

PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURE.

COPY of TREASURY MISURE, dated 10th June 1831;
Letter from Admiralty, 17th June 1831; Ditto, Secretary
of State for the Colonies, 29th June 1831; Ditto, Ordnance,
5th July 1831; TREASURY MISURE, dated 8th July 1831,
upon the subject of giving to Parliament a more early
and effectual Control over the EXPENDITURE for Public
WORKS ANDOARD, as recommended by the Select Committee
of The House of Commons appointed to consider the Water
Communication in Canada.

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
15 July 1831.*

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C O P Y

OF

TREASURY MINUTE, dated 10th June 1831; LETTER from the Admiralty, 17th June 1831; Ditto, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 29th June 1831; Ditto, Ordnance, 5th July 1831; TREASURY MINUTE, dated 8th July 1831, upon the subject of giving to Parliament a more early and effectual Control over the EXPENDITURE for PUBLIC WORKS ABROAD, as recommended by the Select Committee of The House of Commons, appointed to consider the Water Communication in Canada.

Whitehall, Treasury Chambers, }
15 July 1831.

T. SPRING RICE.

COPY of TREASURY MINUTE, dated 10th June 1831.

My LORDS read the following Extract from the Report of the Select Committee, appointed to consider the Water Communication in Canada :

“ Your Committee are distinctly of opinion, that some additional Security is required, for the purpose of giving to Parliament a more early and effectual control over Expenditure, of the description of that under consideration. With this view, they submit the following Resolutions to The House :—

“ 1st. That no Public Work of any magnitude shall be undertaken, except on a Survey and Estimate, made by an officer acting under the orders of some responsible Department:

“ 2d. That on the first application for a Vote of Money, an Estimate of the sum likely to be required for the whole Work shall be laid before The House.

“ 3d. In cases which require more than one year for their completion, and where Money is proposed to be voted on account, there shall be submitted to The House in each year, and before the Vote is proposed, a Statement of the Sums already voted, of the Money actually expended up to the date of the last Accounts, of all outstanding Demands, and of the Sum still wanting to complete the Work; and any deviations from the Original Plan, or any contemplated additions to the magnitude or expense of the whole Work, shall be inserted in the Estimates of the year.

“ 4th. No Department of the Government shall authorize any officer to enter into Contracts for any Work, beyond the limits of the annual grants of Money, without the sanction of a Minute of the Board of Treasury, which shall, with as little delay as possible, be laid before The House.”

In the Opinions thus pronounced, My Lords concur: feeling the necessity of providing in all cases a more direct and effective Parliamentary check upon the Public Expenditure, they are desirous of carrying these Resolutions into effect invariably; but before any decided step is taken, either by proposing these Resolutions in The House of Commons, or by pursuing any other course thereon, My Lords direct, that Letters be written to the Secretary of State for the Colonial

Department, the Lords of the Admiralty, and the Board of Ordnance, expressing the strong opinion of this Board, and inquiring whether any public inconvenience is considered by the several Departments as likely to result from an adherence to Regulations which, in the judgment of My Lords, are as no less in accordance with constitutional principles, than calculated in a most important degree to advance the Public Service.

LETTER from *John Barrow*, Esquire, to The Honourable *J. Stewart*,
&c. &c. &c.

SIR,

Admiralty Office, 17th June 1831.

I HAVE laid before My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your Letter of the 14th instant, with the accompanying Extract from a Report of the Select Committee of The House of Commons appointed to consider the Water Communication in Canada; and I have their Lordships' commands to acquaint you, that they entirely concur in the propriety of the whole of the Regulations suggested by the Committee for a more early and effectual control over Expenditure for all kinds of Public Works, and their Lordships have in fact anticipated the greater part of them: their Lordships will, however, give directions to the subordinate Boards implicitly to adhere to these Regulations, so far as they are concerned.

I am, &c. &c.

(signed) *John Barrow*.

LETTER from *R. W. Hay*, Esquire, to The Honourable *J. Stewart*,
&c. &c. &c.

