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The Administration of the Royal Navy from 1660 to 1673

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PREFACE

I would like to thank the University of Hull for making it possible for me to undertake this research. I would particularly like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor J P Kenyon, for the advice and assistance he has given me in the preparation of this thesis. A special debt is owed to my wife for the help and support she has given me in completing this work.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bodl.,	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
BM,	British Museum.
<u>BIHR,</u>	<u>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.</u>
<u>CSPD,</u>	<u>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series.</u>
<u>Catalogue,</u>	<u>A Descriptive Catalogue of the Naval Manuscripts in the Pepysian Library in Magdalene College, Cambridge, edited by J R Tanner, Navy Records Society, four volumes, (1903-23).</u>
<u>Diary.</u>	<u>The Diary of Samuel Pepys, edited by H B Wheatley, 10 vols (1893-9) (A new edition edited by R C Latham and W Matthews is in progress and all references to the <u>Diary</u> from 1660 to 1667 are taken from this edition, for 1668 and 1669 the older Wheatley edition has been used.)</u>
<u>DNB,</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography.</u>
<u>Ec.HR,</u>	<u>Economic History Review.</u>
<u>EHR,</u>	<u>English Historical Review.</u>
<u>HMC,</u>	<u>Historical Manuscripts Commission.</u>
<u>MM,</u>	<u>Mariner's Mirror.</u>
NMM,	National Maritime Museum.
PRO,	Public Record Office.

Note on Dates

Dates are given in the Old Style, except that the year is taken to begin on 1 January.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is the intention of this thesis to examine the central administration of the Royal Navy from the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 to the resignation of James, Duke of York, as Lord High Admiral in June 1673. To a large extent this will involve concentrating on the activities of the 'Principal Officers and Commissioners of his Majesty's Navy', or to give them their more common title, the Navy Board, but consideration will also be given to the administrative functions undertaken by the King and the Privy Council, and the Lord High Admiral. The first three chapters will be devoted to these 'higher', or more remote echelons, whilst the majority of the thesis will be concerned with the function of the Navy Board. The most important question associated with the higher echelons is the nature and extent of the interest, interference and assistance exercised by the Crown and the Privy Council, and the effects these superior, yet external bodies, had upon naval administration. Within this category there is a clear distinction between the King and Privy Council whose powers and responsibilities embraced all aspects of the nation's affairs, and the Lord High Admiral whose main concern was with the navy. In his recent biography of Charles II, Maurice Ashley comments that 'Charles II has often been commended for his care of the British navy, and there is no question that he and his brother took a personal interest and pride in it', but did this 'care' and 'personal interest' extend beyond the pleasures of sailing and the pride of a Sovereign in his armed forces?¹ Even if the King was interested in his ships, it does not follow that he would be concerned with the administrative aspects of naval affairs. An attempt must therefore be made to try and determine whether the King was personally involved in routine as well as important naval matters, or whether he was content to leave most things

¹ Ashley, Charles II, The Man and the Statesman, p.325.

to his brother and the professional advisers of the Navy Board. If the King was concerned with the navy, what did he actually do to assist the service; did he encourage reforms and improvements, and for the period up to 1673 can any claim be advanced on his behalf for having initiated or supported any significant advances in the size, organisation and general development of the navy? Finally, it may be asked whether there were any adverse effects from the 'interest' shown by the King in the navy; for example, did the navy become the target, or tool, of political intrigues, and did it suffer indirectly through being kept short of funds as a result of the conflicts between the King and Parliament?

Similar questions may be raised in connection with the Privy Council. To what degree did it concern itself with naval affairs and what was the depth of its concern? Was the Privy Council responsible for raising naval matters, or did it simply respond when the Lord High Admiral, the Navy Board, or other individuals raised problems relating to the navy? The role of the Privy Council in naval affairs can also illustrate the relative position of that body in Restoration government. Was the Council an effective body, or had its power and influence been eroded by smaller circles of advisers and its own committees, leaving it with only the appearance of power? There is also the question of whether naval administration was forced to seek the support and assistance of the King, or the King in Council, in order to extend or reinforce the powers and authority then vested in the Lord High Admiral or the Navy Board. The Privy Council was also the body which received a large number of petitions, and it will be relevant to discover the extent to which this practice was used by individuals wishing to challenge the action taken by naval administration, and whether the Council was forced to interfere in naval affairs as a result of such pressure. Lastly, there were the committees of the Privy Council, in particular the Committee for the Affairs of the

Admiralty and Navy and the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and it must be ascertained to what extent these committees, rather than the full Council, were effective in controlling or interfering in naval affairs. Did these committees in any way challenge the authority of the Lord High Admiral, or can they be seen as complementing his authority?

The third element in the higher administration of the navy was the Lord High Admiral. Unlike the King or the Privy Council, he was directly associated with and responsible for naval affairs. The Lord High Admiral was one of the leading officers of State and as such was of considerable importance in a wider political context. During the period under discussion this was certainly heightened by the appointment of the King's brother and heir presumptive, James, Duke of York and Albany, as Lord High Admiral. The fact that after the Restoration this office was executed by one person gives the period from 1660 to 1673 a greater unity, continuity and significance in the development of naval administration. At the same time the office should be set in the context of seventeenth century administrative development. Was it to remain the responsibility of one person or would it, like the position of Lord Treasurer, be put into commission? Thus the development of this office and the nature of its responsibilities can be examined in the context of the wider administrative processes as well as with particular reference to the navy. The office of Lord High Admiral had previously been closely associated with active service at sea - to what extent was this preserved and to what extent did the administrative functions of the office assume greater importance? Apart from the office itself, the Duke of York's personal influence on it must also be taken into consideration - what was his concept of the office and how effective was he in the post? Did he act mainly as a commander at sea, as an administrator, or did he attempt to combine the two roles? Did the Admiralty suffer during James's tenure of office, or was it assisted by its close association with a

leading court figure and politician, and were the failings of the navy exploited and exaggerated in an attempt to attack the Duke? One of the most important questions concerning James is the extent to which he took a personal lead in issuing instructions to regulate and reform the system of naval administration. Has he any real claim to being regarded as a great commander or administrator or was he simply a figurehead? In order to present a balanced appraisal of his career it will be necessary to examine other aspects of the Duke of York's naval associations. This will entail a slight digression from the main administrative theme of this thesis during those occasions in 1665 and 1672 when the Duke commanded the English fleet in action.

Subordinate to the Lord High Admiral were two clearly defined, but closely related, aspects of the navy. Firstly, there was the active, or service role of the navy and the actions of the commanders and fleets; this has been the aspect of naval history which has received most attention from naval historians. The object of this thesis is to examine the second aspect of naval activity, namely the administrative system, or machine, which enabled fleets to be built, prepared for service, maintained at sea and repaired. These functions were entrusted to the Navy Board and its subordinate officials, and here again there are a number of questions to be posed. The Navy Board had emerged during the reign of Henry VIII and had evolved during the rest of the Tudor period; it had been abolished in 1642 and restored in 1660. Was this restoration an attempt to return to the 1642 situation, or were the experiences of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, especially in the First Anglo-Dutch War and in the increased size of the fleet, to be assimilated? Did the restoration of the Navy Board necessarily imply that there would be alterations, except in name, to the system of naval administration, or was there considerable continuity in the system despite changes in name and personnel from the middle of the seventeenth century?

The Navy Board consisted of four 'Principal Officers', the Treasurer, the Comptroller, the Surveyor and the Clerk of the Acts, and a varying number of additional officers known as 'Commissioners'. In January 1662 they were issued with a set of Instructions, usually referred to as the Duke of York's Instructions, which were intended to guide the Board's activities. These Instructions were extensively based, and in some cases almost exclusively based, on the Instructions issued by the Earl of Northumberland in 1640 - were these adequate to cope with the expansion which had taken place in the navy since that time and, more significantly, were they observed by the members of the Navy Board? The 1662 Instructions laid down distinct duties for the four principal officers and contained a number of general articles which applied to all members of the Board, and an understanding of the workings of naval administration will necessitate an examination of the duties of the individual offices as well as the collective responsibility of the Board. These collective duties included supervision of pays, both of ships and dockyards; certain aspects of the recruitment of seamen; the provision of materials to build, repair and maintain the ships; the supply of victuals to the fleet; and the supervision exercised by central administration over the dockyards. There was one extremely important part of naval supplies which was not supervised by either the Admiralty or the Navy Board and it will not, therefore, be considered here; this was the Ordnance, the guns, powder, flints and various sizes of shot which were supplied to both the army and the navy by the Ordnance Commissioners. This separate department, 'despite frequent complaints against its impracticability, lasted until 1887, enjoying an inefficiency which was never denied but never seriously tackled'.¹

¹ Ehrman, The Navy in the War of William III, p.175.

This then formed the scope of naval administration - how effective was this framework which was laid down in 1662, and what attempts were made to improve, expand or reform the administrative structure during the period up to 1673? But beyond this a great deal depended on the diligence, honesty and competence of those appointed as members of the Navy Board from June 1660 to June 1673. In total four persons held the office of Treasurer, three the Comptrollership, three the Surveyorship; one person remained as Clerk of the Acts for the whole period and a total of fifteen individuals held Commissionerships. Thus an examination of naval administration is as much a study of these persons as it is of the system itself.

One basic theme which underlies this thesis is the determination of the success of naval administration under the direction of the Duke of York and the Navy Board from 1660 to 1673. In his introduction to the Pepysian Manuscripts J R Tanner has said that it 'will be found that the materials available justify the conclusion that the naval administrators of the Restoration period were not so incompetent as has sometime been suggested...'; this statement was made with reference to the whole period from 1660 to 1688 and it will be my intention to examine the application of these remarks to the period up to June 1673.¹ It is clear that naval history cannot be divorced from other problems of the Restoration period and it has already been indicated that political considerations could have had repercussions on the navy. This will be considered, where relevant, throughout; for example, with reference to the Duke of York, the Treasurer's (Sir George Carteret) accounts, and Parliamentary enquiries. Two Parliamentary investigations were conducted into naval affairs; the first, through the Committee of Miscarriages, was more concerned with the shortcomings of the active side of the service and concentrated on the failure to follow up the victory after the battle off Lowestoft in 1665,

¹ Catalogue, I, 4.

the misappropriation of prize goods, and the division of the fleet before the Four Days' Battle in 1666. In only one particular, that of the use of 'tickets' to discharge the fleet, did it relate directly to the administration. The second, and potentially more dangerous investigation, which ranged over several aspects of naval administration, was conducted by the Commissioners of Public Accounts and the final Chapter will be devoted to their activity. The financial situation was another factor which had serious repercussions on the navy for, in order to maintain the fleet, to man it and the dockyards, and to obtain supplies of materials, it was necessary for a large proportion of the King's revenue to be devoted to the navy. Tanner considers that it was the 'want of money which was the root of all evil in the Stuart navy', - how did this effect the navy, and was it a real cause rather than an excuse for the navy's difficulties? Was it simply a question of inadequate funds being available, or is there any evidence to suggest that there was waste and corruption within naval administration which made a major contribution to financial difficulties?¹

This then is the outline of naval administration which is to be examined. The overwhelming impression gained from previous writers on the period in question is that naval history is primarily concerned with strategy and tactics, the design and construction of ships and, to a lesser extent, with navigation and voyages of discovery. The administrative system and logistical support for the navy received only occasional passing reference until the end of the nineteenth century, but from the 1890s increasing interest has been shown in naval administration. Despite this development, which has been continued by a number of more recent writers, the general impression is still one of a much greater interest in ships, battles and seamen than in administration. This is perhaps

¹ Catalogue, I, 4.

understandable because of the importance of naval affairs in British history and the fact that the navy existed to be used as a weapon of war or as an instrument of policy.

A few contemporary writers appear to have shown more concern for administrative developments than succeeding generations of naval historians; their intention was not one of providing an account of naval administration but appears to have been undertaken in an attempt to highlight what they considered to be abuses and then to suggest possible remedies. Indeed, this was the aim of a paper, usually attributed to Sir William Penn and possibly prepared for the Committee of the Privy Council that had been set up in June 1660 to consider the regulation of the navy; its main proposal was for a number of commissioners with collective responsibility for all aspects of naval administration.¹ As will become evident this proposal was not accepted, and a second attempt to make suggestions came from the newly appointed Comptroller of the navy, Sir Robert Slingsby in his Discourse upon the Past and Present State of the Navy, and from John Hollond in a Second Discourse Touching the Navy, presented in 1660 and 1661, respectively.² Neither of these Discourses, although interesting as comments on several aspects of naval administration, appears to have had much influence on the immediate settlement after the Restoration or in the succeeding years. In addition there were a number of tracts and pamphlets which usually dealt with specific problems, for example, the conditions of the seamen, their pay, abuses by commanders and pursers, and a number of more technical subjects. Few of these were written in the period under consideration and none dealt directly with administrative matters.³ The only other near contemporary works

¹ NMM, WYN 11/3; printed in Penn, Memorials of Sir William Penn, pp.509-92.

² Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses of the Navy, also contains Slingsby's Discourse.

³ A number of these tracts are listed in Tedder, The Navy of the Restoration, pp.209-12, and Ehrman, The Navy in the War of William III, pp. 681-86.

with direct reference to administration appeared in 1717 when the Duke of York's Instructions were printed under the title of The Oeconomy of his Majesty's Navy Office, and in 1729 a selection of his letters to commanders, consuls, and the Navy Board were printed as the Memoirs of English Affairs, Chiefly Naval, from ... 1660 to 1673. The Instructions and a number of letters also appeared in various volumes of the Navy Chronicle from 1801 to 1806.¹ In all these cases no attempt was made to discuss the content or to form any conclusions on naval administration.

Beyond this the majority of comments on naval affairs, both generally from contemporary historians and particularly from purely naval historians, are centred around naval actions in the Channel, the Mediterranean, in colonial spheres and on the events of the Second and Third Anglo-Dutch wars. The works of Burnet, Clarendon, Heath and Kennett provide examples of this approach.² Burchett's Complete History of the most Remarkable Transactions at Sea, (1720) was one of the first naval histories and he prefaced his work with a few comments on the support services needed to maintain the fleet and on the role of the administration.³ But he went no further than to outline a number of the duties laid down for the Lord High Admiral, the Navy Board and other officials as they existed in the early eighteenth century; the rest of his work is devoted to activity at sea, and only a few pages are actually devoted to the Restoration period.

¹ Navy Chronicle, 1801-1806.

² Burnet, History of My Own Time; Clarendon, Continuation of the Life; Heath, Chronicle of the late intestine warr; Kennett, Complete History of England.

³ Burchett, A Complete History of the Most Remarkable Transactions at Sea.

The later eighteenth and nineteenth-century naval historians showed little interest in administrative affairs; most are either Chronicles of actions at sea or biographies of serving officers, for example, Lediard, Entick, Campbell, Charnock, Schomberg and Derrick, although in his History of Marine Architecture Charnock does print a letter of April 1669 from the Navy Board to the Duke of York which briefly outlined the administrative system.¹ In 1816 J S Clarke's Life of James II concentrated on the martial aspects of James's connection with the navy, but occasional mention is made of the wider political issues affecting James, in particular the difficulties experienced by him during 1668-9.² The first work to include any more than a passing reference to administrative matters was G Penn's, Memorials of the Professional Life and Times of Sir William Penn, (1833). Penn draws from both source materials, such as the Privy Council Registers, and contemporary writers, such as Clarendon, Pepys and Evelyn, and he also prints the proposals for the 'Government of the Navy' attributed to Sir William Penn in 1660.³

The monopoly which the active service side of naval affairs has enjoyed still remains strong, but from the 1890s there has been an increasing interest in administrative matters. The older theme is represented by Hannay, Laird-Clowes, Colomb, Mahan, and, more recently, Richmond and Marcus, and to a lesser extent Tedder.⁴ The most important

¹ Charnock, History of Marine Architecture, II, 404. Other works on naval history with virtually no mention of administration include Lediard, Naval History of England; Entick, A New Naval History; Campbell, Lives of the Admirals; Charnock, Biographia Navalis; Schomberg, Naval Chronology; Derrick, Memoirs of the Rise and Progress of the Royal Navy.

² Clarke, Life of James II, I, 436, 445.

³ Penn, Memorials of the Professional Life and Times of Sir William Penn.

⁴ Hannay, A Short History of the Royal Navy; Clowes, The Royal Navy: A History; Colomb, Naval Warfare; Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power on History; Richmond, Statesmen and Sea Power and The Navy as an Instrument of Policy; Marcus, A Naval History of England: The Formative Years; Tedder, The Navy of the Restoration, although Tedder has more to say on administrative affairs the balance is still heavily weighed on the side of naval actions.

'breakthrough' in the case for the history of naval administration came with the publication in 1896 of Michael Oppenheim's, A History of the Administration of the Royal Navy from 1509 to 1660; this pioneering work was continued in various volumes of the Victoria County History, for example, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Cornwall, Sussex and Somerset.¹ Oppenheim provides an extremely valuable background to administrative practices and their development up to 1660, but he was not able to conduct a thorough investigation of all the available material, especially after that date as he was not allowed access to the Pepysian manuscripts at Magdalene College, Cambridge.² The study of naval history was given impetus by the publications of the Navy Records Society, especially through the works of J R Tanner. For the most part the Society published original manuscripts, but the introductions to these manuscripts are often of great value. This is particularly the case with the first volume of Tanner's Descriptive Catalogue of the Naval Manuscripts in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge.³ Tanner has also written and edited a number of other works which are extremely useful, for example, his lectures on Samuel Pepys and the Royal Navy, and the Further Correspondence of Samuel Pepys 1662-1679.⁴ Tanner's concern was Pepys and the Pepysian manuscripts and, although he used other sources, his primary intention was not to provide an extensive examination of naval administration after 1660.

¹ Victoria County History, Suffolk, II, pp.199-243; Essex, II, pp.259-306; Kent, II, pp.243-388; Cornwall, I, pp.475-508; Sussex, II, pp.125-64; Somerset, II, pp.245-65.

² I am indebted to Mr D Pepys-Whiteley, Deputy Pepys Librarian at Magdalene College, Cambridge for this comment.

³ Catalogue, I.

⁴ Tanner, Samuel Pepys and the Royal Navy; (ed), The Further Correspondence of Samuel Pepys 1662-1679.

Undoubtedly the only complete and satisfactory accounts of the navy are those which combine a scholarly study of both the administration and service aspects. This has been done for the 1690s by J Ehrman and for the period from the 1720s to 1740s by D. Baugh; the object of this thesis is to provide a study of the administrative side of the navy to complement the several existing accounts of naval actions.¹

¹ Ehrman, The Navy in the War of William III; Baugh, British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole.

2. THE HIGHER ADMINISTRATION OF THE NAVY

i

THE KING AND THE NAVY

From 1660 to 1673 when James, Duke of York, held the office of Lord High Admiral there was little interference in naval administration by either the King or the Privy Council, although naval affairs, especially matters of policy and strategy, were undoubtedly discussed privately between the King and Duke or with an inner circle of advisers. Many other aspects of concern to the navy were brought before the King in Council, but these were usually limited to accepting the advice of the Lord High Admiral, the Committee of the Privy Council for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy, or the Navy Board, and were brought before the Council in order to give them a greater legal authority than the Lord High Admiral acting alone could grant. There can be little doubt that a measure of discussion did take place, but in the absence of any detailed minutes for the Privy Council it is difficult to judge the depth of these discussions and the extent to which the King and Council were involved in naval affairs.

There is a measure of agreement amongst writers that Charles II was 'interested' in the navy but the scope of this interest has yet to be examined. An ambivalent attitude towards the King emerges from the contemporary writings of Pepys. On 15 May 1663 Sir Thomas Crew told Pepys that the King 'doth mind nothing but pleasures, and hates the very sight or thought of business', an attitude he attributed largely to the attractions of Lady Castlemaine.¹ A personal encounter with the King

¹ Diary, 15 May 1663.

did not impress Pepys. The King having seen the members of the Navy Board waiting for the Duke of York, walked up and down the gallery at Whitehall with them, 'talking methought but ordinary talk'.¹ There is the strong possibility that Charles II began to lose interest in the conduct of the war in 1666, as there had been no great naval victory to enable him to conclude an honourable peace and it had not brought the hoped for windfall of rich prizes. Pepys was afraid that the Dutch and French would 'master us' in 1667, 'unless God Almighty makes the King to mind his business, which might yet save all'.²

One of the best known passages from the Diary appeared on 21 June 1667, when Pepys recorded that, 'the night the Dutch burned our ships, the King did sup with my Lady Castlemayne at the Duchess of Monmouth, and there were all mad in hunting of a poor moth'.³ This extract has set the tone for many comments on the attitude of Charles II towards his responsibilities, particularly with regard to the navy and defence.⁴ But whatever entertainment may have been the King's pleasure on the night of 12 June 1667, there can be no doubt of his interest in and concern for the navy. Pepys does redress the balance somewhat by stating that, on the day after the Dutch raid, 'the King and the Duke of York have been below [London Bridge] since 4 a-clock in the morning, to command the sinking of ships at Barking Creek'.⁵ A later quotation from Pepys may further restore the balance in the King's favour. In the 1680s he was able to write, 'if it had not pleased God to give us a King and Duke that understood the sea,

1 Diary, 2 November 1663.

2 Diary, 14 November 1666.

3 Diary, 21 June 1667.

4 Bryant, Samuel Pepys, the man in the making, p.335.

5 Diary, 13 June 1667

this nation had 'ere this been quite beaten out of it, such was the deplorable condition of our Navy when they came in, in comparison of the Dutch'.¹

The 'interest' of Charles II in the affairs of the navy has been mentioned by several earlier naval historians. For example, in 1801 Charnock wrote, 'no monarch ... ever proved himself more attentive than Charles to the augmentation of his maritime consequences in every branch whatever'.² Campbell, in 1812, stated that the King 'was inclined to look into naval affairs, so for some time he kept a strict eye on whatever related to the fleet, of which many instances occur in the memoirs of its principal officers'.³ And in 1816 J S Clarke wrote, 'his Majesty ... understood the true interest of the nation and had a particular inclination and application to maritime affairs'.⁴ More recently J R Tanner has said that it 'is not only clear that Charles II took a general interest in ships and shipbuilding, but the papers show also that during the time that he was himself lord high admiral he transacted a good deal of naval business with his own hand, and descended, like his predecessors, to the smallest matters of detail'.⁵ This impression has been repeated by a modern writer, Bernard Pool (1966), who agrees that 'Charles II ... took a lively personal interest in naval affairs'.⁶

Whilst there is general agreement that the King had this 'interest' there is little comment on its depth, especially with regard to the period 1660 to 1673. Unfortunately, when attempting to provide an answer to this question, we are faced not only with little direct evidence but also with

¹ Tanner, Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.84.

² Charnock, History of Marine Architecture, I, 394.

³ Campbell, Lives of the Admirals, I, 237.

⁴ Clarke, Life of James II, I, 399.

⁵ Catalogue, I, 246.

⁶ Pool, Navy Board Contracts, p.42.

the problem of trying to read between the lines of official correspondence in trying to differentiate between the King's personal interest and his mere acceptance of the advice of others. Pepys considered that it was 'the Rebellion and necessity that made seamen of the King and Duke'.¹ But whatever the reason so far as the King was concerned, it manifested itself in his love of sailing in the yachts, his visits to the fleet and dockyards, and his knowledge of shipbuilding. This interest may not always have been beneficial to the navy. Pepys suggested in 1683 that the King's interest allowed 'our commanders and officers (especially gentlemen)' to gain very easy access to the King and to obtain 'orders from him without being duly considered in their proper place, to the great contempt of his Officers of his Admiralty and Navy'.² In this we may detect a certain jealousy in Pepys, as a former Navy Board and Admiralty official, about interference and favouritism. There could be many dangers, as far as the navy was concerned, in allowing ill-informed persons to have too easy access to the King, but on balance it was perhaps far better to have this situation than to have a King who had no interest in the navy.

The interest and special regard of the King and Duke for the navy could have another possibly more damaging effect on the service. Those wishing to attack the King, and more especially the Duke of York, would naturally turn their attention to the navy. This can be held partly to explain the Parliamentary attacks on naval administration and the criticisms from such courtier politicians as the Duke of Buckingham. Thus the navy tended to become the object of political manoeuvring. This particular argument, as put forward by Sir Oswyn Murray, is

¹ Tanner (ed), Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.62.

² Tanner, *op.cit.*, p.194.

probably more applicable to the Duke of York than to the King.¹ Murray also goes on to suggest that, 'the King's personal intervention in the affairs of the Navy greatly restricted the Lord High Admiral's normal sphere of activity. More and more of the questions, even the minor questions, which the Navy Board submitted for the Duke's decision, had to be reserved for settlement by the King in Council, or by the King of his own motion'. This view has been challenged by J Ehrman, who does not agree that 'Charles's interest in the navy detracted from the power of the Lord Admiral under the circumstances'.² This is far more accurate and, as will be seen, while the Duke of York was Lord High Admiral there was little direct intervention by the King in the details of naval administration and that few, if any, 'minor questions' were reserved for the King alone or the King in Council.

Prior to the Restoration the King's enforced travels had led to his making several voyages by sea; his flight across the Channel and later return to Scotland, and his second departure after the battle of Worcester all gave him first hand experience of life at sea. For many the rigours of a voyage in a small ship would have annihilated any love they had for the sea, but this was not so in Charles's case. When returning to the Channel Islands in 1649 he 'grasped the tiller of his favourite craft [a pinnace of 18 oars] in which, under Bowden's tuition, he had so often buffeted the rippling waves of St. Aubin's Bay' and sailed her to Jersey 'being well accustomed to her trim'.³ Thus it was at Jersey and during his travels that Charles II had lessons in seamanship and developed his liking for the sea.

¹ Murray, MM, XXIII, p.321.

² Ehrman, The Navy in the War of William III, p.192,n1.

³ Hoskins, Charles II in the Channel Islands, II, 310.

The more superficial aspects of the King's connection with the navy have several mentions in the State Papers and Pepys's Diary; for example, there was the King's interest in sailing. Prior to 1660 the yacht had been unknown in the English Navy. Its introduction came as the result of a present to Charles II from the Dutch, who no doubt thought it wise to make a conciliatory gesture to the King. This gift, the Mary, was greatly appreciated, and both the King and the Duke of York resolved to have their own yachts built in England. From the Dutch design, Commissioner Peter Pett built the Katherine at Deptford in 1661 for the King, and Christopher Pett built the Anne for the Duke of York at Woolwich.¹ The King decided that Peter Pett, who had been appointed resident Commissioner at Chatham, should stay at Deptford and build the yacht there.² This enabled the King to inspect progress on her more easily.³ Sir George Carteret, Vice Chamberlain of the Household and Treasurer of the Navy, informed the Navy Board on 29 April 1661 that the King had asked for 10 tons of ballast to be put into the new yacht, which by that time was almost ready for sea.⁴ Almost a month later (21 May) Pepys was returning from Greenwich by water when he was overtaken by the King in his barge, 'he having been down the River with his Yacht this day for pleasure, to try it'.⁵ Both the King and Commissioner Pett were pleased with the Katherine, which is said to have been better than either the Dutch built Mary or Christopher Pett's Anne.⁶ Her only initial weakness which did not please the King, was her sails, and on 5 June 1661 Commissioner Pett

¹ Catalogue, I, 294.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.3, 4 July 1660.

³ Diary, 15 January 1661.

⁴ PRO, SP29/34, f.96, 29 April 1661.

⁵ Diary, 21 May 1661

⁶ Diary, 21 May 1661.

wrote to inform the Board that the King had ordered a new suit of sails for her.¹ A further present from the Dutch, this time a slightly smaller yacht, the Bezane, prompted the Duke of York to order Christopher Pett to 'build a bezane yacht according to the design lately presented to His Majesty'.² Of all the yachts the Henrietta was to be the King's favourite; on 4 May 1663 he talked with William Coventry, Sir William Penn and Pepys about the new yacht he 'is resolved to have built out of his privy purse'.³ This new yacht was to be built at Woolwich by Christopher Pett and on 18 May 1663 the King visited the yard to enquire about keel pieces for it. The yacht did not take very long to build for on 18 October 1663 the King ordered her to attend him at Greenwich. The Henrietta obviously retained her place in the King's affections for on 30 November 1668 the Duke of York informed the Board that the King had ordered her to be allowed four more men, and on 15 March 1670 the Master Shipwright at Woolwich, Edward Byland, told the Board that the King had been at the yard to inspect her docking. At the same time he gave orders concerning new poop lanterns which were to be put up, and issued instructions about painting and carved work, the King 'declaring he had more affection for her than the rest'.⁴

Charles II often attended the launch of new ships, especially the larger ones, and on a visit to Woolwich yard on 7 October 1664 he and the Duke resolved that the Royal Katherine should be launched at the next full moon.⁵ On that occasion the King gave instructions on which part of her carved work and rails should be gold in colour, and on another visit

¹ PRO, SP29/37, f.24, 5 June 1661.

² PRO, Adm.106/6, f.17, 13 November 1661.

³ Diary, 4 May 1663.

⁴ PRO, SP29/74, f.8, 19 May 1663; SP29/81, f.118, 16 October 1663; SP29/283, f.63, 15 March 1670, f.71, 17 March 1670.

⁵ PRO, SP29/103, f.18, 7 October 1664.

(22 October) he ordered a report to be prepared advising which parts of the ship were suitable for gilding.¹ The successful launch of the Royal Katherine took place on 26 October 1664 at Woolwich in the presence of the King, the Queen, the Duke of York and many courtiers, and according to Charles 'she had the best bow that ever he saw'.² The King had already been present at the launch of the Royal James, which had undergone extensive repairs at Woolwich, on 14 April 1663, and later he attended the launch of the new Charles at Deptford on 3 March 1668.³ He had expected to be present at the launch of the London in June 1670 but Matthew Wren, Secretary to the Duke of York, informed the Board that the King and Duke would not be able to attend but the launch was to take place as arranged.⁴ When he was interested the King would attend the launching of a privately owned ship. For example, on 22 December 1664 he was present when Sir William Petty's double-keeled boat the Experiment, was launched. This may be explained by the King's interest in both scientific experiments and shipbuilding, as the Experiment had caused a great deal of controversy in nautical circles.⁵

The King's visits to the dockyards were not very frequent, averaging about two or three a year, and were usually made for the specific purpose of inspecting the progress of the yachts or attending the launching of a ship. When great preparations were being made to get a fleet ready in 1664 the King is reported as having visited Chatham on 23 May with the Duke and 'a great crew'.⁶ The Dutch Ambassador reported that the King and

¹ PRO, SP29/103, f.102, 22 October 1664.

² Diary, 26 October 1664.

³ Diary, 14 April 1663; 3 March 1668.

⁴ PRO, SP46/137, f.231, 23 June 1670.

⁵ Diary, 22 December 1664.

⁶ Diary, 23 May 1664.

Duke had visited the ships which were being prepared at Deptford, Woolwich and Chatham.¹ In March 1665 Van Goch wrote to the States General informing them that the King had gone to Portsmouth to view the fortifications and hasten the ships.² Because of the distances involved, the King was able to visit Deptford and Woolwich without great effort, but Chatham was not so convenient and a trip to Portsmouth usually involved several days away from London. It was the usual practice to journey to the West in the summer months and to incorporate a visit to Portsmouth on these occasions. Harwich, which was of little importance in peacetime was not often graced with a royal visit, but on 3 October 1668 the King did go there and delighted the storekeeper, Captain Taylor, by his enquiries about the yard.³ It is most probable that the King's visits encouraged the workmen to give greater dispatch to their labours, even when in many cases they had not been paid for a considerable time. Because of this there was frequently the fear of some form of demonstration or of an attempt to petition the King on these visits. There is also evidence of the King's more direct interest, as on 19 March 1665 Sir George Carteret wrote to the Board that the 'King wonders that the Dutch galliot lying at Deptford, bound for the north of Scotland, is not yet dispatched'. Her captain had given the reason of not having all his stores loaded to excuse his not sailing, and the Board was to find out where the fault lay.⁴

During those periods when a sizeable fleet was being assembled the King could be expected to make at least one trip to it prior to its sailing.

¹ CSPD 1663-4, p.596.

² CSPD 1664-5, p.249.

³ PRO, SP29/247, f.127, 8 October 1668.

⁴ PRO, SP29/115, f.46, 19 March 1665.

When the Earl of Sandwich was about to leave the Hope, he was visited by both the King and Queen on 4 July 1664.¹ The King's presence could be very useful in hastening repairs and preparations to get the fleet out. On 2 July 1665 Coventry wrote to Arlington that the King had left the fleet to return to London, and that 'some of the great ships have sailed today, and others go tomorrow so that the King's visit has not been useless for the dispatch of the fleet'.² Following the Four Days' Battle in 1666 the King, the Duke and Sir William Coventry visited the fleet on 16 June.³ On 11 July, Clifford told Arlington that he thought the King would visit the fleet before it sailed, although it is not certain this visit ever took place.⁴ Commanders were not always warned of a royal visit, as Sir Thomas Allin discovered on 23 June 1668 when the King and the Duke arrived in the Downs and remained with the fleet overnight; Allin wrote to Williamson, 'we were much surprized to see them', and, as with his visits to the yards, the King was able to give encouragement to the commanders and seamen.⁵ The opportunity may also have been taken to hold a Council of War with the Flag Officers, although there is no direct evidence to support this.

The King's obvious knowledge of shipbuilding and nautical matters illustrates his interest in the technical side of the navy. In 1681 he was discussing the art of shipbuilding with Pepys, and 'he being pleased to say, and most truly, that he has ever made it his business to try all

1 Diary, 4 July 1664.

2 PRO, SP29/126, f.11, 2 July 1665.

3 Diary, 16 June 1666.

4 CSPD 1665-6, p.524.

5 PRO, SP29/242, f.6, 23 June 1668. In his Journal Sir Thomas Allin records the arrival of the King, Duke of York, Prince Rupert and many Lords and gentlemen on the Anne yacht. The opportunity was taken to give Allin orders to sail as far as Portsmouth on his voyage to the Straits; Anderson (ed), Journals of Sir Thomas Allin, II, 30.

ways for the improving of that matter, so as he believes, (as I have heard him often say) that there is little left to be added by the shipwright in his craft'.¹ Later in 1694 Pepys was able to comment that the 'personal concernment' and knowledge of Charles II and James II in shipbuilding led them to give positive encouragement to that trade.² One example of the King's interest in experiments was in his decision to have the Bezane yacht, and later the Monmouth yacht, treated with Mr. Watkin's new experiment; this was an attempt to preserve the hulls of ships from 'worms' in foreign parts. It was hoped that this would prove cheaper than sheathing the ship.³ Charles II was also prepared to order the alteration of plans as William Castle, an experienced shipbuilder, discovered. Castle wrote to the Board on 9 January 1665 that he had altered the measurements of the third rate (the Defiance) which he was about to build, 'the King so much desiring breadth'.⁴ While Charles was prepared to have one plan altered he was also willing to accept others as they were designed. He was very pleased with the 'frigate' built by Tippetts at Portsmouth (the Royal Oak) and ordered the building of another second rate exactly the same, "being assured that anything which is not just so, cannot be so good" those were his very words'.⁵ The technical aspects of the King's interest is further illustrated, when on 15 March 1670 at Woolwich, he expressed pleasure with the progress on the St. Andrew; he asked many questions and 'also how the keel and elm plank in the ship stood affected and upon being told very well, seemed joyful'.⁶

¹ Tanner (ed), Samuel Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.115.

² Tanner, op.cit., p.394.

³ PRO, Adm.106/16, f.147, 15 May 1668, f.273, 7 July 1668.

⁴ PRO, SP29/110, f.54, 9 January 1665. From the dimensions given in Catalogue, I, pp.268-9, the Defiance is similar in breadth to the six other third rates built during the 1660's, possibly Castle's original plans were too narrow.

⁵ PRO, SP29/114, f.93, 9 March 1665.

⁶ PRO, SP29/283, f.63, 15 March 1670.

The impression which has so far emerged of the King's concern for the navy does little more than indicate an enjoyment in sailing and a more than average amateur's knowledge of shipbuilding. In the field of naval administration, which is our principal concern, the King's involvement would appear to be very limited. There is, however, need to differentiate between routine matters, which could be delegated to the Lord High Admiral, and decisions of policy which directly affected the navy. It is not to be expected that the King should involve himself in the details of administration, as he was sometimes forced to do after the resignation of the Duke of York in June 1673.¹

Letters sent directly from the King to the Navy Board are not very numerous. Most instructions were sent through the Lord High Admiral, but those letters which do exist were the result of requests for his directions in matters of rewards or marks of Royal favour. In this category are those letters to the Board ordering them to make out bills for payment to various people; these were nearly always concerned with 'services' performed in relation to the navy. In the case of Captain Robert Holmes the King ordered £600 to be paid to him 'in consideration of the many loyal services performed... to us and our Royal Father'.² Captain Straughan, who had served the King in Scotland, was rewarded with half the proceeds of the sale of the Indian and Halfmoon prizes.³ Sir George Carteret was also repaid for advancing 'several sums of money for our special services particularly 38,000 livres

¹ Following the Duke of York's resignation the King took into his own hands the office of Lord High Admiral, delegating some powers to the Admiralty Commissioners. Tanner has analysed the attendance of the Commissioners and found that 'the highest record of attendance belongs to the King, whose unexpected devotion to routine business proves the genuineness of his interest in naval affairs'. Catalogue, IV, xii.

² BM, Add.MS. 9,307, f.12, 13 July 1660.

³ PRO, Adm.106/2, f.276, 16 November 1660; Diary 23 November 1660.

tournais in the first year of our reign'; he was to be paid £3,000 out of the profits arising from the sale of decayed stores.¹ The King was also prepared to reward Admirals who had performed good service. Sir John Lawson was granted £2,000 by the King's warrant of 8 November 1664, although in this case it is unlikely that the money was paid before his death (25 June 1665) as on 26 May 1665 the King wrote to the Board directing that, as there was insufficient money to pay Lawson out of the funds originally designed for this purpose, they were to pass distinct bills for the money to be paid.² This award to Lawson was in consideration of 'his merit and good service', presumably for his action in suppressing piracy in the Mediterranean. A reward of £1,000 had been ordered to Captain Thomas Allin in 1664 for similar services.³ The Earl of Sandwich was granted £2,000 'in consideration of his merit and good services to be paid out of profits arising from the sale of decayed stores, vessels and goods'.⁴ Prince Rupert benefited at least twice from such grants; on 18 July 1665 he was given £2,000 by 'His Majesty's command', and, by an order of 6 May 1667 a further £1,000 was granted to him.⁵ The order also granted the same sum to Albemarle. These awards were probably for their services in the Second Dutch War.

Other occasions for the King's letters to the Board do not fall into a definite pattern. On 30 June 1662 the King wrote to the Duke of York asking him to order the Navy Board to fit and furnish the Briar, which was to be lent to Prince Rupert for his intended expedition to the West

¹ BM, Add.MS. 9,307, f.19, 17 April 1662.

