

First, therefore, *what reductions have been made by his Majesty's ministers, in the annual expenditure and taxation of the country, from the conclusion of the war to the present period.*

Upon the conclusion of the war, in 1815, the first and anxious consideration of his Majesty's ministers was to make such a reduction in the establishments, as might be consistent with the security of the empire, and its station among European powers. In considering this question, the immediate subject of inquiry was, the general basis upon which the future peace establishment should be estimated. The peace establishment of 1792 naturally suggested itself to their consideration. As in all political questions it is not only matter of prudence and policy, but contributes much to the facility of business, to proceed according to some acknowledged rule, his Majesty's ministers adopted this estimate in the first instance subject, however, to the qualifications rendered necessary by a new state of things, and by an actual knowledge (which they personally possessed) that Mr. Pitt himself had often regretted that he had taken the establishment of 1792 at too low a scale, and was therefore obliged to augment it in time of peace. With these qualifications, his Majesty's ministers adopted the peace estimate of 1792.

Having assumed this basis, the next process was to consider in what respect the general state of the nation, and its relations with the other powers of Europe, on the conclusion of the war, differed from the condition of the country in 1792; and what augmentation was necessary for the new circumstances severally considered. The new peace establishment, whatever it might be, was to be distributed through the four branches—of Great Britain, Ireland, and the old and new colonies. In Great Britain, in 1792, the peace establishment was 17,000 men. Now, in the condition of Great Britain at the conclusion of the war, there were two main circumstances which essentially distinguished her situation from that of 1792. Her great increase of population, amounting at least to one-fifth; and, without intending to express any doubt of the loyalty and patriotism of the great body of this happy country, it must be added, that there was assuredly somewhat of a new state of the public mind, and a new force given to public passions, in the peculiar form which the press of that day had already assumed. There was yet a third, and fourth circumstance, in the enlarged basis and frame-work of the army and navy themselves, and in the new system of relieving foreign garrisons, so happily adopted; that of relieving by regiments, instead of drafts. Under the collective effect of these several circumstances, his Majesty's ministers were led into the necessary conclusion, that an augmentation of at least one-third of the establishment of 1792 was necessary for the home-establishment in Great Britain in 1816. They accord-