding not exactly his father's son or his sister's brother, yet he does not seem to be in any way deficient'.¹ It seems apparent that he was chosen for his family connections rather than his ability.

Henry, Lord Apsley, was appointed to the Board for the same reasons. Son of former Lord Chancellor and member of the

1. G.E.Cokayne, The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom: A History of the House of Lords and all its members from the earliest times, New edition, ed. by the Hon.Vicary Gibbs, H.A.Double-day, D. Warrand, Lord H.de.Walden, G.H. White, and R.S.Lea. (13 vols.London,1910-1959; hereinafter G.E.C. Complete Peerage), II.501-502.

influential Bathurst family, he possessed little ambition and a firm devotion to Pitt. According to Grenville he was an amiable High Tory, reserved, a poor speaker, and 'greatly averse to changes but unwillingly acquiescing in many.' But though well regarded by contemporaries, he presents a shadowy, ill-defined figure. He was related to the Buller family who had political interests in Devon and Cornwall and controlled the boroughs of East and West Looe, Saltash and Totnes, seven seats in all. John Buller, a first cousin, became one of the Commissioners for Excise in 1790,¹ and an uncle had been at the Admiralty Board with Lord Sandwich. Apsley himself held the family seat at Cirencester from 1783 to 1794, a seat represented by Bathursts since 1713 under a Tory banner, and after his turn at the Admiralty, was at the Treasury and India Boards for brief periods and later Secretary of State. Through his wife, Georgiana, sister of the future fourth Duke of Richmond, and niece of the Master General of the Ordnance, he was linked with another important aristocratic family.²

Robert Grosvenor, Viscount Belgrave, was also an ardent supporter of Pitt and later Addington. It was as M.P. for East Looe that he first entered the Admiralty in 1789, but a year

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1. I.R.Christie, 'Private Patronage versus Government Influence', English Historical Review, lxxi (1956), 249-255.
 2. G.E.C., Complete Peerage, II.30-31.

later sat for the family borough of Chester. Like Apsley and Pratt his brief stay at the Board was followed by other office, notably at the India Board. Nowhere were his services distinguished but his estates were large and they became even larger on marriage to the sole heiress of the Earl of Wilton. Public office was expected and accepted but could not claim his main interests which were devoted to intellectual and artistic pursuits and to stock breeding.¹

The Hon. John Thomas Townshend conforms to this conventional picture. He belonged to a family which played its part in English social and political life for nearly a century. He sat for Newport, Hants, and then for Whitchurch which his father controlled and first tasted office as under secretary of state to his father Viscount Sydney, the Home Secretary. In the re-organisation of the Cabinet in 1788-9 Sydney resigned and his son followed him out of office, but not for long. In the same year he became a junior lord of the Admiralty, moving to the Treasury in 1793. His Townshend connections alone would have been sufficient to qualify him for high office, but it was assured by the marriages of his sisters. The younger married her cousin, the Duke of Buccleuch, and the elder the Earl of Chatham, the Prime Minister's elder brother and First Lord of the Admiralty from 1788 to 1794. Townshend's own term co-incides almost exactly, 1789-1794.

1. Ibid., XII.Pt.II.538-9.

Charles Perceval, Lord Arden, is an exception in one respect, though he had the conventional social and political background of the others. Son of the second Earl of Egmont by his second wife, Catherine, sister to the Earl of Northampton, he was a member of that ruling circle and represented three seats in Parliament between 178⁰~~9~~-1802, (Launceston, 1780-90; Warwick 1790-96; Totnes 1796-1802. His father in law, Sir Thomas Wilson, was an M.P. for Sussex.)¹. His appointment was probably the result of a family connection with the Admiralty which his brother Spencer, the future Prime Minister, continued when appointed counsel to the Admiralty in 1794. The second Earl of Egmont had been First Lord from 1763 to 1766 and though said to have wasted between £400,000 - £500,000 on 'pompous additions' to the dockyards, he had been a great favourite with the shipwrights, whose claims he had supported.². Arden served longer than any other civilian at the Board and after his resignation retained the position of Registrar of the Admiralty court, to which he had been appointed in 1790. Unlike the others he kept an interest in naval affairs until his death.

With the naval officers the case is much the same. Philip

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1. G.P. Judd, Members of Parliament, 1734-1832, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p302.
 2. His birthday was celebrated at Woolwich and Deptford with great rejoicing. Port Egmont in the Falkland Islands is named after him. D.N.B.XLIV.372.

Affleck was not an M.P. though his brother Edmund, also in the Navy represented Colchester from 178~~7~~¹ till his death in 1788 and their elder brother John, had been M.P. for Suffolk 1743-1761 and for Agmondesham 1767-1768.¹ Affleck's career had been reasonably distinguished though not quite as meritorious as his brother's. At the siege of Louisburg he had attracted attention of Admiral Boscawen by his gallant conduct and had fought bravely with Rodney in the last stages of the American war. A steady, not a brilliant seaman, after a spell in the West Indies from 1790-1793 he saw no more active service and retired from public life in 1796. What then made the Government chose him as junior naval lord of the Admiralty in 1793? The most probable reasons are the outbreak of war with the necessity of having another sailor with political connections at the Board, who was not expected to serve again but was sufficiently noteworthy to command respect, and had practical experience of campaigns.

Despite his famous name, Admiral Drake, another naval member, was an undistinguished officer who served throughout the Seven Years and American wars, but was not employed after 1783. His two elder brothers had been M.P.'s for the family borough at Berealston and he represented Plymouth, an Admiralty borough, in

1. G.E. Cokayne, Complete Baronetage, 1611-1800, (5 vols. Exeter, 1900-1906), V.221

1789. He was a friend of the Cornwallis family and of Admiral Samuel Hood¹ and the brother in law of General Eliot, the heroic defender of Gibraltar during the recent war. His second wife's family were the Onslows of Guildford; his father in law had been M.P. for the borough until 1784, his wife's cousin, Thomas, represented it until 1806. Her great uncle had been Speaker of the House of Commons throughout George II's reign and her second cousin was first Earl of Onslow. Finally there was a naval connection, Admiral Sir Richard Onslow was Lady Drake's uncle. Add to this that Drake's elder brother, the fifth baronet, was Master of the King's Household and Comptroller of the Board of Green Cloth and his nephew aide-de-camp to the King² and it is not difficult to understand why Drake was appointed to the Admiralty. But he did not long enjoy the honour. After only two months, from August to early October 1789, he died, 'worried out of his life by a wife.'³ The vacancy of junior naval lord was offered first to Admiral Hotham and on his refusal to Captain Gardner, though it was kept open for a time in case Sir Charles

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1. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss, p.345, Lord Hood to Commodore the Hon.William Cornwallis, 18 Aug.1789.
 2. G.E.C. Complete Peerage, X.70-71., D.N.B.XLII. 216-221,225., Lady Elliott-Drake, The Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake, (2 vols.London,1911),ii.329-31, 335.
 3. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss, p.347, Admiral J. Leveson-Gower to Commodore the Hon.William Cornwallis, 19 Feb.1790.

Middleton, then Comptroller of the Navy, agreed to serve, in which case Gardner would have been appointed Comptroller. But 'Sir Charles, acting a part not perfectly consistent and expressing a wish to retire, he was taken at his word, Gardner made a Lord of the Admiralty, and Mr. Martin Comptroller.'¹

Gardner, 'worthy and honourable man,' was appointed in 1790. He had recently returned from a tour of duty as Commander in Chief at Jamaica, and served on the Board until March 1795. Unlike Affleck or Drake, he was still a serving officer and administrative duties were not allowed to interfere with active service. Thus during the Spanish armament he commanded the Courageux and in 1793 went to the West Indies on an expedition against the French. His position at the Admiralty was not the end of, but rather a stage in, a long and honourable career, and he was, with Gower, the only one of this naval group to be appointed while still a captain. This was all the more surprising since, unlike Gower, he had no strong political affiliations or powerful family connections. Plymouth served as a seat for six years and Westminster for ten more. Possibly his tactful handling while Commander-in-Chief, Jamaica of the dispute between Prince William, captain of the Pegasus and his first lieutenant, Isaac Schomberg, contributed to his appointment. Martin says that his good feeling for all parties and 'that propriety of conduct

1. Ibid., p.364, Lord Hood to Commodore the Hon.W.Cornwallis, 2 Feb.1791.

and decision which governed his proceedings on all occasions,' brought about a reconciliation which ended the affair quietly.¹ This good feeling and conciliatory temperament did not extend to social inferiors since he threatened to hang one of the men's delegates at the Spithead mutiny of 1797 and escaped hanging himself with difficulty. Ralfe admits that though an able officer he was 'one of the severest and most arbitrary.'²

Admiral Samuel Hood already stood high in his profession when appointed to the Board in 1788, and his efficiency and devotion to the Navy made him a valuable commissioner. A middle class family, the Hoods ultimately became 'the only Naval Officers who were really intimate with the Pitt household.'³ Tory in politics and devoted to the King, through his wife Hood was in touch with the civil branches of naval administration and with the borough of Portsmouth where he had been dockyard Commissioner. His wife's grandfather had been master ropemaker in the naval dockyard, and her father a surgeon and apothecary in the borough. Several of his brothers in law were in the Navy; Captains Linzee, Amherst, Holwall. Hood was M.P. for Westminster 1785-88 and

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1. Letters of Sir^T Byam Martin, R.V.Hamilton, ed., I.(vol.XXIV),84.
 2. J. Ralfe, The Naval Biography of Great Britain, (4 vols. London, 1828, hereinafter Naval Biography), i.412; See also Barrow, op.cit., p.401-2.
 3. D. Mathew, The Naval Heritage, (London, 1945),p.83.

1790-96; in the intervening years he represented Reigate where the two seats were controlled by Lords Harwicke and Somers, the latter through his second wife related to the Buller family.

The Hon. John Leveson Gower was a political captain par excellence, and serves as a microcosm of mid-eighteenth century 'interest'. His connections were splendid and numerous; he was related by blood or marriage to the great ducal families of Newcastle, Rutland, Bedford, Kingston and Beaufort, and to the ^{Marquises} ~~Earls~~ of Rockingham, ^{Earls of} Salisbury, Egmont and Leicester. His half brother, Granville Leveson Gower, first Marquis of Stafford and member of the 'Bloomsbury Gang' controlled four seats, two at Newcastle-under-Lyne, one at Stafford and one at Lichfield, and had been a lord of the Admiralty in Pelham's administration. In 1783 despite his earlier political record, he was Lord President of the Council under Pitt, while his brother John was junior lord of the Admiralty and represented the safe family seats of Appleby,¹ 1784-1790 and Newcastle, 1790-1792.

His family circle illustrates the small connected world in which these people moved; in that circle what mattered most was to be in office, close to the source of places and promotions. At night one met, at the gaming tables or assemblies, the colleagues of the morning Board room, who were frequently close relations. Thus Gower's third cousin was the wife of John Thomas Townshend, Arden's father had married, as his first wife, another cousin, and Gower's nephew, the future fifth Duke of

1. Controlled by the Earl of Thanet. Gower's mother was a daughter of the sixth earl.

Beaufort, married the daughter of his half brother, Granville by his third wife.

A plan to make Middleton and Hood, Lord Chatham's senior naval advisors in 1788 foundered on the dislike Gower entertained for the former and the impossibility of them working together. At the time, because of Gower's 'conduct, his professional character, and his connections,' it seemed impossible to drive him from office, but there were ways,¹ and later in the year he resigned because of 'incivility.'² Martin found him a 'presumptuous overbearing man,' and in Gardner's recollection he appeared almost as a caricature of the bluff, bad tempered, loud voiced captain of fiction.³ Nevertheless he was an able officer and as befitted one of his connections was 'well acquainted with the character of most of the officers in the service; his memory in that respect was astonishing.' This pre-war Board thus had a proportion of seamen who could contribute practical experience, and of the scions of great families

1. Court and Cabinets, Buckingham, ed., I.397, Grenville to Buckingham, 23 Jun.1788.
2. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss., p.347, Admiral J. Leveson Gower to Commodore the Hon. W. Cornwallis, 19 Feb.1790.
3. Letters of Sir T. Byam Martin, R.V. Hamilton, ed., III. 292 nte. The Later Correspondence, Aspinall, ed., i.175, no.232, Prince William to Geo.III, 4 Aug.1785., Recollections of James Anthony Gardner, 1775-1814, ed. by Sir R.V. Hamilton and Sir J.K. Laughton, (London, N.R.S. vol.XXXI, 1906; hereinafter Gardner, Recollections), p.65-67.

whose political support it was necessary to keep. There remained a small group of men who did not control boroughs or votes but were connected through marriage or friendship with the aristocracy who did. Such men were Charles Brett, Richard Hopkins, John Smyth, and Charles Small Pybus. Not much is known of them beyond their brief service records, but the boroughs they represented implied little political power at their own disposal.

In Brett's case there was already a naval and administrative connection. One brother, John, a captain, had been one of Anson's lieutenants, the other, Timothy, clerk of the cheque at Portsmouth. A close friend of Lord Howe's, Brett had been Admiral Boscawen's flag lieutenant in 1747 and eight years later was in charge of Portsmouth yard.¹ He was Paymaster of the Navy from July 1766 to January 1770 when Lord Howe was Treasurer and acted with his patron in all things.² He represented Dartmouth between 1782-1784 when he was at the Admiralty, and before that had been M.P. for Lostwithiel, where the nomination was held by Lord Mount Edgumbe, a Pittite, and then for Sandwich

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1. C.F. Aspinall-Oglander, Admiral's Wife; life and letters of the Hon. Mrs. Edward Boscawen, 1719-1761, (London, 1940), pp.57, 158.
 2. Sir. L. Namier and J. Brooke, The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1754-1790, (3 vols. History of Parliament Trust, London, 1964; hereinafter Namier and Brooke, Hist. of Parl.), II.114-115.

where the patron was Philip Stephens, the Admiralty secretary. Brett was reckoned 'particularly conversant in naval affairs'¹. besides serving on government committees on other topics.

Richard Hopkins is another example. On the Board from 1784 to 1790 he sat first for Thetford from 1780-1784 where the seat was controlled by the Duke of Grafton. Hopkins was an old friend of the third duke, who had been Prime Minister, and kept him in touch with affairs. As such Hopkins was useful to Pitt who used him as a go-between to discover the duke's sentiments on the India Bill and later on Parliamentary reform. Unable to secure the duke when he was forming his ministry, Pitt asked for the support of Grafton's friends in Parliament, and though at first Hopkins refused to serve unless his friend and patron was included, he was finally prevailed upon.² His resignation in 1790 may be a reflection of the growing strength of the Prime Minister with the consequent lessening of his need for a spent political force like Grafton and his supporters in important office. Hopkins sat for Dartmouth until 1790 and represented Queenborough, a Treasury controlled borough, until 1796, and Harwich, the responsibility of John Robinson, a ministerial supporter of George III, for a further three years.

1. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss., p.330, Elizabeth, Countess Cornwallis to Hon. William Cornwallis, 12 Apl.1782.

2. Grafton Memoirs, Anson, ed., p.383,384,387,398-9.

John Smyth though married to the third Duke of Grafton's eldest daughter, was not politically dependant on him. A member of an old Yorkshire family, he was M.P. for Pontefract, from 1783 to 1807 and had taken an active part in the petitioning movement of 1778-9⁹. He was associated with Wyvill's petition for Parliamentary reform¹. but from 1791 to 1793 he sat at the Admiralty and later at the Treasury, was Master of the Mint and a Privy Councillor.

Charles Small Pybus's family was originally a Yorkshire one also, though now settled in Dover. The connections were East Indian; John Pybus, Charles's father, had been a member of the Madras Civil Service and Council. Two of Charles's sisters were married to Indian Army officers, one being Brigadier General Sir Robert Fletcher, Commander in Chief on the Coromandel coast. Connected by marriage with Sir Hugh Palliser, they could claim a naval family interest of some importance. Pybus was M.P. for Dover a Treasury borough, from 1790-1802, covering a period when he was at the Admiralty and one of the lords of the Treasury.²

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1. Namier and Brooke, Hist. of Parl., III.455-6.
 2. The Baronetage of England, ed. by W. Betham (5 vols. Ipswich, 1801-5; hereinafter Baronetage, Betham), iii.402., J. Hutchins, The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset (3rd edition, corrected and augmented by W. Shipp and J. W. Hodson, 4 vols. London, 1861-70), ii.238., L. A. Mills, Ceylon under British Rule, 1795-1932, (London, 1933), pp.1-3., See also The Later Correspondence, Aspinall, ed., i.542, Pitt to Geo. III, 9 June 1791 on the appointment of Smith and Pybus, 'both of whom are likely to be efficient and useful in business.'

It was the decision of the Portland Whigs to join Pitt which brought Lord Spencer into office, first as Lord Privy Seal and a few days later as ambassador extraordinary to Vienna, where he tried to urge on Austria her unfulfilled obligations as Britain's ally in Holland. On his return from this fruitless task he was asked to take over the Admiralty. The unfitness of Chatham for the office, overlooked in the rejoicings over the Glorious First of June, had become more obvious in the following weeks. The battle had failed to prevent the grain ships reaching France and the temporary advantage was not exploited because of confusion and disorganisation in the dockyards, shortage of ships and men and a general lack of planning. It was arranged that Spencer and Chatham should change places and in December, 1794, Earl Spencer became First Lord. The composition of the Board remained the same for the first three months when several changes took place. One was the elevation of Philip Stephens from the secretaryship, where his place was taken by Evan Nepean, to a place at the Board. Another and more far reaching change was the replacement by younger inexperienced officers, of the professional sea lords, Hood, Affleck, Gardner and Middleton, the last of which was particularly unfortunate.

In 1790 Middleton had resigned the Comptrollership of the Navy Board in dissatisfaction over the delay in implementing the reforms proposed by the Commission appointed to inquire into fees and perquisites.¹ After his refusal of a place at the

1. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.6-8.

Board in 1789, for the next four years Middleton acted as unofficial advisor to the First Lord, a curious position which may have satisfied Dundas, Pitt and Chatham but must have been resented by the other sea lords. Middleton had not seen active service since 1763 and in 1778 had accepted a civil appointment which was then generally taken to mean retirement from active service and competition in the flag lists. After the acrimonious debates of 1787-8, he had been created rear admiral, an appointment which contributed to Lord Howe's resignation the following year. In 1794 he joined the Admiralty as senior naval lord, he was second in seniority to Admiral Hood who was then in command in the Mediterranean, and his previous administrative experience was of great value, the more so since both Lord Hood and Gardner were actively employed at sea.

Middleton's active career had been undistinguished. Most of it had been spent in West Indian or North American waters during the Seven Years War. On the outbreak of the American war he was captain of a guardship at the Nore, but saw no more active service and in 1778 was appointed Comptroller. While on half pay he had married, in 1761, Margaret Gambier, one of whose brothers became an admiral, another lieutenant governor of the Bahamas, while a sister married Vice Admiral Cornish. Middleton's family origins were Scots, legal and academic. His father's family was connected with the Earls of Middleton, his mother, Helen Dundas, was a first cousin to Henry Dundas, while a niece

married the Prime Minister's cousin. Influence of a powerful kind had therefore played a part in his career and was used to help younger relations. His nephew, Robert Gambier Middleton became an Admiral, his wife's nephew Admiral James Gambier, became a lord of the Admiralty, another, Samuel Gambier was commissioner of the Navy.

Middleton's appetite for work was immense¹. and Pitt thought him the best man of business he ever knew. He was an evangelical². and though this brought him support and respect from Wilberforce and the like³. in other quarters his religious principles made him suspect.⁴ His zeal for the service was no less whole hearted for being frequently advertised, but he was not an easy colleague to work with; even Dundas, his cousin, learnt that 'he requires to have a great deal of his own way of

1. Memorials, personal and historical of Admiral Lord Gambier, ed.by Georgiana, Lady Chatterton (2 vols London,1861), i.265, Hannah More to Mrs,Bouverie, 20 Oct.1794.
2. Namier and Brooke, Hist. of Parl., I.116.
3. See Hannah More's comment, 'What a comfort it is to have a Cabinet Minister who prays for the success of his measures.' M. Jaeger, Before Victoria, (London, 1956),p.50.
4. The Creevey Papers, A Selection from the Correspondence and Diaries of the late Thomas Creevey, M.P., ed.by Sir H. Maxwell, (2 vols.London,1904), i.36, Creevey to Dr.Currie, 11 May 1805.

doing business in order to do it well.'¹. When at the Navy Board he criticised Admiralty sloth and corruption and jealously guarded the subordinate board's privileges, but when at the Admiralty he adopted its view of his one time responsibility. This was less of a volte-face than it seemed. Middleton had come to the conclusion that no reforms introduced at the Navy Board would ever be really effective until the Admiralty was re-organised to enforce them. Because of this he was suspected by his colleagues of double dealing and inordinate ambition, though his experience was missed in the difficult days after 1795.

The remaining sea officers during these years were Admirals James Gambier, William Young, Robert Man and Lord Hugh Seymour. Of Admiral Man little is known and why he should have been a member of the Board is a mystery.² His service was undistinguished and his connections unimportant. A former shipmate considered him a 'thick headed fellow,'³. Lord Bridport's high opinion of him was general until his conduct in the Mediterranean, in 1796 showed lack of nerve. Admiral Jervis, his

1. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., I.5-7, Dundas to Spencer, 14 Dec. 1794.
2. There may be a link with the Mann family of Linton, Kent, see Baronetage, Betham, ed. iii.254-6.
3. The Tomlinson Papers, ed. by J.G. Bullocke, (London, N.R.S., vol. LXXIV, 1935), p.291, Captain R. Tomlinson to Nicholas Tomlinson, 19 Oct. 1799.

commander there, wrote that for nine months Man had been 'afflicted with such a distempered mind that imaginary ills and difficulties have been continually brooding in it.'¹ It is amazing that after serious errors of judgement which led to his being ordered to strike his flag in January, 1797, he should, within two years, be called to a seat at the Admiralty.²

According to St. Vincent, Man and Young 'never knew what discipline was and they will never acquire it; the former from nervous weakness the latter from conceit and presumption.'³ William Young became rear admiral after serving in the Mediterranean with Lord Hood. He was a close friend of Gambier and though little is known of his background, he had sufficient influence to get command of the Crescent during the Spanish war scare in 1790. Appointed port admiral of Plymouth, he lives in Marryat's Frank Mildmay as Sir Hurricane Humbug and achieved later fame as an enemy of Lord Cochrane.⁴ St. Vincent disliked

1. O. Sherrard, Life of Lord St. Vincent, (London, 1933), p.87.
2. The Naval Miscellany, ed.by Sir J.K.Laughton, (London,N.R.S. vol.XX,1901), I.253, Lord Bridport to Lord Hood, 12 Sep.1798. For an article defending Man see Commander A.M. Sheffield, 'In Defence of Man,' The Mariner's Mirror, xx.no.2 (April, 1934), 187-198.
3. The Spencer Papers, H.W.Richmond,ed., IV(vol.LIX), 4., Also The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, The Jervis Papers, JER/21 Admiral St. Vincent to Nepean, 3 Apl.1797.
4. D.N.B. LXIII,400-01.

him and wrote that when he was a captain his ship was a disgrace but that when elevated to the Board he set himself up 'as the pink of Naval experience and ability.'¹ Lord Spencer however thought well of his professional abilities² though Young took a pessimistic view, unsupported by general naval opinion, in February, 1797, when there were discussions in whether to send re-inforcements to the Mediterranean in view of a possible French invasion.³

James Gambier is quite a notable figure. He was the son of a Lieutenant Governor of the Bahamas and a nephew of Vice Admiral Gambier, under whom he first entered the Navy. He had only five and a half years sea experience when he got his flag in 1799 and thereafter preferred life ashore. The Basque Roads affair was still in the future, but the tactlessness was already apparent when he replaced Affleck in 1799. Known throughout the service for his strict religious views, he was considered by some Methodistical and hypocritical,. Gambier's West Indian connections were reinforced by marriage into the Mathew family of Antigua, a powerful association in a society which paid close attention to

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1. Jervis Papers, JER/24. St. Vincent to Nepean, 22 June, 1800.
 2. Dropmore Mss., IV.320, Spencer to Grenville, 21 Sept. 1798.
 3. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., II (vol. XLVIII), 228-232.

the 'sugar interest' and one which he shared with Gardner. A quiet, kindly man Gambier did not deserve St. Vincent's harsh comment that he was 'a compound of paper and packthread.'¹

His uncle was Sir Charles Middleton, a powerful patron. Gambier became senior naval lord on Middleton's retirement, but he was ill qualified to sit there; his service experience was short, his ability questionable and his rigid principles made him unpopular with his colleagues.

There remains Lord Hugh Seymour, resembling Gower in his aristocratic connections and the 'interest' at his disposal. Seymour's political background, like Gower's, was Whig. His father was the first Marquis of Hertford, his mother the daughter of the second Duke of Grafton. His brother, the second Marquis, was a follower of the prince of Wales. Lord Hugh, his brother George and their friend John Willet Payne, were close friends of the Prince and though a marriage in 1785 to Lady Ann Waldegrave, daughter of the Duchess of Gloucester by her first marriage to the second Earl Waldegrave, had rescued him from 'an irregular and convivial life,' he remained master of the robes and privy purse to the Prince.² His wife's two elder sisters were married respectively to the fourth Earl Waldegrave and the fourth Duke of Grafton, an intimate friend of Pitt. In 1783

1. Mathew, op.cit., p.184.

2. D.N.B. Ll,324. The Naval Chronicle, 1799,ii.357-373.

the Earl of Hertford had had five members in the Commons, his four sons and Whitshed Keene. The amount of interest commanded by such a family was very great; and even if, as O'Byrne later claimed, Lord Hugh was, 'an officer of surpassing excellence,'¹ his influential connections had assured him of a speedy rise in his profession.

After serving in the Spanish crisis, a head injury caused a temporary retirement ashore for three years but with recovery and on the outbreak of war, he was again employed in the Mediterranean under Lord Hood. He fought in the battles of the First of June and L'Orient and in 1799 having been created Vice Admiral went out to Jamaica as Commander in Chief. The capture of Surinam enlivened an otherwise uneventful command which ended in his death from yellow fever in 1801. His appointment to the Board as junior naval lord from 1795 to 1798 did not prevent him serving at sea for most of that time. At this period considered one of the 'rising men in the Navy,'² the comment of his contemporaries and his own letters reveal him as a stern but just officer whose death was regretted by everyone.³ St. Vincent did

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1. W.R.O'Byrne, Naval Biographical Dictionary, (3 vols.London, 1849),iii.1052 nte.
 2. Hist.Mss.Comm., Supplementary Report on the Mss. of Robert Graham Esq. of Fintry, (London, 1942; hereinafter Graham Mss.),p.14, Thomas Graham to Robert Graham,10 Oct.1798.
 3. Gardner,Recollections, R.V.Hamilton & J.K.Laughton,eds., p.237.

not share this view and blamed the decay of naval discipline on the bad example the 'fashionables' such as Seymour and his friend George Berkeley, had set their men by their continued absenteeism.¹

Three civilians, Philip Stephens, Thomas Wallace and the Hon. William Eliot, make up the total. Leaving Stephens until later consideration, let us examine the now familiar pattern to which Wallace and Eliot conformed. Thomas Wallace's father was Solicitor and Attorney General to ~~George III~~ and the milieu of this old Cumberland family was legal and commercial. Wallace sat as Tory M.P. for Grampound and at the time of his appointment to the Board in 1797, for Penrhyn. He was a consistent supporter of Pitt throughout his political life. Like other commissioners his brief period of service was followed by more lucrative government posts. In his case commerce and administration absorbed his talents and he served for long periods at the India Board, was Master of the Mint and finally Vice-President of the Board of Trade.

Eliot too was a Tory and M.P. for St. Germans, one of the family seats, from 1791 to 1802. Like Pratt, Townshend and Apsley he belonged to the circle of ruling families which then formed English society. He was the youngest son of the first baron of St. Germans, who controlled six seats, two at Liskeard,

1. Jervis Papers, JER/21. St. Vincent to Nepean. 21 May, 1797.

two at St. Germans and after 1758, two at Grampound. By his wife, the daughter of the first Marquis of Stafford, Eliot might claim acquaintance with the Whig interests. His eldest brother, Edward, was Pitt's brother in law and close friend. Between them the Eliots represented St. Germans,^{and} Liskeard from 1780-1823 and not surprisingly other plums of office fell to them. Both William and Edward became lords of the Treasury and though the latter took the almost inevitable step to the India Board, William's talents were expressed in diplomatic fields. Between 1791 and 1793 he was secretary of the legation at Berlin, a year later secretary of the Embassy and in the absence of the ambassador, minister plenipotentiary at the Hague, holding the same position to the elector Palatine and the Diet of Ratisbon from 1796-1798. Since these posts required tact, patience and fortitude in handling delicate situations, his appointment to the Admiralty in 1800 was a sensible one. Yet foreign affairs reclaimed him after four years at the Board and in 1804 he became under-secretary of state for that department.

All these men belonged to one social group and in many cases were related by blood or marriage. Some of them were further linked by East or West Indian connections to the world of trade and commercial interests. Of the fourteen civil lords during this period, five later became Lords Lieutenant or Deputy for their county and commanders of their local militia. The possession of political influence or access to it was what primarily

gained them a seat at the Board. The Administration appointed them to placate or satisfy powerful political groups or individuals. Ability, even suitability, were secondary considerations.

The immediate cause of Pitt's resignation in 1801 was his failure to get George III to agree to Catholic Emancipation. The King chose Henry Addington, Speaker of the House of Commons, 1789-1801, as Pitt's successor with the latter's full approval, and during February the ministry was gradually formed. Since Lord Spencer had resigned, the Admiralty was vacant. Addington suggested St. Vincent to the King supported by Pitt and Dundas and an official order was made on 9 February. St. Vincent accepted on certain conditions. Only the 'entire concurrence and approbation of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas and Lord Spencer,' he wrote, would make him agree to such 'a momentous undertaking.'¹ On February 14, the anniversary of the battle from which the earl had taken his title, he had an audience with the king and over the week-end the composition of the Board was decided. On the 20th it met for the first time and started work before most of the other departments.

Since only two members of the previous board, Stephens and Eliot, had agreed to remain, there was an almost complete change. St. Vincent brought with him two naval colleagues whom he particularly admired; Sir Thomas Troubridge and John Markham and

1. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., I.14.

they were reinforced in 1804 by Sir Harry Burrard Neale who replaced Eliot. Though more efficient, capable and conscientious than their immediate predecessors, politically and in seniority the professional element was weak. All three were captains and only Troubridge was a famous seaman. Uninterested in politics, he was M.P. for Great Yarmouth in 1802, sharing the seat with Thomas Jervis, the First Lord's cousin. But it was a lifetime's devotion to the service and his acknowledged professional ability which brought him to the Board. His origins were humble, he had no influential relations or political 'pull' and it is to St. Vincent's credit that he chose such a man to be his senior naval lord. It also reveals that patronage and 'interest' were not all important nor ^{did} ability always go unrewarded.

By contrast with Troubridge's obscure beginnings, Markham was the second son of an Archbishop of York who had been a royal tutor, and a brother to the M.P. for Calne. One brother in law was the third Earl of Mansfield, the other was the third Baron Dynevor, M.P. for Carmarthen, 1790-1793. Markham himself became M.P. for Portsmouth in November 1801 on Lord Hugh Seymour's death and the Admiralty representative in the Commons. Like Troubridge, Markham had served under St. Vincent and a mutual respect had developed, reinforced by Whiggish sympathies. Markham was a good committee member, who served at the Board again from 1806-7, and it was he who, on 13 December, 1802,

brought in the bill to appoint a Commission to inquire into frauds and abuses in the naval departments which ultimately led to the downfall of Addington's ministry in 1804 and the later impeachment of Lord Melville.¹

Neale was a son of the governor of Yarmouth castle, Isle of Wight and succeeded to the baronetcy on the death of his uncle in 1791. His 'interest' showed itself in continuous employment through peace and war and in lucrative appointments to frigates in which he captured French prizes and to royal yachts in which he frequently entertained the Royal Family, when they were at Weymouth. Before and after his appointment to the Board he was so employed and pursued a successful naval career, respected by his contemporaries.² That this career was founded on royal favour appears from a letter from St. Vincent to Sir Charles Grey. The First Lord was eager to advance the career of Grey's son, George, who had been the admiral's first captain. George, he wrote, must make the 'Campaign of Weymouth', to gain royal favour and early promotion.³ As in Neale's case, the King's good opinion had its effect; appointment and honours

1. J. Marshall, Royal Naval Biography, (XII vols. London, 1823-30)., i.266-268., D.N.B. vol. XXXVI, pp.171-4.

2. Add.Mss., 41378, ff.88-89.

3. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., II (vol. LXI), 134-5, St. Vincent to Sir Charles Grey, 12 May, 1801.

were bestowed on the Grey family and George Grey ultimately became resident commissioner at Portsmouth. It is significant that in the invasion scare of 1803, Grey and Neale were considered for the defence of the Thames.¹

Neale seems to have been without strong political affiliations and served from January to September 1804 under St. Vincent and his successor and political opponent, Lord Melville. He represented Lymington, where he controlled two seats. The civilian element at the Board was politically weak and Neale's political attributes were an additional recommendation in his favour.

The new civilian members of St. Vincent's Board were James Adams, William Garthshore and John Lemon. They were undistinguished and reflected the general difficulty that Addington faced in getting able and well known men to serve in his ministry. This was one reason why the proportion of sea officers rose to four to three by 1804, and of the three civilians Stephens might almost be counted a professional sea lord through long experience. Adams's father had been an Exchequer baron and Adams was a lawyer by profession, but the fact that he was also the Prime Minister's brother in law was of more importance to his appointment. From 1796 to 1802 he was M.P. for Bramber, from 1803 to 1806 for Harwich.

William Garthshore, like Addington, was the son of a

1. Ibid., 379-80, St. Vincent to Sir H. Burrard Neale, 9 Sep. 1803.

fashionable doctor. His father's powerful clients and his own virtues secured his appointment as tutor to the Marquis of Dalkeith with whom he made the Grand Tour.¹ Later on the recommendation of the Duke of Buccleuch he became Dundas's private secretary. It was this Scottish connection, for Garthshore's father was a Scot, which helped to bring him to the Admiralty in 1801. He had been M.P. for Launceston in 1795 and later in the same year for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, and his marriage to the daughter of a wealthy wine merchant ensured a connection with commerce. Unfortunately the death of father in law, wife and child, all within a few days, in August 1803, so depressed him that he resigned at the end of that year and his place was taken in 1804 by Colonel John Lemon.²

At this time Lemon was M.P. for Truro, 1794-1814, controlled by Viscount Falmouth, a Tory, and eldest son of the late Admiral Boscawen. Lemon was brother to Sir William Lemon, M.P. for Cornwall in eleven Parliaments from 1774 to 1824. John Lemon's sister in law was Jane Buller, sister of Sir Francis Buller and daughter of James Buller of Morval by his first wife, the daughter of the Earl of Bathurst.³ John Lemon represented

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1. He was also a great friend of the Paget family and one of the Prince of Wales' 'set'. Rt.Hon.Sir.A.Paget, The Paget Papers; diplomatic & other correspondence of Rt.Hon.Sir.A. Paget, 1794-1807, (2 vols.London, 1896), i.120 nte.
 2. D.N.B. XXI:32-3.
 3. G.E.C. Complete Baronetage, V.173. The Buller-Apsley connection with the Board had thus been maintained.

West Looe, 1784, Saltash 1787-1790, both in the Buller interest and Truro. Little more is known of him and as he only served from January to April, 1804, it is difficult to judge his capabilities or regard him as more than a politically useful stop-gap, whose Parliamentary influence got him his post at a time when the ministry needed every vote.

Addington's ministry was committed to peace and retrenchment. With these policies St. Vincent was in agreement but soon added the reform of the Navy to the programme. This was made possible by the peace of Amiens in 1802. Between 20 August and 10 October, the Admiralty had inspected the dockyards and were so dissatisfied at what they saw that a Parliamentary Commission was appointed to enquire into abuses. The reforms which St. Vincent initiated raised a storm of abuse and opposition which weakened Addington's ministry to a point where Pitt was once more able to take over office. In his new Cabinet Dundas, now Lord Melville, a former Treasurer of the Navy, was First Lord and with the exception of Neale and Stephens a completely new Board was once more appointed in May, 1804.

Including Melville, it consisted of three civil lords, Stephens and William Dickinson being the other two, and four sea lords, the senior of whom was Vice Admiral James Gambier, while the new professional lords were Admiral Sir John Colpoys and Vice Admiral Philip Patton. This was something of a triumph for Sir Charles Middleton, whose friendship with Patton and

relationship with Dundas and Gambier had in the past been mutually useful. The triumph was completed the following year when on Melville's retirement, Middleton, now Lord Barham, became first Lord on 2 May, 1805. Though only holding office for a year it provided the culmination of his life's work - the campaign of Trafalgar.

Melville's resignation to defend himself against the charges of corruption arising from the Tenth Report, on the office of Treasurer of the Navy, of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry, did not break the continuity of the Board whose membership remained essentially the same. Neale had been replaced by Sir Evan Nepean in September, 1804 and Colpoys by Captain Viscount Garlies in May, 1805. This last appointment revived Scots influence at the Board and strengthened the weak position of the ministry.

Neither Neale nor Colpoys had served long and according to his nephew, if the latter had been allowed to choose he would have preferred to keep his lucrative appointment as Commander in Chief at Plymouth since he lost the prize money due to the post.¹ Melville's flattering letter of 19 May, 1804, that he and Mr. Pitt wanted 'men of respectable characters, of acknowledged talents, and popular manners,' at the Board, persuaded Colpoys to agree to the appointment and when in 1805 he resigned

1. Which fell to his successor, Sir William Young, see above, p.45

Melville saw that he was compensated for possible financial loss by appointing him Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital at £1500 p.a. and later Governor.¹

As a seaman the admiral's experience was wide and he was respected in his profession. But his subsequent appointments were civil ones and though there was a rumour of probable appointment as Commander in Chief in the Mediterranean, he was never again in active command. Considering Colpoys's unpopularity with the lower deck after the 1797 mutiny, in which he was almost hanged, Melville's phrase was infelicitous. Though no blame was openly attached to him for the incident on H.M.S. London, the Admiralty thought it better not to employ him actively and his appointment to the Board may have been a partial compensation for an unmerited and compulsory retirement, none the less actual for being unofficial. If so it cannot have raised the opinion of the Board held by the lower deck. This was balanced by the appointment of Vice Admiral Philip Patton, whose career and friendship with Middleton extended over forty years. Though his origins were comparatively humble and his career had not been distinguished by spectacular engagements, he was a good seaman, popular with all ranks for his kindness and attempts to improve conditions of pay and service. He had been one of the first to warn the Admiralty of the impending danger of mutiny in

1. J. Ralfe, Naval Biography, iii.180-181.

1797. His work on the improved signal code and at the Transport Board was highly regarded.¹ Lord Chatham had found him so useful as Chief Commissioner for Transports that he tried to persuade Patton to remain at that board rather than take his flag. This Patton refused and though made a rear admiral was not employed until 1803. He was then given command of the Downs squadron under Lord Keith, commander in chief of the North Sea fleet. Despite a strong threat of invasion Patton did not actually go to sea and was allowed to command from the shore. While here he met Pitt, then in retirement at Walmer. This acquaintance may have influenced Pitt to appoint Patton to the Admiralty in the following year, where he continued to serve until the change of ministry in 1806. By his contemporaries Patton was considered the authority on transport and the lower deck, and his choice was a good one.²

William Dickinson is an unknown quantity. At the time of his appointment he was M.P. for Lostwithiel, 1802-1806, where the two seats were controlled by Lord Mount Edgumbe. His father was M.P. for Somerset until his death in 1806 and Dickinson was a firm ministerial supporter who took an active part in the work of the Commons. He served at the Admiralty from May 1804 until January 1806, when he became M.P. for Somerset.

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1. P.R.O. 30/8/365, ff.62-64, Middleton to Chatham, 27 Jan.1794.
 2. D.N.B. . . .XLIV. 65-66., J.Ralfe, op.cit..iii. . .387-400.

Finally with Captain George Stewart, Viscount Garlies, we return to the great world of political and social connections, already familiar from the careers of Gower and Seymour. Son of the seventh Earl of Galloway, he had achieved a distinguished career in the Navy. He was a Pittite and M.P. first for Saltash 1790-1795, then for Cockermouth 1805-6 and Haslemere, October to November 1806, both in the Lowther interest. He was connected with former board members also; his aunt had married the first Marquis of Stafford, half brother to John Leveson Gower, and father by her of Georgiana, wife of the Hon. William Eliot. Garlies' own wife was the daughter of the first Earl of Uxbridge and sister to the future first Marquess of Anglesey, then beginning his army career, and likewise M.P. for Caernarvon boroughs, 1790-1796, and for Milbourne Port, the family borough from 1796 to 1804. Garlies' younger brother, William Stewart, was an excellent soldier, founder of the Rifle Brigade and a close friend of Lord Nelson. In addition he was M.P. for Saltash 1795 and for Wigtownshire, the family seat, 1796 to 1816. The amount of political patronage and influence engrossed by this family was considerable, since in addition to those already mentioned the Earl of Galloway controlled three seats, at Orkney, Kirkcudbrightshire and Stranraer boroughs. Such importance could not be ignored and Garlies became Lord of the Admiralty from 1805-6, when he succeeded his father.¹ He was one of a

1. G.E.C. Complete Peerage, V.606-7. The connection with the Admiralty was renewed when his nephew, Sir James Graham became First Lord.

Scottish group at the Board during these years, comparable to previous close alliances, based on blood and marriage. In this case race was the vital catalyst and one which bound Melville, Barham, Patton and Garlies together in the particularly 'clannish' way of exiled Scots, which Englishmen find so irritating.¹

The infiltration of Scots into the highest ranks was unpopular, but acknowledged and possibly contributed to the resentful feelings of naval officers in the mid 1790's when they felt the service was being dominated by Dundas. Nelson disliked Scots and his feelings were shared by St. Vincent. These feelings were a mixture of racial and political resentment since the Scots often voted together and worked their friends and relations into office whenever possible. Captain Thomas Hardy, the sturdy embodiment of English commonsense and English prejudices, expressed regret at Dundas's impeachment, 'for I believe it was much his wish to befriend the Navy, in spite of his being a Scotchman.'² When in 1805 there was some talk of Lord Keith for First Lord he was rejected as too junior an admiral, 'Exclusive of consideration of his country', that is because he was a Scot.³

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1. There was another section bound by similar religious and moral principles and composed of Barham, Gambier and Patton, who 'attended no clubs and associated only with the most respectable company.' J. Ralfe, *op.cit.*, iii.399.
 2. O. Warner, A Portrait of Lord Nelson, (Pelican Books, 1963), 316.
 3. Bathurst Mss., p.46, Lord Harrowby to Lord Bathurst, 21 Apl. 1805.

Why did these men become Lords of the Admiralty; was it for material reward, power or prestige attached to Government office? The first were not inconsiderable. When the Commission on Fees and Perquisites investigated the Admiralty of 1784, it found that the First Lord had a total net salary of £2872 p.a. the greater part of which came from allowances from the fund for the sale of old naval stores, coal, candles. He and the next four senior lords had a house at the Admiralty; though the two junior lords did not, nor any allowance for rent. Apart from the First Lord, all the other commissioners had a net salary of £775 p.a. which, with their allowances for coal, candles, etc., amounted to £872 p.a. The financial aspect was a powerful one then for relatively poorer members of the Board, but though not to be despised, this salary was not large to men of Camden, Belgrave, Apsley or Spencer's wealth. It did not, for example, compare with Camden's emoluments as teller of the Exchequer, which in 1780 were £6740. 3. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$. and frequently over £7000.

Membership of the Board bestowed power; it also implied the existence of power or political influence. Those members with relatives in the Navy do not seem to have advanced their careers in an outstanding way. This was the field most open to them, yet few achieved brilliant careers; it may be said to have given them a good start and no more. The reason was that the Navy was a profession which required some years of rigorous training. If a boy possessed good family connections, or

influence at the Admiralty he might get his commission at a very early age and be a captain before twenty, but thereafter promotion was by strict seniority. Influence could secure better ships and the chance of employment, while those without remained on half pay, it could even obtain the most profitable stations for prizes, but it could not overcome or bypass seniority.

Only three of the civil lords during this period had family connections with the Navy; Apsley, Arden and Smyth. One of Apsley's numerous cousins was an officer, Smyth's third son, Thomas, became a captain, and Arden had a step brother, Philip Tufton, who was a captain. Arden's son born at the Admiralty in 1794, entered the Navy in 1805 and ultimately became an Admiral in 1863. Arden had persuaded Lord Chatham in 1794 to appoint his brother, Spencer Perceval, Counsel to the Admiralty, a post with a meagre salary but a sign of Government favour and often the beginning of a Parliamentary career; Perceval was elected M.P. for Northampton in 1796.¹

The sea officers were in the same position. Before 1801 only Gower, Affleck, Gardner, Hood and Seymour had younger relatives who sought promotion and of these only the three latter attained any prominence. After 1801 only three of the sea lords

1. D.Grey, Spencer Perceval, The Evangelical Prime Minister, 1762-1812, (Manchester, 1963), p.12. Townshend's cousin, Mr. Thomas Broderick, was Counsel to the Admiralty from 1792 to 1794, The Later Correspondence, Aspinall, ed., i. 386.n.te.

had immediate relations who were in the Navy. Troubridge's son became an admiral, Patton's two younger brothers, Charles and Robert became captains and Colpoys' nephew, Griffith, a rear admiral. There were connections with the civil administration too. Markham's brother, Osborne succeeded Sir William Bellingham as Comptroller of the Storekeeper's accounts and Samuel Gambier, a brother of Admiral James Gambier, had been a Navy Commissioner.

There was nothing especially sinister in this and much that was, at that time perfectly natural, and grosser examples of perquisites for the family are usually missing. There was no further instance of an appointment similar to that of Spencer Perceval, who when one year and ten months was granted by his father, then First Lord, the reversion in succession to his eight year old brother Charles, of the sinecure of Registrar of the Admiralty Court, 'in consideration of good and faithful service already performed.'¹ But the advice given to Frank Mildmay still held good; 'if you could make yourself out cousin-german to the old tom cats at the Admiralty, you would fare all the better.'²

Lastly prestige - for the naval officer in the days before

1. D.Grey,op.cit., p.3.

2. F.Marryat, Captain Frank Mildmay; or the Naval Officer, (London, 1829), p.186.

1801 a seat at the Board meant that he had reached the head of his profession. It was often the culmination of years of faithful service. With the exception of Howe and Middleton it was the first and for most the only civilian government office they held. For the civil lords it was an introduction to rather than a consumation of public life from which they went on to other important government posts.¹

In part this was due to the youth of the civilian lords. Since government was the occupation of their class they had to begin somewhere and the Admiralty offered a good starting point. There were always sea officers to give expert counsel and presiding over it was a man of experience and distinction under whom it would be no disgrace to serve. At worst they could do little harm and at best they learnt something of how a government department was run.

This is further borne out by an examination of the age and length of service of commissioners. The youngest civilian appointment was Lord Apsley's at twenty-one, though before 1793 none of this aristocratic group was older than twenty-seven. The age limit increased during the war; the youngest was Pybus at twenty-five, the oldest Spencer at thirty-seven. The lesser known members were always older, Smyth forty-three, Hopkins

1. Pratt had held only the sinecure of a teller of the Exchequer previously. Townshend was under secretary of state when his father was Home Secretary and left to go straight to the Admiralty.

fifty-six and the veteran Stephens seventy-two. Nevertheless the average age on appointment of these men was twenty-seven-and-a-half, even if we include Hopkins, Smyth, Stephens, Heywood and Brett, it is only just over thirty-eight.

The average age of the seamen on appointment was considerably higher, fifty-two years, assuming Drake and Mann to be approximately fifty-five. The youngest naval officers, Gower, forty-three and Seymour thirty-six, were the ones with the most powerful political connections; the oldest and with the least was Affleck, sixty-seven. This was in accord with the higher average age of seamen in Parliament, thirty-nine on first election as compared with the ^{Commons} ~~national~~ average of thirty-four to thirty-five.¹ Judd says that members of the aristocracy first entered Parliament much earlier than those with less patrician backgrounds, and this is true of the Admiralty Board. After 1793 the professional lords were younger though they were still generally above the national average. Before the war there was a gap of twenty-five years between the average ages of civilian and sea lords, that is fifty-six to thirty-one, after 1793 it narrowed to ten years, from forty-eight to thirty-eight.²

1. Judd, op.cit. p.25.

2. This excludes Arden whose first appointment comes before 1793 and includes Middleton and Stephens who were in their late sixties or early seventies when first appointed. If they are left out the average drops and the gap narrows to forty-three to thirty-one.