² BM, Add.MS. 5,752, f.21, by his warrant of 8 November 1664 the King had directed that the money should be paid from the surplus 'groats', that being the money collected from the seamen for the support of a minister or preacher, which was used for other purposes when ministers had not been appointed.

³ PRO, Adm.106/9, f.57, 2 July 1664.

⁴ BM, Add.MS. 9,307, f.67, 7 September 1665.

⁵ PRO, Adm.106/11, f.17, 18 July 1665; Adm.2/1745, f.158r, 6 May 1667.



Indies. This order no doubt originated from a request by Rupert to the King for the loan of a vessel.¹ A similar request was made in 1668, which resulted in the King ordering that the Eagle ketch should be hired to Rupert, Albemarle and Lord Craven, who were attempting to find a north-west passage by way of the Great Lakes in Canada.² Several of the letters from the King to the Duke of York were the result of the need for the King's authority before the Lord High Admiral could act. Such letters were usually a formality and cannot be said to represent detailed intervention by the King. An example of this type of order is the King's letter of 13 June 1664 to the Lord High Admiral ordering him to press men for the fleet then being prepared, and by virtue of this order the Duke of York was able to issue press warrants to captains.³

The King was also associated with the navy by the debates over the supply of money needed for the Service. Prior to 1666 there was little need for the King to be involved in such matters, except that during the preparations for the 1664 fleet the need to have money for victuals prompted the King to write to the Lord Treasurer (Southampton) ordering him to provide £10,000 for the victualling of the navy. This was to be provided out of the money obtained from the sale of Dunkirk and was to be repaid out of the ordinary assignments to the navy.⁴ When the financial situation began to deteriorate rapidly the King authorised Carteret to borrow £20,000 'at the best rates he can' for the navy. This sum was to provide for widows orphans, discharging pay tickets and fitting out fire ships, and was to be

¹ CSPD 1661-2, p.424.

² CSPD 1667-8, p.220.

³ CSPD 1663-4, p.614.

⁴ CSPD 1663-4, p.590; CSPD 1664-5, p.41.

repaid out of the money that the Customs Farmers had agreed to advance.¹ The King also met the officers of the navy from time to time to discuss the financial position. At one such meeting Sir William Batten, Lord Brouncker, Sir William Penn and Pepys were called before the King, Duke of York, the Lord Treasurer and Sir George Carteret on 14 March 1667 when they stated the 'wants' of the navy. They were satisfied to a certain extent because 'we did get what we asked, £500,000, assigned upon the Eleven Months' Tax', but this did not satisfy the most pressing problem which was the lack of ready money.² The financial position was again reported by Pepys to the King, Duke of York and Lords of the Treasury on 11 May 1670. This was at the time when the King's interest in the financial position of the navy was greatly increased because of his negotiations with France, since these would almost certainly lead to another war with the Dutch.³ The problem of the financial settlement for the victuallers led to Sir George Downing, from the Treasury, informing the Board that 'His Majesty hath appointed to be at the Treasury Chambers' on Friday next at 4 in the afternoon to consider the 'business of victualling the navy', the Board was required to attend at the same time.⁴ During 1672 several meetings took place at the Treasury Chambers between the King, sometimes the Duke of York, the Officers of the Treasury and the Treasurer of the Navy, Sir Thomas Osborne (who was on several occasions accompanied by other members of the Board), when matters relating to the provision of money for the victuallers and paying off ships were discussed.⁵

¹ CSPD 1666-7, p.58.

² Diary, 14 March 1667.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.647, 9 May 1670.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/21, f.259, 8 August 1671.

⁵ BM, Add.MS. 28,040, nine such meetings were recorded by Osborne from 27 January to 25 May 1672, where the journal ends.

The King was also able to call the Board to Whitehall to give advice on matters concerning the navy. Such meetings were usually held on Sundays when the available members of the Board were called before the 'King in Cabinet'. They were not recorded very frequently, only seven being noted by Pepys from November 1664 to April 1669, and it is most unlikely that he would have failed to make a note of other meetings of this nature. But naturally this does not imply that the King and Cabinet could not discuss naval matters without the Board being present. These meetings are first mentioned on 9 November 1664 when 'the King being in his Cabinet council... I was called in and demanded by the King himself many Questions, to which I did give him full answers'.¹ Unfortunately Pepys does not say what these questions were, but they were probably concerned with fitting out the fleet for the following year. On this occasion the 'Cabinet council' consisted of Clarendon, Southampton, the two Secretaries of State, Sir George Carteret and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Duke of York was absent, having left for Portsmouth that day. These meetings do not appear to have had any fixed membership, for on 15 January 1665 the King, Clarendon and several of the Privy Council, were attended by Coventry, Penn and Pepys from the Navy Board, and Admirals Lawson and Ayscue. They considered the problem of manning the fleet and whether to allow the Levant trading ships to sail, as this would involve a loss of seamen to the merchant ships. The naval officials were also reluctant to release warships for escort duties because all ships would be needed for the main fleet.² After the naval advisers had withdrawn the merchants were called in, presumably to press for the lifting of the embargo on foreign sailings which had been in force since the Order in Council on 16 December

¹ Diary, 9 November 1664.

² Diary, 15 January 1665.

1664. As the embargo was repeated by another Order in Council on 22 February 1665 it would appear that they had been unsuccessful.¹

The deficiencies in the victualling system were causing serious concern to the navy. Pepys prepared some proposals on this subject, which were read, on 14 October 1665, to the 'King, Duke and the Caball with complete applause and satisfactions'.² The complaints made by Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle, (the joint commanders in 1666), on the victualling situation, and of their being forced to come in early for more provisions, led to Pepys and Penn appearing before the King and Cabinet to explain the situation, 'wherein they seemed satisfied, but press mightily for more supplies ... Then they proceeded to the enquiry after the fireships; and did all very superficially - and without any severity at all'.³

These meetings did allow the Board direct access to the King and enabled them to state their difficulties. On 7 October 1666, Brouncker, Mennes, Batten and Pepys attended the King and Duke of York at the Cabinet, when Pepys was able to lay 'open the ill state of the Navy - by the greatness of the debt - greatness of work to do against next year - the time and materials it would take - and our incapacity, through a total want of money'. The members of the Board withdrew and the King and Cabinet discussed the financial situation. They decided that £5,000 or £6,000 could be supplied, when '£100,000 were at this time but absolutely necessary, and we mentioned £50,000'.⁴ Having laid out the serious situation the Board was not called again to the King until 14 March 1667, when

1 PRO, PC 6/1, f.104, 16 December 1664; Adm.1/5246, f.95, 22 February 1665.

2. Diary, 14 October 1665.

3 Diary, 26 August 1666.

4 Diary, 7 October 1666. On this occasion the 'Cabinet' consisted of the Duke of York, Clarendon, Southampton, Rupert, Albemarle, Carteret, Coventry and Morrice.

Pepys read the Board's letter to the Duke of York, dated 23 February 1667, and they were assigned £500,000 on the Eleven Months' Tax.¹ The last mention in the Diary of the Board being called to attend the King and Cabinet was on 24 January 1669 when the King required to know by what date all the fleet might be ready for service; the King was very anxious to have a fleet of at least 40 ready for the summer.² Two days later Pepys was again before the King and Cabinet, and he expressed surprise to find the Lord Privy Seal (Lord Robartes) there 'whom I never before knew to be in so much play, as to be of the Cabinet.'³ The discussion concerned the situation in the Mediterranean and the best way of sending more victuals to Allin's fleet to enable him to remain away longer.

From these examples taken from the Diary it can be seen that the King was in regular consultation with his 'cabinet' or 'cabal' about matters of policy. In the field of administration any new suggestions, such as Pepys's proposals about regulating the victualling, would be discussed before this body prior to being put into effect by the orders of the Lord High Admiral. Other decisions reached at these meetings would come before the Privy Council before being passed on to the Lord High Admiral to order their execution.

Conversely, that is the Navy Board applying directly to the King for directions, I have found only one instance of a direct request from the Board for the King's direction on an administrative matter. This occurred on 14 November 1667 when the Board wrote to the King requesting 'directions on two particulars but because of His Royal Highness's illness

¹ Diary, 14 March 1667. Again it must be stated that Pepys is unlikely not to have recorded any other meetings, even though it is almost certain that naval affairs would often be discussed by the 'Cabinet' with the Duke of York or Albemarle providing information.

² Diary, 24 January 1669.

³ Diary, 26 January 1669.

we make application to your Majesty'.¹ The reason for the letter was to establish which ships were to be set out in 1668 so that the Board could inform the King's envoy in Sweden what tar and hemp would be required from there. The Board also wanted permission not to sell the Dutch prize Slothany, as ordered, but to turn her into a hulk at Portsmouth. There is no trace of the King's reply concerning the fleet for 1668, but an Order in Council was issued to turn the Slothany into a hulk, although it was left to the Duke of York to issue the actual orders to the Navy Board when he recovered.² The King did not, therefore, interfere directly, but allowed the order to be given through the Privy Council and issued through the Admiralty.

Despite the solitary example of direct application by the Board to the King, there is abundant evidence of the King taking decisions which affected the navy. These were mainly concerned with matters of policy, such as the number of ships to be set out in the next year and whether or not a new ship was to be built. Various matters were referred to the King and he would act upon the advice of the Duke of York, a Committee of the Privy Council, or the Navy Board. It is reasonable to suggest that in matters of administration the King's intervention was strictly limited to accepting the advice of his professional advisers. For the most part these decisions are expressed in Orders in Council, which will be discussed below.

When commenting on the giving of orders by the King it must be made clear that the evidence available does not allow us to state with absolute

¹ BM, Add.MS. 9,311, f.149r, 14 November 1667.

² PRO, SP29/223, f.41, 21 November 1667.

certainty that the order originated from the King, and in many cases it is safe to assume that, as far as the details are concerned, he would act on the advice of others. An illustration of this problem can be found in the Duke of York's letter to the Navy Board on 2 August 1668, 'I having by His Majesty's directions given order to Sir Jeremy Smith' to send the Resolution, Warspight and Rupert to Portsmouth and the Falcon and Success to Woolwich to be paid off and laid up.¹ The ships mentioned in this letter had been kept in pay because of the possibility of war with France through England's involvement in the Triple Alliance with Sweden and the Dutch. Once the danger of war had passed the fleet was laid up and it is probable that no specific order was made by the King concerning the ships mentioned in this letter; only a decision as a matter of policy would have been taken by the King and the orders for putting this into effect issued by the Lord High Admiral.

The Duke of York passed enquiries from the Board on for the King's decision; in many cases these would be issues which were beyond the authority of the Lord High Admiral to resolve. The somewhat delicate matter of wearing the 'standard' was left to the King's pleasure. The Board told the Duke of York that the 'standard' implied that the King was present. The whole issue had been raised because Prince Rupert was to command at sea in the proposed 1664 expedition, and, because he was of the 'blood Royal', desired some mark of his rank other than an Admiral's flag. The issue was resolved by the King deciding that 'the Prince shall carry the flag of union only, and not that, the King or His Royal Highness being on board'.²

¹ PRO, Adm.106/16, f.338, 2 August 1668.

² Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, p.28.

The need to ascertain the King's pleasure could cause a certain amount of delay. The Board had written to the Duke of York on 19 May 1669 asking for directions on how they should dispose of £40,000 given by the Treasury for the ordinary expenses of the navy. More than five weeks later the Duke replied, saying that he could 'not sooner be in readiness to answer your letter of 19 May', as the King had not declared his 'pleasure' on it 'till now'.¹ This letter also serves as an example of the King acting on the advice of the Board, as the Duke continued, 'His Majesty's pleasure is that according to the method proposed in your letter to me of 19 May you are to proceed to the repairing of the docks, wharves...'. On this occasion the delay was not serious, but it can be taken as an indication that Charles II was sometimes reluctant to concern himself with business.²

On 13 May 1671 the Board wrote to the Duke of York informing him that they were unable to pass Sir Thomas Allin's accounts for his voyage to the Straits, largely because of certain irregularities, but also, because of the lack of precedent, they could not pass the accounts without an order from the Lord High Admiral.³ The Duke replied on 3 July that he had 'acquainted His Majesty' with this, and the King had directed that the account be passed.⁴ In a case like this the King's decision was needed, as it was very much a question of establishing a precedent, and the Duke ordered the Board to 'consider of a method, and propose the same to me, whereby all persons who shall in the future have command of HM ships in the Straits, and are entrusted with the disbursement of money may govern themselves'.

1 PRO, Adm, 2/1746, f.41, 27 June 1669.

2 Pepys comments on this aspect of the King's character, supra pp.13-14.

3 Bodl., Rawl. MS. A 177, f.160, 13 May 1671.

4 PRO, Adm. 106/21, f.223, 3 July 1671.

The need to obtain the King's pleasure even on matters of policy could be inconvenient to the Board. The Duke of York was unable to answer the Board's enquiry about the number of ships to be set out in 1672; this was to enable them to fit the required ships in time and also to warn the victuallers about the provisions they would be required to make. The Duke replied that the need for secrecy prevented a formal declaration and the Board should assume that the whole fleet was to be set out and give orders accordingly.¹

It is very clear that, as the King was in constant touch with the Lord High Admiral, naval matters could easily be discussed, although no records of these would exist. There is, however, one occasion when the separation of the King and Duke did cause a measure of inconvenience.

While the Duke was at sea the routine business of the administration was left to Albemarle in the Second Dutch War, and in the Third Dutch War to Prince Rupert. But when it was decided that the Duke of York should not go to sea again during the Second Dutch War, he was able to resume personal execution of the executive duties of the Lord High Admiral. This process was disturbed by the outbreak of the plague which forced the King and Court to leave London, and Albemarle was left behind to co-ordinate naval affairs. The King and Duke separated, partly out of fear of the plague and partly because of the possibility of unrest in the north.²

The Duke was sent to York to be on hand should any disturbance break out and this broke his close contact with the King. When he had been in York for just over a month the Duke wrote to Arlington that he wished he could discuss the disposal of the fleet to its winter moorings with the King.³

¹ PRO, Adm.106/21, f.343, 31 October 1671.

² Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, I, 37.

³ PRO, SP29/132, f.64, 11 September 1665.

On the same day, 11 September 1665, Coventry also wrote to Arlington stating that, the 'Duke of York's absence from the King is inconvenient at this juncture when, to form a resolution, all the circumstances of foreign business should be thoroughly debated'.¹ Again it should be emphasised that these letters refer to the need for consultation on matters of policy; the actual administrative details of the distribution of the fleet could be left to the Lord High Admiral or to the Duke of Albemarle, both of whom would act on the advice of the Navy Board.

Before turning to examine the Privy Council, there is one further source from which the King could receive advice on naval matters. This was from his admirals through a Council of War, though he was able to summon them to attend him in person with the Navy Board. From the Coventry Papers we are able to gain an indication of the composition of these Councils and the range of their activities in the period leading up to the outbreak of the Second Dutch War. On 10 October and 16 October 1664 the Council of War consisted of the Duke of York with Albemarle, Sandwich and Lawson as sea commanders, and Carteret and Lord Berkeley from the Navy Board. Their conclusions, which 'it was conceived fit to be proposed to His Majesty', concerned orders for the fleet's being sent to the Straits, and an agreement to have merchant ships inspected with a view to hiring suitable ones for the navy.² Further discussion on these Councils of War will take place when considering the Duke of York as Lord High Admiral, but as far as giving advice to the King was concerned, the Council of War represented the point of view of the sea commanders more than the administrative viewpoint put forward by the Navy Board.

¹ PRO, SP29/132, f.65, 11 September 1665.

² Coventry MS. Vol.95, ff.60,64, 10,16 October 1665.

Thus from 1660 to 1673 the King's role in naval affairs was that of the interested and, to a certain extent, knowledgeable amateur. In matters of policy that involved the navy his decision would be final; but the implementation of this and the running of the navy was left to the Duke of York. To Charles II the navy was not an end in itself; he regarded it as an instrument of policy and a factor which aided, or limited, the scope of his activity in foreign affairs.

THE PRIVY COUNCIL AND THE NAVY

After the Restoration the Privy Council was still a very important part of the central government but, as E R Turner says, 'the Council steadily waned in importance, and more and more it lost control of the important things in the realm'.¹ During the 1660s there was a decline in the Council and, at the same time, a corresponding increase in the importance of a small part of the Council, the 'cabinet'. During this period the Privy Council lost what effective control it might have exercised over the navy to the Committee of the Council for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy, and later to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. As Turner says 'It is very probable that important matters of policy and government were generally not debated, or at least effectively discussed, in the council: they had already been talked over or decided by the king with his more confidential advisers in the committee of foreign affairs or cabinet, and they were brought before the council only for announcement and formal approval'.²

The decline of the Privy Council was due mainly to its size. It had grown to such an extent that secrecy and the speedy dispatch of business was very difficult, and as a direct result of this the King gathered around him a small group of more confidential advisers who were regularised into the Committee of Foreign Affairs. These smaller groups had been encouraged by Clarendon who, although favouring the

¹ Turner, The Privy Council of England, I, 381.

² Turner, *op.cit.*, I, 397.

idea of the King acting through the Council, thereby contributed to its reduced importance. This decline can be seen through the Council Registers which became more formal and bare, and from this it is evident that the 'work done in Council meetings was little more than routine or ceremony of formal approbation'.

As with the King, the Privy Council was not involved to any great degree in the administration of the navy. Its function was basically to give greater authority to orders of a general nature concerning the navy and to give full legal authority to the actions of the Lord High Admiral. The Council issued orders to the Duke of York who would pass them on to the Navy Board for their execution. In the case of orders to fit out and victual ships, the initial decision would be taken as a matter of policy by the King and his closer advisers. It would then be placed before the Council for acceptance, and orders to implement the decision would be issued accordingly. There is perhaps a need to clarify one point at this stage; when referring to the 'Council', this relates to the King acting in Council. Thus in theoretical, and certain practical terms, the ultimate authority for many actions of the Navy Board lay with the King in Council and not the Lord High Admiral. This is also true of the power to make victualling contracts, the ordering of Lord Lieutenants to assist in pressing men, and in the provision of additional money for the navy. In all these matters the King and Council would act on the advice of the Lord High Admiral, who in turn consulted with the Navy Board or the Committee of the Privy Council for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy. The role of the Privy Council in naval affairs can be divided into three sections. Firstly, there was the need for the authority of the King in Council; secondly, there were the orders from the King and Council to the Lord High Admiral on matters of policy; and, thirdly, there was the more detailed involvement of the Council in naval

affairs through the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy.

The rights and authority of the Lord High Admiral, as defined by various Orders in Council, will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

For the present, when dealing with the Council, it is sufficient to note that the Council's authority was needed on 23 December 1664 to enable the Duke of York to issue letters of marque and reprisal against the Dutch.¹

These powers were extended on 6 April 1666 to include 'the French King and his subjects', and on 9 May a bill was drawn up to authorise the Lord High Admiral to issue letters against the Danes.² The authority of the King in Council was also required to settle the rights of the Lord High Admiral over prizes taken at sea or driven into port by bad weather.³

The position with regard to the Lord High Admiral being allowed to issue press warrants is not absolutely clear. On several occasions the Navy Board requested authority from the Duke of York to press seamen or additional men for the yards, but when a more general press was required then an order from the Council was necessary. On 7 June 1664 Secretary Bennet was ordered to prepare a warrant allowing the Lord High Admiral to impress seamen.⁴ When the 1668 expedition was being prepared an order was passed in Council authorising the Duke of York to give out press warrants as he 'shall see cause to the captains of the ships designed for this Summer service, to enable them to imprest and provide seamen'.⁵ A final example of this is in the pressing of merchant ships for the

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.83, 23 December 1664.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.149, 6 April 1666; f.152, 9 May 1666.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.177, 6 March 1666; PC2/59, f.255, 4 January 1667.

⁴ PRO, SP29/99, f.28, 7 June 1664.

⁵ PRO, PC2/60, f.230, 18 March 1668.

King's service. Because of the reluctance of several owners to hire their ships to the King, except at excessive rates, the Lord High Admiral was empowered by the King in Council to cause the ships to be impressed if their owners persisted in their rejection of the Navy Board's rates of hire.¹

The Navy Board or, to use the correct title, the Principal Officers and Commissioners of His Majesty's Navy, was empowered to act by an Order of 4 July 1660. The membership of the new Board had been decided upon by the King and Duke of York with assistance from Albemarle and Sandwich. Prior to the acceptance of this establishment, a committee of the Privy Council was ordered to consider the regulation of the navy.² The Duke of York presented their report to the King in Council on 4 July when an Order in Council was passed authorising the Lord High Admiral to appoint the new members of the Board and to revoke the authority granted to the former Commissioners of the Navy, who were also ordered to hand over their offices, books and money to their successors. It is conceivable that it was only because of the unsettled nature of the times that the new government felt a need to pass this order in Council instead of acting on the authority of the Lord High Admiral. This view can be supported because later additions and alterations to the Navy Board did not require Orders in Council, and there is no mention of the appointments of William Coventry, Lord Brouncker, Tippetts, Smith, Allin, Seymour or Ernle in the Council Registers. Apart from the initial appointment of the Navy Board in 1660, the only mention of Commissioners being appointed is in the

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.91, 27 January 1665.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.1, 27 June 1660. The Committee consisted of the Duke of York, Monck, Northumberland, Montague, Secretaries Nicholas and Morrice, Col. Charles Howard and Ashley Cooper.

minutes of the Committee for the Admiralty and Navy.¹ This Committee, acting in the absence of the Duke of York, ordered the appointment of Middleton at Portsmouth and Taylor at Harwich in November 1664.

The Navy Board acted under the Instructions of the Lord High Admiral, which were re-issued by the Duke of York on 28 January 1662; these did not need to have the approval of the King in Council. It is interesting to note that alterations to the Instructions to the Treasurer of the Navy were ordered by the King in Council on 11 July 1671.² On this occasion the reason lay in the somewhat anomalous position of the Treasurer of the Navy who, although a member of the Board, was of far greater stature and independence than his colleagues. This was exacerbated by the intermittent struggle for the control of the greatest spending department of the nation between the Treasurer of the Navy and the Treasury Commissioners. It was therefore not because of its naval connections, but because of the financial and political importance of the post that it was necessary to have an Order in Council to regulate its affairs. The Lord High Admiral, Commissioners of the Treasury, and the Treasurer of the Navy were assisted by the Navy Board in establishing new Instructions, which were accepted by the King in Council on 6 September 1671.³

One of the most important functions of naval administration was to provide victuals for the fleet. For the period 1660 to 1673 this was done by contract rather than by commission, as had been the practice under the

¹ One possible exception to this was over the division of the Comptroller's work in January 1667; for this and the need to invoke the Privy Council, see *infra*. pp.218-219.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.445, 11 July 1671.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.446, 6 September 1671; *infra*. pp.198-201.

Commonwealth. The size and importance of the contract involved is probably the main reason for the victualling contract having to come before the King and Council for acceptance. The advice of the Duke of York, no doubt at the suggestion of Albemarle, Sandwich, and the admirals, was accepted by the King in Council. This led to Dennis Gauden being appointed sole Victualler, and the Duke of York ordered the Attorney General, Sir Geoffrey Palmer, to prepare a bill for this appointment on 21 August 1660.¹ The previous commissioners for victualling acted for some time after this. They were ordered by the King in Council on 9 November 1660 to be 'dismissed from that charge and employment' and to hand over all stores in their possession to Gauden.² The final contract took a few months to perfect, as the first draft was made on 1 November, and it was not until the following March that the contract was ordered to be sent to the Attorney General to be engrossed and prepared for the Great Seal.³

Before this contract was accepted it had been necessary for an Order in Council to be passed to enable the Navy Board to make an interim agreement for the provision of victuals.⁴ The supply of money to support the victualling was also dependent on the authority of the King in Council. As far as the 'ordinary' was concerned (that is for the yards, officers, and the shipkeepers of those ships that were laid up) a Privy Seal would be passed to provide for a year's supply. During 1663 and 1664 a monthly supply of £467 was to be paid to the Victualler for the 'ordinary'.⁵

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1732, f.33r, 21 August 1660.

² PRO, PC2/55, f.30, 9 November 1660.

³ PRO, PC2/55, f.178, 22 March 1661.

⁴ PRO, PC2/55, f.71, 14 December 1660.

⁵ PRO, PC2/56, f.261, 19 December 1662; f.591, 23 October 1663.

In a similar manner the 'extraordinary', caused by expeditions to the Straits and the Dutch wars, would also be supplied on the authority of Privy Seals on the order of the King in Council.¹ Because of the failures in the victualling system in the Second Dutch War it was decided to investigate the possibility of altering the contract. The Navy Board was asked to report to the Council on whether it would be to the King's advantage to change the contract and what articles in the present contract should be altered.² It reported on 11 September that a year's notice had to be given to terminate the contract. The Council accepted this and ordered that notice to end the contract should be given to Gauden and that negotiations were to start for a new contract.³ The negotiations and reports on the tenders for the new contract were discussed between the Navy Board and the Treasury Commissioners, and, as before, the only part played by the Council was in the formal ratification of the contract. Although the report of the Navy Board on the rival tenders was debated at the Council, again there is no indication of the depth of the discussion. The King and Council decided to accept the recommendation of the Navy Board (as drawn up by Pepys) that Gauden should be re-appointed; they added the proviso that he should have two partners with him to avoid the disruption that would be caused by the death of a single contractor.⁴ The Treasury Commissioners were to complete the contract with Gauden at the rates specified in the Order in Council.

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.73, 28 November 1664.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.231, 4 September 1667.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.228, 11 September 1667.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.347, 26 September 1668.

With regard to the wider associations of the Privy Council with naval affairs, the Council Registers contain abundant evidence of the Council's authority being invoked, especially to assist in the prosecution of the war. The Council would issue orders to enforce or lift an embargo; to order the Lord Lieutenants to assist in the pressing of seamen; to regulate the distribution of prize goods, and by a series of proclamations, ranging from one against the embezzlement of stores to another for the encouragement of seamen. Although these matters are closely connected with the problems of the administration, there is no indication that the Council ever acted on its own initiative. The Council issued orders in response to requests from the Lord High Admiral or the Navy Board, and it would also act on the advice of the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy.

The proclamations issued by order of the Council were, in the first place, to give greater legal authority to the actions of the Navy Board and, in the second place, to give these actions greater publicity and circulation throughout the kingdom. A draft for the proclamation against the embezzlement of the King's stores was accepted and ordered to be printed on 19 November 1661, and a similar proclamation was ordered on 26 November 1662.¹ The problem of manpower led to a proclamation being issued on 9 April 1661 commanding all 'masters, pilots, mariners and seamen being His Majesty's natural born subjects in the service of foreign princes' not to take service abroad, and empowering the King's ships to search foreign ships for such men.² This was not put into effect at once but was invoked by Order in Council on 18 May 1664, and again on 5 January 1672.³ The Attorney General was also to issue a proclamation against desertion by

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, no.27, 19 November 1661; no.20, 26 November 1662.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.13, 5 April 1661.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.63, 18 May 1664; f.461, 5 January 1672.

seamen and soldiers who had been paid press and conduct money, and also to give notice of the King's intention to issue commissions of Oyer and Terminer for the trial of all seamen who had run away from the fleet.¹ These proclamations sometimes used threats as well as inducements in an attempt to promote greater response. On 22 December 1665 the Council ordered a proclamation to be drawn up requiring seamen to return to their ships by the following 1 February. Failure to report would lead to a court martial, but encouragement was given by way of promising the seamen payment of their past wages.²

With the approach of war with the Dutch it became necessary to regulate the sailings of merchant ships, and the Council therefore issued an embargo on foreign sailing. The intention of this order was to assist in the recruitment of men for the fleet rather than to protect the merchant ships from Dutch privateers while the fleet was being fitted out. As the most important period for obtaining men for the fleet was in the spring of each year, it was necessary to prevent sailings in the winter and early spring as the ships employed on most voyages would not have returned in time to release their men. Accordingly, on the advice of the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy (which itself was advised by a Council of War composed of the Duke of York and several flag officers), the Council declared an embargo on ships trading abroad on 28 October 1664.³ The usual exemptions to the embargo were ships engaged in coastal trade (this was defined as including ships trading with Scotland, Ireland, the Channel Islands, and in 1672 France as well), those engaged in the fishing trade,

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.71, 16 November 1664.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.131, 22 December 1665.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.58, 28 October 1664.

and coal ships from the north trading to London. Merchantmen preparing to sail to the East Indies were also exempt from the embargo, as ordered on 28 October 1664 and 22 March 1672. Those ships engaged in the fishing trade with Newfoundland were also considered to be important enough to the needs of the victualler to be exempt by an Order of 7 February 1672.¹ At the same time as requiring the Lord High Admiral to order the enforcement of the embargo, the Council declared that he was to be empowered to issue passes to individual ships to exempt them from the restrictions of the embargo. Similar orders were issued by the Council on 22 December 1665 and 4 November 1666 for the Second Dutch War, and on 22 March 1672 and 11 December 1672 for the Third Dutch War.² The usual practice was to lift the embargo after the fleet was reasonably well manned; for example, in the Council's proclamation of 26 April 1665, and when a 'liberty of exporting' (not a complete lifting of the embargo) was allowed on 2 March 1666.³

Besides the imposition of the embargo on sailings abroad, the Council was more directly involved in assisting the Navy Board to complete the manning of the fleet. This was done by the issuing of orders to individual Lord Lieutenants requiring them and their under officers to assist the Vice-Admirals and press masters in the pressing and searching for seamen. This was made necessary because the Lord High Admiral had no authority over the administrative machinery of local government. In each of the maritime counties the Vice-Admiral was mainly concerned with the rights of the Lord High Admiral with regard to wrecks and, in case of war, prizes.

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.75, 28 October 1664; f.482, 22 March 1672; f.469, 7 February 1672.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.161, 22 December 1665; f.482, 22 March 1672; f.512, 11 December 1672; Adm.1/5246, f.176, 4 November 1666.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.111, 26 April 1665; f.147, 2 March 1666.

The Vice-Admiral did not exercise any authority over ships and commanders, although he reported on the arrival and departure of the King's, and merchant ships. During the war their most important duty was to secure a supply of seamen and to arrange for them to be transported to the fleet or port appointed. The Lord High Admiral was responsible for issuing the orders to the Vice-Admirals, and his action was supported by the Council writing on 14 October 1664 to the Lord Lieutenants of twenty English counties which bordered on the sea.¹

The Lord Lieutenant, or his Deputy, the Justices of the Peace and all their under officers, were required to assist the Vice-Admirals 'and all other officers appointed for the impressing of mariners'. They were to apprehend and imprison all who had deserted, and all such as had been given press and conduct money but had failed to appear at the appointed time and place. The usual methods of the press had not proved very successful in 1664 and led to the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy being required to consider the best ways of providing men for the 1665 fleet.² On receiving the Committee's report the Council wrote again to the Lord Lieutenants ordering them and their under officers to assist the Vice-Admirals to impress a specific number of seamen from their county. The figures recommended for each county did not represent the total of seamen to be expected from them, but rather an additional levy beyond the numbers pressed by the usual methods. In order to ensure that this was being done, each Vice-Admiral was allocated to a member of the Privy Council with whom he was to communicate in case of difficulty.³ These Privy Councillors do not appear to have been closely associated with the navy. Apart from Albemarle and the Secretaries of State, who by virtue

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.72, 14 October 1664.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.77, 14 December 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.80, 23 December 1664.

of their office were more involved with orders concerning the navy, the other Privy Councillors were in some cases the Lord Lieutenants, such as the Duke of Buckingham in the case of Yorkshire, and as they were normally to be found at court they would act through their Deputy Lieutenants. Others such as the Earl of Bath (Cornwall) or the Earl of Carberry (South Wales) had little connection with the navy, but were brought into contact with the problems of naval administration through this plan.

This system was thought to have had some success as it was repeated as part of the preparations for the Third Dutch War by an Order of the Council on 26 January 1672.¹ The only important difference between 1664 and 1672 was that on the latter occasion the Vice-Admirals were not required to correspond with members of the Privy Council. Letters were issued to the Lord Lieutenants, as in 1664, and they, or their Deputies, were required to correspond with the Secretaries of State in case of difficulty. The Vice-Admirals were to do likewise. The Council also required the Justices of the Peace to make up lists and keep track of the movements of seamen usually resident in the parishes under their jurisdiction.² These lists would also enable a 'dormant warrant' to be left at the seamen's homes which would come into effect should they fail to return to the fleet. During 1666 the manpower situation grew worse, and the King was informed that many seamen had left the fleet and their usual places of residence to work as labourers. This is not to be wondered at in view of the abuses of the ticket system and the delay in the payment of wages. The Council wrote again to the Lord Lieutenants ordering them to search their counties for such seamen, and at the same time to press any able men for the fleet.³ These letters were sent to

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.467, 26 January 1672.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.96, 18 November 1664; f.463, 10 January 1672.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.161, 27 June 1666.

the inland counties which had not previously been ordered directly to assist in the press. A greater reliance had to be placed on the Lord Lieutenant, or his Deputy, to ensure that the Justices of the Peace and the constables, as well as the press masters themselves, performed their duty because the inland counties did not have a Vice-Admiral appointed. An example of this is the letter of 10 July 1666 to the Earl of Suffolk, as Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, who was to give orders to search for those seamen 'that do sculk and hide' to avoid going to sea and to have them arrested and sent to the fleet.¹ In the same way a letter was sent on 26 March 1672 in which the Lord Lieutenants were asked to search for 'seamen and watermen withdrawing themselves to inland counties to avoid His Majesty's service'.² At the same time any newcomer to the district was to be examined to ensure that he was not a seaman.³ The extent to which the Council's orders in this matter were of actual assistance to the Navy Board, is difficult to decide, but as the majority of seamen were to be found in London, the out ports, and on returning merchant ships, it is very doubtful whether large numbers would be found hiding in the inland counties. More important in this case was the legal authority that the Council was able to confer on the system of impressing seamen, and the threat of imprisonment or loss of wages that a proclamation issued by the Council would have.

One usually rich source of seamen was from among the watermen of London, but attempts to recruit them through the press masters had little success. This led to the Duke of Albemarle being granted full powers to impress

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.165, 10 July 1666.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.284, 26 March 1672.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.284, 26 March 1672.

watermen, who, like the seamen, were prone to desert the service.¹ The Council ordered that those watermen who neglected to appear or later deserted, were to lose their privileges as members of the Watermen's Company. In the same order the Council threatened legal sanctions against the rulers of the Watermen's Company if they did not assist in stopping this abuse by their members; they were threatened with a writ of Quo Warranto against their Charter.²

Apart from issuing orders in connection with the embargo and the pressing of seamen, the advent of war brought a further increase in the Privy Council's activity concerning the navy. This can be seen in the orders for the establishment of the Commissioners for the Sick and Wounded and for the distribution of gratuities to the relatives of those seamen killed in the service. On the recommendation of the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy on 28 October 1664, it was decided to appoint Commissioners for the Sick and Wounded.³ This had originally been suggested by a Council of War which was composed of the Duke of York, Carteret, Coventry and six of the more senior of the flag officers. At the same time as this resolution that 'His Majesty be moved to settle a commission for Sick and Wounded', they recommended that some encouragement to seamen should be published to make them aware of their share of prize goods, and also of the fact that there would be provision for their relatives if they were killed.⁴ These ideas were then passed on to the Council by the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy. On 11 November 1664 the instructions for the

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.112, 28 April 1665.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.167, 11 July 1666.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.77, 28 October 1664.

⁴ Coventry MS. Vol.95, f.65, 23 October 1664.

Commissioners of Sick and Wounded were passed by the Council and the first payment of £5,000 was ordered.¹ Thereafter the Council's support for the Commissioners of the Sick and Wounded was limited to ordering the provision of further money, in requisitioning buildings for their use, and in regulating the rates of exchange of prisoners with the French and Dutch.²

In accordance with the King's promise in his Declaration for the Encouragement of Seamen of 28 October 1664, 'Commissioners for Distributing the Gratuities to the Relatives of those Slain in the King's service' were established on 21 February 1666.³ The scale of these gratuities had been approved by the Council on 22 December 1665; they ranged from £200 to the widow of a captain of a first rate, down to £5 for the widow of an ordinary seaman on a sixth rate. The same table of gratuities applied to those killed in the Third Dutch War.⁴ The definition of 'slain' proved an initial problem for the Commissioners. They reported that the relatives of those who had lost their lives at sea, but not in action, were claiming gratuities. The King, on the advice of the Council, declared that 'slain' would only mean those killed in action or who had died as a result of their wounds, and those drowned when their ships were sunk as a result of enemy action.⁵

Associated with the prosecution of the war was the potentially rewarding subject of prize goods. In this particular the Council's role was small, though it was involved in the establishment of the Commissioners for Prize Goods. It passed a few orders, such as the one to the

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.65, 11 November 1664.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.86, 2 January 1665; f.172, 30 July 1666.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.139, 21 February 1666.

⁴ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.132, 22 December 1665; Adm.2/1740, f.198, June 1673.

⁵ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.157, 18 May 1666.

Prize Commissioners requiring them to reserve prize goods that might be useful for the navy; this was to prevent merchants from buying the goods and then selling them to the Navy Board at high prices.¹ The Council was also brought in on the advice of the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy, to order that the goods found between the decks of prizes should be surveyed by a person nominated by the flag officer or commander who had taken the prize, to ensure a more equal distribution of the seamen's customary share of the prize.² The Commissioners were in some difficulty when it came to deciding which part of the cargo should be declared lawful prize. When this matter was referred to the Council they ordered that if any part of the cargo was condemned as prize in the Admiralty courts, the whole ship would be deemed as prize.³

As can be seen from the Privy Council Registers, one item of business before the Council was the considering of petitions. These would either be granted by the Council or, more usually, they would be referred to the relevant department which was to consider the matter of the petition and make a report back to the Council. Petitions relating to the navy were also dealt with in this manner; a large majority of them were concerned with requests for the payment of debts, which in many cases were long overdue. On several occasions the Victualler of the navy, Dennis Gauden, had cause to petition the Council. On 7 October 1661 one of his petitions was read in Council. In it he stated that he had 'disbursed upward of £53,000 upon former warrants' and was now to advance a further £24,000. He complained that due to non-payments in the past he was unable to make any provision for the victualling of the next year's fleet. In the

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.89, 11 January 1665; f.188, 23 January 1667.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.83, 23 December 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.128, 24 November 1665.

following June he petitioned again, saying, that because of lack of payment, he had been unable to buy provisions at the cheaper rates when they were in season, and had been forced to borrow money at rates of interest which added to his expenses. These were both referred to the Lord Treasurer; the earlier one was also referred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider how to give relief to the petitioner.¹ Gauden was also prepared to petition the Council in order to obtain the payment of relatively small sums. On 16 December 1668 he petitioned saying that he had delivered victuals to Dunkirk by order of the Council and had expended more than he had been paid. The petition was referred to Lord Ashley, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, who reported that Gauden had been paid £1,660. 8s. 3½d. upon an estimate, but that he had expended £9. 0s. 0d. more than this. It was then ordered that a Privy Seal should be drawn up for this sum.²

Further examples of requests for payment came from the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded who petitioned the Council requesting £40,000 to pay off their arrears and to enable them to make provision for 1666. They were ordered to attend the Lord Treasurer, 'who is hereby required and authorised to settle the assignments demanded, or else find what other expedients he shall think fit for the petitioners satisfaction'.³ In 1669 the Council accepted the petition of William Castle, the shipwright, and the Treasury Commissioners were required to find out ways to pay the sum of £2,300 for the building of the Defiance and the fitting out of several other ships and fireships during the late war.⁴

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.23, 7 October 1661; Adm.1/5246, f.27, 22 June 1662.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.359, 16 December 1668.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.143, 26 February 1666.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.391, 28 June 1669, this petition must have been for the payment of the remainder of the money to Castle, as the Defiance, being a third rate, would have cost over £7,000 to build.

