

Foreign Intelligence.

LONDON, April 27. HOUSE OF COMMONS. WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26.

(Concluded from yesterday's Gazette.)

Mr. Fox. The subject now proposed to the consideration of the Committee, is of such vast and serious importance, that I think it unnecessary to apologize for following the right hon. gentleman through some of the various statements and calculations he has made, and offering my reasons for differing most essentially in opinion with him, not only with regard to the state of the finances of the country, but also with respect to the deductions which he has endeavoured to establish from the positions which he has brought forward. The road, sir, we have to travel, is not beset with flowers, but opens to our view a comfortless and dreary prospect, and, while we rashly continue to pursue it, we are deprived of every means to avoid the impending precipices with which it is on every side surrounded. I treat gentlemen to consider and compare the statements they have heard this day from the right hon. gentleman, and those with which he has, on former occasions, but too successfully deluded them. But however specious and unfounded his financial calculations have formerly been, they are even exceeded in delusion by his statements made this day, which I maintain are altogether unprecedented in the history of Finance. The right hon. gentleman came forward in the month of December last, and having succeeded in obtaining a supply of 18 millions, he now repeats the experiment, and calls on us for the same sum. But how has he preface this sudden and extraordinary demand? He has declared, that the talk of applying to the House, after so short an interval, and for so large a sum, is irksome and painful to him, and that he has been disappointed in his views. That he has disappointed us by this unexpected application, I most readily admit; but what particular disappointments the right hon. gentleman may have experienced, which compel him to have recourse to our liberality, after the recent and most convincing proof we have already given of it, or which can justify his applying for this enormous sum, I am, sir, at a loss to conceive. Does he forget the language which he used in this House on the 7th of last December, and must he be reminded, that 18 millions then advanced were given not so much with an idea of prosecuting the war, as with an earnest hope of enabling him to forward the great and defensible work of Peace? Can it be necessary for me to recall to him the public wishes at that period for a speedy termination of the war; and that the Loan was accomplished on the general hope of a successful issue to lord Malmesbury's embassy? He told us then, that the advance of 18 millions was an ample supply, for such were his words, for the exigencies of the State, and adequate to the pressure of every circumstance. Yet no disappointment has since happened to induce him so suddenly to repeat the experiment. I cannot for my part perceive any disappointment which can have compelled him to this unprecedented application, except the state of Ireland alone, and the sum required for the embarrassments of that Kingdom amounts to a million and a half. What other disappointments the sanguine expectations of the right hon. gentleman may have suffered, he has not condescended to inform us. I clearly exposed the delusions with which he amused the House when he called on us to provide for the last Loan of 18 millions, and the event has fully verified what I then pressed so earnestly on the attention of gentlemen. With respect to the statements made in the report of the Select Committee, of the produce of the permanent taxes for the years 1793, 1794, and 1795, I am willing to give the right hon. gentleman every benefit he may wish to derive from that report, however I may differ in opinion with the subject matter of the report, and object to the documents on which it is founded. In speaking of the produce of the taxes in 1796, as stated in the report of the Select Committee, on which he builds his calculations, (I stop here for a moment, and request it may be remembered, that I do not agree to the extent of that part of the report, or to the use which he makes of it), not knowing the amount of the Hat and Legacy Duty, I allow them to produce what he himself thinks fit to state; but when I come to the Wine duty, there, sir, I beg leave to observe, that I differ both with the Committee and with the right hon. gentleman. The stock in hand cannot, in any respect, be considered as an annual tax, and, indeed, the right hon. gentleman seems by the very arguments which he introduces in favour of that opinion to admit that it cannot be viewed in that light. The fair way to estimate the produce of the wine duty is to calculate it for 1796 on the same ground as it was considered in 1795; and I will, sir, by a parity of reasoning, argue for the produce of 1797, by the experience we have had of the preceding year. Thus having given the right hon. gentleman full credit for the Hat and Legacy duty, and admitting that a duty of 2 l. per ton will produce in '96, what it has produced in '95 I still maintain that there remains a deficiency of no less a sum than 357,000 l. in the produce of the taxes brought forward by the right hon. gentleman. I will not argue that because he was minus 357,000 l. he should have immediately proceeded to provide for it; but I will content, that for him to maintain that he had a surplus when he was actually minus 357,000 l. is a delusion of too gross and palpable a nature to impose on the understanding. But if even the taxes of 1796 produced the sum it was intended they should, there would still be a deficiency of 88,000 l. and that according to the report of the Select Committee.