War and the lack of it was responsible for this. The war removed the older officers to active service; ^{absence}~~lack~~ of war in which to distinguish themselves before 1793 had prevented some officers from reaching the Board by merit if not by influence; what were left after 1793 were young 'politicals' or cautious mediocrities.

For these young and inexperienced civilians a seat at the Board could never have the same prestige as it did for the seamen, and there must have been friction and disagreements arising from differences in age. The seamen had given their lives to a service, of which membership of this Board was the highest honour. There could be little in common with men, half their age, who occupied a seat at the Board for a few years before passing on to higher office and more lucrative posts.

Why then did these young men take the job? The answer is not a simple one. The Navy was an expensive service, often the largest public spender, especially in war, and always one of the three most expensive services. But by employing 'gentlemen' at the Admiralty and by appointing them as commissioners at the heads of subordinate boards, the country was able to take advantage of a system which was individually cheap and based on noblesse oblige. The spoils of office were undoubtedly sweet and sought after, but they were not the primary reason why gentlemen took office. Office was a source of patronage, a possible source of income, but it was also the tradition of this class

and a patriotic duty. The government could rely, in return for some rewards, on the sense of personal honour and loyalty, and on the personal standing, which itself bestowed power, of the upper classes who staffed these offices. The gentleman was individually cheap and a safeguard against the expert and could be relied on not to push 'professional zeal to inconvenient or dangerous lengths.'¹ Despite their comparatively short terms in office there is an air of permanence and continuity about these men which derives from a similar social, educational, political and vocational pattern and which in turn contribute to the conservative traditions and methods of the Board.

The attitude of Earl Temple to office was probably a typical one. In May, 1800, he wrote to his uncle, Lord Grenville, the Foreign Secretary, referring to a junior lordship, vacant at the Admiralty by the resignation of Wallace. Though desirous to follow the family tradition of public service, he was deeply hurt at the offer of such a junior post.² In reply Lord Grenville justified the Cabinet's arrangements on the grounds of election convenience and offered the vacancy again, holding out the bait

1. W.L.Burn, The Age of Equipoise, (London, 1964), pp. 263, 264.

2. Dropmore Mss. VI. 235-6, 20 May, 1800.

that Lord Granville Leveson-Gower had been inquiring for it.¹ Family pride compelled Temple to refuse 'the very lowest situation in office'². he had wished to enter public life, but could not do so in a 'situation beneath that in which other young men of my own rank have been placed.' Several points are notable here; the genuine desire to enter government as a public and family duty, second the 'family' connection of some houses with the Admiralty such as the Leveson-Gower's, and the overwhelming pride of the Temple family. Lord Grenville, in a letter to the young man's father, the Marquis of Buckingham, expressed his view and that of his class. His nephew must begin in a subordinate office, he declared, to gain 'habits of office and familiar acquaintance with the subjects and the topics of public debate.' Nor must he regard the comments of enemies who would attribute his acceptance of office to greed for emoluments. To Temple's claim that his position was too important to be wasted on subordinate office, Grenville quoted the cases of Lords Arden, Camden, Bathurst and Belgrave who began in this way and 'if there have been lately fewer persons of that description it is because the war has filled the Admiralty with naval men.'³

1. Ibid., 239-240, 28 May, 1800.

2. Ibid., 240-241, 31 May, 1800.

3. Court and Cabinets, Buckingham ed., III, 77, Lord Grenville to Marquis of Buckingham, 4 June, 1800.

An important factor in the formation of this elite was education. Of a strictly formal pattern, it was the best available, though its suitability for naval administration was doubtful. The general rule was a private tutor or public school, followed by the University and then by the Grand Tour or a period at the Inns of Court. The public schools and universities retained a strong classical bias, the teaching varied and the amount of formal instruction was small. One of the advantages of this seeming haphazard system was a facility in classical quotation in debate, though none of the Admiralty Board at this period so distinguished themselves. Lord Belgrave's maiden speech, when he quoted from Demosthenes to an astonished House and earned himself the name 'lord of Greek,'¹ gave assurance of 'senatorial talents' according to The World² and it may be that the difficulties of reporting debates³ have lost good speeches, but judging by what remains, this is unlikely.

Of the eighteen civil commissioners during this period, excluding Stephens and Nepean, ten were educated at famous public schools, usually Harrow, and twelve proceeded to the University, usually Cambridge. Such an education as they received there, classical and literary, gave them an appreciation

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1. D.N.B. XXIII.282.
 2. The World, 12 June, 1788.
 3. A.Aspinall, Politics and the Press, 1780-1850, (London, 1949), p.36.

of literature, music, and the arts upon which some improved to become patrons and connoisseurs. Lord Spencer was the outstanding example at the Board, with his magnificent library, but Lord Belgrave added to the fine collection of pictures at the Grosvenor gallery.¹

The Grand Tour on which many an aristocrat embarked, was assumed to broaden his knowledge of other countries, bestow fluency in language, especially French, the lingua franca of diplomacy and polite society, and provide the finishing touch to his education. These designs were sometimes frustrated. When the third Duke of Grafton's son, Lord Euston and John Jeffries Pratt went abroad, they soon became bored with Paris and set out for Switzerland, with French, 'just sufficient to bespeak a dinner or order their post horses and conceive that a complete knowledge of the language to carry them through the country, and so the whole purpose of their expedition will be frustrated.'² Lord Belgrave made two Continental tours with

1. He had a taste for private theatricals of ambitious order. See G.E.Mingay, English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century (Studies in Social History, ed. by H.Perkin, London, 1963), p.145. For a brief idea of Spencer's library see J.B. Hedderwick, The Captain's Clerk, (London, 1957), pp.145-6.
2. Bury St. Edmunds and West Suffolk Record Office, The Correspondence of the third Duke of Grafton in Mss. 428/805, Lord Camden to the Duke of Grafton, 29 July 1783; hereinafter Grafton Mss.

his tutor, William Gifford, later editor of the Quarterly Review,¹. Lord Hugh Seymour toured France in 1785². and William Garthshore made the tour, in a less exalted capacity, as tutor to the Marquis of Dalkeith. At least two of the Board, Pybus and Wallace, were members of Lincoln's Inn and James Adams was a member of the Inner Temple, after passing through the University.

But this education did not provide a practical or technical preparation and was not meant to. For the civilian commissioners the Admiralty was an introduction to public office for which no special training was necessary. The professional lords supplied this and with the exception of Lord Howe, none had such education as the public school or university offered. Not that the sea lords resembled the seventeenth century 'tarpaulins', and if the older seamen at the beginning may have been like Admiral Thomas Pye, whose university was a man of war³, that was not true of all. The majority were well connected, several were aristocrats themselves. At least two of them, Admirals Young

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1. See a letter from Gifford to Hoppner, Brit.Mus.,Add.Mss. 38510, Miscellaneous Papers 15th.Century to 19th Century, (D)f.31. 31 Aug. 1786, on meeting John Thomas Townshend at the Hague and of the gay international social life there.
 2. Seymour Papers, CR114A/299.
 3. Namier and Brooke, Hist.of Parl., I.145.

and Seymour, spoke French fluently.¹ Seymour had attended a French school when his father had been English ambassador and moved easily in the court circle of Louis XVI.² Most seamen presumably had sufficient knowledge of that language and of Spanish picked up from frequent service overseas.

The average length of service for civilians was about six years, though Lord Arden was an exception serving from 1783 to 1801; sea officers, though serving individually longer periods averaged four to five years. This was a period of sufficient length to become familiar with the working of the Board, but hardly to be of any value in its deliberations. Indeed from this point of view Arden was in an unrivalled position by 1801, and those permanent civil servants, the secretaries to the Board were more important to the efficient functioning of the department than the Board members themselves.

How regular was the attendance at the Board? This can best be answered by examining the records to see how often certain members attended. Gower, though attending fairly regularly when in England, spent the summer of 1785 on a cruise around the British Isles with Prince William. In 1787 he was at the head of

1. A Memoir of James Trevenen, ed. by C. Lloyd and R. C. Anderson, (London, N.R.S., vol. CI, 1959), p. 69, James Trevenen to his mother, 24 Aug. 1784.
2. Sir Wm. Dillon's Narrative of Professional Adventures, 1790-1839, ed. by M. Lewis, (2 vols. London, N.R.S., 1953-6; hereinafter Dillon's Narrative), I. 1790-1802 (vol. XCIII), 191.

the Channel fleet preparatory to the Dutch armament. Hood spent most of his time at the Board between 1788 and 1793, though in the Russian crisis. Drake served for only two months, Affleck for three years, but Gardner between 1790 and 1795 was in the Spanish armament and in February 1793 went to the West Indies, returning in time for the First of June campaign.

Brett, Hopkins, and Arden's signatures recur frequently between 1784 and 1786, Apsley's and Pratt's less so. A typical year like 1788, taking August and November as average months containing ordinary business may serve as an example. Out of eleven days when the board met in August, from 1 August to 1 September, Hood attended seven times, Arden six, Gower five, Apsley and Pratt twice.¹ In November out of nine business days, from 4 November to 29th, Hopkins attended eight times, and Hood nine; of the others Gower was present three times and Apsley twice, while Arden and Pratt only came once.²

Admittedly much of this business was dull routine, but even when there was a possibility of war with Spain in June 1790, figures were comparable. The Board met twenty-six times in that month; out of this total Hood attended twenty-six times, Townshend nineteen, Gardner ten, Hopkins thirteen, Belgrave and Arden five times, and Pratt not at all.³

1. Ad.2/118, pp.386-403.

2. Ibid., pp.466-480.

3. Ad.2/120, pp.111-196.

As senior naval lord Hood was especially busy at this time. He wrote to William Cornwallis that as Gardner was with the Grand Fleet, his head and hands were full. He was also put in charge of a Baltic squadron of sixteen sail and except for a three day inspection of them, 'I was not out of the Admiralty Court five hours, from the beginning of May until towards the latter end of last month.'¹.

Hood was again the most regular attender, thirty-five times in all, during the preparations for war with Russia the following year. Of the thirty-five days between 28 March and 9 May, when important decisions were being made, he was always there. Gardner was present thirty-three, Arden thirty-one and Hopkins twenty-four times. Of the remainder Townshend and Belgrave were present five times. In 1795, June, a typical war year, the sea lords again proved their efficiency and sense of responsibility. Gambier was present twenty-four times and Stephens, just promoted to the Board, also twenty-four times out of a total of twenty-six. The two other civilians, members Pybus and Arden, eighteen and eleven times respectively.² Two years later, though the

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1. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss., pp.363-4, Lord Hood to Commodore the Hon. William Cornwallis, 20 Dec.1790., Brit.Mus., Add.Mss.35202 (Bridport Papers, vol.XII. Private Correspondence, 1755-1800), I.153, 8 Dec.1790, Lord Hood to Alexander Hood.
 2. Ad.2/128, pp.259-368.

situation had worsened, this record was largely unchanged. In December 1797 only a few months after the mutinies, Gambier and Young were the most frequent attenders, twenty-four to twenty-five times out of a total of twenty-six days. The rest attended approximately half the meetings.¹ The last Board before 1801, meeting in October 1800 shows the same trend. In twenty-six days Admirals Young and Man were present at twenty-five and twenty-two meetings, Eliot and Stephens at approximately half, Gambier a quarter and Arden only once.²

In the greatest crisis, the naval mutinies, from 10 May to 10 June, 1797, when the Spithead 'breeze' was just blowing itself out and the more serious irruption at the Nore was at its height, members of the Board had gone down to the delegates at Sheerness, as they had done at Portsmouth. Gambier and Young were present twenty-five out of twenty-eight days, Spencer twenty-three, Arden for only thirteen, but he, Spencer and Young with Marsden, the second secretary, had been the delegation to the mutineers. Stephens was present only fourteen and Pybus only ten times, while Seymour came only four times.³

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1. Ad.2/134, pp.427-502. Middleton was present only twice and Seymour only four times in this month, but both had been very frequent in May.
 2. Ad.2/140, pp.264-346.
 3. Ad.2/133, pp.256-376, 1800-1801.

This should not be considered in vacuo; due allowance should be made for age and illness. Moreover members of the Admiralty Board were frequently members of Governmental committees, such as select committees on privilege, and a survey of some of the Commons Journals shows that civil lords, and especially the older ones, such as Brett or Hopkins, were regular committee members. Out of eight Parliamentary Committees formed in the Commons between 18 May, 1784 and 18 May 1785, on a variety of topics, ranging from the state of British fisheries to the East India trade, Brett served on all eight, Pratt on four, Hopkins and Apsley on three and Arden and Gower on two.¹ Likewise it was Brett and Hopkins who introduced the Navy estimates from 1784-1791. None of the members of later boards were as regular as this.

Two things are notable here; in peace the board's work was not exacting and provided ample leisure, especially to civil lords. Second, the more important politically and socially the member the less frequent was his attendance, either because he had more to do, or, his place, gained without merit was a sinecure requiring only perfunctory performance. Thus Pybus slipped away at weekends leaving work unfinished, much to Middleton's annoyance.² Earl Camden, outlined the carefree existence of

1. Journals of the House of Commons, XI.4-889; hereinafter Commons Journals.

2. P.R.O.30/8/365, f.73-4, Middleton to Chatham, 17 June, 1794?

his son and others like him; 'They go to bed about three in the morning: rise at eleven, breakfast, ride to the park, till it is time to dress - then dinner, and the evening of course dedicated to amusement They talk a little of politics at their clubs but with respect to the real state of the country they neither know nor care about it.'¹.

It was all the easier to follow this pleasant mode of life; until the reorganisation of the office in 1805 there was no specific duty for the individual lords to perform. There were no votes taken at the Board, the First Lord conveyed the Cabinet's decisions to them, and while there were discussions on technical points the civilians contributed little to these. Three members only were necessary for a quorum or to sign documents, and the anonymous critic of 1790 who declared the acts of the Board to be those of the First Lord and the other members 'mere Automatons, placed there for the purpose of tracing the characters of the names on papers, to give them a formal validity,' was voicing a general opinion.².

Measured by this standard the professional seamen come out well and took their duties seriously, but they had often had cause to curse the sloth of the Admiralty when captains, and were well aware of the dangers of delay. But these figures,

1. Namier and Brooke, Hist. of Parl. III. 324 nte.
2. Letters to the Right Honourable Earl of Chatham, ^{by an Old Sailor,} (London, 1790), p. 44.

based on selected months and special incidents, do not tell the whole story. St. Vincent who considered his board 'well formed and disposed to work hard'¹. thought the 'constant hard work at the Admiralty when the board performs its duty is quite enough and in truth much more than is done by any other public office.'². Marsden remembered long evenings spent at the office with Lord Spencer, and Admiral Young dropping in after 11.0.p.m. when Marsden remarked that it was 'the only public board whose members were so actively employed at that hour.'³. Barham assured Pitt in 1805 that the duty of the sea lords 'will not bear an idle lord to be one of them'⁴.

It was not only the ministry which changed in 1801, the membership of the Board altered its political complexion and less obviously, its social and professional atmosphere also. These differences are revealed in several ways. Between 1801-1806 Garlies was the only member to become Lord Lieutenant, between 1783-1801 there were ^{five} men who ultimately filled that

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1. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D.Bonner Smith,ed.,I.380. St. Vincent to Rear Admiral Sir George Home, 19 Mar.1801.
 2. Markham Correspondence, C.R.Markham,ed., p.50, St.Vincent to Admiral J. Markham, 16 May, 1806.
 3. William Marsden, A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late William Marsden by himself, (London,1838; hereinafter Marsden's Memoirs),p.99 nte.
 4. P.R.O. 30/58/6, f.56, 24 Apl.1805.

office. The proportion of civilians at the board was reversed in favour of the seamen and after 1801 two of the three first lords were seamen. An examination of the age of board members from 1801 - 1806 not only confirms previous generalisations on that point but supports the idea that 1801 was a climacteric year. Those sea lords with influential connections were younger than those without them. Garlies at thirty-seven and Neale at thirty-nine were the youngest seamen, followed by Markham at forty. Excluding the First Lords, Patton and Colpoys, sixty-five and sixty-two, were the oldest. Neither of these men had a Parliamentary seat or any political influence and for them the post was the end of their career. For the seamen it was still the first and for most the only government appointment and like their predecessors they did not generally go into other government posts. But it was no longer for all the culmination of a career but rather a useful stage on the way to further advancement. This was inevitable when distinguished captains were appointed as sea lords, as were St. Vincent's three 'Neptunes.' But it is also true of Gambier, who returned to the Board for the second time in 1804 and saw active service after 1806, and of Garlies who did not get his flag promotion until 1810. It is noticeable that while the average age of seamen on first appointment after 1801 remained constant between fifty-two and fifty-three, the age gap between them and the civilians had narrowed to five years. The average age of the

latter has risen, as might be expected since they were drawn from less distinguished backgrounds than their predecessors. The youngest was William Dickinson at twenty-three, Garthshore was next at thirty-seven, Adams, Lemon and Nepean between forty-five and fifty-three. The average age of the eight civilians between 1801-1807 was forty-seven, forty-five excluding Stephens and Eliot. This was in contrast to the boards of 1783-1793, when the average age of civilians was twenty-seven and from 1793-1801 when it was thirty-seven.

This being so, a greater sense of duty might be assumed in members. Stephens, Nepean, Gambier and Barham all had previous associations with the Board. St. Vincent, Troubridge, Markham, Patton and Colpoys all had long practical experience and outnumbered the non-professional politicals. Administration of government departments thus showed signs of becoming the business of professionals, not only of the secretaries and clerks, but of the Board itself. Too much can be made of this; in the mid-nineteenth century junior lords were accused of being 'paid by the country to learn their bureaucratic profession and they are all paid retainers to vote for the government right or wrong,'¹ but in the late eighteenth century even the idea of them learning their 'bureaucratic profession' would have been novel.

1. Captain J.R. Burton, The Past and Present State of the Navy, (London, 1850), p.7.

Over a period of five years, 1801-1806, the average length of service for civilians was one year and six months, and for seamen one year and ten months. The similarity is less significant than it seems. St. Vincent, Troubridge and Markham all served three years but the average was reduced by men like Garlies and Neale, with the brightest prospects, who only served seven months. In any case, these particular comparisons are hardly fair since in both cases after 1801 a serious political crisis cut short the lives of both boards.

Nevertheless the frequent changes civilian and professional between 1801-1806 were not good for the department. The comparatively short periods of service allowed no time for members to get to know each other or the work of the department, at a time when work was increasing and efficiency was increasingly necessary. Stalwards like Stephens, with over forty years experience, were invaluable though Stephens was old, and in the last two years age prevented his regular attendance, especially in the winter months.

One thing is especially noticeable. In contrast with earlier boards the sea lords did not spend time at sea during their terms in office. Was their attendance likely to be more regular? This is evident from an examination of the records of selected months in certain years. In September, 1801, out of a total of twenty-three days, Troubridge and Markham attended twenty-three times, Stephens and St. Vincent thirteen, Adams

twelve, and Garthshore once, though he improved in November and December, and Eliot not at all. In the following January of a total of seventeen days, Troubridge and Markham were present over twelve times, Stephens and Garthshore eight, Adams and Eliot six.¹ In November 1803 the same tendency was notable; Garthshore, whose wife had died in August, was present five times, and Eliot only once.² Eliot had in fact wished to resign in 1801 and his attendance at and attitude to the new Board was never satisfactory.³ He spent much of his time at Bath and the whole winter of 1803 at Port Eliot,⁴ and this behaviour finally led to his resignation. In the following January when Neale and Lemon had been appointed, the first was only present nine times and the latter not at all and this poor attendance was typical.⁵

1. Ad.2/142,pp.144-216,464-491.
2. Ad.2/146,pp.223-324.
3. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D.Bonner Smith,ed.,I.368,II. 228-9., St. Vincent to Hon.W.Eliot, 15, 26 Dec.1803.
4. P.R.O. 30/58/4,f.113,/14 Nov.1803.
Eliot to Pitt
5. Ad.2/146,pp.216 et seq.

The seamen were thus the most regular attenders and this regularity continued under Lord Melville. Garlies, Colpoys and Gambier were most frequently members of the board; in December 1804, out of twenty-three days, Colpoys and Patton were present for twenty-two and Gambier for twelve, though he had been very frequent earlier. Though Dickinson was present for twenty-one times neither Nepean nor Melville appeared at all.¹ Five months later in May 1805, Nepean was present only nine times when the rest of the board attended regularly.²

While former civil lords had been active in the Commons, serving on Committees and introducing bills, those serving between 1801-1806, were noticeably absent from such activities. Eliot presented the naval estimates until his resignation in 1804³ when Adams took his place. William Dickinson and Nepean were the Admiralty spokesmen in the succeeding administrations.⁴ Occasionally the whole board with the first secretary, were summoned to committees of privilege, as in 1801 or 1803. These meetings were on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons,⁵

1. Ad.2/148, pp.476-552.

2. Ad.2/149, pp.249-325.

3. Commons Journals, LVII, 11, 4 Nov.1801,440,12 May 1802.

4. Ibid., LX.12, 23 Jan.1805.

5. Ibid., LVII. 5, 30 Oct. 1801.

though probably not all attended. On specifically naval topics, such as the Seamen's Desertion Bill of 1803 or the Bill to regulate the conduct of marines ashore, the committee was made up of the Admiralty lords and the first secretary.¹ But in general their attendance at the routine Commons business was irregular compared with that of boards between 1783 and 1801. One of the reasons was an increase in business; the administration of a war-time Navy and the whole scale reforms which St. Vincent's board undertook, left little time for anything else. The Committee which inspected the dockyards was composed of St. Vincent, Markham, Garthshore and Marsden. In a letter to a friend St. Vincent wrote that because of Marsden's, Stephens' and Adams' absence the visitation was impossible before 20 August 1802.² These arrangements were further upset in September when St. Vincent asked Adams' help in the inspection of Chatham and Sheerness. Garthshore was needed in his constituency of Weymouth to influence the election of a mayor, but Adams was promised he would not be needed for the examination of the Thames yards.³ This confirms that the civilians

1. Ibid., LIX.12, 25 Nov.1803., 48, 12 Dec.1803.

2. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D.Bonner Smith, ed., II,191, St. Vincent to Hon.George Grey, 6 Aug.1802.

3. Ibid., II,194, 13 Sep.1802

were nonentities whose political interests were of supreme importance but whose lack of professional skill was unimportant. Barham told Pitt that no naval lord could be spared for the Committee inquiring into the methods of procuring ships for convoy duty as their constant attendance from 9 to 5 at the Board was needed to keep pace with the work.¹

It should now be possible to draw some conclusions. Of the twenty-seven² commissioners between 1783 and 1801 only seven had no Parliamentary seat and these, with the exception of Heywood, were all seamen, Middleton, Man, Young, Gambier, Affleck and Drake. Only Middleton and Gambier went further with the help of powerful friends. The situation after 1801 was similar; excluding Eliot and Stephens, of the eleven commissioners between 1801-1806 only two, Patton and Colpoys had no Parliamentary seat. If we accept that 'interest' was necessary at all levels and that Parliamentary interest was

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1. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.84, Undated.
 2. 26 have been mentioned, the 27 was James Modyford Heywood, who served from December 1783 to April 1784 in a temporary capacity. A Devonshire landowner he was brother in law of Lord Howe, (The Later Correspondence, Aspinall, ed., i.no.15, Pitt to George III, 30 Dec, 1783., Namier and Brooke, Hist. of Parl II.622), M.P. for Fowey 1768-74 and a friend of the Marquis of Buckingham who controlled several seats and this, together with a connection with Pratt, earned him a seat at the Board. Pratt had married a niece of Sir Francis Molesworth of Pencarrow with whom Heywood was connected. He was also a grandson of Governor Heywood of Jamaica and Grace Modyford, sister of a previous governor of that island. F. Cundall, The Governors of Jamaica in the Seventeenth Century, (London, 1936), p.30., Hist.Mss.Comm., Report on the Mss. of the Marquess of Lothian preserved at Blickling Hall (London, 1905), pp.289, 293, 332. Sir J.B. and J. Burke, History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies, (2nd.edn., London, 1844), pp.359, 490.

the most potent of all, these men, lacking a seat themselves, were able to draw on powerful support or possessed exceptional ability, to become commissioners. But apart from Middleton, who was too efficient to be ignored none of these men was more than a competent seaman, and since to have political interest was more important than to have ability, powerful political support was the key to success. The appointment of such mediocrities, while it did little good to the professional standing of the Admiralty, at least did not revive the bitter political rivalries so recently apparent in the Keppel Palliser affair. It cannot have been easy to choose admirals at once sufficiently distinguished to be useful at the Board and free from political passions which would imperil its smooth working. But since placid temperament and outstanding ability rarely go together the choice was even more limited, and always tended to fall on the side of peace, if possible with honour. Only five seamen of undisputed ability served at the Board during these years, Howe, Hood, Middleton, St. Vincent and Troubridge, and none were without their enemies or particularly easy to work with.

We must leave the first lords out of any further calculations at this point, as when they took office, all were members of the House of Lords. But of the remaining seventeen commissioners before 1801, who were M.P.'s, fourteen had seats before appointment to the Board. For two, Apsley and Gardner,

the seat and the appointment came together, and for only one, Gower did the appointment come first. With the latter's political connections a seat could always be found and Pitt, whose ministry was not expected to survive the Christmas season, must have thought it necessary to placate the 'Bloomsbury gang,' to which Gower belonged, by a seat at the Board.

Because acceptance of office meant members of Parliament must seek re-election, junior ministers or office holders, more often sat for close boroughs, which were more likely to elect them, than for popular boroughs with a wide franchise or for the county seats.¹ Without exception the Admiralty lords who were M.P's conformed to this description. The Government's numerical influence was weak, but in fact many seats nominally owned by private patrons were sold to or placed at the disposal of the Government by individuals holding offices or pensions. Before 1801 five of the ^{patrons of the} boroughs which returned the commissioners, were supporters of Pitt, another six were acknowledged Tories and several independents, prepared to accommodate the Government. Six of the ^{boroughs} were family seats, like Apsley's at Cirencester, or Belgrave's at Chester, and after 1801 this was still true though the number of such seats had dropped to two, Neale's at Lymington and Garlies'. Their permanence in government was thereby assured and this enhanced their value in administration, not simply for the sake of permanence but for the consistent power of the vote

1. Betty Kemp, King and Commons, 1660-1832, (London, 1957), p.62.

they possessed. Of the eleven commissioners between 1801 and 1806, seven had a seat before appointment, for Troubridge and Markham the appointment came first and a seat was then found from those in the Government interest. Thus Troubridge was elected for Great Yarmouth and Markham for Portsmouth, Lord Hugh Seymour's old seat.

Whenever possible commissioners were elected for Admiralty boroughs; the naval centres or dockyard towns where the Board was one of the chief employers and where Admiralty contracts were valuable. Such places were Plymouth, Portsmouth, Rochester, Sandwich and Queenborough, though even here because of large electorates, no seat was safe and Admiralty control, never stringent, depended on personal contact. In 1784 they controlled seven seats compared with thirteen in 1754, and in Sandwich, 'a borough of contests,' it was only the patient work of Philip Stephens, in the face of strong private interests, which increased the Board's control from one to two seats.¹

The Admiralty Board over which the First Lord presided was a heterogeneous body, which did not necessarily hold his political or professional opinions. William Eliot, one of Lord Spencer's board who reluctantly remained under St. Vincent, considered Addington's ministry a national misfortune and offered to support Pitt whenever he returned to power.² Evan

1. Namier and Brooke, Hist. of Parl., I. 54-56.

2. P.R.O.30/58/4,f.113, 14 Nov.1803.

Nepean, the Board's secretary, found it increasingly difficult to work with the new Board, despite his friendship with St. Vincent, and resigned in 1804 to become chief secretary of Ireland¹ and Canning declared that the bill to investigate naval abuses was the product of the Admiralty against the opinion of 'all the old admiralty people.'²

In such cases when the subordinate and the First Lord could not agree, the former always resigned. In 1795 Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, senior naval lord and commander in chief in the Mediterranean, was recalled and no longer employed, because of disagreements over the conduct of the war in that sphere.³ In the same year Sir Charles Middleton resigned through dissatisfaction with the First Lord's methods of work. Middleton's relations with Spencer were never as smooth as they had been with Chatham.⁴ The board to which Spencer came was the one left by Chatham. All his professional lords had several years experience and were older than he, and the majority of the

1. Marsden's Memoir, pp.103,108.
2. P.R.O.30/58/4, f.87.Canning to Pitt, 18 Dec, 1802.
3. The Naval Miscellany, I. J.K. Laughton, ed., 243-247., Seymour Papers, CR114A/325/10, 30 Apl,no.11, 2 May 1795, Spencer to Seymour.
4. P.R.O. 30/8/364, i.f.36, Chatham to Middleton, 18 Nov,1795.

members had been appointed when Chatham was in office. It was an awkward situation, more especially as, by the nature of the appointment, Spencer had been called to rectify the mistakes of a board whose membership remained the same, for the first three months. Then the replacement of his two senior naval advisors, Hood and Middleton, by junior admirals was a serious loss to the Board and had Cabinet repercussions. Middleton had wanted to resign in 1794. Persuaded that the office would be organised as he wished, the 'loose and irregular manner in which business was executed,' where everything was left 'to the memory and discretion of clerks,' disgusted him. He was told that his opposition to several schemes sprang from annoyance at not having thought of them himself. Lord Spencer talked of confidential discussions but Middleton found the real business was settled before the board met by 'an interior cabinet of admiralty,' and that except for half an hour or less a week, he rarely spoke to the First Lord alone. 'The business to be done came generally to me in the shape of letters and notes, without any other explanations, as though I had been the mere secretary of the office, instead of that confidential communication which might have been supposed to exist between a First Lord new to the duty and an old professional member of the board'¹. The difference in age was only one reason, but

1. The Barham Papers, Sir J.K. Laughton, ed., II, 428, Middleton to Dundas, 9 Nov, 1795.

a powerful one. Spencer was thirty years younger than Middleton, an aristocrat, disinclined to listen to the didactic phrases of self made men. He preferred to consult Lord Hugh Seymour, whose family was as splendid as Spencer's own and as politically important.

During the 1797 mutinies there was a difference of opinion with Lord Arden who had accompanied Spencer to Portsmouth as one of the committee of conciliation a month previously. Arden, who had then served longer than anyone else at the Board, may have pressed his advice for speed in passing the Seamen's Bill, too hard. On 10 May he offered his resignation to Pitt, giving as reason his difference of opinion with Spencer.¹ But on that day Lord Howe set out to reconcile the mutineers and Arden's resignation was not accepted. Despite an earlier friendship Lord Hugh Seymour also resigned in 1797 over a naval matter. His opinion on a professional question, now unknown, received scant attention and he deemed it necessary to withdraw.²

Though Lord Howe may not have been an active participant in Cabinet affairs, his attendance at the Admiralty was regular, hardly missing a day.³ Neither St. Vincent nor Barham equalled

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1. P.R.O.30/58/2, Bundle 2, ff.9,10. Arden to Pitt, 9 10 May, 1797. J.S. Corbett, ed., The Spencer Papers, II.126-7. Arden to Spencer, 10 May 1797.
 2. Seymour Papers, CR114A/321, Seymour to Spencer, 7 Nov. 1797.
 3. Ad.2/116, June, 1784-April, 1786.

him. The former attended thirteen times out of twenty-three in September 1801, only once in the following January.¹ In November, 1803, he attended fifteen out of twenty-six days and in the following January eight out of twenty-eight days.² True, for much of that time he was occupied in reforms and from August to October 1802 in the visitation of the dockyards, but from 1803 onwards there were increasing pleas to be allowed to resign because of ill health³ and more frequent excuses for Cabinet and Parliamentary absence.⁴ Barham's signature was even less frequent in May 1805, he only signed twice.⁵ Yet the Board's work did not suffer unduly from their absence nor did they neglect their duties. Despatches followed St.Vincent regularly to Essex and though Barham sat apart to conserve his strength and only worked in the mornings he was fully in control.⁶

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1. Ad.2/142 pp.144-216,464-491.
 2. Ad.2/146 pp.223-324,431-548.
 3. Letters of Lord St.Vincent,D.Bonner Smith,ed.,II.209, 30 Mar,1803., 212, 19 May,1803. St. Vincent to Addington.
 4. Ibid.,212, 16 May,1803, St.Vincent to Addington.,213,23 May 1803,St.Vincent to Lord Hawkesbury.
 5. Ad.2/149,pp.250-et seq.
 6. P.R.O.30/58/6,f.63, 2 May,1805, Barham to Pitt. His day was;-11.0.am attend the reading of letters, 1.0.pm. work with his private secretary, 2.0.pm. exercise, 4.0.pm. at Admiral Gambier's for the rest of the day.

Melville's attendance was irregular but the composition of the Board remained virtually the same under his successor, so that the work of the office was undisturbed. Nevertheless the impetus of a board headed by elderly invalids and, with the exception of Barham, unversed in departmental administration, could not be very vigorous.

The two remaining civilians before 1801, Chatham and Spencer, thirty years younger than their successors, served longer than them and their attendance was more frequent. One thing is notable, even surprising in view of his reputation - the high attendance rate achieved by Lord Chatham. In August 1788, out of eleven days he was present eleven times, in November out of nine days he attended six.¹ In June, 1790, he was present for twenty-one out of twenty-six meetings.² His successor, First Lord at one of the most difficult periods of the war, was as regular. In June 1795 Spencer was present twenty-two out of twenty-six meetings.³ In December 1797, just after the mutinies, he was present ten out of twenty-six times⁴.

1. Ad.2/118, pp.386-403,466-480.

2. Ad.2/120, pp.111-196.

3. Ad.2/128, pp.259-368.

4. Ad.2/134, pp.427-502.

and in October 1800 towards the end of his period in office he shewed the same regularity.¹

All Admiralty decisions were the ultimate responsibility of the First Lord; a heavy one when it is remembered that until Barham's reorganisation of the office in 1805 the naval lords had no special duties, sometimes were on active service abroad, and that the civilians were primarily concerned with politics.

The First Lord controlled all naval patronage and salaried appointments, and his influence was thus enormous within the service. Outside it was also of great importance to the Government in the control of seaport boroughs, and the inter-relation of votes and office. The patronage annexed to the office was of considerable importance to politicians.² Admiralty appointments were one way of rewarding government supporters; in 1792 Admiral Sir Richard King urged the satisfaction of the claims of two men at Chatham yard as a reward to the freemen of Rochester for support at the last election.³ Howe wished to know the result of the Portsmouth election of 1784 to find 'the extent of the obligations we may be under to our different friends.'⁴ In 1805 Pitt asked that if Barham, then First Lord,

1. Ad.2/140, pp.264-346.

2. Court and Cabinets, Buckingham, ed., I. 369, Grenville to Buckingham., 1 Apl.1788.

3. Ad.1/472, King to Stephens, 24 Dec.1792.

4. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss., p.339, Viscount Howe to Capt. the Hon. William Cornwallis, 31 Mar.1784.

gave a ship to Captain Codrington he might gain the credit with Codrington's brother, the M.P. for Tewkesbury, who had not recently attended the Commons because of the inattention his brother had received.^{1.}

No First Lord could afford to neglect this duty, but it was one which especially appealed to politicians like Spencer or vain cyphers like Chatham, who used it to create an illusion of importance, and responsibility. Some examples of the extent of the First Lord's patronage will illustrate this.

His good offices could supply good ships, stores, equipment, and even crews.^{2.} Spencer, for example, arranged for young Byam Martin to command the new frigate, Tamar, partly because he liked him and partly because his father was Comptroller of the Navy.^{3.} But this patronage could sometimes be wrongly used, and while willing to oblige their friends, First Lords, being human, were also ready to hamper those they disliked. When Lord Howe was appointed in 1793 to command the Channel fleet he had most of the men entered for his flagship, the Queen Charlotte, taken by Admiral Hood, for the Mediterranean squadron, which also had the better ships. Likewise 64's and inferior ships

1. The Barham Papers, Sir J.K. Laughton, ed., III.83-84., 8 May, 1805.

2. Dillon's Narrative, M. Lewis, ed., I.66.

3. Letters of Sir^T Byam Martin, R.V. Hamilton, ed., I. 270-271.

went to Howe and this seriously delayed the Channel fleet. The injury was further illustrated by Captain Barlow, appointed by Howe to the repeating frigate, being given the Pegasus, 'the worst sailing ship when he ought to have had, as repeater of signals, one of the fastest.'¹.

On the other hand favoured commanders were sometimes allowed a choice of vessel. In 1790 Chatham asked Cuthbert Collingwood, then a junior captain, whether he would prefer command of a frigate or a 64.² In 1793 a similar situation led to a canvass among his friends, among them Mr. Brandling, M.P. for Newcastle. Collingwood disapproved of Brandling's letter to Chatham which urged no stronger claim than that Collingwood had a vote for a Parliament man.³ Though he might dislike such obvious methods it was a strong recommendation; he himself write to Sir Edward Blackett in 1793 that there was 'scarce a ship in the Navy that had not an instance that political interest is better argument for promotion than any skill.'⁴.

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1. Memoir of the Life of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, Lady Bouchier, ed., (2 vols. London, 1873), i. 14.
 2. The Private Correspondence of Admiral Lord Collingwood, E. Hughes, ed., (London N.R.S., vol. XCVIII, 1957, hereinafter Collingwood Correspondence), p. 26.
 3. Ibid., pp. 33-4, Same to Same, 17 Feb. 1793.
 4. Ibid., p. 35-7, 22 July, 1793.

Chatham paid particular attention to arrangements which enabled him to employ aristocrats or their protégés.¹ Middleton urged the appointment of sound officers against Chatham's easy promotion of politically importunate aristocrats, though without much success.²

Spencer too was inundated with similar requests with which he dealt courteously. A Captain Thompson wrote repeatedly for employment between May, 1795 and August, 1796³ to which Spencer replied in polite terms, recommending him to have 'patience a little while longer.'⁴ All this was in the greatest contrast to Howe's coldness or St. Vincent's brutal frankness.⁵ ~~Though~~ According to St. Vincent Spencer's numerous family connections

1. Hist.Mss.Comm., Eleventh Report, Appendix, Part V. The Mss. of the Earl of Dartmouth., (London, 1887; hereinafter Dartmouth Mss.), 425, 4 Oct. 1788, 22 Nov. 1790, Chatham to the Earl of Dartmouth., Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss., pp.362-3, Chatham to Commodore the Hon.W.Cornwallis, 19 Dec 1790., Gloucester County Record Office, The Ducie, Moreton and Reynolds Papers, 1 bundle, D340a/C32, nos.35,38, 31 July, 9 Dec.1790, Chatham to Lord Ducie.
2. P.R.O. 30/8/365, ff.42-3, Middleton to Chatham, 31 May 1793?
3. Brit.Mus., Add.Mss., 46119 (Correspondence of Sir T.Thompson, 1st.Bart.), ff.29-55; hereinafter Add.Mss.46119.
4. Ibid., f.41, 19 April 1796.
5. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., I.326, St. Vincent to Rear Admiral Dacres, 3 May, 1801.

helped to fill up flag vacancies.¹ When St. Vincent had been commander in chief in the Mediterranean he had expressed the same opinion more forcibly to Nepean. He had then accused Spencer of grasping at patronage 'which is the only stimulus to great actions, in a manner, that Sandwich would have been ashamed of.'² This was a typical exaggeration, but his argument that patronage had always been badly managed by the Admiralty, echoed Middleton's opinion.³

But when St. Vincent became First Lord he changed his opinion. In a letter to Lord Keith, then commander in chief in the Mediterranean, he apologised for the necessity of trespassing on a commander's patronage.⁴ His letters show the difficulties of a 'just disposition of patronage' which would provide for meritorious but neglected officers as well as young aristocrats. By attempting a more even distribution of places St. Vincent raised great opposition amongst the aristocracy who thought their birth entitled them 'to promotion in prejudice to

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1. Ibid., 329, St. Vincent to Vice Admiral Bazeley, 18 Feb., 330 to Vice Admiral Dod, 22 Feb., 331 to Sir John Carter, 17 Feb. 1801.
 2. Jervis Papers, JER/21, 3 Aug, see also 21 May 1797.
 3. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., I. 10.
 4. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., I. 333, 21 Feb. 1801.

men of better services and superior merit.'¹ It also made him unpopular with borough and dockyard interests; an unpopularity which was soon increased by his attacks on the abuses in the civil branches.

When Lord Barham became first Lord he experienced the same difficulties. His remarks are worth quoting in full as they are the sentiments of First Lords at this period.

'With regard to patronage, the service has been too extensive to make it any longer an object; and I declare to you that since my coming to this board. I have made but one master and commander and when I read over the claims before me - from admirals and captains for their children, from the king's ministers, members of Parliament, peers, and eminent divines - I do not see when I am to make another. Under these circumstances it is impossible that any person in my situation should give satisfaction. If I steer clear of injustice I shall think myself fortunate. To conclude, in all matters of patronage, I execute it as I would any other duty belonging to this office, I hope with impartiality.'²

Though the First Lord controlled the greater share of Admiralty patronage there were 'Admiralty vacancies'³ and the collective patronage of the Board was supervised by one of the commissioners,⁴ and was jealously guarded by them. On appointment to the Newfoundland command Admiral Sir Richard King was

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1. Ibid., 338, 28 Mar. 1801, St. Vincent to Sir Charles Grey.
 2. G. Cornwallis West, The Life and Letters of Admiral Cornwallis, (London, 1927), p. 494.
 3. JER/22, 11 Jan., 20 June, 1798, St. Vincent to Nepean., A Selection from the Public and Private Correspondence of Lord Collingwood, ed. by G.L. Newnham Collingwood, (2 vols. London, 1837), i. 221-222, Barham to Collingwood, 8 Nov. 1805.
 4. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., I. 10, Middleton to Spencer, 19 Dec. 1794.

allowed to choose his Captain and a lieutenant, not the first, but the remainder of the patronage the Admiralty kept for themselves.¹ Individual commissioners, usually the professional lords, recommended their friends or proteges to commanding officers or used their influence to obtain appointments.²

Likewise the civil lords used their influence though it was more intermittent and aimed at satisfying specific requests which were often quite simple. Thus Mr. Pybus recommended a lieutenant to command the Dover cutter, Flora, to Lord Hugh Seymour, when a vacancy occurred.³

There were six secretaries to the Board between 1783 and 1806. Until 1804 Philip Stephens and Evan Nepean were the respective First Secretaries and Henry Ibbetson and William Marsden their assistants. After 1804 Marsden became First Secretary with Benjamin Tucker and John Barrow as his deputy. If it is true that the status and authority of the office depended on the men who filled it, the secretaryship to the Admiralty was moulded by these men and received the stamp of

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1. Memorials, personal and historical of Admiral Lord Gambier, Georgiana, Lady Chatterton, ed., ii.4-5, Admiral Nelson to Admiral Gambier, 2 Oct.1805.
 2. Add.Mss.46119,ff.54-5,T.Thompson to Admiral Young, 16 Sept. 1796, f.58. Admiral Seymour to Thompson, 21 Oct.1796., Seymour Papers, CR114A/348, Captain Pakenham to Seymour, July, 1796.
 3. Ibid. CR114A/309, 1 Jan.1795.

their virtues and limitations.

Because his was a political appointment which was often temporary the head of a department depended on his permanent staff of secretaries and clerks who thereby assumed greater importance. He could not always familiarise himself with the department since his term in office was limited and further curtailed by lengthy periods spent in consultation with other Ministers. Moreover, just because it was a political appointment the man chosen would frequently be someone ignorant of the department's work who would need to reply on what his staff told him. In this case not only the official head, the First Lord, but the six other commissioners were continually changing for political and professional reasons so that the position of the secretaries was even more important.

Like many others in the naval service, Stephens was 'a son of the rectory,' in this case at Alphamstone, Essex. Both his elder brothers were in the Navy; the younger a captain, the elder a Victualling Commissioner who brought Philip into his office as a clerk, whence he rose to be assistant secretary. But it was when Lord Anson 'took him by the hand', that Stephen's career began. Anson made him his personal secretary and from there it was a short step to assistant secretary at the Board in 1761. He had already found a seat at Liskeard at Anson's request of Edward Eliot, (See above^{p.49}) and by 1763 was First Secretary, a post he was told to hold for thirty-two years.

Five years later he was established in the Government borough of Sandwich which he represented for the rest of his career. In 1795 he was created a baronet and promoted to membership of the Board he had served so long, finally retiring in 1806 when he was over 80, with a handsome pension of £1500 p.a.¹.

His successor's beginnings were equally humble though his later career was more spectacular. A Cornishman, like many of his kind he took to the sea, entering the Navy, possibly because two cousins were already in the service. He was a clerk first and then purser to various ships on the American station from 1776 to 1780. Though there is no indication of a family naval connection, some powerful interest must have been at work, since from now on his career took a sensational turn.

In 1782 after a brief spell as Admiral Lord Shuldham's secretary, Nepean became under secretary of state for home affairs, in Lord Shelburne's ministry. His early appointments have been credited to St. Vincent's patronage and in 1800 the Earl thought him the best secretary 'since the days of old Pepys of Immortal memory.'² Jervis was a friend of Shelburne and the circumstances suggest Whiggish sympathies, but if so they were not very strong since the change of government did not affect Nepean's steady rise. Perhaps by this time he had been noted as a useful

1. Burke, Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies, p.506.

2. Jervis Papers, JER/24, ... St. Vincent to Nepean. 22 June, 1800.

man whom it would be foolish to dismiss, probably he was too devoted a civil servant to be a strong party man. He was M.P. for a Government borough, Queenborough, from 1796 to 1802, and for Bridport from 1802 to 1812.¹ In 1794 he became the under secretary for war, to succeed Stephens a year later at the Admiralty where he served for nine years. Like his predecessor he was created a baronet in 1802, and after a brief spell as secretary of state for Ireland returned to the Board in 1804 as one of the Commissioners. If there is any truth that St.Vincent was responsible for his professional beginnings this debt was paid since it is probable that Nepean helped to select St.Vincent for the Mediterranean command. The success of the Trafalgar campaign was a fitting conclusion to his work and he retired from the Board in 1806.

Beyond the brief record of his service nothing is known x about Henry Ibbetson but William Marsden is a more notable figure. His family was Anglo-Irish, of Derbyshire origin but settled in Dublin since the reign of Queen Anne. Here his father's business interests as shipper and merchant had flourished. A promoter and director of the Bank of Ireland he formed part of the commercial class to whose interests Pitt was highly sensitive. Marsden's career showed great business acumen, besides 'strong sense, truthfulness and caution.'² Through

1. Judd, op.cit., p.287.

2. D.N.B.XXXVI. 206-7.

the offices of an elder brother he joined the East India Company at Bencoolen, Sumatra became assistant and then principal secretary to the governor and on leaving the island invested his savings in his own business, an East India Agency in Gower Street, in 1785. Ten years later he became second secretary to the Admiralty, assuming Nepean's place in 1804 for two years.

Marsden had wide cultural interests and was a famous orientalist and numismatist.¹ Among other things a member of the Royal Society, the Royal Irish Academy and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, he was one of those men who not only administer empires, but as scholars and academicians, enrich them. This wider circle of acquaintance helped and made him a congenial subordinate to Earl Spencer, under whom he was first appointed, but his business training and ability also qualified him for the post.

The careers of Nepean and Tucker are very similar and the former helped the younger man in his profession. Both were Cornishmen of a middle class background.² Tucker's father had been a warrant officer in the Navy and a brother was a foreman of the shipwrights at Plymouth so that the sea was an accepted

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1. He presented his collection of Oriental coins to the British Museum in 1834 and his books and mss. to King's College.
 2. In the Stowe Mss. there is a note of Nicholas Nepean's admission as burgess of Saltash, signed 1774. Brit.Mus., Stowe Mss. 813,f.48b.

career for the family. From 1792 to 1798 Tucker was putser to various ships in the Channel and Mediterranean fleets and at one time secretary to Lord Shuldham. He became St. Vincent's secretary and protege and when the Earl became First Lord, was appointed first, clerk of the cheque at Plymouth yard, then a naval commissioner and finally second secretary to the Admiralty in 1804. He was a warm supporter of his patron's reforms and his practical knowledge of the yards made him invaluable, though unpopular with St. Vincent's enemies, during these years.^{1.} x
Though he left the office with St. Vincent he was appointed Surveyor General of the Duchy of Cornwall in 1808 and retired with a comfortable income to an estate near Saltash.