The above were all cases where the service had been performed and the estimates or bills passed by the Navy Board, but in other cases where the pretensions of the petitioner needed to be examined, the Navy Board could be ordered to report to the Council on the truth of the petition before an order was issued for the satisfaction of the petitioner. An illustration of this is the order for the Navy Board to report on the petition of Francis Bayley, the Bristol shipbuilder, for the payment of £1,151. 4. 9d. towards the building and fitting of the Edgar and St. Patrick.¹ The Board reported that Bayley was owed £253. 13s. 1d. from 1666 for the St. Patrick and £897. 11s. 8d. for the Edgar, and recommended that because of the 'remoteness of his abode and the well performance of his part in the building of the said ships' the petition should be granted. This was accepted by the King in Council and the Duke of York was to order the sums to be paid.

The more direct contact between the Privy Council and the navy can be seen in the orders to the Lord High Admiral and to the Navy Board. Firstly, there were the orders which conferred greater authority on the Lord High Admiral, such as those empowering him to issue letters of marque and press warrants, which have already been referred to.² Secondly, there were those to the Lord High Admiral requiring him to ensure that the Council's orders were put into effect; orders of a more general character can also be included in this category. On 6 March 1661 the King in Council directed that the Duke of York should order all the commanders of the King's ships to 'take care of the due observance of the late Act of Parliament for encouraging of shipping and navigation', and the commanders were to 'proceed' against all foreigners who were to be

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.369, 17 February 1669.

² Supra, pp.39, 46-50.

found ignoring these laws.¹ The Lord High Admiral was also ordered by the Council to ensure that the embargo was enforced. On 22 December 1665 and 22 March 1672, the Duke of York was to place an embargo on 'all ships outward bound which are sailed by His Majesty's subjects, until His Majesty's fleet be fully manned, except such ships as shall have His Royal Highness's pass'.² In the same way, on 18 September 1668 the Lord High Admiral was ordered to station a frigate off the Cornish coast in order to hinder the illegal exportation of wool, but this does not seem to have met with much success. On 24 September 1669, the Customs' Farmers complained that the abuse in the carrying away of wool had reached such a height that they could do little about it. On this occasion the Duke of York was required to order that two shallops should ply off the Kent coast to search for ships suspected of carrying wool.³

The majority of the orders from the King in Council to the Lord High Admiral were connected with the decision to have a certain number of ships set out. This decision, as previously indicated, was usually taken by the King together with a few close advisers, who would normally include the Lord High Admiral. The matter was then formally raised in Council and, presumably after some discussion about which we have no record, a decision was taken to require and authorise the Lord High Admiral to issue his orders to the Navy Board to put the decision into effect. These orders could be from 'His Majesty in Council', as on 26 February 1666 when the Duke of York was to order the building of two frigates at Harwich, or from the 'Lords of the Privy Council', as on 18 May 1664 when the order was signed by twenty-two members of the Council requiring the Duke of York

¹ PRO, PC2/55, f.157, 6 March 1661.

² PRO, PC6/1. f.161, 22 December 1665; f.482, 22 March 1672.

³ PRO, PC2/61, f.16, 18 September 1668; PC6/1, f.394, 24 September 1669.

to issue warrants for the equipping of a squadron of twelve ships to observe the movements of the Dutch in the Narrow Seas.¹ These orders covered shipbuilding, the fitting out of ships for sea, and the provision of victuals.

The usual practice was for the Duke of York to be authorised to issue his warrant to the Navy Board, and, at the same time, to require it to prepare an estimate of the cost involved.

This estimate was then presented by the Duke of York to the King in Council, where its acceptance would appear to be little more than a formality. An order was then issued by the King in Council for the preparation of a Privy Seal to authorise the Lord Treasurer, or Treasury Commissioners, to make the requisite payment to the Treasurer of the Navy.

Because of the time involved in putting such orders into effect there was little danger of the Council authorising an extensive programme before ascertaining the expenditure involved. The following is an example of how such a change in plan could be made without harmful effect. It is also an illustration of the process involved following the decision to build a ship. On 23 August 1661 the Duke of York wrote to the Navy Board asking them to prepare an estimate for the building of two third rates, but on 20 September he wrote again saying that the King had changed his mind and was going to have two second rates built instead and the Board was to provide another estimate.² No mention is made in the Council Registers before October 1661 of any decision being taken to have these ships built. This, therefore, is a good indication that the role of the Council was limited to accepting the King's decision. The first mention of these ships at the Council was on 2 October 1661 when the Duke of York presented the Navy Board's estimate of £18,352. 2s. Od., and 'it was ordered by His Majesty that the clerk of the Signet attending' was to draw up a bill for

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.175, 26 February 1666; f.64, 18 May 1664.

² PRO, Adm.106/5, f.247 23 August 1661; f.335, 20 September 1661.

a Privy Seal to authorise this sum to be paid to the Treasurer of the Navy.¹ Once this had been done there was no further mention of these ships at the Council. Thus it can be seen that, as far as routine matters were concerned in the administration of the navy, the role of the Council was very limited.

The same procedure was followed when any squadron was to be prepared for sea. The Lord High Admiral issued orders for the fitting of the ships and the provision of victuals, and a Privy Seal was granted to the Navy Board on the prepared estimate. It was the accepted practice that during the winter only a small number of ships would have to be kept at sea. In peace time the Winter Guard consisted of three, or possibly four, of the smaller ships, and the Summer Guard consisted of eight or nine ships which sometimes included a third rate. The size of these squadrons was dictated more by the financial position of the time than the need for defence. On 8 February 1661 the Council ordered the Navy Board to work out the cost of a Summer Guard of 6,000 men to be kept at sea for six months. The estimate was presented to the Council by the Duke of York on 20 February, where it was accepted, and a Privy Seal for £135,000 was ordered.²

In 1668 it was thought possible that a large fleet might be necessary for the summer; this was due to the negotiations with the Swedes and Dutch for the formation of the Triple Alliance. The Duke of York was to order the Navy Board to repair fifty ships of the fourth rate and above, and to have them made ready with all speed. Eight sixth rates were also to be prepared for convoy duty.³ The continuing possibility of war led to Charles II declaring in Council that the 'posture' of his neighbours abroad had obliged him to prepare fifty ships for sea. The Lord High

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.23, 2 October 1661, the ships were the Royal Katherine and Royal Oak.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.10, 8 February 1661; f.11, 20 February 1661.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.286, 15 January 1668.

Admiral was to direct that as many of the ships as were ready should be sent to sea and the remainder were to be fitted out and made ready with all possible speed.¹ The Navy Board's estimates of £171,825 for wages and £55,300 for victuals were accepted and a Privy Seal granted as early as 29 January 1668, but in the event the fleet was not needed, preparations were stopped, and orders were issued to discharge the ships during June 1668.²

In the setting out of ships the Council could be moved by requests from merchants. On 7 October 1663 it was ordered that two 'Holland built' ships, and two of the King's fourth rates, were to be fitted and victualled for eighteen months to provide a convoy for the ships of the Royal Adventurers Company.³

The methods used to obtain money for victuals, except for the 'ordinary', which was passed on an annual basis, were the same as those for shipbuilding and ordering ships to be fitted out. The Council's order was passed to the Navy Board through the Lord High Admiral, and the Board's estimate would be presented to the Council for the granting of the Privy Seal. In certain cases the Duke of York would order the Victualler direct to make a provision of victuals, instead of going through the Navy Board. For example, on 8 June 1664 the King in Council required the Lord High Admiral to order the Victualler to provide for an additional 7,000 men above the 3,000 ordered on 11 May, and 4,000 on 18 May, and separate instructions ordering the preparation of an estimate were issued to the Navy Board.⁴ Although the Navy Board provided an estimate, there is no record of a Privy Seal being passed by the Council. This may have been because there was

1 PRO, PC6/1, f.299, 6 March 1668.

2 PRO, PC6/1, f.291, 29 January 1668; f.319, 3 June 1668.

3 PRO, PC2/56, f.572, 7 October 1663.

4 PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.48, 11 May 1664; f.49, 18 May 1664; f.50, 8 June 1664.

considerable uncertainty about the exact number of men required and the length of time for which they would be needed. On 12 October an identical order was issued to provide for 20,000 men for one year, and again there is no record of a Privy Seal. The final figure agreed upon appears to have been 25,000 men for one year, as ordered on 16 November. The Navy Board's estimate came to £912,500 for victuals, wages, wear and tear, and a Privy Seal for this was passed on 28 November 1664.¹

The Navy Board was sometimes summoned to attend the Council when their advice was required on a specific issue. Prior to 1667 the Council's contact with the Navy Board was limited to letter or acting through the Lord High Admiral. The members of the Navy Board did attend the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy at Whitehall during November 1664, but there is no evidence to suggest they attended the full Council before 1667. From August 1667 to September 1668 Pepys recorded twelve occasions on which they were in attendance at the Council; this was to give advice on matters ranging from the discharging of the fleet on 23 August 1667, to giving an explanation of the ticket system on 30 September 1667.² The best recorded attendance of the Navy Board before the Privy Council was during January 1670, when they were heard before the King and Council giving their reply to the report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts. This will be dealt with later.³

The argument so far developed does not credit the Council with much more than a superficial involvement in the navy. There is, however, one qualification which should be made, that is, for the period following the Dutch raid on the Medway. For about a year and a half after August 1667 there was a marked increase in the Council's activity in the more detailed

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.73, 28 November 1664.

² Diary, 23 August 1667; 30 September 1667.

³ Pepys MS. 2874, ff.385-504, infra pp.481-507

aspects of naval administration. This was due to the general political climate after the Dutch war when the navy was brought under Parliamentary scrutiny. The personal opponents of the Duke of York became more vocal, and his own position was weakened by his illness and close association with his father-in-law, Clarendon. The Council called the Navy Board to them to explain their conduct and to give advice. At this time the independence of the Treasurer of the Navy was being attacked by the new Treasury Commissioners, and some of this struggle was also to come before the Council. Even after the fury of the country had been somewhat placated by finding a scapegoat in Commissioner Pett, the navy was still a target for political attack. The attack was chiefly aimed at the Duke of York, and for this reason the increased intervention of the Council will be discussed in the next chapter when dealing with the Duke of York as Lord High Admiral.

The last aspect of the Privy Council's relations with the navy is to be found in the activities of the committees of the Council. Two committees were directly involved in naval matters, the Committee of Foreign Affairs and the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy. Prior to the reorganisation of the Council committee on 12 February 1668, it is doubtful whether the Committee of Foreign Affairs existed officially, but after this date it took over the discussion of naval matters which had previously been left to the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy. Although the latter committee continued in existence, it appears to have lost a lot of its importance after 1668.

The process by which the full Council would refer matters of importance to one of its committees can be seen by the order of 13 January 1669 which required the Committee of Foreign Affairs to consider the number of ships needed for the Summer Guard, and, if necessary, it was to call

on the Navy Board for advice.¹ The Committee met on 24 January and most of the meeting was taken up with naval affairs. They discussed the number of ships to be set out, and whether it was better to use the King's ships or hire merchant ships to provide the escort for convoys; they also discussed the problem of providing money. The members of the Navy Board were called in to give their opinion on when the whole fleet could be ready for sea. Because of the lack of money, very little work appeared to have been done on the ships since the end of the war, and the Board estimated that it would take two years for the whole fleet to be ready, and only then if a steady supply of money could be guaranteed. This was thought to be too long, and the members of the Navy Board were asked to say how long it would take to get forty ships ready. They suggested that it could be done by May, but only if they repaired those ships which were in the best condition, and if the necessary money was made available.² Another occasion on which the navy was discussed by the Committee of Foreign Affairs, was on 18 April 1669 when they considered the extent to which the allocation of £200,000 for the navy should be used to provide for the expedition against Algiers.³ Other mentions of naval affairs at this Committee follow the same pattern, with its decisions on policy being referred to the full Council for approval. The Navy Board's estimate for replenishing the stores, the dispatch of ships to the Straits, and the need to provide money for the victuallers, were all brought up before the Committee of Foreign Affairs. Their discussions could be the result of an order from the Council, as above, or could be prompted by the Navy Board asking for advice on how to proceed, as in the case of using the £200,000. It would appear that, whilst the Committee did not receive regular reports on the state of the navy, all matters of importance would be brought

1 PRO, SP29/254, f.77, 13 January 1669.

2 PRO, SP104/176, f.107, 24 January 1669.

3 PRO, SP104/176, f.141, 18 April 1669.

up and discussed there, with the Committee calling on the Board's advice if necessary. Their report would then be sent to the Council for acceptance. This again illustrates the decline of the Council and the rise in importance of the smaller committee of the King and a few close advisers. Thus, after the fall of Clarendon and the establishment of the committees of the Council on a more regular basis, the decline of the full Council is very much in evidence.

The Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy was by far the most important part of the Council's naval activity. Hitherto it has been emphasised that the role of the Council was in granting greater authority to the Lord High Admiral and in passing formal orders for building or setting out and victualling ships. In short, the Privy Council exercised a purely executive function as far as naval administration was concerned, but through the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy a greater depth of discussion and involvement in the details of naval administration took place. The Committee acted with the Lord High Admiral as the King's principal advisers in matters of naval policy. During certain periods from 1660 to 1673 it can be seen that there was a division of power between this Committee and the Duke of York, both exercising executive control over the navy. For a short period in 1664 when the Duke of York was at Portsmouth the Committee took over the full powers of the Lord High Admiral, although this does not seem to have been a great success. This distinction between the 'Lords Commissioners for Executing the Office of Lord High Admiral', who were established in July 1673, and the Committee of the Privy Council for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy acting with the Duke of York, is purely academic, the only difference being that the Committee functioned somewhat sporadically compared with the regular meetings of the Commissioners. The Commissioners, in fact, completely replaced the Lord High Admiral, whilst the Committee acted in conjunction with him.

The Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy was first established by an Order in Council on 9 November 1660, and consisted of the Duke of York and nine of the more active members of the Privy Council.¹ Prior to October 1664, there are few records of the Committee having met, although they did meet on 14 November 1660 to consider the number of ships to be kept at sea for the Winter Guard, and those which were to be prepared for the following year's Summer Guard. They were also to 'contract for ... such provisions as shall be found necessary for supply thereof.'² Although there is no record of their report, it is probable that they were responsible for suggesting a figure of 6,000 men for six months, as the Navy Board was required to provide an estimate for this number, which was to be presented to the Duke of York and 'the Committee of Council for Maritime affairs and by them to be communicated to the Board'.³ From this emerges the pattern of the Committee's activity; it would debate the number of men required at sea, the Navy Board would be asked to make an estimate of the cost, and, along with its recommendation, the Committee's findings would be transmitted to the Council by the Duke of York. The recommendations of the Committee being reported by the Duke of York to the Council was seen again in 1668, when 'His Royal Highness reported from the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy', and 'His Royal Highness,

1 PRO, PC2/55, f.30, 9 November 1660. Besides the Duke of York, the Committee consisted of Albemarle, Southampton, Sandwich, Denzil Holles, the Vice-Chamberlain, Sir George Carteret, who was also Treasurer of the Navy, Secretaries Nicholas and Morrice, Arthur Annesley and Ashley Cooper. Additions to the Committee up to January 1668, were Prince Rupert, Lord Berkeley and Henry Bennet on 11 November 1663, Sir Edward Nicholas on 26 October 1664 - this was probably a re-appointment as he would have lost his place on resigning his Secretaryship in October 1662; the Earl of Lauderdale on 16 November 1664; The Duke of Buckingham on 25 November 1664, and the Duke of Ormonde on 30 November 1664. PC2/56, f.611; PC2/57, ff.257, 292, 301, 304.

2 PRO, PC6/1, f.34, 14 November 1660.

3 PRO, PC6/1, f.10, 8 February 1661.

the Duke of York making Report this day from the Committee of this Board for the Affairs of the Navy'.¹ Beyond this the Committee also considered 'a paper offered to the Council by His Royal Highness concerning the office of an Auditor General for the navy and stores', but as there is no further mention of this, the Committee must have decided against the project.²

A further illustration of the Committee advising on the number of ships to be set out occurred on 12 November 1663 when they met to consider the ships to be sent to the Levant and for the following year's Summer Guard. Their report on the Levant ships was accepted by the King in Council the same day and the Duke of York was to give orders for the ships to be fitted out.³

As relations with the Dutch deteriorated during 1664, the Committee met on 17 May to consider the Dutch preparations, and they reported to the Council on the next day that twelve ships should be set out 'to observe the motions of the Dutch'. They laid down what rates of ships should be prepared and also advised that a further thirty ships should be made ready in case of war. In the usual manner the Lord High Admiral was to issue orders for this and the Navy Board was to prepare an estimate.⁴

The foregoing was typical of the activities of the Committee prior to the Dutch War, but the lack of minutes relating to their deliberations does pose difficulties when attempting to evaluate their role in naval administration. With the exception of the Duke of York, Albemarle, Carteret, and later Prince Rupert, the members of the Committee cannot be said to have had any experience of naval matters. The only professional seaman was Sandwich, and he does not appear to have taken much part in the Committee's activity, even when taking into account the periods when he could not be present; for example, when he was with the fleet or in Spain, and

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.325, 10 June 1668; f.326, 1 July 1668.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.26, 22 January 1662.

³ PRO, PC6/1 f.52, 12 November 1663.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.64, 18 May 1664.

the letters from the Committee to the Navy Board rarely include his signature. The competence of the Committee when dealing with matters of detail must, therefore, be regarded as questionable, particularly as there is no evidence of the Navy Board being summoned to attend them, or to send them reports prior to October 1664. For its technical information the Committee would have to rely on the Duke of York, who may have been assisted by his secretary Coventry, Albemarle, Carteret, and Rupert, although their technical knowledge was somewhat limited.

There are few lists from which to judge the regularity of attendance by the members of the Committee, but it is possible to say that the King never attended and that the Dukes of York and Albemarle, with Secretaries Nicholas, Morrice, and later Bennet, were the most frequent attenders. As indicated, the Committee was not very active in the first four years of the reign; only eight meetings are recorded during this period. Its function was purely consultative, and it was always associated with the Lord High Admiral. There was no suggestion at this time of its superseding him, or of it exercising any direct control over naval administration. However, the whole scope of the Committee's activity was greatly enlarged from the end of October 1664 to the beginning of January 1665. During this short period it effectively replaced the Duke of York and acted with the full powers that the Commissioners for Executing the Office of Lord High Admiral were to have after July 1673. The reason for this marked change in the activity of the Committee, was simply the fact that the Duke of York was going to be absent from London for a few weeks; he was joining the fleet at Portsmouth. As many questions would have to be settled, it was felt that something had to take over his executive functions during this time. Pepys records that the Duke was 'fitting himself with all speed to go to the fleet' on 31 October 1664.¹ The Duke did not actually leave

¹ Diary, 31 October 1664.

until 9 November and returned on 4 December. His absence at this crucial time in the preparation of the fleet suggests a greater zeal to execute his role as a commander at sea than to fulfil his administrative duties as Lord High Admiral. Before leaving, the Duke advised the Navy Board to 'follow our business close and to be directed in his absence by the committee of the Council for the Navy'.¹ On the day of the Duke's departure the King ordered in Council that the Committee was to meet 'constantly every Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings about the affairs of the navy and oftener if need be, to begin on Friday 11th'.²

At first the Committee was in some doubt as to its powers, for on 11 November the following passage appears in the Council Registers:

'It being humbly proposed by the Committee of the Lords of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy that His Majesty would be pleased to declare what latitude of power he would vouchsafe to grant unto them in the dispatch of all such business as, upon various and sudden emergencies of affairs under their care and inspection, might happen to fall out in the present service, what they should do of themselves and what extraordinary matters of great moment His Majesty should think fit to receive into his own hand. His Majesty this day in Council for the better dispatch or dispatches of business was pleased to order all such powers to the direction and judgment of the said committee'³

Thus provided with a considerable latitude of power, the Committee began its work. The volume of business from it to the Council for official approval, and the importance of this business, led the King to order, on 23 November, that the reports from the Committee should have preference at the Council before any other business.⁴

The first meeting of the Committee during the Duke's absence took place, as ordered, on 11 November, and they met at least another nine times up

¹ Diary, 7 November 1664.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.61, 9 November 1664.

³ PRO, PC2/57, f.276, 11 November 1664.

⁴ PRO, PC2/57, f.300, 23 November 1664.

to 2 December. The Navy Board was called to attend them, and the next day Pepys wrote to Coventry saying that the Lords Commissioners, as he called them, 'seem resolved to sit close to the navy business'.¹ This was because of their order to the Navy Board to certify the condition of the stores and for a list of the ships then in service, their station, and the length of time for which they were victualled.² Pepys also expressed concern over the lack of professional knowledge of this Committee and he regretted the time wasted on the extra work involved in preparing lists and information for them.³

The Committee's activity during this short period of just over three weeks is an excellent example of the Lord High Admiral's administrative duties. Their recommendations would be presented to the full Council, where it is possible a small amount of debate would take place, and the relevant orders would be issued to the Lord Lieutenants, the Vice-Admirals, or the Navy Board. As is to be expected naval affairs figure largely in the Council Registers at this time. Based on the advice of this Committee the Council passed orders for the embargo to be placed, ships to be built, and for the pressing of seamen and the provision of victuals. But, as has already been pointed out with regard to the full Council, the Committee was itself directed by advice from other quarters. As far as the embargo was concerned, the original idea came from a Council of War on 23 October, which consisted

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.116, 12 November 1664.

² PRO, Adm.106/9, f.394, 11 November 1664.

³ Diary, 11 November 1664, Pepys recorded their visit to the Committee, 'we were called in, where a great many lords - Annesley in the chair. But Lord, to see what work they will make us, and what trouble we shall have to inform men in a business they are to begin to know when the greatest of our hurry is, is a thing to be lamented - and I fear the consequence will be bad to us'.

of the Dukes of York and Albemarle, Sandwich, Lawson, Penn, Ayscue, Carteret, Berkeley and Coventry.¹ They recommended that an embargo should be placed upon all sailings abroad, with the exception of the fishing ships. When this order was passed by the Council on 28 October, the ships preparing for the East Indies and coastal traders were also exempt; these additional exemptions were probably made at the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy rather than at the full Council.² There was a difference of opinion over this issue between the Committee and the Duke of York, supported by the flag officers. On 30 November the Committee recommended that the embargo should be lifted, which was no doubt due to pressure from mercantile interests. As a result a Council of War was held on board the Royal Charles on 3 December to declare that 'by former experience it is judged that nothing will be so effectual (to getting seamen) as continuing the embargo'.³ After the Duke of York's return to London another Council of War was held, this time with Albemarle, Carteret, and Lawson, and they resolved to advise the King to renew the embargo.⁴ The recommendations of the professional seamen were accepted; on 16 December the embargo was renewed and was to be retained until the fleet was fully manned.⁵

A further difference between the Duke of York and the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy, can be detected over the size of ships that were to be built. When the Duke was present an Order in Council was passed on 26 October for the building of two second rates and four

¹ Coventry MS., Vol.95, f.65, 23 October 1664.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.58, 28 October 1664.

³ Coventry MS., Vol.95, f.76, 3 December 1664, with the Duke of York were Prince Rupert, Sandwich, Lawson, Penn and Ayscue.

⁴ Coventry MS., Vol.95, f.78, 11 December 1664.

⁵ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.78, 16 December 1664.

third rates, but at its meeting on 11 November the Committee advised the building of this number of ships, plus an additional two fourth rates; at the same time, however, it reduced the size of the other rates.¹ The Duke of York wrote from Portsmouth to Secretary Bennet that, whilst he had no complaint about the increased number of ships to be built, he regretted that their size had been diminished. He argued that the Dutch ships would always be superior in numbers to the King's, and that many of their large merchant ships were equal to the King's fourth rates; the need was, therefore, for ships to carry a greater number and weight of guns.² On this occasion the Committee's decision was accepted, and Privy Seals were passed for the building of these ships and for the felling of timber; the decision was not reversed following the Duke of York's return.

Other orders issued by the Committee during the Duke of York's absence were concerned with the provision of victuals, for example, on 11 November and 28 November. The Navy Board was also required to provide estimates and hasten all the ships designed for the expedition, as were ready, down to Portsmouth, and to send all impressed seamen there as well.³ On a more detailed matter, they ordered that two fifth rates should be fitted out and should remain in the Thames to collect pressed seamen. They also enquired about the condition of the Guernsey frigate.⁴ The range of the Committee's activity can be seen in two of their orders to the Navy Board on 18 November. Firstly, they ordered that the new commissioners at the out ports were not to have the same powers as the existing Principal Officers and Commissioners of the Navy, that is, they were not to have the

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.58, 26 October 1664; f.61, 11 November 1664.

² PRO, SP29/104, f.95, 13 November 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.62, 11 November 1664; f.73, 28 November 1664; Adm.106/9, f.398, 14 November 1664; f.437, 28 November 1664.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/9, f.400, 14 November 1664; f.406, 16 November 1664.

power to sit and act at a full Board meeting. Secondly, they continued to fulfil the duties of the Lord High Admiral by passing warrants for the appointment of ships officers.¹

Following the return of the Duke of York the Committee lost its executive function. Although it met four, or possibly five, times from 5 December to the middle of January 1665, it did not concern itself with administrative details and returned to its advisory role. On 14 December it was ordered by the King in Council to meet two days later to consider how to dispose of the Dutch prisoners, and how to raise at least 15,000 men by the Spring 'as the usual method of impressing men had not proved so effective as expected'.² The Committee's main recommendation was that the Vice-Admirals in the maritime counties should be given a quota of seamen to press, and the Lord Lieutenants and their Deputies were to help. In case of difficulty each Vice-Admiral was allocated to a Privy Councillor, with whom he was to correspond. By this scheme it was hoped to raise 5,300 men, the rest being raised by the usual methods.³ The Committee's advisory role is also illustrated when it was required to consult with the leading merchants to discuss the best way of improving trade during the war, and to consider the best method of bringing fish over from Newfoundland.⁴ After this there is no further mention of this Committee in the Council Registers, or in the letters to the Navy Board for the rest of the war. The experiment of the Committee exercising executive power in the absence of the Lord High Admiral was not repeated when the Duke of York left to command the fleet in 1665. Pepys was pleased to note, on 17 March, that 'the best piece of news

¹ PRO, Adm.106/9, f.422, 18 November 1664.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.77, 14 December 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.80, 23 December 1664.

⁴ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.87, 2 January 1665; f.88, 4 January 1665.

is that instead of a great many troublesome Lords, the whole business is to be left with the Duke of Albemarle, to act as Admiral in his stead; which is a thing that doth cheer my heart - for the other would have vexed us with attendance, and never done the business'.¹ In the absence of any concrete evidence it is difficult to attribute the Committee's demise to the hostility of the Duke of York, but its revival in 1668, when the Duke himself was in eclipse, may give credence to this theory.

The Committee, as created on 9 November 1660, was never formally abolished, and it is possible that it did meet on certain occasions between January 1665 and January 1668. There is, however, only one meeting recorded during this period; this occurred on 23 December 1667 when the Committee met to consider the Duke of York's proposals concerning foreign prizes, but the nature of the proposals and the outcome of the meeting is not known.²

On 12 February 1668 the committees of the Council were regulated into four standing committees, one of which was the 'Committee of the Privy Council for the Admiralty and Navy, as also all Military matters, Fortifications etc.'.³ Why it should have been necessary to reconstitute the Committee for the Admiralty and Navy is not clear. E R Turner in his book on the Cabinet Council, concentrates on the Committee for Foreign Affairs, and suggests that this Committee may not have been 'definitely appointed as a committee of the Council' before February 1668.⁴ This does not apply to the Committee for the Admiralty and Navy, which was entered in the Council Registers on 9 November 1660. Possibly it was thought necessary to mention this Committee in the general reorganisation that took place in February 1668 and, at the same time, add 'Military Matters and Fortifications.'

¹ Diary, 17 March 1665.

² PRO, PC2/60, f.101, 23 December 1667.

³ PRO, PC2/60, f.176, 12 February 1668.

⁴ Turner, The Cabinet Council of England, I, 66.

This would also have given an opportunity to clarify the exact membership of the Committee, as some of the original members were dead and others were no longer in favour. As has been suggested, the revival of this Committee, particularly because of its renewed activity, can be taken as an indication of the weaker position of the Duke of York.

Although the new committees were not entered into the Council Registers until 12 February, they had been agreed upon at a meeting of the King and several advisers on 31 January 1668.¹ The Admiralty and Navy Committee was to meet on Wednesdays in the Council Chamber, with three members as its quorum. The Duke of York, who was understood to be a member of all committees, was to preside 'if he is pleased', if not, Albemarle would. When the membership was accepted in full Council, the Lord Chamberlain and Vice-Chamberlain were added.² The omission of the Earl of Sandwich is another indication of the reduced influence of the professional seamen. This omission, and possibly the choice of the whole Committee, was done without the knowledge of the Duke of York, further indicating his eclipse.³

Between February 1668 and January 1673 it is possible to be certain of twenty meetings of the new Committee; of these, fourteen took place between February and the end of September 1668. It is unlikely that any other meetings of consequence took place as their decisions were bound to have

¹ BM, Egerton MS.2543, f.207, 31 January 1668.

² PRO, PC2/60, f.176, 12 February 1668. The membership of the Committee as decided on 31 January was Prince Rupert, Albemarle, Anglesey, Carlisle, Craven, Arlington, Berkeley, Clifford, Ashley, Morrice, Sir William Coventry and Sir John Duncombe. At the full Council the Lord Chamberlain (Manchester) and Carteret were added. Later additions were the Earl of Middleton, Sir Orlando Bridgeman, Buckingham and Ormonde on 29 July 1668, PC2/60, f.408; and Sandwich on 21 May 1669, PC2/61, f.308.

³ *Infra.* pp.97-99; Diary, 13 February 1668, Pepys goes on to say that Carteret and Anglesey were left out of this Committee, which is not correct, but his comment that men were put in who were 'wholly improper' is not so inaccurate.

come before the Council for ratification. After September 1668, except for a meeting in January 1669, the Committee lapsed into a state of suspension. When the Duke of York went to sea in 1672, the Committee was not brought into prominence as it had been in October 1664. Prince Rupert was appointed to act in the Lord High Admiral's absence, as had been the Duke of Albemarle in 1665.¹

During its period of revival, which lasted from February to September 1668, the Committee still did not have any executive authority. As before, its recommendations were presented to the King in Council by the Duke of York, where acceptance was usually a formality. In its revived form the Committee does not seem to have altered Pepys's earlier opinion of it. On 20 May 1668 Pepys and Colonel Middleton attended the Committee with the Duke of York, 'where we discoursed several things; but, Lord! like fools; so as it was a shame to see things of this importance managed by a Council that understood nothing of them'.² Following this form of deliberation the Committee's advice was reported to the Council. An example of this is the Order in Council of 22 April 1668, when 'the ensuing proposal being agreed upon by his Royal Highness & the Committee of the Navy', the Duke of York ordered the provision of victuals for four months to the whole fleet, and in the customary way the Navy Board was required to provide its estimate.³ This fleet was never set out as the risk of war with France passed, and by an Order in Council on 10 June 1668 following 'His Royal Highness making a report from the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy', the Lord High Admiral was directed to lay up 22 ships.⁴ In the same way,

¹ PRO, Adm.7/723, f.85, 2 May 1672.

² Diary, 20 May 1668.

³ PRO, PC2/60, f.282, 22 April 1668.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.325, 10 June 1668.

from the 'committee of the navy', the Duke of York proposed that four ships should be added to the squadron designed for the Straits; this was accepted by the Council and he was authorised to issue the necessary orders.¹

The Navy Board had been ordered by the Duke of York and the Committee to report on the tenders for the new victualling contract. Its report was debated at the Committee but, because of some disagreement there, it was left to the King in Council to decide whether the report should be accepted. The debate at the Committee, when some of the Treasury Commissioners were also present, took place on 25 September 1668 and caused some 'hot words' between the Duke of York and Sir Thomas Clifford. The Duke favoured Gauden as one who had tried hard and now offered the best rates, while Clifford was 'for removing old officers' and not allowing the contract to be in one person's hands for too long. The matter was left to a full Council meeting on the next day, when it was 'carried for Gauden ... with great difficulty'.²

After September 1668 there was a noticeable decrease in the Committee's activity. During 1669 there are only three recorded meetings and, in 1670, only one. This decline can be explained partly by the fact that certain items of naval business were being discussed by the Committee of Foreign Affairs, and, as this was the more important Committee, there was little point in calling the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy to discuss the same points.

In the preparations for the Third Dutch War, the Committee did not play a major role. It considered a proposal of the Duke of York concerning

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.326, 1 July 1668.

² Diary, 25 September 1668. The report of the Navy Board is in BM, Add. MS.9,311, ff.176-79, 25 September 1668.

rewards for service at sea on 13 March 1672, and in 1673 it was dealing with the distribution of the King's bounty to the relatives of those slain in the service. But this only indicates that the Committee was still in existence in 1673, and in the absence of any more conclusive evidence, it is possible to assert that its importance had declined compared with the position it had held in 1664. This can be explained in part by the presence of the Duke of York during the months that decisions had to be taken on the number of ships to be set out, and other administrative matters.

In conclusion it may be stated that the role of the Privy Council in naval affairs was relatively limited. There is no evidence to suggest that the Council forced the King to interfere in the running of the navy. However, it is somewhat artificial to talk of the 'Privy Council' as an executive force threatening the independence of the Lord High Admiral. The Council could be the venue for a dispute concerning the navy, but the real struggle took place behind the scenes, or at the Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy. The Lord High Admiral did suffer a loss of influence from the middle of 1667 but had recovered his position by the beginning of 1669. The resignation of the Duke of York was the climax of a political campaign that had only an indirect bearing on naval matters. The Privy Council could provide the ground for the political struggle to take place, but there was never any suggestion of it, as a body, being able to replace the Lord High Admiral.

THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL

The title of Lord High Admiral came into use in the early part of the reign of Elizabeth and it can be found on documents of the Admiralty Court. Prior to this the title of 'High Admiral' or 'Magnus Admirallus' was used and a continuous line of High Admirals can be traced back to the Duke of Gloucester in 1462. The first break in this line followed the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham in 1628, when six Commissioners were appointed to execute the office. The first use of the full title of 'Lord High Admiral' on official letters patent appears on the patent for the 1628 Commissioners, and the difference between this patent and the one granted to Buckingham in 1619 is very marked. Buckingham's patent was almost exclusively concerned with the jurisdiction, fees, and privileges of the office, but in 1628 a far greater indication of the power and duty of the office is given. The Commissioners were given 'full power and authority to do, execute, exercise and perform all and every acts matters and things which to the office of a lord admiral ... belongeth, as well in and touching those things which concern our Navy and Shipping as those things which concern the rights and jurisdictions' of the office.¹ The patent goes on to mention some of the administrative functions of the office. They were required to issue orders for 'the repairing and preserving of our ships' and for 'the new building, preparing, fitting, furnishing, arming, victualling, manning and setting forth such ships', and they were to 'establish and direct such entertainments, wages and rewards for and unto all and every such person as are or shall be employed

¹ Perrin, 'The Lord High Admiral and the Navy Board', MM, XII, p.129.

in those our services'. The Commission was dissolved in 1638 to make way for a single person as Lord High Admiral, the Earl of Northumberland; this was an attempt by Charles I to gain another supporter. As such, therefore, it was purely a political move, but because of the unsettled political situation, Northumberland was appointed 'during pleasure' instead of for life, and Charles declared that Prince James, the future Duke of York, who was then five years old, was to be designated Lord High Admiral.¹ Northumberland's patent was virtually the same as Buckingham's and did not contain any mention of the administrative duties of the office.

During the Interregnum this office, along with the associated office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, was abolished and its functions were transferred by the Council of State to the Committee for the Admiralty and Navy, with the profits of the office being kept by the government. The Commonwealth Commissioners remained in power for a short period after the Restoration until they were replaced by the Navy Board on 4 July 1660. The Duke of York, however, acted as Lord High Admiral as soon as the Restoration was an accomplished fact. On 16 May 1660, when the fleet was waiting to bring the royal party back to England, Pepys was told by Montague that the Duke was to be 'High Admiral' and two days later he heard that, 'the Duke of York our Lord High Admiral' was to come on board.²

The office into which James, Duke of York, somewhat belatedly entered was, in effect, a triple one; firstly, there was the judicial function of the office; secondly, the Duke's activities as a commander at sea; and, lastly, the administrative function of the office. There is no single document which gives the full power, duty, and perquisites of the Duke of York's

¹ Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.283.

² Diary, 16 May 1660; 18 May 1660.

position but some idea of this can be ascertained from his patent, Acts of Parliament, and various Orders in Council, which tended to enlarge, or more often clarify and define the role of the office.

The first grant of the office of Lord High Admiral to the Duke of York was made on 31 August 1649 at St. Germain, and on the basis of this grant James entered into the execution of the office at the Restoration. There is no indication that a patent was issued on this occasion but, if so, it is unlikely to have been very different from the 1661 patent. The need to leave no doubts as to the Duke of York's authority, and the possibility that no earlier patent had passed the Great Seal, would explain the issuing of two patents to the Duke, one on 19 January 1661, and the other on 20 February 1662.¹

These patents are very similar to the 1619 patent granted to Buckingham in that they were concerned mainly with the judicial powers and the profits of the office. The Duke of York was granted Admiralty jurisdiction in the first patent over England, Wales and Ireland and 'the Dominions and Islands thereunto belonging', and over the long lost town of Calais and 'our marches thereof, of Normandy Gascoin and Aquitain'. This was extended in the 1662 patent to include Dunkirk, New England, Virginia, Jamaica and other Caribbean islands, Tangier, and the ill-defined 'Guinny, Binny'. Both these patents granted the office of Captain General of the fleets and sea and 'all manner of Jurisdictions, Authorities, Liberties, Offices, Fees, Profits, Salaries, Emoluments, Wrecks of the Sea and cast up by the same, Rewards, Advantages, Commodities, Preheminences and Privileges'. Apart from the territorial definitions the two patents are the same, but as Lord High Admiral of England the Duke of York was to receive an annual fee of 200 marks with an additional 100 marks for Dunkirk and the overseas

¹ PRO, Adm.7/724, f.1, 19 January 1661; f.23, 20 February 1662.

possessions. The real financial advantages of the post were not to come from this small fee but from the jurisdiction of the Admiralty Court. These were defined as the goods and chattels of 'traitors, pirates, manslaughterers and felons' as well as rights over goods and 'treasure' found in or thrown out of the sea. The Lord High Admiral was allowed to make a profit out of fees from anchorages, beacons, lighthouses and the ballasting of ships. The ancient right over 'Fishes Royal' (sturgeons, whales, dolphins etc.) and other large fish were also his. A more rewarding profit came from 'fees, mulcts, issues', taken in any of the Admiralty Courts, and with this went power to hear trials for treason, robbery, and murder within the maritime jurisdiction as defined earlier.