— Let us then consider that at the beginning

of the session we were 357,000 l. short;— that in October the right hon. gentleman funds his Navy bills, and immediately after, in December, makes his Loan, should he not then have said that the interest of the taxes which have been proposed, it appears that a sum of 1,830,000 l. in taxes would not be too much for the various calls of the present moment. The deficiency on my calculation amounts to 470,000 l. and not to 210,000 l. as stated by the right hon. gentleman, and in the report of the Select Committee.— And here, sir, I think it necessary to declare, that the report of that Committee does not merit the eulogium which has been lavished on it. I believe it has originated from, and has been conducted with good intentions; but that it is particularly clear, that it is founded on convincing documents, and that it is supported by evident and accurate calculations, I can by no means admit. For I beg leave to ask, what has been the line of conduct pursued by the members of the Committee? They sent to the public offices for the calculations in the respective departments; and on these papers, so supplied through the very channel of Government, they proceeded to form a decisive opinion; and here I must notice, that in delivering their decision to the house, they have merely grounded their proceedings on the authorities furnished incontestably by government, and which alone we are thus called upon to sanction. In stating the produce of the permanent taxes, they have recourse to the stoppage of the distilleries, for the purpose of accounting for the deficiency which took place in them, and proceeding on the same system, they also allude to the bounties granted to seamen in 1796, when it cannot be denied, that these bounties were in reality issued not in one year, but within a year and a half. This conduct was therefore prejudicial to the produce of the permanent taxes in 1795, and to that of other years. They say, that the stoppage of the distilleries between June 1795, and November 1796, must have materially affected the amount of that part of the produce which arises from the duty on British spirits. They do not venture to state the precise deficiency, but on comparing the produce of the duties on British spirits in 1796, with the average produce of the same duties in the three preceding years, the deficiency is said to be 557,793 l. They immediately admit that upon this computed account of the loss upon the distilleries, an allowance should be made in consideration of any increase of duties upon beer which may have taken place within the same period; but what the amount of that allowance may be, they do not attempt to point out.— Thus, sir, it is evident that they estimate a deficiency in one instance with respect to the stoppage of the distilleries, on the system of a computed average, and reject any substitute for that deficiency in the instance of the duties on beer, which they clearly admit have increased, but which they do not think proper to estimate by comparing it with the average produce of other years, as they have done in the case of distilleries. Let us for a moment take the average produce of the beer tax for the three preceding years, and we shall find, that there arises a sum of 270,000 l. in favor of last year, which has been entirely overlooked in the report of the committee. This sum, I therefore contend, ought to have been added to the produce of the permanent taxes. They have also, sir, stated their estimate of the navy service for the ensuing year to amount to 12,935,000 l. but the right honorable gentleman differs in this very material consideration from the committee, and fixes it at 12,661,000 l. to which if we add, as we are justified in doing, the floating arrears of 1,500,000 l. the estimate will then appear to be 14,161,000 l. Thus the right hon. gentleman, instead of making his estimate, as he says it is, less by 100,000 l. than that furnished by the committee, will in fact make it greatly exceed that which we find in the report. I wish to know, sir, on what principle he has calculated the probable increase of the navy debt for the ensuing year. In my opinion the best, and certainly the most satisfactory way would be, to calculate it by the experience we have had of the expenses incurred in that department of the