John Barrow's origins were equally humble, but by his own merits he rose to the position of second secretary in 1804. He was especially interested in science and mathematics, but had no further formal education and at fourteen became timekeeper in a Liverpool iron foundry. A trip in a Greenland whaler which introduced him to sea life, and a job as mathematics instructor in a Greenwich school, broadened his outlook and led to an introduction to Lord Macartney then on the point of his embassy to China. Barrow became comptroller of his household and, some years later, his private secretary when Macartney was governor of the Cape of Good Hope. His services here in mapping out

1. D.N.B. LV11.279.

unknown territory and partially reconciling Boers and Kaffirs, earned him the auditor-generalship of accounts. Barrow would have settled down in South Africa but the peace of 1802 meant the evacuation of the Cape by Britain and he returned home. He had become a friend of General Dundas while in Africa and through this connection was now introduced to Lord Melville. When the latter became First Lord in 1804 he appointed Barrow second secretary, a post which he held for the next forty years, and which he had gained through his ability and hard work.¹ It was a good choice and confirmed a career which could serve as a model for Samuel Smiles' precepts, and which was typical of the new century.

The secretaryship of the Admiralty was an important office. An act of 57Geo.III, fixed it next to the Secretaries of the Treasury and above the under secretaries of state. The first secretaryship was then in the patronage of the Treasury, the second, created in 1784 a separate office, under Admiralty control². though the former often chose his assistant, informing the head of the department in case he had any objections.³

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1. D.N.B. .III. 305-307.
 2. Marsden's Memoir, p.107.
 3. English Historical Documents, XI, 1783-1832, A.Aspinall and E.Anthony Smith, eds., (London, 1959), 245. Lord Liverpool to F.J.Robinson, 9 Mar.1811.

Ibbetson may have been Stephens' choice, but Marsden was Lord Spencer's as Tucker was St. Vincent's. The latter Marsden accepted reluctantly but had put himself in a position where he could not refuse.¹ When Lord Melville became First Lord he consulted Marsden on the choice of the second secretary, but made it clear that John Barrow was his preference to which Marsden acquiesced.²

The first secretary was not a modern civil servant but an eighteenth century politician. Both Stephens and Nepean were M.P's before they were appointed to the post, both represented Government boroughs, or those in the Government interest, though there is no record of Stephens having spoken in any of the forty six Parliaments in which he sat, while supporting each administration.³

But that the secretaries were becoming modern civil servants and permanent heads of government departments is partially confirmed by Stephens' career⁴ and by the third report on the Admiralty, issued in 1788 by the Commission appointed to enquire into the taking of fees and perquisites in Public Offices, which noted with approval that the secretaries were 'stationary officers.'

1. Marsden's Memoir, p.107.

2. Ibid., p.110.

3. Namier and Brooke, Hist. of Parl., III.475.

4. Ibid., I.121.

The divorce between politics and permanent office was incomplete. Marsden was not an M.P. and found it easier to keep aloof from party politics and carry on the business 'with the entire confidence of successive administrations....'¹. He was not desired to resign on the change of ministry in 1804, when political passions over the Admiralty were running high. But the resignation of Nepean, and the removal of Tucker in 1805, once his patron fell from power, were proofs that political bias was present. The change which affected the Admiralty between 1801 and 1804 was thus reflected in the secretaryship. Nepean resigned because he found it increasingly difficult to work with the new Board, though its head was an old friend. He was roughly treated by Markham.² and soon resigned³. Marsden nearly following his example.⁴ The new reforming attitude and different political opinions of the Board were uncongenial to both men and were reflected in the appointment of Tucker, a man who aroused as strong feelings as his master. In the growing political animosity of those years it was inevitable that the secretaryships should become a means to triumph over political opponents.

1. Marsden's Memoir, p.87.

2. Dropmore Mss.,VII.137. Thomas Grenville to Lord Grenville, 20 Jan.1803.

3. Ibid., 206.T.Grenville to Lord Grenville, 12 Jan.1804.

4. Marsden's Memoir, pp.103-105.

Though some interest was necessary to gain entry to the service it was such as could be commanded by reasonably prosperous middle class families to which these men belonged, and later appointment to the Board was the reward for past services. None of these men owed their position to their families but in the first instance to the notice of some great man and then to their own efforts. Such conclusions are confirmed by examining their ages on appointment. When chosen as First Secretary Stephens was forty, Nepean forty-four and Marsden fifty, though when second secretary he was forty-one. Presumably Ibbetson was the same age as he served thirty-one-and-a-half years, Tucker was forty-two, and Barrow was forty. This is just what we should expect from men who have been given a good start by their families or been fortunate enough to attract the attention of a patron, but must then make their own way. It takes time to build up a reputation for industry and reliability and gain experience and, an important point in the days when Government service was still regarded as a privilege, to build up some private means.

The families of these men were in a fortunate position and achieved respectable positions for themselves. One of Stephens' nephews, Philip, after a quick rise to captain, and constant employment in the Navy, became vice admiral of the Blue; another, Stephens Howe, was aide-de-camp to the King, lieutenant colonel of the sixty third regiment and M.P. for Yarmouth but died in

1796, in Jamaica. Stephens' illegitimate son was killed in a duel. A daughter, who died in childbirth at the Admiralty in 1805, had the year before married Thomas Jones, sixth Viscount Ranelagh, on whom Stephens' estates ultimately devolved.¹

Nepean's two brothers were in the Army; Thomas the elder, in the Royal Engineers, Nicholas the younger, a lieutenant colonel. Nepean's sons married the daughters of naval officers and his nephews entered the Navy and did well.² There is a monument in Bath Abbey to Thomas Nepean, commemorating his fifty years service, 'highly cultivated talents and uncorrupted integrity.' Marsden's brother Alexander was appointed under secretary to the Chief secretary to the Lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1801.

Their patronage and influence extended to friends and made them consequential. A constant stream of petitions for employment, promotion or support came to them in friendly or deferential terms.³

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1. G.E.C. Complete Peerage, X.736., Complete Baronetage, V.294., J.Marshall, Royal Naval Biography, ii.576. For a full account of the family see Baronetage, Betham, IV.264-270.
 2. J. Burke, Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire, (London, 1828), p.444., Baronetage, Betham, V.494. W.O'Byrne, op.cit., ii.808.
 3. Ad.1/492, f.130, Admiral R.Hughes to Stephens, 20 Sept.1790., JER/22, St.Vincent to Nepean, 9 June, 1798., Ad.1/166, Admiral E.Hughes to Stephens, 22 Dec.1783.

In return for such support¹ or in anticipation of it, favours were given by commanding officers. Admirals had opportunities of patronage which could be used in this way. Sir Richard Hughes informed Stephens of the appointment of 'your young friend Mr. Sayer,'² as lieutenant and commander of one of the schooners which the Board had allowed him to buy and to which he might appoint lieutenants. It was quite new, and 'if Master Sayer keeps anything of a lookout he will pick up sufficient prize money to make a purchase in the neighbourhood of your borough.' At this time there was no civil service examination and no set qualifications or requirements, even for such an important office as secretaryship, and none who held it had a public school or university education. William Marsden after a classical training in Dublin, was preparing to enter Trinity College when his brother intervened, but Marsden came from a wealthier and probably more cultured background than the others and was a scholar all his life. He was an authority on oriental languages and coins. Some of his books, such as the Travels of Marco Polo, the Dictionary of the Malay Language, and a History of Sumatra, which

1. Add.Mss. 46119, f.59., Thompson to Nepean, 26 May, 1795.
2. Ad.1/492, f.130, 20 Sep. 1790.

went into three editions and was translated into French and German, became standard works and were produced while he was at the Admiralty.¹

Sir John Barrow, was an equally industrious author, mainly on eastern and arctic travel or naval affairs; his life of Lord Howe is still an authority. Barrow was educated at Ulverston Grammar School, but left at fourteen and thereafter was largely self taught.²

Though these men were exceptional, the remaining secretaries were 'educated' men in the best sense. Stephens, though only receiving an elementary education in the free school at Harwich³ and entering the Navy in his early teens, became an F.R.S. and F.S.A. in later life. Tucker had a good education⁴ though no details are known, and both he and Nepean, ~~as pursers~~, had attended an elementary and possibly a local grammar school, within the financial limits of their families. Nepean seems to have been unfamiliar with French⁵ though Marsden, who had toured

1. D.N.B. XXXVI.207.
2. D.N.B. III.307.
3. D.N.B. 54, p.LIV.179., Victoria History of the County of Essex, W.Page and J.H.Round, eds., (London 1907 hereinafter Victoria County Hist.)ii.556., Namier and Brooke, Hist of Parl, III.475.
4. D.N.B.LVII.279.
5. C.R.Fay, Huskisson and his Age, (London,1951), p.66.

France several times, spoke it fluently.¹

A conventional education was not as important however as hard work, lucid exposition of orders, a clear hand, though Stephens fell sadly short in this respect, and the ability to keep the office working well. None of the secretaries found the lack a barrier to social or professional advancement. The educational attainments of the remainder of the office were presumably adequate. The chief clerks were Sir Harry Parker and Mr. Charles Wright, both trained in the office for over thirty years. The former, eldest son of Admiral Sir Hyde Parker the elder, probably attended the ancient grammar school of Bury St. Edmunds² which regularly sent scholars to Cambridge and provided an excellent education which included French, Spanish and Italian.

In addition there were a number of legal officials connected with the Admiralty such as the Judge of the Admiralty Court, the Solicitor of the Admiralty and the Receiver General and Comptroller of Rights and Perquisites. The current holder of the latter office in 1784 was Claude Champion de Crespigny and of the office of Comptroller, James Dyson. Between them they received and accounted for all ships, their cargoes and equipment, condemned as the perquisites of the Admiralty. Crespigny's salary was

1. Marsden's Memoir, pp.50-53.70.

2. Victoria County Hist., Suffolk, ^{W. Page, ed., (1907),} ii. 306-324.

£350 p.a. Dyson who was also Solicitor to the Admiralty, was financially better off. His salary was £250 p.a. as Comptroller, but he was occasionally employed by the Sick and Hurt board at £40 p.a. and was assistant to the Council for the affairs of the Admiralty and Navy Boards, which brought an additional £370 p.a. plus £200-£300 as a share in the profits of the Attorney and £40 p.a. in occasional fees. Both these positions were quasi-sinecures, though in war there was more work attached to them, but the prize courts were notoriously corrupt. Crespigny's appointment, at least, was in the nature of a political one. His family controlled two seats at Aldeburgh¹ and a brother in law was one of the important Commissioners of Excise.²

1. English Historical Documents, XI.1783-1832. A.Aspinall and E.Anthony Smith, eds., 229.
2. J. Burke, Genealogical and heraldic history of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, (4 vols.London,1835-8), iii.133.

The remainder of the establishment consisted of nineteen clerks in 1784; two marine clerks, eleven extra clerks and six established clerks. The latter were assisted in the tasks by the extra clerks and supervised by the chief clerk, in work which was purely manual and contained nothing original or requiring initiative in it. The clerks prepared papers, letters, orders and memoranda, as directed, and each of them had a separate branch of the business in his care. The background of these men is unknown; presumably it was middle class, or from the lower ranks of the gentry. Sir Harry Parker, son of a Suffolk squire, and later J.P. for Westminster while chief clerk¹. and Joseph Belson, one of the established clerks, who had served in the Navy and Sick and Hurt Offices before coming to the Admiralty illustrate this assumption. Anthony Trollope gives a vivid picture of office staff in his novel The Three Clerks culled from his first hand experience as a clerk at the Post Office in the mid-nineteenth century. Trollope's maternal grandfather, a clerk in the War Office around 1800, came from a Hampshire parsonage, and no doubt many clerks were drawn from this and similar backgrounds.

It is logical to assume a family connection among several clerks with the same name, since young men were introduced into

1. Ad.2/374,p.437, Nepean to Lord Chancellor, 12 May, 1795.

the office in their late teens and trained there as assistants to their fathers or uncles or brothers. In this way Charles Wright may have introduced a son or nephew, Henry Wright, as fifth extra clerk. Mitchel Hollingsworth may have entered one of his family as eleventh extra clerk, and Robert Maxwell, a younger brother, Basil, in the same way. There was nothing wrong in this, the customary method of entry into office, but the very lack of requirements meant the acceptance of a low standard of attainment. The only necessary qualification was, seemingly, the ability to write clearly¹. and even this was too often neglected.².

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1. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D.Bonner Smith,ed., I.303, St.Vincent to Marquis Townshend, 25 Apl.1801.
 2. Markham Correspondence, C.R.Markham,ed.,p.180, Admiral B.S. Rowley to Admiral Markham, 6 Jul.1806.

CHAPTER IIMethods of business and relations with the Cabinet
and other departments.

Thxough a government office, valuing economy and efficiency, the Admiralty enjoyed a pleasant working atmosphere. The First Lord often took a personal interest in his staff and Marsden remembered the happy family atmosphere at the Board.¹

Yet the secretaries worked extremely hard, since all the business of the department passed through their hands and their attendance was constant. They brought all letters and memoranda to the Board, received and made note of orders, sent out replies and in cases where business was urgent, and it was impossible to get the Lords Commissioners together to do so, signed orders subject to a covering letter from the Board as soon as possible. All letters and despatches from subordinate boards or other officials came to them as well as all letters from other Government departments, and all out going letters were drafted by them before the Board signed them. That they were conscientious is proved by the regularity of their signatures and the comparative smoothness with which the office was run. Scrawled on the turned up bottom corner of letter or despatch, was the date it was received, the date of the answer, usually the day after, with appropriate comments.

1. Marsden's Memoir, p.97 nte. 2 June, 1800.

Under Nepean the habit of asking questions by minute and obtaining answers in the same way, increased, and a virtual 'running commentary' was recorded on certain documents. Parts of letters were sometimes marked in the margin where they concerned other departments. These parts were then copied out and sent to the departments concerned.

The chief clerk prepared all memorials and letters to the Secretaries of State and orders to the Navy Board and Ordnance Board, cared for the maps, charts etc and paid the contingent expenses, according to the Board's directions. He obtained money for this from the Navy Board with whom he accounted annually. He was helped by the youngest of the established clerks and one of the extra clerks.

The second clerk dealt with Admiralty books and made out all the licences, the third prepared correspondence with the public offices, commanders of ports and squadrons and commissions and warrants to officers. The fourth prepared a list of officers entitled to half pay every six months, indexed correspondence between the Admiralty and other public boards, took care of official papers and checked the fees earned by his colleagues and the messengers' bills. The fifth clerk entered the Board minutes in a book, the sixth took charge of the common letter book, containing letters of commissioned and warrant officer, and the Greenwich Hospital letter book. The seventh clerk helped the chief clerk and

prepared monthly lists of ships in commission with the names of their officers and their station, and entered a fair copy of the Board's minutes into the minute book.

All the extra clerks were attached to the established clerks to assist them in these tasks by copying, indexing and margining the papers. In addition some of them had special duties of their own. Thomas Kite second extra clerk, collected the weekly returns of ships in commission at home, entering them into a ledger. Robert Maxwell, seventh extra clerk, translated and copied all French and Spanish documents, and extracted and arranged all foreign reports. All the extra clerks copied papers for Parliament and occasionally the minutes of courts martial, for which they were paid small fees. The two marine clerks prepared and wrote all letters, orders and commissions concerning the Marine Corps, the half yearly lists of half pay officers, and checked all relevant bills.¹

This staff was competent to deal with peace time business, and often were then under-employed, but ^{they} were overwhelmed in war. ~~Rather than~~ ^{This was not due to} any inefficiency on their part ^{but to} ~~this was the fault~~ of the piecemeal system which had grown up gradually as paper work increased and still bore the marks of a smaller department.

1. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc; Reports from Commissioners, No.III. The Admiralty, pp.107-116; 1806,vii.

There was still much emphasis on the keeping of records with too many clerks duplicating or overlapping each other's work and there was little delegation of authority. The First Lord had to see personally and confirm every warrant commission, victualling and transport licence, and press exemption as well as his own orders and despatches.

It was to deal with the increasing volume of work throughout the war, that the number of clerks had increased by 1806, when there were six ^{senior} clerks, ten junior established and ten extra clerks, excluding the secretaries, the chief clerk, and the private secretary to the First Lord. Murray Young compares the granting of a clerkship to a young man to that of presenting him with a small estate for life¹. Certainly employment in the civil service was one of the profitable avenues open to gentlemen. Clerks had security of tenure, being attached to the office rather than to the person of the First Lord or the Admiralty Board, and could expect compensation if their place was abolished after some years. The more senior clerks, including the secretaries, could hold ^{quasi-} sinecures, which added to their income, and provided one way of rewarding the more diligent and useful. Thus both Stephens and Nepean, while first secretary, also held the secretaryship to the

1. D.Murray Young, The Colonial Office in the Early Nineteenth Century, (Imperial Studies Series, no.XXII, 1961), p.24.

Commissioners for the relief of Poor widows of commissioned and warrant officers, at a salary of £200. Ibbetson was secretary to Greenwich Hospital at £221/5/10, and Parker secretary to the Board of Longitude at £74 p.a. Nepean also held the clerkship of the crown and courts at Jamaica at an unnamed amount and Marsden was naval officer for Dominica and St. Vincent at £116/4/11 p.a. When Charles Wright became chief clerk he retained the pursership of a third rate in ordinary which he had taken when a clerk and which brought him £30 p.a. He was also Registrar of the Vice Admiralty Court at Halifax, Nova Scotia, a profitable sinecure in wartime. Joseph Belson, another established clerk, was secretary to the Privy Seal Office at £30 p.a. and deputy to two clerks in that office from each of whom he received about £80 p.a. He was likewise purser to a ship 'in ordinary'.¹ James Dyer, an extra clerk, was deputy secretary to Greenwich Hospital, and both he and James Cutforth, reading clerk to the Board, were pursers of ships 'in ordinary'. Several clerks had also been agent for prizes or naval and marine officers during the American war, though this was later forbidden.

Promotion among clerks was slow but certain; when a vacancy occurred all the clerks moved up one place. Nor was this the absolute bar to efficiency it seemed, since the Admiralty could discharge those clerks who were too inefficient

1. That is to an uncommissioned ship, laid up in dock with a skeleton crew.

or pension them off before their period of service ended. It was thus possible for clerks to rise from extra to established positions and possibly to the chief clerk or secretaryship, and thence, in rare cases, to the Board itself. Hopes of promotion thus stimulated efficiency.

Conditions of service were reasonable. Work began at eleven a.m. and finished at five p.m. though the established clerks were expected to stay later, in rotation, if the work was unfinished. During the war Sunday was also a working day if pressure of business was great, and the last four extra clerks on the establishment attended every other evening to help with letters and orders. The marine clerks' hours were even less, from twelve till four.¹ It is possible that like other government offices the Admiralty clerks received refreshment of food and drink though there are no recorded payments in the office accounts.²

Since the Admiralty was a war department its working hours were more erratic than most, and much work was done in great spurts in answer to some emergency or to hasten an expedition already begun. Despatches arrived, or orders were sent, late at night in such cases. Thus when the Trafalgar

1. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners, No.III. The Admiralty, pp.96-106; 1806,vii.

2. See Murray Young, op.cit., pp.26-27.

despatches arrived at 1.0.a.m. on 6 November, 1805 Marsden was just going to bed after finishing some work. He then sat up with some clerks till 4.0.a.m. writing official letters and a special gazette informing the public of the news, besides dealing with various early callers.^{1.}

With ~~Six~~ ^{had been} of the clerks, including the secretaries, in the office for thirty years in 1786, ^{thus} the department had enough long service members to ensure a sense of continuity invaluable in a government department. Thus Stephens was 'a senior Admiralty official before Nelson was born, and he was still at the Admiralty when Nelson died'.^{2.} Of the rest all but six junior clerks had served for over eight years and most for over sixteen. Ten years later Ibbetson, the second secretary, Parker, the chief clerk, Thomas Fearne, the senior established clerk, and James Freshfield one of the extra clerks had resigned, and William Bryer, an established clerk had died, while another had been discharged.^{3.} Ibbetson, Parker and Bryer had served for over forty years, and retired on good pensions, Fearne, after thirty-four years, and Freshfield, after eighteen years, may have been compelled by ill health

1. Marsden's Memoir, pp.116-118.

2. Namier and Brooke, Hist.of Parl., I. 121.

3. Ad.22/5, pp.9,10.

to retire, but were also granted small pensions.¹ Thereupon the remaining clerks had all been promoted one place, permitting the extra clerks to be placed on the establishment. By 1806 this process had further advanced them, death and resignations weeding out the original clerks of 1784, though only after long periods of service. But there were still six of the 1784 establishment left, though all were now established clerks, and one, Charles Wright, had become chief clerk. Only three had been discharged throughout the period; no reason was given, nor were their ages disclosed, so it is impossible to deduce whether they were inefficient or merely moved to a more profitable place. Though in 1786 several clerks had given evidence to the Commission of the resignation of their colleagues because of poor wages, only two resignations among the junior clerks are recorded after 1790. The reason for such permanence was the improved salaries the Admiralty had introduced.

1. Ad.2 2/17, p.206,231.

Though the office ran smoothly enough in peace time the immense amount of work which accumulated after 1793 called for a reorganisation of office practice. The creation of an orderly office routine was largely the work of Sir Charles Middleton, though his severe criticism of the working methods of the board to which he was appointed in 1794, should not be taken too literally. ^{He was} Always a man to see things in black and white and in his own way as emphatic and didactic in expression as Lord St. Vincent, ^{but} it is doubtful if the office could have carried on with all the faults he imputed to it. Middleton declared he found clerks 'extremely defective in attendance', with no dependance on anything being done. Lord Chatham's leisurely habits had delayed work. Marsden says that 'many hundred packets, carried into the house of the First Lord were found there unopened',¹ and Middleton suggested to Lord Spencer that he should begin to read letters at 11.0.a.m. rather than at 12.0.~~a.m.~~^{noon}.²

The regulations Middleton drew up for office work give an interesting glimpse of working methods before 1794. Letters were read at intervals throughout the day, as they arrived and in no set order of importance. Consequently

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1. Marsden's Memoir, p.115.nte.
 2. The Spencer Papers, J.S.Corbett,ed., I.8-9, 19 Dec.1794.

Board members were inattentive¹. or attended only in the morning, or for occasional hours during the day. Messengers were not prompt, and clerks were often late in arriving and left while the Board was still transacting business. The lack of arrangement in the Board's work left them unoccupied at some periods, while a mass of papers to copy often kept the Board waiting. Moreover visitors came to see the clerks while at their desks and delayed them still further.

To remedy these failings Middleton proposed some changes and was able to introduce a more orderly method of work into the office for the short time he was there. The resignation of several senior clerks at this time may have been occasioned by these changes, and must have accelerated them. A fixed time, from 12.0.p.m. to 2.0.p.m. was set aside for reading letters which were now opened at 10.a.m. Town letters received after 2.0.p.m. were read before 12.0.p.m. the following day. Clerks were to be at their desks by 10.30. not to receive visitors at any time, and remain in the office until the Board had finished its work. A minute book which did not exist when Middleton came to the Board, and which he had created only after 'inconceivable perseverance' was to be

1. Seymour Papers, CR114A/325/5. Spencer to Seymour, 10 Jan. 1795, 'Having a moment's time while some uninteresting letters are reading at the Board

kept up to within two days and ready on all occasions. Minutes were also sent out to clerks at intervals, to keep them employed in copying, and to have papers ready to sign so as not to keep the Board waiting. Press warrants protections and Mediterranean papers were kept on a side table and not mixed with other business, and a list of warrant officers who were candidates for employment, with their cases and lists of vacancies, were kept on the table with relevant dates.¹

The impression is of a department in chaos before Middleton appeared and neither this nor the extra work or advice he suggested can have made him popular. Nor is it a true picture; the habits of work in the office were leisurely but not therefore wholly without order. Middleton's advice to the secretary to enforce the clerks' attendance and see that the day's business was finished in the day, suggests that Stephens had not taken care. Combined with the Commission's recommendation that he should live in the house provided, this allegation may have some foundation. But it should be remembered that the first secretary was an elderly man, possibly not as meticulous as in his youth, but from the very length of experience in office able to run the department in what seemed like confusion to an outsider.

1. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., I. 12-14, Middleton to Spencer, 19 Dec. 1794.

On the other hand Middleton was not a complete outsider. He had long experience of office routine, had been a most successful Comptroller of the Navy and was responsible for the recommendations of the 1784 Committee of Inquiry. He was the only man to appreciate that conventional habits and methods would not serve in the war, though even he did not realise how long it would last, or how great a strain it would impose on naval administration. Middleton was an exceptional man, with a talent and passion for organisation and he attempted to introduce new, business like methods. He was unable to do more in the short time he was a commissioner, and found it impossible to reorganise the duties of the Admiralty commissioners on the lines he wished.

Thus matters rested until he became First Lord in 1805, when he was at last free to re-distribute the duties of the Commissioners and so prevent the increased work from overwhelming the Board in the succeeding war years. In May 1805 he drew up a schedule of commissioners' duties.¹ The First Lord was to have the general arrangement of work; the first sea lord, formally the senior naval lord, was to act in the First Lord's absence and also deal with the day's letters, especially those from the ports and the secret services, which

1. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III. 76-79, May 1805.

he was to minute and send on to the secretary. With the agreement of the First Lord he was to dispose ships on all stations, giving the necessary orders, attend to the distribution of men and marines as necessary and to the equipment of ships. He was to check the logs with the orders issued for any deviation and note promotions, and to pay the utmost regard to the "justice and other circumstances attending it, as also to the character of the claimant". The second sea lord would receive from the secretary, once read, all letters belonging to subordinate boards, minute them and return them to the secretary to be sent. The third sea lord was to superintend the appointment of all commissioned and warrant officers under inspection of the First Lord who would sign all such commissions and warrants. The civil lords were to sign all orders and assist with their advice, and any absentee had to assign his duties to another member.

This schedule marks an important step in the work of the office and the development of the Board. Not only were specific duties assigned to each commissioner, but there was increased responsibility for the sea lords and a recognition of their importance, while the civil lords were depressed almost to the level of cyphers. There was a stricter attitude to work and the days of leisure disappeared. Another significant order of the same year ¹. which struck a blow at

1. Ibid. III.79.

political interference in Admiralty affairs and naval interference in political matters, refused leave of absence to a captain who was also an M.P. and whose ship was under sailing orders.

Though there was practically no government department with which the Admiralty did not correspond at some time, the Board's most regular correspondents were their own subordinate offices and the more important departments of the Treasury, War, Foreign and Home Offices. Correspondence between the Admiralty and Lloyds, the East India and Africa Companies, the Stationery and Post Offices was small. In 1785 the Foreign Office sent twelve letters to the Board, receiving double that number. There was a sharp rise ten years later, each office receiving well over one hundred, and the same is true of the Home and War Offices until 1805, when there was a marked, though temporary decrease.

Contact with minor departments was sometimes maintained indirectly; with the Stationery Office through the Treasury, with the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland through the Home Office. Relatively few letters passed direct between these offices and the Admiralty except in times of crisis. Complaints of poor quality stationery came direct from the Board¹ and were answered equally directly.² Information about attempted

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1. Stat.1/3, p.87, Nepean to Lewis Wolfe, 24 Dec.1803.
 2. Stat.3/57, p.61, 7 Oct., p.73, 27 Dec.1803, Wolfe to Nepean.

French invasions of Ireland was generally passed from the Admiralty via the Home Office,¹ and only when invasion seemed imminent did Nepean write direct to Castlereagh to warn him the French had sailed from Brest.² With the Secretaries of State there were two types of correspondence; that between the departmental secretaries, concerning routine topics and the rarer, more formal one between the Secretaries and the First Lord. The volume of correspondence increased throughout the period, but especially after 1793, when each year's letters occupied three, and after 1803, four volumes. But except on matters of urgency or delicacy departmental heads rarely wrote to each other in their official capacity.

This large correspondence with major offices of state was on a limited number of topics. With the Treasury the Admiralty discussed the problem of combating smuggling, the numbers of cutters employed in the excise service, the re-imburements of naval officers, or consuls for assisting British seamen or collecting information, the delivery of naval estimates, the transport of specie abroad to pay overseas establishments, the bounty paid to English counties for supplying seamen

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1. The Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh, ed. by the Marquess of Londonderry, (4 vols. London, 1848), I.318-9,399-403,451-455.,II.199.)
 2. Ibid., I.380-381, Nepean to Castlereagh, 27 Sept.1798.

according to quota, the import of duty free wine, tobacco and spirits into store for the use of the Victualling Board, or the cost of prisoners of war.

Letters to the Home Office concerned the care of prisoners of war, the care and transport of convicts, and until the establishment of a Secretary of State for War in 1794, of troops.¹ Major causes of disputes between the two departments and their local officials were the activities of the press gang, and local magistrates from Falmouth to Campbelltown protested, or hindered them.² The transport of colonial governors to their appointments³ and the defence of the colonies and of Britain were also discussed. All addresses and petitions to the King, including seamen's petitions, passed through the Home Office, which also made out the warrants for letters patent by which the Admiralty Board was appointed.

With the Foreign Office the Admiralty discussed salutes to the British flag, the release of American seamen in British ships and of British sailors in American vessels, complaints of punitive actions by British sailors or evidence of hostility by any power against Britain.⁴ Once the war began the support

1. H.O.29/2, p.46-48, 10 Nov., p.48-9, 7 Dec., p.50, 20 Dec.1785, Home Secretary to Admiralty Commissioners.

2. Ad.2/609, p.209, Nepean to William Wickham, 21 Feb.1795.

3. Ad.1/4152, f.19, Home Secretary to Admiralty Commissioners, 1 Aug.1786.

4. Ad.1/244, Admiral P. Affleck to Stephens, 11 June, 1791., Ad.2/374, p.239, Stephens to Grenville, 26 July, 1791.

of allies, naval intelligence, the treatment of neutrals, and the duties of admirals as representatives of Britain, were more important. Correspondence with the War Office was primarily confined to transport of troops, conduct of the war and joint co-operation on combined expeditions. Other departments were sometimes drawn into these discussions, notably the Ordnance and Transport Boards.

Relations between the Admiralty and the major government departments revolved around the inter-action of the problems of divided responsibility, the supply of raw material and equipment and the furnishing of transport. In the departmental maze which formed the antiquated administrative machine small difficulties could be magnified, jobs taking days stretched to weeks and original letters or proposals of unwelcome projects shelved. A single topic, such as the fitting out of an Irish revenue cutter could involve the Admiralty, the Navy Board, the Treasurer of the Navy, the Home Secretary and the Irish Treasury.¹ A complaint raised in one department embroiled all other offices remotely connected with it. Thus a complaint, by the commander of the forty-fifth regiment of foot, of poor quality bedding, supplied by the Navy Board's transport agent in Ireland in 1786, drew in the Secretary at War, the Home Secretary, the Lord Lieutenant's secretary, the Admiralty and Navy Boards, and

1. H.O.28/5, p.254, Admiralty Commissioners to Home Secretary, 15 May, 1786.

occupied their time for over a month.¹ The need to consult so many offices on even trivial matters wasted valuable time and provided plentiful grounds for disputes and for holding up unpopular projects.

Nowhere was confusion greater than among the war departments. The Admiralty, Navy, Victualling and Sick and Hurt Boards administered the Navy. The Army was administered by the Secretary at War, the Secretary of State for War, after 1794, and the Commander in Chief, after 1795. Of these only the Secretary of State was a Cabinet minister, though while William Windham was Secretary at War he was in the Cabinet, through force of personality and ability. The Ordnance was a separate department, controlled by the Master General. The clue to smooth working among such administrative confusion was personal contact, which was more easily made then than it would be now. All departments were small and ministers, secretaries and chief clerks knew each personally and even intimately, and had often worked in each other's offices. Lord Grenville and Lord Hawkesbury were Home and Foreign Secretaries for several years, Dundas was Home Secretary, Secretary for War and First Lord. Chatham and Spencer were First Lords and later occupied the Ordnance and Home Offices respectively and a former Admiralty lord, Pratt, when Lord Camden, became Secretary for War. Evan

1. Ad.1/4152,f.10, Home Secretary to Admiralty Commissioners, 14 Apl.1786., H.O.28/5, p.268, Admiralty Commissioners to Home Secretary, 25 May, 1786.

Nepean had been under secretary in the Home and War Offices before joining the Admiralty. Secondly there was a strong social bond between them to reinforce the professional one. We have seen how this affected the Admiralty lords. It also concerned the secretaries. Nepean's successor at the War Office, William Huskisson, was a personal friend, as was Robert Brownrigg, military secretary to the Duke of York. Nepean's eldest son married Mrs. Huskisson's niece.¹ Thirdly Pitt intervened in many offices personally. Besides the Treasury he virtually directed foreign affairs until 1791, the Admiralty, through his brother, after 1788^{b 1794,} the Board of Trade and the India Board.

The heads of departments, though political appointees, were still powerful. They were heads in fact as well as name and often managed much of the routine office work personally. The amount of power wielded depended on them individually, but however mediocre, they ~~were impossible to ignore~~^{could not be}. It was part of constitutional practice that all government orders were transmitted by the Secretaries of State to various departments and this formal notification of royal commands was necessary before anything could be done officially.

1. J. Burke, A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire, p.444., C.R.Fay, Huskisson and his Age, pp.67,68,184., See also Chapter I.pp.110-111.

Yet though departmental heads were important, their under-secretaries were even more so. At the Admiralty they had been in office longer than the commissioners and good personal relations between them and their colleagues in other offices were desirable. An informal network of communication, embodied in friendly notes which passed between them and often secured by personal friendship outside the office, could smooth the official path. Where it existed everyday routine ran efficiently, but if it was lacking between offices already estranged at Cabinet level, then difficulties and delays were almost insurmountable.

Relations with the War Office secretaries were good and helped to overcome the friction which exacerbated feelings between ministers. Dundas frequently used Nepean, a former under-secretary, as a private channel of communication with the Admiralty¹ both when the latter was at the War Office and after he became Admiralty secretary.² It is possible, in the general re-shuffle of departments in 1794, that Dundas secured Nepean's appointment to the Admiralty to continue close co-operation with that office.

Both Stephens' and Nepean's relations with their colleagues in the Home Office and the Treasury were equally good. Whenever

1. Dropmore Mss., V.206, 29 July, 1799., VI.301, 19 Aug.1800, Dundas to Grenville.

2. P.R.O.30/8/368, Dundas to Chatham, 14 Sept.1794.

possible routine channels were by-passed by private arrangements,¹ documents were sent unofficially,² and Admiralty despatches occasionally delayed or hastened to suit the convenience of the Secretary of State,³ but these indirect methods had to be used tactfully lest departmental chiefs took offence.⁴ There was no such friendly communication with the Ordnance Office and relations between the two suffered accordingly. When a present of twelve carronades was sent to the King of Sicily, the Ordnance first heard of it when the master of the storeship appointed to carry them applied to their office for the guns.⁵ Similarly, cool relations between the War and Foreign Office secretaries mirrored those between their chiefs, Dundas and Grenville. In 1800 Dundas had to ask Grenville to order someone in his office to send Dundas a daily intelligence report, since Huskisson, the under-secretary, had found the Foreign Office secretaries, George Aust and Bland

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1. Ad.1/4289, Thomas Steele to Stephens, 8 Nov.1786., Ad.1/4152,f.4, Nepean to Stephens, 15 Feb.1786, H.O.28/25, p.189, Nepean to Wickham, 17 Apl.1799.
 2. H.O.28/33,p.150,Marsden to John King,30 Apl.1805, Ad.1/4330, Lewis to Stephens, 20 Nov.1790.
 3. Ad.1/4152,f.11, Nepean to Stephens, 26 Apl.1786., H.O.28/25, p.40, Wickham to Nepean, 23 Jan.1799., p.52, Nepean to Wickham, 27 Jan.1799.
 4. Ad.1/4152,f.54, Nepean to ?Stephens, 11 Mar.1787.
 5. Ad.1/4014, A. Rogers to Stephens, 30 Nov.1784.

Burgess, reluctant to do so.¹

In this close-knit circle unofficial warnings were discreetly given;² favours exchanged and appointments solicited for friends and protégées. Stephens urged his protégée as provost marshal for St. Johns in 1785;³ George Rose successfully forwarded a request for the judgeship of the Admiralty court at St. Kitts.⁴ Not all applications were successful; other claims might be stronger or external factors intervene. Thus though Nepean strongly recommended Mr. Logie for the Algerian consulship in 1799, Mr. Falcon was actually appointed.⁵ Finally this system of informal communication supplemented the intelligence passing between departments. News that was too imprecise to be committed to formal despatch, or too recently acquired to have been included in the previous one, was sent in this way.⁶

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1. Dropmore Mss., VI.253, Dundas to Grenville, 21 June, 1800.
 2. Ad.1/4072, Francis Freeling to Nepean, 20 Apl.1797.
 3. H.O.28/5, p.11, Stephens to Nepean, 1 July, 1785.
 4. Ad.1/4291, Rose to Nepean, 20 June, 1797.
 5. H.O.28/25, p.94, Nepean to King, Undated letter, probably end of February or beginning of March, 1799., p.205, 22 Apl., p.386, 10 Oct.1799, Nepean to Wickham.
 6. Ad.1/4291, Charles Long to Nepean, 20 Feb. 29 March, 1797.

The ties which linked the secretariat joined ministers also and provided underlying strength for Pitt's first Cabinet. The successful "inner" Cabinet system which Pitt had established by 1791, with Grenville at the Foreign and Dundas at the Home Office, should have been especially useful in war. But the outbreak of war and the inclusion of the Portland Whigs in 1794 led to new 'alliances' being formed in the Cabinet, the result of divergencies about methods of waging war.¹ Each minister urged his own plan as the one best suited to end the war quickly and advantageously and clamoured for available resources. Pitt, who was no war minister, had to decide between them and plumped for trying all in turn, a fatal decision with the limited resources available, and one which led to the failure of many schemes. Unable to direct autocratically, Pitt had to control and drive an illmatched team of aristocratic amateurs of varying ability and differing temperaments, who often quarrelled among themselves.²

Dundas and Pitt favoured a colonial, imperialist war, in

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1. Brit.Mus., Add.Mss.40102(Melville Papers,iii),ff.79-82, Dundas to Pitt, 22 Sept.1800; hereinafter Add.Mss.40102.
 2. Court and Cabinets, Buckingham, ed.,II.155, Lord Bulkeley to Buckingham, 27 Apl.1789., The Political Memoranda of Francis Godolphin Osborne, Fifth Duke of Leeds, ed.by O. Browning (Camden Society Publications, New Series.,xxv,1884.), pp.155-6, 166.

which the capture of French colonial possessions and ships would cause French trade to wither, while chaos at home would make peace inevitable. While this early eighteenth century view was partly true it could never have won the war. The mere collection of naval bases, while commercially useful, could not destroy an enemy imbued with political rather than economic principles, and naval victories, however brilliant, could not defeat a military empire. The war continued unabated for ten years after Trafalgar, and some of Napoleon's greatest victories were to come after his greatest naval defeat.

Grenville, who assumed a more independent line in foreign policy after the inclusion of the Portland Whigs, was a supporter of the French Royalists in Toulon, La Vendée and Brittany, and wished for a knock out blow against the central French government by such means and by invasion from Flanders. It was Grenville who persuaded Pitt to support the French Royalists when the Prime Minister would have dropped them, on Dundas's advice and his own belief that the money could be better spent in the West Indies. Grenville was also opposed to peace negotiations with France, an attitude which brought the first real split in the war Cabinet in 1797, when only the crisis following the naval mutiny prevented his resignation.¹

1. Dropmore Mss., III. 329, Grenville to George III, 16 June, 1797., E.D.Adams, The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy, 1787-1798, (Carnegie Institute of Washington Publications, no.13,1904), p.57, nte.

The ablest man in the Portland group, William Windham, supported him. To Windham, the disciple of Edmund Burke, and in some measure to Grenville too, the French war was a crusade whose purpose was the extirpation of Jacobinism. To Pitt it was an unnecessary evil to be finished as quickly as possible. Between these views there could be no real harmony and Windham and his friends were reluctant allies of a Prime Minister whose principles they distrusted. Into these dissensions Lord Spencer, an eminent Portlandite, was drawn.

There had been Cabinet quarrels before in which the Admiralty had been involved, notably between Lord Howe and the Duke of Richmond.¹ Howe had aroused strong personal antipathy in the American war, both in the service and Parliament, where he was bitterly attacked in 1788 over unpopular flag promotions.² He was a Cabinet liability and was blocking the naval reforms which Pitt, through Middleton wished to promote.³ There were equally bitter quarrels between Chatham and Richmond, whose usefulness in the Cabinet and in Parliament had waned by 1792.⁴

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1. Hist.Mss.Comm., Fourteenth Report, Appendix, pt.I. The Mss. of His Grace the Duke of Rutland preserved at Belvoir Castle, (4 vols.London, 1888-1905; hereinafter Rutland Mss.), III.299, I.Orde to Duke, 13 May, 1786, 301, D.Pulteney to Duke, 16 May, 1786., A.G.Olson, The Radical Duke, The Career and Correspondence of Charles Lennox, Third Duke of Richmond, (Oxford, 1961), pp.85-87.
 2. Barrow, op.cit., pp.179-187., Parliamentary History, 1786-8, xxvi.648., The Morning Post, 22 Feb.1788.
 3. See Chapter I pp.16-18.
 4. Olson, op.cit., pp.88-91.

Neither Howe nor Richmond had been regular attenders at Cabinet meetings, both were personally unpopular and neither possessed sufficient political "interest" to overcome these faults. Pitt was ruthless about jettisoning his liabilities and dropped both men without a qualm.¹ But none of these arguments applied to Lord Spencer. He was too important politically to be pushed aside, he attended Cabinet meetings regularly and took an interest in them, partly because he was conscientious but even more because he enjoyed politics.² Unlike Howe, he eventually won the support of his own board and the bulk of the service. At first, while Spencer was still inexperienced and under War Office pressure, there was resentment over the predominance of the Army and War Office in naval affairs. The cause of this resentment was the appointment of a junior admiral to the Leeward Islands expedition of 1795.

This combined operation formed part of Dundas's plan for conquering the French West Indian islands and he was largely responsible for its organisation. The Army commander was Major General Abercromby. Spencer, who had just come to the Admiralty,

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1. Ibid., p.101., Dropmore Mss., Buckingham to Grenville, 2 Sept.1793.
 2. Add.Mss.,40102,ff.10-11, 7 Sept.1795 Cabinet Minute., Dropmore Mss., 644,646, Cabinet minutes for 14,18 Nov.1794., Ibid., III.35,36,261,283,310,330, Cabinet minutes for 19 March, 1795, 19 Oct.1796, 10 Dec.1796, 9 Apl., 16 June, 1797., Ibid., IV.95,329,Pitt to Grenville, 2 Jan. 21 Sept. 1800.

was influenced by Dundas to choose Rear Admiral Sir Hugh Christian, who had gained the latter's approval by his work at the Transport Board, as the naval officer. Unfortunately there was already an admiral in the Leewards, Sir John Laforey, considerably senior to Christian. It was not clearly defined what would happen when the expedition arrived but Dundas and Abercromby assumed, and Spencer's memorandum of 25 August confirmed,¹ that Laforey would be removed to the Jamaica station, leaving Abercromby free from the interference of a senior naval officer.

The confusion of these orders was not apparent to Spencer until Sir Charles Middleton returned to the Board after some days absence. He objected strongly to the removal of Laforey, a personal friend, and protested at the implied snub to a senior officer. Christian was therefore ordered to put himself under the over-all command of Laforey. It was not until 11 October that Dundas learnt of the change. An angry meeting took place. It ended in a patched up solution by which Christian was to remain under Laforey's command but be given the sole charge of the naval side of the expedition. This satisfied Spencer and Dundas, but not Abercromby. The West Indies were notoriously unhealthy and there was a possibility that Christian might die and that Laforey, hurt by the original snub would refuse to co-operate. What, the General reasonably

1. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.2-5.

asked, would happen then?

Spencer tried at first to shift responsibility for choosing a naval commander onto the Cabinet, but on Dundas's accusation that he was shirking his responsibilities he capitulated, agreed to the recall of Laforey, and to overcome the seniority problem, nominated Admiral William Cornwallis a Commander in Chief of the Leewards expedition, though the latter was in the Home Fleet and about to sail on another mission.¹ The Admiralty Board were indignant at the harsh treatment of Laforey. Middleton preferred to resign as a protest against the overweening influence of the War Office in naval concerns, rather than sign the order for Laforey's recall, and the rest of the Board were not silent. Lord Hugh Seymour, in an undated memorandum, referring to this crisis, regarded the treatment of Laforey as 'the harshest.....that ever was shewn', and the appointment of Christian as one 'fraught with much inconvenience and difficulty to the Naval service as well as to the Minister presiding over it.' Dundas seemed oblivious to these dangers and 'dispos'd to render the Admiralty an appendage to his office by thus indirectly dictating to it in its choice and selections of officers to fill the first command.' Seymour did not doubt Dundas's ability to select Army officers but thought 'it would

1. For further details see Lieutenant-Commander J. Stewart, 'The Leeward Isles Command, 1795-6', The Mariner's Mirror, xlvii.no.4. (November, 1961), 270-280.

be but fair to allow the same power of selection to those to whom responsibility equally attaches itself', at the Admiralty.¹

Spencer was disheartened by the whole affair. In a letter to Windham he expressed his regret at,

'the situation into which I suffered myself to be drawn in a great degree contrary to my own judgement, and entirely against my inclination and from my entrance into which to this moment I have experienced little but a continued series of vexations and anxiety, unaccompanied by the consolation which I flattered myself would have counterbalanced them, and the satisfaction of its producing considerable public benefit.'²

His depression had some justification. In the first years of office he had driven several admirals whose experience could ill be spared, to retirement, shaken the confidence of naval officers in the Board, seemed to confirm their suspicions that the Board was subordinate to the War Office and that their future promotions might depend on the friendship or approval of Dundas. This could have created a situation for Spencer similar to that under Lord Sandwich, when many senior officers, touchy about the promotion of juniors for political and other reasons, united in opposition to the First Lord and refused to

1. For the full memorandum see Appendix I., The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.6-9, Middleton to Chatham, 8 Nov.1795., The Spencer Papers, J.S.Corbett, ed., I.131-229.
2. The Life and Correspondence of the Rt.Hon.William Windham, 1750-1810, ed. by the Earl of Rosebery (2 vols.London,1913; hereinafter Windham Correspondence), I.314, Spencer to Windham, 10 Nov.1795.

serve under him.^{1.} Spencer avoided Sandwich's fate, survived the upheaval and overcame the service resentment. He also managed to force Middleton's resignation, an administrative loss but a personal relief to Spencer. But the cost in resentment and lack of co-operation between Army and Navy in the field was high.

Despite this incident Spencer was not isolated in the Cabinet as Howe had been. He took office as a member of a group which was unenthusiastic about coalition and which could force Pitt to make concessions. Spencer was a close friend of Windham,^{2.} and was drawn to Grenville by mutual interests; both bibliophiles, they shared a love of the classics.^{3.} Moreover all three men were united in their irritation^{with} even personal dislike of Dundas, whose chief recreations were politics and port.^{4.}

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1. J.H. Broomfield, 'Lord Sandwich at the Admiralty Board: Politics and the British Navy, 1771-1778', The Mariner's Mirror, li.no.1.(February,1965),7-17.
 2. Windham Correspondence, Rosebery, ed., II.47-49, Lady Spencer to Windham, 20 Apl.1797., 158, Windham to Spencer, 25 June, 1800.
 3. Grenville knew The Iliad and The Odyssey by heart, Spencer read widely while at the Admiralty. Once when overworked he was prescribed a day's rest and a Euripides' play. Le Marchant, op cit., p.16.
 4. Windham Correspondence, Rosebery, ed., II.8-10, Windham to Dundas, 1 May, 1796., 252, Windham to Captain Lukin, 9 Mar. 1805., C. Matheson, The Life of Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville, 1742-1811, (London,1933),pp.156-7, 346, Dropmore Mss., III.167-8, Grenville to Pitt, 25 Jan.1796., P.R.O.30/8/157, Dundas to Pitt, 11 Apl.1800.

Spencer leaned heavily on his naval advisors after Middleton resigned. Such dependence was unacceptable to Dundas who resented the influence the naval lords exercised over Spencer. The responsibility for naval affairs lay with him, he reminded Spencer, and 'your colleagues in the Cabinet can look nowhere but to you for the rapid and prompt execution of what is resolved upon.'¹ Again and again Dundas lectured Spencer on his duties and responsibilities as First Lord. When the Helder expedition was being prepared in 1799 he rebuked the selfishness of the Admiralty who would not alter their convoy arrangements.