The judicial role of the office of Lord High Admiral required little personal attention from the Duke of York at this time. The Lord High Admiral's rights, as derived from the patent, were looked after in the Court of Admiralty by his Advocate and Procurator. The fees and other perquisites which originated from the Court of Admiralty were the major source of revenue for the Lord High Admiral, but this, and the operation of the Court of Admiralty, are somewhat removed from the purpose of this study and will, therefore, be left for full consideration by a legal historian.¹ It is sufficient to state at this point that the judicial functions of the Lord High Admiral were exercised in the maritime shires by the Vice-Admiralty Courts. These tribunals had the power to adjudicate and decide on matters of prizes and salvage, and the authority to prepare indictments at the Quarter Sessions in cases of piracy. They were also allowed to hear and determine cases against persons accused of embezzling

¹ The Court of Admiralty had been severely cut back in the seventeenth century due to the hostility of the Common Law Courts. After the Restoration the Court of Admiralty was unable to recover the ground it had lost during the Civil War and Interregnum. Holdsworth, History of English Law, I, 544-68.

naval stores or stealing from wrecks.¹ It would appear that the only administrative role for which the Lord High Admiral used his judicial powers was to order the Marshal of the Admiralty Court to impress seamen and to apprehend those who had deserted.²

As far as the Duke's role as commander at sea was concerned, the patents did nothing more than appoint him as 'Captain General of the Fleets and Seas', which was in line with Buckingham who had been appointed 'Prefect General'. He was allowed to appoint a Lieutenant Admiral as well as the Vice-Admirals of the maritime counties. These latter officers were responsible for the Admiralty jurisdiction in the out ports, but the title of Lieutenant Admiral, which was granted to the Earl of Sandwich, was little more than a sinecure. With regard to administration, there was no mention of the orders to be issued for the repair of ships etc., as there had been in the 1628 patent. The only power granted in this sphere was that of collecting ships and seamen in any part of the kingdom, but, as will be seen, this power to impress seamen and ships was to require an Order in Council to reinforce it. Thus from this source at least, little can be derived concerning the administrative functions of the Lord High Admiral. Other official documents, which are of more use in discovering the other functions of the Duke of York, are to be found in Acts of Parliament and Orders in Council. The powers of the Lord High Admiral were given a more established form in two Acts, firstly, in 13 Car II c.9, which is usually referred to as 'an Act for the better Government of his Majesties Navies'.³ This Act legislated for the behaviour and conduct of commanders

¹ Ogg, England in the reign of Charles II, I, 258.

² PRO, Adm.2/1725, f.140r, 14 June 1664. The Duke of York ordered the Navy Board to empower the Marshal of the High Court of Admiralty to impress 120 men. It appears that only 64 of these men arrived at Portsmouth as on 8 July the Marshal was ordered to detain and keep in custody those men who had not reported to Portsmouth.

³ Statutes of the Realm, V, 311, 'An Act for the Establishing Articles and Orders for the regulating and better Government of His Majesties Navies, Ships of War & Forces by Sea'.

and seamen in general terms with regard to prizes, how to act in relation to foreign powers and their ships during hostilities, and the duty of a commander in battle or on convoy duty. It laid down punishments for desertion, mutiny, wasting of ammunition, and other negligence or crimes at sea. This Act granted the Lord High Admiral power to issue commissions to Vice-Admirals or Commanders in Chief to call courts martial, and this article (34) was frequently invoked when a fleet or squadron was being set out. On 19 January 1663 Jeremy Smith, who was being sent with a squadron to the Mediterranean, was empowered by the Duke of York to hold courts martial by virtue of this Act. Similarly on 4 June 1664, the Earl of Sandwich was appointed as Admiral in the Narrow Seas and was given power to hold courts martial.¹ When Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle were sent to command the fleet in 1666 the Duke of York wrote to them on 17 March giving them authority, by virtue of this Act, 'to call and assembly Court Martial consisting of the Commanders and Captains'.² This Act also contained a proviso that nothing in it was to give the Lord High Admiral any other 'Power, Right, Jurisdiction, Preheminence or Authority' than he possessed before its making, other than for the offences specified in the Act. This is no doubt a reflection of the desire of the lawyers in Parliament to ensure that the Admiralty Court did not attempt to use this Act to extend its powers.

The second Act which granted specific powers to the Lord High Admiral was also concerned with the behaviour or the disciplinary problems of the navy. This Act, 22 & 23 Car II c.23 (1671), gave power to the Navy Board to fine persons found guilty of embezzling stores, to enter ships in search of stolen goods, and allowed them to take further measures for the preservation

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.14, 19 January 1663; f.77r, 4 June 1664.

² Powell and Timings (eds), Rupert and Monck Letter Book, p.23.

of the King's stores.¹ The Act also stated that every power given by it to 'any officer or Commissioner of the Navy may be executed by the Lord High Admiral', this would allow him to use the Marshal and other officials of the Admiralty Court to search for embezzled goods and the prosecution could take place in the Admiralty Court.

The Orders in Council passed during this period are a further source of information concerning the powers and duties of the Lord High Admiral. When the Second Dutch War broke out there was a need to clarify the position with regard to the rights of the Lord High Admiral in times of war. This was mainly concerned with the profits of the office, which it was hoped would result from the war, and because of the recently disrupted tenure of the office there were certain doubts about which prizes belonged to the King and which to the Admiralty. At a meeting of the Council at Worcester House on 6 March 1666 the position was defined; it was declared that all enemy ships which came into ports, harbours, creeks etc. under the Lord High Admiral's jurisdiction would belong to him if they came in by accident, if they were forced in by bad weather, or if they came in not knowing that war had been declared.² If they were seized or were driven into port by the King's ships then the King would benefit, but if the ship was taken at sea by ships which did not have the King's Commission, they would fall to the Lord High Admiral. The question of prize goods needed further clarification, for on 4 January 1667 the previous order was repeated and on 24 March a different order was required for ships taken outside home waters. The latter order declared that the previous orders were to be extended to all places within the 'limits of his Royal Highness commission of Lord High Admiral of England and Admiral

¹ Statutes of the Realm, V, 741, 'An Act to revive an Act, Entitled An Act to prevent the disturbance of Seamen and others, and to preserve the Stores belonging to his Majesties Navy Royall, with some Alterations and Additions'. This confirmed Acts of 1664 and 1666 but these earliest Acts had made no mention of the Lord High Admiral.

² PRO, SP29/150, f.56, 6 March 1666; PC2/59, f.255, 4 January 1667.

of his Majesty's foreign plantations'.¹

Although the patent allowed the Duke of York to take up men and ships for the King's service, this in itself was not thought sufficient because of the long time lapse since the previous Lord High Admiral, and to have relied completely on the patent would have brought the legality of impressing into greater doubt. It is an illustration of the weaker legal standing of the patent after the Restoration, which, even at this date, was an archaic document and did not meet the practical problems of impressment. To get round this difficulty, and also to gain wider approval for what was bound to be an unpopular measure, Secretary Bennet was ordered by the Council on 8 June 1664 to prepare a letter for the King's signature directing the Duke of York to give orders for the impressing of seamen.² This was extended by another order on 7 December to the Lord High Admiral empowering him to order the hiring, and later pressing of merchant ships for the King's service.³

The Dutch War led to further definitions of the Lord High Admiral's powers when the Council passed orders empowering him to issue letters of marque and reprisal against the Dutch on 23 December 1664, against the French on 6 April 1666, and the Danes on 9 May 1666. On each occasion the instructions, which were to be issued with these letters, were entered in the Council Registers.⁴

¹ PRO, Adm.7/668, f.15, 24 March 1667.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.51, 8 June 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.76, 7 December 1664.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.110, 23 December 1664; f.180, 6 April 1666; f.183, 9 May 1666.

The only extensive statement of the duties of the Lord High Admiral is to be found in an Order in Council of 13 June 1673, which was passed two days before the resignation of the Duke of York.¹ It was the first attempt to define the administrative duties of the office since the patent for the Commissioners of 1628; this would indicate that when Commissioners replaced the single holder of the office it was thought necessary to provide them with a detailed guide to their office. Although the 1673 order makes no mention of the impending changes, it was obviously intended to serve as a guide to the Duke of York's successors. It can also be seen as an attempt to limit the freedom of action of the Commissioners by defining their powers and duties so clearly. For the administrative duties of the Lord High Admiral, this order is far more important than the patent which was based on outdated conditions.

The first duty of the Lord High Admiral was to be able to give the King an accurate account of the state of the navy, that is, the condition of the ships and yards, the stores remaining, and the persons employed and their various duties. He was to ensure that his subordinates conducted themselves with 'diligence, faithfulness and good husbandry', and in order to achieve this the Lord High Admiral was to meet the Navy Board at least once a month, and more often if need be, to inform himself of their work and to obtain an account of their actions. Before any new work or repairs were embarked upon, the Lord High Admiral was to obtain an estimate of the cost from the Navy Board and to present this to the King. Upon receipt of the King's approval, he was to assist the Treasurer of the Navy to obtain the necessary money from the King and Treasury. When the money had been assigned and paid, he had to ensure that it was not directed to any other

¹ PRO, Adm.7/723, f.47, 13 June 1673. Pepys claimed to have prepared this paper which was then confirmed by the King in Council., Tanner (ed), Samuel Pepys Naval Minutes, p.151.

purpose. The Lord High Admiral was not to allow his subordinates to do anything 'contrary to the known and allowed practice and precedent of the Navy', nor was he to 'make or interpose in the making' of any contracts for ships and stores, except for the victualling contracts which had always been done 'by his Majesty at the Council Board, after being first consulted on and prepared by the Lord Treasurer and Lord Admiral'.

Because of the importance in promoting diligent and experienced officers, he was expected to use his 'utmost circumspection' in their choice, and to encourage 'virtue' by promoting deserving officers. The Lord High Admiral and his successors were somewhat limited in their actions by the clause which prohibited any commander to be granted a commission on shore 'without the privity and approval of his Majesty first had in writing'. This was to prevent the growth of a greater system of patronage under the control of the Lord High Admiral whereby he could press for the appointment of seamen to various posts in peacetime. In practice this clause did not prevent the appointment of sea officers to the Navy Board, not that this was its intention, but it ensured that the Lord High Admiral was forced to seek the King's approval before making important appointments. Lastly, the Lord High Admiral was to take care that in all 'matters not herein specified he proceeds in the well governing of his Majesty's navy and performing the whole duty of the Lord High Admiral of England according to the known and allowed practice thereof'.

This Order in Council set out the duties of the Lord High Admiral at the end of the Duke of York's period of office, but there is little doubt that he was bound by most of them in practice through the established precedents of the office. These precedents provided guidance for the Duke of York, who had had very little experience of the navy or its administration when he took up office in 1660, at which time there might have been a strong possibility that he could have developed into a figurehead forced to rely completely on the advice of the Navy Board.

The Duke of York had been destined for the office of Lord High Admiral from an early age, for, as we have seen, he was to have succeeded the Earl of Northumberland, who was only appointed 'during pleasure' in 1638. This was effected when the court was in exile, and the terms of the patent were discussed at a Council meeting on 31 August 1649 at St. Germain.¹ At the Restoration the Duke of York could claim a reasonable amount of experience as a soldier through his campaigns with Turenne from 1652 to 1656, but, as far as the navy was concerned, he was completely lacking in practical experience. This was not considered to be a serious obstacle, and the careers of Blake, Prince Rupert, and Albemarle illustrate how often transfers of this nature had taken place. Before 1660 the Duke of York's only contact with the fleet had been in 1648 when part of the Parliamentary fleet revolted and went over to the Royalists. This was an inauspicious beginning, as the fleet was quickly reduced to a state of faction by the perpetual intrigues of the Duke's servants.²

Even those historians who can find very little to say in favour of James II, are usually prepared to admit that he was reasonably successful, if not very imaginative, at the Admiralty. Gilbert Burnet said of James that he 'understood navigation well, but above all he knew the architecture of ships so perfectly' and 'he came to understand all the concerns of the sea very particularly'.³ Macaulay, who was reluctant to make even the smallest comment in favour of the Stuarts, admitted that James would have made 'a respectable clerk in the dockyard at Chatham'.⁴ The reputation of the Duke of York at the Admiralty was promoted by Charnock in 1801, who

¹ PRO, PC2/54, f.12, 31 August 1649. No further debates on this matter are given, and there is no evidence that the patent was ever issued.

² Ollard, Man of War, Sir Robert Holmes, p.25, Ollard suggests that the cheering of the seamen may have turned James's head thus making him more eager to act in naval matters, but this appears to be an extremely shallow theory.

³ Burnet, History of My Own Time, I, 128, 237.

⁴ Macaulay, History of England, I, 218.

wrote, 'no one who had filled that office before him displayed more care, more attention and more ability'.¹ Campbell in his Lives of the Admirals, published in 1812, said that James 'certainly shewed a great attention to the public interest, and as he had good natural abilities, and was inclined to look into naval affairs, so for some time he kept a strict eye on whatever related to the fleet'.² Of the more sympathetic historians, J S Clarke stated that, ever since the Duke of York had returned to England he had made it his business 'to inform himself of the condition of the Fleet'.³ More modern historians make a qualified approach to their views of the Duke of York; A W Tedder recognises the Duke's ability and says, 'if ever personal interest and administrative skill could compensate for lack of practical experience, they did so in his case', and further states, 'there can be no doubt that the official head of the Navy, prince though he was, was far from being a mere figure-head'.⁴ Bryant is almost excessive in his praise when he states that, with the help of Pepys, the Duke of York 'did more personally for the Royal Navy than any other English Sovereign past or future'.⁵ Michael Lewis considers that James could be tactless and obstinate, especially when he was on the throne, but 'it is only fair to record that he was a great success at the Admiralty'.⁶ A more cautious note is sounded by F C Turner, who still gives the Duke of York credit for his interest in the navy which was 'great and persistent',

¹ Charnock, History of Marine Architecture, p.404.

² Campbell, Lives of the Admirals, I, 237.

³ Clarke, Life of James II, I, 399.

⁴ Tedder, Navy of the Restoration, pp.39, 45.

⁵ Sells (ed), Memoirs of James II, His Campaigns as Duke of York, p.1.

⁶ Lewis, The Navy of Britain, p.360.

but this is qualified by the comment that 'it is doubtful if he took the initiative in any of the reforms which have been connected with his name'.¹ Thus there is general agreement that the Duke of York was interested in, and knowledgeable about, naval matters, and, although he has not been portrayed as an innovator, he was reasonably competent and possessed a certain degree of administrative ability. These points have been used to give a more balanced portrait of James II and to create the impression of a soldier (sailor) king.

The impression gained from a study of the Duke of York in the office of Lord High Admiral is that of an enthusiastic amateur whose knowledge of his charge increased tremendously over the years, and who had a sincere and continued sense of devotion to the service. The Duke is not usually described as being over intelligent, and there is little evidence to suggest that there was any originality in the reforms or regulations that were issued under his name. He began with the natural advantages of his social position, which was aided by the considerable reputation he had built for himself when he served with the French army. Although he was always prepared to receive advice and recommendations from the Navy Board and individual commanders, he lacked the depth of experience necessary in administrative matters to be able to differentiate between practical and impractical schemes. Probably his greatest failure was that he did not attempt to follow up his Instructions and regulations to ensure that they were effectively carried out, or that they were modified if found insufficient. This is one of the main failings of the whole administrative system of the Restoration; from the Lord High Admiral downwards there were inadequate checks made on the diligence and integrity of subordinates.

As far as the navy was concerned the Restoration period was one of consolidation and it was to be the beginning of a new era of continual

¹ Turner, James II, pp.71-3.

development. In this the great achievement of the Duke of York was his realisation of the importance of giving the navy a framework for its development, and is to be seen in the 1662 Instructions and the various fighting instructions of the period. In most cases these were based, often extensively, on earlier codes, but the foundations which had been laid under the Commonwealth were retained and expanded, and it is to the Duke of York's credit that he presided over the introduction of a coherent administrative system which was to survive virtually unaltered until 1832.

The Duke of York was Lord High Admiral for almost 13 years before he was forced to resign because of the passing of the Test Act, although he retained the office of Lord High Admiral of Scotland, which had been bestowed upon him for life on 1 February 1673.¹

As would be expected, the majority of the Lord High Admiral's orders were concerned with the routine administration of the navy. Included in these were orders for the dispatch, fitting, repairing and building of ships; orders relating to the dockyards, the Chatham Chest, or the Board's affairs, and a miscellaneous collection of relatively trivial and ephemeral matters. Of much greater significance, however, were the proposals for reforms and developments in naval administration which were sent out in the Duke's name.

During the Restoration period a series of reforms were introduced to improve the running of the navy; in some cases orders were issued by the authority of the Lord High Admiral, but in others the authority of the King and Council was required. The extent to which the Duke of York can be regarded as a reformer and innovator has been questioned by F C Turner. It is, in

¹ The Dukes of Lennox had been the hereditary Lord High Admirals of Scotland since the sixteenth century; the last Duke died without issue in December 1672, and the King granted the office to the Duke of York, Grant, The Old Scots Navy, pp. xxiii-xxvii.

fact, very difficult to determine how far the Duke was personally responsible for these measures. In some cases there is no doubt that the inspiration came from other sources, for example, from Sandwich, Penn, Coventry and Pepys. Often it is impossible to discover the originator of a proposal, and the part played by the Duke of York is equally obscure.

There can be little doubt that both ashore and at sea the Duke of York was anxious to provide written instructions and regulations to cover all matters from the conduct of the Navy Board to the regulation of the number of guns to be fired in salutes. The need for such instructions is fairly obvious; they were designed to prevent abuses and to provide the officers concerned with a clear knowledge of their duties, they also gave the under officers a form of safeguard to justify them in their actions. To the seventeenth century official there was always a constant need to be able to justify himself by saying that he was acting under the order, warrant, or instructions of one of the leading officers of state. On the other hand they provided the Navy Board and the Lord High Admiral with an established code by which to judge the actions and misdemeanours of their subordinates.

Above all it was the need for a known and settled set of instructions to guide the Navy Board and dockyard officials which led to the most important instructions ever issued under the name of the Duke of York. These were the 1662 Instructions, usually referred to as the 'Duke of York's Instructions for the Regulation of the Navy', which were sent to the Navy Board at the end of January 1662.¹ The Duke's insistence on the observation of these Instructions can be seen in a letter from

¹ There are many copies of the Duke of York's Instructions and of those issued by Buckingham and Northumberland; the following comments are based on PRO, Adm.7/633, not foliated; BM, Sloane MS. 3232, f.88; and Pepys MS. 2611.

Coventry to the Navy Board on 7 May 1662, when he informed them that it was the Duke's order that the Instructions were to be fully observed, even if some small advantage could be gained by breaking them.¹ However, it was one thing to provide and urge the Board to observe these Instructions, but another matter to ensure that this was done, and it is here that the Duke's shortcomings can be seen. The substance of these Instructions owes very little, if anything, to the Duke of York; he makes no claim to originality and acknowledges that he was merely concerned to 'ratify and confirm certain orders which I understand were formerly published by the Earl of Northumberland (being then Admiral), with some small additions and alterations'. It is to the Duke of York's credit that he saw the necessity to issue these again, but whether he decided to do this on his own initiative is not clear; it is most probable that he was prompted to it by the older officers who knew of their existence, such as Sandwich or Penn. The immediate reasons for sending out the Instructions are explained in letters sent with them to the Navy Board. In these the Duke of York says that he understands 'there arise frequently doubts and disputes amongst some of the officers belonging to his Majesty's Navy, concerning the duties of their several places'.² These doubts, if allowed to continue, would have been a tremendous hindrance to the working of the Navy Board and its authority over subordinate officials. The Duke said that the idea of sending the Instructions had been with him for some time, but that he had delayed 'not that I thought them unnecessary', but because the financial condition of the navy was so bad there was little hope of reform until past debts and wages had been paid, and because of this inability to pay arrears of wages, it was impossible to discharge those guilty of

¹ PRO, Adm.106/7, f.444, 7 May 1662.

² These two letters, dated 28 January 1662, are to be found in most cases with copies of the Duke's Instructions, PRO, Adm.7/633, etc.

'negligence and abuses'. In this way the Instructions were sent out to coincide with the improving financial condition of the navy when it would be possible to discharge the unnecessary workmen, as well as those who had served 'deceitfully and negligently'. In the same letter the Duke of York called on the Navy Board to hold a general enquiry into the running of the navy, and in particular the dockyards. He had been informed that several persons were better fit for a hospital than to be in the King's service; he also suspected that the stores were being wasted, and that unnecessary expenses were being incurred in the repairing of ships. The Board was also to be 'extraordinary careful' in checking the reports of the storekeepers to prevent fraud, and was to ensure that the stores be well provided with the goods needed for the fleet. It was to take special care, as was repeated in the Instructions, that it made good contracts and did not rely on one person too much.

As far as the ships were concerned, a strict enquiry was to be made into the 'ability and behaviour' of the standing officers (that is, the pursers, boatswains, gunners, carpenters and cooks). This was judged to be very important as a great number of persons had been granted warrants for these posts at the Restoration 'upon presumption of their good affection, than there could be any certainty of their ability'. This letter can be seen as evidence of the Duke of York initiating a widespread and far reaching enquiry into the running of the navy. It has always been overshadowed by the Instructions that it accompanied, but, as far as the Duke of York was concerned, it is of the utmost importance as an indication of his interest and concern for the navy, and of his desire for reform when the improved financial position made this a practical proposition. Thus, in January 1662, the Duke of York took the opportunity of the availability of more money to issue his Instructions, and, at the same time, reinforced them with an immediate and extensive enquiry into the condition of the navy.

The extent to which the Navy Board and the Duke himself followed this reforming initiative will be seen as something of a disappointment, though it was from the beginning of 1662 that the Duke of York began to take a serious initiative in tackling the abuses of the navy.

The Duke of York's second large scale attempt to investigate the conduct of the Navy Board, and through it the whole service, did not come until 1668. This delay should not be taken as an indication that all was well up to this time as the Dutch War had disrupted everything. The Duke of York's action was strongly politically motivated because he wanted to ensure that his own house was put in order before a group of self-appointed reformers, headed by Buckingham and Arlington, did it for him. The Medway disaster provided an excellent political weapon to be used against the Duke of York. Although his personal responsibility for the affair was slight, it brought the whole of naval administration under close scrutiny. During 1668 his political influence was at its lowest point since the Restoration, and it is doubtful whether it fully recovered before he was driven from office.¹ It was through a desire to prevent an attack upon himself, as well as his desire for reform, that made the Duke favourable to an enquiry into the conduct of the Navy Board. On 1 July 1668 Pepys found the Duke 'very hot for regulations in the Navy', although he suspected that the Duke was prompted in this by Coventry.² A few days later Pepys was told by the Duke that he intended to 'mend things in the Navy himself, and not leave it to other people'.³ Pepys, who was well aware of the failings of the Navy Board, was also anxious to appear diligent to the Duke, and, knowing the Duke's frame of mind, he requested an interview. On 24 July Pepys

¹ Diary, 30 March 1668, the Duke was thinking of going to sea that summer if war broke out with France, and Pepys thought 'it is mighty hot counsel for the Duke of York at this time to go out of the way'.

² Diary, 1 July 1668.

³ Diary, 8 July 1668.

exposed the weaknesses of the Navy Office to the Duke of York and advised him to call the Board to account; Pepys laid 'open the whole failings of the Office and how it was his duty to find them, and to find fault with them, as Admiral, especially at this time'.¹ From this it is clear that the Duke was very receptive to the idea of reform before Pepys saw him and because of this he willingly took up Pepys's suggestion, but whether the Duke had been put in mind of reform earlier by Coventry is uncertain, though probable.

The Duke of York asked Pepys to prepare a letter which would be sent to the Navy Board in the Duke's name. The result was a long letter, usually referred to as 'The Lord High Admiral's Letter of Reflections', which was completed by Pepys on 20 August and approved by the Duke of York three days later. It was read at the Navy Board on 29 August in the same form as Pepys had written it, and he was able to write in the Diary, with obvious pleasure, that it was 'in my very words, without alteration of a syllable'.² The failures of the Navy were attributed mainly to the lack of money, which made the normal conduct of business virtually impossible, and also to the failure to observe the 1662 Instructions. This is perhaps an implied criticism of the Lord High Admiral himself who had not ensured that the Instructions were carried out. This charge against the Navy Board by Pepys was undoubtedly very close to the truth and was also an indication of the Duke's own failure. The answers from the Navy Board were sent to Pepys, who prepared a second letter, again in the name of the Duke of York.³ Whilst there is nothing unusual about the head of

¹ Diary, 24 July 1668.

² PRO, Adm.49/54, ff.106-29, 26 August 1668. Diary, 27 August 1668; Catalogue, I, 30 n2., Tanner has compared the draft by Pepys and the final letter, and says that the only difference is the 'omission of the phrase, "to the insupportable obstruction of his Majesty's service" ... perhaps because it was too strong'.

³ PRO, Adm.49/54, ff.130-37, 25 November 1668. For a discussion of the criticisms of individual members of the Navy Board, see *infra*.pp.176-82; 231-38; 264-65; 269-70; 291-93.

a service calling for a report on the actions of his subordinates, and indeed the Duke deserves all praise for this, it is unfortunate that little more was done to ensure better compliance in the future, for, as after the issuing of the 1662 Instructions, the Duke again failed in 1668 to ensure that the cause of reform was actively pursued. He had undoubtedly given the Navy Board a scare, but this was in no way sufficient, and whilst he had given full support to the idea of reform, he was not able or prepared to carry this further. But in one way at least the 'Letter of Reflections' had its value. It was proof to the reformers from outside the navy that the Duke of York was actively attempting to bring in reform.

The Duke of York's enquiry into the affairs of the Navy Board was, in part, promoted by a desire to defend himself. In fact, the position of the Lord High Admiral was not as strong as it might appear, but this was not the result of interference by the King, Privy Council or Committee for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy.¹ There is little evidence to indicate any direct intervention in the administration of the navy by the King, and the powers of the Lord High Admiral were not weakened by the interest shown in the navy by Charles II. It is difficult to understand how Sir Oswyn Murray can state that, 'despite his [the Duke of York's] good intentions ... the powers of the Lord Admiral steadily declined in his hands, until, at his withdrawal, the office retained only the shadow of its former greatness'. The main reason for this, as suggested by Murray, was the 'competing interest of Charles himself in naval affairs'.² This view is based on a completely exaggerated impression of the King's activity in naval matters. The position of the Lord High Admiral had certainly lost some of its 'traditional powers' by the 1660s, but this was the culmination of a gradual process which was helped by the abolition of the office during the Civil War. The

¹ Supra. pp. 55, 67.

² Murray, 'The Admiralty', MM, XXIII, p.317.

use of 'commissions' instead of single office holders was part of a general trend in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries which affected the Lord Treasurer as well as the Lord Admiral. But while the Duke of York was Lord High Admiral, this process was, if anything, arrested, and his powers can be compared favourably with those of his predecessors. Murray further asserts that, because of the King and the Duke's interest in the navy, 'naval administration became the favourite object of attack' and the navy was 'dragged into the political arena', but this is true of any period in naval history.¹ In the reigns of William III and Anne the armed forces came in for far greater Parliamentary scrutiny than they had ever known in the two previous reigns. But as far as the Duke of York was concerned, his own weakness and political unpopularity were bound to reflect on the navy. His personal unpopularity was evident before the Dutch War; on 25 January 1663 Sandwich expressed his surprise to Pepys that the Duke of York should be going to Portsmouth at that time of year 'it being no way, we think, to increase his popularity, which is not great'.²

Prior to 1667 the Duke of York did not come under severe political attack; with the support of his father-in-law Clarendon, the Duke, and through him the navy, was relatively free from outside interference. The Duke even gained a considerable amount of popularity after his victory over the Dutch in the Battle off Lowestoft in June 1665. But the situation was dramatically changed in 1667 with the disaster on the Medway and the fall of Clarendon. During August 1667 the Duke of York had little time to devote to the navy; Pepys records that at the weekly meeting of the Navy Board with the Duke on 27 August, they 'did little business'; the Duke 'his head full of other business and of late hath not been very ready to

¹ Murray, *op.cit.*, p.321.

² Diary, 25 January 1663.

be troubled with any of our business'.¹ An attack of smallpox prevented his playing any great part in the events which led up to the fall of Clarendon, and thereafter he was forced to defend his own position.

The decline in the Duke of York's position was reflected in the increasing activity of the Privy Council in naval matters through the revival of the Committee for the Admiralty and Navy. It is important to note that the main attacks on the Duke came from the Buckingham and Arlington factions at court, and not from the Commons. The immediate outburst of popular indignation after the Medway fiasco was directed at those on the spot, mainly Commissioner Pett, and there is no suggestion that the Commons thought the Duke was in any way to blame for the disaster. The Commons' investigations were directed at the Navy Board, Sandwich and Penn for breaking into prize goods and those responsible for the Medway defences. At no time did they direct their investigations at the Duke of York. From this it can be seen that the main attack on the Duke was not basically because of his naval connections, but the naval disaster provided useful additional ammunition to be used against him.

The Committee of the Admiralty and Navy was re-formulated, along with other committees of the Privy Council, in January 1668; with the exception of one meeting in December 1667, this Committee had not met since January 1665.² The revival and reorganisation of the Privy Council committees was done without consulting the Duke of York, as is demonstrated by his not knowing the members of the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy beforehand. The Duke, who could not be left out while he was Lord High Admiral, sent for Sandwich to join the Committee, but the Lieutenant Admiral replied that 'he was none of them; which shows how things are now-a-days ordered,

¹ Diary, 27 August 1667.

² Supra. pp. 70-71.

that there should be a committee for the Navy; and the Lord Admiral not know the persons of it!'.¹

During 1668 the future of the Duke of York as Lord High Admiral was itself a subject for speculation, for on 12 August 1668 Pepys heard from Captain Cocke that it was 'certain' that the Duke of York would 'lose the authority of an Admiral, and be governed by a committee'.² These rumours persisted and on 4 November Pepys observed that the Duke of Buckingham was 'carrying all before him' and Pepys was troubled to hear that 'the Duke of York's regiment is ordered to be disbanded; and more, that undoubtedly his Admiralty will follow'.³ The next day Pepys had an interview with the Duke of York and he did perceive the Duke of York's trouble, and that he do lie under great weight of mind from the Duke of Buckingham's carrying things against him'.⁴

The Duke of York's weakness was further revealed by the appointments to the Navy Board at this time. The suspension of the Earl of Anglesey from the post of Treasurer of the Navy was the result of a clash between him and Buckingham, and Anglesey's refusal to assist in the attack on Ormonde; as a result Buckingham decided that Anglesey should be driven out of office.⁵ On 29 October 1668 Pepys and the rest of the Navy Board were informed of the King's decision to suspend Anglesey and the 'putting in

¹ Diary, 13 February 1668, Sandwich was appointed to the Committee on 21 May 1669, PRO, PC2/61, f.308.

² Diary, 12 August 1668.

³ Diary, 4 November 1668.

⁴ Diary, 5 November 1668. Relations between the Duke of York and Buckingham had never been very good; on 12 April 1665 the Duke had refused to allow Buckingham to attend a Council of War on the Royal Charles because he was not a commander, Buckingham claimed the right to attend as a Privy Councillor and because of his 'Quality', Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, p.179.

⁵ Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, II, 21-4.

Sir Thomas Littleton and Sir Thomas Osborne, the former a creature of Arlington's, and the latter of the Duke of Buckingham's.¹ The Duke of York was forced to comply, and this was done, according to his Secretary Matthew Wren, 'without his privity' and the Duke was 'the most wounded in this'; the idea of putting the Admiralty into commission was once more expressed.² He was also unable to influence the choice of a successor to Sir William Penn, who left the Navy Board to become one of the Victualling Contractors; the Duke suggested Captain Cox, the senior Master Attendant at Chatham dockyard, or Admiral Sir Jeremy Smith, as a suitable successor, but the King would not make a decision, 'and so the Duke of York could not prevail for either, nor knows who it shall be'.³

Despite these setbacks, the Duke of York was able to maintain his position and the idea of putting the Admiralty into commission at this time came to nothing. The Duke was able to head off the reformers by his letters calling the Navy Board to account for its actions. By 1669 the threat to his position was considerably reduced and the Privy Council's Committee of the Admiralty and Navy was allowed to slip back to its pre-January 1668 state of inaction, for during 1669 it held only three meetings. The Duke of York's position was improved as the uneasy alliance between Buckingham and Arlington began to crumble during 1669.⁴ The powers of the Lord High Admiral were not affected seriously, indeed if at all, by the political attacks on the Duke of York. When the Admiralty Commissioners were appointed in 1673 they inherited an office which had not been reduced in authority since 1660.

¹ Diary, 29 October 1668.

² Diary, 29 October 1668.

³ Diary, 5 November 1668.

⁴ Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, I, 77.

In addition to the major regulations and attempts at reform, there were several sets of instructions of a less important nature issued in the Duke's name. It is not possible to show fully the extent of James's personal involvement, but it would appear that he gave greater force and authority to the necessary regulations, which were drawn up by the Navy Board and other advisers. It is to the Duke's credit that he was prepared to associate himself with a whole series of regulations, even though neither he nor the Navy Board was able to ensure that the regulations were fully observed. For the most part these regulations will be discussed when dealing with the relevant problem, but for the present two examples may be taken to show the differing fields of the Duke of York's regulations and the manner in which they were followed up. Firstly, there are the instructions issued to captains of the King's ships in 1663 which, according to Ogg, meant that a 'much stricter disciplinary code was enforced, a code attributable to the Duke of York'.¹ These instructions give no clues as to their origin but, in view of the relative detail incorporated in some of the 33 articles, it is not likely, nor should it have been expected, that the Duke of York would have had much to do with their compilation.² Although there is no positive evidence, it is reasonable to suggest that Penn, or possibly Sandwich, would have been the guiding spirit behind them. One of the frequent criticisms of the Restoration captains was their lack of discipline; this was explained by Coventry, amongst others, as the result of appointing too many 'gentlemen', instead of seamen ('tarpaulins'), to commands. At this stage it is sufficient to note that the problem was recognised by the Duke of York in that these instructions attempted to lay down a code of conduct for commanders. The 1663 instructions do not appear to have been sufficient, for in 1669 a new set of 44 articles was issued, and on this occasion there is no doubt that the Duke of York was

¹ Ogg, England in the Reign of Charles II, I, 274.

² PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.32.

acting on the advice of the Navy Board. On 31 August 1669 the Duke of York wrote to the Navy Board, 'I have sent you some copies of my General Instructions to Commanders as they were lately, after several conferences with yourselves, agreed and confirmed by me', and the Navy Board was required to ensure that the new instructions were dispatched to all commanders, and also to the clerks of the cheque in the yards and the muster masters with the fleets.¹ Secondly, is the set of regulations concerned with the payment of merchants' bills in a strict order, or, as it was known, by 'payment in course'. This was an expedient adopted in an attempt to encourage merchants to continue supplying the navy with goods on credit, the idea being that if the merchant was assured that his bills would be paid strictly according to the order in which they were registered in the Treasurer's books and that there would be no deviation to favoured individuals, he would feel more secure in trusting the navy with a further supply of goods. It is again not clear who first brought up this idea, but it is likely that it came from the Navy Treasurer or possibly Coventry.² It would appear that Carteret, the Treasurer, accepted the new scheme, although he was aware that it would reduce his freedom to pay bills in the order he chose. The idea was probably connected with Sir George Downing, and the attempt to raise money on the credit of the new Act for an Additional Aid of £1,250,000 was being energetically supported by Coventry and Downing in December 1665. The first draft of the orders for the 'payments in course' was drawn up on 8 December 1665 and sent to the Navy Board.³ It would appear that the Navy Board as a whole had not been consulted prior to this (although Pepys was invited to comment on them), because on 23 December they wrote to Coventry expressing their willingness to implement the instructions, but

¹ Bodl., Rawl. MS. A 289, f.95, 31 August 1669.

² *Infra.* p. 361-63.

³ PRO, Adm.7/637, ff.112-20, 8 December 1665.

asking that further orders should be issued to cover points which were not clear in the first set. This resulted in a second order concerning payments in course, and, as far as can be ascertained from Pepys's Diary and letters from the Navy Board, they were not involved in this second set of instructions either.¹ Although no positive claim can be made on behalf of the Duke of York to originality or innovation; it would seem that he was acting on the advice of others, almost certainly Coventry; but it is to his credit that he was prepared to accept such advice and to issue instructions which, it was hoped, would help to tackle the most serious problem facing the navy at that time, the lack of ready money. As in other matters, the Duke of York left the execution of his instructions completely to the Navy Board, although he retained an interest in the success of this scheme, as a year later on 17 December 1666 he asked the Navy Board how these instructions had worked in their first year and whether the Board could suggest any improvements.²

Apart from issuing instructions or regulations to improve the routine administration of the navy and to tackle specific problems, the Duke of York exhibited considerable concern for enquiring into and preventing abuses. This can be taken as evidence of his involvement in the detail of naval administration and of his growing knowledge of the service. The Duke's Instructions of 1662 did a great deal to clarify the regulation of the dockyards.³ In the letter accompanying the Instructions, the Duke exhorted the Navy Board to enquire into the running of the yards. In a similar manner he wrote to the Navy Board on 22 April 1662 that 'many abuses are crept into the Navy of late' and, as the Board was about to pay the yards, it was to have particular care to implement his Instructions and his letter

¹ PRO, Adm.7/637, ff.121-26, 26 December 1665.

² PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.151, 17 December 1666.