public service during the last year. I must observe, that in every estimate of this nature he has been always disappointed, and the cause is obvious: he has continually acted on erroneous principles, and has therefore been continually mistaken. What is the line of conduct then which he should adopt? Why, sir, instead of confining himself to narrow and circumscribed statements, instead of implicitly regulating his judgment by the standard of official accounts and trifling calculations, he ought to take matters on a larger, and unquestionably a more secure basis, since it is established by the experience of the past. Let us take a short view of the effect of those estimates on which he prides himself. On the 7th of December, 1795, the right hon. gentleman stated, that the probable increase of the navy debt would be 23 millions, and this he called a very ample estimate. Then it arose to 4 millions; then to 7 millions; and now, in the month of April, which seems to be a fixed term for bringing forward a second budget, he calls for 8 millions more. The right hon. gentleman next tells us, that he has all his documents from the respective offices; and this I believe to be true; but he ought to suppose an increase not merely from official papers, but from the constant experience of facts. The expenses of the navy are at this moment on a much larger scale than any time during the war. 100,000 men were voted for the service of last year; we have this year voted 120,000. Instead, therefore, of making the increase less than it was, he should make it proportionally greater, and it ought to be 6 or 700,000 l. more than what it is now fixed at. With respect to the army extraordinary, the right hon. gentleman says, they are included in the common estimate, but will he not admit that many after payments have frequently taken place? And if so, is it not very likely that

such expenses will be incurred on future occasions? I feel myself justified in declaring from the various views which I have taken of these important subjects, that notwithstanding all the heavy burdens, and all the dreadful taxes we are about to impose this day, we have still one million more to provide for the exigencies of the public service. On the subject of affording pecuniary succours to the emperor, the right hon. gentleman expresses his desire to have a certain sum reserved for that purpose, and in that point I perfectly agree with him. Yet what is not a little extraordinary, he wishes to have 200,000 l. voted as a loan to his imperial majesty immediately; may, sir, if I rightly understand him, he wishes to have the measure agreed to this very night. I hope the right hon. gentleman will set me right, if I have misconceived his intention, or if I mistake what I take to be a most alarming proceeding (Mr. Pitt here signified his intention of moving the 200,000 l. in the course of the night). Then, sir, I maintain such a proceeding to be a direct infringement of the declaration made by the right honorable gentleman, that he wished to have the pecuniary succour intended for the emperor, reserved to a convenient opportunity. I will not pretend to say how far the credit of the country may be hurt by the measure, but let me ask, is there any material difference between exporting 200,000 sterling, and not receiving 200,000 sterling which this country was to receive? Did the right hon. gentleman speak of this extraordinary manner of paying the interest of the loan, when he asked us to be security for the house of Austria, and when he extolled the good faith of the bank of Vienna? But having in compliance with his arguments and entreaties guaranteed the loan, he now with singular feeling laments, it is extremely hard to think that the emperor could pay the interest, as he says, to a day.— To a day, sir?— With more propriety may the right hon. gentleman say, it is hard to suppose that the emperor can discharge it to a year, or to a far more distant time. But when will it be paid? The loan was made to him in critical circumstances, and yet he is not to pay the interest, because he is now in critical circumstances. There has not been hitherto one shilling of the interest discharged, and I fear this country will have cause to repent lending money to the emperor. The right hon. gentleman must beware that if the interest remains unpaid, he must come to the House and provide taxes for the sum guaranteed by us to his Imperial Majesty, and thus add, by more permanent taxes, to the burdens already too heavy to be borne.