'If Mr. Pitt', he argued, 'was to refuse the aid of his Revenue Cutters and yachts on such an occasion, would the Excuse be tolerated that a Cargo may be smuggled in the mean time, or that the Revenue might suffer by the deviation of the Revenue vessels from their proper duty?'

Spencer must put the country's needs first rather than those of his service. He was a 'Member of the Government of the Country, implicated in the general responsibility of administration', and must shoulder the duties incumbent on him.² Despite the crisis caused over the appointment to the Leeward Islands command in 1795, Dundas interfered in the same way in

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1. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., II.332-4, Dundas to Spencer, 5 May, 1798., Add.Mss.40102, ff.28-31, Dundas to Spencer, 1 July, 1799., Dropmore Mss., V.113-4, Dundas to Grenville, 1 July, 1799.
 2. Add.Mss.40102, ff.28-31, Dundas to Spencer, 1 July, 1799.

1798 over the proposed expedition to Ostend. This was another combined operation, aimed at blowing up the gates and sluices of the Bruges-Ostend canal, so interrupting the navigation between French occupied Flanders and Holland and preventing the French massing their forces in Flanders, preparatory to an invasion of England. The proposer of such a scheme was Captain Sir Home Riggs Popham. He was unpopular at the Admiralty, but worked well with the Army and was strongly recommended by Dundas.¹ Because of strong Army pressure Popham got the appointment, but Spencer protested against 'this peremptory sort of nomination of naval commanders by land officers' and was concerned that the appointment would give 'great disgust and offence to the profession who are sufficiently irritable in these matters.'² Two years later Dundas was urging Spencer to remove Admiral Lord Keith from the naval command in the Mediterranean because of rumoured quarrels with General Abercromby, a course which Spencer delayed until death removed Abercromby from the scene.³ More important, Dundas brushed aside genuine difficulties as imaginary or easily overcome. He regarded the collection of

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1. The Spencer Papers, J.S.Corbett, ed., II.317-8, Dundas to Spencer, 17 Apl.1798.
 2. Ibid., 319, Spencer to Dundas, 25 Apl.1798.
 3. The Spencer Papers, H.W.Richmond, ed., IV.136-8, Dundas to Abercromby, 29 Dec.1800.

fifteen thousand men at short notice for the Helder expedition an easy matter, and calmly suggested stripping guardships and Russian and British war ships of men whom it would have been virtually impossible to replace. The Admiralty was unjustly blamed for the failure of the Ostend expedition,¹ but no account was taken of the other services for which frigates might be needed besides acting as convoys for troop transports.² Spencer was opposed to the squandering of resources on expeditions and small enterprises, partly on logistic grounds which Dundas would have done well to consider. He was also concerned that the Navy would be unable to perform its functions, including the vital one of protection from invasion, if stripped of equipment and dissipated in unplanned exercises.³

Dundas's criticisms of Admiralty slowness and selfishness were occasionally justified but his method of sweeping aside difficulties as though they existed only in the mind of the First Lord, and of lecturing him about his duties, did not remove the difficulties or make Dundas more acceptable to Spencer. The latter only drew closer to Grenville, siding with him in his rivalry with Dundas for Pitt's attention.

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1. G.E.Manwaring, 'Popham's expedition to Ostend in 1798', The Mariner's Mirror, vii.no.11.(November, 1921.)332-341.
 2. Add.Mss., 40102, ff.92-3 Dundas to Spencer, 21 Nov.1800.
 3. The Spencer Papers, H.W.Richmond, ed., III.159-160, Spencer to Dundas, 9 Aug.1799.

Grenville neither dismissed difficulties nor lectured the First Lord on his duties, since both shared a landed aristocrat's conception of them. He consulted Spencer on policy affecting the Navy¹ and drew him into informal discussions on foreign and naval policy with Pitt.² He never bullied Spencer into appointing unpopular officers. Though as insistent as Dundas, in his own way, he appeared to leave the choice to Spencer.

In 1798 the Government received offers of alliance against France from Naples and Turkey. Much turned on the amount of naval help Britain could provide. Grenville proposed several measures to effect these alliances, among them the dispatch of a small naval squadron to the Turks, commanded by Captain Sir Sydney Smith. Smith had the added advantage of a brother who was consul at Constantinople and the two would work harmoniously together.³ Spencer was well aware of Smith's unpopularity in naval circles and of the difficulties such an appointment would cause, and his orders were left deliberately ambiguous. Nevertheless, thanks to Smith's tactlessness, both St. Vincent and Nelson, his senior officers in the Mediterranean and Levant,

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1. Dropmore Mss., V.101-2, Grenville to Admiralty lords, 25 June, 1799. See also official minute Ibid., VI.156-7, 6 Mar.1800.
 2. Ibid., V.376, Spencer to Grenville, 7 Sept.1799., IV.303-4, Spencer to Grenville, 10 Sept.1798.
 3. P.R.O.30/58/2,f.37,Grenville to Spencer, 18 Sept.1798.

were chagrined at the appointment and the latter threatened to resign.¹ The situation resembles Christian's appointment in 1795. But Spencer was not annoyed by this suggestion, as he was by those of Dundas on similar topics. The whole tone of his correspondence with Grenville was different; nor were there angry protests against Foreign Office interference in Admiralty affairs.

The animosity Dundas had aroused was exposed in 1805 when Admiralty administration had become the focus of party strife. Parliament had a traditional admiration for the Navy, the national bulwark. There were approximately thirty naval officers in the Commons between 1784 and 1806² and in addition to this large body of professional opinion many politically powerful aristocrats had naval connections.³ But Parliament had no affection for ^{the} Navy's administrators, who earned their share of criticisms of their professional ignorance and ambition.⁴

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1. The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, ed. by Sir N.H.Nicolas, (7 vols. London, 1844-46; hereinafter Nelson's Dispatches.), III.213-4, nte., Spencer to St.Vincent, 9 Oct.1798., 215, Nelson to St.Vincent, 31 Dec.1798., 217-8, Nelson to Spencer, 1 Jan.1799.
 2. Judd, op.cit., p.88.
 3. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.203-4, Anon. to Lord Barham, 27 Dec.1805., Dropmore Mss., I.466, Buckingham to Grenville, 6 May, 1789.
 4. Hist.Mss.Comm., Report on the Mss. in various collections, VI. The Mss. of Captain H.V. Knox, (London, 1909), p.201, William Knox to Lord Walsingham, 25 May, 1788., Seymour Papers, CR114A/348/7, Captain Berkeley to Seymour, 16 Aug.1795.

Debates on purely naval topics were rare in peace. During the war routine attacks were made on the Admiralty for its slowness and unpreparedness.¹ The undefended state of the country in 1795, during the French expedition to Bantry Bay, and the naval mutinies of 1797, justified these attacks, though censure motions were defeated in both houses.² Admiralty spokesmen played an inglorious part in these debates, having no adequate spokesmen in the Commons. In 1795 it was Dundas who defended the Board against charges of sloth³ and in 1797 the Admiralty lords were similarly reticent.

Between 1803 and 1805 there was a revival of interest in purely naval topics, and a renewal of party strife similar to that over the Keppel-Palliser affair some twenty years earlier. Pitt's resignation in 1801 introduced Henry Addington as Prime Minister. Though there was little change of policy and Addington was supported by Pitt, he was despised, for his mediocrity, his modest birth and for making the inglorious but necessary peace of Amiens, and harassed by the witty, spiteful jibes of Canning and his friends. Despite these jibes and the hostility of a powerful Commons group, calling themselves the

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1. Parliamentary History, 1794-5, xxxi, 1434-1454., P.R.O. 30/8/364, No. IV. f. 4, Undated rough notes for Lord Spencer, probably 1795.
 2. Parliamentary History, 1797-8, xxxiii, 107-125.
 3. Ibid., 5-25.

'New' Opposition, and composed of Grenville, Windham and Spencer among others. Addington's ministry seemed likely to last as long as peace held and no controversial topics were introduced. The proposed Admiralty reforms soon showed on what shifting foundations the ministry was built.

In a ministry of mediocrities the Admiralty, under the direction of Earl St. Vincent, was outstanding, for it was only on naval policy that Addington's policy differed from Pitt's. The Admiralty had made an inspection of the dockyards in 1802 and were already at loggerheads with the Navy Board over the obstructions placed in their way. St. Vincent found it had become a principle that the royal yards could not build ships in war, but only refit and repair them, and that new ships were built, often badly, by contract with private firms at extortionate rates.¹ St. Vincent decided to stop contract building, reform the royal yards, which if properly managed could build and repair, discharge unfit shipwrights and make the remainder work harder. From 1802 he gave no more contracts to private yards. Such measures raised an opposition with strong vested interests in the status quo. Timber supplies were in the hands of the contractors who raised their prices, even refusing to sell to the royal yards. St. Vincent thereupon

1. For fuller details see Memoirs of the Administration of the Board of Admiralty under the Presidency of the Earl of St. Vincent, a tract published as an appendix in Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., II.429-564.

planned to build ships abroad, which created fresh enemies. The result was deadlock; he would not use the contract system and his opponents would not use any other. There were two solutions; to go on with the reform, which Addington at first supported, or Pitt's plan, supported by contractors, merchants, shipwrights and all who stood to lose by the reforms, of returning to the old system. It was unfortunate that St. Vincent's reforms, begun in peace, were interrupted by a war, longer and more desperate than the former. His political enemies accused him of abandoning caution, common sense and the protection of the country in a reforming crusade. But it was just this latter point which drove him on, like an Old Testament prophet, to attack the corruption he had seen, and which, possibly, blinded him to international dangers.

By 1803 a Parliamentary commission was investigating frauds and abuses in the naval departments, Addington was being increasingly attacked for his naval policy and for the supposedly unprepared state of the country faced with the threat of renewed war with France, and was seeking support. Rumours were rife of cabinet changes and possible coalition between Pitt and Addington. Hints that Lord Melville, as Dundas had become, would take the Admiralty decided the 'New' Opposition to take no further part in attacks on the Admiralty, since such attacks would only clear the way for Melville and not serve Spencer's ambition to return there.¹ By May, war with France had been

1. Court and Cabinets, Buckingham, ed., III.250-251, Grenville to Buckingham, 15 Feb. 1803.

declared and Pitt had decided to return to office as Prime Minister, bending his energies to removing Addington. A campaign against the Admiralty, the First Lord and the Commission of Naval Inquiry, was therefore begun and much political manoeuvring and behind scenes cabinet making went on during the next months. By February, 1804 the 'New' Opposition had split into two; the larger Grenville group whom Pitt could not conciliate, and who amalgamated with Fox and the Old Opposition, whose interests and antipathies they shared, and the smaller group under Canning who joined Pitt.

Under repeated attacks Addington's nerve broke, he resigned on 10 May, 1804 and Pitt returned to form his last ministry, in which Lord Melville was First Lord. It was pitifully weak. Pitt had difficulty in combating the attacks of the Opposition whose attacks were made more bitter by the strong personal element which had entered into debates, and was hard pressed to find any support. Addington was won over with a seat in the Cabinet, and a peerage. The attack against the Admiralty having served its turn was now stopped, and Pitt offered command of the Channel fleet to St. Vincent, who indignantly refused it unless Pitt publicly apologised and denied the false charges he had levelled against him. The latter had no need to do so and was taking steps to replace the Parliamentary commission with a Royal Commission, headed by Sir Charles Middleton, when the issue of the Tenth Report of the Commission of Inquiry,

dealing with the office of Treasurer of the Navy, on 13 February, 1805, altered everything. It destroyed for ever Melville's public reputation and revealed that while Treasurer, he had connived with Alexander Trotter, the Paymaster in speculation with public funds, allowing Trotter to place such funds to his own account in a private bank, in defiance of the law. The speculations in which Trotter engaged were successful, and there was no loss to the public, but Melville was involved by refusing to answer the Commissioners' questions, by borrowing money from Trotter which he must have suspected was public money, and by diverting such money from naval to other uses, which he would not disclose. Melville's had not been a popular appointment and hostile pamphlets and petitions poured in demanding his dismissal. The political passions Pitt had raised to remove St. Vincent now destroyed his friend.

The publication of the report was greeted with delight by Pitt's and Dundas's enemies. The venomous attacks made on Dundas, the violent speeches and spate of coarse prints,¹ were a continuation of the methods used to discredit St. Vincent and Addington. Fatally easy to rouse, they were difficult to control or subdue. In the forefront of Melville's attackers were some of his former colleagues, with members of the Old

1. M.D. George, English Political Caricature: A Study in Opinion and Propaganda, (2 vols. Oxford, 1959), II.80.

Opposition. On 6 April Samuel Whitbread, a brother in law of Charles Grey, introduced a motion accusing Melville of applying public money to his own use. Pitt's attempt to get the matter referred to a select committee was defeated in a tense House by the casting vote of the Speaker. The proceedings in the Commons then became temporarily chaotic. There were huzzas and 'view hallos' as numbers were read, and shouts of "We have killed the fox," indicated the strength of party and personal feeling.¹ Melville resigned the following day to be replaced by Middleton, created Lord Barham. A policy of harassment ^{achieved} ~~saw~~ the removal of Melville's name from the list of Privy Councillors, an exceptional step revealing great bitterness. At the same time unsuccessful attempts were made to implicate Pitt in Melville's downfall and blacken his character by imputing financial frauds to him. Melville's enemies had not yet done. There was sufficient evidence for his impeachment and proceedings were begun in June, 1805. Examination of witnesses took the whole summer but though they uncovered much unsavoury practice the committee, of which Whitbread was chairman, failed to prove Melville had personally profitted by Trotter's transactions.

The rancorous party spirit was not assuaged by the news of Trafalgar and only slightly by Pitt's death. His cousin,

1. Matheson, op.cit., p.350.

Grenville is said to have wept on hearing the news, but there was no such emotion for Pitt's closest friend. Even after Dundas had been acquitted of all charges, except carelessness Grenville harboured some resentment against him.¹

There were few disagreements between the Admiralty, War and Foreign Offices after 1801. With the exception of Lord Hawkesbury, Foreign and War ministers were mediocre. Neither St. Vincent nor Barham attended the Cabinet regularly. Both took office on the understanding that they need not attend those Cabinets which did not deal with professional business. St. Vincent left those meetings which seemed to him time-wasting, Barham was regarded as something of a stop gap.² In June he had attended the Cabinet only once since his appointment in May, and when 'wanted the other day between five and six.... had gone to drink tea somewhere or other in the City.'³ He usually submitted a rough draft of the present state of naval matters which the Prime Minister corrected and submitted to the Cabinet.⁴

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1. Dropmore Mss., VIII.387, Grenville to Wellesley, 16 Oct.1806.
 2. Bathurst Mss., pp.45-7, Lord Harrowby to Lord Bathurst, 21 Apl.1805, p.47, Lord Camden to Bathurst, 22 Apl.1805.
 3. Aspinall, The Cabinet Council, p.181 nte.
 4. P.R.O.30/58/6,f.167, 27 Nov.1805.

The effects of Cabinet divisions on the conduct of the war were often disastrous. Traditional bad relations between the services were aggravated because at first the Navy won all the battles and the Army floundered under mis-direction. Only the best relations between the persons concerned could soothe ruffled feelings. But such relations were often far removed from the dealings of the War and Admiralty Offices and their subordinates, and a seemingly deliberate policy of non-co-operation was followed with the Ordnance Board.

In 1784 the latter requested the Admiralty's help in testing the durability of different types of gunpowder.¹ Such orders were given but a series of misunderstandings and delays at Portsmouth between Ordnance officials and navy officers responsible prevented the despatch of the powder. Once the war began such lack of co-operation was serious. The failure of the Dunkirk expedition in 1793 was partly attributed to the fact that the gunners had sailed on one ship, while their guns, on an Admiralty transport, never left Woolwich.² In 1805 the Admiralty distrusted the proposed use of rockets by the Ordnance against enemy vessels. Both Barham and Admiral Keith were opposed to them and disliked the projector of the scheme, Sir

1. Ad.1/4014, Rogers to Stephens, 5 May, 26 June, 1784.

2. Olson, op.cit., p.97., Windham Correspondence, Rosebery, ed., I.153, Spencer to Windham, 18 Sept.1793.

Sydney Smith, who was urging the experiment forward with political help.¹

Quarrels at Cabinet level about suitable commanders for combined operations sometimes meant delays which prejudiced the success of the expedition from bad weather or other causes. Such was the case in the Leeward Isles expedition. Reference has already been made to the resentment caused at the Admiralty and the arguments between Dundas and Spencer, over Christian's appointment. Thanks to these disputes and delays the expedition did not sail till late autumn when it met severe weather. Twice it battled against November gales with heavy losses. It left St. Helens with two hundred transports on 16 November, 1795. The following day it was caught by a gale and six transports were lost.² In a second attempt one hundred and thirty four transports were scattered or lost.³ On the expedition's second return Spencer appointed Admiral Cornwallis commander, but further delays, the result of controversy over the Duke of York's regulations, were to occur. The controversy surrounding the introduction of these regulations illustrates another serious problem, never solved, in inter-service relations, that of

1. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.170, Barham to Pitt, 18 Nov.1805., The Naval Miscellany, IV. ed. by C.Lloyd, (London, N.R.S.vol.XCII,1952),431, Barham to Lord Keith, 4 Oct.1805.

2. Victoria County Hist.Dorset, William Page, ed., ii.(1908), 223.

3. Ad.1/3731, Transport Commissioners to Nepean, 1 Feb.1796.

divided responsibility.

Since the beginning of the war disputes between naval and army officers had been most numerous in the Mediterranean and in 1795 they reached a climax. A quarrel between Lieutenant Fitzgerald, commanding the 11th foot regiment, acting as marines aboard H.M.S. Diadem, and the captain, resulted in Fitzgerald's court martial. The latter refused to plead on the grounds that Army officers were not amenable to naval courts martial and was upheld by his commanding officer. Nevertheless he was found guilty of disobedience and dismissed the service. There the matter rested but once the combined operation to the Leewards was proposed, it revived.

The Duke of York, thinking over the Fitzgerald affair and wishing to prevent similar incidents in the Leewards expedition, issued new regulations to the Army. Commanding naval officers were now allowed only to punish privates and then only if the senior army officer on board agreed. Spencer approved these regulations but when Admiral Christian saw them he was appalled by their implied threat to naval discipline. He protested to Spencer that such regulations would destroy all discipline in the fleet and wrote to his brother officers at Portsmouth telling them of the new regulations. The speedily aroused opposition there was led by Admiral Waldegrave, Lord Hugh Seymour's brother-in-law. Waldegrave informed Spencer that a distinction must be made between troops being carried and those

acting as marines, and that the regulations should not apply to the latter. Spencer, after expressing surprise that there was such strong feeling on the matter, agreed, and marines temporarily replaced infantry on board ships for the West Indies and Channel fleet.

At a second meeting, senior officers at Portsmouth, still very angry, registered a protest against the regulations which they declared the ruin of the service and illegally introduced without Parliamentary sanction, and this protest was followed by one from the captains at Portsmouth two days later. Admiral Cornwallis, proposed by Spencer as the new Commander in Chief of the expedition, was among those admirals who protested, though he was then ignorant of Spencer's intention. When he learnt of his appointment he was unenthusiastic. The regulations were still in existence, though not enforced and Cornwallis renewed his demand for their complete withdrawal. But Spencer was not prepared to humiliate the Army in raval eyes; he listened patiently to Cornwallis's complaints, and continued to urge the recalcitrant admiral to sea with all speed. On 29 February Cornwallis sailed, once more to encounter bad weather. Then his flagship had an accident which involved returning to Portsmouth, in March, 1796. When Cornwallis refused, for health reasons, to shift his flag to a frigate, a court martial was summoned. Comprised of his colleagues and supporters, it declared him not guilty of disobedience, for his

judges considered he was being prosecuted for his opposition to Army regulations, and their verdict expressed their own sympathies with his views. Thereupon the Admiralty ordered him ashore and he was not employed again while Spencer was First Lord.¹

This was the most serious dispute between the Army and Navy over divided responsibility, but not the only one, as the difficulties of the Transport Board illustrate. The board was created in 1794,² to centralize transport arrangements which had previously been in the hands of the Navy, Victualling and Ordnance Boards. From the first it faced obstruction from the latter and received little help from the Admiralty,³ who were not eager to co-operate with a board only partly under their control. The War Office shared responsibility for the board and Dundas's suggestions concerning it frequently read like commands.⁴ He altered transport arrangements by direct consultation with the board and then informed the Admiralty of

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1. G.Cornwallis-West, The Life and Letters of Admiral Cornwallis, pp.291-341., The Spencer Papers, J.S.Corbett, ed., II.131-229., Memoir of the Life of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, Lady Bouchier, ed., i.38-9.
 2. Ad.108/31, pp.1-7, Official Minute, 4 July, 1794.
 3. Ibid., p.34, 29 Aug.1794., p.156, 20 Sept.1794.
 4. W.O.6/147, p.1-2, 16 July, p.3, 19 July, 1794, Dundas to Admiralty Commissioners.

the altered needs of convoys.¹ The naval departments' dislike of the new creation was thus intensified by its association with Dundas, who was suspected of creating a new office for his friends and relations. Sir Charles Middleton, another sponsor of the board, was suspected of trying to introduce the business routine he had failed to achieve elsewhere. Indeed several of the first transport commissioners were friends and fellow countrymen of Dundas and Middleton, for example, Captains Gambier, Patton, Searle and Schank.²

Such dislike was easily transferred to field level. In the cramped, uncomfortable conditions which obtained in all transports every triviality was magnified and quarrels quickly flared up.³

Another source of dispute was the chronic shortage of men suffered by both services. In 1795 fifteen regiments had to be drafted into the Navy to fill a yawning gap, leaving the Army seriously depleted. On foreign service where disease thinned the ranks both services needed constant re-inforcements and disputed arose as they fought each other for available manpower. In 1787 there was such a shortage in India, the

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1. Ibid., pp.34-36, Dundas to Admiralty Commissioners, 31 Aug. 1794.
 2. P.R.O.30/8/365, ff.58-64, Middleton to Chatham, 27 Jan.1794.
 3. Ad.1/4330, Lewis to Stephens, 20 Nov.1790, enclosing complaint by the officers of the New South Wales Corps, embarked on H.M.S.Gorgon. Index 4809, Series III.no.101, 5 Oct.1789, Admiralty to Navy Board.

Secretary at War suggested that Army officers be allowed to board ships discharging landsmen and enlist them volunteers, a suggestion the Admiralty rejected as too inconvenient.¹ There was constant correspondence even in peace, concerning the pressing of stray or deserting soldiers. In war pressing became frequent and rapacious; so desperate was the need for men that the gangs took all they could get without asking too many questions. Difficulties arose between Admiralty and War Offices, since neither was prepared to give way. The close proximity of Army and Navy officers on combined operations aggravated disputes over rank and discipline and at Ferrol, in 1800, brought accusations of naval greed for prize-money and counter accusations of army cowardice.²

There were exceptions. The expedition of Sir Charles Grey and Admiral John Jervis to the West Indies in 1794 was an outstanding exception to poor inter-service co-operation. The reason was the good personal relations between the two commanders.

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1. Ibid., 2 Nov. 1787, Admiralty to Secretary at War.
 2. The Spencer Papers, H.W.Richmond, ed., III.299,368-371.

The co-operation between General Abercromby and Admiral Mitchell at the Helder in 1799 was successful for the same reason. Despite delays and difficulties and the dislike of the whole scheme entertained by Spencer and Grenville, the Army and Navy "pulled heartily together".¹ John Graham could write to his mother that Captain Reynolds of H.M.S. Pomone, was 'as good a man as any in the Navy',² and Sir Ralph Abercromby lived so long on board H.M.S. Arethusa with Rear Admiral Harvey, at the capture of Trinidad in 1797, that he thought himself 'one of the family.'³ It was unfortunate for the conduct of the war that these harmonious relations could not be guaranteed in all the Admiralty's dealings with other departments and their officers.

Naval officers were often put under the direction of Secretaries of State. In such cases the officer wrote direct to the Secretary concerned. Occasionally he was ordered to put himself under the direction of the ambassador.⁴ But the Admiralty insisted on being 'exactly acquainted with everything which passes', and issued sharp reprimands when news was lacking.⁵

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1. Dropmore Mss., V.345-6, Mitchell to Admiral Duncan, 29 Aug. 1799.
 2. Graham Mss., p.21, 29 Sept.1799.
 3. Brit.Mus., Add.Mss.,29300,A-Y,f.11, Abercromby to Spencer, 20 Feb. 1797.
 4. Nelson's Dispatches, Nicolas, ed., IV.379, Secret Orders to Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, 16 Apl.1801.
 5. Ibid., 110, Nelson to Nepean, 26 Nov.1799.

Occasionally British admirals were virtually the only British representatives and conducted negotiations with foreign powers in addition to other tasks. Collingwood sustained this role for years in the Mediterranean. After Copenhagen Nelson arranged the armistice between Britain and Denmark.¹ and later Hyde Parker was authorised to offer an armistice to the Swedes and Russians.² Naval officers were thus closely involved in the work of the Foreign Office.

In general harmonious relations prevailed between seamen and Foreign Office representatives, not merely because relations at Cabinet level were good, but because of the lack of inter-service rivalry and of opportunities for friction. The help of consuls and ambassadors was often essential to seamen for the passage of news or arrangement of supplies. When Nelson searched for the French fleet in 1798, he paused at Alexandria. The British consul, Mr. Baldwin, was absent, his deputy unintelligent and the Turks unfriendly. Writing to Baldwin three years later, Nelson declared that if Baldwin had been there to explain matters to the governor, he would have stayed several days, taking in fresh supplies and so have met the French as

1. Ibid., 332-336, Nelson to Addington, 4 Apl.1801., 337-341, Same to the Same, 9 Apl.1801.

2. Ibid., 349-350, Admiralty to Parker, 17 Apl.1801.

they entered the bay.¹ The chief diplomatic posts were held by men of rank who might have connections with the navy and political influence at home. Such were Sir William Hamilton at Naples, Spencer Smith and the Earl of Elgin at Constantinople, Lord St. Helens at St. Petersburg. Occasionally diplomats might be irritated by seamen's blunt ways² or seamen profess scorn at time wasting diplomacy.³ But relations were generally good and naval superiority was considered a most effective argument.⁴

In general too British sailors worked well with their allies. Duncan charmed the Dutch and Russians with his courtesy, Nelson the Neapolitans with his victories. Smith was able to deal with the Turks, and Ball was idolised by the Maltese. There were exceptions; Nelson found co-operation with the Austrians difficult and Hood and De Langara, the Spanish admiral before Toulon, were on unfriendly terms. Ushakoff, the Russian commander of a worthless squadron in the eastern Mediterranean, was hostile and suspicious of Turks, British and Neapolitans.

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1. O.Warner, A Portrait of Lord Nelson, pp.150-151.
 2. P.R.O.30/8/367, ff.82-3, Hood to Chatham, 20 Oct.1793.
 3. Nelson's Dispatches, Nicolas, ed., IV.375, Nelson to Earl of Carysfort, 19 May, 1801., The Spencer Papers, J.S.Corbett, ed., II.47-8, Jervis to Spencer, Aug.1796.
 4. A. Paget, The Paget Papers:diplomatic and other correspondence of the Rt.Hon.Sir A.Paget, 1794-1807, i.186, Elgin to Paget, 8 Mar.1800.

Lord Bridport hated the French Royalists with whom he had to collaborate¹. and the Admiralty under Chatham and Spencer disliked the idea of using Frenchmen, even supposed allies, in British service.² Collaboration at all levels depended on the personalities of the men involved. This was the element of 'friction' on which the Cabinet, especially Pitt and Dundas, rarely counted, but which could hinder or speed the war effort.

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1. Windham Correspondence, Rosebery, ed., II.130, Windham to Dundas, 29 Nov.1799.
 2. Ibid., 118, Windham to Grenville, 6 Sept.1799., Parkinson, Edward Pellew, Viscount Exmouth, pp.141-2.

CHAPTER. III.Naval Finance; Admiralty relations with the
Treasury and the commercial interest.

The enormous admiration in which the Navy was held, was reflected in the readiness with which Parliament granted money for naval services, or with which money was subscribed for the relief of naval families and the erection of naval monuments. Yet most people had never seen a battleship, and of those who had, few realised how much it cost to maintain. Dillon tells the story of a wealthy farmer visiting the Alcide, in 1791. After examining her, he declared himself pleased with all he had seen.

'I never was on board a man of war before. The paying of the taxes is a constant annoyance to me. I could not make out what so much money was wanted for. Now that I have seen the Fleet, I don't grudge what I have paid, as I begin to understand how the money has been expended.'¹

Unfortunately not every tax payer was open to such first hand persuasion. Not even the Government fully realised the exact cost, since the real reason for the constant shortage of money and credit seemed to have been not simple dishonesty nor gross overspending, but 'that all concerned underestimated the real cost of maintenance.'²

1. Dillon's Narrative, M.Lewis, ed., I.24.

2. Sir O. Murray, 'The Admiralty' pt.vi, The Mariner's Mirror, xxiv.no.3 (July,1938),330.

Naval expenditure formed a large part of the budget, even in peace. This was inevitable when so much of the Navy's strength lay in ships, yards and docks, which needed constant care to be efficient. Despite cuts at the end of the American war, by 1786 the Navy was taking one sixth of total expenditure on military services.¹ In the first years of the war, Army expenditure exceeded that of the Navy, partly because of massive recruitment and because, in the three international crises of 1787, 1790, 1791, the Navy had been brought to a high level of efficiency at a cost spread over several years. But by 1797 the Navy and the Naval Debt was again costing almost half of total military expenditure.² The cost of the service was increased by the recruitment of 100,000 seamen and 20,000 marines in 1797, a number which rose to 105,000 seamen and 30,000 marines by 1801, and by the increase in the number of commissioned ships, from twenty-nine sail of line and one-hundred-and-eleven other ships in 1793 to approximately one-hundred-and-forty-two sail of line and five-hundred-and-fifty other vessels by June, 1801. Such increased expenses would have been impossible to meet but for the financial reforms of 1797 and succeeding years.

1. Parl.Pap., Accounts relating to Public Expenditure, 1688-1801. Accounts and Papers, pp.197,199,203,205; 1868-69, xxxv.pt.ii.

2. Ibid., p.219.

The Admiralty was very largely independent of Treasury control, receiving its own revenue and paying its own bills. Money for the Navy was granted by Parliamentary vote and the Treasury exercised little influence over Admiralty finance or naval estimates. These were divided into three classes; the 'Ordinary' estimate for the ships 'in ordinary', or laid up, the Sea Service estimate for ships at sea, or 'in commission', and the Extra Ordinary estimate for exceptional services or for those not fully covered by the preceding categories.

The first group included payments to principal officers and Commissioners of the Navy, superannuated sea officers, pensions and allowances to flag and other sea officers, to widows of Navy Commissioners, and relations of sea officers, wages to officers at the naval yards of Chatham, Deptford, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Woolwich and Sheerness, wages to officers at the outports and at ships laid up in harbour and repairs to docks, wharves, buildings etc. in various yards, and half pay to flag officers and officers of Greenwich Hospital.

The principal items of the second group, apart from the cost of wear and tear, comprised wages, victuals and ordnance for a specified number of men for the fleet, for a year of thirteen lunar months, each of twenty eight days. Until 1797 this annual estimate was calculated on the sum of £4 per man per month which could be broken down into 30/- for wages, 27/6 for wear and tear, 20/- for victuals and 2/6 for ordnance.

After 1797 it was calculated on the sum of £7 per man per month, split up into £3 for wear and tear, £1/17 for wages, £1/18 for victuals, and 5/- for ordnance.¹

There was a considerable difference between the two estimates, the first nearly always being less than the second and its method of voting being standardised. At the opening session of Parliament a general resolution was passed by the Commons, 'that a supply be granted to His Majesty.' Certain orders were then issued in the following traditional form.

'That an estimate of the Ordinary of the Navy for the year 1785 with the half pay of the Officers of the Navy and Marines be laid before this House That an estimate of the Charge of what may be necessary for the building, rebuildings and repair of ships of war in His Majesty's yards and other extra works, over and above what are proposed to be done upon the Heads of wear and tear and ordinary for the year 1785 be laid before this House..... That an account of the services incurred and not provided for by Parliament be laid before this House..... That an account be laid before this House shewing how the monies given for service of 1784 have been disposed of, distinguished under the several heads.' 2.

These orders took the form of an address to the King, asking him to order the preparation of these estimates and accounts, to which the King in his reply formally agreed.

In consequence of these orders, and often in anticipation of them, the Treasury sent a letter to the Admiralty, asking

1. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. No.XXIV. Public Debt and Expenditure for 1797, pp.151,169; 1803, xiii.
2. Commons Journals,^{XL} 471-2.

them to direct the Commissioners of the Navy and Victualling Boards to prepare their annual estimates.¹ This letter was a pure formality. Prior to the receipt of the Treasury letter, the Admiralty had issued its own instructions for the preparation of estimates to the Navy Board.² When they received this estimate the Admiralty made their own revisions without Treasury interference, sometimes crossing out unduly expensive items. When it was in an acceptable form they sent a copy to the Treasury and then presented the estimates to the House of Commons, through one of their representatives. The House then referred the estimates to a committee of supply and voted them without alteration.³

In the second class of estimates, the independence of the Admiralty was more strongly marked. The Commons did not call for estimates; indeed, there is no evidence that the Admiralty presented such an accounting to the House, much less to the Treasury. The number of men to be employed in the coming year was decided on Admiralty advice, by the King in Council. The recommendation took the form of an Order in Council, requiring

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1. I.27/37, p.111, George Rose to Philip Stephens, 21 Jan.1785.
 2. Ad.3/100, 6 Jan.1785., Ad.2/261, Admiralty Commissioners to Navy Commissioners, 6 Jan.1785., Ad.2/584, Stephens to Navy Commissioners, 21 Jan.1785.
 3. Commons Journals, XL,540-549,605.

an estimate of costs for maintaining a stated number of men. This order was then sent, via the Admiralty, to the Navy Board Commissioners, who reported back to the senior board. The Admiralty then reported to the King in Council and, as a final step, notification was given to the Commons and the House voted supply.¹ The Admiralty did not present the proposed numbers of men as a formal estimate to the Commons. Some informal communication must have been made to the House, but whatever the form, the House took it as a matter of course, and debated and voted the complement, without formal notification, by procedure which was stereotyped.²

The Admiralty, determined to maintain its financial independence, insisted on seeing all accounts called for by Parliament of the Treasury, before they were delivered.³ The Treasury had virtually no power to interfere with the Admiralty's finances, merely acting as book keeper to that Board. It could not refuse applications for money from the Treasurer of

1. Ad.2/261,p.28,14 Jan.1785., Ad.3/100,21 Jan.1785.,Ad.106/2617, 20 Jan.1785. Occasionally alterations in numbers were necessary and were made in the same way. See Ad.2/261, p.59-60, 3 Feb.1785., Ad.106/2617, 7 Feb.1785., Ad.3/100,18 Feb.1785., Ad.2/261,pp.87-88, 18 Feb.1785.
2. Commons Journals, XL,479.
3. Ad.99/50,p.I, Undated memo., Ad.110/33,pp.277,278, 4 May, 1785.

the Navy, since the Navy's total requirements had already been fixed by the Admiralty and voted by the Commons, for that year. All the Treasury could do was to see that the money was paid out as required with due regard to the state of the Exchequer and the needs of other public departments. To meet Navy requirements easily the Treasury therefore asked the Navy Board for a 'scheme of cash' or an approximate forecast of their annual demands.¹

Once the money was granted by Parliament the Treasurer of the Navy obtained a Privy Seal endorsement, authorising the issue of a round sum from the grant. The Treasury warrant and order were completed and the Treasurer was given credit at the Exchequer to the amount named, on which he could draw when the respective boards approached him for money.² The desired amount in such cases was authorized by letter and the process was repeated until the whole sum, authorized by the Privy Seal had been used, when the process was repeated until the total amount had been used.³ Once allotted to a particular service money could not be spent on anything else and once used up there was

1. I27/37, p.531, Rose to Navy Commissioners, 19 Aug.1785.

2. Ad.3/104, 5 Jan.1788.

3. J.E.D.Binney, British Public Finance and Administration, 1774-1792, (Oxford,1958), pp.174-5.

no borrowing from other heads, so that a fresh application to the Treasury was necessary. The practice of granting one total sum for all specific naval services continued unchanged till 1798 and no detailed printed naval estimate of expenditure was presented to Parliament till 1810.¹

Under this cumbersome system the Treasurer of the Navy who paid all naval expenditure, held a larger balance of money than would have been necessary if it had been placed as a consolidated fund, applicable to all services.² The Treasurer was one of the key public accountants holding large sums of public money, drawn from the Exchequer. He was the principal commissioner of the Navy Board, though he did not perform his office in person, delegating his duties to a Paymaster and clerks. He was also the Navy's banker, and was allowed to pay money received from the Exchequer into his private account, from which he might draw the interest as a perquisite. In addition to his salary of £2000 p.a. he received fees which frequently depended on the amount of money passing through his hands, so that it was in his interest, though not in the interest of the country, that the government should receive and spend large sums, and that he should keep these sums in his hands as

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1. Parl.Pap., Accounts relating to Public Expenditure, 1688-1801. Accounts and Papers.p.671;1868-9,xxxv.pt.ii.
 2. Binney, op.cit., p.140.

long as possible.¹.

It was not possible for the Treasurer to balance his accounts till he left office, and, until this was done, his final account with the Exchequer could not be passed to the Pipe Office which gave him his final discharge, after which his account could no longer be questioned. There were always lengthy delays before this happened and many ex-Treasurers were allowed to keep the balances of public money in their hands for years after they left office. The clerks had thus to keep separate accounts for which they received fees from the Treasurers or their heirs, and many accounts were open for a considerable time.

In their twenty second report the Select Committee on Finance gave a list of 'desperate debts' in several offices, which, because of length of time or death of creditors, could not be paid. The total was over £4½,000,000, of which the Navy Board's debt was the largest, just over £3,000,000, and the Victualling and Sick and Hurt Boards' debts considerable, many dating from 1685.².

There were several reasons for such delay. One was the number of sub-accountants whose accounts had yet to be made up

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1. E.Halévy, England in 1815, (London, 1949), p.10.
 2. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1797. Select Committee Report, No.XXII. Auditing the Accounts of the Public Receipt and Expenditure. The Exchequer. p.503;1803,xii.

and cleared before the Treasurer could cast his accounts. The various boards could call for their accounts and hasten the final reckoning and the Committee recommended that they do so. Another reason was inadequate numbers of clerks in the Navy Pay Office. The Commission of the 1780's had pointed out this difficulty, but the office remained permanently understaffed and overworked. Lastly the method of paying seamen's wages was cumbersome. Crews were paid on board, but those sick, absent or transferred to another ship, as commonly happened, could claim their wages later. Such claims could carry on for years, yet receipts could not be taken from seamen and treated as the Treasurer's vouchers, possibly because of the men's illiteracy and ships' books, bearing a record of the transactions, were therefore so treated, nor until they closed could the Treasurer's accounts be passed and audited. Considerable delay followed, since ships might be away for years. To prevent fraud, it had been decreed that one book could not be a voucher for two Treasurers. Thus when a new Treasurer took office all ships' books had to be copied out afresh for his payments, a labour involving some nine months work.¹

The report of the Commissioners examining public accounts brought to a head the general dissatisfaction with this position.

1. Binney, op.cit., pp.143-5.

In 1785 an act was passed regulating the office of Treasurer of the Navy with the support of the holder of that office, Henry Dundas, transferring custody of the Navy's cash to the Bank of England. Such legislative action was intended to prevent the Treasurer from speculating with public money for his own profit. It was also decreed that a Treasurer should take over his predecessor's balances and pay the claims outstanding so avoiding the need for ex-Treasurers or their relations to hold balances. At the same time the Treasurer's salary was increased to £4000 p.a. The act did not specify how long money drawn from the Bank might be held by the Treasurer, or how and where it might be kept, and these loopholes were used against Dundas at his trial in 1805. It was then proved that Dundas's paymaster, Alexander Trotter, had withdrawn money from the Bank and deposited it at Coutts Bank, where his brother was a partner, under his own name, and that he had speculated with the money to make himself a handsome private fortune, though at no cost to the public, all in contravention of the spirit, if not the letter of the act.¹ Trotter exonerated Dundas, in the course of an enquiry into the latter's affairs when Treasurer, occasioned by the publication of the Tenth Report of the Commission of Naval Enquiry. But Trotter refused to answer some of the questions put to him by the investigating Commons' committee, for fear of incriminating himself, and admitted to a private fortune of over £51,000,

1. Binney, op.cit., pp.145-148.

though he could not remember his fortune when he had been an extra clerk at £50 p.a. in the Navy Office. Melville's association with Trotter had not brought the former wealth, as the investigating committee tried to prove, indeed he was often in debt and notoriously careless of money matters. But Trotter, by gambling with public money, had achieved a Scottish estate, houses in Blackheath and Hampstead and a large fortune.¹

The final and most troublesome item of the naval estimates was the Naval Debt, which, until the financial reforms of 1797, plagued successive governments. The Commons called annually for an accounting of this debt from the Admiralty who forwarded a copy to the Treasury at the same time. The debt itself was the result of the Admiralty's antiquated method of estimating, which led to constant under-estimating. Thus the Finance Committee of 1797 noted that the naval estimate for the year was £12,935,496, but that actual expense incurred was £14,065,980.² One reason was that the estimates were not based on contemporary costs and values, but on the unchanged

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1. Brit.Mus., Stowe Mss. 374, f.14 July, 1805. Trotter's family was closely connected with Dundas. His heir married the latter's granddaughter, another son John entered the Bengal civil service through Dundas's help and a third, a captain in the Navy, was named after Dundas. J.Burke, The Landed Gentry, (2 vols.London, 1853), ii, 1435-6.
 2. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798, Select Committee Report, No.XXIV. Public Debt and Expenditure for 1797. p.150., 1803, xiii.

seventeenth century figure of £4 per man per month, totally inadequate by 1797. The Navy Commissioners, when submitting evidence to the Finance Committee, had warned

'that an Estimate formed for the succeeding year, of the probable Expense of the Navy, cannot be considered as an Account to be depended on; as it can only be formed upon the best Opinion taken from the Example of former years of the War, and a consideration of all the circumstances then existing, in addition to which many must arise, which cannot be foreseen, or provided for.'¹

A further cause of the rising debt was the method of paying the Navy's creditors. Payments were not made in cash but in bills, drawn on the Navy, Victualling and Sick and Hurt Boards. The members of these boards signed bills directing the Treasurer of the Navy to pay the sum required but there was frequently insufficient money to meet all the bills presented for payment. The bills were of two types; Ready Money and In Course. The first could be cashed on sight, provided there was sufficient money available, the latter needed further directions before they could be cashed.

On the receipt of stores the contractor's bill was registered in a ledger, numbered in the order in which it was received and Victualling or Navy Bills, bearing the date of registration, and paid in the same order, as funds were available, were issued to him. This method of payment was known as the course system. The time of payment depended on the Boards

1. Ibid., p.168, Appendix E2.

who were often a year in arrears and without ready money to meet their creditors. Because the delay in cashing In Course bills was considerable, Navy and Victualling bills had long become recognised as transferable, the holder being able to sell his bill for what it would fetch, if he preferred slightly less ready cash to the Navy's promisory note, often of doubtful value. The contractor sold his bill to a broker at a discount which varied according to the time between the registration and the payment 'on the course'. Speculators in Navy and Victualling Bills became established and regular quotations of market prices were published for them as for other stock, fluctuating according to the expectations of early or late payment by the Navy. This had a harmful effect on the price of naval stores, for when the Navy bills were at a discount the contractors raised their prices to cover themselves for possible loss when payment was due, either by raising the price of their next tenders, or by allowing for the increase in their original one after studying the discount rates. The naval debt was thus increased and naval credit collapsed under the strain. The Treasury assigned funds to pay both Victualling and Navy bills and until 1796 a discount rate was regularly quoted in the press.

Special, though unavailing efforts, were made by successive governments to pay off the Naval debt by making additional Parliamentary grants, and by December, 1785, thanks to a period

of peace and a fall in the discount rates, it had been cleared to June, 1783, and bills were regularly paid. Thereafter despite peace, it rapidly increased and by 1789 stood at nearly £2,000,000.¹ By May, 1791 it was seriously in arrears and the uncertain political situation had brought a rise in rates. The credit of the Victualling Board was able to stand this until 1793, when the war and arrears in payment, caused a price rise. An act of Parliament of 1794, whereby the Navy and Victualling bills from April, 1794 were payable at 15 months from the date of issue, with interest from the dates of registration, temporarily reduced the discount rates. But in 1796 it rose again, to be established in 1797 when an act was passed for the payment of all contractors by 90 day bills bearing interest of 3½d per £100 p.d. from the date of the bill, which was equal to £5.6.5½% p.a. This ended the course system and because payment was at a certain rate, bills were no longer subject to discount. The rate of interest was reduced to 3d per £100 p.d. in 1803 and remained stable until 1819.² The Finance Committee's recommendation that estimates be large enough to support government credit by punctual payment to contractors, was also effected.

1. Binney, op.cit., pp.141-2.

2. Sir William Beveridge and Others, Prices and Wages in England from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Century, I. (London, 1939), 526-7.

Despite the inconvenience attending payment, government contracts were highly profitable and eagerly sought. Though Lord Sandwich has generally been regarded as one of the most corrupt of First Lords in this respect, giving contracts in return for political support, according to Middleton, he was no worse than his successors.¹ Certainly blatant examples of favoured contractors occurred after Sandwich had left the Board. In 1783 John Slade, one of the Victualling Commissioners, became involved in the trial of Christopher Atkinson, corn factor to the Victualling Board. Slade was deeply implicated in successful fraudulent attempts to gain money by overcharging, and though he was not dismissed, Atkinson, M.P. for Hedon, a borough with Admiralty connections,² was expelled from the House. The political connections of government contractors were to bedevil naval administration for some years.

Before the war the majority of articles for the Navy, Victualling and Sick and Hurt Boards had been supplied by tender in answer to advertisements inserted in the newspapers, or by standing annual contract. If the former the contracts were stipulated as being for a number of months, usually six or twelve 'certain' and a given number provisionally. On an appointed day the contractors and the Board met. After some haggling the latter accepted the lowest tenders, except for

1. The Barham Papers, J.K. Laughton, ed., II, 10.

2. Namier and Brooke, Hist. of Parl., I. 434, II. 31.

hops where quality was essential, refusing those whose prices were too high and re-advertising if dealers attempted to form a combine. It was at this meeting that quantities and times of delivery were settled. Difficulties were sometimes experienced when no tenders were forthcoming and the Board was then compelled to grant higher prices. Thus Alexander Donaldson, contractor for victualling the sick at Jamaica hospital, had his tender of 2/3d per man per day, accepted by the Sick and Hurt Board in June, 1789 although it was 3½d per day more than formerly. Only two months before Donaldson had stated his intention of giving up the unprofitable contract and there was no-one at Jamaica to replace him.¹ In 1793 Edward Bayntun, contractor at Antigua, begged to be allowed an additional ½d to his original contract price of 2/5½d per man per day, because of rising costs. To this the Board agreed, because in 1792 Bayntun had been the only merchant to submit a tender and a refusal of his request might mean he would not contract again.² But when this policy became too common and expensive the Board decreed that no future additions should be made without Admiralty orders.³

1. Ad.99/50,p.39, 17 April, 1789,p.42, 26 June, 1789.

2. Ad.99/51,p.33-38, 18 Sept.1793.

3. Ibid., pp.114-116, 4 Mar.1796.

After 1793 increasing numbers of articles were bought on commission employing a dealer as agent with a percentage fee and costs, or by private tender. Thus the Sick and Hurt Board employed the appropriately named Mr. Bonus, a slop dealer, as agent and later supplier of clothing to prisoners of war, as 'more eligible than advertising for tenders, having a dependance on his supplying proper articles at a fair price', though this was contrary to the spirit of open competition.¹ The Victualling Board's argument² was that in war open contracts would have disturbed the market, raised prices, created a combine and even passed information to the enemy. The latter was possibly true, since the public advertisements stated time and place of delivery for large amounts of stores. But there was an equal danger that by the secret methods adopted, the merchants would form a combine to crush opposition and raise prices, as happened in the dockyards with timber supplies.