³ Ehrman, The Navy in the War of William III, p.102.

of 28 January.¹ Two abuses which the Duke of York considered should be tackled first were the entering of more workmen than were needed and 'those many times unable for the work', and the carrying away of too much wood under the pretence of it being waste or 'chips'. Later that week various members of the Navy Board were down at Chatham and Portsmouth yards to inspect them, to muster the workmen, and to give the new Instructions to the yard officers.² The Duke of York continued to press for a stricter watch to be kept on the yard. On 25 April 1664 he complained to the Navy Board that he had heard that there was a great deal of neglect of duty by the yard officers 'occasioned by drunkenness and other debauchery'.³ On this and the preceding occasions it was left to the Navy Board to investigate and issue whatever directions they thought fit. This led to the Navy Board writing to the Master Attendants at Portsmouth and Deptford, and the Master Shipwright at Woolwich, requiring them to certify what 'enormities shall be committed' by their under officers, and those found guilty were to be suspended from their office until the Duke's 'pleasure' was known.⁴

The Duke of York was also concerned to investigate abuses on ships in harbour, and the reasons for delays in preparing ships for sea. On 28 June 1661 Coventry informed the Navy Board that it was required to attend the Duke of York with the Victualler, Dennis Gauden, and the captains of ships in the river, to find out why the ships had not sailed for the Downs.⁵ The following day Penn, Batten, and Pepys were down at Deptford to look into the matter and they reported to the Duke on 30 June that the only

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.74r, 22 April 1662.

² Diary, 30 April 1662.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.104r, 25 April 1664.

⁴ PRO, Adm.49/132, no.30, 7 May 1664.

⁵ PRO, Adm.106/5, f.52, 28 June 1661.

reason for the ships being there was that the wind had been against them for some time and they could not be moved down river.¹ In the same way on 2 March 1662, Coventry told the Navy Board that the Duke was aware that the 'provision of victuals for the East India ships are very backward' and he wanted an enquiry into this.² This led to discussions with the Victualler and to some of the Navy Board taking at least two trips down the river to look at the ships concerned. In this case the failure lay in the slowness of the Victualler in bringing in his provisions.³ From this it can be seen that, when the Duke was informed of a specific abuse, he would pass it on to the Navy Board for speedy investigation, and in this he cannot be faulted. But where the Duke of York did not do so well was in the following up of general complaints and in ensuring that they were investigated properly by the Navy Board. The orders that he issued for a general enquiry, as in 1662 and 1668, should only have been the first step in the matter, but too often nothing further is heard of them. As Pepys was to admit, apart from the want of money, the main reason for the failings of the naval administration of the Restoration was in the neglect of the Navy Board and dockyard officials to observe the 1662 Instructions.⁴ By implication some of this blame must be attached to the Duke of York for not going far enough himself in ensuring that his Instructions were observed, and to this failure in supervision from the Lord High Admiral downwards can be attributed the major failures of the Restoration navy.

One of the constant themes running through the naval administration during the Restoration period is that of financial difficulty. In his office as

¹ Diary, 30 June 1661.

² PRO, Adm.106/6, f.299, 2 March 1662.

³ Diary, 18 March 1662.

⁴ Pepys MS. 2242, f.22.

Lord High Admiral, the Duke of York was expected to assist in obtaining funds or assignments for the navy, and he was also to be able to inform the King of the naval debts; this part of his duty is clearly laid down in the 1673 Order in Council on the duties of the Lord High Admiral.¹

There can be no doubt that the Navy Board kept the Lord High Admiral constantly informed concerning naval debts, and many letters were presented to him, especially during the Dutch Wars, in which the dire condition of the navy, due to lack of money, was expressed. Usually it was beyond the Duke of York's power to remedy the shortage of money, and this problem was certainly not limited to the navy. All government departments suffered from this shortage, but probably none so acutely as the navy where the effects were seen so much more obviously and quickly.

The Lord High Admiral was, therefore, very conscious of this problem and from his position at court, where he was in close proximity to the King and Lord Treasurer, he was far more aware of the wholesale shortage of money than the Navy Board. Whenever possible he did attempt to encourage economy in the navy. On 8 October 1662 he told the Lord Treasurer, Southampton, that the Navy Board had told him that 500 men could be discharged from the yards as being unnecessary, thus saving the King £50 per day, and a request was made for an immediate advance of £4,000 to discharge these men and pay off their arrears.² A further, but smaller example of the Duke ordering economy was his order to dismiss the measurers of timber at Deptford and Woolwich. This was also an attempt to bring in a small reform, as the storekeepers were to be made responsible for the measuring of timber and for certifying that it was according to contract, and it was hoped that this would lead to greater diligence on their part.³ When the Second Dutch War was over the Duke of York ordered

¹ PRO, Adm.7/723, f.47, 13 June 1673.

² PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.83r, 8 October 1662.

³ PRO, Adm.106/7, f.228, 30 October 1662.

an immediate reduction of expenses by taking away all the new offices which had been created as a result of the war. The Navy Board was to consider if it was necessary to continue with the yard at Harwich, and it was to make a special check when examining the ships' books to prevent abuses.¹

One of the most obvious ways to economise was by reducing the number of ships in the Summer and Winter Guards, and by paying off unnecessary seamen. At the end of 1663, when there was little danger of not being able to man the following year's Summer Guard, the Lord High Admiral ordered several ships to be paid off. At the same time the Oxford, Pheonix, Resolution, Antelope, and Bonadventure were to be fitted out for service in the Mediterranean, but as this would take a considerable time, the greater part of their crews (who had just returned from forming part of the Summer Guard) were to be paid off and discharged as an economy.² A general reduction of the men carried on ships was brought into effect in 1663. On 22 August the Duke of York wrote to the Navy Board requiring it to consider reducing the complement on ships in the North Sea and those on fishing duty during peacetime, as several voyages had been performed with less than the usual complement.³ It was to ensure that the running of the ships was not endangered and that the number of 'officers [that is the purser, carpenters etc.] servants' was to be maintained as an encouragement to the officers and as a means of training for the future. This led to a reduced establishment being accepted on 17 October 1663, but with the approach of war in 1664 this was abandoned and the full war complements were to be borne on all ships.⁴ This is a useful example of the Duke's

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.162, 29 July 1667.

² PRO, Adm.106/8, f.227, 16 November 1663.

³ PRO, Adm.106/8, f.116, 22 August 1663.

⁴ BM, Sloane MS. 2032, f.13, 17 October 1663; Add. MS.9,302, f.181, 17 November 1664.

attempt to reconcile the need for economy, which was no doubt being urged on him by the Treasurer, and the requirements of the navy in future standing officers. The Duke of York's desire to reduce unnecessary expenditure was also seen during the Dutch War. It was often the practice to hire merchant ships for additional service during the summer, which would not be required in winter. On 14 October 1665 the Duke ordered that all merchant ships should be paid off as money became available; those which had been hired last were to be paid off first, which would allow a greater number of ships to be discharged with the money available.¹ With the approach of winter the Duke of York was always anxious to ensure that the largest ships were paid off first, but this was not always possible, and in 1665/6 several of these ships were kept in pay because there was no money to pay them off. But where possible the Duke ordered the first and second rates to be paid off first, especially the Sovereign, which had a nominal war complement of 700 men and was the largest ship in the navy; she was mentioned by name in letters of 14 October 1665 and 29 September 1666 when the Duke ordered the Navy Board to begin paying off the ships.²

The debts and financial problems of the navy had been brought home to the Duke of York soon after his return to England in 1660. On 11 June 1660 he wrote to Sir George Carteret saying that 'the present posture of the affairs of the navy is very intricate and the debts great for that without speedy remedy, his Majesties service is likely to be very much damaged', and Carteret was asked to find out the exact state of the debt and report this to the Duke.³ The problem of the debts inherited from the

¹ PRO, Adm.106/11, f.130, 14 October 1665; Adm.106/13, f.432, 29 September 1666.

² PRO, Adm.106/11, f.130, 14 October 1665; Adm.106/13, f.432, 29 September 1666.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.1r, 11 June 1660.

Commonwealth was largely left to the Parliamentary Commissioners for Disbanding the Army and paying off the Navy; both the Duke of York and the Navy Board were glad to be rid of both this troublesome work and the hostility which was inevitably directed against those involved. Although the Duke of York was not directly concerned in this work, he kept in touch with developments, as is seen from his letter to Vice-Admiral Sir John Lawson in which he stated 'tho' I have not appeared to take notice of it, yet I have not been unconcerned in the interest of the Navy, in the late Act concerning the Paying off ships', but it is not clear what the Duke was doing in connection with this matter.¹

As most of the efforts of the Duke of York in obtaining money for the navy would be through verbal contact with the King and Lord Treasurer, there is little trace of his endeavours. But some indication of the manner in which this was done comes from Pepys's Diary on 14 August 1661, when the Navy Board attended the Duke of York and gave 'him an account of the condition of the Navy for lack of money'; the Duke expressed his concern over this and promised to speak with the King about it that morning.²

As a result of this, and possible other later appeals, the Duke of York wrote to the Navy Board on 18 October 1661 that 'I am very sensible of the present want of money for carrying on the affairs of the Navy and shall take what care I can to get it supplied', and that he had persuaded the Lord Treasurer to make over £20,000 from the Customs for the use of the navy and the Navy Board was to decide how best to use it.³ The Duke of York's concern for the financial problems of the navy went so far as to induce him to lend some of his own money for the use of the service. On 6 October 1662 Southampton wrote to Carteret that 'his Royal Highness was

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.27r, 21 February 1661.

² Diary, 14 August 1661.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.57, 18 October 1661.

pleased in a time of necessity, of his own private money, to furnish towards the payment of some ships then come in'; the sum involved came to over £9,000.¹

Throughout 1666 the Navy Board was complaining constantly to the Duke of York about the shortage of money; from 13 May to 19 December there were at least nine occasions when the Board brought this matter up in forceful terms, but because of the wider financial situation the Duke could do very little. On 24 October 1666 the Navy Board attended the Duke, 'and to all our complaints for want of money ... the Duke only tells us that he is sorry for it, and hath spoken to the King of it, and money we shall have as soon as it can be found'.² Following the death of Southampton in 1667 the Treasury was put into commission. One of the Commissioners was Sir William Coventry, who had previously been secretary to the Duke of York and a Commissioner of the Navy. Coventry at least understood the problems of the navy, but was unable to bring about any appreciable improvement in the situation. The Duke of York continued to pass on the complaints of the Navy Board to the King and the Treasury Commissioners, but, it would seem, to little avail. Wren, as Coventry's successor, informed the Navy Board on 1 November 1667 that the Duke of York had given their letter about the priority of the caulkers to the King in the presence of the Treasury Commissioners, but they were 'not much more troubled with it than with your other letters about the general debt of the Navy and yards'.³

¹ Calendar of Treasury Books, 1660-1667, p.437.

² Diary, 13 May, 18 July, 5 August, 8 August, 19 September, 4 October, 19 October, 24 October, 19 December 1666. On these occasions the Navy Board was complaining 'solemnly of the want of money'; 'to complain but to no purpose of want of money'; 'did our usual business, but nothing but complaints of want of money without success'; 'usual business before the Duke of York: which signified little, our business being only complaints of lack of money'.

³ PRO, SP29/222, f.17, 1 November 1667.

The ending of the war did not bring any immediate relief; the Duke experienced greater difficulty in pressing the claims of the navy because of his own political decline, and also because the new Treasury Commissioners were determined to exercise a strict control over the supply of money. After mid-1667 the navy as a whole lost a great deal of its financial independence to the Treasury Commissioners. But, despite these factors, the Duke was frequently with the Navy Board attending the Treasury Commissioners to press for more money. One such meeting was on 21 April 1669, when the Duke of York was very insistent in declaring that the £200,000 set aside for the annual expense of the navy needed to be doubled. He offered to have the Navy Board draw up an estimate to prove this, and also pressed that it should be supplied with additional money for extra expenditure, such as the repairing of the ships burnt by the Dutch in 1667.¹ In order to prevent any delay by the Treasury Commissioners complaining about lack of information, the Duke promised to send them an estimate of the monthly charge of Allin's fleet in the Straits and of the wages due to the other ships, 'thereby my Lords may take measure to provide the money'.²

As is to be expected, most is known about the Duke of York's relations with the Navy Board. Some indication of this contact has been given in the preceding pages, but a more detailed look will illustrate his power, duties and involvement with the Navy. F C Turner states that the Duke of York's 'administrative work extended little beyond presiding at a weekly meeting of the Navy Board, and even there his attendance was irregular ... out of 22 meetings mentioned by Pepys, six only were held quite regularly'.³

¹ Calendar of Treasury Books, 1669-1672, p.56.

² Ibid. p.225.

³ Turner, James II, p.73.

On 8 September 1662, Pepys recorded that the Board attended the Duke, and were told 'that he doth intend to renew the old custom for the Admiralls to have their principal officers to meet them once a week to give them an account what they have done that week, which I am glad of ...'.¹ These meetings, which were usually held on Mondays, admittedly did not get off to a very regular start as on 15 September the Duke was out hunting; 29 September was a 'collar day' and the Board had 'no time' to talk with the Duke about business, and the meeting on 6 October did not take place as the Duke was not well.² Thereafter, between 20 October 1662 and the departure of the Duke of York to hasten the preparations of the fleet at Portsmouth on 9 November 1664, it is possible to be certain of 63 meetings on a regular basis, with the possibility of two others when Pepys was out of London. The only lengthy period when these weekly meetings did not occur was after the 4 July 1664 meeting when, with the exception of 10 and 17 August, there was no meeting until the regular meetings were resumed from 12 October 1664. This break was caused by the Duke of York's absence from London when he was with the King and Court on their mid-summer tour. The regular meetings recommenced after the Duke of York's return from Portsmouth in December 1664, and continued until he left for the fleet in March 1665. When the Duke was absent at sea, and when he was in the North in the latter half of 1665, the Navy Board attended the Duke of Albemarle. The Duke of York returned to London towards the end of January 1666, and the weekly meetings were resumed from 29 January. For the rest of the period covered by the Diary, the Navy Board attended the Duke of York at least three times in every month (except November 1667 when the Duke had smallpox), and in most months four or five meetings took place.

¹ Diary, 8 September 1662.

² Diary, 15 September, 29 September, 6 October 1662.

From this it can be seen that Turner's sample of 22 meetings is not completely representative; whenever possible, the Duke of York was in personal contact with the Navy Board.

These regular meetings helped to keep the Duke of York informed about the routine business of the navy; they provided an opportunity for the Navy Board to obtain the Duke's decision after discussion before him, and to inform him of the condition of the navy. The regularity of these meetings over a long period shows the sustained interest and involvement of the Duke in naval administration. The majority of these occasions followed a similar pattern, as can be seen from the comments made by Pepys; he often described them as 'our business' or 'our usual business', and sometimes 'our weekly errand' or 'our usual attendance with the Duke'.¹ On some occasions matters of greater importance were discussed, although Pepys does not often mention the business covered. Some idea may be gained from the meeting on 10 November 1662 when they discussed 'among other things, how to pay off this fleet that is now come from Portugall'; this was the fleet under Sandwich which had brought the new Queen back to England.² As the financial position of the navy began to deteriorate rapidly, these weekly meetings gave the Navy Board the opportunity to complain to the Duke about the situation and to present him with letters to this effect.³ The preparations for the fleet were also brought up, as on 4 April 1664 when 'some discourse of the condition of the fleet in order to a Dutch war'

¹ The members of the Board did not all attend each meeting. Pepys was present at the vast majority, with Penn, Mennes and Batten with him on most occasions; rarely were there less than three members of the Board present. It is most likely that Coventry, as Secretary to the Duke as well as being a Commissioner of the Navy, would also be present, even though he is not usually mentioned. The Treasurers, Carteret, Anglesey, Littleton and Osborne were less frequent in their attendance.

² Diary, 10 November 1662.

³ Diary, 19 September 1666.

took place, and on 18 April 1666 'attending the Duke as usual, and there concluding of many things preparative to the Prince and Generall's going to sea'.¹ After the war the Navy Board was with the Duke to discuss the reduction of the fleet; on 24 September 1667 'we had an audience of the Duke of York of many things of weight, as the confirming an establishment of the numbers of men on ships in peace and other things'.² On many occasions the decisions taken at these meetings had to be sent in writing to the Navy Board; for example, on 3 April 1669 the Board wrote to Matthew Wren, who had been absent from the meeting, that the Duke had given verbal orders which it was to proceed upon 'in expectation of his order in writing'.³ In the same way the Duke of York wrote to the Navy Board on 22 August 1670, 'there were several particulars agreed upon at the last time that you attended me, which I give you my direction in writing'. This concerned a relatively minor matter about the complement of the Eagle ketch, which is an indication that even a very routine matter, which was not absolutely clear to the Board, had to be brought to the Duke for his decision. It also concerned the terms for breaking up and salvaging the wreck of the Defiance.⁴

Frequently the Navy Board would ask the Duke of York for instructions or approval on various matters, and, conversely, he often asked for the Board's advice. When the Board was in doubt as to the correct action, or when it lacked the authority, it would appeal to the Lord High Admiral. The need to obtain the Duke's 'pleasure' can be seen on 17 September 1660 when the

¹ Diary, 4 April 1664; 18 April 1666.

² Diary, 24 September 1667.

³ BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.187, 3 April 1669.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/20, f.92, 22 August 1670.

Navy Board wrote to Coventry that the clerks of the Cheque in the yards were about to make up their books for the last quarter, and the Board wanted to know if the salaries should be rated 'as was allowed before the late unhappy revolution or by what is since established which doth much exceed the pristine salaries'.¹ On 24 September Coventry replied that the Duke had decided that the salaries were to be rated according to the latter establishment, thus accepting the salary increases brought in with the Commonwealth; the Duke sent his order to this effect the next day.² Although there is no direct evidence, it is highly probable that in the question of salaries the Duke of York would have consulted the King since this was establishing an important financial precedent. The making of the pursers' books is another example of the Navy Board asking for the Duke's decision. On 14 August 1661 Coventry wrote to the Board, 'your letter touching Pursers Accompts I have communicated unto his Royal Highness, who orders that the pursers are to be given credit for the prisoners and also passengers who were victualled on the fleet when the King, Queen [Mother] and Princess Royal were present and at no other time'.³ This appears to be the Duke's own decision, but there is no indication as to whether he was guided by Coventry in this. In other instances when his directions were requested, the Duke would prefer to call on the Navy Board for its advice. On 31 January 1668 the Board asked for the Duke's decision over the pursers' books again; this time the problem was over the number of supernumary seamen that were to be allowed above the ships complement. The Duke of York must have consulted the Board, because in his reply on 7 February he says, 'upon conferring with yourselves about it, I do not

¹ BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.75r, 17 September 1660.

² PRO, Adm.106/2, f.43, 21 September 1660.

³ PRO, Adm.106/5, f.235, 14 August 1661.

think it proper or convenient to alter or dispense with the former rules', but anything which was not covered in them was to be referred to the Duke for his directions.¹

The Navy Board was always anxious to obtain the Duke of York's decision in writing, for this was the final justification of their actions in case of investigation. It also gave those under the Navy Board similar justification when obeying the orders of the Board. This is seen when it was necessary to send directions to the Commissioners in the 'out ports' (Tippetts at Portsmouth and Cox at Chatham), who had asked what 'latitude of power' they possessed when time did not allow opportunity to ask the Navy Board in London for a proper answer, as was laid down in the Duke's Instructions. The Board passed this on to the Duke on 3 February 1670 when, although the members declared themselves 'unfit' to deliver their opinion on the matter, they said they believed it was the Duke's intention to allow the Commissioners freedom of action when speed was essential, and this was laid 'before your Royal Highness to be confirmed or corrected'.² The Duke accepted the Board's opinion completely and ordered that the Commissioners were 'in cases requiring immediate action ... to do what ought or might have been done by the Whole Board', but they were to send up to the Board a full account of what they had done under this power.³

On many other occasions, especially when technical matters were involved, the Lord High Admiral would turn to the Navy Board for advice. This covered advice on where ships could best be built, the distribution of victuals to the ports, and the former practice of giving salutes to the King of England's ships in the Narrow Seas. The process of consultation

¹ PRO, Adm.106/15, f.312, 7 February 1668.

² BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.201, 3 February 1670.

³ NMM, SER 122, f.78, 15 March 1670.

and advice between the Lord High Admiral and the Navy Board is well illustrated during 1666 when, by an Order of the King in Council on 30 June, the Lord High Admiral was ordered to direct the officers of the Navy to give orders for the building of ten new ships of the third rate and above.¹ The Duke passed this to the Navy Board on 3 July and ordered it to give an 'account' of this at its next meeting with him.² The meeting took place the following day and Pepys records 'our usual business with the Duke, all of us. Among other things, discoursing about the places where to build ten great ships'.³ At their next weekly meeting, on 11 July, the Navy Board presented its proposals to the Duke of York; on this occasion the King was present, which gives an indication that on matters which would involve great expenditure and were extremely important, it was always necessary for the Duke to obtain the King's approval. The meeting agreed on the places where the ships would be built, but in view of the financial situation, only four third rates of this programme were ever built.⁴ This illustrates the whole process of a formal decision being taken by the King in Council, and the various steps of consultation between the King, Lord High Admiral and the Navy Board. From the timing of this matter it is certain that the decision to build these ships was taken by the King and Duke of York, with the advice of Rupert and Albemarle, to replace those ships lost in the Four Days' Battle of 1/4 June 1666.

While the Duke of York was Lord High Admiral there was a very close link between the Admiralty function of his office (that is, ordering the dispatch of ships and granting warrants to commanders and standing officers), and the Navy Board (as executors of orders from the Lord High Admiral on all

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.188, 30 June 1666.

² PRO, Adm.106/13, f.287, 3 July 1666.

³ Diary, 4 July 1666.

⁴ Diary, 11 July 1666. The Navy Board recommended the building of six second rates and four third rates, BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.114.

aspects of administration). This was emphasised when the Duke's secretary, William Coventry, sat as a member of the Navy Board from 1662 to mid-1667; the connection was continued, though in less depth, by Coventry's successors, Matthew Wren up to 1672, then Henry Saville for a very short period, and, finally, John Werden. The Lord High Admiral's Secretary was responsible for dispatching letters to the Navy Board, commanders, and the dockyards; he also had to deal with official letters and the Duke of York's other correspondence. As far as the navy was concerned, the importance of this post was only fully realised when Pepys was appointed as Secretary to the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral in June 1673. Prior to 1673, there was a strong tendency for the distinction between the Admiralty and the Navy Board to be blurred, but this was very much a temporary state of affairs caused by the reappointment of a single Lord High Admiral. In a few cases this led to letters being sent to the Navy Board instead of the Lord High Admiral. For example, Thomas Taylor, the master gunner of the Sovereign, wrote to the Navy Board requesting that his place should be exercised by a deputy. The letter was passed to Coventry, who obtained the Duke's permission, and the warrant was passed on 23 August 1662.¹ The Admiralty role of the Lord High Admiral was closely allied to the Navy Board when it was necessary to set out ships or prepare estimates for service at sea. The vast majority of the purely Admiralty work concerned the dispatch of orders and formal instructions to commanders at sea. These letters, and the replies and other correspondence from ships have been lost, which makes the task of assessing the Duke of York's role very difficult. The most that can be said with any degree of certainty is that, as far as possible, the Duke was in close touch with

¹ PRO, Adm.106/7, f.154, 23 August 1662.

either the fleet or individual commanders. This was more difficult in the case of ships in the Mediterranean or those away from the Channel and North Sea, but during 1666, when Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle were at sea, they sent a stream of letters to the Duke of York informing him of the preparations of the fleet and of their progress when at sea. Some letters were sent to Coventry, who passed the information on to the Duke together with requests for more assistance. This is seen in a letter from the joint commanders on 24 April 1666, just after they had joined the fleet. They tell Coventry, 'We desire you will please to move his Royal Highness to send us some ketches...', and on 14 June they again ask Coventry 'to move his R. H. that we may have liberty to press seamen from any merchantmen...'.¹ Writing to Coventry had an added advantage, for, as a Commissioner, he could press for action at the Navy Board.

To conclude this section on the administrative role of the Duke of York when Lord High Admiral, a few examples will be given which give some indication of his attention to business and his desire to be well informed about the affairs of the navy. On 18 February 1661 the Duke asked the Navy Board to provide an estimate for the charge of the whole fleet for a year, and the Summer Guard of 6,000 men for six months.² The Board sent its reply quickly but had not given it in sufficient detail for the Duke's satisfaction. On 23 February he complained that it did not 'particularise what will be due for victuals, which I being desirous to know'.³ The Duke of York also liked to be kept informed of the receipts and issues of the navy Treasury, but this was very superficial

¹ Powell and Timings (eds), Rupert and Monck Letter Book, pp.13, 65.

² PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.26r, 18 February 1661.

³ PRO, Adm.106/3, f.124, 23 February 1661.

supervision. On 19 February 1662, Coventry sent to the Board telling the members that the Duke had seen their estimates and wanted to know whether the money paid to Lady Slingsby (widow of the Comptroller) had been authorised by Privy Seal, letter, or warrant from the King. He also asked to be told of any other Privy Seals for payments from the Treasury of the navy, which had been passed without his knowledge.¹ The Duke of York was usually kept well informed about the debt of the navy and the financial problems facing the service. On 2 March 1666, however, he wrote to the Navy Board saying that, in accordance with his instructions for the payment of bills in course, he had been sent an account of the bills signed since 2 January 1666, but had not been given an account of the money borrowed or received, the assignments obtained from the Exchequer, or of the money that had been paid on these bills. The lack of this information meant that he was unable to give the King an account of the state of the naval debt. The Navy Board was, therefore, required to prepare a full account of all receipts and payments, and this was to be sent to him.²

All in all there can be no doubt about the interest and deep involvement of the Duke of York in the affairs of the office. He was in constant touch with the Navy Board and commanders at sea, and, as far as he was able, he ensured that a strong fleet was set out when required. It is worth noting that the English fleet was out before its opponents in 1665 and 1666 during the Second Dutch War, and again in 1672. The only reason for doubting the naval success in the Second Dutch War was the failure to destroy the Dutch fleet in a Nelsonian manner, and to stop the Dutch raid on the Medway. The former will be dealt with below, but in the latter case

1 PRO. Adm.106/6, f.252, 19 February 1662.

2 NMM, SER 78, f.36, 2 March 1666.

the real culprit was the shortage of money, which forced the bulk of the fleet to be laid up; this can hardly be attributed to the Duke of York. The Duke's tenure of office was neither spectacular nor known for great reforms, but it should be seen as a period of consolidation following the expansion of the Commonwealth years during which the navy was able to recover from the political upheavals of that time. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that, without the interest of the King and the Duke of York in the navy, the service would have been rundown completely.

The last aspect of the Duke of York's connection with the navy which must be examined is his role as commander in chief at sea. Traditionally this had been an important and essential part of the office of Lord High Admiral, but with the growth of the navy and the amount of work which had to be done on shore, the emphasis of this function rapidly declined. The development of a full-time professional body of seamen, and the increasing use of commissions to replace the single Lord High Admiral during the seventeenth century, led to the complete eclipse of the role. The Duke of York was the last Lord High Admiral to command a fleet in battle, and was thus the last person to fulfil completely the Elizabethan and early Stuart concept of the office.

The Duke of York was enthusiastic for a war in which he hoped to add to the military laurels already gained during his campaigns with Turenne. On 4 April 1664 the Duke's leanings towards the 'war party' became clear to Pepys at the weekly meeting, when there was 'some discourse of the condition of the fleet in order to a Dutch war, for that I perceive the Duke hath a mind it should come to'.¹ The Duke was also very eager to take command in person; Sir William Morrice wrote to the Earl of Winchelsea on 31 October 1664 that the King would have 50 ships ready for sea the following week

¹ Diary, 4 April 1664.

'and when the whole fleet is ready, his Royal Highness (whom it is impossible to divert from it) will imbarque with divers of the nobility'.¹ Some time after the war Sir William Coventry wrote, in some notes which he drew up on the causes of the war, 'I must not forget to add his Royal Highness own vigour, who having been bred to arms, was willing to have an occasion to show his courage on sea as at land... this vigour of his Royal Highness broke the measure of those ministers who would otherwise have preserved the peace at any price'.²

It was in a mood of enthusiastic optimism that the Duke of York put all his energies into the preparations for war in 1664. The increased complexity of naval affairs was realised, and during the absence of the Duke of York it was felt essential to appoint someone to supervise the preparations from London. The Duke's desire to get to sea was seen in November 1664 when he went down to Portsmouth to take personal control of the preparations. In fact, there was little point in this, as at that advanced stage of the year it was very unlikely that any part of the Dutch fleet would be out at sea, and the chances of picking up stray merchant ships was remote. The futility of the exercise was shown by the fact that the fleet was only at sea from 27 November to 3 December, cruising aimlessly in the Channel.³ The Duke of York went to Portsmouth, leaving the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy in charge in London. This Committee was not very successful, and when the Duke left to join the fleet the following March, it was thought better to nominate the Duke of Albemarle 'as Admiral in his stead'.⁴ This was repeated in 1672, when the Admiralty function of the office was exercised by Prince Rupert.⁵

¹ HMC, Finch MS., I, 339.

² Coventry MS. Vol.102, f.12.

³ Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, p.157.

⁴ Diary, 17 March 1665, Supra.pp.70-71.

⁵ PRO, Adm.7/723, f.85, 2 May 1672.

During his stay at Portsmouth the Duke of York was very active in pushing along the preparations in calling several Councils of War with the flag officers to discuss progress, and in making recommendations to London. The Duke wrote to Secretary Bennet on 11 November that the fleet was progressing well and that the only need was for extra seamen; he also asked that more efficient methods should be used to prevent desertion and to punish offenders.¹ But the Duke had a more humanitarian side to his nature, as is shown by his concern for the plight of many poor seamen who did not have the means to provide themselves with clothes; he ordered that the rules laid down for the selling of clothes (slops) were to be dispensed with, and the pursers were to issue clothes. He was also careful to see that the King would not lose money over this, as the pursers were only to issue clothes up to the value of the wages owed to the men.²

On 23 March 1665 the Duke of York left London to join the fleet which was being assembled in the Hope (a reach of the Thames), and on his departure he left the Navy Board with instructions requiring them to make certain that the fleet was kept well supplied with victuals and other materials, which would be needed for repairs. They were to ensure that they had sufficient 'clerks and other instruments' to do all the increased work, and that the Chatham Chest could cope with the expected increase of pensioners as a result of the war.³ The Duke of York took command of a fleet which grew to about 109 ships (the figures vary from 103 to 115, but 109 occurs more often) with about 21,000 men. The Duke had never commanded a naval battle before, nor had he commanded a fleet of this size, which will give some indication of the problem facing him.

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.113, 11 November 1664.

² PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.120r, 22 November 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.118, 22 March 1665.

As far as tactics are concerned the Duke of York's claim to fame lies in the development of the 'line' or formal method of fighting at sea. As with his reforms and instructions for the administration of the navy on-shore, there can be little claim to originality on his behalf, but in his adoption of official fighting instructions he gave the navy a code for its conduct in battle, just as in the 1662 Instructions he laid down the guiding principles for administration. The two schools of naval tactics, the *mêlée* and formal schools, recognised that the first essential before any battle was to gain the weather gauge. This gave the fleet to windward greater manoeuvrability and the advantage of being able to choose the moment to attack; it also allowed them to use fire ships to the best advantage, and the guns, unimpaired by their own smoke, had a better view of the enemy. The difference between the two schools was over the progress of the battle after the fleets were in contact. The *mêlée* school, as favoured by Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle, accepted that an orderly approach had to be made, but when action was joined the battle would degenerate into a series of isolated fights between small groups of ships. The commander in chief, and often his vice-admirals, would lose control over the course of the battle and the 'outcome would largely depend upon the individual initiative and fighting qualities of subordinate leaders'.¹ The formal school was headed by the Duke of York, Sandwich, and Penn; they wanted the commander in chief to retain a tighter grip over the whole battle by keeping the "line" intact. This would reduce the danger of a few ships being cut off by a superior force, and would enable the whole fleet to be concentrated against any part of the enemy line.

The Duke of York's support for the formal school led him to issue his fighting instructions on 10 April 1665.² The influence of Sir William

¹ Lewis, The Navy of Britain, p.457.

² Corbett (ed), Fighting Instructions, p.126.

Penn was the most important factor in the issuing of these instructions; Penn was still a member of the Navy Board, but was taken to sea by the Duke of York in the Royal Charles in order to advise him on the tactics of the fleet. The 1665 Instructions were 'nothing but a slight modification of those of 1654, with a few but not important additions'.¹ Corbett goes on to suggest that at the Council of War held just after the Duke of York joined the fleet, 'prolonged discussions' took place when 'much time must have been spent upon the consideration of the tactical problem'.²

In this sphere, as in administration, the Duke of York was acting on the advice of others and adopted the practice of his immediate predecessors. On 20 April 1665, the evening before the fleet sailed, he called a Council of War of all the captains of the fleet and 'exhorted them to behave themselves gallantly in fight, to give berth in sailing and anchoring, to observe carefully all their instructions and order of Battle, and some other useful advices of care of the ships masts and tackle'.³ While at sea the Duke was constantly calling his flag officers, and sometimes all the captains, to Councils of War. Clarendon says that from the outbreak of war the Duke 'consulted daily, for his own information and instructions, with Sir John Lawson, Sir George Ayscue and Sir William Penn; upon the advice of these men the Duke always made his estimate and all propositions to the King'.⁴ These meetings were held regularly while the fleet was at sea, and it would appear there was a considerable amount of discussion. From Sandwich's Journal the scope of these meetings can be ascertained. The Duke of York would put forward an idea which would be discussed fully, and he would then be guided by the prevailing opinion. For example, at the Council of War

¹ Corbett (ed), Fighting Instructions, p.110.

² Corbett, *op.cit.*, pp. 112-3.

³ Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, p.195.

⁴ Clarendon, Continuation of the Life, II, 354.

held on 30 April, 'the Duke did propose to consideration what attempt could be made upon the Dutch fleet as they rode at the Texel' This was an idea put forward by Downing, in Holland, and Rupert and Sandwich with the fleet, but 'both the enterprise and the circumstance of the Duke's person commanding the fleet make it of very great weight to determine, and therefore was left with us to ruminate further upon'.¹ The matter was brought up again at the Council of War on 5 May, but was rejected when the question of shallow water was considered, because it was thought that only the fourth rates would be able to enter the Texel to attack the Dutch ships; 'besides the consideration of the Duke's commanding the fleet. It was thought very inadvisable to make any such attempt'.² Thus, whilst the Duke of York may have initiated the discussion, he left most of the talking to the flag officers and was guided by them, acknowledging that he had insufficient knowledge about either Dutch waters or the practical possibilities of such action. The Duke of York was certainly not the domineering commander who would decide on the course of action himself; he recognised that he was virtually an amateur in naval fighting and, because of this, he has never been regarded as one of the greater naval commanders in chief.

In his role as a commander in chief he was to suffer from a common problem of those in command, that of inadequate instructions. As early as 11 December 1664, a Council of War consisting of the Dukes of York and Albemarle, Carteret and Lawson, resolved to propose to the King that 'his Royal Highness be instructed where the fleet is to be united to endeavour to stop the Dutch fleet and whether they are to be seized or destroyed in case of resistance'.³ The need for this does not appear to

¹ Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, p.204.

² Anderson, *op.cit.*, p.206.

³ Coventry MS. Vol.95, f.78, 11 December 1664.

have been met as the Duke left for the fleet in 1665 without any precise sailing instructions from either the King or the Privy Council. On 31 March 1665 the Duke wrote to Arlington that the fleet would be ready to sail in a few days, and he asked Arlington to 'propose to his Majesty what design may be most fit for his Majesty's service for his fleet to attempt'; he went on to express concern that it 'would be of ill consequence that after so much expense and so great an expedition (not only at home but even throughout Christendom) that the fleet should remain (as it was in port) without doing any service'.¹ The next day Coventry wrote to Lord Falmouth, saying, that the lack of precise instructions would be to the Duke's detriment should an opportunity be missed or a disaster occur; he thought that the instructions, which had been given to the Duke, had 'nothing but the name of instructions, not leaving his Royal Highness to do anything now, nor justifying him thereafter, in case of bad success'.² The desire to be justified in their actions was common among officials in the seventeenth century, and in this case it may reflect some doubts in the Duke of York's mind as to whether the King intended the fleet to go into action, as there was still the chance that a mere show of force would deter the Dutch. Coventry pressed Falmouth to use his influence with the King to get a more specific set of instructions issued. The outcome of these letters is somewhat in doubt, but the King did send another letter to the fleet ordering them to sail and trap a fleet of about forty Dutch merchantmen thought to be sailing round the north of Scotland.

This letter was read at a Council of War on 17 April, when Sandwich advised that the fleet should sail for the Dutch coast immediately in the hope of trapping the merchant ships and thus provoke the Dutch fleet to come out.

¹ Coventry MS. Vol.95, f.81, 31 March 1665.

² BM, Add. MS.32,094, f.46, 1 April 1665.

This was approved by the Duke of York and the other flag officers (with the possible exception of Lawson, who thought that the fleet would have to return within six weeks to take on water, which would allow the Dutch fleet to come out and bring home their merchant ships), and it was decided to sail for the Dutch coast.¹ On 25 April another Council of War was held, when it was decided to sail further inshore to make a show of force; according to Sandwich, the main reason for this was 'that the King would be pleased therewith', which may be another indication that Charles II thought of the fleet as a means of coercing the Dutch by its size and appearance off their coast, rather than in the hope of a naval victory.² The fleet was off the Dutch coast on 28 April, but this early arrival achieved little, as the Dutch fleet was able to remain securely behind the sandbanks; the presence of the English fleet did prevent the junction of the Holland and Zeeland sections of the Dutch fleet, but as a permanent blockade was not possible and the merchant ships were not close to home, there was no reason for the Dutch to come out. With no news of the merchant ships, and an attack on the Texel impossible, it was decided at a Council of War on 5 May to return to the English coast and take on more stores. But the fleet was not running low on victuals since, according to Sandwich, it could 'have continued three weeks longer at sea'.³

With the departure of the English fleet from their coast, the Dutch were able to sail and unite their fleet. The news of their being at sea reached the English fleet on 22 May, but it was not until 30 May that the English fleet was at sea again. The next day the Duke of York called a Council of War, where Sandwich proposed that the hired merchant ships should be left out of the line of battle and kept in a separate squadron at the rear, thus

¹ Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, p.198.

² Anderson, op.cit., p.201.

³ Anderson, op.cit., p.207.

concentrating the more powerful ships together. This idea was very radical and, although Lawson and some others 'seemed to like it', they were not prepared to support it at the Council of War. It was probably thought to be too dangerous and no one was prepared to take the responsibility for supporting an untried idea; the result was that 'nobody was forward to speak, and so agreed to continue our former order of battle'.¹ The Duke of York again accepted the advice of the majority of the flag officers and did not adopt the idea. The Dutch fleet was sighted on 1 June and, although in possession of the weather gauge, their commander, Opdam, made no use of his advantage, and it was not until the early hours of 3 June that the wind changed and allowed the Duke of York to engage. The actual role played by the Duke of York in the battle is almost impossible to ascertain; he no doubt relied heavily on Penn, and it is unlikely that in the manoeuvres before the battle and in the direction of the battle itself the Duke of York possessed the seamanship and technical knowledge to have directed affairs himself, apart from issuing general orders to engage whenever possible or to engage more closely.