— With respect to the specious argument which is held out that the restoration of peace will, by restoring commerce to its full extent, also make the produce of the taxes more considerable; I on the contrary maintain that peace is much more likely to diminish than to increase the amount of our taxes. For when we look over our taxes, we find upwards of one million arising entirely from articles which could not be taxed in peace. I cannot agree that the state of our manufactures is more flourishing than it was last year, for the assertion is positively contradicted by the manufacturers. When the Right Hon. Gentleman last year proposed to lay a tax on landed and personal property, he stated the landed rent to amount to 25 millions sterling. I am, however, one of those who think he undervalued it, but taking it at his own estimate, I feel myself justified in saying, that when we have passed the taxes now proposed, and when, after the winding up of the war, we come to a state of peace, we shall have a revenue equal to our whole landed annual produce. We are now Sir, at the end of April, and 18 millions are yet to be found. Three payments have only been made on the Loyalty Loan, and there are still seven tenths of it to be made good, which amount to 12,600,000 l.— We are to vote 18 millions to day; so that between this day and the 1st of January next, we have yet to find for the public exigencies, the enormous sum of 30,600,000 l. We have to furnish in so short a space of time as 35 weeks, 30,600,000 l. or, in other words, almost one million per week, till the end of the year. But, Sir, there is still another point of view in which I wish to place this most serious and alarming consideration. In 1796, the new taxes only produced 3 millions. What then, Sir, is the burden which the subject has hitherto felt? The weight of that sum alone. But the taxes to be imposed this day, with all the others, will make 7 millions and a half. So that we have actually felt only 3 millions; and, to use a favorite expression of Ministers we have been as yet only scratched by the war, for the people have not experienced half the weight of the burthens imposed upon them, and which they must suffer when they come to pay 7 millions and a half instead of three. That it is right and necessary to look these dangers in the face, the right honorable gentleman himself admits, though he is by no means ready to practise the theory which he proclaims. There still remains another article with respect to future expenditure, to which I wish to direct the attention of gentlemen. I mean, Sir, the Bills to be drawn this year, in St. Domingo, on this country, probably to the amount of 900,000 l. The bills drawn in January amounted to 700,000 l. Whether they have been paid I cannot undertake to say; but if half remains unpaid, and an additional sum of 900,000 l. is drawn for, I conceive it very difficult to find how the whole is to be discharged. I do not blame the Select Committee for proceeding to their report on the calculations laid before them; but I blame both the Committee and the House for not grounding their opinion on others that convey more solid information; I mean those which are furnished by experience. I am fully sensible of the inestimable value of peace to the country, and it will, by a geometrical progression, become more valuable every year. I know no system to obtain the blessings which it diffuses, and secures, but an unequivocal and steady pursuit in the attain-

ment of it. It is not, Sir, in my opinion, likely to be restored to us by sending Mr. Hammond, or any other man in the hour of impending danger and necessity to Vienna; but in openly declaring and vigorously adhering to equitable and honorable terms. But something more is requisite to be done. The House must prove themselves the Representatives of the people. They must shew the people that they do not blindly confide in a minister by whom they have been so often and so shamefully deceived; and if there is not patriotism enough left to force them to act thus, there is I do not hesitate to assert, an end of the Constitution. From the measures pursued, and the system avowed by Ministers of persevering in them, the country is every day involved in additional perplexities and embarrassments. It is in vain we look round for an open and cheering prospect, for amid this labyrinth and confusion we strive to no purpose to rescue ourselves from distress.— *(While Alps on Apparition.)* With respect to the vote for the Army Extraordinaries, does any man think that the arrears of the army will be extinguished by that measure? No Sir! I am of an opinion directly contrary. The exertion of the public spirit is in this momentous crisis absolutely necessary. The people ought to know that we should have a complete change of system—a change from a blind confidence in Ministers to a watchfulness and jealousy of their conduct. I believe, Sir, I have nothing further to remark than that if the Right Hon. Gentleman means to take the sense of the house on the measure of lending 200,000 l. to the Emperor, I shall most certainly oppose it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in reply to the question put by Mr. Fox, said it was his intention to propose a resolution, granting a temporary loan to the Emperor of 200,000 l. Mr. Grey combated several of the arguments adduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; he charged him with being guilty of misdemeanor in diverting a parliamentary grant of last session, to purposes different from that for which it was voted; and stated, that a sum amounting to 1,054,000 