When stores were urgently needed and difficult to get the Boards commissioned agents to buy foreign stores independently as well as those under contract. The agents thus employed were usually the merchants already serving the Board, but in this case they charged the Board the purchase price, incidental

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1. Ad.99/51,p.40, 14 Oct.1793.
 2. Parl.Pap.,Finance Reports, 1797. Select Committee Report, No.XXXII., The Victualling Board.p.508;1803.xiii.

costs, freight charges, and insurance and a commission percentage¹; and received imprests before and during the transactions. The total cost was therefore higher but the supply more certain, though the Boards always returned to the contract system whenever possible. There were dangers in this method and careful supervision was needed to prevent gross overcharging. In 1795 Sir Andrew Hamond, the Comptroller, interfered personally to buy hemp and timber at Riga, to prevent the French buying up all supplies. The bargain, struck without the knowledge of the rest of the Navy Board, revealed the extent of Hamond's ignorance and the dangers inherent in the system. Hamond allowed the special agent he used a commission of 5% on the best terms, and to Thornton and Son, the bankers who handled the financial arrangements in the Baltic, a commission of 2½%. This compared unfavourably with previous special arrangements when a maximum of 4% had been allowed and once the Navy Board heard of the new percentages they reduced them to that figure.²

The main contract for foreign stores was made in early

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1. ADM/G793, 4 Dec.1804. Solly and Son of Danzig agreed to supply beef to the Mediterranean fleet at a commission of 2½%. Since 1799 the same firm had been supplying the Victualling Board with barrel staves. Ad.2/623,p.110, Nepean to Geo.Hammond, 26 Jan.1799.
 2. B.Pool, 'Navy Contracts in the Last Years of the Navy Board, 1780-1832.' The Mariner's Mirror, 1.no.3(August, 1964), 161-176.

spring, between February and April. The bulk of naval stores came from the Baltic and the contractors merchants trading with those countries. It was important that contracts were made before the fleets sailed and terms of delivery were usually completed before Christmas to give traders eight to ten months to make their arrangements. Terms of delivery varied according to the country of origin. Contractors supplying British manufactured goods or agricultural produce delivered their goods free, though they might come from a considerable distance.¹ Baltic goods were cheaper at the Thames yards, a delivery allowance being paid by Portsmouth and Plymouth, but North American stores were cheaper at the latter and delivery charges were always higher in war because of the increased cost of insurance. Thus in 1778 premiums of two and a half guineas were charged on return voyages to the Baltic without a convoy and of one guinea with one. In 1793 the price had risen to three guineas with a convoy to Stettin and double without. Charges to China and the East Indies were higher as befitted the distance and extra hazards. In 1793 the premium on a return voyage from St. Helena was ten guineas without a convoy and three guineas with one, and in 1794 most 'respectable insurers' were charging ten to twelve guineas, for ships sailing

1. For example from South Wales and Yorkshire. CHA/N/1, p.38, 4 July, 1793, p.68, 14 April, 1795.

without convoys. Ships sailing alone were charged according to their armament, five to ten guineas in 1793, eight to fifteen a year later.¹ The delivery charges for hemp at Portsmouth rose from 10/- in peace to 30/- in war, and of pitch and tar at Plymouth from 15/- to 30/-.² There was a similar price fluctuation in victuals; beef was dearer in London than at western yards, sugar and spices cheaper.³

Grain and its products, hops, peas, coal, rum, rice, raisins and sugar were supplied by various traders, with varying lengths of contract, to the Victualling Board, which was often forced to accept several differing tenders on the same day to get the amount needed. Some contractors supplied several types of goods or supplied all boards. From 1760 the main contract for British tallow was held by the dealer supplying the Victualling Board with salt beef in barrels. Solly and Son of Danzig supplied the Navy Board with timber and the Victualling Board with beef and barrel staves.⁴ Those contractors who held quarterly or annual contracts,

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1. P.R.O.30/8/365, ff.9-13, 10 Jan.1795, Memorandum by Sir John Julius Angerstein to Pitt.
 2. Beveridge, op.cit., 619.
 3. Ibid., 698-9.
 4. See above p.189.

usually for timber, iron, pitch, hemp, meat, butter, cheese, salt, vinegar or for the supply of chests of spices to the sick, often supplied the boards for a number of years, and though on the renewal of their contract they had to compete once more against all comers, the contract tended to become consolidated in one family or group of families or firms, which had the experience and organisation to keep its prices down and outbid its rivals. Thus Peter Samuel and William Mellish in turn supplied beef, first at London and Chatham, then at Dover and Portsmouth from 1760 to 1829¹, and Mellish and Sons gained the meat contract for Greenwich Hospital in 1786.² Important contracts always tended to become limited to small numbers of merchants, because they involved such large quantities of stores that only those accustomed to supplying them could submit tenders.

Few firms could undertake to supply meat for forty thousand men on the cheapest and best terms, or the three thousand loads needed to build a seventy four gun ship, at steadily rising costs throughout the war, from £17/17 to £36 per ton.³ A

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1. Beveridge, op.cit., 516.,ADM/D36, 31 July, 1787, Abstract of Contracts.
 2. Ad.67/35,p.192, 23 Sept.1786.
 3. C.Derrick, Memoirs of the Rise and Progress of the Royal Navy, (London,1805),p.252.

third rate required a mainmast of thirty six yards in height and thirty six inches in diameter. Such large sticks were difficult to find and an extra inch added greatly to the cost. Thus a single stick of American pine thirty five yards by thirty five inches cost £88, but one of thirty six yards cost £110.¹ This meant a large capital outlay and a long wait for their profits, because of the frequently parlous state of naval credit, which only a few contractors could contemplate.

Such men were John Larking and William Bowsher, who virtually controlled the timber supply during the Napoleonic wars and formed a combine to force up prices and dictate to the Navy Board. When Lord St. Vincent became First Lord he attempted to break the timber combine and appointed timber inspectors to examine deliveries. Larking and Bowsher thereupon withheld all supplies and a desperate situation occurred after 1803. The blockading ships grew more in need of repair and the squadrons smaller as these repairs were delayed. Lord Melville succeeded St. Vincent in May, 1804, and immediately capitulated to the timber dealers, who allowed enough timber to the yards to patch up thirty nine sail of line in time for Trafalgar. Of the twenty seven ships at that battle, seventeen were repaired after the surrender to the dealers, and after

1. R.G.Albion, 'The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862', The Mariner's Mirror, xxxviii. no.I (February, 1952), 4-22.

1805 a more serious shortage of timber, which not even Larking and Bowsher could remedy, strained the Navy's resources to the limit.^{1.}

Such contractors were not unique. Frequent complaints of inferior quality hemp, contract rope, salt, and victualling stores appear in commanders' despatches and inter-departmental letters.^{2.} The contractors were powerful enough to dictate their own terms and unscrupulous enough to do so in a national crisis. In association with private ship builders, whose fat profits, gained by building Royal Navy ships on contract, St. Vincent stopped, they drove the First Lord from office to be replaced by the more complacent Lord Melville. Pitt was a party to this unworthy alliance and rewarded his supporters, such as Robert Wigram, with places or baronetcies.

On 6 May, 1805, Wigram wrote to Pitt requesting a baronetcy and setting out the services which deserved this reward, he was head of the firm of Wigram and Sons, merchants and East India agents. He was managing and principal owner of nine East India

1. For fuller details see R.G.Albion, Forests and Sea Power: The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862. (Harvard Economic Studies, vol.xxxix, 1926.)
2. ADM/D36, 7 Jan. 1785, James Morrison to John Slade., P.R.O. 30/8/255, Port of London Papers, 1783-97, pp.218-243, circa 1791, concerning Thomas Weston, a salt supplier to Deptford., Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices, etc., Reports from Commissioners.No.VIII. The Victualling Board, p.572; 1806, vii.

ships. He had considerable investments in Meux' brewery, was interested in a patent ropery, 'which renders the British Navy more independent of the Northern powers for hemp', and was M.P. for Fowey.¹ Wigram was a good example of the criss-cross of commercial and shipping interests embracing East and West Indian connections and associated with the City and Lloyds. The latter were 'a source of intelligence and an instrument for shipping control' as well as 'the best channel of communication between the Admiralty and the shipping community as a whole'.² The secretary regularly requested that members might see the Admiralty convoy lists, to discover which ships had recently sailed.³ In permitting Lloyds to see these official and possibly secret lists, the Admiralty acknowledged the importance of the co-operation of the trading interest. Lloyds were equally conscious of the need to co-operate.⁴ Both boards agreed that trade must support the war, and that regular convoys would play

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1. P.R.O.30/58/6, f.64, 6 May,1805. His letter of thanks for the baronetcy is Ibid., f.129, 30 Sept.1805.
 2. C.R. Fayle, 'Shipowning and Marine Insurance', The Trade Winds, ed. by C.N.Parkinson.(London,1948),p.44.
 3. Ad.1/3992, Thomas White to Evan Nepean, 4 Feb.1796.
 4. Ad.1/3992, White to Nepean, 30 Dec.1796.

an important part in preserving the fleet.¹.

The importance of convoys was recognised by insurance firms (See above p.190) and increasingly stringent efforts were made to prevent 'running ships', which sailed alone, 'tempted by hopes of extraordinary gain, and not without suspicion in numerous instances of fraud and collusion',² evading the convoy system. Acts were passed in 1798 and 1803 imposing duties and licences and extracting heavy penalties from those who tried to evade the convoy's protection. Though merchants grumbled Lloyds supported the Admiralty and the scheme was soon accepted.³ The Admiralty had often to resist heavy pressure from commercial interests who would have sacrificed the Navy's other tasks to convoy duty. A powerful parliamentary lobby among merchants was able to get the Admiralty to listen to, sometimes adopt its plans for the protection of trade.⁴ The Chairmen of Lloyds, such as Angerstein or Thornton, were M.P.'s and personal friends of Pitt who listened to their advice. Lloyds sent memorials to

1. P.R.O.30/8/365, ff.42-3, Middleton to Chatham, 31 May, ?1793. At the illuminations to mark George III's jubilee in 1809 Lloyds displayed a transparency of a ship, anchors and tridents and a motto, 'Ships Colonies and Commerce.' M.D. George, English Political Caricature: A Study in Opinion and Propaganda, II.84 nte.
2. P.R.O.30/8/364(I), ff.1-4, Undated Memorandum, Chatham to George III.
3. A.C.Wardle, 'The Newfoundland Trade', The Trade Winds, C.N.Parkinson, ed., p.236.
4. Ad.2/119, pp.325-7, Stephens to George Spence, 30 Dec.1790.

the Admiralty urging the adequate protection of the East and West Indian and Baltic convoys against enemy attacks in the Channel, to which the Admiralty was compelled to listen and on which they acted with promptness.¹ Nor were London merchants the sole agitators. Other ports possessed pressure groups who could exploit the anxieties of the Admiralty, or support its efforts. The Bristol and Liverpool merchants could command some Parliamentary interest and often had personal naval connections which gave added point to their views.² The whole merchant community regarded the Navy as 'the favourite and popular Branch of the Public Service',³ but their support was not unqualified. They considered the Navy's primary duty, and the Admiralty's chief concern was the protection of trade and were constantly pressing for more frigates for convoy duty or to protect the scattered colonial possessions where their trading interests lay⁴ and were capable of using Secretaries of

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1. Ad.1/3992, John Bennet and T. White to William Marsden, 8 May, 1804., Nelson's Dispatches, Nicolas, ed., VI.80-81, Nelson to Marsden, 21 June, 1804.
 2. Gloucester County Record Office, Bragge-Bathurst Papers, D42lx6/1-34, x6/11, Mr. Daubeny to Charles Bragge-Bathurst, 10 June, 1796., P.R.O.30/8/250, pt.I, f.42, 23 Feb.1795, A memorandum from the merchants of Liverpool to the Admiralty.
 3. Ibid., f.32, 9 Feb.1795, Memorandum from the shipowners of Sunderland.
 4. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., I.247-255, Dundas to Spencer, 22 Apl.1796, enclosing letters from two Jamaica planters.

State of His Majesty's consuls to express their views.¹ Many of the Admiralty lords themselves had connections with the various trading or commercial interests, particularly the East India Company, and several were M.P.'s in the Company's interest.² In and out of Parliament the commercial interest was able to bring pressure to bear on the Board and besieged the Admiralty with requests for more convoys, or attacked them for neglecting the nation's true interests. The Admiralty were well aware of ^{the importance of} keeping the supply lines open, not only for the country's good, but to ensure a regular supply of naval stores and food, but it was equally aware that convoys were not the best way to do this. With limited resources it would have been foolishness to dissipate the concentrated strength of fleets over a wide area searching for privateers or commerce raiders. The most effective way of protecting merchantmen was to clear the seas of the enemy fleets and blockade their ports effectively.

Some losses were inevitable. The French had little trade themselves and concentrated their ships on a guerre de course. It was impossible, the Admiralty argued to sweep away all privateers and the only solution was to bear the individual

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1. ^{Paget, ed.} The Paget Papers: diplomatic and other correspondence of the Rt. Hon. Sir A. Paget, 1794-1807, i. 309, Paget to Admiral Lord Keith, 9 Feb. 1801.
 2. C.H. Philips, The East India Company, 1784-1834, (Manchester, 1961), Appendices I & IV.

losses stoically as not great enough to affect the prosperity of the whole. This was cold comfort to those who had lost, but the argument was sound and the proof was in increased trade throughout the period. One indication of this was the opening of the West India docks in 1801, the London and Surrey docks between 1800 and 1804 and of the East India docks in 1806, to accommodate the profitable increase. At the same time marine insurance rates fell from 25% in 1790 to 6% in 1810.¹

1. A. Briggs, The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867, (London, 1959), p.162., See also Bragge-Bathurst Papers, D421x/17/22, Nicholas Vansittart to Charles Bragge, 4 July, 1801.

CHAPTER IV.

The Financial System of the Admiralty Office.

Like other old established government departments, the Admiralty was virtually independent of the Treasury, but the period saw a gradual change whereby the Admiralty's financial independence was slowly diminished. By 1806 there were small yet significant pointers to the Treasury's ultimate dominance. The supply of office stationery had been removed from private contract to another government department, the Stationery Office, over which the Treasury had control. Fees were abolished, the Treasurer of the Navy and his sub-accountants no longer were allowed to hold large sums of public money from which they could derive a personal advantage. More adequate salaries and a generous pension scale had been introduced, preparing the way for a truly professional civil service in the nineteenth century. Some of this was the work of Parliamentary committees, exerting outside pressure on all offices, but some of the reforms were the work of the Admiralty itself, attempting to maintain the office as one which would continue to attract suitable recruits by being lucrative, responsible and a fitting occupation for 'gentlemen'.^{1.}

Various fees, gratuities and allowances supplemented the

1. Stat.1/1,p.307, Thomas Kite to Nepean, 10 Feb.1802, referring to the Admiralty clerks in this way.

salaries of most officials in government departments. A regular schedule of fees existed in the Admiralty carefully graded from £5/7/6 for making out a commission to flag rank, or a warrant for a commissioner of the Navy, Victualling or Sick and Hurt Boards, to one of 2/6 for issuing a protection from the press gang.¹ £152,019/11/1 was received in fees between 1769 and 1798 according to the Lords Commissioners report to the Privy Council in 1799.² The Admiralty paid fees as well as receiving them. The largest sums were to the Exchequer when drawing bills on that office. Until 1794 they amounted to £3000 annually, then they rose first to £6000, then to £9000 finally reaching a peak in 1800 at £12,000.³ The commissioners themselves paid fees to the Home Office on the issue of a new patent of Admiralty, the First Lord at the rate of £100, the other commissioners at £50. Occasional smaller amounts were paid on Treasury warrants, and an annual fee of three guineas went to the Post Office clerks for sending daily and weekly lists of packet boats. There were occasional

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1. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners.No.III.The Admiralty.pp.123-124,Appendix 28;1806,vii.
 2. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports,1798. Select Committee Report. Proceedings of the Admiralty on Finance Reports.G.p.805; 1803,xiii.
 3. Ad.17/222.

payments on commission of officials appointed to Vice Admiralty courts and fees to the Home Office for patents passed under the Great Seal, bestowing knighthoods on deserving naval officers for feats of conspicuous gallantry¹ and a regular fee of approximately ten guineas annually on venison warrants.² Except for those paid on the Exchequer bills and those for the new Admiralty patent, these fees were all paid out of the contingent expenses by the chief clerk.

The basic salaries of the secretaries were good. Philip Stephens, the first secretary from 1783-1795, earned £800 p.a. Ibbetson, his deputy, earned £600. Both men were also secretaries to the marine department at £300 and £200 p.a. respectively. Thanks to the fees they received their total net salaries were much higher than those of the Lords Commissioners. Stephens' fees in 1784 were £1,184/4/2, increasing his salary to £2,146/8/8 and Ibbetson's fees amounted to £358/16/6 in the same year, which raised his salary to £1,197/8/6. The basic salary of the chief clerk was £200,

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1. Ad.17/8,1800. £198/10/6 for Sir Edward Hamilton, knighted for re-capturing H.M.S.Hermione from the Spaniards.
 2. I have been unable to find further details of these, but they may be similar to the three fat bucks in summer and three does in winter to which the auditors of the Exchequer were entitled from the royal parks and forests. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports,1797. Select Committee Report. No.XXII. Auditing the Accounts of the Public Receipt and Expenditure. The Exchequer.p.456,Appendix B1;1803,xii.

supplemented by fees to £804/2/8. The salaries of the six established clerks ranged from £431/1/9 to £113/8/3, which included all their fees and other emoluments. Without these allowances their basic salaries only ranged from £150 to £60 p.a. All the junior or extra clerks earned a basic wage of £50 p.a. swelled by occasional fees for copying Parliamentary papers, to a maximum of £57 to £77. One of these clerks, Robert Maxwell, earned £100 p.a. as French and Spanish translator, until 1787, when payment ceased by Admiralty order.¹ The two marine clerks were slightly better off at £180 and £80 p.a. which, with fees and with sundry small allowances, as agent for Portland garrison or purser to a ship 'in ordinary', they increased to £245/19/6 and £97/17 respectively.²

In 1784 the total expense of the Admiralty office, including salaries, pensions and contingencies was £27,227/18/-½. By 1797 it had almost doubled to £52,668/14/8½.³ There had been an annual increase of £5,325 in office salaries, partly from an increased number of clerks employed and partly from the

1. Ad.22/4,p.158.

2. Parl.Pap.,The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners.No.III.The Admiralty. pp.126-7, Appendix 30;1806,vii.

3. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1797. Select Committee Reports. No.XVII. The Admiralty Board, the Navy Board, the Navy Pay Office, the Marine Pay Office.p.341;1803,xii.

augmentation of the salaries of some of the permanent clerks as a reward for the amount of war business. Since 1795 the establishment of three new offices, that of Hydrographer, the Inspectors of Telegraphs and of Naval Works, formed a principal item of this increase, amounting to £3,650 each year.¹ The increase had been gradual but pressure for increase was inexorable; after 1787 there were no diminutions until 1795 when there was a slight reduction. But this was almost immediately offset by increases in salaries and allowances totalling over £1,200 for that year alone.²

The basic salaries of the established clerks had not altered, though their fees had increased enormously in wartime. Nepean, the first secretary, earned £5,242 p.a. in 1797 of which £4,340 came from fees; the second secretary's basic wage, increased from £600 to £800 in 1790, was swollen by three times the amount of fees his predecessor had received, making a total of £1,931/18. Charles Wright, the chief clerk, more than doubled the fees he received during the war. Like his predecessor, Sir Harry Parker, he received a two per cent allowance on the amount of contingent bills he paid. His total net salary in 1797 was £1,383/11/8 compared with Parker's salary of £804/2/8

1. Ibid.,p.328.

2. Ibid.,p.335,Appendix D1.

in 1784. The senior established clerk, Joseph Belson, had a total net salary of £568/10/9, approximately £300 more than his predecessor had received thirteen years earlier, the primary cause being the amount of fees he took, now five times as much as in peace.¹

The basic salaries of the fifteen extra clerks were increased in 1790 and now ranged from £110 to £90, plus five guineas a year for the majority for preparing papers for Parliament. In addition Mitchel Hollingsworth, first extra clerk, was granted an allowance of £205/5 for his care in managing the secret order branch of the office. One other extra clerk, James Cutforth, appointed in September, 1794 by Admiralty order,² had an extra allowance of £150 as reading clerk to the Board. This appointment, together with that of keeper of the minutes, at £150, was the result of Middleton's departmental re-organisation.

It had generally been conceded by the Commissioners of the 1780's that the salaries of Admiralty clerks were inadequate to the work performed and, more important, to the trust reposed in them. They were not graded by length of service and, unlike clerks of other departments, were given no official proportionate increase in salary during the war for the extra work they

1. Ibid., pp.338-339,340-341.

2. Ad.22/6,p.178.

performed. An official superannuation scheme did not exist. Clerks paid part of their salary to their predecessors as a reward for the vacancy to which they succeeded. Thus in 1797 Charles Wright, the chief clerk, and Joseph Belson, the senior established clerk, were paying Thomas Fearne, the former senior clerk, £62/10 p.a. each from their salaries, as part of an annuity, since by his resignation they had obtained their positions. William Pearce, paid £25 annually to James Freshfield for the same purpose.¹

To remedy this state of affairs the Commission investigating fees in the 1780's recommended that clerks be arranged in three classes, according to seniority, and their wages increased accordingly; that certain fees should continue, being placed under the responsibility of one of the senior clerks and collected into a fee fund used by the Admiralty to defray the costs of stationery and contingencies. The cost of these items would be covered in war by the money derived from fees, but if in peace amounts were insufficient, money from the sale of old naval stores, always amounting to many thousands of pounds, could make up the deficiency. The purpose of abolishing fees in this manner, begun in all government departments at this time, was to reduce public expenditure and indirectly lessen

1. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. No.XXXI. The Admiralty, Dockyards and Transports.p.501, Appendix F1;1803.xiii.

the amount of patronage a minister had at his disposal. The joint purpose of the 'economical reform' movement would thus be fulfilled. All fees, gratuities, perquisites or other emoluments, not strictly allowed by the office were to be abolished as,

'a species of emolument very liable to abuse: it may be a reward for civility, favour, or extra service; it may be also the purchase of undue preference, expedition, and in some cases, of procrastination. Flowing, at first, from the liberality of opulence, the ostentation of vanity, or the design of cunning, it very soon assumes the name of custom, and becomes a claim, submitted to, to avoid the imputation of meanness, and frequently to the great inconvenience of contracted circumstances.' 1.

To reinforce their determination that fees and gratuities should disappear the Commission had proposed that clerks should enter into a bond of three times their annual salary to faithfully perform their duties. That if they broke this bond, or took any fees other than those allowed, or acted as agents, or had any interest in naval stores or provisions, they should lose the bond, be dismissed from the service and never employed again in a civil capacity.

The Admiralty were unsympathetic to these recommendations, and when the Select Committee on Finance made their investigations, they discovered that the Board had followed a policy of passive resistance to the proposals of 1787. No fee fund had been established, no pension scheme was in existence. Clerks had been graded into established or extra ranks according to

1. The Annual Register, vol.XXVIII.1786.197.

their seniority, but the basic salaries of the former had not increased to compensate for the abolition of fees, which therefore continued unabated. The explanation given in a letter of 29 June, 1797, from Nepean, the Admiralty secretary, was that the proposed establishment was inadequate and the proposed salaries insufficient for the 'constant and laborious service' performed by the staff.¹ Despite the protests of the Finance Committee the Admiralty succeeded in staving off proposed alterations in the status quo, until 1799, when they made their own report on the Finance Committee's findings, to the Privy Council. In this report they gave grudging agreement to the principle they had obstructed for over ten years; the payment of salaries free from all fees. But they were doubtful whether office business would ever be conducted 'with the same facility and dispatch as under the former system.'²

In its opposition to the recommendations of the Select Committee of 1797 and previous commission of enquiry, the Admiralty at first sight appears re-actionary. In fact its counter proposals were more generous and its attitude to its employees more liberal than the apostles of 'economic reform'.

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1. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports 1797. Select Committee Report. No.XVII. The Admiralty, the Navy Board, the Navy Pay Office, the Marine Pay Office.pp.328,330,Appendix A; 1803,xii.
 2. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. Proceedings of the Admiralty on Finance Reports.G.p.801; 1803,xiii.

There was some danger that future recruits to the clerical staff would be deterred from entering the service by the economies proposed by the Finance Committee. Though the latter had suggested increases in the salaries of the secretaries, the first to have £2000 p.a. and the second £12,000 p.a. and of the senior clerks to £400, £350, £300 and so on, in descending order of seniority, their recommended abolition of all fees and gratuities would have actually reduced these salaries below the level of what the secretaries and clerks earned in peace. The Admiralty therefore proposed, more realistically, a salary of £4000 for the first secretary in war and £3000 in peace, and to the second of £2000 in war and £1500 in peace, as being more suitable for the hard work they performed and for the trust placed in them. The Admiralty's establishment was more extensive than that of the Select Committee and more generous in its pay scales. Its cost annually exceeded that of the Select Committee by £4,543 in peace and £7,118 in war, but the Board did not consider these salaries exceeded what ought to be given to trustworthy officials. They were as follows.¹

1. Ibid., pp.801-802.

<u>Select Committee's Recommendations.</u>		<u>Admiralty Recommendations.</u>	
1st. senior clerk	£400.	1st. senior clerk.	£500.
2nd. " "	£350.	2nd. " "	£450.
3rd. " "	£300.	3rd. " "	£400.
4th. " "	£250.	4th. " "	£350.
5th. " "	£200.	5th. " "	£300.
6th. " "	£150.	6th. " "	£250.
Receiver of Fees and Paymaster of Contingencies.	£150.	1 marine dept.clerk.	£300.
3 first junior clerks	£120.each.	1 junior marine dept.clerk.	£250.
5 other " "	£100.each.	2 junior clerks	£200.each.
An additional salary of—£50] for the French and Spanish Translator.	£150.	3 " "	£175.each.
3 extra clerks	£90.	4 " "	£150.each.
1 marine clerk	£200.	2 extra clerks	£100.each.
2nd. " "	£120.	4 extra clerks	£90.each.
Translator	£100.	1 marine clerk	£150.
		Translator	£100.
		Secretary to the First Lord	£300.

The salaries eventually approved by the Order in Council of 15th January, 1800, were more extensive than these and provided, at last, an adequate remuneration for the work performed. The war time salaries were to be as follows. The chief clerk was to earn £950 p.a., the eight senior established clerks from

£640 to £240, the eight junior established clerks from £240 to £180, the two marine clerks £360 and £180 respectively, the six extra clerks from £100 to £90 and the post of translator was revived and that of secretary to the First Lord created at £300 p.a.¹. The Select Committee's proposal to create a new officer, the receiver of fees, when the chief clerk managed the business adequately, was rejected, and the proposed salary of £150 paid to the chief clerk for his trouble.

On the renewal of war in 1803 salaries, which during peace had been cut down, were again increased.² At the same time eight new extra clerks were engaged³ at salaries ranging from £100 to £90 each.⁴ Nevertheless, despite these increases in staff numbers and their wages, the total bill for salaries, stationery and contingencies in 1805 compared favourably with that of 1797. The reason was the total abolition of fees and the removal of various allowances to clerks for specific duties. In addition the salaries of the senior extra clerks were reduced from £110 to £100, the wages of the housekeeper were transformed into a pension and placed on the Ordinary estimate, the job of

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1. Ad.22/8,pp.174-177. For fuller details see AppendixII.
 2. Ad.22/9,pp.175 et seq.
 3. Ad.22/10,p.14.
 4. For details of 1805 costs see Appendix II., Stat.3/2,p.26, Lewis Wolfe to G.Rose, 30 Apl.1799. Ad.17/8,1805.

Inspector of Repairs had been abolished and the extra porter was also employed as a watchman.¹ Nevertheless all Admiralty employees were better off in 1805 than twenty two years earlier. Prices had risen but wages had risen to keep pace with them, and by 1805 the extra clerks' salaries had doubled the standard of 1784, those of the junior established clerks increased by from fifty to one hundred per cent and those of the senior established clerks by approximately two hundred per cent. The salary of the second secretary had almost quadrupled, that of the first had increased fivefold.

The Admiralty, in fact, was more concerned with maintaining a sense of permanence and continuity, so essential to a government department than with strict financial economy. By its insistence on higher salaries, more generous pensions, more staff to assist with increased work, it showed itself more conscious of the real interests of the office and more aware of the dangers to its future development than the investigating committees. The Board was aware of a departmental 'ethos' which must be strengthened and enhanced by suitable rewards to staff. Its tone to outsiders was aloof, and a little contemptuous, even to those representatives of 'economical reform' who threatened the office's independence. A comment on the hours of attendance suggested by the Select Committee, illustrates

1. Ad.22/9, p.8.

this. The staff worked from approximately 11.0.a.m. till 5.0.p.m. or later if necessary and the committee suggested that they come into line with the Navy Board and work from 10.a.m. till 4.0.p.m. with the advantage of more daylight hours. While the Admiralty considered these hours suitable for the Navy Office they assumed the commissioners had 'either very little understood or did not well consider, the nature and extent of the business to be conducted by this Department.. . . . where business must be executed at all hours and cannot.. . . for a moment be delayed', and they proposed that the Board should fix its own hours of work as it had always done, since it knew its own business best.¹ The Admiralty had recognised a fundamental administrative truth; that unless rewards were compatible with work, unless a certain status was achieved for clerks, by higher pay, assured and reasonable pensions, security of tenure in office and 'gentlemen's' hours of work, which the office could regulate, then it would eventually be impossible to find suitable applicants and the office would suffer.

This was not an abstract problem. In 1784 there were six established and eleven extra clerks. In 1796 the number of extra clerks had risen to fifteen, plus a keeper of the minutes. By that year only three of the six established clerks of 1784 remained in office. The others had died, retired or

1. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. Proceedings of the Admiralty on Finance Reports.G.p.803; 1803,xiii.

left. Four of the junior clerks of 1784 had risen by promotion and seniority to the ranks of senior or established clerks, but of the remaining seven extra clerks of 1784 only four remained and they were still extra clerks though slowly rising in the scale of preferment.¹ The majority of extra clerks in 1796, nine of them, had service of two years and under, compared with the position in 1784 when none of them had less than four years.² In 1787 many clerks had given evidence of resignations because of the low salaries.³ The increase to extra clerks in 1790 had contributed to the problem. By an Admiralty order of 24 May, 1790, extra clerks were to receive increases, back dated to 25 March, which would raise the salaries of the first four extra clerks to £110.p.a. of the next three to £100 p.a. and of the three junior clerks to £90 p.a. This increase 'for their greater encouragement' and 'to enable them to support themselves in a manner more becoming their situation', raised the salaries of these clerks above

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1. Ad.22/5,pp.9,10,185.See Appendix II.
 2. Parl.Pap.,Finance Reports,1797. Select Committee Report No.XVII. The Admiralty Board, the Navy Board, the Navy Pay Office, the Marine Pay Office.pp.338-341;1803.xii.
 3. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc. Reports from Commissioners. No.III. The Admiralty.pp.111,113,Appendix 6,10,11;1806,vii.

those of the most junior established clerks at approximately £60-£70 p.a.¹. These men would have been less than human if they had not resented their position. The abolition of fees at this time would have increased the resentment.

Low wages also encouraged the taking of bribes and selling of information. In 1784 Thomas Kite, one of the extra clerks, had received a salary of £57 p.a. though part of his duties were to copy out confidential papers for the First Lord.² Robert Maxwell, the translator, had confidential information often passing through his hands, but his salary only amounted to £145/15 in 1796. Such information could be valuable on the stock market, nor is it surprising if clerks yielded to the temptation their position afforded of using their inside knowledge to speculate on foreign stock, sometimes imperilling the secrecy of operations. Other clerks had been known to sell information to the enemy.³ It was for these reasons, among others, that the Admiralty allowed its employees to take fees and gratuities or earn additional income through other employment, in accordance with the spirit of the age. The eighteenth century saw nothing wrong in the Admiralty secretary

1. Ad.22/5,p.70.

2. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc. Reports from Commissioners.No.III. The Admiralty.p.113; 1806,vii.

3. Ibid., p.111.Appendix 6.

earning £160 p.a. as secretary to the commission for the relief of poor naval widows, or the second secretary Ibbetson, being secretary to Greenwich Hospital, at £221/5/10 p.a., a post he retained on his retirement from the Admiralty, or Marsden, his successor being naval officer for St. Vincent and Dominica at £116/4/11. Sir Harry Parker, when chief clerk, had been secretary to the Board of Longitude at £74 p.a. Wright, his successor, retained his place as purser to a third rate, at £30 p.a. which he had first taken when a clerk, and had prospects of other gains from his position as Register of the Vice Admiralty Court at Halifax, Nova Scotia.¹ Similarly Joseph Belson, senior clerk in 1796, kept his two offices as secretary to the Privy Seal at £30 p.a. and deputy to two clerks in that office, at £80 p.a. One of the extra clerks in 1796, John Dyer, was deputy secretary to Greenwich Hospital at £96 p.a. and both he and James Cutforth, reading clerk to the Board, were sinecure pursers of ships of the line. Another clerk, Mitchel Hollingsworth, was even allowed to supplement his meagre salary of £57 p.a. by employment as assistant collector of Imported Liquors at the Custom House, which paid less than £60 p.a. To this job he attended in person, since he did not have to be at the Admiralty office until 12.0.a.m. though sometimes it was much later when he arrived. Nevertheless, he was granted this

1. Ibid., pp.126-7, Appendix 28, pp.110-111, Appendix 6.

indulgence because of the smallness of his income and the largeness of his family.¹ Even when the Board agreed to abolish fees it saw no reason why a 'meritorious servant of the Public, should preclude from the advantage of any additional reward for his services'. The labourer was at all times worthy of his hire.²

Adequate pensions also played an important part in establishing a sense of permanence, security and continuity. The Admiralty considered the Select Committee's recommendations of a pension of half the salary insufficient for those who had spent a lifetime in the service. They suggested their own pension scale whereby the pension bore some relation to the length of service and thus gave added incentive to junior clerks to continue with the office. For those with between seven and ten years service a pension of one third their salary was devised; for those with between twenty and thirty, two thirds the salary would be provided. Those with over thirty years service would have three quarters of their salary.³ Something had already been done on these lines prior to 1800. When John Ibbetson, the second secretary retired in 1795 he was granted a pension

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1. Ibid., pp.114-115, Appendix 15.
 2. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. Proceedings of the Admiralty on Finance Reports.G.p.802; 1803,xiii.
 3. Ibid., p.803.

of £800 p.a. for his faithful services,¹ and the former chief clerk, Sir Harry Parker, received a pension of £400. Two clerks who retired at the same time were granted a pension, the one of £100 for life, the other £55, half his salary, for the same period.² The Admiralty proposals for higher pensions, submitted on 13 August, 1799 to the Privy Council, were not therefore original. Before a great deal could be done the government resigned and Lord St. Vincent's board were more concerned with economies and attacking corruption in the yards. Yet in 1804 two old established clerks, William Gimber and Robert Robinson, both in the office for thirty three years, received pensions of three quarters of the peace time salary on their retirement.³ Nothing was given to the dependants of clerks who died in service, but this was expecting too much from a department already generous in its provision for past employees.

The contingent accounts varied considerably over twenty three years.⁴ In 1784, at the end of the American War,

1. Ad.22/17,p.206.

2. Ibid., p.231.

3. Ad.22/19,p.221.

4. Those between 1795 and 1800 seem to be missing. Only those between 1784-1794, Ad.17/7 and 1800-1806, Ad.17/8, have therefore been consulted.

£10,689 was spent on contingencies. There was a spectacular halving of this account the following year and a further reduction, to £3,834, the lowest figure ever reached, in 1786. By 1790 however costs were rising inexorably and by 1794 were almost at a level of ten years previously. An attempt in 1792 to cut back expenses illustrated Pitt's determination to cut naval costs and his sanguine belief that peace was assured, just as the reductions in expenses between 1800 and 1802 are indicative of St. Vincent's economies on the same premise. Both were falsely based and economies cancelled by the enormous rise the following year. In 1791 the contingent account was £8,304/1/4, in 1792 £6,846/7 and in 1793 £8,862/13/0½. There was a drop of over £628 between 1800 and 1802, followed by a rise of £676 in 1803 and £1,109 a year later. The cost of contingencies between 1784 and 1789, the years of peace, averaged £5,519 annually, between 1790 and 1794, £8,206 and from 1800 to 1805 they had risen to £11,653 p.a. The commission on fees thought that fees should cover the costs in war and, with the help of the sale of old naval stores, in peace, but the experiment was never tried.

An examination of the contingent accounts is best considered under the headings of rents and taxes, lighting and firing of the office, domestic duties, stationery, books, maps, messengers accounts and postage, and various other items included in the account.

Rents, rates and taxes fluctuated slightly over the period, showing a tendency to rise after 1800 but were never very large. Some of the rents were unchanged; the ground rent remained at £50, the land tax was £151/17 p.a., the water rate £45. The window and house tax was approximately £88 each annually until 1792 when there was a sharp rise to £97 and £179 respectively. Until that year the land tax, poor and water rates were all included in the payments for parish dues. Since this payment also contained amounts for coal and candles, it is impossible to separate items before that date, but in 1792 the poor rate was £151/14/2 and subject to violent fluctuations in the succeeding years. By 1800 it had reached over £250. There was also an annual Easter offering to the parish church of St. Martin's in the Fields, of five guineas.

The cost of providing the office with lamps, oil and cotton varied considerably in war and peace. In 1787 it was only £177 but in an average war year it was approximately £400 and in 1805 had reached £609/6/4. Coal and candles, wood and turnery ware were provided by the head messenger, and until 1792 included in the lump sum allowed for parish dues. After 1801 the woodman's bill averaged £40 p.a. and the bill for coal and candles for two years, 1799, 1800 came to £1,361/8/1. Lighting and firing must have formed a large part of this 'block grant', for the Admiralty commissioners and secretaries were allowed £97 worth of coal and candles each year for their private

use, and the office requirements were added to this. Domestic duties cost approximately £160 p.a. and included destroying rats, sweeping chimneys, pumping water, emptying cesspools, watering the yard and street, a necessary convenience, to allay the thick dust before metalled roads, ^{were made} especially in summer, washing towels ^{and} inkstands, cleaning carpets, all items costing less than £20 p.a. There were seasonal payments too, like that of £1/11/6 for throwing snow off the roof.¹ Besides these regular payments there were skilled, occasional tasks, the cleaning of pictures, repair of clocks, the upholstery of office furniture on which an average of £262 p.a. was spent between 1785 and 1802. The cost of the latter was considerable, though the sum of £1,029/15/4 in 1791 was exceptional and was probably the result of repairs and redecoration after the office rebuilding. There was also an occasional bill of £62/18/4 for bargemen's liveries.

The cost of office stationery in 1784 was £1,489/0/5 but during the war it rose sharply as more despatches, orders and letters were written and as minutes and letter books increased. Between 1797 and 1799 it averaged £4,468/18/7¼ p.a.² To reduce this expense the Admiralty was supplied from the Stationery Office from 1 July, 1799, on a Treasury order. The stationery

1. Ad.17/8,1801.

2. Stat.3/2,p.26,Lewis Wolfe to George Rose, 30 April,1799.

was paid for out of the ordinary estimate, but after 1801 regular large payments were made for stamps, vellum, passes and commissions to Messrs. Winchester, the office stationers. This firm also printed and bound for the office; over a period of four years, from 1801 to 1805, they were paid £9,219/11/8 for their services. Before being supplied by the government the Admiralty had spent roughly £1000 per quarter on stationery, after 1799 this was reduced. In 1803 it was averaging £454 per quarter¹. and from Michaelmas 1805 to Midsummer 1806, amounted to £693 per quarter.² However it should be remembered that approximately £1,844 was being spent with Messrs. Winchester annually and that the Stationery Office, though officially empowered to do so, did not bind many of the Admiralty's maps and charts, and that there was an Admiralty printer, at £100 p.a. Money was also paid to the King's printer for his work on gazettes and treaties.³

The expenditure on maps was slight and an average of only £10 annually was spent on books,⁴ but that on newspapers and charts was consistently high, particularly once war began.

1. Stat.3/57, pp.29,45,57.

2. Ibid., pp.130,135,140.

3. Ad.17/8, in 1803 it was £315/6/3.

4. This does not include the exceptional item of £460 spent on The Atlantic Neptune in 1784, but if that is included the average rises to £30 p.a.

In 1792 newspapers cost £189/3/6, two years later the figure had risen to £231/2/4 and continued to rise until it averaged £279/10/6 from 1800 to 1805¹. French newspapers were also an expensive item, £181/4/6 being spent on them in two years, between 1800 and 1803.²

Postage and messengers journeys were straightforward and were paid by the head messenger from money imprested to him by the chief clerk. These sums ran into several thousands, averaging £2,570 before 1794 and proportionately more as the war continued. Messengers journeys made up approximately a quarter of this sum, rising steadily throughout the period, from the lowest figure of £371/15/9 in 1785, to £1,082/14/9 in 1790 over the Spanish crisis. This figure was regularly exceeded in war and reached £2,710/4/6 in 1804, by which time messengers' accounts, postage, coal and candles were all listed separately, being too large to lump together. Amounts spent on postage were much smaller but showed the same tendency to rise throughout these years. They formed about one tenth of the total sum granted the head messenger, averaging £237 before 1794 and approximately £590 after 1800. To this was added £25 for carrying letters to the Post Office.

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1. By contrast the Stationery Office spent £5/1 p.a. on newspapers, Stat.3/2,p.36.
 2. See Chapter V.p. 255.

Other grants on the contingent account were for extra clerks, employed during the war, or at any crisis when extra help was needed, at two guineas a week, the travelling expenses of the Admiralty commissioners in their visitation of the dockyards, and casual items scattered through the accounts, of passing interest. Such was the payment, in 1794, of £30/7/6 to Captain Bligh for the expense he had been put to by a native of Otaheite, the allowance of five guineas to a seaman, coming to the office for his master's examination, who had been robbed en route of all his possessions,¹ or the various sums paid to distressed Dutch seamen in 1797, presumably after the battle of Camperdown or the compensation to Morocco merchants for their losses under 'peculiar circumstances' for which the Admiralty felt responsible,² but it was rarely that the Board played the Good Samaritan in this manner.

One major item of expense which must be mentioned was that for 'naval services', often unspecified. There were regular annual payments to consuls at Rotterdam, Elsinore, Smyrna, Salonica and other ports, amounting to several hundred pounds. This money reimbursed the consuls for their trouble and expense in caring for shipwrecked, destitute sailors of those taken prisoner in the area,³ or for forwarding naval despatches.⁴

1. Ad.17/7,1794.

2. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports,1797. Select Committee Report. No.XVII.The Admiralty, the Navy Board, the Navy Pay Office, the Marine Pay Office.p.342;1803,xii.

3. Ad.17/8,1800.

4. Ad.17/8,1803.

Money was also spent on secret or special services of which no details were given and for which no receipts were required. Thus £1,206/6 was paid to an unidentified person for secret services, between August and November, 1790, when the danger of war with Spain was most acute,¹ and in war these sums increased enormously. In 1784 £848/10/6 was paid to foreign correspondents outside the usual channels, who sent information to the office. In 1797 £11,327 was spent on such services.² Anonymous sympathisers, merchants trading with Europe³, regular French informers⁴ and even spies in the French ministry of marine⁵ passed information and received money.

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1. Ad.17/7,1790.
 2. Parl.Pap.,Finance Reports,1797. Select Committee Report. No.XVII. The Admiralty, the Navy Board, the Navy Pay Office, the Marine Pay Office.p.342;1803,xii.
 3. The Spencer Papers,J.S.Corbett,ed.,I.255-257, Richard Cadman Etches to Spencer, 7 May,1796. Between 1797 and 1799 Nepean received regular reports from his agents, William May and Richard Cadman Etches, in Holland, revealing the disordered state of the Dutch Navy and urging an attack on the Texel. N.M.M. Papers of Sir Evan Nepean, 1751-1822. See NEP/1 and NEP/2.
 4. Dropmore Mss., II.402,Pitt to Grenville,June-July,1793.
 5. Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh, Londonderry,ed., I.372, Wickham to Castlereagh, 21 Sept. 1798. There were similar leaks in the British War Office since an order to seize French fishing boats in 1798 was known on the French coast before it had been signed by the Secretary for War and sent to the Admiralty. The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbott, Lord Colchester, ed. by Charles, Lord Colchester, (3 vols.London,1861), I.138,8 Mar.1798.

It may be asked why the Admiralty did not raise salaries when they realised their clerks were underpaid, instead of allowing them to hold numerous sinecures. The Select Committee on Finance of 1797 to 1798 also remarked on this seeming anachronism, but the Select Committee looked at institutions with an innovator's eye. Fees, sinecures or alternative emoluments were legitimate eighteenth century rewards for service and Admiralty finances should be judged from an eighteenth century standard. There was a fear, real in the seventeenth century and not completely eliminated under George III, that a large government salary might make its receiver the government's tool. There had been a time when despotic officials seemed beyond the reach of the law. A large salary from a single source meant the emergence of a single-minded man, the expert, anathema to the spirit of the noble amateur or dilettante, so beloved by English government. The safeguard against him and against 'an administration based on abstract political principles and staffed exclusively by those who held these opinions' was the gentleman.¹

The English approach to politics and administration has always been pragmatic. The main test of any office machinery was whether it was reasonably efficient and worked at little cost to the central government. By employing gentlemen the government could call on their sense of noblesse oblige, of

1. W.L.Burn, The Age of Equipoise, p.263.

honour and duty, which the majority possessed. They would run the machine well because they were accustomed to leadership. They would run it cheaply because state service was a duty and an honour and in return would accept the spoils of office, the places, pensions, sinecures and possessions. Gentlemen would not 'push professional zeal to inconvenient or dangerous lengths.' They might indeed be casual amateurs, but even this was safer than a state educated man, dependent on the state for a living.¹

This attitude to government service persisted well into the nineteenth century, but first showed signs of collapse in the civil service. These signs were heralded by administrative reforms of this period. Amidst the complexities and elaborations of war, ever more costly and time consuming, the expert emerged, with all the virtues and vices of his type. His advent can be faintly traced in the development of the Admiralty office during this period. There was tighter monetary control, more efficiency from increased numbers of clerks, more government control, at least at the periphery of office finance, a stronger emphasis on economy as a prime virtue, and a corresponding withering of paternalism, which could lead to a lowering of staff status.

Despite the reputation of the service departments for

1. Ibid., p.264.

hidebound rigidity, the Admiralty was one of the first to attempt to put its own house in order. Treasury control was excluded and the Board resented interference, but while protecting its staff against too rigid and short sighted economies, it introduced its own reforms. By paying its clerks more and not overworking them, by engaging extra messengers, granting the First Lord a secretary and messenger on the office establishment and establishing three new departments to deal with modern technological problems, the Board showed itself able to adapt to changing circumstances and to be concerned with its own increased efficiency rather than pure economy. Much of the credit must go to that prototype of nineteenth century administrators, Sir Charles Middleton, a veritable 'Sir Gregory Hardlines', who as Comptroller of the Navy Board, Lord of the Admiralty and First Lord, introduced and carried through many of the reforms discussed here. It was he who urged the several commissions of enquiry on their task and insisted on their recommendations being put into effect. There was no real divergence between the Board and these committees, rather they were two sides of the same coin, dealing with the same problem, that of remodelling an eighteenth century department on modern lines. It may even be that one corrected the faults of the other and that through the efforts of both the office achieved a temporary equipoise between government control and total financial independence, in these years.

CHAPTER V.The Office at Admiralty House.

The Admiralty had been established on its present site in Whitehall since 1725. It was one of a group of government offices in that area, close to Parliament and to the subordinate naval offices, once they moved to their new premises in Somerset House in 1787. The Admiralty was housed in a plain and comparatively small building, enclosing three sides of a courtyard, opening into Whitehall, protected at first by a high wall, and after 1785 by an ornamental screen designed by Robert Adam. The single narrow entrance was inconvenient for coaches, though a protection against riotous mobs, and most traffic probably came via the Horse Guards entrance.