The battle was fought about forty miles south-east of Lowestoft, and in its earlier stages it conformed to the formal school with the two fleets passing each other in line ahead and then turning for a second 'pass'. As the ships moved closer there was the usual tendency for the battle to degenerate into more of a *mêlée*, even though the formal school leaders were in command. This is not to be wondered at considering the difficulties of keeping station accurately in sailing ships, the relative novelty of the idea of remaining in the line, and the tendency of many commanders to engage the enemy more closely rather than keeping the line. The details of the battle are best described by R C Anderson in

¹ Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, p.222.

the introduction to the Earl of Sandwich's Journal.¹ There can be little doubt that the battle was a victory for the English and it was only marred by the failure to follow up the battle during the night of 3 June when the Dutch fleet was allowed to escape.²

This was the Duke of York's last period at sea during the Second Dutch War, which raises the problem of the reason for his departure from the fleet after a successful campaign. His retirement is glossed over by R C Anderson, who says, 'for some reason it had been decided that the Duke of York should remain ashore'.³ M Lewis suggests that mistakes and misunderstanding had been made during the battle, which 'the Duke's opponents at home - and they were quite as much political as naval - were now slow to seize upon'; these critics 'won the King's ear' and the Duke 'together with his lieutenant, Sandwich' was brought ashore.⁴ The idea of failure is also put forward by David Ogg, who thinks that the time spent in manoeuvring before the battle and the failure to follow it up 'served for a time to discredit the "formal" school, and may account in some measure for the supersession of York and Sandwich by Rupert and Monck'.⁵ Both Lewis and Ogg link the Duke of York and Sandwich as if they were removed at the same time, but Sandwich remained in command of the fleet until the end of October. If it had not been for

¹ Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, pp.1-lvi.

² This is a very murky incident; the usual story is that one of the Duke's household, Henry Brouncker, brought an order to Harman to shorten sail, when Harman refused, Brouncker went below to where the Duke had retired for the night and returned saying that the order was confirmed. Harman obeyed and the fleet which followed the light carried by the Royal Charles, fell behind the Dutch. The Duke denied that he had ever given this order and Brouncker was dismissed from his service when the matter came to light after the war. The following morning the Duke expressed surprise that the Dutch had escaped, but did not appear to know that the sail had been slackened during the night. Beyond these facts nothing more can be added to clarify this incident or the theory that the Duchess of York had instructed the Duke's staff to do what they could to prevent him from being endangered too much.

³ Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, p.lvii,

⁴ Lewis, Navy of Britain, p.460.

⁵ Ogg, England in the Reign of Charles II, I, 268.

the failure of his attack on Bergen and, more important than this, his over-reaching himself in the business of distributing prize goods before their adjudication by the Prize Commissioners, there is no reason to doubt that he would have been appointed to command in 1666. Penn was also involved in the prize goods affair and was similarly put aside because of it. It was largely coincidence that the leaders of the formal school were all rendered ineligible at the same time. The only other possible replacements were Rupert and Monck as none of the other flag officers had either the social status or the experience of command. It is highly unlikely that, when considering who should command in 1666, the King was moved by any consideration of the merits of the various schools of naval tactics.

When considering the Duke of York's retirement, F. C. Turner says, to 'James's dismay, Charles ordered him ashore' and that this was out of concern for the succession should James be killed at sea.¹ But according to D Hannay in his History of the Royal Navy, it is 'not to be believed that Charles would have compelled his brother to come on shore if the Duke of York had been really anxious to stay at sea'.² There is no definite evidence to settle this question, but from various suggestions it would seem that Turner's explanation is the more likely. The danger to the succession had been appreciated before the battle off Lowestoft when, at the Council of War on 30 April, the idea of an attack on the Dutch fleet in the Texel was considered, but the importance of the question and 'the circumstance of the Duke's person commanding the fleet' led to its being left to another Council of War. This was held on 5 May, when the idea of an attack was abandoned, mainly because of the shallow water, but also because of the 'consideration of the Duke's commanding the fleet'.³ It is well known that the

¹ Turner, James II, p.82.

² Hannay, History of the Royal Navy, p.345.

³ Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, pp.204, 206.

Duke of York would, in the last resort, always obey the orders of his brother; this is seen later in the reign when Charles ordered the Duke to go into exile. In 1665 the restored monarchy had not been long on the throne and the dangers of a minority, or even a female ruler, were not such as would make Charles enthusiastic about the idea. Possibly Charles did not think the Dutch would go so far as to fight him at sea and, therefore, the sending of James to sea in 1665, at his own request, may not have been thought to endanger the monarchy. When Charles fully appreciated the dangers to which his brother had been exposed, (the Earl of Falmouth and Lord Muskerry had been killed at his side), he determined to bring him ashore.¹ There is little doubt that it was care for the succession rather than concern for the Duke's person, and certainly not any criticism of his tactics, that led to his being ordered ashore after the battle of Lowestoft.

During 1666 the Duke of York returned to his administrative role leaving the command of the fleet to Rupert and Albemarle. The 1666 campaign did not provide a solution to the conflict, nor did it do anything to settle the controversy between the two schools of naval tactics. The most noteworthy incidents in the campaign were the Four Days' Battle (1-4 June), the St. James's Day Fight (25 July), and the raid on the Dutch coast, known as 'Holmes' Bonfire'.²

The Second Dutch War ended with the disastrous Dutch raid on the Medway in June 1667. The root cause of this debacle was the decision not to set out

¹ Evelyn records being present at a Council of War on 1 July 1665 on board the Royal Charles, with the King, Duke, Penn and other flag officers, when it was 'determined his R. Highness should adventure himself no more this summer', de Beer (ed), Diary of John Evelyn, III, 414.

² For the details of the 1666 campaign see; - Tedder, The Navy of the Restoration; Powell and Timings (eds), Rupert and Monck Letter Book; Anderson (ed), Journals of Sir Thomas Allin; Ollard, Man of War, Sir Robert Holmes.

the main battle fleet in 1667, and the lack of adequate defences around the Medway. There is little doubt that the Dutch, or rather Johan de Witt, decided to avenge the equally humiliating raid on the islands of Vlie and Schelling, (Holmes' Bonfire) which had been far more destructive to merchant shipping than was the Dutch retaliatory raid on the Medway. The decision to lay up the ships was taken on purely financial grounds, and it is impossible to speculate what sort of fleet would have been prepared for 1667 had this decision not been taken, but in view of the constant complaints from the Navy Board about the lack of money, it is not likely that much could have been done. It is not clear either when this decision was taken or by whom it was suggested, and the role of the Duke of York is equally obscure. Possibly the first indication that a change of policy was afoot came in a letter from the Duke of York to the Navy Board on 27 December 1666 in which he said that, for the security of the ships in the Medway, 'it hath been thought necessary that a platform should be made upon the point at Sheerness for 12 guns to be planted upon'.¹ The Navy Board was not officially told about the change until 6 March 1667 when the members attended the Duke, who 'did acquaint us, and the King did the like also, afterwards coming in, with his resolution of altering the manner of the war this year; that is we shall keep what fleet we have abroad in several squadrons'. Pepys goes on to reveal that, 'great preparations there are to fortify Sheerness and the yard at Portsmouth ... so that we have some fear of an invasion, and the Duke of York himself did declare his expectation of the enemy's blocking us up here in the River'.²

This again brings up one of the main criticisms of the Duke of York, for while he was aware of the possibility of a Dutch raid and issued orders

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.151r, 27 December 1666.

² Diary, 6 March 1667.

about the fortifications, he did not ensure that his orders were carried out and left too much to the diligence of his subordinates. On 22 March Pepys noted that the Duke was at Harwich, and had been with the King at Sheerness, but apart from this, he did not appear to have taken a great deal of interest in the progress of the fortifications. He might well have considered that this was more the concern of the Ordnance, and particularly the army under the Duke of Albemarle, but, as they were intended to protect the fleet, he should have shown more concern. Although the idea of a raid was quite common, there appears to have been a great deal of complacency at this time; a feeling of security existed because of a belief that the Dutch could not, or would not, risk an attack on the fleet at anchor in narrow waters, which were thought to be well defended. This feeling of complacency can be seen in relation to the Duke of Albemarle, who has received the least blame for the Medway fiasco; Hannay says, he 'only reached Chatham in order to be the helpless eye-witness of a national disgrace ... his long military experience and his natural sagacity must have shown him at once that the case was hopeless'.¹ This is very much the image that Albemarle fostered after the event, especially in his narrative to the House of Commons, but at the time he was as confident as the rest of the country that the fleet was safe behind the Medway defences. On 11 June Albemarle wrote to the Duke of York, 'our business here is in such a posture that I hope we shall not need to fear any harm that the enemy can do his Majesty's shipping at Chatham... Your Highness may be confident that the ships at Chatham may be safe from anything that the enemy can do to them'.² In view of this it is hardly surprising that the Duke of York felt confident that no harm would come to the ships;

¹ Hannay, History of the Royal Navy, p.391.

² Coventry MS. Vol.95, f.323, 11 June 1667.

with Albemarle apparently setting up more defences and not worried by the approach of the Dutch, there was no need for him to interfere.

It was not until the Third Dutch War that there was again an opportunity for the Duke of York to go to sea. In 1668 there was the possibility that a fleet would be set out against the French in accordance with the terms of the Triple Alliance, and Pepys heard a rumour that the Duke intended to go with that fleet, but in the event nothing came of this.¹ The second and last battle fought by the Duke of York at sea was at Sole, or Southwold, Bay on 28 May 1672. The return of the Duke to command at sea is somewhat difficult to explain, although he may have been anxious to prove himself in battle and gain some popularity by defeating the Dutch. His unpopularity was growing in the 1670s, and he may well have looked on the chance of battle as an excellent opportunity to turn public opinion in his favour. He no doubt remembered the expressions of support from the Commons in October 1665 when they asked to bring in a bill for £120,000 to be 'granted to his Majesty, with a Desire to his Majesty to dispose it to his Royal Highness the Duke of Yorke'.² Moreover, the situation was complicated by the presence of a French squadron, due to the Treaty of Dover, and it is conceivable that in order to obtain co-operation from them, the English had to be certain of having a prince of the blood royal as commander-in-chief.

While the fleet was being prepared, the King and Duke paid several visits to the ships in the Thames. On 26 February 1672 the Duke went on board the Royal Prince, which was to be his flagship, with several 'lords and gentlemen', and spent three hours viewing the ship which he liked 'very well'.³ On 8 and 20 March the King and Duke went down to inspect progress

¹ Diary, 30 March 1668.

² Commons Journal, VIII, 621, 24-25 October 1665, this was probably lost at the prorogation of 31 October 1665.

³ Anderson (ed), Journals of the Third Dutch War, p.65.

on the Prince, and on 2 April the Duke returned to his flagship, where he remained until the 10th. Before his return to London he had 'set all the business in a forwardness in getting the fleet ready'; he was again pleased with the Prince, except that, in common with many English ships of the period, her lowest, and heaviest, guns were carried too near the waterline and could not be used in heavy weather.¹ He returned to the Prince on 19 April and, as in the previous war, called the flag officers to Councils of War. Initially this was done very frequently. On the day after his return to the Prince, and on each of the following three days he held Councils of War; on the afternoon of the third day all the ships' captains were summoned to the Council of War.² A further two Councils were called before the fleet sailed to meet the French squadron, which joined on 7 May. The Dutch fleet narrowly missed catching the English fleet before the allies joined; after this the Dutch returned to their own coast, and the allied fleet felt secure in returning to Southwold Bay on 23 May to take on extra water and provisions. At first the wind was blowing offshore, but on the 26th it changed to the east, which made the security of the fleet very doubtful. This change in wind enabled de Ruyter to sail across to the English coast and to catch the fleet at anchor. The Duke of York has been severely criticised for allowing the fleet to be caught unprepared. Hannay comments that, 'the duke was essentially no commander at all, but only a very dull man who had acquired some knowledge of the mechanical parts of seamanship, and was intrinsically incapable of thinking out any plan of action'.³ Hannay is far too extreme in his criticism, and there is

¹ Anderson, (ed) Journals of the Third Dutch War, p.74.

² Anderson, op.cit., pp.77-8, 80.

³ Hannay, History of the Royal Navy, p.419.

far more truth in the remark of F C Turner that the Duke of York placed far too much reliance on his flag captain, Cox. In the previous war the Duke had placed a great deal of faith in the ability of his flag captain Sir William Penn; with the death of Penn he was forced to look for another adviser and Cox was a poor substitute. This is indicative of another failing of the Duke of York as a commander at sea; he always placed too much reliance on the advice of others, and did not have the necessary ability to discern the best of this advice; as Turner says, the Duke was too often forced to 'submit' to the advice of men with more practical experience.¹ This attack on the Duke of York is pushed further by Hannay when he says that there is 'a well known and fairly well authenticated story' of how the Duke of York 'answered with a silly jeer' the advice of Sandwich to draw the fleet further up to the shore; 'what Sandwich probably meant was, that as it lay, the fleet could get no support from the batteries on shore...'² This comment is based on Hannay's previous mistake of 'putting the fleet 7 or 8 miles off shore' when, according to Narbrough's journal, it was only two miles out.³ Thus the fleet was already within the protection of such shore batteries as existed and, as for Sandwich's advice being based on 'a well authenticated story', F R Harris in his Life of Sandwich says that the evidence of it is 'of the slightest', and R C Anderson in his introduction to the Journals of the Third Dutch War, states that 'there is no real confirmation of the story'.⁴ Sandwich's own journal for this period has not survived and the story cannot be confirmed, but if this advice

¹ Turner, James II, p.103.

² Hannay, op.cit., pp.419-20.

³ Anderson (ed), Journals of the Third Dutch War, pp.13-14. Narbrough says that on 23 May 'we rode about 2 miles from the shore', p.94.

⁴ Anderson, op.cit., pp.13-14.

was given and accepted, there is no guarantee that the fleet would have been well protected by the shore guns.

One theory for the Duke of York being appointed to command in 1672, was that his royal blood would have made for better relations with the French squadron and their Admiral d'Estrées. If this is correct it does not appear to have been very successful from the point of view of liaison, as the other main issue of contention about this battle is that the French squadron sailed away on the port tack while the two English squadrons sailed north-east on the starboard tack. The historiography of this episode is long and tedious and no new evidence has come to light to clarify the situation. The most satisfactory explanation is again from R C Anderson, who described the incident as resulting from an 'unexplained misunderstanding'.¹ Anderson says that the French, as the leading, or van, squadron, would have expected to lead the line into battle, and he blames the Duke of York for failing to inform the French that the line of battle was changed. But it would seem that circumstances prevented the Duke from choosing the tack on which the fleet would sail, as his squadron was beginning to clean the bottoms of its ships when the Dutch were sighted, and was the last to be ready for sea. As Sandwich lay to the north and was ready first, he sailed in that direction as 'a matter of convenience', and the Duke of York was obliged to choose between following either his own or the French squadron. It has also been suggested that the Duke did not even have this amount of manoeuvrability as the flood tide virtually forced him to leave the bay on the track of Sandwich's squadron.² The only blame that can be

¹ Anderson, (ed), Journals of the Third Dutch War, p.14; the campaign is also described by de la Roncière, Histoire de la Marine française, V.

² Anderson, op.cit., p.15.

attached to the Duke of York is that of accepting advice which eventually proved to be wrong. It is possible that, if he had been a more experienced commander, he would never have started to clean his ships when the wind was blowing from offshore. It could also be stated that, although frigates were sent out to watch for the Dutch, they did not give the Duke adequate warning, and it is possible that their dispatch had been too long delayed. Thus although he was not wholly responsible, this incident shows that the Duke of York lacked the necessary tactical grasp of naval fighting to be judged as an even moderately successful commander.

The battle which followed was certainly one of the most hard fought and bloody of all the Dutch Wars, but its result was indecisive. The failure of the French squadron to co-operate to the full, and the loss of Sandwich with his flagship the Royal James, did not help the morale of the English fleet. Although neither fleet was destroyed, the tactical advantage lay with the Dutch who, with most of their fleet still intact, were able to prevent an invasion of their coast; on the other hand, the Dutch were in no position to repeat their raid on the Medway. For the rest of the season the Duke of York remained in command, but there were no further fleet actions. The Dutch had achieved their immediate aim of preventing an invasion and did not come out again. But there was no suggestion that the Duke of York should give up command, even though his political opponents were gathering for the final attack which was to drive him from office. The Duke remained with the fleet to hasten preparations for going to sea again during June 1672. The King was with the fleet on 5 and 25-26 June, and it was probably at this time that he and the Duke decided on the next course of action, which was to sail to Scheveningen Bay. This was communicated to the flag officers at a Council of War on 30 June when 'His Royal Highness signified he intended to show himself...'

but there is no suggestion that any actual discussion took place with the flag officers.¹ With the refusal of the Dutch to put to sea and the danger of their fleet being in existence, there was little that the Duke could do except keep watch off the Dutch coast so long as his provisions held out. Once at sea the Duke reverted to his practice of asking the flag officers for their advice; for example, on 3 August, when 'his Royal Highness being pleased to have them to Council, and every individual man to give his approbation what he thought would be the safest and securest course to direct this fleet', and it was decided to return to the Nore because of the condition of several of the ships.²

The King with Prince Rupert, Arlington, Shaftesbury, Buckingham and others, attended the Council of War with the flag officers on 11 September, when it was decided 'that Sir Edward Spragge should go to sea'; this in effect meant that the campaigning season was considered at an end. A week later the Duke of York decided, with the flag officers, how the large ships were to be disposed of for the winter; later that day the French squadron sailed home and the Duke hauled his flag down and left the fleet. This was the end of the Duke of York's period as commander at sea; the passage of the Test Act the following year ended his direct association with the navy. Had it not been for the Test Act, there is nothing to suggest that the Duke would not have returned to sea the following year.³

¹ Anderson (ed), Journals of the Third Dutch War, p.110.

² Anderson, *op.cit.*, p.131.

³ Anderson, *op.cit.*, p.25, Anderson considers that when the Duke left the fleet in September 1672 'it was probably intended that he should resume command of the combined fleet in the following year'; there is no reason to doubt this.

The scarcity of evidence impedes a definite statement about the role of the Duke of York as commander-in-chief. It is almost certain that he always relied heavily on the advice of his flag officers and, where this was conflicting, he tended to abide by the majority decision. He was a competent, but by no means outstanding, commander, who made some serious errors. There is no doubt of his personal courage in battle. He was often in the middle of the action; this is seen by his changing ship twice during the battle of Southwold. He was basically unimaginative and reluctant to deviate from the established plan of action; his belief in the formal school of naval tactics made him reluctant to allow individual initiative. Finally, his contribution to the navy in general can best be summarised as being constructive, conservative and cautious.

Although this dissertation is only concerned with the period 1660 to 1673, the Duke of York's involvement in naval matters continued well beyond this time. During the 1670s the Duke's influence at court waned and naval affairs also declined (except for 1676-77). He was always on hand to advise the King on naval affairs; the navy's rejuvenation in and after 1684 can only be attributed to his personal concern. From 1685-87, as James II, he gave full encouragement to a programme of reorganisation, building and reform. This, possibly more than anything in the earlier period, indicates the sustained and true devotion of the Duke of York for the Royal Navy.

3. THE NAVY BOARD - PERSONNEL

The Navy Board, or to give its members their full and correct title 'the Principal Officers and Commissioners of his Majesty's Navy', originated in the reign of Henry VIII, and its development as a bureaucratic body was a gradual process 'extending over the period 1509 to c.1560, when the duties of the naval officials were codified. But the decisive steps had been taken by 1547 when the Navy Board, though as yet nameless, was already an established institution'.¹ The only official to exist prior to this was the Keeper, or Clerk, of the Ships, whose office dates from the medieval navy.² As a direct result of the increasing number of ships, either owned or hired by the King, there was a corresponding growth in the number of officials needed to administer them and a tendency for these officials to become permanent. By the 1540s it is possible to note the existence of a Treasurer, Comptroller, and Surveyor, although there was no definition of their duties and they were not always known by these titles. The existence of what may be called the Navy Board was recognised by Elizabeth when she spoke of, 'the erection of the said office by our late dearest father'.³ Thus the Navy Board

¹ Davis, 'Administration of the Royal Navy under Henry VIII: the Origins of the Navy Board', EHR, LXXX, p.269. On all the documents studied the words 'Navy Board' were hardly every used by contemporaries. In official letters they were called the 'Principal Officers and Commissioners', and were often referred to as the 'Officers of the Navy' or, simply the 'Board'. As the later title 'Navy Board' has been used by most modern writers, and it avoids confusion between sea commanders, who are referred to as 'officers' from the next century, and the Navy Board 'officers', the term 'Navy Board' will be used in most cases when the full title 'Principal Officers and Commissioners' was used in contemporary correspondence.

² Johns, 'The Principal Officers of the Navy', MM, XIV, p.47.

³ Johns, op.cit., pp.48-50.

was an accepted part of naval administration more than a century before the period under consideration.

The continuous development of the Navy Board was interrupted to a far lesser degree during the Civil War than the office of Lord High Admiral. During 1642 the King lost all chance of gaining the support of the fleet, and both he and Parliament turned their attention to the current members of the Navy Board. Having lost control of the fleet, the importance of the Board to the King was considerably reduced, and as there was uncertainty about the loyalty of its members, Parliament acted first by dismissing the old Board and replacing it with Commissioners.¹ During the Interregnum the membership of the Commissioners was changed as a direct result of political factors. The Commissioners of 1642, twelve in all, were appointed because of the 'restraint laid by his Majesty upon all the Principal Officers and all other officers of the Navy, by which the fleet cannot be used for the defence of the Kingdom and the service of the navy is much damnified'.² The enlarged body created by Parliament continued the functions of the old officers of the Board up to the Restoration. The main changes brought in during the Interregnum, were the increase in the numbers associated with naval administration, and the reduced financial independence of the Navy Treasury through increased Parliamentary supervision. Although the names were changed, the functions of the old Navy Board were continued by the Parliamentary Commissioners.

At the Restoration, the Navy Commissioners continued in office for a short period until the settlement of the future of naval administration was decided. On 27 June a committee of the Privy Council was appointed

¹ Dewar, 'Naval Administration of the Interregnum', MM, XII.412.

² Dewar, *op.cit.*, p.418.

to consider the regulation of the navy; they met on 2 July and their report was accepted and put into effect by an order of the King in Council on 4 July 1660.¹ This order was intended to re-establish the control of the Principal Officers and to add three Commissioners to form the full Navy Board, thus ending the powers of the old Commonwealth Commissioners, but it did not establish the Principal Officers; these were to be appointed by patents, and were to be able to act by virtue of the warrants for these patents. The role of the Privy Council Committee in the re-establishment of the Navy Board was very limited, for example, Pepys had received his warrant for his patent on 29 June before the Committee met to consider the regulation of the navy.² The restoration of the old idea of four principal officers as the centre of the Navy Board must have been decided before the Committee met, as on 18 June Montague had told Pepys that he was hoping to get the place of Clerk of the Acts for him.³ The Committee of the Council may well have considered the idea of adding commissioners to the Navy Board and the best way of ending the powers of the old commissioners at the meeting on 2 July, because, following this meeting, the Principal Officers were asked to draw up a suitable order to be passed by the King in Council.⁴

¹ PRO, PC 6/1, f.1, 27 June 1660. The Committee consisted of the Duke of York, Monck, Northumberland, Montague, Secretaries Nicholas and Morrice, Col. Charles Howard and Ashley Cooper. There is a certain amount of confusion surrounding the date and purpose of his order. Granville Penn in his Life of Sir William Penn says that this order was dated on 2 July, and it is probably from this that J R Tanner was led to say that the order was 'dated in error 4 July ...', but reference to Pepys MS. 2611 'Makes it clear that the right date is 2 July and not 4 July', Catalogue, I, 7 nl,. The Privy Council Register clearly gives the date as 4 July and on 2 July Pepys recorded that 'we had order to meet tomorrow to draw up such an Order of the Council as would put us into action before our patents were passed', and the next day the 'officers and Commissioners of the Navy' met at Carteret's chamber and 'agreed upon orders for the Council to supersede the old ones, and empower us to act', Diary, 2/3 July 1660. From this there can be no doubt that the Order in Council was dated 4 July.

² Diary, 29 June 1660.

³ Diary, 18 June 1660.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.3, 4 July 1660.

The Restoration of the Navy Board does not seem to have been a very controversial issue; the only persons who lost out were the former commissioners and some others who may have hoped for places on the Board. The new Navy Board consisted of Sir George Carteret as Treasurer, Sir Robert Slingsby as Comptroller, Sir William Batten as Surveyor, and Samuel Pepys as Clerks of the Acts, with the assistance of Lord Berkeley, Sir William Penn, and Peter Pett, as Commissioners.¹

In discussing the work of the Navy Board it will be more convenient to examine each of the Principal Officers in turn, looking first at the Instructions under which they acted. An attempt will then be made to assess the individual holders of the particular office. The same procedure will be followed for the Commissioners of the Navy. Lastly, the work of the Board collectively, or 'jointly', will be considered. The first document to be considered will be the Lord High Admiral's Instructions of 1662, and the subsequent additional orders issued under his name. Extensive use, whenever appropriate, will also be made of the Duke of York's Letter of Reflections in 1668 on the activities of the Board, and the report of the Parliamentary Commissioners of Public Accounts. A third enquiry into naval affairs was conducted by the House of Commons Committee of Miscarriages in 1667/8; however, this was more concerned with the conduct of the war, and only in one instance, i.e. the extensive use of 'tickets' to discharge men, was it concerned with administrative matters.

¹ The patents were issued to Carteret, Slingsby, Batten and Pett on 4 July, to Pepys on 13 July, and to Berkeley and Penn on 18 August; although these dates differ, the officers all started to act after the passing of the Order in Council on 4 July, and were paid from 24 June 1660, PRO, PC2/54, f.63.

THE TREASURER OF THE NAVY

The principal occupation of this officer is made clear by his title; the importance of the post made him stand apart from the rest of the Board. This superior position was reflected in his higher salary, the size of naval expenditure, and, initially, the fees derived from this, which ensured that the office was a prize to be sought after. The influence of the office is shown by the higher social status of those who held it, yet this importance tended to make it the object of attack by those who wished to reduce the Treasurer to the role of a paymaster, subordinate to the rest of the Board. The chief threat to the power and independence of the Navy Treasurer came, not from his fellow officers, but from the Lord Treasurer and Treasury Commissioners. Buckingham, as Lord Admiral, had attempted to exclude Treasury influence from naval affairs.¹ But after his assassination in 1628, his successor, Weston, was able to exercise greater control over the navy by getting himself appointed as one of the Commissioners of the Admiralty. The conflict for control of naval expenditure continued during the Interregnum when the old Navy Board was swept aside. Initially naval finances were supervised by the Parliamentary Committee of the Navy and Customs, but this was ended when Cromwell dissolved the Long Parliament in 1653.² After this, financial matters were dealt with by Admiralty Commissioners, who were appointed on 28 July 1653.³ At the Restoration the office of Treasurer, along with the rest of the Navy Board, was restored and the

¹ Murray, 'The Admiralty', MM.XXIII, 144.

² Dewar, 'Naval Administration of the Interregnum', MM.XII, 408.

³ Firth and Rait (eds), Acts and Ordinances, II, 708.

separate nature of the office was continued. The Treasurer was much more a great officer of state than a member of the Board, and, as such, his attendance for matters of routine business was greatly reduced. The separation was made more obvious by the removal of the Treasurer's Office from the Navy Office in Seething Lane, to Leaden Hall Street, but these offices were found to be in a bad state of repair and the Navy Board was ordered by the Council to take out a twenty-one years' lease on a house in Broad Street for the Treasury.¹ When Anglesey was Treasurer he appears to have conducted a great amount of business from his own house in Drury Lane.

One of the most attractive aspects of the office of Treasurer was that it offered financial advantages. The traditional method of payment was for the Treasurer to have a fee and be paid 3d. on every pound sterling handled by him. In 1630 this 'poundage' was extended to include money paid on wages as well as money paid for stores; another perquisite of the office was a house at Deptford. By 1634 the fee of the office had risen from £270-13-4 to £645-13-4.² During the Interregnum the fee and all other perquisites were abolished and a salary of £1,000 was paid. This was raised to £1,500 in 1655, with an additional £100 for every £100,000 issued above £700,000.³ This practice was continued for a short time after the Restoration when the Treasurer's salary was increased to £2,000. The old system of fees and perquisites was still referred to in Carteret's patent, and was restored by a declaration of the King's pleasure on 11 August 1662, which stated that, notwithstanding the Order in Council of 4 July 1660, the Treasurer was to receive his usual fees and allowances.⁴ This was no doubt due to Carteret's influence at Court and his friendship with the King and Duke of York, but the return to fees was short-lived.

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.55, 21 September 1664.

² Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.280.

³ Catalogue, I, 8.

⁴ CSPD 1661-2, p.457.

The system was attacked by the new Treasury Commissioners in 1667 when they suggested that the Victualler should be paid direct from the Exchequer and not through the Treasurer of the Navy, thus saving poundage for the King. Sir William Coventry, who had left the Navy Board and became one of the Treasury Commissioners, was the moving spirit behind this idea. At the same time Anglesey was appointed Treasurer, but he lacked Carteret's influence with the King, and this, together with the financial stringency of the time, prevented him from retaining these payments. By an Order in Council of 7 August 1667 it was declared that the Victualler was to be paid direct from the Exchequer.¹ The return to payment by fees instead of salary was brief, for when Littleton and Osborne succeeded Anglesey they were paid by salary; the warrant for this was issued on 10 July 1669, which stated that their salary was to be £1,250 each, with an allowance of £800 for their cashier, paymaster, and other inferior officers.² When Osborne was appointed as sole Treasurer on 22 September 1671, he was granted an increased salary of £2,000, with an additional £800 for his cashier and clerks; the same was granted to Seymour in 1673.³

The first attempt to give the Treasurer any guidance in the execution of his duty came in the 1662 Instructions; these did not bring in any material alteration to the running of the office, as the same ideas concerning receipt and issue of money had been in operation for some time. With the exception of occasional words, which did not alter the intention of the Instructions, the 1662 Articles were the same as those issued by Northumberland. Therefore, despite the growth in size and expense of the navy since 1640, it was not thought necessary to amend the earlier Instructions.

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.222, 7 August 1667.

² CSPD 1668-9, p.403.

³ CSPD 1671, p.498; CSPD 1673, p.380.

The first duty of the Treasurer, as defined in the 1662 Instructions, was to receive and pay such money 'as by his patent or sufficient warrant' he was authorised; at the end of each year he was to 'digest' his accounts into a ledger for the rest of the officers to sign. After he had signed his estimates, or contracts, the Lord High Admiral, and the rest of the Navy Board, would authorise his payments; after they were passed, he was to 'solicit' the passing of Privy Seals and ensure that the money thus paid was issued so that 'service may neither be retarded nor men discouraged for want of money to pay and discharge them'.¹ In order to enable the Lord High Admiral to inform the King on the state of naval finances, the Treasurer was required to present a statement of all his assignments, payments and receipts (Article 5). He was supposed to act as a check upon the payments warranted by the rest of the Board so that neither the King nor the party 'to whom the same is due may be damnified' (Article 6). The Treasurer had also to be present 'at all, or most' payments of wages, and ensure that the money was paid punctually and according to 'the rates and allowances' laid down for the service. Finally, he had to enter in his ledger all abatements, receipts or discounts, for each year so that the auditors could balance his accounts. By these eight articles the greatest spending department in the kingdom was to govern its transactions. There was no attempt to settle any method of payment or the keeping of accounts, except in a 'ledger', and there was no obligation on the Treasurer to show his accounts to the other members of the Board, except 'at the end of every year'. There was little provision for the checking of accounts at more frequent intervals, and the situation was exacerbated by the length of time taken to perfect them, so that the accounts were often two or more years in arrears when they were presented to the full Navy Board.

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, not foliated, Instructions to the Treasurer of the Navy.

It was with these Instructions that Sir George Carteret was to govern his actions as Treasurer of the Navy until June 1667, when he exchanged places with the Earl of Anglesey to become Vice-Treasurer of Ireland. Carteret had been a staunch royalist throughout the Civil War and could also claim a reasonable amount of experience of naval affairs. Although his early life is somewhat obscure, he was probably at sea in 1632 as a lieutenant on the Convertine. In 1637 he was appointed second in command to Rainsborough, and in 1639 was made Comptroller of the navy.¹ His devotion to the royalist cause prevented him from accepting the post of Vice-Admiral under the Earl of Warwick in 1642; instead he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Jersey, and was very active in hampering Parliamentary shipping until he was forced to surrender the island in 1651.² He then spent a considerable amount of time wandering in France and may at some time have served in the French navy. At the Restoration he was rewarded for his services by being appointed to the posts of Treasurer of the Navy and Vice-Chamberlain of the Household, The former was a very lucrative post, whilst the latter was probably of greater social prestige and importance at court; he was more frequently addressed as Vice-Chamberlain than as Treasurer of the Navy. Apart from his proven devotion to the royalist cause and his experience of the navy, he owed this appointment to the friendship of Charles II; he had been appointed Treasurer by Prince Charles in 1647, but his patent was not issued until after the Restoration.³ Carteret was one of the few Treasurers in this period who could claim any practical experience of naval matters, but he was also in line with his successors in regarding the office as being a reward for past services, or, in his case, a

¹ DNB, III, 418.

² Hoskins, Charles II in the Channel Islands, II, 128.

³ Hoskins, op.cit., II, 113.

step on the political ladder. Carteret was not in any way a reformer and did not bring in any new ideas for the management of naval finances despite his practical knowledge. At first he was faced with the large debts left by the Commonwealth, and was later to be completely overwhelmed by the increasing financial burden of the Second Dutch War.

The extent to which Carteret carried out his duties as Treasurer of the Navy is obscured by lack of evidence. The only remaining financial records are a series of ledgers which record the bills passed for payment by the Treasury, and these are of little use in assessing Carteret's personal role. The ledgers do not show when the bills were actually paid, nor do they give any indication of the efficiency of the Navy Treasurer. But despite these limitations it is important to attempt some sort of evaluation of Carteret, and in this it is necessary to rely heavily on the testimony of Pepys, who was at first very much in awe of the important courtier but was subsequently on very friendly terms with him. Pepys's comments are usually favourable although he does point out some of Carteret's failings.

In the absence of any minutes for the Navy Board prior to 1673, it is impossible to be accurate about Carteret's attendance at the Board. The impression gained from the Diary is of very sporadic attendance, about two or three times a month. On 11 June 1661 Pepys was at 'the office this morning, Sir G. Carteret with us ...', and the fact that Pepys thought it necessary to note Carteret's presence may be taken as an indication that this was not a regular occurrence.¹ Indeed it had become normal for the routine and non-financial aspects of the Board's work to be conducted without the Treasurer, though he was always present when matters of great importance were being discussed. For example, on

¹ Diary, 11 June 1661.

the reading of the Lord High Admiral's Instructions on 5 February 1662, the passing of the Victualler's accounts on 9 April 1662, and when the financial position of the navy was being discussed.¹ Although it is impossible to build up a complete picture, it would appear that Carteret would not be present when the Navy Board attended the Lord High Admiral, unless financial matters were to be discussed.²

The seventh Article of the Treasurer's duties required him to be present at 'all or most payments either of ships or the other great payments whatsoever respecting wages', but as far as can be ascertained, this was also observed in a somewhat sporadic manner. Carteret was present at many of the pays in 1661/2, but thereafter the evidence for his attendance is slight. This is further obscured by the payment of ships' companies at the Treasury Office in Broad Street. There is nothing to suggest that he was present at such pays but it is most likely that, unless several ships were being paid off, this work would be supervised by his paymaster, Waith. During the later stages of his Treasurership, lack of money meant that there were few pays to attend.³ Although the evidence is not very conclusive, there is little doubt that Carteret was at some pays after 1662. On 20 January 1666 Albemarle wrote to Arlington that Carteret was 'wanted in town to pay the seamen', and on 21 May 1666 Carteret and Mennes were paying tickets.⁴ This illustrates the other side of

¹ Diary, 5 February 1662; 9 April 1662; 3 December 1663.

² Diary, 8 September 1662. In the first half of 1663 Carteret is mentioned as being present at 5 of a possible 19 meetings. The impossibility of coming to a definite conclusion from the Diary is seen in a letter of 27 October 1666, which is mentioned in a journal book as being signed by Carteret and four others of the Board, PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.32, there is no mention of any meeting that day in the Diary.

³ Pepys records that Carteret went to pay ships at least 8 times in 1662, Diary, 27 March, 24-30 April, 26 August, 23 September and 24 December 1662..

⁴ CSPD 1665-6, p.212; Diary, 25 May 1666.

Carteret's life, that of the courtier, for his absences from London were frequently due to a tour by the court. Carteret was also a member of the Privy Council and a Member of Parliament and would, therefore, have less time for the navy. He was one of the most regular attenders at the Privy Council, and from his being sworn on to the Council on 11 July 1660 to his departure from the Navy Board in June 1667, he was present at the majority of its meetings.¹ His Parliamentary duties made fewer calls on his time as there were long periods when the House was not in session and, in any event, the meetings of the Navy Board were altered so that they did not clash with Parliamentary sittings.

One of the main criticisms levelled at Carteret during his period at the Navy Board was that of not revealing the exact financial position of the navy to the rest of the Board. This was expressed by Coventry on 23 August 1662 when he told Pepys of Carteret's 'having so much the command of the money, which must be removed'. The same criticism was voiced later the same day by the earl of Sandwich, who 'doth much cry against the course of our payments and the Treasurer to have the whole power in his hand of doing what he will'.² Carteret's desire to keep control of all financial matters was largely due to his regard for the profits of the office, by ensuring that all payments were made through him, but it was also an attempt to avoid criticism of his methods of payments by keeping the rest of the Board in ignorance. In fairness it should be stated that Carteret was responsible to the Lord High Admiral, and was not required, except at the annual audit, to show his accounts to

¹ PRO, PC2/54-59, for most of the period there were eight or nine Council meetings each month and Carteret was present at seven or eight of these, his only bad period was November 1662 when he attended one out of a possible nine meetings.

² Diary, 23 August 1662.

the rest of the Board.¹ During the Dutch War the Lord Treasurer's Secretary, Sir Philip Warwick, discussed the problem of Carteret's 'keeping us in ignorance what he doth with his money', and on 18 April Warwick told Pepys of 'the endeavours that he hath made to bring Sir G. Carteret to show his accounts and let the world see what he receives and what he pays'.² It would appear that there was nothing the Treasury or the rest of the Navy Board could do about this. Pepys had another talk with Warwick on 3 May 1665 about 'Sir G. Carteret's business and the abuses he puts on the nation by his bad payments', but neither could see any remedy.³

Despite large Parliamentary grants of money for the war, the financial situation steadily deteriorated and by the beginning of 1666 there was talk of an enquiry into expenditure. Pepys and Warwick were amazed that Carteret did not try and bring some order to his accounts as the 'King expects the Parliament will call upon him for his promise of giving an account of the money, and he will be ready for it', but Pepys did not think that it would be possible unless Carteret's accounts 'be better understood than they are'.⁴ It would appear that the Navy Board had very little access to the Treasurer's accounts. The annual accounts (as required by the fifth Article of the Treasurer's Instructions) were made up half-yearly at the Navy Treasury by Carteret's cashier, Robert Waith, and then presented to the Navy Board for signing. . . Apparently only the completed accounts were presented, which meant in practice that it was impossible for the Comptroller, or any member of the Board,

¹ Even when the Board did see the accounts the inadequacy of the Comptroller, Mennes, prevented them from rectifying any abuses, Diary, 6 June 1665

² Diary, 7, 18 April 1665.

