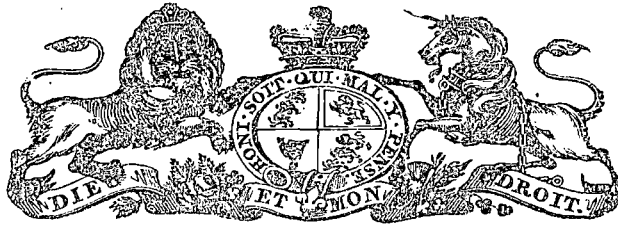


(No. 66.)



1863.

[SECOND SESSION.]

TASMANIA.

CIRCULAR DESPATCH,

26 *June*, 1863.

MILITARY DEFENCES.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 18 August, 1863.



(Copy.)

TASMANIA.
CIRCULAR.

Downing-street, 26th June, 1863.

SIR,

You are doubtless aware that the attention of Parliament has been frequently directed to the question how far the Colonies and Dependencies of Great Britain should be required to contribute to their own Military Defence. A matter of so great and increasing importance has, of course, equally engaged the consideration of Her Majesty's Government; and I find myself in a position to communicate to you the decision at which they have arrived in regard to the Australian Colonies.

It is in these Colonies, (among which, for the present purpose, I do not include New Zealand), that the question arises in its simplest form. To Western Australia it is not intended to send any regular Troops. The Force in Tasmania, where the effects of the old system of Transportation are not yet worn out, will be maintained, for the present, at the expense of the old Government; and, in the remaining Colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Queensland, there are no exceptional circumstances to prevent the free application, on the part of the Home Government, of those principles which arise from, or are correlative to, the grant of Responsible Government.

That form of Government being unequivocally established, it is, I imagine, admitted on all hands that the Imperial Government has no further responsibility for maintaining the internal tranquillity of the Country. Its obligation, therefore, to contribute towards the Defence of Colonies in full possession of internal Self-government, and unaffected by any exceptional circumstances of situation or population, is limited to the contingency of war and danger of war. But, in the case of the Australian Colonies, free from the presence of formidable native tribes, and free also, as occupying a vast Island, from the perils to which a land frontier exposes other communities, those obligations will always be in the main sufficiently discharged by Her Majesty's Navy, which must form, both in peace and war, the true Imperial contribution to the security and protection of Australia. With the Colonies themselves it must rest to make such other provision as they may think expedient for the Defence of their own Capitals and Ports, in the way of Local Land Forces, together with such Fortifications, Floating Batteries, Barracks, and similar works, as may be needed for the efficiency and accommodation of whatever Troops may be raised in or sent to Australia. Her Majesty's Government, at the same time, are willing to continue to furnish a certain quota of Imperial Troops as a nucleus for such Local Forces, upon condition of a fair contribution from the respective Colonies towards their cost. It follows, therefore, to consider what should be the number of Troops allotted, and what and how the Colonies should contribute. With respect to the first point, it has been the desire of Her Majesty's Government to frame such an arrangement as would be most likely to reconcile Colonial convenience with the necessities of Military discipline; and, with this view, they propose in future to allot to the Australian Colonies (15) Fifteen Companies of Infantry, consisting of One entire Regiment and the Head Quarters' Wing of another Regiment, in the following proportions:—

Colonies.	No. of Companies.	No. of Officers.	No. of Men.	Total Officers and Men.
New South Wales	4 and head quarters	about 19	340	359
Queensland	1	3	88	91
Victoria	5 and head quarters	22	423	445
Tasmania	3	11	249	260
South Australia	2	6	166	172
TOTAL	15	61	1266	1327

The Four Companies in New South Wales, and the single Company in Queensland, will probably be a Wing of a Regiment of which the other Wing will be in New Zealand. Another Regiment will, in that case, furnish the Ten Companies in Victoria, Tasmania, and South Australia.

With regard to the mode and amount of the Colonial Contribution, I have come to the conclusion that, in order to avoid the frequent controversies and discontents which have arisen under the present system, it should take the shape of a single annual payment, either fixed or capable of easy ascertainment, which will, of course, virtually include the "Colonial Allowance" hitherto provided. A fixed sum would be evidently unfair to the Colonies; for, as it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to guarantee under all circumstances a definite number of Troops, it would be unjust to the Colony to require it to pay a certain sum for an uncertain advantage. I think, therefore, that the best course will be to require a stated annual sum, which it has been decided to place at Forty Pounds per annum for every Officer or Soldier of Her Majesty's Infantry on Service in the Colony, calculated upon the average of the usual Monthly Returns.

Under this arrangement the maximum payable by each Colony, including, for completeness sake, Tasmania, would be as follows:—

<i>Colony.</i>	<i>No. of Men.</i>	<i>Annual Payment.</i>
New South Wales	359	£ 14,360
Victoria	495	19,800
South Australia	166	6640
Tasmania	249	9960
Queensland	88	3320
TOTAL.....	1357	54,080

In case the Imperial Government should allow these numbers to fall off, the Colonial Contribution will be proportionally decreased. In case the Imperial Government should increase the Force, for its own convenience, the Colonial Contribution will not be increased beyond the maximum above stated. But in case the Imperial Government should, at the request of the Colony, send out any Infantry in excess of the above number, or any Artillery whatever, the annual payment in respect of this extraordinary assistance will be at the rate of Seventy Pounds per man, a sum which more nearly approaches the real cost to the Imperial Government of each Soldier.

If the different Colonies should accept these terms, it will rest with the Australian Governments to propose to their respective Legislatures Laws authorising the Governor, with the advice of his Executive Council, to make monthly or quarterly payments to the Imperial Government at the rate of Forty Pounds per annum upon the Force employed there; such payments, however, not exceeding the respective maxima set forth in the above Table.

I trust that this arrangement will meet the concurrence of the different Legislatures, and will have the effect, in the Colonies which it concerns, of settling, for some considerable period, this much vexed question. I have only to add that, in cases in which it is accepted promptly, Her Majesty's Government will be ready to take a liberal course in dealing with outstanding matters of dispute in respect to Military Expenditure.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) NEWCASTLE.

Governor GORE BROWNE, C.B.