The designer of the building, 'a most ugly edifice and deservedly veiled by Mr. Adam's handsome screen', according to Horace Walpole, was Thomas Ripley, an indifferent architect but a protegee of Sir Robert Walpole. The building was the official residence of the commissioners as well as their place of work. The First Lord's apartments on the south west side were the largest, but the four senior lords had houses there and the first secretary unfurnished rooms. These apartments were highly valued. They were not always grand, but they were central and rent free, no small item to the parent of

families raised there.^{1.}

The amount of space available for the thirty five clerks and other officials living and working in the building in 1784 was thus limited. In 1797 the number had increased to fifty four, owing to the creation of three new departments, the Hydrographer's office, the Inspector of Naval Telegraphs, and the Inspector General of Naval Works. Yet there were only a few rooms for them, in the cellars, attics and some central rooms, in 1784. As their numbers and the office work increased more room was needed. Lord Kinnoul's house, next door, was bought, demolished and a new house for the First Lord erected in its place. This allowed the Board Room, used by Lord Sandwich as a dining room, to be used solely for business.^{2.} The life interest in Kinnoul House had been acquired by Sir. R.Taylor, the Admiralty architect, from whom it had to be purchased for £3,200, and whose pupil, Samuel Pepys Cockerell, later appointed to the sinecure office of Inspector of Repairs, carried out the new work. Work on the foundations of the new building was begun on 10 April, 1784. It was temporarily halted

1. Admiral Leveson Gower had seven children (C.F.Aspinall-Oglander, Admiral's Widow: life and letters of the Hon. Mrs.Edward Boscawen, 1761-1805, (London, 1942), p.135,; two of Admiral Markham's sons were born there, (Markham Correspondence, Markham, ed., p.xiv,) and Philip Stephen's daughter died in childbirth there in 1805. (G.E.C.Complete Peerage, X.736.
2. D.Bonner Smith, 'The Admiralty Building', The Mariner's Mirror, ix.no.9.(September, 1923), 278.

while the Commons debated the £6000 estimate recommended by an investigating committee, and not passed until 12 June. There had been protests at the unnecessary and excessive expense involved. Charles Brett, in reply to these charges, had urged the lack of room and discomfort under which clerks worked. Some were in attics, lit by candles, some in permanently damp cellars, often flooded by the Thames, and papers lay about in confused heaps, not docketed or locked away.¹ Other members asked if the drawing rooms, library and bedrooms being added, were designed for the greater security of official papers, or the improvement of clerks' conditions, and whether the conversion of Kinnoul House into offices would not have been a cheaper and easier process. But these motions were defeated, the estimates passed, and work continued.²

In common with most building operations the original estimates were exceeded and the work took longer than had been expected. Between October 1786 and 1789, £13,000 had been advanced to Cockerell, but his accounts were not finally passed till 22 May, 1795, when the Admiralty ordered the payment of the balance due to him, over £700, plus the allowance of £600

1. The Debates and Proceedings of the House of Commons, viii. pt.ii.1786,170-171. Printed for J.Stockdale.

2. Ibid., 312-316.

for the three years spent preparing plans and a further £200 for his trouble in supervising further alterations between 1789-1790 and for the repair of the garden at £110/5.¹

The dominant building skills were those of the bricklayer and carpenter, on whom the craft trades, painters, plasterers, glaziers, depended. The largest bills for the new work were therefore those of the carpenter, £3,554/3/1 and the bricklayer £3,239/18/5. Cockerell would seem to have followed the customary practice employed in public works, entering into a contract with master builders in the two constructional trades, who subcontracted the remainder of the work.² The masons and plasterers submitted bills of over £1000 each, those of the more specialised trades, plumbers, smiths, painters, glaziers, cost proportionately less.

'The London craftsman was, as a rule, a man of considerable skill and status - proud, conscientious, and expensive.'³ One of the craftsmen employed by the Admiralty in 1789 earned £1/11/6 per week for forty nine weeks, for work of a special

1. Ad.17/1. The details of costs of labour and materials, unless otherwise stated, come from Ad.17/1.
2. J. Summerson, Georgian London, (Harmondsworth, 1962), pp. 76-77. For these and similar details I have drawn heavily on Chapter V of this excellent book.
3. Ibid., p. 69., Bragge-Bathurst Papers, D421x/17/69, Undated letter, probably about 1806, from Lord Spencer to Charles Bragge-Bathurst, recommending the appointment of Thomas Buzzard, glazier to be glazier at the Mint Buildings. The recommendation probably had political significance but also mentions Buzzard's professional skill.

unspecified nature, possibly to do with the laying out of the garden, after the building had finished, leaving behind the usual builders' debris. The garden disappeared under the building of Admiralty Arch in the 1890's but it was extensive enough to cost approximately £10 p.a. for seeds, trees and tools and £79/18/5 in 1790, after the buildings were complete and the garden re-laid. Turf and fifty nine loads of gravel were also needed to restore the garden to its former order.

The Admiralty showed a desire to economise wherever possible. All the chimney pieces in the new building were brought from dismantled or reconstructed houses. Four came from Sir Gregory Page's house at Blackheath, three from York House and one from Lord Egremont's, all at a cost of under £250. Window shutters, two mahogany doors, columns and several other items were brought from Blackheath at a reasonable cost. From their descriptions some of the chimney pieces, particularly those from York House, were sumptuous, with marble statuary, swags of fruit and flowers and sienna columns.¹ In fact, though a plain building, the Admiralty was not completely unadorned. It was roofed with best green Westmorland tiles, and £24/14 was paid for the highly popular, artificial Coade stone, used for ornaments and extremely hard wearing. Inside, ornament was confined to

1. The expert task of installation was supervised by Richard Westmacott, father of the famous sculptor. D.N.B.LX.355.

the public rooms and was both chaste, rich, and appropriate.

The main staircase was rebuilt and a pair of plaster Tritons ordered for it at a cost of £5/17. The bills for the fine wood carving and iron work involved also include accounts for Portland stone and Purbeck marble. The latter was used for paving halls, laid in squares with little diamonds of black Namur marble at the crossings. The plaster mouldings of the public rooms were also the work of craftsmen. The more elaborate pieces, some of which were gilded, were moulded separately and then fixed to the cornice. The motifs used were the normal classical ones, Ionic medallions, Doric tryglyphs, the Vitruvian scroll, but others reflected the English countryside in their use of ruffled leaves, roses and honeysuckles, and the nautical nature of the office in scallop shells, anchors and sea-dolphins. Of more practical nature were the lead cisterns to which water was brought from Chelsea Water Works or York Buildings. Adequate sanitation was provided by cesspools in the garden, but a more modern installation was Joseph Bramah's water closet, reliable and hygienic, at a cost of £32/16/4½.

It was at this time that the Board room was given a new ceiling, and a print by Pugin and Rowlandson, circa 1807, shows what the room looked like at this period. Above the fireplace was a series of rolled up maps, at one end of the room the magnificent carvings, possibly by a pupil of Grinling

Gibbons, at the other, in a recessed case, were the books, globes and wind dial recording every variation in wind direction. The room was panelled in oak and in the centre was the mahogany table, made for the office about 1789, with its desk shaped end for the secretary.^{1.}

A series of public rooms opened out of the large plain hall, where messengers waited and where the doorkeeper was permanently on duty. On the left of the passage leading past the main stair was the Captain's room, where Nelson's body lay for one night. Facing it on the right, was the waiting room. Cruikshank's ^{engraving} ~~drawing~~ of it in 1820 shows a featureless apartment,^{2. X} sparsely furnished and thronged, as in real life, with hopeful naval officers. Beyond these public rooms, was a narrow stair and a labyrinth of dark passages and small rooms, crowded with boxes and drawers full of maps, charts and the official departmental records, a swelling tide which threatened to engulf the clerks who dealt with it. The Admiralty was unable to expand because of the difficulties of the site. Hemmed in by other government offices, it had to build upwards and the accommodation for clerks was never satisfactory. Yet it was from these cramped quarters that the whole naval war effort was directed and the Navy controlled, by a staff much smaller than

1. C.Hussey, 'The Admiralty Old Building-Whitehall', Country Life, (November, 1923), 688-692.

2. The drawing was the work of Captain Marryat.

that now employed by a moderately sized town council.^{1.}

Like every government office the Admiralty maintained a small staff for household duties. Throughout these twenty three years the domestic staff, caring for the needs of Admiralty officials, changed very little, though the numbers increased very slightly during the war. Only retirement from ill health or death removed them.

The housekeeper at £40 p.a. and the necessary woman at £35 p.a. did not perform their duties in person, employing a deputy, to whom the latter paid half her salary.^{2.} The latter's salary was raised during the war, first to £60 and by 1804 by a further £50 to help pay the two assistants she now employed.^{3.} There were three watchmen, for the hall, gates and gardens at an annual salary of £20 each, though they received allowances which augmented this. In 1784 those of the senior watchman amounted to £16/12/8 and of the others to £4/8/8. Part of this was a clothing allowance to provide for a thick coat. Coals for

1. The Admiralty only employed between forty five and fifty six clerks during the war, compared to the Navy Board which had one hundred and sixty, and was smaller than the War Office with fifty eight; though compared to the Home and Foreign Offices with staffs of under thirty it was quite large. Emmeline W. Cohen, The Growth of the British Civil Service, 1780-1939 (London, 1941), pp.34-5.
2. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners.No.III. The Admiralty.p.119,Appendix No.23;1806,vii.
3. Ad.17/8,1804.

a fire as protection against the fogs and chills of the Thames were also bought out of this sum. The watchmen were paid for messages they delivered at discretionary rates; in 1784 these came to £60 each. The position was thus a valuable and responsible one, though Lieutenant Bowling's confidence in the head watchman's influence was perhaps too great.¹ After 1799, when stationery was supplied by the Stationery Office, Winchester, the chief watchman, was given substantial sums to buy stamps, vellum, passes, commissions for the office. In 1802 these came to £1,152/9/4, and from 1803 a regular item appears in the accounts of sums to Messrs. Winchester and Sons for printing and binding books of instructions, marine treatises and signals at a cost, between 1803 and 1805 of £3,611/9/9. This was in addition to printing done by the office printer, or binding done by the Stationery Office.²

A porter and three messengers completed the tally of domestic staff. The former's salary of £30 p.a. remained constant until 1800, but was supplemented by a series of lucrative perquisites and allowances whose fluctuations over ten years, 1787 to 1797, are reflected in the slight increase in salary

1. T. Smollet, Roderick Random, (London, 1961), p. 257.

2. Ad. 17/8, 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805.

by the latter date. In 1787 he earned £57/12, in 1797 £61/3/10.¹ To a £10 allowance for rent, was added £15/10 for clothing, a gown every two years, a red cloak and hat, presumably some official livery. His share of New Year gifts came to two guineas, but his biggest source of income came from an allowance of one penny for every burner in every lamp, every night, and for supplying the lamps with oil and cotton. In 1784 this allowance amounted to £355, thirteen years later had increased to £375,² and after 1800 averaged £486 p.a.³ The head Messenger, William Millman, was responsible for the cleaning of the office and the overall supervision of the domestic staff. Out of the money granted him by the chief clerk, amounting to considerable sums, he paid his assistants' expenses, parish dues, postage bills, water rates, casual employees engaged to destroy rats, pump water, sweep chimneys or empty cesspools, the bills for livery for Admiralty bargemen and other petty office expenses. He no longer delivered

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1. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners. No.III. The Admiralty, P.118;1806,vii.,Finance Reports,1797, Select Committee Report, No.XVII. The Admiralty Board, the Navy Board, the Navy Pay Office, the Marine Pay Office. pp.340-341, Appendix G.1; 1803,xii.
 2. Ibid., 340-341., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc. Reports from Commissioners.No.III. The Admiralty.p.119, Appendix no.23; 1806,vii.
 3. Ad.17/8, 1802,1803,1804,1805.

letters except, occasionally, to East India House, when he received 7/6 for his pains. His predecessor had lived at the office but these rooms were appropriated for clerks and Millman received £40 p.a. in lieu of accommodation. His official salary was £50, but he received an allowance of £300 from the Board to supply brooms, mops and pails for cleaning the office, coal and candles for lighting and heating, and for keeping the locks, stoves and fenders repaired. Apart from this allowance, numerous small fees also increased his basic salary to approximately £100 p.a. Of these the most profitable were the three guineas received on each marine commission and the shilling on each protection made out by the office. These fees, which he shared with his assistants, were considerable during the war. Millman's share had amounted to approximately £150 before 1783.

His assistants shared some of these fees but their basic salaries were lower, £40 and £30 respectively.¹ They did receive, however, generous travelling expenses; one shilling a mile for 'riding journeys' out of London and at discretion for other errands. Their expense accounts had to check with the journey book kept at the office, in which the sender was

1. Two assistants were added during the war at £30 each, but received no allowances or fees. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1797, Select Committee Report., No.XVII. The Admiralty Board, the Navy Board, the Navy Pay Office, the Marine Pay Office. pp.340-341, Appendix G1;1803,xii.

noted and the business specified. The account was then sent to the Board, signed and paid, via the head messenger, by the chief clerk. Post chaises were rarely hired by Admiralty messengers, though subordinate boards used them extensively.¹ The Admiralty thought the number of messengers insufficient and wished to retain the extra staff employed in war time and increase their salaries 'for their better support and maintenance.' Their proposals in this respect compared favourably with those of the Select Committee.²

<u>Select Committee's Proposals, 1797.</u>		<u>Admiralty proposals, 1799.</u>	
Head messenger	£100.p.a.	Head messenger	£120.p.a.
Assistants	£40-£30.p.a.	Assistants	£60-£50.p.a.
Porter	£50.p.a.	Two extra messengers	£40 each.
		Porter	£50 p.a.
		Extra porter	£40 p.a.

It was the Admiralty's recommendations which were carried into effect from 1 January, 1800, when a general increase in the salaries and wages of all Admiralty employees took place.³

A third extra messenger at £40 p.a. was added in 1800 and a messenger for the First Lord's secretary also at £40, in the autumn of 1804⁴ and six months later the wages of the assistant

1. Ad.2/1393, Admiralty Commissioners to Navy Board, 19 Oct. 1801.
2. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. Proceedings of the Admiralty on Finance Reports. G.p. 802; 1803, xiii.
3. Ad.22/8, pp. 77-78.
4. Ad.22/10, p. 14.

messengers were raised by between ten and twenty pounds each.¹ Over the period there was thus a steady rise in the wages of domestics, and in some cases a dramatic one; twenty five per cent for the watchmen, sixty six per cent for the porter and over fifty per cent for the messengers.²

The Admiralty messengers delivered letters, despatches and orders to other government offices, to the outports, to the Secretaries of State or First Lord, absent at Bath or on their country estates, and to the King. Less important mail was delivered by the twopenny post. Messengers did not go abroad. The Admiralty sent its despatches either in one of its own ships or in the Post Office packets, not always a reliable or comprehensive service. Despite its strategic importance there was no service to Malta until 1806 and then only in the teeth of Post Office opposition,³ and there were criticisms by commanders of packet captains' inefficiency and even cowardice.⁴ On the Post Office side there were complaints

1. Ibid., p.73.

2. See Appendix II.

3. P.Mackesy, The War in the Mediterranean, 1803-1810, (London, 1957), p.18.

4. JER/21, St. Vincent to Nepean, 5 Apl.1797., The Letters of Lord St.Vincent, D.Bonner Smith, ed., I.301, St.Vincent to John Robinson, 30 March, 1801. The packets were built for speed not fighting and appointments to them were open to borough influence. See A.C.Wardle, 'The Post Office Packets; The Trade Winds, C.N.Parkinson, ed., 278-290.

of the unpunctuality of Admiralty clerks and messengers. Overseas mail left the General Post Office at 8.0.p.m. and letters from government departments had to be there at 7.45.p.m. As the war continued and work increased, the mail arrived later and later, resulting in serious delays. Francis Freeling, secretary to the Post Office, appealed to Nepean in 1799 to send letters by 7.30.p.m. and the Admiralty agreed that no letters should leave their office after 7.0.¹ But a month later the Post Office complaint was renewed, when a check revealed the Admiralty messenger to have been regularly ten minutes late delivering letters.² Sometimes there were more serious complaints. Messengers allowed strangers to put their letters in the Admiralty bag to avoid postage charges³ or perpetrated petty frauds by overcharging on official letters.⁴ But the Post Office was not blameless; their clerks were equally careless with important despatches. An increase in the number of Admiralty letters brought Post Office requests not to stuff the envelopes too full and to use stronger paper packets to avoid them being torn in transit. Nepean gave appropriate orders,

1. Ad.1/4073, Freeling to Nepean, 2 May, 1799.

2. Ibid., Freeling to Nepean, 14 June, 1799.

3. Ad.1/4072, Freeling to Nepean, 19 Oct. 1797.

4. Ibid., Freeling to Nepean, 18 March, 1797.

but in a revealing minute asked that the Post Office clerks' practice of jumping on the bags, a circumstance to which many torn letters could be attributed, should stop.¹ In 1804 two letters for Sir Andrew Mitchell at Halifax got into the Jamaica bag and were returned to Falmouth to await the next North American packet.² Delays of months could result from a few minutes carelessness and vitally affect plans of campaigns.

Even if everything went well and there were no delays, news took weeks to reach its destination. It was conveyed along well defined routes. Easy communication between Bergen and Christiansand provided the Baltic news with an alternative route³ to the north German ports and there was a regular route to India via Germany, Venice and Constantinople. An alternative route to India existed via Alexandretta, Aleppo and Bussarah, providing a service frequently quicker than the long sea route round the Cape.⁴ Yet though many of these routes were faster and more convenient than the long sea voyage they were exposed to interruption and hazards, especially in war. Countries then

1. Ad.1/4073, Freeling to Nepean, 19 Dec. 1803.

2. Ibid., C. Godby to Marsden, 5 Dec. 1804.

3. Seymour Papers, CR114A/325, f.26, Spencer to Seymour, 1 Apl. 1796.

4. It took only three weeks to go down the Red Sea to the Malabar coast in June, as opposed to several months via the Cape. Nelson's Dispatches, N.H. Nicolas, ed., III.40, Nelson to St. Vincent, 29 June, 1798.

previously friendly were often hostile¹ or in the Balkans and the Middle East robbers or hostile Arabs held up such traffic.² By the time information so conveyed arrived, the situation had changed and plans were often out of date. In May 1800, Lord Spencer considered Rear Admiral Blankett's letters from the Red Sea, written in April and June of the previous year, 'rather now like a matter of history than anything else.'³ The Admiralty therefore issued orders in the most general terms and vital decisions were left to the judgement of the commander on the spot, often himself in ignorance of the latest news or of Cabinet changes of plan. Such conditions inevitably affected the war and the success of campaigns.⁴ The escape of Rear Admiral Bruix from Brest in 1799 leaving no clue to his destination, compelled the Admiralty to issue vague orders to Nelson in the Mediterranean. Lord Spencer thought Bruix's destination might be Ireland,⁵ but Pitt, Dundas and Grenville thought it

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1. Ad.1/389, Captain R. Forbes to Admiral Peyton, 8 June, 1790.
 2. The Spencer Papers, H.W. Richmond, ed., IV.205, Rear Admiral Blankett to Spencer, 17 Dec. 1799.
 3. Ibid., 219, 11 May, 1800.
 4. C. Lloyd, The Battles of St. Vincent and Camperdown, (London, 1963), p.58.
 5. The Spencer Papers, H.W. Richmond, ed., III.58-9, Admiral Young to Spencer, 1 May, 1799.

might be in the Mediterranean.¹ The Board's orders covered most eventualities;² their complexity was the result of a lack of reliable information and of a swift system of transmitting any fresh intelligence. The speed with which news was passed to headquarters, so that its effect might be calculated and the next strategic step planned, was therefore of vital importance and methods of transmitting news should have been of the best.

Until the invention of a machine to transmit messages, information could only be sent as fast as a man could ride, and despite improved roads, a system of post horses and hard working messengers, in an emergency this method could be too slow. On the news of Bruix's escape the messenger covered the distance between Plymouth and London in the record time of twenty three hours,³ normally it took almost two days.⁴ News from Ireland took longer, depending on the weather. Mails leaving Waterford on December 16, 1804, arrived in London late on the evening of December 23.⁵ The telegraph and semaphore

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1. Ibid., 61, Same to the same, 3 May, 65-7, Marsden to Spencer, 4 May, 1799.
 2. Ibid., 51-2.
 3. L. Kennedy, Nelson's Band of Brothers, (London, 1951), p. 173.
 4. Ad. 1/4073, Way Bill for Apl. 27, 1797.
 5. Ibid., Way Bill for 16 Dec. 1804.

were therefore gradually introduced to improve upon these traditional methods, though the Admiralty were reluctant to spend money on experiments with these machines.

The Navy already possessed a good system of flag signals, and signal stations existed to pass pre-arranged messages. But the telegraph, working by means of a shutter, spelt out words and sent messages direct rather than in the code of the flag system. Various experiments were made by the Rev. John Gamble, chaplain to the Duke of York, with the help of dockyard officials at Portsmouth.¹ Unfortunately for Gamble the Rev. Lord George Murray, son of the Duke of Athol, and later Bishop of St. Davids, had also experimented and produced a better and larger machine, able to transmit more messages. It was this machine the Admiralty adopted in 1795, though they cut down Murray's original scheme to one costing less money.² In September, 1795 George Roebuck was given the contract to erect fifteen telegraph stations between London and Deal with a branch to Sheerness. They were ready by 27 January, 1796 and their superiority was immediate; on a clear day messages could be sent in seven minutes,³ and Lord Spencer paid tribute

1. W.O.6/148, pp.3-4, Huskisson to Nepean, 5 Jan.1798.

2. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., I. 261-2, Murray to Spencer, 10 June, 1796.

3. The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbott, Lord Colchester, Colchester, ed., I.30, 4 Feb.1796.

to the invention in a speech on naval defence a year later.^{1.}

Another line from London to Portsmouth was completed by the end of 1796, to keep in touch with the Channel fleet.^{2.} A proposal to extend the telegraph to Yarmouth in 1801 was delayed by peace, but once war broke out the Admiralty kept a ship permanently stationed between Southend and Sheerness to pass on military signals, and the line was extended to Plymouth and later, in 1805, to Falmouth. This was the decision of Lord Barham, who considered the trifling cost of the installation offset by the great advantages it bestowed.^{3.} The lack of communication with Admiral Cornwallis was creating difficulties and the extension of the telegraph to Falmouth afforded easy communication with a port near the mouth of the Channel and gave better opportunity of counteracting enemy moves than did reliance on ships blockading Brest and Rochefort.^{4.}

The telegraph system was not without faults. There were frequent interruptions, bad weather and poor visibility making

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1. The London Chronicle, 16-18 March, 1797.
 2. Ad.1/524, f.129, Admiral Duncan to Nepean, 15 May, 1797., The Spencer Papers, H.W.Richmond, ed., III. Admiral Pasley to Nepean, 30 Apl. 1799.
 3. P.R.O.30/58/6, f.139, Barham to Pitt, 25 Oct. 1805.
 4. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.116, Part of a memorandum by Barham for the King and Cabinet, 11 Jan. 1806.

it impossible to use in winter, and sometimes mistakes were made in signalling.¹ There were also abuses in the small Inspector of Telegraph's office; in 1805 a private code was discovered by which Roebuck, the Inspector, 'sent up Prawns by signal to London.'² Nor were the Admiralty always enthusiastic about improvements in a system which seemed to work well enough. They displayed no interest in Gamble's radiated telegraph,³ and as soon as peace was signed endeavoured to save money by closing the signal stations, and after 1814 even selling the land and houses very cheaply. Suggestions forwarded by the War Office were tersely acknowledged or coldly received.⁴ They were similarly abrupt with William Goddard, who wished to interest the Board in his improved code system. On submitting his plans to the secretary, Marsden annoyed him by facetiously remarking that he thought Goddard would have proposed something that could see through fog.⁵

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1. The Spencer Papers, H.W.Richmond, ed., III. 180-181, Dundas to Spencer, 1 Sept.1799.
 2. Captain R. Huddleston, 'The Coast Signal Stations and the Semaphore Telegraph', The Mariner's Mirror, i.no.7.(July, 1911),161-166.
 3. Commander O.T.Tuck, 'The Old Telegraph', The Fighting Forces, no.3.(September,1924),469-470.
 4. Ad.1/4333, Huskisson to Nepean, 1 Aug.1801., W.O.6/148, p.66, Huskisson to Nepean, 28 Apl.1798.
 5. Commander H.P.Mead, 'The Story of the Semaphore', The Mariner's Mirror, xix.no.3.(July,1933),333-334.

If the horseman was the prime means of sending messages, the prime means of transcribing them was the clerk. The war brought mechanical aids to both. A copying machine had been bought in 1791, eight years before the War Office bought one, at a cost of £15/4/6,¹ and a small printing and rolling press was installed in 1797. The copying machine had its limitations, the most serious of which was that copies made by pressing very thin paper on the original letter, could only be taken after the ink had set firmly on the original, and were always a reverse copy, readable only when held to the light. Still it was useful in a war department where records were often needed for consultation by other branches, and a second copying machine, by Bramah, was bought in March, 1806, as the work of the office increased.² The printing press issued proclamations, official forms, protections and passes, and there were frequent bills for touching up the copper plates used, or for engraving a new set.³

Most clerks spent their office lives copying despatches and letters. One copy was made of letters to home departments, those from overseas were copied in triplicate, the original and a duplicate being sent and the third entered in the Out Letter book.

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1. It came from Lawrence and Winchester, Ad.17/7,1791.
 2. Ad.17/8,1806.D.Murray Young, op.cit.,p.136.
 3. Two plates cost £131/5. Ad.17/8,1802.

Large amounts of stationery were therefore required. No account of stationery supplied to the Admiralty for this period is preserved among office papers, but a comparison of the stationery supplied to other departments may enable an estimate of the stationery used in the office to be made.¹ Reams of superfine royal, foolscap gilded and plain, demi, quarto, cartridge and superfine propatria gilt paper were supplied. Black and red ink, pounds of best Dutch sealing wax, wafers, memorandum books, a very large quantity of pens and an almost equally large quantity of 'best Hudson's Bay Quills' and pencils, slates, ivory pounce boxes and reams of blotting paper, penknives with several blades and razor strops to sharpen them, red and green tape, needles and thread, rubbers, rulers, shears, inkstands and lip glue were some of the items constantly needed.

Until 1799 the stationery was supplied by contract, by Lawrence and Winchester, and cost well over £1000 p.a.² From 1 July, 1799, however, stationery was supplied by the Stationery Office, who also bound the official records and Parliamentary minutes. This system, devised to save government money, did not work as well as was hoped. There were delays in delivery of supplies blamed by the Comptroller of the Stationery Office on the laziness of clerks or storehouse men, or temporary

1. Stat.1/1, pp.81,179.

2. Stat.3/1,p.138. Winchester and Co. remained contractors to the Stationery Office throughout the period. Stat.3/56,pp. 23,24, et seq.

exhaustion of supplies.¹ Sometimes the Admiralty were completely without stocks, 'not a pen or sheet of paper' for a week in February, 1802². and these delays were increasingly common.³

Being a conservative department the Admiralty kept its records, though not until Sir Charles Middleton came to the Board, with any great order. The chief clerk received £100 annually for taking care of maps, books and papers belonging to the office, but there was very little room to store these in the building and as early as 1784 the office statutes were being kept in a warehouse, for which the Admiralty paid an annual rent of £8. The older Admiralty records were scattered between the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, Lincoln's Inn Library, Doctor's Commons, and the State Paper Office. The latter contained ninety volumes of correspondence between Admirals, commanders and the Admiralty from 1689-1761, besides warrants and commissions which should have been readily available for consultation. They were housed in the Transmitter's office

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1. Stat.3/2,pp.96-97, Lewis Wolfe to J.H.Addington, 17 Feb.1802.
 2. Stat.1/1,p.307, Thomas Kite to Nepean, 10 Feb.1802.
 3. Such complaints and objections to poor quality stationery continued after 1806. Stat.1/2,24 Aug.1807, A.B.Erickson, The Public Career of Sir James Graham, (Oxford,1952), p.102 nte.

in Middle Scotland Yard, an office which, according to the select committee reporting on the preservation of public records, was 'old and ruinous throughout', and constantly damp through the river overflowing into the cellars every high tide.¹ There were annoying gaps in these records. In 1797 when Nepean wanted an Admiralty memorandum on seamen's pay dating from the Long Parliament, Mr. Ancell of the State Paper Office found the papers of that period 'wholly deficient'.²

Letters and minutes were bound between hard covers, stamped with the office seal, or tied into bundles with the red tape, which symbolised for so many the toils of officialdom. Foreign treaties, and documents in foreign languages, mainly French and Spanish, but occasionally in Dutch were also kept. They were translated either by clerks employed for that purpose, or by outsiders if the language was unfamiliar.³

The sheer weight and volume of records increased enormously with the war, and consultation of them became difficult. This placed greater reliance on clerks' memories, particularly those

1. Parl.Pap., The State of Public Records of the Kingdom, Select Committee Report.Nos.I & II.pp.69,73,566;1800,xv.

2. Ad.1/4291,Ancell to Nepean, 24 Apl.1797.

3. Ad.17/7,1786,1792., For translation difficulties in oriental languages see Murray Young, op.cit., M.S.Anderson, 'Great Britain and the Barbary States in the Eighteenth Century', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research,xxix. (1956),106.

of the senior officials, though since several of them had spent a lifetime in the office they were able to draw on ample experience, and the copying of documents in which each clerk was involved, impressed its contents on his memory. Nevertheless, memory proved no substitute for an adequate filing system. The lack of one involved the Admiralty in reversed decisions and countermanded orders. On 5 July, 1787, an Admiralty order was issued to the Victualling Board that all ships in port be victualled with fresh meat in place of salt, every meat day.¹ But the Victualling Board, on previous Admiralty orders of 26 September, 1786, had laid in large stocks of salt meat, which they begged might be used first, by restricting the issue of fresh meat to two days, and to this the Admiralty agreed. Such confusion involving large sums of money and the logistic delays to which the Victualling Board was liable, was not permissible in war.

The very length of service of some of the officials, especially the first secretary, may have hindered the introduction of more modern methods necessary to deal with wartime business. A properly kept minute book did not exist until Middleton came to the office in 1794, and created one with 'inconceivable perseverance'. By his insistence on punctuality and method he carved an orderly office routine, symbolic of the nineteenth

1. ADM/D36, Victualling Commissioners to Stephens, 5 July, 1787.

century, out of the seeming confusion of eighteenth century methods.¹ It is perhaps not without significance that a year after this 'wind of change' blew through the office, Stephens was promoted to the Board, and his place taken by Evan Nepean, a younger man, more accustomed to the 'bustling' ways of Dundas and Middleton. Under Nepean documents were more regularly and fully minuted. Sometimes several minutes appear on one letter requesting and relaying information on relevant topics. Scraps of paper containing minutes or informal notes were bound in with the relevant correspondence, and a more efficient classification and arrangement of records was begun. Private signals and instructions were regularly bound and printed after 1804² and the first digest of Admiralty records was made in 1806, one of the last things Middleton was able to accomplish before he resigned. A digest of Admiralty statutes had been made in 1791, but this was a small compilation, costing only £2/12/6, compared with the monumental work of 1806, costing £209/11.³

Another sign of changing times was in the number of newspapers taken by the office. Before 1792 it was negligible,

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1. The Spencer Papers, J.S. Corbett, ed., I.12-14, Middleton to Spencer, 19 Dec. 1794.
 2. Ad.17/8, 1802, 1804 et seq.
 3. Ad.17/7, 1791., Ad.17/8, 1806.

by 1800 the cost was £279/10/6. From that date also French newspapers had become sufficiently numerous and important to list as a separate item and almost £200 was spent on them between 1800 and 1803.¹ The English newspapers taken probably included The True Briton and The Sun both pro-government papers, the latter founded by George Rose and Francis Freeling,² and The Times, which came out strongly in defence of the First Lord during the attacks on the Admiralty in 1803.³ In addition Lloyds enclosed colonial newspapers if they contained any interesting news⁴ and from 1790 onwards Lloyds annual register of ships was bought by the office.

The books bought by the office were on naval or allied subjects, and purchased for strictly practical purposes. In 1784 twenty sets of Désbarres' Atlantic Neptune, were purchased, at a cost of over £460.⁵ Three years later the voyages of Byron,

1. Ad.17/8.
2. K.Ellis, The Post Office in the Eighteenth Century, (London, 1958), 160-162.
3. The Times, 4 Apl.1803, 17 March, 1804., Aspinall, Politics and the Press, 1780-1850, p.77.
4. Ad.1/3915, Bennet to Marsden, 9 Nov.1803.
5. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc. Report of Commissioners.No.III. The Admiralty. pp.124-5, Appendix 29; 1806, vii.

Wallis, Carteret, Cook and Bougainville were bought for Lieutenant William Bligh's use on his voyage to Tahiti.¹ Small sums were spent on directories, maps of London, a History of Mauritius, and an item whose relevance is not obvious, but on which £105 was spent, some natural history drawings of Mrs. Helena Ross.² More useful to naval officers, and a mark of approbation, was the binding and preservation of Admiral William Cornwallis's journal of his masterly retreat from a superior French force in 1795. The Admiralty kept the journal as a blueprint for other officers to follow in similar situations.³ Unidentified maps were bought between 1783 and the outbreak of war. Two maps of 'Indostan'(sic) were bought in 1792 and a modern map of Europe in 1800 to keep pace with Napoleonic conquests. But maps cost the office less per year than the bargemen's velvet caps.⁴ The real expenditure, steadily increasing after 1790 and receiving greater impetus after the establishment of the Hydrographer's office in 1795, was on charts.

The charts and narratives of voyages of discovery by British naval officers were carefully preserved at the office, especially

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1. Ad.17/7,1792,1794.
 2. Ad.17/8,1802.
 3. The Spencer Papers, J.S.Corbett,ed., I.49, Memorandum by Middleton, 30 June,1795.
 4. See Chapter IV pp.221,222.

those of Captain Cook and Lieutenant Vancouver. Large numbers of charts were being bought by the Admiralty before the Hydrographer's department was established. In 1790 fifty sets of plans of the Tortugas and Florida keys were bought, a reflection of the increasing tension between Britain and Spain which culminated, the following year, in a diplomatic crisis and warlike preparations in the West India. Two years later twelve sets of plans of Jamaica and the Windward passage were purchased, an indication of the importance of the West Indies in naval affairs. Charts of the Baltic and entries of accounts for manuscript books of charts fill the records after 1791. £271/6/9 was spent on them between 1790 and 1794, £139/17 in the latter year alone, and once the Hydrographer's office was set up approximately £400 p.a. was spent on it exclusive of staff salaries. In 1804 over £110 was spent on buying a new set of charts. French and Dutch charts were also purchased whenever possible, and charts of East Indian waters were supplied by the East India Company. Alexander Dalrymple, the first Hydrographer, had made his great reputation as hydrographer to the Company, a position he retained on his Admiralty appointment. ^{Like Lord Spencer, he was} A Fellow of the Royal Society, ^{and} it was probably Spencer's influence which engineered the appointment at that time. Under the Earl's tactful handling Dalrymple worked well, but he was an obstinate perfectionist and his relations with Spencer's successors were less happy. The few models bought were confined

to war time experiments. There was a model of a floating battery in 1794, and one of an invention to steer fireships after the crew had left in 1803, but expenditure on them was small.

The Admiralty adopted a paternalistic attitude to its employees, and provided money for extras and a few rare allowances, on occasions from the contingencies. There were treats; four guineas was often spent on beer in which to drink the King's health on his birthday, and on the occasion of the several great naval victories the Admiralty was illuminated. The bills for this service increased as the war proceeded and the victories became more splendid, rising from £50/7/-½ in 1794, to reach a peak in 1802 when £216/1 was spent to celebrate the peace. By contrast £101 was spent in 1805 when the Admiralty was illuminated for three nights only, but Nelson's death cast a cloud over the joyousness of that occasion.

Though none of the domestics received an official pension, special arrangements were occasionally made for old servants. The housekeeper, whose office was a sinecure, was employed because she was the widow of a former messenger, and even when the Admiralty agreed to the abolition of the office they insisted on continuing her salary of £40 p.a. for the rest of her life.¹

1. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. Proceedings of the Admiralty on Finance Reports. G.p.802; 1803,xiii., She was granted an official pension from 1 Jan.1800 which ceased with her death on 14 Dec.1803. Ad.22/8,p.252,Ad.22/19,p.166.

A former messenger, John Jones, was granted an allowance averaging £46 annually between 1802 and 1804 until he could be provided for and the Admiralty paid the necessary five guinea fee, in 1804, on a Treasury warrant, granting him a licence as a Port of London waterman.¹ Twelve years earlier, in 1792, John Hill, one of the watchmen, was appointed porter at Sheerness yard.² This was a promotion, since at Sheerness, Hill had a house and a salary of £45 p.a. and like most yard porters, was permitted to keep a tap, which could bring in well over one hundred pounds annually.³ The Board could be equally considerate to casual employees or men hurt in their service. In 1790 four sums of ten guineas were paid to members of a press gang as compensation for wounds received in the service.⁴ During the building of the new offices in 1788 one of the workmen, James Sibbald, fell down a coal hole and was paid compensation of £10/6/8 for the injuries he received.⁵ A year later four

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1. Ad.17/8,1804.
 2. Ad.22/5,p.460.
 3. Parl.Pap., The taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners.No.VI.The Dockyards. pp.286,288;1806,vii.
 4. Ad.17/7,1790,20 July,13 Oct.
 5. Ad.17/7,1788.

guineas was paid to Diana Murphy, wife to one of the workmen injured, during work on the office, in a fall which confined him to Westminster Infirmary for twelve weeks.¹

One of a number of government offices in Whitehall, the Admiralty had outgrown its premises by 1783. Limited expansion partially solved the problem of clerical accommodation, though the staff employed was not large for such an important department. A domestic staff catered to the essential needs of commissioners and clerks, often earning more than the latter through their traditional allowances or profitable contracts. Admiralty tradition was shown in its conservation of records, its leisured, eighteenth century attitude to work in their haphazard collection and preservation. The advent of Sir Charles Middleton to the Board, the removal of elderly officials and the growing numbers of documents compelled the introduction of a more systematic care of documents recording policy-making decisions. Yet though a traditionalist department the Admiralty had adopted mechanical aids for the office earlier than many others, always paying due regard for the saving of public money by cutting down wartime services as soon as peace was declared. But the Board was prepared to invest in practical schemes. After 1790 the increasing numbers and importance of accurate charts was recognised by the creation of a special department for them

1. Ad.17/1.

and for the new telegraphic system, in 1795. The Board was conscious of its importance as the organiser of naval affairs and was generous in its official tribute to the numerous victories of the period. In its limited way it was faithful to old servants and generous in granting small pensions and allowances to old employees, or even casual labour. Despite pressure from reforming committees the Admiralty endeavoured, successfully, to continue these beneficent payments, and its attitude to clerks and domestics alike was one of kindly paternalism.

CHAPTER VIThe Relations of the Admiralty with subordinate Naval boards.

Immediately under the direction of the Admiralty was the all-important Navy Board. Responsible for civil administration, it was not consulted on policy or strategy, though when the Admiralty was weak, or there were no seamen with sufficient experience at that Board, a strong Comptroller, like Sir Charles Middleton, might alter this position. The Board's duties were to make contracts for and distribute to the yards, all necessary naval stores, to prepare naval estimates, examine and certify the Treasurer's accounts, pay the seamen, recommend officials for yard employment and gunners, carpenters and pursers for sea service, draw up warrants for the latter, and generally design, build and maintain the fleet, administer the yards and, through subsidiary boards, deal with the transport, victualling and health of the fleets.

In the late eighteenth century the complete establishment of the Navy Board comprised twelve commissioners of whom the principal, and nominal head was the Treasurer of the Navy. He was responsible to the Admiralty and was appointed by patent, but did not perform his duties in person. These were delegated to a Paymaster and clerks and by 1783 the Treasurer had ceased to attend board meetings. The post was a sinecure, a political appointment held by some important government supporter. Pitt

thought the office next in importance to Cabinet ministers¹. one of whom sometimes held it. For most of this period Henry Dundas was Treasurer, 1783-1800. His successors were the Hon. Dudley Ryder, Charles Bragge Bathurst, Addington's brother in law, George Tierney and George Canning.

Of the other eleven commissioners, four were at the outports of Portsmouth, Plymouth, Halifax and Chatham, and seven more in London. These seven properly composed the Board and were the Comptroller, the Comptrollers of Treasurer's, Victualling and Storekeepers' Accounts, whose duties were to check the accounts of their respective departments, the Surveyor, whose duties were practical and technical and involved the supervision of all ship building and repairs in the yards, the Clerk of the Acts, who acted as secretary to the Board, and one, in war two, extra commissioners. In addition there was one assistant to the Clerk of the Acts, two to the Surveyor, a storekeeper of slops, one hundred clerks and other inferior officers. Previous to 1786 their office had been on Tower Hill, but in that year they moved to Somerset House and larger premises. The real head of the Board was the Comptroller, who presided at meetings, prepared the Board's agenda and attended the Admiralty and Treasury frequently. In addition he supervised his own

1. The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, Colchester, ed., I.258.

department which was responsible for bills and accounts, half pay, the supervision of the yards at Deptford and Woolwich. But by 1783 work had so increased that he had to transfer half pay arrangements to the Navy Pay office and on the outbreak of war a deputy was created to share the burden.

The central administration was distributed to the yards through resident commissioners. There were six main British yards; four were on the Thames at Deptford, Woolwich, Sheerness and Chatham, and two on the south coast at Portsmouth and Plymouth. Smaller yards were at Deal, Harwich, Leith and Kinsale, and there were foreign establishments in the Mediterranean, the East and West Indies and Halifax, Nova Scotia. The post at Chatham was generally regarded as senior and better paid, a basic salary of £500 was increased by fees to £623, allowances of coal and candles and payment as one of the governors of Chatham Chest.¹ The appointment at Sheerness was the most junior. Portsmouth and Plymouth, rendezvous of the Channel fleet, being busier and larger than the Thames yards had larger responsibilities. The salary of the Portsmouth commissioner was £529 p.a. plus allowances and payment as governor of the Royal Academy, at Plymouth it was £551 and

1. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners.No.VI. The Dockyards.p.289, Appendix 134;1806,vii.

allowances.¹.

Below the resident commissioners were the six main yard officials. The Master Attendant was responsible for sails, rigging and bosun's stores, the Master Shipwright for the building and repair of ships, docks and buildings and the supervision of all artificers except the sail makers and riggers. Not only were the shipwrights the most important and highly skilled workers in the yard, 'that main-spring of all naval movements',² but the most independent, turbulent and difficult to control. In all yards they formed an hereditary caste, difficult to reform, intricately organised, with roots in the boroughs which made them formidable opponents. Especially during the war there were frequent, violent demands for higher wages, when revolutionary principles affected some and greed others, culminating in the great strike of 1801.³ The Clerk of the Cheque was the representative of the Treasurer of the Navy and responsible for pay, the Clerk of the Survey checked on all yard proceedings, especially accounts, the Storekeeper, Clerk of the Ropeyard and Purveyor, who surveyed, marked and reported on timber tendered by contract, were the remaining

1. Ibid., pp.408-9.
2. Letters of Sir T. Byam Martin, R.V.Hamilton, ed.,III.390.
3. A.Aspinall, The Early English Trade Unions, (London,1949), pp.13,39,48., C.N.Parkinson, Trade in the Eastern Seas, 1793-1815, (Cambridge,1937),pp.27-129.

officers. All of them surveyed and inspected stores delivered in the yard, signing bills and certificates for them. There were also a surgeon, a bosun of the yard who was assistant to the Master Shipwright, and a porter who kept the gate, in the larger yards. The last post was usually given to a favoured servant of an admiral or First Lord¹ until St. Vincent decided to change the name to warden and use it to provide for active officers, such as lieutenants of the Navy. The smaller yards had lesser establishments, consisting of a storekeeper or clerk of the cheque and clerks and the overseas establishments, apart from Halifax, had a naval officer who acted as storekeeper, a master shipwright and a small staff of artificers and clerks. Through long custom the yard officers appointed their own clerks and received premiums from them. These clerks often performed the duties for which their superiors were responsible.

There were three Comptrollers between 1783 and 1806, Sir Charles Middleton, 1778-1790, Sir Henry Martin, 1790-1794, and Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, 1794-1806. Their deputies after 1793 were Captain Le Cras from August, 1793 to February, 1794, Hamond from February to October, 1794, Captains Samuel Marshall, from October, 1794 to 1796, Charles Hope, until 1801 and Henry Duncan from 1801 to 1808. All were naval captains when appointed

1. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., II. pp. 179-80, St. Vincent to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, 8 Sept. 1801.

and the majority received baronetcies as a reward for bravery in action or distinguished civilian service. All the Comptrollers were M.P.'s while at the Board, for government controlled boroughs, like Middleton at Rochester, 1784-1790, or for boroughs controlled by friends of the administration, like Martin at Southampton, 1790-1794 and Hamond at Ipswich 1796-1806.

Hamond was the son of a wealthy shipowner at Blackheath. He entered the Navy in 1753 and through Lord Howe's influence and his own ability quickly rose in his profession. By 1780 he was governor of Nova Scotia, commander-in-chief on the ^{Nova}North ~~North~~ _{Scotia} America station and commissioner of the yard at Halifax. Created a baronet at the end of the war, his connections and ability secured him employment in peace when he served as commander-in-chief at the Nore, 1785-1788, and in the Spanish crisis of 1790. Three years later he became a naval commissioner and on the outbreak of war deputy comptroller, to succeed to the Comptrollership on Martin's death in 1794. Possibly the King's personal liking for Hamond contributed to his appointment, since he commanded the Southampton frigate in which George III cruised while at Weymouth in 1789.

Martin also enjoyed royal favour. Prince William was entrusted to his care in 1781 and 1785, while Martin was at Portsmouth.¹ Martin's family had estates in Antigua, where his father had been speaker in the Island's assembly. One half

1. The Prince fell in love with Sarah Martin and had to be removed. N.M.M.Papers of Admiral Lord Howe, How/4, George III to Howe, 28 Jan.1786.

brother, Josiah, had been governor of North Carolina, another, Samuel, Treasurer to the Dowager Princess of Wales. Martin, whose service career was undistinguished, was friendly with Lord Hood, and through him with Pitt, while a son in law was an independent politician, J.P. Bastard, M.P. for Truro, 1783-1784, Devon, 1784-1816.

Captain Charles Hope was son of the second early of Hopetoun and member of a large and powerful Scottish noble family. A cousin was M.P. for Linlithgow with a son who was president of the court of session and lord advocate in Addington's ministry.¹ He was succeeded by Henry Duncan, second cousin of Admiral Duncan who began his career in the merchant service and achieved a fortunate marriage which made him financially independent. Settled in Dartmouth he may have devoted himself to local politics, for his career was bound up with ^{that of} Lord Howe's, ^{who was} M.P. for that borough. Duncan became his flag captain on the North American station and commissioner of Halifax when Howe was First Lord. He remained there until 1799 while the Duke of Kent was governor, an association which may have been useful but was unfortunate for his reputation. According to Lord St. Vincent, he had been 'a pimp and pandar to the Duke of Kent and exposed himself to much slander and contempt'.² Duncan

1. D.N.B. XXVII.312-3,314.

2. JER/24, St. Vincent to Nepean, 4 Feb.1800.

Duncan was appointed commissioner at Sheerness and finally deputy Comptroller.¹

Thus all these men were seamen with some service and civil experience and in some cases with influential friends or family connections which had contributed to their appointment. The same is broadly true of the resident commissioners. The most senior was Charles Proby at Chatham, appointed in 1771, resigning in 1799, to be succeeded by Captains Hartwell and Hope. Proby, whose mother was a Leveson Gower, whose brother was Baron Carysfort and whose nephew, the first Earl, married into the Grenville family, had seen service with Lord Anson and had a brief spell as Comptroller of Victualling Accounts.² Sheerness's first resident commissioner was Captain Henry Harmood, formerly a commissioner at the London board without special function. He was succeeded by Hartwell and then by Isaac Coffin, son of an American loyalist, to whom an accident had brought retirement from active service. He served at Corsica and other Mediterranean ports, Halifax and Sheerness and was a follower of Lord St. Vincent.³

At Portsmouth Henry Martin, later Comptroller, was succeeded by Charles Saxton, in 1790, a rough sailor according to Nelson,

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1. The Naval Miscellany, J.K.Laughton, ed., I.107-110.
 2. The Naval Chronicle, 1799, ii, 83.
 3. J. Marshall, Royal Naval Biography, i.229-233.

with few social pretensions but wide experience.¹ At Plymouth John Laforey, 1783-1789, and Robert Fanshawe, 1789-1815, were the commissioners. The first had West Indian connections, (his wife was from Antigua), which were complemented by his appointment to the Leeward Isles as commander in chief in 1789. Fanshawe, 'that odd fish'² had seen action under Lord Rodney but his connection with the Duke of Leeds, Foreign Secretary till 1791, probably secured him the post. At Halifax the commissioners were Henry Duncan, later deputy comptroller, and John Inglefield. The latter's service had been marked by personal bravery but his marriage to the daughter of Sir Thomas Slade, a former Surveyor of the Navy, must also have helped him professionally. Inglefield was pompous but a capable administrator.³ Captain Francis Hartwell was the son of the Lieutenant Governor of Greenwich Hospital, had seen active service in 1790 and 1791 and been Victualling Commissioner in 1793. He then became resident commissioner at Sheerness and Chatham and was appointed extra commissioner.⁴

1. D.N.B.L.384-5.

2. Letters of Sir T. Byam Martin, R.V. Hamilton, ed., I.222, Commissioner Laforey to Martin, 27 Apl.1788.

3. D.N.B.XXVIII.437-8., The Spencer Papers, H.W.Richmond, ed., IV.5, St. Vincent to Spencer, 22 Jan.1799.

4. Marshall, op.cit., iii.60-61.

The remaining commissioners were civilians, trained clerks with specialised experience, gained at the outports and London office. The Clerk of the Acts, George Marsh, worked at Deptford as secretary to Admiral Mostyn, as private secretary to the First Lord and as Victualling commissioner, before joining the Navy Board. But William Palmer, Comptroller of the Victualling Accounts had a more typical career. He began as clerk in the Slop Office, became clerk to one of the commissioners, clerk of the survey at Deptford and of the cheque at Portsmouth, before being promoted to the Navy Board. The Surveyors had worked in all the principal home yards and generally spent some time as draughtsmen in the office of the former Surveyor who acted as their patron. Yet there were exceptions to this conventional pattern. William Bellingham, Comptroller of Storekeepers Accounts in 1790, had been Pitt's private secretary, was a close friend of Lord Chatham, and M.P. for Reigate, 1784-1789.¹ Extra commissioners without special function during this period were Samuel Gambier, Benjamin Tucker, Lord St. Vincent's protegee, who on his removal to the second secretary-ship at the Admiralty, was replaced by the Hon.H.Legge, related to the Earls of Dartmouth. Osborne Markham, brother to Captain Markham at the Admiralty, became an extra commissioner in 1803 in place of Bellingham and the Hon.E.Bouverie and

1. Namier and Brooke, Hist.of Parl., I.81.

John Deas Thomas, were appointed in 1805. Bouverie whose brother, the first Earl of Radnor, took an active part in Melville's impeachment, may have been selected in an unsuccessful attempt to appease a powerful enemy.