³ Diary, 3 May 1665.

⁴ Diary, 2 March 1666.

to investigate them.¹ This, and the lack of urgency before the Dutch War, deterred the rest of the Board from attempting a more searching examination. The members of the Board themselves showed little anxiety over this state of affairs, as none of them wanted to incur the displeasure of a man as influential at court as Carteret. Pepys saw some of the failure here, but it would seem that he was unwilling to question Carteret, and was 'vexed at the heart to see a thing of that importance done so slightly and with that neglect, for which God pardon us'.²

As there is insufficient evidence, it would be impossible to do a complete audit of Carteret's accounts; all that can be done is to mention some of the criticisms and suspicions about them, which will indicate that all was not well. On this point most of Pepys's information came from Sir Philip Warwick who, as Secretary to the Lord Treasurer, would have certain knowledge of the payments to the Navy Treasurer. On 12 September 1663 Warwick assured Pepys that Carteret had been paid 'every farthing, that we to this day, nay to Michaelmas-day next, have demanded', and he was certain that this was £50,000 more than 'truly our expense hath been - whatever is become of the money'.³ The absence of figures prevented Pepys from being more positive, but his suspicions were clearly aroused. After another talk with Warwick he was informed that, 'the King cannot be in debt to the Navy at this time £5,000; nay, it is my opinion that Sir G. Carteret do owe the King money, and yet the whole Navy debt paid'.⁴

¹ The accounts were examined according to the Diary on 29 October 1662; 6 April and 8 September 1663; 29 March 1664; 1 April and 8 October 1665; 17 September 1666; 17 April 1667.

² Diary, 6 April 1663.

³ Diary, 12 September 1663.

⁴ Diary, 24 September 1663, on 3 December Carteret told the Board that the whole debt was paid off.

The Parliamentary Commissioners of Public Accounts was the only independent body to attempt an examination of Carteret's accounts. Carteret must have had considerable warning of the impending investigation, as on 2 March 1666, Pepys had commented on the King's expectation of Parliament accepting his promise to give an account of the money spent on the war. The session of Parliament opened on 18 September 1666, and, as expected, one of its intentions was to take an account of the money voted for the war.¹ With last minute urgency, the Navy Board was with Carteret the day before the session opened, working on his accounts. He presented them to the House on 21 September, and was ordered to bring them forward on the following Saturday.² The whole of the Navy Board were very apprehensive about the outcome of the examination, and Pepys had little confidence in Carteret, whom he regarded as 'a man that understood them not one word'. The Board met again on Sunday, 23 September, when it was discovered that the debt was about £900,000; Pepys thought 'our method of accounting, though it cannot I believe be far wide from the mark, yet will not abide a strict examination if the Parliament should be troublesome'.³ The extent to which these figures were juggled with in order to mislead the Commons, will always be in doubt, but it is certain that Carteret thought it necessary to alter his own figures, after consultation with Lord Treasurer Southampton, to ensure that there was no discrepancy between the 'Lord Treasurer's general account, as well as that of the Navy particularly'.⁴ The accounts were presented to the House by Carteret on 26 September, and it was resolved that a committee should be appointed to inspect

1 Commons Journal, VIII, 624-5.

2 Diary, 21 September 1666.

3 Diary, 22, 23 September 1666.

4 Diary, 24 September 1666.

them. This committee consisted of 55 members, including Colonel Birch, a former Commonwealth Navy Commissioner, Garroway, Thomson and Boscowen.¹ Their report was presented to the Commons on 11 October by Sir William Lowther, where it was accepted that an additional £30,000 should be added to the account of the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded, but Sir John Duncombe's attempt to get a further £54,000 allowed for the Ordnance was rejected.² The Commons would not accept £150,000 on the naval accounts as the charge for wear and tear on the fleet while it had been in harbour during the winter.³ The Commons were not well disposed towards Carteret, as Coventry told Pepys that the 'House has a great envy at Sir G. Carteret', and because of this Coventry withheld any mention of bad payments in his speech fearing that this would have brought further attacks on Carteret.⁴ After its preliminary report the committee continued to look into the accounts, and on 17 October Lowther reported that the cost of the navy from 1 September 1664 to 30 September 1666 was £3,223,194-17-5.⁵ After this was known the House lost interest in Carteret and his accounts, and attention was turned to the business of considering what supply should be granted to the King. Thus, the Navy Board escaped further examination at this stage.⁶

Because of the long delays in making up the accounts after the Dutch War, it was some time after Carteret had left the Navy Board that his

1 Commons Journal, VIII, 628.

2 Commons Journal, VIII, 634; Robbins (ed), Diary of John Milward, p.20.

3 Diary, 12 October 1666.

4 Diary, 13 October 1666.

5 Robbins, op.cit., p.27.

6 For the events of this session and the passage of the Poll Bill see Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, pp.49-58.

accounts for the whole war were examined by the Commissioners of Public Accounts. They had been established by an 'Act for Taking Account of the Several Sums of Money mentioned therein' (19 & 20 Car II c.1), and made a series of observations on Carteret's conduct; these were presented to a committee of the House of Lords appointed on 6 November 1669.¹ The report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts, and their clash with Pepys before the King and Privy Council, will be discussed at relevant stages, but at this juncture it is pertinent to examine those parts of their reports which deal with Carteret, and the extent to which their findings were upheld by the Committee of the Lords.

Before the Commissioners could start, the accounts had to be made up and passed by the Navy Board, and because of the amount of work involved, this took a long time. Apart from the pressure from the Commissioners, Carteret was also urging the Board to complete their examination, so that he could be relieved of the responsibility of being accountable for them. On 23 September 1667 his petition for a quick despatch of the accounts was read before the King and Council, consequently the Navy Board were ordered to make haste and to inform the King how a distinct account of the expenses of the war could be obtained.² Two days later the Navy Board replied that they were in no way conscious of any neglect or 'spared industry' on their part. They blamed the paying of men with tickets for their inability to work faster, because of 'that constant incapacity we have been in, in proceeding in the ancient and regular method of discharging by money', and the 'manifold perplexities' brought into the Treasurer's books by this.³ If Pepys can be believed, the Council had very little understanding of the matter and seemed untroubled

¹ Lords Journal, XII, 261.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.231, 23 September 1667.

³ NMM, SER 78, f.63, 26 September 1667.

by it, for 'none of them understood the business'. . . Ultimately the King cut short what must have been a rambling and dull debate by urging the Navy Board to make as much haste as they could.¹

Despite the desire of the King and their promise of 'constant attendance to the dispatch of the work', progress was very slow. Carteret presented a similar petition on 15 November and asked that four sets of clerks should be set to work on the accounts, with a member of the Navy Board being responsible for ensuring that the work was done speedily; this was agreed to by the King and Council.² The Navy Board, having been sent the Order of the Council, asked Carteret to name those clerks who were not sufficiently diligent so that they could be removed and reprimanded. The Board said that because of the volume of work at that time, all their clerks, including the additional ones, were fully employed, and they were reluctant to employ strangers on such important work, but they would attempt to find persons capable of serving the King. The Board did not want to appoint one of their own number to supervise the work, and they expressed the hope that they would be able to employ men who would not bring any blame to the office.³ Despite this, one of the additional commissioners, Sir Thomas Harvey, was appointed to oversee the work.⁴

The progress of Carteret's accounts came up again at the Privy Council before they were eventually completed in 1670. Carteret himself had completed his part of the work by the end of June 1668 when his former cashier, Waith, wrote to the Navy Board on 27 June that the accounts were perfected up to the end of June 1667, except for a few tickets which

¹ Diary, 25 September 1667

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.238, 15 November 1667.

³ BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.153, 28 November 1667.

⁴ PRO, SP46/136, f.621, 30 November 1667.

should have been paid by the Earl of Anglesey.¹ There were obviously still a few matters to be cleared up, as on 22 July 1668 it was necessary for the Council to authorise that several sums paid to foreign 'princes for the service of the late war' were to be allowed on Carteret's accounts. These included an unspecified sum to the Bishop of Munster, £26,357-4-3 to the King of Sweden, and £1,000 to the Prince of Moldavia.² By this time Carteret had crossed to Ireland to take up his duties as Vice-Treasurer and this absence, though of advantage to him, contributed to the delays. The Treasury Commissioners complained that their auditors could not proceed to examine the accounts as they had no certificates of money borrowed, or of when it was borrowed. An Order in Council was obtained to enable the certificates of George Fenn, who had kept these accounts for Carteret, to be accepted as sufficient warrant during Carteret's absence, and the auditors could then check the amount of interest paid.³

The accounts, having been passed by the Navy Board and audited by the Treasury Commissioners, were examined by the Commissioners of Public Accounts, who presented their report, together with various letters and answers, to the House of Lords on 29 October 1669. On 4 November a further 20 papers were sent in and two days later a Committee of the Lords was appointed to go through the report and the papers.⁴ On the basis of the figures claimed by Carteret, he was only owing the King £1,600-18-9½, and had received and discharged over £3,390,000 from 1 September 1664.⁵ The Commissioners were not prepared to accept all his claims, in particular they objected to his claiming for money paid as interest on loans raised before 1 September 1664. They stated that he

¹ CSPD 1667-8, p.462.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.337, 22 July 1668.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.337, 22 July 1668.

⁴ Lords Journal, XII, 257.

⁵ Lords MS.213, ff.5-7, summarised in HMC, 8th Report, Appendix, p.128.

had failed to charge himself with £7,400 interest on some of the Dunkirk money, and for money saved when there had been no ministers, or 'preachers', appointed to ships.¹ In total he was charged with not having cleared himself of £244,051-0-3¼, and the Commissioners followed their findings with a series of observations on the accounts. In the first place Carteret was accused of not using the money granted by Privy Seals for the payments expressed in them, 'whereby he hath assumed to himself a liberty to make use of the King's treasure for other uses than is directed'; this was a breach of the Fourth Article of the Lord High Admiral's Instructions.²

Carteret sent his reply on 23 September 1669; he explained that it was not practical in peacetime to apply money strictly from one Privy Seal to the purpose mentioned in it, and this was even more impossible in war when greater urgency was required.³ This was certainly true; money was used for the most pressing purposes when it became available, and it would have been a far greater neglect to have kept money in hand when there was urgent need for it elsewhere. In this, if Carteret had transgressed the letter of his Instructions, he had acted in the best interest of the service, and this observation cannot be held as an important criticism, especially as there was no suggestion that the money had not been used for naval purposes.

The second observation was allowed to lapse by the Commissioners themselves; they claimed that they were not able to pass £230,731-13-9 for deposits on security of interest because no 'times' were declared on the certificates. Carteret claimed that he was allowed these sums by Privy

¹ Lords MS.213, f.6r.

² Lords MS.213, f.7.

³ Lords Minute Book, 2 December 1669.

Seals in 1665 and that it was not his responsibility to compute the interest. The Commissioners did not accept that the Privy Seal gave the authority claimed by Carteret, but they did not press this further as they were not able to examine the interest accounts of the bankers in the time available.

The papers of the Commissioners were examined by the Committee of the Lords from 2 December 1669, and, on the first observation, they declared that Carteret had not assumed the liberty of making use of the King's treasure for other uses than directed by justifiable warrants.¹ The Committee cleared Carteret of the observations that he had paid for goods, which had been served into the stores 'contrary to the Instructions of the Navy', and he was acquitted of having made double payments to ships.² The Committee did agree with one of the Commissioners' observations (5) that large sums were charged in one year's account, although they were not paid until the following year, but they accepted that this was the usual and constant practice of the Navy, and that it did not appear to be of any damage to the King.³ The Committee ended its proceedings with the prorogation of Parliament on 19 December 1669, and the other observations were never discussed. Carteret had done very well out of this investigation, for on most of the observations a verdict of not guilty, or not proven, must be recorded. It is most likely that the court was prepared to allow the examination to continue for as long as possible, in the hope that the passage of time and the mass of material to be considered would reduce their impact. This proved to be the case, and despite all the protracted investigations, the final settlement and passage of Carteret's accounts were reserved for the friendlier atmosphere of the Privy Council.

¹ Lords Minute Book, 2 December 1669.

² Lords Minute Book, 4 December 1669.

³ Lords MS.213, f.9, 7 December 1669.

In December 1669 Carteret's accounts were discussed before the King in Council, with Pepys in attendance, which was 'to the great dissatisfaction of the Commissioners of Accounts as well as good success to Sir George'.¹ The examination continued into January 1670, with Pepys composing a defence for Carteret against the accusation that £514,000 had been put to 'other uses than the war'; this carried the implication that, and gave rise to, 'the world's believing if it had been to uses of pleasure or other private respects of his Majesty'. This charge reflected as much against the King as it did against Carteret, and the Commissioners of Accounts were forced to admit at the Council on 5 January 1670, that the King had spent 'out of his private revenue' £300,000 'more than what would satisfy this £514,000'.² The King's resentment at the Commissioners was due to their refusal to allow that money issued before 1 September 1664 (the date taken to signify the start of the war), should be accounted as part of the money spent on the war. The Commissioners did nothing to remove their implied criticism of the King's finances, but they did not press the point, nor did they make any allegations concerning the use of the money.

The Commissioners of Accounts presented their final report on Carteret's accounts on 19 August 1670, which only differed from their first report in that it took note of Carteret's reply. The King appointed a Committee of the Council to examine the report and the accounts, especially the part concerning a large sum of tallies which had been left as security for the interest on money borrowed, and had not been cleared.³ This

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.387.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.390.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.410, 19 August 1670.

Committee made its report on 14 September 1670, and virtually accepted Carteret's answers to the Commissioners of Accounts. It was acknowledged that over £150,000 had been transferred to the Earl of Anglesey when Carteret left office; the tallies said to be unaccounted for amounted to £165,632, of which £165,149-8-10 was then accepted as cleared by the Auditors of the Exchequer, leaving only £432-12-2, for which Carteret acknowledged himself accountable.¹ Thus from a total of £326,000, which the Commissioners had refused to accept, the Committee of the Council had reduced it to £8,852-4-5. This sum was further reduced by £2,939-3-6 transferred to Anglesey and £1,806-7-1 used on the King's orders, which left £4,106-8-10 to be accounted for. Carteret admitted that £1,873-3-10 had been paid as double payments, but this was over a great number of bills and tickets during the war, and he claimed that this was not solely his responsibility as the payments would have been warranted by the Navy Board.

The report was read before the King and Council, and it was declared that all payments made by Carteret on the directions of the Navy Board were to be allowed on his accounts, as were the 'imprests' to the goldsmiths on production of their receipts. As for the accounts of the interest paid by him, he was to ascertain the times for which the money was borrowed, but beyond this there was no need for him to concern himself further with the matter, and it was finally stated that the 'several particulars in the said accounts were just and satisfactory'. The King approved the report and ordered it to be entered in the Council Register for 'the justification of Sir G. Carteret and for directions to the Auditors of the Exchequer'.² Thus, more than three years after leaving office, Carteret was cleared of his accounts, but the extent to which the figures had been altered to justify them must remain obscure. The chaos and lack of method in the

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.415, 14 September 1670.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.415, 14 September 1670.

accounts, with the huge volume of bills, tickets and certificates, cannot have rendered their examination easy. The final acceptance of the report, with the failure of the Commissioners of Accounts to bring to light any great misdemeanour, saved Carteret from any further attack in Parliament.

Besides his involvement with the Commissioners of Accounts, there are other aspects of Carteret's career which are worthy of note. One point which must be stressed in his favour is that he was prepared to use his personal influence, and on occasions his own money, to obtain credit or goods for the navy. For example, at the beginning of the reign Carteret raised a loan to enable the ships, which had been in pay for several months, to be paid off, and as a result, on 17 April 1662, the King ordered that, as Carteret had borrowed money on his own account for the service, he was to be repaid by the Navy Board from the profits arising from the sale of decayed stores, to the value of £3,000.¹ On 13 December he further ordered that part of the Dunkirk money, which was to be used for the navy, should be used to secure the debt to Carteret.²

Carteret's relations with the rest of the Navy Board appear to have been limited to business occasions. Because of his influence at court he was regarded with awe, and Pepys certainly thought it wise to keep on good terms with him. One conflict which clearly emerged was that between the Treasurer and Coventry. This may be explained by Carteret's jealousy of someone so close to the Lord High Admiral, and also because of his friendship with Sandwich, who did not get on at all with Coventry. On 8 May Carteret told Pepys that Coventry was to join the Board, 'At which he is much vexed, and cries out upon Sir W. Penn and threatens him highly', which indicates that Carteret may have been blaming Penn for the idea of

¹ BM, Add. MS.9,307, f.19, 17 April 1662.

² Calendar of Treasury Books 1660-1667, p.459.

bringing Coventry on to the Board.¹ The first recorded clash between them occurred on 12 June 1662, less than a month after Coventry had joined the Board. Coventry raised what was to become a favourite matter with him, the business of the Victualler's account being paid directly from the Exchequer, and not, as was the custom, through the Navy Treasury.² Carteret was extremely sensitive on this particular issue and always sought to guard the profits of his office. The dispute became a trial of influence behind the scenes, although it did not come up before the King in Council, as Pepys expected. On 30 October Coventry said that Carteret 'carried the business of the Victualler's money to be paid by himself' but, at the same time, was generous enough to admit that Carteret 'is a man that doth take the most pains and gives himself the most to do business of any man about the Court'.³ Relations between the two did not improve, and on 26 March 1666 Carteret appeared to be in fear of 'falling' from office, 'Sir W. Coventry having so great a pique against him'.⁴ But Coventry was unable to make much headway against Carteret because of his being 'so great with the King', which meant that the Duke of York, Coventry and the Navy Board could 'do or say what they will, while the King lives, G. Carteret will do what he will'.⁵ There was another clash between the two at the Navy Board, when there were

¹ Diary, 8 May 1662.

² Diary, 12 June 1662.

³ Diary, 30th October 1662, the value of his poundage was considerable; Pepys calculated that for three and a half years the value of the 'thirds' came to £41,000, about 20-25% of this from money paid to the Victualler, hence Carteret's desire to keep these payments.

⁴ Diary, 26 March 1666.

⁵ Diary, 17 February 1667.

'very high words arising between Sir G. Carteret and W. Coventry, the former in a passion saying that the other should have helped things if they were so bad; and the other answered, so he would, and things should have been better had he been Treasurer of the Navy'.¹ After Coventry had gone to the Treasury Commission, he still had dealings with the Navy Board, and Carteret complained that the Treasury Commissioners 'will eclipse him' and he was 'mightily displeased' with them. At the same time Coventry was talking about the naval accounts and 'how backward our Treasurer is in giving satisfaction', but in fairness to Carteret, Pepys thought, 'the truth is, I doubt he cannot do better'.²

This inability to do anything about the financial situation, together with the anticipation of further Parliamentary attacks upon him, were the main reasons for Carteret deciding to give up the Treasurership in 1667. From the end of 1666 Carteret appears to have lost all interest in the work; in November 1666, he showed concern for the future of the Navy Board by looking upon them all as 'undone people'.³ In addition to these political considerations, the office of Treasurer of the Navy was much less lucrative for the holder by the middle of the war. The most important perquisite of the office had been the 'poundage', that is, of every pound sterling paid out, the Treasurer could claim an allowance of 3d. But with the introduction of 'payments in course' and, of much greater importance, the Additional Aid of October 1665, a great deal of naval supplies were paid directly from the Exchequer. This was continued by the Poll Tax and Eleven Months' Tax in 1666 and 1667, thus on

1 Diary, 12 April 1667.

2 Diary, 3 June 1667.

3 Diary, 14 November 1666.

19 May 1667 he told Pepys that 'he would be content to part with his place as Treasurer of the Navy upon good terms'.¹ Carteret's disenchantment with the financial situation led him to neglect his duty, and fears for his own safety made him increasingly anxious to leave the Board. Although allowance must be made for the hostility between Carteret and Coventry, the latter complained on several occasions that the Treasurer was leaving his work. In February 1667 Coventry thought the Treasurer did 'not mind the getting of money with the same good cheer that he did heretofore', and on 1 April he told Pepys that 'Sir G. Carteret doth not look after or concern himself for getting money as he used to do'.² Later that month the Treasurer was described as a man 'moped and stunned, not knowing which way to turn himself. Sir W. Coventry cried that he [Carteret] was disheartened and I do think that there is much in it'. The Master of the Ordnance 'do charge him with mighty neglect in the pursuing of his business, and that he do not look after it himself'.³

With this growing lack of interest, and perhaps a feeling of helplessness, Carteret looked for someone to take over his place, but there are no records of any negotiations taking place, or of the number of persons approached. During 1666 there was a rumour that Lord Craven was hoping to get the post; Pepys was told this by a merchant, Captain Cocke, who said the whole town was talking of 'my Lord Craven being come into Sir G. Carteret's place, but sure it cannot be true'.⁴ At this stage Carteret had not been worried, although Pepys thought it expedient to warn the Treasurer that he had heard Craven was 'looking after the Treasureship of the Navy and reckons himself assure of it'.⁵ This

¹ Diary, 19 May 1667.

² Diary, 6 February, 1 April 1667.

³ Diary, 24 April 1667.

⁴ Diary, 7 January 1666.

⁵ Chappell, Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p.78.

particular matter is not mentioned again, but by 1667, the situation having altered, it was Carteret himself who was seeking the change. Lord Bellasise was mentioned as 'a man likely to buy it' but nothing came of this.¹ Eventually Carteret exchanged places with the Earl of Anglesey to become Vice-Treasurer of Ireland. The exchange was settled during June 1667, and Pepys makes first mention of it on 26 June when he was told that Carteret 'parted with his place ... by consent' to Anglesey, but 'upon what terms it is I know not'.²

After seven years in the post Carteret thought it expedient to remove himself in order to escape further censure. There is little to be said of his tenure of the post of Treasurer, as he left very little mark on the administrative structure of the Navy; he did not introduce any new ideas for the payment, receipt, or recording of his financial transactions. He was always anxious to preserve the profits of the office, but does not seem to have paid a great deal of attention to its work; most things were left to his cashier, Waith, and other subordinates. It is clear that he viewed the office as a reward for past services and did not expect to be overworked by it. Without the enormous pressure of the Dutch War, it is unlikely that either he or the financial structure of the navy would have come in for much criticism, and we have no way of knowing just how the system would have coped if there had been a plentiful supply of money. On the positive side, Carteret was useful in obtaining credit and goods for the service, and was even prepared to give up some of the profits of his office when the idea of 'payment in course' was brought in. He was not found guilty of the embezzlement of any funds, and, in the absence of any suggestion of irregular dealings, there is no reason to

¹ Diary, 19 May 1667.

² Diary, 26 June 1667.

suspect that he was not as honest as any other official of that day. Certainly there was chaos and disorder in his accounts, but this might be due to his incomprehension of more than the bare essentials of financial matters. What is evident is that Carteret's impact as the first Treasurer, after the Restoration, was minimal.

The warrant for the surrender of the office by Carteret, and its grant to Anglesey, with a fee of £100 and 3d on every pound sterling issued or received, was sent to the Attorney General on 26 June 1667.¹ The King's approval was necessary for this change in offices, and it is probable that the Lord High Admiral was also informed, but apart from them the change appears to have been a private matter arranged between the two parties. According to Pepys the King was at first reluctant to agree to the exchange, but because of his 'owning of great obligations' to Carteret for 'his faithful and long service to him and his father', he was 'willing to grant his desire'.² This exchange of offices casts an interesting light on the attitude of high ranking office holders to their posts, for it is clear that both regarded their posts as rewards for past services which could be disposed of as they pleased. There was, however, always an important proviso, which prevented these offices from being completely regarded as personal property to be exploited at will, and that was the duty of the holder to ensure that the King, and to a lesser extent the subject, was not defrauded, and that the service did not suffer. This obligation, especially when it was supported by a set of Instructions, prevented the office from being abused to any large degree.

During his early career, Arthur Annesley, who succeeded to the title of Earl of Anglesey in 1661, was chiefly concerned with Irish affairs; he

¹ CSPD 1667, p.235.

² Diary, 28 June 1667.

could not claim long service, or exile because of the royalist cause, but by the late 1650s he was thought to be a royalist, and by 1660 is described as being a moderate with practical views.¹ He was appointed to his father's old post of Vice-Treasurer and Receiver of Ireland in August 1660. His association with the navy prior to 1667 is almost nonexistent, although he is mentioned as a member of the Committee of the Privy Council for the Admiralty and Navy which was set up on 9 November 1660.² As this Committee was not very active, he had little opportunity of learning about the navy until 1664, when it exercised the administrative functions of the Lord High Admiral during the Duke of York's absence. Pepys mentioned that Anglesey presided over the Committee on 11 November 1664, but was not impressed by the Committee's proceedings in matters about which they knew little.³ As the Committee's administrative role was brief, Anglesey would have had little opportunity to acquire much knowledge about the navy, though he might well have had experience in financial matters as a result of his post at the Irish office.

Soon after taking office, Anglesey suffered a personal setback when he lost the fight to make the payments to the Victualler and the Lord High Admiral's regiment. For some time it had been Coventry's desire to save the poundage paid to the Treasurer as an economy; his first attempt had been blocked because of Carteret's influence, but Anglesey could not rely so much on royal favour, particularly in view of the unfavourable financial situation. Coventry took advantage of his own move to the Treasury Commission and the change in the navy Treasury to bring the

¹ DNB. II, 1.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.7, 9 November 1660.

³ Diary, 11 November 1664.

matter up again, and after a hearing at the Council, it was ordered that henceforth the payments should be made direct from the Exchequer.¹ This suggests that Coventry had not brought up the matter initially just as a means of attacking Carteret. Pepys told Sandwich that Anglesey had 'felt more effect of his [Coventry's] unkindness (if it must be termed so) in the loss of his having the payments of the victualler, than ever the Vice Chamberlain did in all his time'.²

One of the most essential requirements of any official in this period was to be certain that his actions were grounded on a sufficient warrant from the King, the Privy Council, or, in this case, the Lord High Admiral. This was particularly so, since the official could be held responsible with his entire estate for any failure, until his accounts were passed, which in Carteret's case took several years. This explains the desire of the Treasurers to get their accounts passed quickly. The need to be justified in his actions was even more important to Anglesey in 1667 when he knew there was the certainty of a Parliamentary enquiry. In order to protect himself, and also possibly to clarify the situation, he presented a petition to the King in Council on 16 August 1667, which was read, with the Navy Board present, on 23 August.³ Anglesey first brought up the matter of payment by ticket. He was no doubt aware that this had already been mentioned in the Commons, but he foresaw that, as more ships came to be discharged, the lack of money would lead to the wholesale issuing of tickets. He therefore requested an order to the Navy Board to stop the discharging of ships in this manner, and that 'the laudable course held in this time of your Royal Progenitors be henceforth enjoined'.

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.222, 7 August 1667.

² Smith, Life and Correspondence of Pepys, I, 121.

³ PRO, PC2/59, f.541, 23 August 1667.

So that this could be done, he also wanted an order to the Treasury Commissioners to ensure that money 'be ready to pay what is due'. The idea behind this was a mixture of the desire to reduce the suffering of the seamen for lack of money, thereby reducing the pressure on the Navy Pay Office, which caused a great disturbance in London, and to provide a ready excuse if the Treasury Commissioners failed to keep up a supply of money. The petition was then referred to the Navy Board and the Treasury Commissioners for their consideration. This is indicative of the weak position of the Navy Treasurer, for although he could foresee the extent of the problem before him, and realised the political capital which could be made from his failure, he was unable to do anything about the pressing financial problems without an order from the Council and the assistance of the Treasury Commissioners, and it illustrates the declining position of the Navy Treasurer in relation to that of the Treasury Commissioners. The Navy Board's reply was presented on 28 August and read at the Council two days later; as a result it was ordered that a further £100,000 on the Poll Bill was to be reserved for the payment of seamen.¹ No mention is made of an order to the Treasury Commissioners to ensure that the money was paid, and the petition could, therefore, only have been a partial success for Anglesey. It would seem that there was little consultation between Anglesey and the rest of the Navy Board before either the petition or the Board's reply was presented at the Council, which further evidences the separation of the Treasury from the rest of the Navy Board. The criticism that Carteret did not consult sufficiently with the rest of the Board, has already been mentioned, and this lack of communication continued under Anglesey.

¹ PRO, Adm, 1/5246, f.227, 30 August 1667.

The idea of obtaining the authority of the Council for the Treasurer's payments was very sensible. The Treasury Commissioners, led by Coventry, closely watched Anglesey's proceedings and were ready to find fault with him at the least excuse. At a meeting of the Council on 6 December 1667, Coventry accused Anglesey of altering the course of payments made by the Council in connection with the payment of seamen's wages. In what way this had been done is not clear, but Anglesey virtually admitted the truth of the charge and, according to Pepys, said 'he had already sent to alter it according to the Council's method'. Pepys was glad that the business went no further because the Treasury Commissioners were ready to make an issue of it.¹ An Order was passed requiring Anglesey not to alter the payments directed by the Council without the knowledge, and presumably the approval, of the Treasury Commissioners. This matter was to be raised again by the Commissioners of Public Accounts, who accused Carteret of altering the course of money assigned by Privy Seals. He was exonerated by the Committee of the Lords, who declared that he had done nothing to the detriment of the King. Anglesey was obviously being accused of doing something similar, and in August 1669 the Commissioners of Accounts asked if he had altered the method of payment in the navy. He replied on 14 September 1669 that he had 'innovated' nothing in payments, having observed the 'rules, Instructions and directions' laid down in the 'discharge of that trust'.² It is probable that as a matter of expediency he had altered some of the strict intentions of the Council's orders, but as no specific charge was made, and he quickly reverted to the order when challenged by Coventry, this did not become a serious affair.

¹ Diary, 6 December 1667.

² PRO, Adm.106/18, f.385, 14 September 1669.

Throughout his period in office Anglesey had to be far more careful in the justification of his payments. A further instance of this can be seen in the probing of the Commissioners of Accounts into his payments. Anglesey wrote to the Navy Board on 8 February 1668 that, because the Commissioners were making some scruple about his payments, he could not proceed further 'without hazard or ruin', and he desired the Board to give him sufficient authority to cover him for his past payments. He also asked whether he could have a 'known rule' to guide him in the future.¹ The Board replied on the same day explaining that they did not know what had prompted the Commissioners to make difficulties in accepting his payments, and declared that they saw no reason to alter the existing instructions. They advised Anglesey either to continue making payments as he had done hitherto, or that if he was still in doubt, he should himself apply to the King in Council for a resolution.² Although this might not have been very satisfactory, Anglesey did not apply to the Council, and was prepared to stand by the established instructions for his office.

The problems facing the new Treasurer were considerable, not only was there a very large debt to be paid off, but there was also the expected investigation into the money voted for the war. Anglesey made an inauspicious start. His clash with the Treasury Commissioners has already been mentioned, but he subsequently aroused the hostility of the Duke of York and the members of the Privy Council. The Duke of York was at that time against having a Treasurer of the Navy, because he realised from experience that this office could become too powerful. In his letter to the Committee for reducing the King's expenditure, the

¹ PRO, SP46/137, f.50, 8 February 1668.

² BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.162, 8 February 1668.

Duke of York considered that the Navy Treasurer should be reduced to a paymaster 'of quality inferior to the other officers', who would not sit with the rest of the Board but would obey their orders and give them an account of all he did. The Duke thought that the combination of financial power and a person of 'quality and interest' had given the Treasurer more power than 'is fit'.¹ The Duke accepted the appointment of Anglesey as being 'settled', but he hoped his idea could be put into effect in the future, in practice he was in fact suggesting a return to the Commonwealth system. Bearing this in mind, and taking into account the possibility that the Duke had not been closely involved in the choice of the Treasurer, it is not surprising that his attitude to Anglesey was unsympathetic. Pepys affords the only direct evidence of this attitude, and records that the Duke was 'vexed that Lord Anglesey did the other day, complain at the Council-table of disorders in the Navy, and not to him'. A few days later on 6 July 1668 the Duke referred to this and expressed his anger at Anglesey.² The Duke of York was also annoyed by the Treasurer's failure to attend the Navy Board regularly; for example, on 18 September the Duke was 'somewhat sour, and particularly angry with Lord Anglesey for his not being there now, nor at other times so often as he should be with us'.³ The Duke's further dissatisfaction was expressed in a letter of 5 October 1668 to the Board, when he reminded them about the Article of the Treasurer's Instructions, which required him to give the Lord High Admiral an account of the navy debts and inform the Treasury Commissioners of what stores should be bought, so that a timely provision of money could be made.⁴ It is, however, unlikely that Anglesey was able to comply with this order before his suspension from office on 28 October 1668.

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, ff.163r-66, 12 August 1667.

² Diary, 1, 6 July 1668.

³ Diary, 18 September 1668

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/17, f.110, 5 October 1668.

Several of the most important criticisms of Anglesey were made in the Duke of York's Letter of Reflections on the conduct of the members of the Navy Board. This letter, dated 26 August 1668, had been drawn up by Pepys, who had suggested the idea to the Duke of York.¹ Through Pepys, the Duke of York saw fit to make reflections on six of the eight Articles of the Treasurer's Instructions. Anglesey was accused of not having been sufficiently diligent in his attendance at the Board, which was all the more remiss because of the importance of having his advice at the making of contracts, and he had 'wholly overlooked that part of his duty relating to contracts, otherwise than being sometimes at the Board on other occasions by accident made him witness to some of them'. In his reply, which was delivered to the Lord High Admiral, the Treasurer did not deny the truth of this. Anglesey asked that 'constant days' should be kept for the dispatch of this business and, if this was done, he would be present to give advice to the Board and to the merchants about payments.² The evidence from the Diary is slender, and it is impossible to gain a full impression of Anglesey's presence at the Board; there are less than ten positive mentions of his being there for the conduct of business, but it is unlikely that in his sixteen months as Treasurer these were the only occasions on which he was present. His suggestion that regular days should be set aside for the making of contracts was sensible. This had been the practice of the Navy Board before the Dutch War, but with the increased business and its subsequent inability to make contracts for lack of money, the regular days were dropped and, it would seem, not resumed after the war. Nevertheless it is evident that Anglesey was neglectful in his attendance at the Board, probably far more so than Carteret.

On the third Article of the Treasurer's duty, the Duke of York said that Anglesey had failed completely to make up the annual account of the office

¹ PRO, Adm.49/54, ff.106-29, 26 August 1668.

² Pepys MS.2242, f.50, 12 September 1668.

for presentation to the whole Board, and had not followed the usual method in making his accounts, so that it was impossible to tell what had been paid, or what was still due, on any particular service.¹ Anglesey replied that the work of preparing his ledger books for presentation to the Board was well advanced. He pointed out that it had been his predecessor's practice, in time of peace, to take up most of the following year in perfecting the accounts of the previous year, even though Carteret had not been 'incumbered with that multiplicity of tickets nor payment of ships in part as now'. So far as his not observing the correct methods in the accounts was concerned, he blamed the Clerks of the Cheque in the yards and other under-officers for failing to keep proper records, and the Comptroller for not stating the reason for payment on each bill.² This answer is only partly correct, because during peacetime Carteret was with the Navy Board working on his accounts on a half-yearly basis and appears to have had them accepted by the Navy Board about a month after the end of each half year.³ The Board had written to Anglesey on 2 May 1668, when he had been in office for about ten months, telling him about the need for these accounts and an estimate for the coming year.⁴ As the Treasurer could say in his reply to the Duke of York in September 1668, that the accounts were still in preparation, he had obviously not made any haste in getting them completed. The Duke was calling for the accounts on 5 October, but it is unlikely that they were ever completed before Anglesey's suspension on 28 October. It was no doubt correct that the failures of the Comptroller and the Clerks of the Cheque did make the Treasurer's task more difficult, but this does not excuse the Treasurer from his own failure, or for not pressing the others to observe their duties.

¹ PRO, Adm, 49/54, f.109, Reflection on the third Article.

² Pepys MS.2242, f.51.

³ Supra. p.154.

⁴ BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.167r, 2 May 1668.

The fourth Article of the Treasurer's duty required him to 'solicit' for the passing of Privy Seals and to ensure the payment, or assignments, of money. The Duke of York wanted to know how far the Treasurer had acquitted himself in that part of his duty, 'wherewith I must confess myself not to want some doubts from my observations'.¹ In reply Anglesey appealed to 'your Royal Highness own observations at the Council Board and at the whole Council and Commissioners of the Treasury for justification of my diligence and incessant importuning in observation thereof', and stated that, he had 'often solicited for assignments of money but without success' at the Treasury Commissioners.² If he had failed in this part of his duty Anglesey had disappointed Pepys, who had hoped in 1667 that Anglesey 'will solicit soundly for money, which I do fear was Sir G. Carteret's fault, that he did not do that enough'.³ The truth of this matter remains obscure, for when Pepys had drawn up the letter, he may not have known of the number of times Anglesey had attempted to get money at the Council or the Treasury Commissioners, and there is no way of knowing whether Anglesey, by further 'soliciting', could have obtained more money.

The Letter of Reflections then went on to state that, although the Duke of York was always ready to receive advice about the state of the navy, especially its financial condition, he could not remember 'any such remonstrance' from the Treasurer and 'therefore have not only good reason to apprehend the ill effects of his failure therein'.⁴ In his own justification Anglesey asked the Duke to 'recollect the several representations and remonstrances which I made' on this matter to the King and Council, and 'more especially that large one of 22 June last,

¹ PRO, Adm.49/54, f.110.

² Pepys MS.2242, f.52.

³ Diary, 9 July 1667.

⁴ PRO, Adm.49/54, f.111.

which I presented first to your Highness and was returned to me by your Highness with directions to present it to his Majesty'.¹ This answer did much to vindicate the Treasurer, and it was also somewhat of a counter-attack since it suggested that the Duke himself should have known of the letter and should not have relied completely on Pepys for the preparations of these Reflections, since Pepys, not being a member of the Privy Council, would not possess full information about the matters discussed there. This reply also shows the lack of communication between the Treasurer of the Navy and the rest of the Board, who were presumably in ignorance of the estimate which Anglesey presented to the Council with the King, the Duke of York, Treasury Commissioners and 'others' being present.² It estimated the navy debts to be £930,000 and explained the poor position of the navy Treasury, which was neither able to pay this sum nor provide for the repair of ships and docks. Anglesey could justify himself to a certain extent by saying that he had not been paid the money promised to discharge old tickets, to pay the widows and orphans, the clerks of the Navy Board, or to discharge the ships now returned to port. In his answer the Treasurer went most of the way to clearing himself, and his earlier caution in bringing the business of the tickets to the Council paid off in this respect when the Treasury Commissioners did not provide the necessary funds. The only criticism of Anglesey here is that he did not inform the Navy Board of his proceedings. The fact that the Duke

¹ Pepys MS.2242, f.52.