SIR,

Downing-street, 29th June 1831.

I HAVE laid before Viscount Goderich your Letter of the 16th instant, transmitting for his Lordship's opinion, by command of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, the Copy of their Lordships' Minute of the 10th instant, founded on a Report of a Select Committee of The House of Commons, proposing certain Resolutions for giving to Parliament a more early and effectual control over Expenditure on Public Works, and stating that their Lordships are desirous of carrying them invariably into effect, as being no less in accordance with constitutional principles, than calculated in a most important degree to advance the Public Service; and I am directed to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners, that Lord Goderich concurs in their Lordships' opinion, and he is not aware that any public inconvenience is likely to result from an adherence to these Regulations in future.

I am, &c. &c.

(signed) *R. W. Hay*.

LETTER from *R. Byham*, Esquire, to The Honourable *J. Stewart*,
&c. &c. &c.

SIR,

Office of Ordnance, 5th July 1831.

REFERRING to your Letter of the 14th ult., transmitting an Extract from a Report of the Select Committee of The House of Commons, appointed to consider the Water Communication in Canada, and desiring to receive the Opinion of the Master General and Board of Ordnance upon the Resolutions therein proposed, with the view of giving to Parliament a more early and effectual control over Expenditure of the description mentioned therein;—

I have the honour to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, that the Master General and Board are not aware of any objection to the adoption of the Resolutions referred to; but, with regard

RELATING to EXPENDITURE for PUBLIC WORKS ABROAD. 3

regard to the 4th Resolution, they consider it right to state, that, unless Executive Officers at *Foreign Stations* are authorized to enter into a Contract for the *whole* of any Work proposed to be executed in a given number of years, Contractors will naturally seek to indemnify themselves, by higher prices, from the risk they would run of having their work stopped, or discontinued, at the end of any year. At the same time, the Treasury, in the event of the Resolutions being adopted, having, as it seems, the power of sanctioning, by their Minute, a deviation from the 4th Resolution, it is submitted, as a question for their Lordships' consideration, whether this power will be effectual to obviate the inconvenience above anticipated.

I have the honour, &c. &c.

(signed) R. Byham.

COPY of TREASURY MINUTE, dated 8th July 1831.

READ Letter from the Secretary to the Board of Ordnance of the 5th instant, referring to the Letter of this Board of the 14th ult., enclosing an Extract from a Report of the Select Committee of The House of Commons, appointed to consider the Water Communication with Canada, for the Opinion of the Master General and Board of Ordnance, upon the Resolutions therein proposed, with the view of giving to Parliament a more early and effectual control over Expenditure of Public Works in the Colonies; wherein he states, that the Master General and Board of Ordnance are not aware of any objection to the Resolutions referred to; but with regard to the 4th Resolution, they state, "that, unless Executive Officers at *Foreign Stations* are authorized to enter into a Contract for the *whole* of any Work proposed to be executed in a given number of years, Contractors will naturally seek to indemnify themselves, by higher prices, from the risk they would run of having their works stopped, or discontinued, at the end of any year."

Read Letter from Mr. Hay of the 29th ult. on the same subject.

My Lords resume the consideration of all the former Papers on this subject, and also read their Minutes of the 10th and 28th ult.

My Lords are gratified to perceive, that it appears from these Communications that no real difficulty arises in carrying into effect generally the proposed Resolutions, and thus ensuring to Parliament a more full and adequate Check upon the Public Expenditure.

With respect to the difficulty suggested by the Ordnance Department, My Lords are of opinion, that it will not arise where the entire Expense of any Work has been submitted to Parliament, and approved of, although a *Voté* may not have been taken for the full amount in any one year. Unforeseen and unavoidable Expenditure will, it is conceived, be sufficiently provided for by the exception contained in these Resolutions.

The Lords of the Admiralty having already given orders that these Resolutions shall be acted upon implicitly in that Department in future, it is unnecessary to make any further communication to that Board: but My Lords desire that the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Master General and Board of Ordnance may be requested to give corresponding directions in their respective Departments.