Though not all the commissioners belonged to a similar social group their profession and position helped to bind them into a recognisable entity. Their families occasionally intermarried and formed connections with the service and with the yards, as well as more tenuously with political and other non service interests. Thus Martin's son, Thomas Byam, married one of Fanshawe's daughters, four of whom married naval officers. Inglefield's daughter married Captain Hallowell,¹ Laforey's son, Francis, became an admiral, his daughter married Captain Molloy, a friend of the Duke of Rutland, court-martialled after the battle of the Glorious First of June and dismissed his ship. Proby's daughter married Rear Admiral Tchitagoff.² Hartwell's wife was the daughter of Captain John Elphinstone, vice admiral in the Russian service and one time commander of their Baltic fleet.³

These connections were not confined to commissioners but permeated every part of the dockyard service. Thus Commander Samuel Warren married the daughter of the clerk of the survey

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1. The Naval Chronicle, 1800,iii,331.
 2. The Naval Chronicle,1799,ii,547.
 3. Marshall, op.cit., iii,61-2.

at Chatham.¹ The daughter of John Lloyd, clerk of the cheque at Plymouth, married Admiral Herbert Sawyer. Sawyer's sister was the wife of Charles Hope, commissioner at Chatham, whose son, Henry married his cousin, Sawyer's daughter. Admiral Samuel Hood had married Margaret Linzee, whose grandfather had been Master Ropemaker at Portsmouth. The three sons of Peter Butt, clerk of the survey at Deptford, all entered the Navy, while one of his daughters married Vice Admiral George Parker, the nephew of Admiral Peter Parker, Nelson's patron.² There was thus a close web of relationships, which was probably closer than can now be discovered, between the yard officers, the commissioners and the service. Few of these men came from noble families, most belonged to the middle and professional classes.

This web of relationships did not extend to the Admiralty whose members had little in common, socially or professionally with the Navy commissioners. The two boards resembled concentric rather than overlapping circles. Middleton was the only member of both during this period, though Admiral Hood was another Admiralty lord whose social and professional ties were with the Navy rather than the Admiralty board. Relations between the Admiralty and Navy Boards, like those between the Admiralty and other government offices, were often dependent on

1. The Naval Chronicle, 1801,iv.527.

2. J.Summerson, 'The Monuments in St.Nicholas Church,Deptford', The Mariner's Mirror, xxvii.no.4.(October,1941),288.

personalities, principally those of the Comptroller and First Lord. Middleton and Howe did not agree; Howe, who was in the stronger position theoretically, would not listen to Middleton's advice or consult him on official business and did not take him on the visitation of the yards. Martin and Chatham, their successors, were two mediocrities on friendly terms. Spencer and Hamond worked well and for similar reasons. Spencer was reluctant to stand against the professional advice of the Navy Board¹ and both men were rather controlled by their boards because of their own professional ignorance. Under St. Vincent things were different. There was now an experienced seaman at the head of affairs and one who had long considered the civil administration rotten and the Navy Board inefficient. At first St. Vincent excluded Hamond from this general condemnation and placed reliance on his opinion. But when he found him upholding the fraudulent yard workers and siding with the timber contractors against the Admiralty he revised his opinion, refused to write to the Comptroller except on official business and would 'have almost given his two ears' to get rid of him.² Communication with the Navy Board therefore virtually came to a halt during these strained relations and became the subject of Parliamentary inquiry in 1803 and 1804.

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1. Parkinson, Edward Pellew, Viscount Exmouth, p.124.
 2. Letters of Sir.T.Byam Martin, R.V.Hamilton, ed., III.274, H.Legge to Byam Martin, 24 Oct.1831.

But there was another reason for difficult relations between the two boards. There were two essential but opposing elements in naval administration; the civil and military, compelled to work together for the good of the service. The development of administration has been a civil process, performed in offices far removed from fighting but it has been concerned with the supply and development of the fighting machine. A struggle has therefore been present for supreme importance. The civil administration was in contact with the military branch by letter only and rarely experienced at first hand the conditions of service it helped to form. The military branch rarely had experience of civilian administration and over-simplified the problems involved. Since fighting has always been regarded as a more manly occupation than clerical work there was a constant struggle between the civilian, inferior Navy Board and the military, superior Admiralty, reinforced, in this period, by social distinctions and embittered by a personal quarrel.

The superiority of the Admiralty did not rest unchallenged. A strong Comptroller could, in practice, almost reverse this balance; an Admiralty ignorant of civil problems could not assert its full authority. Since most Admiralty Boards were composed of young, inexperienced aristocrats and middle aged seamen, this frequently happened. Latent antagonism between the boards was reflected in ships' appointments. The senior officers, fighting men, were appointed by the Admiralty, the civilian officials, pursers and the like, by the Navy Board.

Coupled with the problem of divergence of function was the normal dislike of the civil administration entertained by serving seamen. There was a tendency in the service to despise those who accepted a safe civil appointment and rejected the toils and glories of service life for the more tangible rewards of promotion, safety and emoluments. This was the natural dislike of the active for the chair-borne, of the soldier for the civil servant, but it was mixed with an irrational envy for the comfort of a 'soft billet' and the detachment from hardship which the civil servant enjoyed. The Navy Board were thus caught between the upper and nether millstones of Admiralty status, including social superiority, and service scorn. It is not therefore surprising if the Navy Board consoled themselves with perquisites or entrenched themselves behind barriers of precedents.

Correctly and conscientiously performed the Comptrollership was no sinecure. The Comptroller was responsible for the smooth running of the naval machine. His efficiency or slackness affected not only his clerks but the humblest yard worker, and would ultimately affect the efficiency of the ships themselves in their performance in battle, their speed on convoy work, their sheer persistence in blockades and cruising. Though the

Admiralty issued the orders, these could not be carried out with rotten masts, leaky hulls, ravelled cordage, supplied by inefficient or corrupt yards, nor by men debilitated by bad beer, mouldy biscuit and rotten meat.

It was Sir Charles Middleton who, by herculean labours, brought order out of chaos when he was first appointed in 1778. He re-organised the office work, dealt with the day's business in the day and expected punctual attendance and hard work from subordinates. He took office in the middle of a war, when there was a serious deficiency in stores, ships and men. By the end of the war he had replenished the stores of timber, built new yards in the West Indies and twelve new sail of line at home, and coppered the entire fleet. He had also drawn up an index of Admiralty orders and instructions for the Navy Board's use and insisted on regular accurate returns from the yards, so that a check on expenses and stores might be kept and reliable estimates made. Unfortunately these excellent regulations were allowed to lapse after Middleton retired and the Commission of Naval Enquiry of 1803 recommended that they be restored. Middleton had achieved all this in the face of continued obstruction from the yards and the Admiralty. He may have hoped Pitt's interest in naval affairs presaged a new era in naval administration; if so he was disappointed. He was ordered to reduce expenses by between £300,000 and £400,000 p.a. This brought him into conflict with the First Lord,

Lord Howe, who insisted on the dismissal of two extra commissioners, Captains le Cras and Wallis. Unable to reduce expenses without damaging what he considered necessary services and finding his recommendations for the reform of the office were not carried out Middleton resigned in disgust in 1790. Yet he had achieved a great deal. The speed and efficiency with which the fleet was equipped to meet the crises of 1787, 1790 and 1791 and the outbreak of war in 1793, were attributable to Middleton.

He had also made the office of the Comptroller next in importance to the First Lord, by discussing affairs with Pitt, without reference to the Navy or Admiralty Boards. Such intimacy with the Prime Minister and such an extension of the Comptroller's influence aroused the jealousy of the Admiralty. His idea that the Comptroller should become a member of the Admiralty, while the first Victualling commissioner became a member of the Navy Board, was sound, but he did not dare to suggest it to the Commissioners investigating the taking of fees in the 1780's, nor attempt to put it into practice. Any attempt to do so would have aroused the Admiralty's wrath, particularly while Howe was First Lord, and would have been doomed to failure. But Middleton did impress his personality on the office. He raised the standard expected from future holders and under him the board worked efficiently. This was not always true of his successors.

Martin's four years were uneventful. According to Middleton he allowed himself to be advised by dockyard officers,¹ and his tenure was marked by tact rather than reforming zeal. Hamond was not a strong character. He took office in 1794, the same year in which Lord Spencer became First Lord. Spencer was totally unfamiliar with naval administration and depended on his naval colleagues at the Admiralty, none of whom, after the resignation of Middleton and the recall of Hood, were particularly noteworthy. In such a situation a strong Comptroller could have been the dominant figure, and it may be imagined what Middleton would have made of this opportunity. But Hamond did not have Middleton's strong character. Though both served for twelve years, there is no comparison of the work done by them. Hamond was Comptroller of a Board which weakly yielded to the threats of timber contractors and the demands of yard workers for piece work rates and overtime, regardless of work done. The Board was virtually unchanged from that which worked under Middleton. But the momentum the latter generated began to run down. Not only the clerks but the commissioners needed constant supervision which neither of Middleton's successors were prepared to give.

1. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.20-21, Draft Memorandum, Apl.1803.

The Commission investigating the taking of fees in public offices in its report on the Navy Board, voiced Middleton's recommendations. The most important of these was that the number of commissioners in London be increased to ten and divided into three committees, of stores, accounts and correspondence. The Comptroller would be an ex officio member of each committee with a casting vote, and each would report to the whole board on its work. This proposal was to eliminate what Middleton had complained of as 'nine commissioners sitting at a table to obstruct business', a revealing description of business at a board where no commissioners had specific duties and each an equal voice. The Commission also made a comprehensive survey of the yards. Though they acknowledged that all the officials there and at the central London office seemed to do their duty to the best of their ability, they criticised the taking of fees and premiums and condemned the embezzlement of stores and the other petty abuses they uncovered. Their primary function however was not to reform the whole yard structure, but to recommend where economies could most effectively be introduced. Undoubtedly much petty thieving did exist;¹.

1. Parl.Pap., Portsmouth Borough. On Petitions of Inhabitants respecting Frauds and Abuses in the Victualling Departments, House of Commons Reports.Miscellaneous, No.55.pp.3-13, Appendix 5; 1783-4,xxxvi.

there was often gross overcharging for stores,¹ articles were signed for before they were received, work was often rated as 'job' rather than 'task' work and paid fifty per cent higher, though it was the same work, children, old men and invalids were sometimes carried on the yard books² and the granting of special perquisites like 'chips' of wood for shipwrights and of fees and premiums for all workers, was common. The 1787 Commission therefore had recommended that fixed, adequate salaries be paid, fees abolished, duties performed in person and the abuses connected with 'chips', stores and the taking of apprentices be checked.

The Admiralty, to whom these recommendations were made, largely ignored them. Middleton resigned when he realised they would not be implemented and no further investigation was carried out into the Navy Board or dockyards until 1798. By then Britain had been at war for five years and public credit was feeling the strain. The Select Committee on Finance, appointed in the preceding year, to investigate these problems, though not concerned with a wholesale reform of the Navy Board

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1. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners. No.IX. Naval and Victualling Departments at Foreign or Distant Ports. pp.728-9, Appendix 4, p.745, pp.746-8, Appendix 5; 1806,vii.
 2. Parl.Pap., Commission of Naval Enquiry into Irregularities, Frauds and Abuses practised in the Naval Departments and in the Business of Prize Agency., Reports from Commissioners. No.VI. Plymouth and Woolwich Yards. pp.59-60;1803-4,iii.

and yards devoted several reports to the Navy as one of the biggest government spenders, and part of their thirty first report dealt with the yards.

Several regulations, recommended by the Commission of 1787 had already been implemented. By an order in council of 8 June, 1796 the Navy Board was re-organised into the Committees recommended and on 2 August the offices of clerk of the acts, comptrollers of Treasurer's, Victualling and Storekeepers accounts were abolished and their holders became extra commissioners without special function. This was the most important reform, but smaller ones had been introduced in the yards, aimed at bringing standing orders up to date and keeping an accurate list of stores. The Finance Committee, while noting the Admiralty's reluctance to investigate the naval departments during the war, hoped that such an investigation would not be long delayed. An order in council of 12 January, 1792 had urged the preparation of such a report and the Admiralty had promised one¹ only to be thwarted by the war. Fees still remained, there had been no rise in salaries, chips and other abuses continued to flourish. The Committee therefore produced no new recommendations since those of ten years earlier had not been carried into effect, but they urged the Admiralty to deal with this matter at the earliest opportunity.

1. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. No.XXXI. The Admiralty Dockyards and Transports.p.486; 1803,xiii.

It was not until 1801 that the Admiralty replied to these reports. The Board that did so was Lord Spencer's, which prepared a partial reform of the yards, based on previous suggestions. Progress was slow because of the war, and before they could get far the Admiralty board were themselves replaced. But, in common with their suggestions concerning the Admiralty office, many of the Admiralty's proposals were more far reaching than those of the two earlier committees and showed a genuine desire to improve the efficiency of the service. They suggested higher salaries to compensate for a rise in prices and the higher rates paid by private yards, introduced a graduated pension scheme by which ten to fifteen years service earned one third the peace time salary, fixed more adequate compensation for the abolition of the traditional privileges of 'chips' and the taking of apprentices, and required a stricter attention to work and the employment of sufficient clerks. They also showed themselves jealous of their power over the naval establishment, and disapproved of any recommendation which imperilled this. Thus while they wished to increase the power of the resident yard commissioners, they rejected the view that these should be chosen from the seamen at the Navy Board. They spurned the idea that salaries at Sheerness be a quarter less than anywhere else because it was a smaller yard, despite the Navy Board's tentative approval of this recommendation,¹ and they considered the appointment of a surveyor of civil

1. Ibid., p.491, Appendix D1.

architecture unnecessary while the Inspector General of Naval Works, their own official, performed his functions.

Lord St. Vincent's board were prepared to follow up the work of their predecessors and the strike of shipwrights, coupled with the First Lord's well known opinion of the rottenness of the civil branch encouraged this resolve. A visitation of the yards was in any case long overdue, thanks to the war. Nor, at first, were the motives which inspired it partisan. St. Vincent had his suspicions, even pre-conceived notions, of yard corruption, but these were not certainties and he and his board had no idea of the true state of affairs. Hamond later claimed that St. Vincent did not allow the Navy Board a fair hearing in its defence, and there is some truth in this charge. When roused the Earl's wrath was crushing and he could pursue supposed enemies vindictively. Marsden agreed that reforms in the yards were necessary, but objected to the manner of carrying them out, 'the object seeming to be to find grounds for delinquencies presumed in the first instance'.¹ The inferior boards, he claimed, had been abused and attempts made to drive them from office. 'To crush them was the object of the Bill (against naval abuses), and the frauds in the dockyards..... are only the pretext'.² Yet to argue that the Navy Board was

1. Marsden's Memoir, p.103.

2. Ibid., p.104, nte.

only guilty of negligence is untrue. Their duty was not to be negligent, but to 'uphold and enforce obedience to their Instructions and not to palliate the conduct or furnish excuses to those who act in direct contradiction to them'.¹ There were cases of corruption and undue profit when all exaggeration is cleared away.

The Admiralty's visitation of the yards began in August, 1802 at Plymouth. Throughout the Admiralty laid special emphasis on upholding the power of the commissioner, not only over the officials in the yard but sometimes even in contradiction to the Navy Board. Fanshawe at Plymouth was supported by the Admiralty in his dispute with yard officers, and the Navy Board ordered to communicate orders to him only in future and not to yard officials in an irregular correspondence, and on all occasions to strengthen his authority. At Sheerness they upheld the Commissioner Coffin in his dispute with the Board and after uncovering many abuses, on 16 October wrote to the Board, strongly censuring their conduct and failure to fulfill their duty. It was decided to appoint a commission of enquiry to investigate the abuses in the naval department and this was established in December, 1802. At its head was

1. Parl.Pap.,Commission of Naval Enquiry into Irregularities, Frauds and Abuses practised in the Naval Departments and in the Business of Prize Agency. Reports from Commissioners. No.XII. Observations supplementing the First Report. p.244;1806,iv.

Vice Admiral Sir Charles Pole, a relative of Captain Markham. Another commissioner, Ewen Law, was Markham's brother in law, while Law's brother, Lord Ellenborough, the lord chief justice, was the son in law of Commissioner Towry of the Victualling Office. The commissioners were thus not free from the usual eighteenth century connections. They worked until June, 1803, when they produced the first three reports on naval storekeepers at Jamaica, the Chatham Chest, and the Block and Coopers contract, all revealing notable frauds.

Abuses not only flourished in the yards but were connived at in the Navy Board. No check was made of wages paid to shipwrights, and three of the commissioners, when examined on this point were uncertain whether the yard pay books were checked in the office or not before payment.¹ When asked by the Admiralty why they allowed false vouchers from Halifax yard, knowing them to be false, they gave the incredible answer that false vouchers saved the trouble of making out numerous correct ones.² The Board had regularly agreed to the requests of certain contractors, for an increase in rates above that submitted by their tender.³ It was discovered that the ^{block} contract had

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1. The Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., II. Appendix, p. 451, nte.
 2. Ibid., pp. 479-80, nte.
 3. Parl. Pap., Commission of Naval Enquiry into Irregularities, Frauds and Abuses practised in the Naval Departments and in the Business of Prize Agency. Reports from Commissioners. No. III. The Block and Cooper's Contract. pp. 177-181, 183; 1802-3, iv.

never been read at the time of minuting¹. and never signed and so was invalid in law, whereupon the Admiralty cancelled it and established machinery at Portsmouth to make blocks. *

Not only did St. Vincent enrage the merchant builders, he antagonised the powerful timber contractors. The Navy Board, according to a standing order of 1776, was supposed to keep a stock of timber for three years consumption in the yards and send the Admiralty an annual account of all timber in store. From 1795 to 1802, years when Middleton had resigned and Spencer and Hamond were left in professional ignorance, this was neglected. In 1797 the Board refused to buy timber on the grounds that it would not need any till the following year though there were then ships rotting for want of timber to complete them and though the Purveyor reported that there were sufficient trees for cutting in the royal forest of Sherwood.².

The reason for this attitude was the desire to accommodate the timber merchants, who supplied the yards by contract. These merchants, the foremost of whom were John Larking and William Bowsher, had formed a 'ring' with the connivance of the Board, completely controlling the timber supplies in the country. The clerks and receivers of timber in the yards were their agents, paid more by them in fees than their government

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1. Ibid., p.183. This machinery was the invention of M. Brunel, father of I. K. Brunel.
 2. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., II. Appendix, p.453.

salary. As a result, of two hundred and eighty nine trees the contractors sent to Deptford in 1801, one hundred and forty four were defective. The Navy Board had advanced money to these merchants which enabled them to outbid the Navy Purveyors and drove every other contractor out of competition. Time and again the Board sided with the contractors and weakly acquiesced in blackmail. Though there was a severe timber shortage in 1802 they refused to accept less than one hundred loads of standard size timber which prevented all but the biggest contractors tendering and which also meant good first size timber was cut up for repairs or smaller ships. They rejected small private offers and sometimes paid for royal trees as though they were private property, thanks to the fraudulent dealings of the Purveyors and contractors.¹ Neglect in checking the timber delivered meant the best pieces were taken for use in private yards and though the reports of the Purveyor were the only vouchers the Board had to show what they had paid for, such vouchers were neglected in Plymouth for sixteen years.² As a result of these and other abuses by December 1800 there was less than one and a half years timber in the yards, though a private contract had been made with Larking for fifty thousand loads of Holstein oak, of notoriously

1. Ibid., pp.465-6.

2. Ibid., p.467.

poor quality, for which the Board paid the best price and freightage charges.

Once St. Vincent discovered what was happening he tried to prevent it. The timber converter, appointed by the Board, was replaced by a timber master, appointed by the Admiralty and responsible for the receipt of wood and its good quality, having power to reject unsatisfactory timber. This immediately aroused the contractors' hostility; their prices, they declared had been low because of the easy method of checking used in the yards, an interesting admission. The timber masters were unreasonably harsh, the contractors averred, refusing good timber and they threatened to cut off supplies altogether, as a reprisal. Hamond urged reconciliation, which St. Vincent, by now thoroughly aroused, scouted, advertising in the press, sending Rule, the Surveyor on tour to buy up oak, though with disappointing results. The royal forests, which at this juncture should have been able to supply naval needs, were equally unforthcoming and St. Vincent wanted an act of Parliament to commandeer private oak in a national crisis. This proved impossible. The landowners who stood to lose by the act were the very men required to pass it, and the suggestion remained unfulfilled. By 1803 with the outbreak of war, the situation was desperate. The timber trust refused to co-operate and did not submit contracts for that year. To get round these difficulties Hamond suggested the appointment of a Purveyor

General and suggested John Larking for the post. While St. Vincent remained First Lord this was rejected, but once Melville was appointed in 1804 the capitulation and humiliation of the Navy Board was complete and Larking took office. A reconciliation was made with the timber trust, higher prices and revised contracts were given whereby the timber masters were rendered harmless and this situation continued for as long as the Navy depended on timber.¹ In 1789 Commissioner Cherry, chairman of the Victualling Board, wrote to Admiral Cornwallis that it was nearly impossible

'to counteract the machinations and combinations of unprincipled people. I lament that men of that description seem numerous in the public service and to defraud the Crown is by many scarce held to be dishonourable or a crime'.²

It was unfortunately true of the subordinate naval boards during this and succeeding periods, though the Navy Board and the dockyards seem to have surpassed others in their wholehearted surrender to such an attitude.

Apart from the clash of personalities and breakdown of communication between the two boards in 1803, routine work continued to be done through a regular though not daily correspondence. In peace it slowed to a trickle, only nineteen letters

1. R.G.Albion, Forests and Sea Power, pp.319-324.

2. G.Cornwallis West, The Life and Letters of Admiral Cornwallis, p.153.

between January and April, 1786. But by 1803 it had swelled to a flood and one hundred and fifty two letters were written in April alone. The main topics of this correspondence were finance, appointments of clerks and lists of ships and stores. The Navy Board were expected to inform the Admiralty of any change in their method of business¹ and received a severe reprimand from the Admiralty if they neglected this duty.² In general the Navy Board's advice was adopted on technical matters and the Admiralty gave directions which followed the suggestions of the inferior board³ but not always so⁴ and the Navy commissioners who presumed to act without the Admiralty's sanction were rebuked.⁵ The Admiralty too often adopted an attitude of Olympian detachment from the cares and worries of its subordinate boards but attempts by naval officers to play off one against the other usually led to failure since no matter how deep the divisions between the boards, they closed their

1. Ad.3/100,p.25,1 Nov.1784.

2. Ibid., p.68, 7 Dec.1784.

3. Ad.2/259,p.552,18 Mar.1784, p.571,25 Mar.1784, Admiralty Commissioners to Navy Commissioners.

4. ADM/B,vol.207, Navy Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 29 Jan. 1 Feb.1803.

5. Ad.2/624,pp.59-60, Nepean to Navy Commissioners, 18 May,1799.

ranks when threatened with external criticism.¹ On occasion the two boards met to discuss pressing problems² and such meetings were common between the Navy and Victualling Boards. Relations with the latter and with the Sick and Hurt Board were cordial, though contact was slight. The Comptroller could ask the Sick and Hurt commissioners to 'step over to the Navy Office' for an informal talk on an urgent problem³; a further example of the importance of good personal relations between departments. Such friendly relations with the Admiralty were unthinkable. There was a greater distance between them than that between Somerset House and Whitehall or than could be bridged by crossing the road.

But if the Admiralty's relations with the Navy Board were be-devilled by poor personal relations, frequently strained and always formal, those with the Victualling Board and Sick and Hurt Office were generally good. A regular correspondence existed with the former which had been a distinct department since 1783 and whose duties were to buy provisions for the Navy and arrange for their storage and distribution. The bulk of

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1. Index 4813.Series III.no.85a, Lieut.Harris to Admiralty, 6 Apl.1793., Markham Correspondence, C.Markham, ed.,p.25, St. Vincent to Markham, undated.
 2. ADM/B.P.6B, Navy Commissioners to Admiralty, minute, 13 March, 1786.
 3. Ad.99/51,p.119, 18 Apl.1796.

stores was bought at principal victualling centres or made under supervision, for once it had obtained the necessary raw materials, the department was almost self-supporting. It killed and salted its own meat, packed it in its own casks made in the cooperage, brewed its own beer and baked its own biscuit from flour ground at its own mills. It was one of the most important divisions of naval administration, since on its efficiency depended the health and well being of the fleets.

Besides the Commissioners in London, each of whom supervised a separate branch of the service, with a large staff of clerks, there were permanent establishments at Deptford, where the principal storehouses had been built, at Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham, Dover and Gibraltar, each of which had an Agent Victualler, responsible to the Board. To these were added in war, establishments at the Leeward Islands, Lisbon and the Cape of Good Hope, but the victualling of the Navy was so vast and complex and so dependent on local circumstances, that it was impossible to have agents victualler or contractors wherever ships touched. At such places the commander of the ship or ships was authorised to buy necessities for which the purser drew bills on the Board for the same amount. Victuals for the East Indies were sent out from England or provided by a contract made through the Commander in Chief.¹

1. C. Northcote Parkinson, War in the Eastern Seas, 1793-1815, (London, 1954), pp. 349-351., G. Cornwallis-West, op.cit., pp. 155, 157-8.

The seven commissioners, three of whom made a quorum, were appointed by patent, receiving their instructions from the Admiralty, who appointed the secretary. The officers and chief clerks were appointed by the Commissioners on Admiralty orders, and the clerks by the Commissioners themselves. Until 1784 no business procedure had been fixed, nor was there any permanent chairman, but in that year the Admiralty directed that the commissioner superintending the department of the accountant for cash should preside at meetings and the remaining members should take precedence from their respective departments.¹ These were the accountant for stores, that of the hoy taker, the brewery, cutting and bakehouses and cooperage.

Little is known of the commissioners. The appointment was sometimes held by the First Lord's former secretary,² a departmental official, like Robert Moody, appointed in 1794 and thirty eight years in office³ or by seamen, of whom there were

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1. Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices, etc., Reports from Commissioners. No.VIII. The Victualling Board.p.553; 1806,vii.,Ad.3/100,pp.30-31, 3 Nov.1784.
 2. The Morning Post, 24 Apl.1805.,The Naval Chronicle,1798, i.539.
 3. ADM/D38, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 21 Mar.1794.

five at the Board in 1798.¹ One post, that of superintendent of the Hoy taker's department, responsible for vessels hired by the Board, was always filled by a captain.² But the origins of most commissioners and the reasons for their appointment are generally obscure. Some of them had naval connections. William Boscawen was the nephew of one famous admiral, the Hon. John Rodney, the son of another. George Cherry, chairman of the Board, 1786 to 1799, ^{had personal connections} ~~was related~~, by the marriage of his eldest daughter to the Rev. Charles Proby, eldest son of the naval commissioner at Chatham, ^{with} ~~to~~ another branch of the administration, while Rodney's place at the Board was taken by Rear Admiral Sir Charles Cunningham, married to another of Commissioner Proby's daughters.³ There were further links with the personnel of the Navy Board. Three of the Navy commissioners during these years, Marsh, Bellingham and Hartwell all served at the Victualling Board before being promoted to the Navy Office. Admiral Rodney's jibe that

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1. Parl. Pap., Finance Committee Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. No. XXXII. The Victualling Office. p. 555, Appendix M; 1803, xiii.
 2. Letters of Lord St. Vincent, D. Bonner Smith, ed., II. 210, St. Vincent to Hon. Mrs. Bouverie, 26, 27 Apl. 1803.
 3. J. and J. B. Burke, A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland, (3 vols. London, 1846-1849.), I. 211-212., J. Burke, A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire, (London, 1853), p. 174.

'it was the misfortune of sea officers to know little of the world and to be bred in seaport towns', applied with equal truth to the higher officials in the civilian administration who had little in common, socially, with the Admiralty lords. On the other hand, their relatively obscure origins did not prevent their children rising in the social scale. George Towry's daughter married Lord Ellenborough, John Slade's son became a general in the Peninsular war,¹ and Cherry's grandson became deputy lieutenant for Berkshire.²

Like commissioners in other government departments the Victualling commissioners supplemented their basic salaries of £400 p.a. with the traditional allowances of rent, coal and candles and enjoyed other sinecures and emoluments. They attended four days a week in peace, daily in war, from 10.0.a.m. to 4.0.p.m. The war prevented the implementation of the reforms suggested by the Commission of 1788, but in 1800 the Admiralty issued their own report on the work of the previous investigating committees, combined with their own proposals for the office. Once more they proposed salaries be increased to a more realistic level in order to finally tackle the problem of fees, they suggested a pension scheme similar to that introduced in the yards, and, in accordance with the Government's economic policy of that time, a slight increase in clerical salaries, though with suitable cuts in pay and numbers of

1. Ibid., (1828), p.210.

2. J. and J.B.Burke, The Landed Gentry, I.211.

clerical staff once overdue accounts were made up and fees abolished.¹ Unfortunately before all these ideas could be carried out a new Admiralty Board took over.

St. Vincent's reforming Admiralty found much to criticise in its inspection of the victualling departments at the yards.² The necessity for some regulations was proved by the third and eighth reports of the Commission of Naval Inquiry, the one on the Block and Coopers' contract, of June, 1803, the other on the embezzlement of casks at the Plymouth victualling yard, published in June, 1804. Everywhere frauds were discovered and stopped³ and regulations tightened.⁴ But the Board itself remained largely undisturbed in these and the following political changes. There were no dismissals like that of Osborne Markham from the Navy Board, as personal revenge for St. Vincent's attack on entrenched corruption, and the board was left to pursue its uneventful and largely unreformed way till 1832.

Mention has already been made of Middleton's idea that a

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1. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. Proceedings of the Admiralty on Finance Reports.H.pp.806-815.
 2. Letters of Lord St.Vincent, D.Bonner Smith,ed.,II.12.
 3. ADM/G793,Admiralty Commissioners to Victualling Board, 17 Sept.1802.,29 Nov.1802.
 4. Ibid., 18 Sept.1802.

line of communication should be formed between the Admiralty, Navy and Victualling Boards, by including the Comptroller as a member of the Admiralty Board, and the chairman of the Victualling Office as a member of the Navy Board. This idea was put forward by the Commission investigating fees in the 1780's. It had great merit, chief being the reduction of delays,¹ but it was never effected. The Victualling Board was opposed to the idea and to the suggestion that it should be split into two committees, one for stores, one for correspondence.² Even when Middleton became First Lord he made no attempt to introduce the measure. He may have felt that the complete re-organisation of an office working reasonably well was too great a task to tackle during the war. Also he was over eighty and the invasion threat subordinated every interest. Yet although not established in theory, in practice the line of contact between the three boards was often achieved and, once more, depended on personal good will and harmonious relations to retain it. Occasionally the Victualling Chairman attended the Admiralty and received verbal orders from the First Lord, or Secretary, which were later put into writing.³

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1. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., II.295.
 2. Parl.Pap., Finance Reports, 1798. Select Committee Report. No.XXXII. The Victualling Office.p.555,Appendix M;1803,xiii.
 3. ADM/D36, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, un-numbered pages at the end of the volume., Ad.111/115, 27,28 May,1789., Ad.111/152, 8, 16 Aug.1799.

When Middleton became First Lord he did continue the improvements in victualling which he had introduced as Comptroller and former member of the Admiralty,¹ and which were even more vital now that the fleet was stretched to the limit to combat Napoleon's invasion force. He saw the chairman of the Victualling and Navy Boards about the speedy supply of necessary stores and provisions to the Channel, Mediterranean and blockading squadrons² and arranged that one of the sea lords at the Admiralty should superintend this business to prevent the slightest delay. The Channel fleet and blockading squadrons were supplied regularly with food and water to avoid the necessity for leaving their stations and a small victualling and stores depot was established at Falmouth for Admiral Cornwallis's easier supply.³

But in general, apart from such crises, the contact between the Admiralty and Victualling boards was irregular. In peace infrequent letters came from the Victualling Board; sixty three in 1788, sixty eight a year later. Admiralty replies were equally irregular, sometimes they came the next day, sometimes a month later. In war the amount of business increased

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1. A small but useful improvement in the Board's work, typical of Barham's meticulous eye for detail, was the dating of each page of the minute book so that it could be seen at a glance how many pages the day's work occupied. There is no evidence that Barham had this done or even knew of it, but it reflects his professional attitude to work.
 2. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.81, Barham to Pitt, 22 May, 1805.
 3. Ibid., III.105-6, Barham to Pitt, 28 Nov. 1805.

but there was still no daily correspondence. In 1796 two hundred and eight letters came from the Victualling commissioners, most dealt with routine subjects and were of a conventional kind, but Admiralty minutes and resulting orders were more frequent, now within two or three days of receipt of the original letter. The Board's orders came from three main sources; the Admiralty, whose orders were formal in tone and relatively few in number, the Secretary to the Admiralty, whose orders were more numerous and specific, and those from the Navy Board, forming the most numerous group. Finance, staff appointments, international relations, matters involving another department or the alteration of their mode of business were the Admiralty's concern. Thus the victualling, in 1795, of an allied Russian squadron under Admiral Hanikoff, provided the subject of several Admiralty orders in reply to worried enquiries from the Board.¹ The Navy Board dealt with estimated costs of victualling the fleet, or with departmental expenses. To make up their estimates the Victualling Board asked the Admiralty for the number of men to be employed in the coming year.² The Admiralty likewise asked

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1. ADM/G791, 16 Sept., 9 Oct., 3 Nov. 1795., ADM/D40, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 27 Feb., 2 Mar. 1795. See also Mrs. E.H. Turner, 'The Russian Squadron with Admiral Duncan's North Sea Fleet, 1795-1800', The Mariner's Mirror, xlix.no.3 (August, 1963), 212-222.
 2. ADM/D36, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 5 Sept. 1787.

the Victualling Commissioners what money they would need in the next naval estimates. Such approval was almost automatic, but the Board was severely reprimanded and proposed work cancelled if they anticipated Admiralty approval or wrote to the Navy Board without first obtaining it.¹

It is difficult to say how much the Admiralty were influenced by the Victualling Board in their decisions. Often they merely followed the professional advice the Board included in their letter of enquiry,² but not invariably, particularly on appointments.³ The Victualling Board was an office relying on tradition, carefully preserving its records⁴ and quoting precedents in its correspondence with the Admiralty, which reinforced its recommendations. For example, in a letter of 27 May, 1788, on the subject of bad meat, they referred to a similar correspondence with Admiral Boscawen in 1758, before many of the junior Admiralty lords had been born. Many of the Victualling Commissioners too, were more permanent than those of the Admiralty, which might lead one to suppose them to be

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1. Ad.3/100, pp.139, 7 Feb.1785.
 2. ADM/D36, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 24 Oct.1787, 2 Jan., 8 Feb.1788., ADM/D38, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 25 Oct.1793.
 3. ADM/D36, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 23 Oct.1787.
 4. Ibid., 20 Sept.1786.

in a strong position. Yet though in this case the Admiralty followed their advice it was not always so and they frequently contradicted orders they themselves had issued.

Certain decisions were effected by the appointment to the Admiralty of seamen who took a greater interest in the men's welfare than the civilians. Sometimes indeed, the order came from an individual admiral, possibly to add greater point and emphasis to a general Admiralty order.¹ Admiral Philip Affleck, who became an Admiralty lord in 1793 was commander on the Jamaica station the previous year and attempted to persuade the Victualling Board of the benefit of substituting local articles for traditional ones, in a warm climate, in this case cocoa for butter. Nothing he reminded the Admiralty was more unwholesome than butter in the West Indian climate or 'more productive of bilious complaints which are the harbingers of death'. Cocoa, obtained locally, had kept down hospital expenses in previous years and its continued issue would justify any trifling expense.²

The Admiralty forwarded this letter to the Victualling Board, with a favourable recommendation. Although providing reasons for the impracticality of the suggestion, and declaring

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1. ADM/G791, Admiral Young to Commissioner Cherry, 7 Aug.1797, Young to Victualling Commissioners, 19 Aug.1797.
 2. Ad.1/244, 14 Jan.1792, Affleck to Stephens.

the expense would be enormous, the Board discontinued the supply of butter and substituted cocoa instead.¹ Two years later Admiral Jervis commander in the Leeward Islands, wished to substitute sugar and cocoa for butter and cheese. This re-opened the whole correspondence and led to a re-statement of the Victualling Board's views.² They asked for instructions from an Admiralty of whom Affleck was now a member, and whose influence may be detected in the reply, which allowed the substitution. All three sea lords then at the Board, Hood, Affleck and Gardner had served in the West Indies, knew the conditions and probably carried the Board on this point. In a similar case Admiral Jervis had recommended wine be substituted for spirits in the West Indies³ and the Victualling Board requested the Admiralty's order on this. The substitution was immediately allowed, despite the fact that there was little wine in store, partly because of the support it received from Admiral Gardner, and the two examples illustrate the personal and professional influence exerted by seamen at the Admiralty.

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1. ADM/D37, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 9 Mar.1792.
 2. ADM/D38, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 24 Apl.1794.
 3. ADM/D38, Victualling Commissioners to Admiralty Board, 5 Oct.1793.

It is significant that the main arguments for and against the adoption of wine and cocoa turned on financial and practical grounds, rather than humanitarian ones. Affleck argued from the expense of sickness and the wastage of men, Jervis from the impossibility of recruitment in the islands and the necessity of 'preserving them (i.e. seamen) by any means ever so expensive'.¹ Such arguments appealed to those in authority grappling with costs and estimates. The Admiralty depended on the professional opinion of the Victualling Board, the view of the local commander, possibly the experience of their own members, and struck a balance between them. In most tussles economy won, except where a humanitarian motive could be backed by strong economic reasons, or where it was shown that it would be more economic in the long run to disregard professional advice.

Closely associated with the Victualling Board was the Office for Sick and Hurt Seamen. The provision of a special diet for sick seamen was their joint responsibility, and many of the innovations in victualling, the introduction of lemon juice, portable soup, fresh vegetables etc., began as items for the sick, provided by the physicians to the fleets. The two boards occasionally used the same contractors, for example, Alexander Donaldson and Edward Bayntun in the West Indies, where there was some difficulty in getting tenders. They also

1. Ibid., Admiral Jervis to Victualling Board, 5 Oct.1793.

shared contractors with the Navy Board; Solly and Son of Danzig supplied the Navy Board with timber and the Victualling Board with beef in the Mediterranean, on a handsome commission. Officials of both boards at Deptford worked closely together,¹ and occasionally the Chairman of the Victualling Board attended the Sick and Hurt Office to discuss matters of common interest or to learn the latter's proposals, concerning victualling, to the Admiralty.²

The Board was never distinguished, and it was not until Sir Gilbert Blane became commissioner in 1795 that it made innovations on its own initiative and not at the prior suggestion of its subordinates. 'Interest' loomed large in Blane's career; he had been Admiral Rodney's personal physician, and physician to the West Indian fleet in 1781. Later his large private, aristocratic practice helped his appointment by Lord Spencer. Possibly because of this influence Blane's advent at the board was the occasion for quarrels with the first commissioner, Dr. Robert Blair. These came to a head in 1796 over Blane's proposals for remodelling the medical department. Blair accused him of arrogance and intemperate language and of being too absorbed in his private practice to attend the Board regularly. Blane complained to Lord Spencer of obstruction

1. Ad.99/50, p.42, 16 Oct.1789.

2. Ad.99/51, p.116, 11 Mar.1796., p.226, 13 Mar.1797.

and insults¹ and eventually got his way over the reforms. The introduction of lemon juice, of soap, of free drugs to surgeons, were also his work.²

The duties of the Sick and Hurt Board were the care of sick seamen on commissioned ships, in hospitals or sick quarters, the establishment and maintenance of hospitals and hospital ships and staffs at home and abroad, the superintendance of medicines and other necessities, the examination and appointment of surgeons and their mates and the care of prisoners of war. In 1796 responsibility for healthy prisoners of war was transferred to the Transport Board, the Sick and Hurt Office caring only for those prisoners who were ill. Finally ten years later the office was abolished and all its duties undertaken by the Transport Board.

The enormous amount of work involved in these functions was too much for the insufficient staff employed. In 1784 there were three commissioners, with salaries of £500 p.a. and travelling expenses, a secretary, with the usual perquisites, all Admiralty appointees and twenty others, mostly clerks, appointed by the commissioners. Numbers were slightly increased throughout the period. By 1802 there were four commissioners

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1. Ibid., pp.135-142, Blane to Spencer, 25 Sept.1796., pp.151-176, Blair to Spencer, 28 Oct.1796.
 2. Medicine and the Navy, 1200-1900, ed. by Commander J.J.Keevil, C.Lloyd and J.L.S.Coulter (4 vols.Edinburgh,1957-1963), III.1714-1815. 46.

and approximately twenty six clerks, but the board complained that this was an inadequate staff to deal with current work. Yet board meetings were infrequent and irregular and did little more than formal work. The great arrears in accounts, amounting to over £1½,000,000 in 1788 and dating back to 1734, were largely untouched, despite the recommendations of several commissions of inquiry. When the Admiralty suggested in 1802 that the working day be extended from 9.0.a.m. till 5.0.p.m. the commissioners rejected the proposal on the grounds that, 'six hours a day is as long a time as official business can be prosecuted with alacrity and effect'.¹ By 1805 the 'deplorable state' of the office led Barham to reform it. By then arrears had swelled to £2½,000,000, half of which had accumulated since 1793, the commissioners rarely met more than twice a week and the clerks who dealt with the business were often owed a quarter's salaries.² Barham abolished this 'very inefficient establishment', pensioning off all but the medical commissioner and clerks necessary for business, and transferring them to the Transport Board in 1806.³

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1. Mrs. E.H.Turner, 'Naval Medical Service, 1793-1815', The Mariner's Mirror, xlvii.no.2.(1960),121.
 2. Ad.99/51, pp.123-125,17 June, 1796.
 3. The Barham Papers, J.K.Laughton, ed., III.122-130.

Thus ended, with few regrets, the career of the Sick and Hurt Board, whose organisation, so severely criticised, was never properly organised for its duties. The Sick and Hurt commissioners saw the medical services as a permanent means of reducing sickness in the fleet. The Admiralty and Treasury were reluctant to expand a skeleton peace establishment to deal with what they hoped would be a short lived emergency, and the disparity between these views caused a makeshift policy and an atmosphere which encouraged confusion and arrears. Because of a constant shortage of money, economies in sick diets, the closure of hospitals and the reduction of staff were promptly introduced at the end of the war, though this policy was a short sighted and uneconomic one.

Apart from the instances already mentioned the Admiralty's contact with the office was slight. The routine of granting or disallowing extra charges incurred by pursers or commanders, the building or repair of hospitals, the exchange and treatment of prisoners of war, or the adoption of new remedies reported on by the Board, occupied the irregular correspondence.¹

Such was the case with the naval charities of Greenwich Hospital, Chatham Chest and the Receiver's Office. Some of the Admiralty were members of one or the other of the governing boards, and the Board appointed the higher officials in each

1. Ad.2/613, p.327, Nepean to Sick and Hurt Commissioners, 14 Mar.1796.

department, or occasionally corresponded with these offices, through their secretary, but more direct contact was rare. Greenwich Hospital, founded in 1694 for old and wounded seamen, and housed in Wren's palace, was administered by a General Court Commissioners, of whom the First Lord was the chairman. Proposals by the board of directors were forwarded to this court, composed of some of the Admiralty and Navy Board commissioners, the Admiralty secretaries, the Governor and Auditor of the Hospital and other ex officio members. Occasionally the Admiralty lords would visit the Hospital on rare, formal occasions and the pensioners drank their lordships' health on public holidays. Apart from these contacts the Admiralty had little to do with the Hospital and no control over it as such.

The three commissioners and domestic staff of the Receiver's office on Tower Hill, which collected sixpences per man per month from ^{all} ~~merchant~~ seamen for Greenwich Hospital, were appointed by Admiralty warrant. The post of commissioner often provided a sinecure for former Admiralty employees. John Cleveland, the Accountant to the office, appointed in 1762, was the son of a former Admiralty secretary, but rarely attended the Board. Both this office and the sixteenth century charity of the Chatham Chest for the relief of seamen maimed and wounded in the service of their country had become notorious for frauds by 1801 and were among the first institutions St. Vincent's

reforming Admiralty attacked. The Chest was abolished in 1803 and a smaller establishment created at Greenwich, by an act of 43 Geo.III,c.19,¹ of which the First Lord was to be head while the number of commissioners in the Receiver's office was reduced to two and a general reform in salaries and numbers of staff was undertaken.²

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1. Ad.80/75, 29 May, 1804.
 2. Parl.Pap., Commission of Naval Enquiry into Irregularities, Frauds and Abuses practised in the Naval Departments and in the Business of Prize Agency. Reports from Commissioners. No.V. Sixpenny Office.pp.329,411; 1802-3,iv.

CONCLUSION.

Hobhouse in his biography of Fox wrote,

'Pitt was born to show Fox up The old aristocratic parties, the old family cabinets, the pensions and sinecures, the nepotism, the log rolling, the wire pulling, were to be swept away (Pitt's) colleagues might be young and little known: but they were a breakaway from all that had gone before.' 1.

This study of the Admiralty has proved that generalisation only partially true in some respects and totally false in others. An antiquated machinery, gradually being modernised, was still dominated by personal relationships, which alone permitted its smooth working. Government was still almost a family concern, certainly still a small group of the more important people directing affairs, and this was inevitable when government rested on gentlemen and was regarded as a natural occupation for them. The importance of any department still rested on its head's ability and he performed much of the routine work associated with it. In the Admiralty he was helped by a semi-permanent secretariat which maintained the departmental traditions and kept the office running despite changes at the board. This secretarial staff was gradually freeing itself from political influences and was acquiring a recognisable nineteenth century civil service image. The subordinate naval departments were equally conscious of tradition and their staffs had often spent a lifetime in the offices.

1. C.Hobhouse, Fox, (London,1934)p.160.

By the end of the period a change was evident, thanks to the increased amount of work, which forced a more regular attendance, harder work and closer attention to business. The change was also the result of the work of commissions of inquiry, and the Admiralty's own attempt to re-organise itself, made by Lords Spencer, St. Vincent and Barham. It had never been so complacent a board as not to acknowledge that reform was necessary. But it insisted on doing the work in its own time and in its own way, and jealously guarded its independence from central control or encroachment by other departments or subordinate naval boards.