l. to be returned to the banks had been appropriated to other purposes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer defended his conduct, and shewed that the surplus stated by the Hon. gentleman, had been brought to account, and appropriated in the grants of the present session. Mr. Steele defended the Chancellor of the Exchequer (relative to the appropriations of the grant of 5,500,000 l. of last year) from the charges of Mr. Grey, whom he accused of pressing eagerly forward to notice on a point on which he was not properly informed, and quoted the act of parliament, in corroboration of his assertion, that 1,054,000 l. alluded to by Mr. Grey, was not included in that grant. Mr. Grey, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, replied to each other on this subject. Mr. Sheridan charged Mr. Pitt with misrepresenting his own friend (Mr. Grey) after which he stated his objection to the proposed taxes in general, none of which, he said, excepting that of plate, met with his approbation. He particularly objected to the tax proposed on the carriage of goods, and said, that with regard to the additional tax on newspapers, it was oppressive in the extreme. The right hon. gentleman might, if he pleased, indulge himself in a play of words, and title it a tax upon luxury; but he would tell him it was a tax upon literature; it was striking at a source of political information; it was a violent attack upon the liberty of the press, and was calculated to impede the general circulation of parliamentary proceedings. He viewed this proposed tax as of so oppressive a nature, that he believed none but the right hon. gentleman would have ventured to bring it forward, and on every account he was determined to give it his firm opposition. The resolution was then put by the chairman and agreed to, but for the resolution for an increased duty on newspapers, a division ensued, Ayes 151 Nays 43 Majority 108 Strangers were not admitted after the division; but we understand, that after the house was refused, the resolutions were reported by the chairman, and bills ordered to be brought in accordingly; after which, the house resolved itself into a committee of supply, when, upon a motion of the chancellor of the exchequer to make a temporary advancement by way of loan of 200,000 l. to the Emperor, a division ensued, Ayes 149 Nays 45 Majority 104 Adjourned at 11 o'clock. LONDON, APRIL 27. Mr. Pitt's Budget of the new Taxes to pay the interest of the last Loan, as well as former deficiencies, is now before the public, and we feel no difficulty in observing, that if no other Ways and Means can be devised for paying it, there will be a most miserable deficiency indeed of the public revenue. A new tax of three-halfpence on every Newspaper! and an additional duty on advertisements, the indefinite extent of which we know only by the right hon. gentleman's own words, to "amount in some instances to pounds." We are lost in astonishment, at who could be the advisers of such an enormous and impolitic tax, which must defeat the very purpose for which it was intended. We cannot suppose that it is the wish of the Minister to ruin the property of those who have raised a support for themselves and their families at considerable expense, and still more considerable labour and risk; such an intention, we are sure, is beneath his consideration; and yet we are at a loss to conceive, what delusion could have prompted him to such a measure. We know very well that his enemies will say of him, that this tax is intended as an attack on the Liberty of the Press, and to confine the circulation of knowledge; there certainly is ground for suspicion on this head, for the tax is a complete prohibition of the sale of Newspapers. If the hon. gentleman had consulted the books of the Stamp Office,— he would have found, that the too heavy duties he has already imposed on Newspapers, have not much tended to increase the Revenue; and if it has done so in a trifling degree, it is not an object of consideration, when we consider the momentous events that have been passing, to excite the curiosity of the public. When these cease, which we hope

will soon be the case, Mr. Pitt will find that his whole tax on Newspapers will be very trifling indeed. It cannot be unknown to those whom Mr. Pitt ought to have consulted on this subject that half the Newspapers in the kingdom have for some time past been carried on with scarcely any profit, and many at a loss, in hopes of a favorable change in the times— what then must be their situation, when they are raised to a price which must inevitably diminish their sale, as well as the number of their advertisements; for the enormous addition proposed to the already very heavy duty on advertisements, by falling principally on the regular Advertisers, such as Bookellers, Auctioneers, and Venders of Medicines, will so reduce the number of advertisements, as to prove a death blow to at least half the newspapers now printed; and by preventing the advertising of medicines, &c. be equally injurious to the revenue, as it is destructive to the property of Newspapers, and all property, the sale of which was effected through the medium of the Public prints. We have just thrown out these observations to draw Mr. Pitt's attention more minutely to the subject. We are sure this plan will never answer the purposes of the revenue nor will it be possible, with this new heavy imposition of duty, that either the Printer or the Newsmen can afford to sell his Paper without also adding some profit to the little he already gains.