

THE BRITISH-AMERICAN REGISTER.

QUEBEC, SATURDAY, 19th MARCH, 1803.

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House of Commons, Dec. 8; 1802.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Upon the motion of the Secretary at War the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply.

The SECRETARY at WAR rose.—He began by saying, that it was his duty to lay before the Committee the proposed establishment of the army for the ensuing year. The estimates upon the table certainly exhibited the detail of an army larger considerably than any which had been maintained by this country upon a peace establishment. The main question to be decided, in his opinion, was not the *quantum* of the force to be kept, but whether that force was necessary; and upon this point he did not imagine much could be said in addition to the arguments used when the navy estimates were before the Committee. The Hon. Gentleman here alluded to the arguments adduced upon that debate, which he combated with great force. He remarked that the present state of France seemed to have realized the most sanguine dreams of Louis XIV. That this country must be prepared to any emergency, but not commit any act of aggression or heedless violence, and at the same time resist, in a bold and manly manner, any attack upon the national honour. He then entered into a detail of the state of the French army as it at present stands, from which he shewed that the army of the Republic amounted, to upwards of 400,000 men, exclusive of the late conscript levy. Such being the case, it surely became in-

dispensable for England to have a force larger than she ever had upon a peace establishment. This country had no right to calculate upon the duration of any peace, unless it was in possession of the most effectual and efficient means of self-defence. There was a constitutional objection to a large standing army in time of peace, unless it was sanctioned by Parliament. This he was most readily disposed to admit; but he had an answer to every objection of the kind in one short word, namely, "necessity." The force intended to be kept up consisted of 27 regiments of Dragoon Guards—the Foot Guards to remain upon their present establishment. The total number of Cavalry to be 17,250, and the Foot Guards to consist of 6060. It was proposed to maintain 102 battalions of infantry, the regiments of the line to be up to the 93d. The Royals, being a very old and most valuable corps, the second battalion of that regiment was not intended to be reduced.—The two battalions of the 52d, for the same reason, was also to be kept.—There were also five additional battalions of the 60th; and it was also, with the permission of the Committee, to include the 94th. These regiments would consist of 75 rank and file per company, except those corps destined for service in India, whose complement would be still higher. This statement made up 102 battalions of infantry. The West-India regiments had been reduced from twelve to six, and it was proposed to retain those six regiments. The foreign corps now consisted only of four regiments;—1st. that called