Too soon revelations of naval abuses lost their novelty and power to shock. Time began to heal old wounds and dull the enthusiasm of even the keenest reformer and brought fresh scandals and events. After the climax of Trafalgar there was a lack of spectacular naval successes for the rest of the war. The Navy had been almost too successful in defeating its rival so heartily that only the necessary but dull duties of convoy, patrol and blockade were left. From being the focus of attention during the early war years, the Admiralty and the Navy sank into the background, to be superseded by the growing popularity of the Army, winning victories in the Peninsular War, and by the scandals of the sale of Army places. Yet there was not complete stagnation. The moral reformation for which the commissions had prepared the way, and the higher

standard of conduct introduced into the Admiralty's work by Barham and others, was never entirely forgotten and eventually bore fruit in the reforms of the nineteenth century.

Appendix I.

Undated Memorandum, endorsed 'Lord Hugh's opinion on Admiral Christian's appointment to the West India command'. Seymour Papers, CR114A/321. This memorandum has been published in The Mariner's Mirror, l.no.2. (May,1964), 154-5. Words in brackets have been crossed out.

On the subject of the W.I. command I continue of my former opinion that the harshest treatment that ever was shewn to any officer will be the Recall of Sir J.L. after having continued him in that command during the equipment of the present Expedition which is to be conducted (by ships under the orders of) an Officer whom he has always been taught to expect to act under his orders. I am the more dispos'd to object to the arrangement propos'd by Mr.D. from the mode in which that business has been conducted from its first being undertaken, on the outset of it, it was pretended by those who proposed(?) the Expedition that Admr.C. from his habits of intimacy with Mr.D. and having been in the course of doing business with him (that he) was the properest person to be joined to the R.A. in the expedition against the W.I. The difficulty of charging so young an Admr. with such a command appear'd in its full force but that was soften'd by Ad.C. appraising those who doubted the success of a Junior Officer conducting a business of such magnitude to the face of his Comm. in chief that from his

knowledge and intimacy with Sr.J.L. that no circumstances would arise between them to obstruct the plans which would actually have been expected to hail from the Jealousy naturally to be expected to arise between any other two human beings under similar circumstances - the Expedition is completed as far as relates to the Naval part of the Equipment and Adl.C. being placed in the situation he before appear'd not even to glance at, it is discovered that success cannot be expected to arise from the Expedition without he is appointed Commr. in chief on the W.India station. I hear he occupies the place of one of the Junior Admirals upon the list I think the 98th - a circumstance not to be considered as objectionable only on the score of Etiquette as Mr. D. terms it but fraught with much inconvenience and difficulty to the whole naval service as well as the Minister presiding over it, but this seems not to have occur'd to Mr. D. who appears to me dispos'd to render the Adml. an appendage to his office by thus indirectly dictating to it in its choice and Selections of Officers to fill the first Command and by starting difficulties which I believe only to originate in his want of openness in his dealings towards the Admy. and his doubts of their being determined to act according to their own opinion. He is I have no doubt able to judge of the Merit of those which he calls forth in his official Capacity to serve the Country in the Army and it would be but fair to allow the same power of selection to those (with) to whom

Responsibility equally attaches itself.

Should L.S. however be prevailed upon to name Adml.Ch.Comm. in chief I think that Sir.Jn.L. should go to Jamaica where I am however aware that the same difficulties and objections will arise to his being employ'd, from his not having been informed of the details of the views of Govt. in that qur. more than in that which he is obliged to quit. There is nothing new in all this but the Sec. of State for the War Dept. having been led to think that the Adml. Board is merely to enforce orders it may receive from him instead of being considered what it always has hitherto, the most independent and important Branch in the Govt., which has always conducted its own business.

Appendix II.

A list of the salaries of the Secretaries and clerks of the Admiralty in 1786, 1800 and 1805, showing increases, differences in war and peace time rates and any changes in staff numbers.

1786 These salaries do not include emoluments from other employments to which the staff were then entitled. (Parl.Pap., The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc., Reports from Commissioners.No.III. The Admiralty.pp.126-7, Appendix 30; 1806, vii.)

Philip Stephens	First Secretary	£2146/8/8	Admiralty lord,1794.
John Ibbetson,	Second Secretary	£1197/8/6	Resigned 1795.
Sir Harry Parker	Chief Clerk	£804/2/8	" "
Thomas Fearne	Second clerk	£271/6/3	" "
William Bryer	Third clerk	£307/14/4	Died 1790.
Charles Wright	Fourth clerk	£431/1/9	Chief clerk 1795.
Joseph Belson	Fifth clerk	£150/4/-	Died 1799.
Simon Devereux Barkham	Sixth clerk	£131/19/1	Discharged 1790.
Robert Robinson	Seventh clerk	£113/8/3	Resigned 1804.
William Gamber	First extra clerk	£57.	Resigned 1804.
Thomas Kite	Second extra clerk	£57	
William Gæcoigne	Third extra clerk	£77/10/-	Died 1801.
James Freshfield	Fourth extra clerk	£62/5/-	Resigned 1795.

William Pearce	Fifth extra clerk	£62/5/-	
Mitchell Hollingsworth	Sixth extra clerk	£57/5/-	
Robert Maxwell	Seventh extra clerk and translator	£145/15/-	Died 1802.
Edward Barnes	Eighth extra clerk	£57	
Basil Maxwell	Ninth extra clerk	£57	Resigned 1799.
Thomas King	Tenth extra clerk	£57	
Arthur Mills Raymond	Eleventh extra clerk	£57	
James Madden	First Marine clerk	£245/19/6	
George Coombe	Second Marine clerk	£97/17/-	
William Millman	Head doorkeeper and Messenger	£97/17/6	
John Man	Assistant Messenger	£42/2/-	Died 1788.
John Hill	" "	£32/2/-	Porter at Sheerness yard, 1792.
Elizabeth Bell	Housekeeper	£40	Granted a pension 1799.
Elizabeth Butler	Necessary Woman	£20	
Richard Hutchinson	Porter	£57/12/-	
John Maryan(?)	Watchman	£36/12/8	Died 1791.
Thomas Scott	"	£24/8/8	

Charles Winchester	Watchman	£24/8/8
John Tucker	Gardner	£30
James Arrow	Inspector of Repairs	£30

Basic salaries of the Secretaries and clerks for 1800, showing the different rates in war and peace. (Ad.22/8,pp.174-8, Lady Quarter,1800,pp.195-7, Midsummer quarter,1800,p.245, Christmas quarter,1800.)

	<u>War.</u>	<u>Peace.</u>
First secretary - Evan Nepean	£4000	£3000
Second secretary - William Marsden	£2000	£1500
Chief clerk - Charles Wright	£950	£800
<u>Senior established clerks</u>		
Robert Robinson	£600	£500
William Gimber	£540	£450
Thomas Kite	£480	£400
William Gascoigne	£480	£400
William Pearce	£420	£350
Mitchell Hollingsworth	£360	£300
Robert Maxwell	£300 + £100 as translator	£200 Died 1802.
Edward Barnes	£240	£200
<u>Junior Established Clerks</u>		
Arthur Mills Raymond	£240	£200
Henry Wright	£210	£200

<u>Junior established clerks</u>	<u>War.</u>	<u>Peace.</u>
William Reynolds	£210	£175
John Dyer	£180	£175
James Cutforth (Reading clerk to the Board.)	£180	£175
Thomas Hollingsworth	£180	£150
Richard Riley	£180	£150
Charles Sayer	£180	£150
George Coombe - first marine clerk	£360	£360
Samuel Moss - assistant	£180	£180

Extra Clerks

Samuel Thurtle	£100	£150 (promoted to established clerk, 11 Apl.1800.)
Charles Sedgewick (Keeper of the Board minutes)	£100	£100
James Douglas Barker	£100	£90
Richard Martin	£100	£90
Henry Frederick Amedroz	£100 + £100 as translator in R. Maxwell's place.	£90
William Pollock Cowcher	£90	£80
John Fisher	£90	£80
John Harrison - secretary to the First Lord	£300	£300

<u>New establishments</u>	<u>War.</u>	<u>Peace.</u>
Alexander Dalrymple-Hydrographer	£500	£500
J. Walker - assistant	£100	£100
George Roebuck - Inspector of Telegraphs	£300	£300
Samuel Bentham - Inspector General of Naval Works	£750	£750
Samuel Bunce - architect in the above office	£400	£400
Simon Goodrick - mechanist	£400	£400
James Sadler - chemist	£400	£400
John Peake - secretary	£300	£300
James Burr - draughtsman	£200	£200
Richard Upsal "	£100	£100
John Fetter - messenger	£10	£10
<u>Domestics</u> (Salaries constant in war and peace)		
William Millman - Head doorkeeper and messenger	£120	
John Eastwood - Assistant		£60
James Cline		£50
John Winchester - extra messenger		£40
George Houssen - porter		£50
Thomas Sandford - extra porter		£40
Elizabeth Bell - Housekeeper		£40 Died 1803
Elizabeth Hill - necessary woman		£100
John Crockford - Watchman		£25
Thomas Sandford - assistant		£25

Domestics

Charles Winchester - assistant	£25	Died 1800.
Davis Coombe - gardener	£30	
Samuel Pepys Cockerell - Inspector of Repairs	£30	Office abolished 1800.

Salaries for the Christmas Quarter, 1805. (Ad.22/10, pp.187-190.)

First Secretary - William Marsden	£4000
Second Secretary - John Barrow	£2000
Chief Clerk - Charles Wright	£950

Senior established clerks

Thomas Kite	£600
William Pearce	£540
Mitchell Hollingsworth	£480
Edward Barnes	£480
Arthur M. Raymond	£420
Henry Wright	£360

Junior established clerks

William Reynolds	£300
James Dyer	£240
Richard Riley	£240
Charles Sayer	£210
Samuel Thurtle	£210
Richard Martin	£210

Junior established clerks

Henry F. Amedroz	£180 + £100 as translator.
John Fisher	£180
John Darch	£180
James Evans.	£180

Extra clerks

George Shepherd	£100
Henry Bedford	£100
Francis Wilder	£90
Moses Barnes	£90
John Innes	£90
Robert Randall	£90
J. Barker	£90
Alex. Brodie	£90
J. Spence	£90
Marshall Clifton	£90
George Coombe - First Marine clerk	£360
Sam. Moss - Second Marine clerk	£180
Alexander Dalrymple - Hydrographer	£500
J. Walker - assistant	£100
George Roebuck - Inspector of Telegraphs	£300
Samuel Bentham - Inspector General of Naval Works	£750
Edward Hall - architect	£400
S. Goodrick - mechanist	£400

Extra clerks

J. Sadler - chemist	£400
John Peake - secretary	£300
H. Rogers - clerk	£150
E. Sheffield - metal worker	£200
William Howard - messenger	£40

Domestics

William Millman - Head messenger and doorkeeper	£120
John Eastwood - assistant	£80
James Cline - assistant	£65
Joseph Wooley - assistant	£50
Joseph Nye - assistant	£50
John Morris - porter	£50
James Smith - assistant	£40
First Lord's messenger	£40
Elizabeth Hill - necessary woman	£100
John Crockford - watchman	£25
James Smith - watchman (see also as porter)	£25
John Leggatt - watchman	£25
Davis Coombe - gardener	£60

BIBLIOGRAPHY.Manuscript Sources.A. Private Collections.

Warwick County Record Office: Seymour of Ragley Mss. The Papers of Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour, 1759-1801.

This is an extensive collection, containing much interesting material. Seymour was one of the Admiralty commissioners and his papers throw some interesting side-lights on Admiralty affairs. The papers are divided into Naval Records and Private Papers. In the first group I have particularly examined CR114A/299, 329, and 325, this last a bundle of 33 letters from Lord Spencer, which as far as I know, have never been used before. In the Private papers I read CR114A/348, 349, 365, 366. These are bundles of letters from naval friends and his wife, often containing references to naval affairs.

Bury and West Suffolk Record Office: Grafton Mss. The Correspondence of Augustus Henry, Third Duke of Grafton, 1735-1811. Many of the letters have been printed in Autobiography and Political Correspondence of Augustus Henry, Third Duke of Grafton, ed. by Sir W. Anson, (London, 1898). Those I found useful were in correspondence with Richard Hopkins, an Admiralty commissioner, William Pitt and Lord Camden. Camden's son, J.J. Pratt, and Grafton's son Lord Euston were close friends and the letters give some indication of the behaviour of the young civilian Admiralty commissioners.

Gloucester County Record Office: The Ducie, Moreton and Reynolds Papers. Reynolds Family Correspondence, 1761-1804, D340a/C32. 73 letters to and from Captain Francis Reynolds, later third Lord Ducie, mainly concerning promotions, requests for places or occasional naval events. The Bragge Bathurst Papers. Charles Bragge Bathurst was Treasurer of the Navy, 1801-3. These papers do not contain his official correspondence, but the two bundles consulted are concerned with appointments and contain items of naval interest. They were D421x6 - 34 letters of 1796, D421x/17 - 1 bundle of original letters, 1796-1828.

B. British Museum. Additional Manuscripts.

Bridport Papers. Add.Mss. 35202, vol.xii. Private and Family Correspondence, 1755-1800.

Correspondence of George Chalmers, 1787-1824. 3 vols. Add.Mss. 22900, vol.i.
Add.Mss. 22901, vol.ii.

(These contain letters from William Boscawen, one of the Victualling Commissioners.)

Holland Papers. Add.Mss. 51724, vol. clvii. no. 9. Contains letters to Lord Spencer.
Original Letters to Thomas Hill, 1785-1820. vol. i. Add.Mss. 20081. Contains a letter from William Boscawen.

Martin Papers. Series B. Correspondence and papers of Sir Thomas Byam Martin. Add.Mss. 41364, vol. xix. 1752-1799. Contains some of his father's papers when Comptroller.

Add.Mss. 41365, vol. xx. 1800-1811.

xxxiii Add.Mss. 41378, vol. Miscellaneous memoranda, historical and political notes on contemporaries etc.

Melville Papers. Add.Mss. 40102, vol. iii. Drafts, memoranda etc. of Cabinet decisions, letters between ministers.

Add.Mss. 41079, vol. i. Letters and Memoranda of Sir Charles Middleton to Henry Dundas, 1788-1806.

Correspondence of Sir Thomas Thompson, 1st. Bart. Add.Mss. 46119. A series of letters mainly to Lord Spencer, but involving other Admiralty lords, about employment.

The Letters Books of Sir Evan Nepean, 1795-1801. 2 vols. Add.Mss. 31171. Add.Mss. 31172. These contain letters from Admiral Sir John Jervis, commenting on Admiralty and naval affairs, and personalities.

Letters and Papers relating to campaigns of the First French Republic, 1796-1804. Add.Mss. 41192. Contains some papers of British naval commanders in the Mediterranean, notably Sir John Jervis, one letter of his criticises the conduct of Admirals Hyde Parker and Robert Man.

Miscellaneous original letters and papers, Fifteenth to Nineteenth Century (D2) Add.Mss. 38510.

Miscellaneous Autograph Letters. A-Y. Add.Mss. 29300.

Stowe Mss. 813. Transcript of the Royal Charter granted to Saltash and signed by Nicholas Nepean.

374. Minutes of the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to draw up articles of impeachment against Henry Dundas Lord Viscount Melville, 5-12 July. The proceedings are reported verbatim and contain evidence of Trotter's transactions in public funds.

C. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

Private Papers.

The Papers of Admiral Richard Viscount Howe. Of little value. Only HOW/4 was used.

The Papers of Admiral John Jervis, later Earl St. Vincent, 1735-1823.

Those used were the letters to Evan Nepean, 1797-1802, JER/21-26, when Jervis was commander in the Mediterranean and the Channel. JER/21, JER/22, JER/24 were especially useful for the pungent opinions on later Admiralty lords or Navy Board officials.

The Papers of Sir Evan Nepean. NEP/1 and NEP/2 were briefly consulted. They were reports from secret agents to the secretary of the Admiralty.

Official Records.

Admiralty Board. In Letters from the Victualling Board. ADM/D.

These letters are usually quite full, often containing enclosures and having the answering Admiralty minute on them. They were useful for the workings of the Victualling Board and its relations with the Admiralty.

Those consulted were:-

ADM/D 36	July, 1787 - December, 1789.
ADM/D 37	January, 1790 - December, 1792.
ADM/D 38	January, 1793 - June, 1794.
ADM/D 40	January, 1796 - December, 1797.

Also consulted for the relations between the Admiralty and Victualling and Navy Boards, were the Abstracts of Admiralty orders to the Victualling Board. ADM/G. Those most useful were:

ADM/G 789	August, 1783 - December, 1789.
ADM/G 791	August, 1794 - July, 1798.
ADM/G 793	January, 1802 - August, 1805.

Admiralty Board. In Letters from the Navy Board. ADM/B, ADM/B.P.

The series B.P. are unbound and supplement series B. They also supplement gaps in the series Ad, 106, Navy Board In Letters at the P.R.O. Like the Victualling Board letters they contain enclosures and are useful for the workings of the two boards.

Those consulted were:

ADM/B vol. 207	January - February, 1803.
ADM/B.P. 6B.	January - December, 1786.
ADM/B.P. 15B.	July - December, 1795.

D. Public Record Office.Private Papers.

The Dacres Adams Papers. P.R.O. 30/58.

William Dacres Adams was private secretary to Pitt, 1804-6. The papers used contain letters between Cabinet ministers and between Pitt and Barham especially the latter's invasion plans, appointment to the Admiralty, lists of naval appointments and of the numbers of seamen, marines and ships available. Those used were:-

P.R.O.30/58/2 1797-1799.
 30/58/4 1801-1803.
 30/58/6 1805.

The Chatham Papers. P.R.O.30/8. Second Series.

Correspondence of John Second Earl of Chatham. These letters were written largely when Chatham was at the Admiralty and contain advice and information from Hood and Middleton and naval officers. Those used:-

P.R.O.30/8/364. Section 1. Letters of the Earl.
 " 2.49 Letters from George III, mainly about naval appointments and dispositions.
 " 4. Notes, memoranda etc.
 P.R.O.30/8/365. 1 Section. 51 Letters and memoranda from Middleton and others, 1788-1794.
 P.R.O.30/8/366.
 P.R.O.30/8/367. Includes a series of 34 letters and enclosures from Lord Hood in the Mediterranean, 1793-4.
 P.R.O.30/8/368. 1 section, miscellaneous letters.
 P.R.O.30/8/369. Ditto.

Correspondence of William Pitt the Younger.

P.R.O.30/8/157. Letters of Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville, 1784-1804.
 P.R.O.30/8/241. Army Papers. Ordnance Papers. Nothing of importance.
 P.R.O.30/8/246. Papers relating to the Admiralty and Navy Commissioners and Navy Board, sent by Middleton.
 P.R.O.30/8/250. Admiralty Papers:-
 Part i. Essays, propositions etc. on manning the Navy. Has merchants' suggestions among others, Insurance rates etc.

Part iii. Cases and depositions. Has suggestions for convoys, examples of treasonable talk among seamen, experiments etc.

P.R.O.30/8/255,256. Port of London Papers,1783-1805.
Gives examples of frauds relative to naval victualling stores.

Official Records.

Admiralty 1 Series. Secretary's Department In Letters.Ad.1.

Admirals Despatches.

These often contain enclosures from merchants, consuls or captains with much useful information on enemy or neutral conditions. Though listed as Admirals despatches they also contain despatches from Commodores. I have selected despatches from each station where possible, at a time when events there were especially important. e.g. in 1790 during the Spanish crisis the Mediterranean and West Indian despatches were used. These despatches give much information on local difficulties of commanders and the Admiralty's attitude to them. Those consulted were:-

Ad.1/54	Cape of Good Hope	1758-1786	Commodore R. King.
Ad.1/98	Channel Fleet	1790-1793	Admiral Elliott.
Ad.1/166	East India	1783-1787	Admiral Sir.E.Hughes.
Ad.1/244	Jamaica	1789-1792	Admiral P.Affleck.
Ad.1/315	Leeward Isles	1787-1792	Admiral J.Laforey.
Ad.1/389	Mediterranean	1788-1790	Admiral Peyton.
Ad.1/390	Mediterranean	1790-1792	Admiral Goodall.
Ad.1/472	Newfoundland	1782-1792	Admiral Sir R.King.
Ad.1/492	North America	1789-1795	Admiral Sir R.Hughes.
Ad.1/524	North Sea	1797	Admiral Duncan.
Ad.1/578	Unemployed	1743-1790.	

Letters from Admirals at Naval Stations.

Ad.1/724 Nore and Sheerness 1791-1794.

Secretaries of State's Letters.

These contain original letters from the Secretaries of State or their under secretaries. They are often supplemented by the out-letters from the respective departments and form a considerable correspondence. They give day to day details of inter-departmental relations and often have informal letters between departmental secretaries in addition to the more formal correspondence between departmental heads. Those consulted were:-

Ad.1/4151	January,1784 - December,1785.
Ad.1/4152	January,1786 - December,1787.
Ad.1/4157	January - April,1793.
Ad.1/4164	April - June,1795.

Ad.1/4163 January - March, 1795.
 Ad.1/4165 July - September, 1795.
 Ad.1/4166 October - December, 1795.
 Ad.1/4198 January - April, 1805.
 Ad.1/4199 May - July, 1805.
 Ad.1/4200 August - December, 1805.

Letters from the Ordnance Office.

Ad.1/4014 1784-1797.
 Ad.1/4015 1798-1803.

Letters from the Post Office.

Ad.1/4072 1776-1798.
 Ad.1/4073 1799-1812.

These also contain some intercepted letters from suspected mutineers or deserters and give pathetic glimpses of lower deck feelings.

Letters from the Treasury.

Ad.1/4289 January, 1783 - December, 1789.
 Ad.1/4290 April, 1790 - December, 1795.
 Ad.1/4291 1796-1799.
 Ad.1/4293 1804-1805.

Letters from the War Office.

Ad.1/4330 1782-1794.
 Ad.1/4331 1795-1796.
 Ad.1/4332 1797-1798.
 Ad.1/4333 1799-1801.
 Ad.1/4335 1804-1807.

Often containing enclosures from army officers or others with complaints, news etc.

Secret Letters. Ad.1/4352 1756-1800. Contains reports on suspected traitors, information, often in French, of enemy movements. Nothing of value.

Letters from Lloyds. Ad.1/3992 1793-1804. Often has enclosures sometimes of colonial newspapers, from members with information about enemy ship movements, or news of convoys etc.

Letters relating to the Colonies - Governors of Plantations.

Ad.1/3821 1791-1814. This includes the Channel islands and Malta and Gibraltar and has requests for convoys, protections against French privateers etc.

Letters from the East India House.

Ad.1/3914 1782-1795.
 Ad.1/3915 1796-1804.

Letters from the Transport Department.

Ad.1/3730 August, 1794 - December 1795. This contains the Board's establishment.

Ad.1/3731 January - June, 1796.
 Ad.1/3773 Supplementary Letters - 1795-1800.

Letters from the Board of Green Cloth. Ad.1/3921 1722-1789.

Admiralty 2 Series. Secretary's Department Out Letters. Ad.2.

These letters are often merely a precis of the original letters. They can be supplemented by Ad.1 or by consulting the In letters of the department concerned. There are three main sub-divisions, I - Secretary's Letters to Public Offices and Admirals, II-Orders and Instructions - these are usually quite brief, III - Secretary's Common Letters.

Orders and Instructions. For this period they extend from Ad.2/115 to Ad.2/150. Those most frequently consulted were:-

Ad.2/115 July, 1783 - June, 1784.
 Ad.2/116 June, 1784 - April, 1786.
 Ad.2/117 April, 1786 - September, 1787.
 Ad.2/118 September, 1787 - January, 1789.
 Ad.2/119 February, 1789 - May, 1790.
 Ad.2/120 May, 1790 - November, 1790.
 Ad.2/128 March - August, 1795.
 Ad.2/133 March to August, 1797.
 Ad.2/134 August, 1797 - February, 1798.
 Ad.2/140 June, 1800 - January, 1801.
 Ad.2/142 July, 1801 - March, 1802.
 Ad.2/146 September, 1803 - January, 1804.
 Ad.2/148 July, 1804 - January, 1805.
 Ad.2/149 January, 1805 - August, 1805.

Secretary's Letters to Public Office and Admirals. These extend from Ad.2/581 to Ad.2/646. Those most frequently consulted were:-

Ad.2/584 November, 1784-May, 1785.
 Ad.2/585 May, 1785 - January, 1786.
 Ad.2/609 January - March, 1795.
 Ad.2/610 March - June, 1795.
 Ad.2/611 June - September, 1795.
 Ad.2/612 September - December, 1795.
 Ad.2/613 January - May, 1796.
 Ad.2/623 January - May, 1799.
 Ad.2/624 May - September, 1799.
 Ad.2/625 September, 1799 - February, 1800.
 Ad.2/643 January - June, 1805.
 Ad.2/644 June - October, 1805.
 Ad.2/645 October, 1805 - February, 1806.

Lords' Letters.

These extend from Ad.2/259 to Ad.2/310, and from Ad.2/333-337.

Those most frequently consulted were:-

- Ad.2/259 September, 1783 - March, 1784.
- Ad.2/261 January - December, 1785.
- Ad.2/267 December, 1790 - July, 1791.
- Ad.2/275 March, 1795 - July, 1795.
- Ad.2/276 July - October, 1795.
- Ad.2/277 November, 1795 - February, 1796.
- Ad.2/281 January - May, 1797.

Lords Letters to Secretaries of State for this period occupy three volumes. All were consulted:-

- Ad.2/374 January, 1783 - January, 1797.
- Ad.2/375 January, 1797 - June, 1804.
- Ad.2/376 July, 1804 - November, 1815.

Miscellaneous Letters relating mainly to Office Establishments.

Ad.2/1393 1797-1801.

These letters concern the Navy and Victualling Boards establishments.

Secretary's Department. Indexes and Compilations. Ad.12.
Series 3.

From 1793 there is a 2 volume Index and Digest of In Letters, arranged alphabetically for each year, after 1801 there are three volumes of each. There is also a Digest of In Letters from 1763-1792 in 4 volumes, arranged numerically - Ind.4806-4809. These do not go into details which can be gathered from the letters themselves, but they do give a general impression of business. Those consulted were:-

- Ind.4809 1777-1792.
- Ind.4813 Digest of In Letters, 1793.
- Ind.4818 Index.

Digests of In Letters.

- Ind.4809 1777-1792.
- Ind.4813 1793.
- Ind.4820 1795.
- Ind.4821 1795.

Index of In Letters.

- Ind.4818 1795.
- Ind.4819 1795.

Admiralty 3 Series. Minutes. Ad.3.

These are divided into Board and Rough minutes. They are not indexed, there are occasional gaps and they were used to confirm specific points or read generally and briefly. For this period they extend from Ad.3/98 to Ad.3/127 and the Rough minutes from Ad.3/128 - Ad.3/156. Those most generally used were:-

Ad.3/100 October, 1784 - July, 1785.
 Ad.3/104 January - August, 1788.
 Ad.3/107 January - December, 1790.
 Ad.3/115 January - April, 1795.
 Ad.3/132 January - June, 1795 - Rough minutes.
 Ad.3/152 January - April, 1805.
 Ad.3/155 October - December, 1805.

Navy Board. In Letters. Ad.106.
 There are none from the Admiralty for this period. See Ad.2 and N.M.M. records.

Navy Board Minutes. Ad.106.
 These were only used to confirm specific points already noticed in letters to the Admiralty.

Ad.106/2617 January - April, 1785.
 Ad.106/2668 January - December, 1805.

Transport Department. Ad.108.
 The only In Letters of this period are from the Treasury, but the Admiralty's orders can be obtained from Ad.2. The Out letters proved more useful and were consulted for relations with the War Office and subordinate naval boards.

Letters to Secretaries of State and others.

Ad.108/19 December, 1795 - March, 1799.

General Out Letters.
 Ad.108/28 1795-1800.

Sir Rupert George's Letter Book.
 Ad.108/30 1796-1806.

George was chairman of the Transport Board and his letters reveal some of the problems with which the Board had to deal.

Transport Board Minutes.

These extend from Ad.108/31 to Ad.108/80. Those consulted in detail were:-

Ad.108/31 August - September, 1794.
 Ad.108/32 September - November, 1794.
 Ad.108/33 November - December, 1794.
 Ad.108/34 December, 1794 - January, 1795.

From 1800 there is an Index of minutes. Those used were:-

Ad.108/7800 1800 Index for volumes 60 - 68.

Ad.108/7803 1803-4 Index for volumes 74-77.

Victualling Department.

The Victualling Board Out Letters - Ad.110 are similar to those at Greenwich. Ad.110/32 to Ad.110/54 cover this period.

The Victualling Board Minutes - Ad.111 are extensive, Ad.111/97 to Ad.111/179 cover this period. Those consulted were:-

Ad.111/115 January - June, 1789.

Ad.111/116 July - December, 1789.

Ad.111/150 January - March, 1799.

Ad.111/152 July - September, 1799.

Ad.111/166 January - March, 1803.

Ad.111/177 October - December, 1805.

Medical Department.

Ad.98/15 Out Letters to the Admiralty 1785-1793.

Ad.98/107 " " " " " 1796-1797. These

letters mainly relate to prisoners of war.

Ad.99/50 Medical Department Minutes-General. 1783-1792.

Ad.99/51 " " " " " 1793-1797.

Greenwich Hospital Minutes. Ad.67.

Ad.67/151 Minutes of the Council of Greenwich Hospital
1783-1785.

Ad.67/35 Minutes of the Directors of Greenwich Hospital.
1786.

Miscellanea-Variou.

Ad.80/74 Papers relating to the management of Greenwich Hospital 1703-1810.

Ad.80/75 Papers relating to the affairs of Chatham Chest and Greenwich Chest 1712-1813.

Accountant General's Department. Accounts Various. Ad.17.

Ad.17/1 House of the First Lord of the Admiralty, 1786-1791.

Ad.17/7 Admiralty Office Contingent Account 1759-1795.

Ad.17/8 " " " " " 1800-1814.

There is an appropriate bundle of accounts for each year.

Ad.17/222 Accounts of Money received from the Exchequer, 1742-1823.

Accountant General's Department. Registers of Salaries and Pensions. Ad.22.

Ad.22/4	Register of Salaries and Pensions	1786-1789.
Ad.22/5	" " " " "	1790-1793.
Ad.22/6	Register of Salaries	1793-1796.
Ad.22/8	" " "	1798-1801.
Ad.22/9	" " "	1801-1804.
Ad.22/10	" " "	1804-1806.
Ad.22/17	Register of Pensions	1793-1896.
Ad.22/19	" " "	1801-1804.

All these records proved most useful in ascertaining sums spent, numbers employed etc.

Home Office Records. H.O.

These were used to discover details not given in Admiralty correspondence with the Home Office.

H.O.28/5	Departmental - Admiralty Correspondence - Lords of the Admiralty	1785-1787.
H.O.28/25	Departmental - Admiralty Correspondence - Lords of the Admiralty	1799.
H.O.28/33	Departmental - Naval-All Departments	1805.
H.O.29/2	Departmental - Admiralty Entry Book General	1784-1793.
H.O.29/3	" " " " "	1793-1796.

Treasury Records. T.

These were used to confirm details of Admiralty estimates and business concerning them between the Admiralty and Treasury.

T.27/36	Out Letter Book	1784.
T.27/37	Out Letter Book	1784-5.

Treasury Indexes. T.2.

Those used were:-

Ind.8540 (T.2(5))	1785.
Ind.8559 (T.2(24))	1795.
Ind.8579 (T.2(64))	1805.

War Office Records. W.O.

Secretary of State Out Letters, Letters to Public Departments: The Admiralty. W.O.6.

W.O.6/147	1794-1797.
W.O.6/148	1798-1801.

Stationery Office Records. Stat.

In Letters from the Treasury. Indexed. Stat.1.

Stat.1/1 14 February,1798-10 July, 1802.

Stat.1/2 22 July,1802 - 24 October,1807.

Out Letters - Treasury-Entry Book. Indexed.Stat.3.

Stat.3/1 5 August,1785 - 17 April,1798. This contains some letters from other departments, including the Admiralty and some in letters.

Stat.3/2 15 January,1798 - 29 July,1802.

Out Letters-Miscellaneous: Entry Books. Indexed. Stat.3.

Stat.3/56 4 August,1802 - 17 December,1822.

Stat.3/57 August,1802 - December,1810.

Includes letters from contractors etc.

Primary Sources - Printed.A. Parliamentary Papers.

1. The Taking of Fees and Perquisites in Public Offices etc.
 Reports from Commissioners. 1806,vii.
 No.III. The Admiralty.
 No.IV. The Treasurer of the Navy.
 No.V. The Navy Board.
 No.VI. The Dockyards.
 No.VII. The Sick and Hurt Board.
 No.VIII. The Victualling Board.
 No.IX. The Naval and Victualling Departments at Foreign or Distant Ports.
 Nos.III,VI,VII were particularly useful. All contain very full accounts of working conditions, pay, staff numbers etc.
2. House of Commons Reports. Miscellaneous.1783-4,xxxvi.
 No.55 Portsmouth Borough.
3. Select Committee of Finance Reports. 1797-1798.
 No.XVII. The Admiralty, the Navy Board, the Navy Pay Office, the Marine Pay Office.1803,xii.
 No.XVIII.The Transport Office. 1803,xii.
 No.XXII. Auditing the Accounts of the Public Receipt and Expenditure. The Exchequer.1803,xii.
 No.XXIV. Public Debt and Expenditure for 1797. 1803,xiii.
 No.XXXI. The Admiralty, Dockyards and Transports.1803,xiii.

- No.XXXII.The Victualling Office. 1803,xiii.
 No.XXXIII. The Office for Sick and Wounded Seamen.1803,
 xiii.
 No.XXXIV.Chatham Chest, Greenwich and Chelsea Hospitals,
 1803,xiii.

Nos.XVIII,XXXI were especially useful. At the end of
 vol.xiii are Admiralty Proceedings on the Finance
 Reports,1798-1803.

Nos. G.H.I.K. All were read, but G. and H. were
 especially useful.

4. Select Committee Report. 1800,xv.
 The State of Public Records of the Kingdom, pts.i,ii.
5. The Commission of Naval Enquiry for inquiring into
 Irregularities, Frauds and Abuses practised in the
 Naval Departments and in the business of Prize Agency.
 Reports from Commissioners. 1803-1806.
 No.I. Naval Storekeepers at Jamaica.1802-3,iv.
 No.II. Chest at Chatham. 1802-3,iv.
 No.III. Block Contract. Coopers' Contract.1802-3,iv.
 No.V. Sixpenny Office. 1802-3,iv.
 No.VI. Plymouth Yard. Woolwich Yard. 1803-4,iii.
 No.IX. Receipt and Issue of Stores in Plymouth Yard.
 1805,ii.
 No.X. The Office of the Treasurer of His Majesty's
 Navy.1805,ii.
 No.XII. Purchases of Hemp, Masts and Fir Timber.
 Observations by way of supplement to the First
 Report on the Memorial of the Principal Officers
 and Commissioners of His Majesty's Navy in
 answer to that report.1806,iv.
6. Accounts and Papers.
 Accounts relating to Public Expenditure,1688-1801.
 1868-9,xxxv.pt.ii.

- B. Parliamentary Journals, Histories etc.
Journals of the House of Commons.
 Volumes XL,XLI,XLII,XLIII,XLIV,XLVI,LVII,LIX,LX.
The Parliamentary History of England,1066-1803,ed.Cobbett
 and Wright. Volumes xxv,xxvi,xxxi,xxxii,xxxiii were
 especially used.
The Debates and Proceedings of the House of Commons. Printed
 for J.Stockdale.Volume viii.pt.ii.
The Parliamentary Register (1743-1802). Various volumes were
 consulted to supplement gaps in The Parliamentary History.

Parliamentary Debates. ed.by W.Cobbett. Volumes i,ii,iii,iv,v.
A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for
 High Treason and other crimes and misdemeanours. T.B.Howell.
 33 vols.London,1816-26. Vol.29. 1804-6. Used for Lord
 Melville's trial.

C. Contemporary Newspapers and Periodicals.

The Times. 1803-1804, 1805.
The True Briton. 1797.
The London Chronicle. 1797.
The World. 1788.
The Morning Post. 1788, 1805.
The Morning Chronicle. 1788,1797.
The London Gazette. 1785.
The Sun. 1802-4.
The Annual Register. xxviii,xlv,xlvi,xlvii,li.
The Naval Chronicle. i,ii,iii,iv, xxv.

D. Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports.

Bathurst Mss. Report on the Mss. of Earl Bathurst at
 Cirencester Park. (London,1923). Contains
 references to Cabinet changes in 1804-6.

Dartmouth Mss. Eleventh Report, Appendix,Part V. The Mss.
 of the Earl of Dartmouth.(London,1887).
 Used for several references to naval promotions
 by Lord Chatham, illustrating the use of
 'interest'.

Dropmore Mss. Report on Official Mss. of J.B.Fortescue
 preserved at Dropmore. 10 Volumes.(London,
 1892 etc.) They contain the private papers
 of Lord Grenville as Home and Foreign
 Secretary, between 1789-1801. Vols.I-VII were
 used.

Mss.of Robert Graham Esq.of Fintry. Supplementary Report,
 pt.I. (London,1924). Has some reference to
 co-operation between navy and army officers.

Lothian Mss. Report on the Mss. of the Marquess of Lothian
 preserved at Blickling Hall.(London,1905).
 Used for several references to John Modyford
 Heywood.

Rutland Mss. Fourteenth Report, Appendix,pt.I.The Mss. of
 His Grace the Duke of Rutland preserved at
 Belvoir Castle. 4 vols. (London,1888-1905).
 Vol.III was used for examples of patronage
 and 'interest' and relations between the
 Admiralty and Ordnance after Richmond and
 Chatham had quarreled.

Report on the Mss. in Various Collections. Vol. VI. Cornwallis Wykeham-Martin Mss. Mainly letters to and from Admiral William Cornwallis and his family, on naval and political affairs. Useful for personal accounts of changes at the Admiralty.

The Mss. of Captain H.V. Knox. (London, 1909). Has a few references to Admiralty commissioners circa 1788.

Contemporary Pamphlets, Autobiographies and Published Correspondence etc.

Navy Records Society Publications.

- Barnes, G.R. and Owen, Commander J.H. (ed.) The Private Papers of John Earl of Sandwich. Vol. IV. (London, 1938). Used for Middleton's work as Comptroller.
- Bonner Smith, D. (ed.) Letters of Admiral of the Fleet the Earl of St. Vincent, 1801-1804. 2 vols. (London, 1921, 1926). St. Vincent's papers as First Lord, useful for his naval reforms. The Appendix to Vol. II is a copy of Memoirs of the Administration of the Board of Admiralty under the presidency of the Earl of St. Vincent, and contains much useful information on frauds and their political connections found in the dockyards.
- Bullocke, J.G. (ed.) The Tomlinson Papers. (London, 1935). Used for references to various Admiralty lords.
- Corbett, J.S. and Richmond, Rear-Admiral H.W. (ed.) The Private Papers of George, Second Earl Spencer, 1794-1801. 4 vols. (London 1913-4, 1923-4). Spencer's papers while First Lord.
- Hamilton, Sir R.V. (ed.) Letters and Papers of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Thomas Byam Martin. 3 vols. (London, 1898-1902). Vols. I, III. Martin's father was Comptroller of the Navy Board, 1790-1794. These volumes contain recollections of him and of Admiralty lords and naval events.
- Hamilton, Sir R.V. and Laughton, Sir J.K. (ed.) Recollections of James Anthony Gardner, 1775-1814. (London, 1906). Contains character sketches of some Admiralty lords, notably Leveson-Gower and Seymour.
- Hughes, E. (ed.) The Private Correspondence of Admiral Lord Collingwood. (London, 1957). The early pages show how 'interest' and patronage could be brought to bear on the First Lord.

- Laughton, Sir J.K.(ed.) The Naval Miscellany, I. (London,1901). Contains some of Admiral Samuel Hood's papers from the Mediterranean, circa 1794 and letters concerning his removal from office.
- The Letters and Papers of Charles, Lord Barham. 3 vols.(London,1906-1910).Vols.II,III. Barham's papers while an Admiralty lord and later First Lord.
- Lewis, M.A.(ed.) Sir William Dillon's Narrative of Professional Adventures, 1790-1839. 2 vols.(London,1953-56). I.1790-1802. Used for general naval background, and sketches of Admiralty lords, especially Seymour.
- Leyland, J. (ed.) Dispatches and Letters relating to the Blockade of Brest, 1803-1805. 2 vols.(London,1898,1901).
- Lloyd, C. (ed.) The Naval Miscellany, IV. (London,1952). Contains a section on the use of rockets to destroy the invasion fleet at Boulogne. Useful for the inter-relations of Admiralty, Ordnance and Cabinet.
- The Keith Papers, selected from the letters and papers of Admiral Viscount Keith. Vols. II, III.(London,1950,1955). Used for relations between the services, events in the Mediterranean and Near East, the interference of the Foreign Office in Admiralty affairs etc.
- Lloyd, C. and Anderson, R.C.(ed.) A Memoir of James Trevenen. (London,1959). Contains some references to Admiral Young, an Admiralty lord.
- Markham, Sir C. (ed.) The Correspondence of Admiral John Markham, 1801-1807. (London,1904). Markham was one of St. Vincent's reforming Admiralty and his papers contain information about the reforms and the people concerned.
- Perrin, W.G.(ed.) The Keith Paper, selected from the letters and papers of Admiral Viscount Keith. Vol.I. (London,1926).
- Thursfield, Rear-Admiral H.G. (ed.) Five Naval Journals, 1789-1817. (London,1951). Used for general naval background.

Other Publications.

- Anson, Sir W.(ed.) Autobiography and Political Correspondence of Augustus Henry, Third Duke of Grafton.(London, 1898). Contains letters to and from Richard Hopkins, one of the Admiralty lords about the formation of Pitt's first Cabinet.

- Aspinall, A.(ed.) The Later Correspondence of George III, 1783-1797. 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1962-3). Contains naval references and shows the interest George III took in naval affairs. It also has Cabinet decisions regarding Admiralty or naval affairs, letters from Earl Howe and Earl Spencer etc. The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales, 1770-1812. 2 vols. (London, 1963-4). Contains occasional references, especially to Seymour who was a close friend of the Prince.
- Aspinall, A. and Smith, E.A. (eds.) English Historical Documents. XI. 1783-1832. (London, 1959).
- Bourchier, Lady (ed.) Memoir of the Life of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington. 2 vols. (London, 1873). Vol. I.
- Browning, O. (ed.) The Political Memoranda of Francis Godolphin Osborne Fifth Duke of Leeds. Camden Society Publications, New Series, XXV. 1884. Has information on Cabinet quarrels, decisions and methods of business. Useful only to 1791 when Leeds, former Foreign Secretary, left the Cabinet.
- Buckingham and Chandos, Second Duke of. (ed.) Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III. 4 vols. (London, 1853-5).
- Chatterton, Georgiana Lady (ed.) Memorials, personal and historical of Admiral Gambier. 2 vols. (London, 1861). Gambier was an Admiralty lord and relative of Middleton. This book had limited use but throws light on the evangelical circle with which Gambier and Middleton were associated.
- Colchester, Lord. (ed.) The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbott, Lord Colchester. 3 vols. (London, 1861). Abbott was Speaker of the House of Commons for most of this period and his diary contains useful information on topical events.
- Greig, J. (ed.) The Farington Diary by Joseph Farington, R.A. Second ed. 8 vols. (London, 1922-1928). Vol. I. Only of slight use, contains occasional references to Admiralty lords.
- Harcourt, Rev. L.V. (ed.) The Diaries and Correspondence of the Rt. Hon. George Rose, 1744-1818. 2 vols. (London, 1860). Rose was secretary to the Treasury and a trusted friend and confidant of Pitt. His diaries contain some naval references but are generally useful for the background of political events.

- Hardy, C.F. (ed.) The Benenden Letters, 1753-1821. (London, 1901). Letters between Richard Cox, a clerk in the Sick and Hurt Office and cousin to the naval storekeeper at Harwick, and William Benenden. Though mostly concerned with events and people before 1783 they give some idea of the life of humbler naval officials, which is all too rare.
- Londonderry, The Marquess of, (ed.) The Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh. 4 vols. (London, 1848). Vols. I, II. Mainly dealing with affairs in Ireland and used for the contacts between the Home Office, Admiralty and Lord Lieutenant.
- A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late William Marsden by himself. (London, 1838). Marsden was Admiralty secretary and witness to the inner workings of the Board. Marsden approved of Lord Spencer's board and was critical of St. Vincent's methods. He particularly disliked the harsh methods of Markham and Troubridge and criticised the treatment of the Navy Board, and the behaviour of the Commission of Naval Enquiry.
- Maxwell, Sir H. (ed.) The Creevey Papers. A Selection from the Correspondence and Diaries of the late Thomas Creevey, M.P. 2 vols. (London, 1904). Vol. I. Used for the events of 1805-6.
- Newnham, Rev. G. L. (ed.) A Selection from the Public and Private Correspondence of Lord Collingwood. 2 vols. (London, 1837). Vol. I.
- Nicolas, Sir N. H. (ed.) The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson. 7 vols. (London, 1844-1846). Contains much diplomatic material, the problems of a commander in the Mediterranean, dealing with difficult allies, the co-operation between naval officers and Foreign Office appointees etc.
- Letters to the Right Honourable Earl of Chatham by an Old Sailor. (London, 1790).
- Paget, Sir Augustus. (ed.) The Paget Papers: diplomatic and other correspondence of the Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur Paget, 1794-1807. 2 vols. (London, 1896). Vol. I. Used for relations between Paget, while consul at Constantinople and Admiral Keith and generally for naval-diplomatic relations.
- Pellevé, Hon. G. (ed.) The Life and Correspondence of the Rt. Hon. Henry Addington, First Viscount Sidmouth. 2 vols. (London, 1847). Vol. I. Used for events after 1801.

- Roseberry, Earl of (ed.) The Life and Correspondence of the Rt. Hon. William Windham, 1750-1810. 2 vols. (London, 1913). Contains much useful information on relations between Spencer, Windham, Grenville and Dundas. Also has many references to naval affairs, chiefly in connection with expeditions to La Vendée and Quiberon Bay.
- Wraxall, Nathaniel. Historical Memoirs. 4 vols. (London, 1818). General period background.

Secondary Sources.

General Reference Works.

- Betham, W. The Baronetage of England. 5 vols. (Ipswich, 1801-5).
- Burke, John. A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire. (London, 1828, 1853).
A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland. 4 vols. (London, 1835-1838).
- Burke, Sir John Bernard and John. History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies. Second Edition. (London, 1844).
A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry. 3 vols. (London, 1846-1849).
- Cockayne, G.E. Complete Baronetage, 1611-1800. 5 vols. (Exeter, 1900-1906).
The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom: A History of the House of Lords and all its members from the earliest times. New ed. by the Hon. V. Gibbs, H.A. Doubleday, D. Warrand, Lord H. de Walden, G.H. White and R.S. Lea. 13 vols. (London, 1910-1959).
- Ford, P. and G. A Guide to Parliamentary Papers. (Oxford, 1956).
- Dictionary of National Biography, ed. by S. Lee and L. Stephen. (London, 1885-1900).
- Judd, G.P. Members of Parliament, 1734-1832. (New Haven, 1955).
- Manwaring, G.E. A Bibliography of British Naval History. A Bibliographical and Historical Guide to Printed and Manuscript Sources. (London, 1930).
- Marshall, J. Royal Naval Biography. 12 vols. (London, 1823-1830). i, iii.
- Namier, Sir Lewis and Brooke, J. The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1754-1790. 3 vols. (London, 1964).

- O'Byrne, W.R. Naval Biographical Dictionary. 3 vols. (London, 1849).
- Ralfe, J. The Naval Biography of Great Britain. 4 vols. (London, 1828).
- Steven Watson, J. The Reign of George III, 1765-1815. (Oxford, 1960).

Detailed Reference Works.

- Adams, E.D. The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy, 1787-1798. Carnegie Institute of Washington Publications, no. 13. 1904.
- Albion, R.G. Forests and Sea Power: The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862. Harvard Economic Studies, vol. xxxix. (Cambridge, U.S.A. 1926). Used for the Navy's Board's difficulties and their relations with the timber contractors.
- Clowes, Sir W. Laird. The Royal Navy, a History from the earliest times to the present. 7 vols. (London, 1897-1903). Vols. IV, V, were used. They contain lists of office holders and accounts of administrative developments as well as naval battles.
- Barrow, Sir J. The Life of Richard, Earl Howe. (London, 1838).
- Beveridge, Sir W. and others. Prices and Wages in England from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Century. I. (London, 1939). Used for prices of naval and victualling stores and for details of the Navy Debt, methods of paying Navy bills etc.
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