— *(Times.)* CONGRESS. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Tuesday, June 20. (Concluded from yesterday's Gazette.) Mr. S. MERRICK thought that by raising these men, they would increase the danger which they wished to avoid. They apprehended an attack from a foreign nation, and to guard against any possible injury they were to go to expense, and by that means increase our national debt, from which he thought we had the greatest danger to fear, since they saw the difficulty attending the raising of any additional revenue. He called the attention of the house to a situation of things not much unlike our own. The French nation had many regiments on their sea coast, and had been long making preparations, as if with a view of invading Great-Britain. In consequence, the British have expended large sums in fortifying and putting the island in a good state of defence; and, though, perhaps the French never seriously intended to invade that country, yet the appearance of it had probably occasioned greater embarrassment, from causing these great expenses, and the consequent derangement of the country, than if an invasion had really taken place. Mr. S. reprobated the idea of defending the country against an invasion by two regiments of artillery. The militia, he said, would be the proper defence in such a case; but he trusted the commissioners appointed for the purpose would speedily settle all differences between the two countries. Mr. S. spoke of a very serious statement which they had received the other day from the secretary of the treasury, which did not seem to call for additional expense, but for additional revenue. It appeared by that document that there was due from the government to the bank of the United States, 4,750,000 dollars. Yet they were told these expenses must be gone into and money borrowed whenever the interest might be. In common life, he believed, if a man was pressed for money, it was accounted a prudent thing for a man to retrench his expenses. He supposed the same rule ought to hold good in respect to government. But it was said, if these men were not raised, privateers would come into our ports, and insult our citizens. Had there been any thing during the present European war, which could justify such an apprehension? He thought not. He did not know a single instance of insult, except that of the British ambassador at Rhode Island, because some officers were not released. As to any invasion taking place, he had no idea of it; but if it were to happen, militia would be the best defence and no expense would be incurred, except there was a necessity; but if artillery were raised the expense would be certain. Mr. HARTLEY was against striking out the first section; for, though he did not think 950 additional artillery were necessary, he thought there was a necessity for some, and also for an increase of the infantry. He thought 4000 men necessary for a peace establishment, as it would be very inconvenient to march militia from one end of the Union to the other. He did not wish to go into details, but he wished the force to be efficient. He knew there must be an increase of taxes; he was for a land tax, and wished to go immediately into it. Mr. BROOKS said, if he believed there was no danger, he should agree with gentlemen that there would be no occasion for these men; but thinking our situation in no degree improved by the late events in Europe, he should vote for raising the proposed regiment. The objection of expense would go against every measure. As there was no certainty of our ambassadors being able to settle our dispute with France, they ought, he said, like wise men, to foresee, and prevent the evil. He was afraid gentlemen were got into a profound sleep, and would not wake till it was too late. Mr. S. SMITH said that the report from the secretary of war had confirmed his opinion with respect to this measure. The gentleman from S. Carolina had spoken of a number of forts which had been thought of in 1794, but which had since been given up. With respect to non-commissioned officers which that gentleman seemed to think should be deducted from the number of men, they were the life of the artillery service, and the nucleus were few. To show that the present number of men would be sufficient, he stated the following as being a proper number for each place, viz. West Point 60, New-York 60, Mud-Island 60, Baltimore 50, Norfolk 50, Wilmington N. C. 30, Charleston 60, Savannah 30, Newport 60, Portland 30, Portsmouth 30, Point Petre (Georgia) 30, Western Posts 412— Total 992.