² NMM, REC 1, 22 June 1668.

of York did not remember this occasion, and had accepted completely the points made by Pepys without checking, does him little credit. There may be some doubt as to whether Anglesey showed his estimate and complaints to the Duke before showing them to the Council; it is also possible that Anglesey had given his letter to the Duke, told him of its contents in general terms, and the Duke had ordered it to be presented to the Council without having read it fully himself.¹

The Duke of York doubted whether the Treasurer had been effective in 'preventing injury' to the King, or the subject, in the payment of money, as prescribed in the sixth Article of his Instructions. Anglesey complained that he did not have the authority to stop the payment of tickets signed by the rest of the Board, even though he was empowered in general to stop and correct abuses.² Anglesey explained that, if this Article was strictly observed, it would be impossible for the Treasurer to pay any bill or allowance, as there was always the danger that either the King, or the party to whom the same was paid, could be 'damnified'.³ If the Duke thought that this Article was designed to prevent false payments, then the Treasurer requested that 'there may be some elucidation thereof' and that he should have a power of 'comptrolling and correcting'. To show that he had discovered, and presumably prevented, frauds, Anglesey gave the example of the Assurance, which had 30 or 40 men entered on her books who had been passengers from the West Indies. Anglesey claimed that the 'exercise of the Treasurer's power' had not been neglected 'in refusing of payments though duly warranted by his fellow officers'. This does not fit in with his earlier complaint

¹ Diary, 1 July 1668, Pepys wrote that the Duke was annoyed with Anglesey, who did 'the other day, complain at the Council table of the disorders in the Navy, and not to him'.

² PRO, Adm.49/54, f.112.

³ Pepys MS.2242, f.53.

that the Treasurer did not have the power of comptrolling and correcting his fellow officers. The Treasurer's Instructions were quite explicit on this point; he was not to pay any money when 'the King or the party to whom the same is due may be damnified, though the same allowance may be warranted by one or two of his fellow officers'.¹

From this it would appear that either Anglesey did not understand the Article, or he thought that it was impossible to enforce, which is probably true when considering the volume of work involved, and the fact that the Treasurer of the Navy Board had to rely on the dubious testimony of commanders, pursers and dockyard officials.

The last Reflection on the Treasurer's duty concerned his presence at the payment of ships and yards. It was always admitted that he could not attend all pays in person because of the distance at which they were made from London, and because of the need for him to be in town for the 'soliciting' of money and his other duties, but Anglesey was criticised for not observing a 'certain rule' in the payment of ships, as to 'the number and quality of the officers allowed'. The 'looseness' of the method was chiefly objected to in this particular rather than because of the amount of money alleged to have been lost.² Anglesey took up the excuse provided in the Reflections, that he was not expected to be everywhere, and claimed that all pays had been attended by him or one of his deputies. As for the method of payment, he claimed to 'have not failed ... in the paying of his Majesty's treasure according to the rules and allowances settled by his Majesty for sea service'.³ This reply does show a weakness in several of Pepys's Reflections, namely the lack of specific examples to prove the point. In general terms there

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, sixth Article of the Treasurer's Duty.

² PRO, Adm.49/54, f.112.

³ Pepys MS.2242, f.53.

may have been some justification in the charge, but without evidence it could easily be answered or evaded. Pepys was undoubtedly in possession of a great deal of information and gossip, but, particularly in the case of the Treasurer, who worked from a separate office, he did not have access to all the necessary information to prove his Reflections.

In conclusion, Anglesey replied to the general Reflections on the Navy Board by saying that he had 'diligently attended to his Majesty's service at the Board' and had done his best to put the office in order after finding it 'discomposed' because of the war. The Treasurer advised the Duke of York to call for all the books of the office 'which the clerk of the Navy by the Articles of his duty is required to keep'. This arose from his suspicion that Pepys was behind the Duke's letter and he may perhaps have hoped to cause Pepys some discomfort. Pepys was shown Anglesey's reply on 16 September, in which 'I perceive, he do do what he can to hurt me, by bidding the Duke of York to call for my books', but he was not unduly upset as 'this will do me all the right in the world, and yet I am troubled at it'.¹ This letter came at the end of Anglesey's period at the Navy Board and may be useful as a criticism of him, but, in fact, Anglesey's conduct had not been very satisfactory. Of the six Articles of his duty that were brought up, he can only be acquitted completely on the fifth Article relating to informing the Lord High Admiral about the state of the navy. The rest of the Reflections show that he was negligent in his attendance on the Navy Board, and in balancing his accounts he does not seem to have been sufficiently aware of his powers to check the actions of his colleagues. He claimed to have been diligent in the soliciting of Privy Seals and in following the prescribed methods of the Board in his payments, but this is doubtful, and, in the absence of any more definite evidence, it is impossible to be more precise.

¹ Diary, 16 September 1668.

So far as the Navy Board was concerned, the suspension of the Earl of Anglesey from his office was completely unexpected, and it is probable that it came as a shock to the Treasurer himself. Anglesey did not have very good relations with the Lord High Admiral, but far more important than this, he lacked the support of the King and fell foul of the political squabbles between the court factions. Despite the Lord High Admiral's Letter of Reflections, there was no suggestion of his being removed for his failures in the office, his suspension had nothing at all to do with the navy and was brought about on purely political grounds. The weakness of Anglesey's position had been observed by Pepys on 8 December 1667; two days previously Coventry had brought up the matter of Anglesey altering the course of the Council's payments, but because of Anglesey's prudent silence and the reversal of his orders, together with the Treasury Commissioners not pressing the matter, it was passed over, but 'had the Duke of Buckingham come in time enough and had got it by the end he would have tossed him in it'.¹ Buckingham had been wanting to replace Anglesey with his own nominee, Sir Thomas Osborne, in what was 'one of the most lucrative offices at the disposal of the Crown'; Browning states that this had been the intention at the fall of Clarendon but Buckingham's duel with Shrewsbury put a stop to all manoeuvres for a short time.² It is not absolutely clear why Anglesey was removed at this particular time, but it is most probably connected with the temporary alliance of Buckingham and Arlington, who reached agreement and were able to bring greater pressure to bear on the King. This liaison was the product of their determination to bring about the fall of Ormonde as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and it would seem that Anglesey's refusal to co-

¹ Diary, 8 December 1667.

² Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, I, 57-8.

operate with them led to his own fall. The original idea, according to Browning, was that Arlington's 'creature' Sir Thomas Littleton should succeed Anglesey, but Buckingham brought in Osborne to act as a check on Littleton.¹ The Lord High Admiral was not consulted and Wren told the Navy Board that the Duke was 'the most wounded in this ... for it is done and concluded without his privity'.² The Duke of York was directed by the King to sign a warrant on 18 October 1668 to the Solicitor General, directing him to prepare a warrant for Anglesey's suspension, and two days later he was to prepare an order for the office to be executed by Littleton and Osborne during the suspension.³

The explanation given to Anglesey for his suspension was that the King suspected some 'very great Miscarriages in the management of that revenue' which had passed through his hands when he had been in Ireland. Subsequently this proved to have been only an excuse, for the investigation the following year into the Irish revenue produced no evidence of malpractice.⁴ The Treasurer had been suspended rather than dismissed as a matter of tactics, because he held the office for life by a patent under the Great Seal. To have dismissed him without any evidence of misconduct would have been seen as a direct attack on the principle of holding office for life.

Initially Anglesey did not realise the hopelessness of his position; on 2 November Pepys thought that he 'makes nothing of this order for his suspension, resolving to contend and to bring it to the Council'.⁵

¹ Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, I, 64; BM, Add. MS.36,916, ff.116-9.

² Diary, 29 October 1668.

³ Duke of York, Memoires of English Affairs, p.154.

⁴ PRO, PC2/61, f.104, 11 November 1668.

⁵ Diary, 2 November 1668.

He was, however, prevented from doing this as the suspension was said to have been sealed on 3 November, and so Anglesey resolved to present a petition instead on 5 November.¹ The petition was read on 11 November, the same day that the new Treasurers showed the Great Seal for Anglesey's suspension and their own patent to the Navy Board.² In his petition Anglesey claimed a 'legal' right to the office with its fees and profits because he had been granted it under the Great Seal for the term of his natural life; he requested that the petition should be read at the Council and that the King should take the advice of the judges.³ The King replied that the suspension had already passed the Great Seal and he saw no reason, 'upon sight of the petition', to alter what had been done. The King stated that he did not intend to deprive Anglesey of the benefit of law, although he cannot have wanted the matter to be taken to the courts, and that he was only acting to ensure that he was well served in so important an office. As Anglesey was allegedly suspected of miscarriages in the Irish revenue, the King 'therefore does not think it fit to trust the Treasury of his navy to the same hands till he hath better received satisfaction'.⁴

It is possible that Anglesey did not suffer financially from the loss of the office; indeed he hoped to be paid £3,000 yearly during his suspension. This is first mentioned in a letter of 27 June 1672 from the Navy Board to Osborne, but it is not certain whether these payments only started in 1672, as the Board said that they had only just been sent the King's warrant for the payments.⁵ There was also some doubt about the

¹ Diary, 5 November 1668.

² Diary, 11 November 1668.

³ PRO, PC2/61, f.104, 11 November 1668.

⁴ PRO, PC2/61, f.104, 11 November 1668.

⁵ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.225r, 27 June 1672.

validity of the payments, as on 4 July 1672 Osborne wrote a note that Anglesey had produced 'a strange kind of warrant for a salary of £3,000 for life' out of the Navy Treasury, and the King declared that no payment was to be made until Anglesey's accounts were passed.¹ Anglesey was to face similar problems to Carteret in trying to get his accounts passed and it was more than two years before these were settled. There were still some small accounts unsettled as late as 1672, and it may have been these which held up the payment of the salary of £3,000 to him.

On 23 June 1669 the Treasury Commissioners asked the Navy Board to 'hasten their completing' the accounts of both Carteret and Anglesey, 'it being of much concernment to his Majesty's service that the same be dispatched'.² Anglesey was himself anxious that the work should be done. He had attended the Treasury office with his clerks on 13 October 1669, but the Navy Board had not been there and he 'entreated' them to appoint a day for the dispatch of the accounts so that they would not all be charged with neglect.³

However, the Navy Board was unmoved by this, and on 28 October he wrote to 'entreat that a speedy day may be appointed ... you only allow one day in the week, and if that be not punctually observed, I shall be long before I am discharged of my account'.⁴ This became even more urgent because Anglesey was being pressed by the Commissioners of Accounts; he told them that the accounts were with the Navy Board and they wrote to the Board on 3 February 1670 urging them to 'make speed'.⁵ The Board replied

¹ BM, Add. MS.28,040, f.25r, 4 July 1672.

² PRO, Adm.106/18, f.233, 23 June 1669.

³ PRO, SP29/266, f.104, 13 October 1669.

⁴ PRO, SP29/267, f.16, 28 October 1669.

⁵ PRO, Adm.106/19, f.186, 3 February 1670.

that 12 sections of the ledgers for 1667 and 1668 had been examined, and all the sea books for ships paid were made up and signed, but the members could not say when the rest would be finished. However, an assurance was given to the Commissioners that everything possible was being done.¹

The extra volume of work involved was a reasonable excuse for the slowness of the Navy Board, particularly as all its normal duties had to be carried out at the same time. The Board was also loath to enlist the aid of extra clerks, who were not familiar with naval accounts. Anglesey, like his predecessor, petitioned the Council, but he was only able to obtain an Order to the Navy Board requiring it to 'hasten the finishing of the said earl's accounts now depending before them'.² The Commissioners of Accounts wrote to the same effect on 13 July and 1 August 1670, and added that they could not get on with their work until the accounts were perfected.³ The Board saw little need to put themselves out for either Carteret or Anglesey, and were understandably reluctant to provide finished accounts which could be used against them by the Commissioners of Accounts. On 2 November the Commissioners sent a further letter saying that, 'we have long expected (as we had cause) the bringing in of the Earl of Anglesey's accounts', and wanting a definite answer as to when they would be ready.⁴ There is no record of when the bulk of the accounts were actually presented to the Commissioners, but some parts of Anglesey's accounts were still not ready by mid-1672, as on 4 July 1672 Osborne noted in his diary that the accounts had still not been passed.⁵

¹ BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.202, 16 February 1670.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.409, 1 July 1670.

³ PRO, Adm.106/20, f.37, 13 July 1670; f.63, 1 August 1670.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/20, f.247, 2 November 1670.

⁵ BM, Add. MS.28,040, f.25r, 4 July 1672.

The new Treasurers, sometimes called the Commissioners for executing the Office of Treasurer of the Navy, first sat with the rest of the Board on 11 November 1668. At first they were regarded with a considerable amount of suspicion because of the manner in which they had been brought into office, and also because of the novelty of having two people to execute the office. Many years later, Pepys wrote that they were 'brought into the Navy for want of other ways of gratification'. They remained in office jointly until July 1671, and Osborne then continued alone until June 1673.¹ Littleton had already been described as one of the 'professed enemies' of the Navy Board when the report of the Committee for Miscarriages was discussed in March 1668.²

From the beginning the new Treasurers gave the impression that they were looking for the faults of the office and were going to dispense with old servants. It was rumoured that Waith and Fenn, who had been paymaster and cashier to Carteret and Anglesey, were to be replaced. On 11 November 1668 Waith told Pepys that 'the new Treasurers do intend to bring in all new instruments', but Waith survived, although Hutchinson (probably the same person who had been paymaster prior to the Restoration) was brought in to join him, whilst Fenn was replaced by Littleton's brother Timothy.³ The manner in which the work of the Treasury was divided is not clear. It appears that Littleton dealt with 'purely financial matters', leaving the examination of accounts to Osborne. The situation is difficult to understand, because letters were directed to both Treasurers and their letters were signed jointly. From the outset the situation was unsatisfactory as it was based on the temporary political rapprochement between Buckingham and Arlington, and as they became increasingly estranged, relations between their followers also

¹ Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.257.

² Diary, 5 March 1668.

³ Diary, 11, 12, November 1668.

began to deteriorate. This uneasy alliance at the Treasury in which, according to Browning, it was 'highly probable that Littleton was the senior partner all round', inevitably led to clashes between the two Treasurers and impaired their efficiency.¹

Some indication of the separation of the Treasurers' work comes from a warrant of 17 October 1673 directed to Osborne, who was by then Viscount Latimer and Lord Treasurer. This warrant discharged him from all accounts of money paid or imprested to him and Littleton while they were joint Treasurers, the King being fully satisfied that Osborne 'never intermeddled with the receipts or payments', and that Littleton was the only person who could give an account or be answerable. This discharge was given on the proviso that it should not be extended to include Littleton.² It confirmed an earlier warrant sent to the Attorney General ordering him to prepare a discharge for Osborne during the joint Treasurership, which again was not extended to Littleton.³

Littleton's role in the payment of money is illustrated by a letter from Eleanor Tippet to the Navy Board, complaining about the non-payment of tickets by Littleton's brother Timothy, even though he had been ordered to pay these by the Board and Osborne.⁴ Littleton must also have been responsible for the 'soliciting' of money for the payment of wages, for when the Navy Board were expecting him to resign they wrote to the Duke of York's secretary, Wren, saying that, as Osborne was not yet ready to enter into the office, a delay would be caused in the procuring of money, and there would be no prospect of any further ships' pays.⁵

¹ Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, I, 86.

² CSPD 1673, p.584.

³ CSPD 1672-3, p.268.

⁴ PRO, SP29/300, f.9, 6 September 1671.

⁵ CSPD 1671, p.514.

The new Treasurers soon revealed their attitude to the rest of the Board, as at their second sitting they brought up the precedence due to them by virtue of their office. Hitherto Lord Brouncker had presided at the Board because of his 'quality'; what happened when Anglesey attended is uncertain, but the new Treasurers challenged this, demanding that because of their office they should have the same precedence as their predecessors. After some debate the matter was left with Brouncker in the chair, although Pepys thought that the Treasurers would bring the matter up before the Lord High Admiral for settlement.¹ During this initial period Pepys was very concerned at the lack of unity shown by his fellow officers in front of the newcomers. At a meeting before the Duke of York, Mennes complained that he was 'being made nothing of' when the Board discussed auditing accounts relating to tickets. Pepys thought this to be especially foolish since it was done before Littleton, 'who would be glad of this difference among us', but he thought it prudent to remain silent.² Later in December Pepys bemoaned the fact that he could not keep Mennes and 'others of the Board from showing our weakness, to the dishonour of the Board' and, although he claimed to be innocent of failures 'it vex me to the heart to have it before these people that would be glad to find out all our weaknesses'.³ The Duke of York and the rest of the Navy Board were treated with equal disregard by both Treasurers. On 4 January 1669 Pepys described their attitude as being one of 'opposition' to, or 'at least independency of, the Duke of York' and the Board, and the Duke was aware of how the Treasurers 'do carry themselves very disrespectfully of him and us'.⁴

¹ Diary, 17 November 1668, there is no further mention of this.

² Diary, 4 December 1668.

³ Diary, 15 December 1668.

⁴ Diary, 4 January 1669.

An example of this indifference occurred early in January 1669 when the Board attended the Duke of York. The Treasurers told him they had 'set themselves a rule of paying no money other than to reduce the growing charge or answering the present pressing service (without the least taking notice of the Board either before or now in it)'. They asked for the Duke's approval and he revealed the weakness of his own position by making an 'indifferent answer' telling them to act to the King's best advantage.¹ The Navy Board decided that the new Treasurers had overstepped themselves and they therefore advised the Duke to stand up to them, thus forcing them to either climb down or face a confrontation. Following the advice of Brouncker and Pepys, the Duke was 'mighty plain' with the Treasurers to such an extent that Pepys believed it 'will make the Treasurers careful of themselves, unless they do resolve upon defying the Duke of York'.²

The Treasurers continued to probe into the affairs of the Navy Board and pursued their attempt to discredit the rest of the Board. It is unfortunate that the Diary ends in May 1669, for it is the source of much of the material concerning the Treasurers.

Mennes, Tippetts and Pepys, together with the Treasurers, met the Treasury Commissioners to discuss the debt of the navy. The Treasurers tried to claim that the Navy Board had run the King into debt up to £50,000 beyond the money assigned for the navy, and the Board was attacked by Clifford and Ashley for their lack of method. Coventry and Duncombe

¹ Pepys MS.2581, f.136.

² Diary, 8 January 1669.

strongly defended the Board and it was resolved to put the objections into writing, which Pepys was 'mad at it, to see us thus wounded by our own members, and so away vexed'.¹ The hostile attitude of the new Treasurers may have had a beneficial effect, for although the Duke of York was again 'mightily angry', he was also 'mighty desirous to bring in as many good motions of profit and reformation in the Navy as he can, before the Treasurers do light upon them, they being desirous it seems, to be thought the great reformers'.²

The suggestion that the Navy Board had negligently wasted money was repeated to the King, who expressed his dissatisfaction. Pepys explained the matter to Wren, who took him to the King, and although he was able to satisfy the King for the moment, he did not think that the Board was safe, as the King's 'satisfaction is nothing worth, it being easily got and easily removed'. This incident did nothing to endear the Duke of York to the Treasurers; he was 'horrid angry against them; and he hath cause for they do all they can to bring dishonour upon his management, as do plainly appear in all they do'.³

The last example of the hostility of the Treasurers to the Duke of York and the Board, mentioned in the Diary, occurred on 10 May 1669 when Littleton clashed with the Duke over the reputation of a merchant, Mr. Child. Littleton 'very hotly and foolishly' said that he had 'never heard any honest man speak ill of Child', to which the Duke made a 'smart' reply. Afterwards the Duke had the 'Treasurers into his closet to chide them' for having thought to attack the constitution of the navy. This had taken place when the Duke's Instructions and other articles for the

¹ Diary, 12 February 1669

² Diary, 12 February 1669.

³ Diary, 14 February 1669.

government of the navy had been presented to the Council for examination. Nobody had been ready to say anything against them except the Lord Keeper, who said 'he did believe the Treasurers of the Navy had something to say, which was very foul on their part to be parties against us'.¹

During their examination of the books, the Treasurers discovered that it had been the practice of their predecessors to make payments on bills and other warrants, which was not strictly allowed by the Constitution, or Instructions, of the office. To have continued this practice would have jeopardised their position as reformers and would have rendered them liable to attack. Also, in order to safeguard their own position and to regularise these payments, they asked the Navy Board to issue a warrant to justify the payments. In itself this is an indication of the weakness of the Treasurer's Instructions, in that it was necessary to obtain additional warrants to cover their payments. Thus Littleton and Osborne appreciated some of the difficulties of their predecessors, and were at least prepared to do something about it by introducing additional Instructions to cover their actions. These rules for the payments made by the Treasurers of the navy, were the first serious attempt to update the Treasurer's Instructions; they recognised the increased business and complexity of naval finances since the Instructions were first drawn up in 1640. Thus the Duke of York and the earlier Treasurers can be censured for having done nothing to improve the situation.

As previously mentioned, Anglesey had also had doubts about his authority to make certain payments but was put off by the Navy Board, who advised him to apply to the King in Council if he considered that his patent, the 1662 Instructions, and the practice of his predecessors were

¹ Diary, 10 May 1669.

insufficient warrant for his payments.¹ Littleton and Osborne were not so easily dissuaded from their purpose, and on 5 December 1668 the Navy Board told the Duke of York that the Treasurers had requested a warrant to allow certain payments, which have been made 'upon other vouchers than what the strict course of this office allows'; hitherto such payments had been made by Carteret and Anglesey on no other warrant than 'necessity and custom'.² As usual the Duke of York accepted the advice of the Navy Board, and on 12 December he authorised them to issue a warrant to the Treasurers to justify these payments; this was drawn up and signed by the Navy Board on 7 January 1669.³

The first problem to be tackled by these new Instructions was that of the Comptroller being absent on other business. It was part of his duty to sign and record in ledgers the bills sent to the Treasurer for payment. In order to prevent delays, or the Treasurer paying unauthorised bills, it was decided that the signature of two or three of the other Principal Officers, or Commissioners, would be sufficient warrant for the payment of bills, provided the bill 'appears by the attestation of one of the known clerks of the Comptroller and Clerk of the Acts' to have been duly registered by them.⁴ This was designed to speed up the payment of bills and to avoid delay while preserving the check or comptrol on the Treasurer. The second article hit at one of the great abuses of the period, certainly as far as the workmen were concerned, which was the delay in getting tickets signed. Henceforward the tickets could be signed by one of the Principal Officers, or Commissioners, together with the testimony of the Clerk of the Cheque in the yard and

¹ BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.162, 8 February 1668.

² BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.183, 5 December 1668.

³ PRO, Adm.7/638, f.127, 12 December 1668; Adm.2/1740, f.178, 7 January 1669.

⁴ PRO, Adm.2/1740, f.178, 7 January 1669.

one of the known clerks of the Comptroller. This was also allowed in the third article for tickets or passes for seamen discharged out of the King's or hired ships, provided that the ticket was attested by the purser and two of the standing officers of the ship. Finally, the Treasurers were to be justified in making payments of all tickets, bills or wages, for yards or sea service, which had been made up and signed by three of the clerks of the Navy Board, one being the Comptroller's clerk, and this would be 'sufficient warrant to the Treasurers for payment as if the Principal Officers and Commissioners were present', provided the Treasurers gave 'timely notice' of all such payments to the Navy Board, especially the Comptroller.

The importance of these articles is in their precise and practical nature, compared with the general articles of the 1662 Instructions. They were not an innovation but merely an official recognition of what appears to have been the practice of former Treasurers. Most probably Littleton and Osborne, with their reforming outlook and past criticisms of the Treasury for its lack of method, wanted to bring more order to the office and, at the same time, regularise their own position with regard to payments. This was the only attempt at reform prior to July 1671 and, with this exception, the joint Treasurers operated in the same manner as their predecessors. There is little doubt that the Navy Treasury absorbed the reforming Treasurers after the jolt of their initial impact and the system ran very much as before. However, their new roles, together with the strength of the Treasurers' personalities, must have brought some measure of increased efficiency into the running of the office. They were men of far greater energy than either Carteret or Anglesey, and when they had appreciated the problems of the Navy Board a better relationship evolved between them.

The joint Treasurership lasted until mid-1671, by which time a good deal of dissatisfaction had emerged both at the idea of two people holding this office, and with the Instructions which guided them. When the political alliance between Buckingham and Arlington began to crumble their protégés were similarly affected and relations between the Treasurers became strained. Even without these pressures, Osborne was ambitious for more power and he 'chafed at the subordinate position which he was required to occupy in the partnership'. Matters came to a head in the summer of 1671, when Osborne accused Littleton of 'serious malversations in connection with the funds entrusted to his care'.¹ This presented an excellent opportunity to bring the position of the Treasurers under review, and attack Buckingham and Arlington through their subordinates. The accusations against Littleton were later summarised by Osborne; they amounted to his having failed to observe the order allowing him to borrow money from the goldsmiths. He was also alleged to have made considerable payments, which were 'irregular' and should not have been paid out of the money supplied for the navy, and to have not passed his accounts for the money received when he was Treasurer. After he had left office it was stated that he had lent £9,000 of the money still in his hands to his partners in the victualling. This was an 'undue diversions of the King's money from the use it was appointed' and was at a time when the King was 'much straitned for money in all his offices'.²

The debate on the changes in the office went on for most of the summer with the King, Lord High Admiral, some of the Privy Council, the Treasury Commissioners, and the Navy Board, all involved. The result of these

¹ Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, I, 86.

² Browning, *op.cit.*, p.86 n2, Leeds MSS, Packet 16.

negotiations was an important development in the office of Treasurer, in fact the most important since the Restoration. In effect it was an attempt to reduce considerably the importance of the office by the alteration of its Instructions, though in practice this was not achieved, since the new constitution of the office only lasted until June 1673.¹

The first open move in the dispute between the Treasurers occurred on 24 June 1671, when Osborne went to Windsor to see the King 'about the difference between me and Sir Thomas Littleton'.² The King returned to London on 28 June and ordered that Littleton should agree to the proposals made by Osborne. It is not clear what these were, but presumably they were to remove Littleton and leave Osborne as sole Treasurer. Other pressures were also brought to bear on the King, probably by the Duke of York, who had for some time been wanting to reduce the power of the Treasurer, and the King announced that in future there would be no Treasurer, only a cashier.³ These negotiations provide an excellent insight into the vacillating aspect of Charles II's character, for having made two changes already, he then resolved not to make any decision on the matter until it had been discussed with the Treasury Commissioners; at the same time he assured Osborne that he would continue to receive the same salary.⁴

On 11 July 1671 the matter was brought up before the Privy Council, with the Navy Board in attendance, and a 'full mature debate' was held. As a result it was decided that the dispute between Littleton and Osborne should be settled by the King, and it was resolved that in future there would be only one Treasurer; the idea of having a cashier must have been dropped. At the same meeting instructions were drawn up which were

¹ Catalogue, I, 87.

² BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.9, 24 June 1671.

³ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.9, 28 June 1671.

⁴ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.9, 1 July 1671.

intended to emphasise the future subordination of the Treasurer to the Navy Board.¹ These stated that the Navy Board should always have before them a 'full and perfect state' of the cash or assignments for the use of the navy remaining in the Treasurer's hands; that the Treasurer could no longer make payments on his own authority as 'no money shall be paid for the use of the navy but by order of the Board'; and that the Treasurer was not, except 'at his greatest peril', to be allowed to alter the order or method of payments of bills after they had been settled by the Board. The new rules clearly spelled out the inferior position of the Treasurer by stating that, although he was required to attend the Board, he would 'in no wise have a vote in the making of contracts or bargains'. The idea of giving the Treasurer a salary was continued and it was reaffirmed that he was not to be allowed poundage. This was a compromise between the desire of the Lord High Admiral to reduce the pre-eminence of the Treasurer and the desire of Osborne, supported by Buckingham, to remain as Treasurer. The Treasury Commissioners, the Navy Board, and some of the Privy Council then drew up a new set of Instructions in line with this settlement; these were to be presented to the Duke of York for 'his judgement and opinion' before the final approval of the King was obtained. During the King's absence on a long journey along the south coast to visit several ports and inspect the fleet, the Treasury Commissioners and the Navy Board worked on the additional Instructions, which were presented for formal approval at the Council on 6 September 1671 by the Lord High Admiral.² The report was accepted and the King ordered that the new Instructions were to be 'held obliging' to everyone of the Principal Officers and Commissioners, and particularly the Treasurer and

¹ PRO, SP29/291, f.181, 11 July 1671.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.446, 6 September 1671. *Supra*.p.41.

the Comptroller of the Treasurer's accounts.

The whole purpose of the new Instructions was to reduce the independence of the Treasurer by restricting his freedom of action and by making him more accountable to the Navy Board. The 'mystery' of the accounts was to be laid open and the Treasurer was no longer to be the powerful courtier figure elevated far above the rest of the Board. A far more stringent check was to be kept on the debt, receipts, and expenditure of the navy, with the idea that strict surveillance would reduce excessive waste and bring errors to light before the money or assignment could be disposed of.

The first four articles concerned the weekly certificates, which the Treasurer was required to present to the Navy Board. On every Saturday he had to deliver an account of all money and assignments received within that week, the amount still remaining in his hands, and the payments he had made whether by bill, ticket, or other warrant.¹ The certificates were to include the names of the persons to whom money had been paid, and the fund from which the money had been assigned had also to be listed. In his payments the Treasurer had to distinguish between payment in money or assignment. By these certificates the Navy Board would be able to keep a constant check on the receipts and issues of the Treasury, and, in order to ensure that this was effective, the certificates were to be given to the Comptroller of the Treasurer's accounts. This duty was performed by one of the Commissioners, Lord Brouncker, who had to inspect these certificates so that he could give the Lord High Admiral, the Treasury Commissioners, or the Navy Board, a full statement of the Treasurer's actions. The Treasurer was also required to observe the 'form' laid down by the

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, Articles 1-4.

Treasury Commissioners, or Navy Board, in the making of these certificates, and to allow the books to be compared with the certificates by the Comptroller of the Treasurer's accounts. The introduction of these weekly certificates was the most important innovation brought in by these Instructions, and in theory they would enable a running check to be made of naval finances. This was a considerable advance on the 1662 articles, which had contained no such provision for regular checks.

One of the main problems of financing the navy on credit during the Dutch War had been the over registering of bills on the various funds set aside for the navy. This had led to further confusion in the accounts, and eventually had the effect of reducing the credit available when contractors realised that the funds were oversubscribed. To reduce this danger the Treasurer was not to be allowed to dispose of any assignment, whether for raising money or for satisfying debts, without the direction of three or more of the Navy Board. The idea of stricter control was also apparent in the 6th Article, which directed the Treasurer not to make any payments when the 'fund' from which it was to be made was not specified on the bill or warrant. If the Treasurer did make such a payment, he was not to be given allowance for it on his accounts unless otherwise ordered by the Lord High Admiral or Treasury Commissioners. In these two articles it is possible to see the influence of the Treasury Commissioners, who had the most interest in ensuring that the funds were not oversubscribed.¹ To assist the Treasurer, the Navy Board were required to ensure that the Comptroller of the Treasurer's Accounts had entered the fund from which the bill, or warrant etc., was to be paid, before sending it to the Treasurer.

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, Ninth Article.

The last four articles of the new Instructions attempted to tackle the system which had developed of having separate payments for the Victuallers and the Chatham Chest. Finally, the Treasurer was required to reside in the house provided by the King, to use the offices provided, and he was also to be responsible for the actions of his paymaster, cashier and clerks. One of the great triumphs of the Treasury Commissioners of 1667 had been to take away from the Navy Treasury the payment of the Victualler, thus saving poundage to the King; but by 1671 the Navy Treasurer was being paid by salary, not poundage, and in consequence this separation was rendered unnecessary. The 11th Article therefore declared that, because of the inconvenience caused by the Treasurer and Victualler having separate receipts and issues of money, henceforward the Treasurer would receive and issue all money for the Victualler, which it was hoped would help to simplify the accounts. A similar reason led to the Treasurer being required by the last Article to be accountable for the deductions from seamen's wages made for the Chatham Chest. The Chest had not enjoyed a reputation for being well managed in its financial affairs, and it was thought that, by giving direct responsibility for its payments to the Treasurer, and by making him accountable for them, the situation would improve.

Even though the Navy Treasury had been given a new set of Instructions, the question of who was going to execute the post still had to be settled. What happened behind the scenes is not known, but the result became apparent on 20 September when Osborne noted 'I was declared sole Treasurer of the Navy and kissed the King's hand upon it'.¹ A compromise must have been worked out because Littleton was not completely cut off from the navy; on 23 September he was named as one of the Commissioners for Victualling.² Even though this could be regarded as a consolation prize

¹ BM. Add.MS.28,040, f.11, 20 September 1671.

² BM, Add.MS.36,916, f.231, 23 September 1671.

it may have had considerable financial attractions for Littleton, who thus escaped the strict regulation enacted for the Navy Treasury. For the rest of the period under consideration Osborne was the sole Treasurer, and from a diary kept by him during most of this time it is possible to obtain a closer view of the workings of the Navy Treasury.

Osborne was determined to observe the new Instructions, and on his arrival at the Navy Board as sole Treasurer, he began to press further towards a regular system of payments. He appointed his own paymaster, Robert Maddocks, breaking the rule of Waith, who had been in that post since 1660, and his own cashier, Anthony Stephens. His reforming influence was seen within a month of his taking office, when he prevailed with the Navy Board to keep a minute book for 'recording each day's orders, transactions and warrants'. This was very much a Pepysian move and may have been suggested by the Clerk of the Acts.¹ Osborne pressed the Board to recognise his Instructions, and they agreed to observe them by inserting in their margins the fund from which the bills were to be paid. Up to this time the Comptroller had been able to put forward bills for early payment after they had been signed by the rest of the Board. It is easy to see how this power could have been abused to the advantage of favoured individuals and Osborne thought it was 'not fit to remain in any single hand'.² As a result of his actions, the Board agreed that the bills would be signed by three of their number in order to determine their course of payment, thus preventing preferential payment by the Comptroller.

One of the most important functions of the Treasurer's duty was the 'soliciting' of money from the Treasury Commissioners, which indicates the Navy Treasury's subordinate position. Their relative positions had

¹ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.12, 19 October 1671.

² BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.12r, 24 October 1671.

been somewhat blurred when Carteret had been at the Navy Board, but when there was a general shortage of money, it was evidently beyond the power of the Navy Treasurer to rectify matters. On 23 October 1671 Osborne stated to the Treasury Commissioners that a sum of £95,260-8-0, which should have been paid in Littleton's time, was still outstanding, but 'nothing was obtained at this meeting more than a promise from Alderman Backwell to advance £5,000'.¹ At a meeting the next day part of the money was promised by the Commissioners and was in fact paid the following day, but the rest was promised in varying sums when money was available and depending on the other demands on the Treasury. On 23 November Osborne was told that he could not be given a 'certain date' when he would receive the remainder of the first payment of £11,000, but was promised £6,000 of it the following week; he received this sum on 6 December. By January 1672 only £74,772 of the money had been paid to the navy, of this only £36,000 came from the Treasury; the rest had been borrowed with interest from the bankers, £14,600 from Backwell, £12,000 from Ryder, £2,000 from Sir Robert Viner, and in smaller sums.² Part of this money was required to pay off the yards for work done during the Second Dutch War. These old debts were being paid off a quarter at a time with the wages for the present quarters. On 7 December 1671 Osborne sent money to Chatham to pay the quarter ending at Michaelmas 1671, and the old quarter ending at Michaelmas 1666.³ Osborne was reasonably successful in borrowing money for the navy. Browning comments that to his contemporaries the most striking characteristic was his skill in borrowing money, a facility which was possibly due to family connections in the City.⁴ On 28 October 1671 he was asked by the Navy

¹ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.12r, 23 October 1671.

² Another contact in the banking world frequently used by Osborne to advance money was Sir John Banks, Coleman, Sir John Banks, pp.58-62.

³ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.15r, 7 December 1671.

⁴ Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby, I, 88.

Board to procure \$1,500 for the payment of tickets and 'I borrowed it immediately of Alderman Backwell'.¹ The Treasury Commissioners were not very enthusiastic about Osborne's ability to borrow money with such ease and in complete independence of them, but on 10 November it was agreed that he should borrow money at 10% interest. He declared that he could 'borrow money on my own promise to repay them at three months' notice', but having granted this, the Treasury Commissioners 'retracted' the power three days later.² Osborne was still allowed to borrow money, but with the Treasury Commissioners, and not himself, as security. In this he was quite successful, though not to the degree required by the Treasury, as they complained that he was standing too 'precisely' on the figure of 10% interest and should give more rather than lose the money. On 24 November Lord Ashley told him that he was 'complained of for not borrowing money and standing too nicely upon rules in doing it' and that he should borrow on what terms he could.³

The approach of the Third Dutch War brought a great increase in business for the Treasurer, and as the need for money grew he had to be more persuasive with the Treasury Commissioners and bankers. There were still several old quarters to pay in the yards; old tickets continued to come in, and Sir Edward Spragge's squadron returned from the Straits as war broke out. The Treasurer was also involved in making a survey of the stores when it was discovered that the King had been badly misled by Surveyor Middleton into believing that the stores were full when in fact they were virtually empty. Osborne went with Shaftesbury and Clifford to inspect the stores at Chatham, Deptford and Woolwich, and arranged with the prominent banker Sir John Banks to have more money advanced for the navy.⁴

¹ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.12r, 28 October 1671.

² BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.13r, 10 November 1671.

³ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.14r, 24 November 1671.

⁴ Haley, First Earl of Shaftesbury, p.301.

While he was Treasurer, Osborne was always punctual in sending weekly certificates to the Navy Board. This had been an important part of the 1671 Instructions. His first one was sent on 24 October 1671, and thereafter they were sent at the required weekly intervals. Osborne complained that, while he had returned the certificates 'distinctly at every week's end', the Navy Board had not been passing them on to the Treasury Commissioners; on 8 March 1672 they had given in eight weekly certificates at the same time.¹ From 9 July to 16 September Osborne spent the summer in Yorkshire. During his absence the business of the Treasury was carried on by Stephens and Maddocks, who continued to send in the certificates; eleven were forwarded between 1 July and 16 September.²

The last part of Osborne's journal shows that the navy had again fallen into dire straits for lack of money, and that the Treasurer and the rest of the Navy Board were completely unable to remedy the situation. On 31 October 1672 Maddocks returned from having paid off all the ships, and as a result the Treasury appears to have been completely exhausted; Osborne was to write a sad epitaph on his final days at the Treasury; 'from this day to 3 December, I was seldom at the Navy Office, there being but little money in my hands, but I was chiefly employed to solicit for money'.³ For the last few months of his period in office the silence of the diary may indicate that there was little change in the situation. Osborne, having served his financial apprenticeship at the Navy Treasury, had become Lord Treasurer. He had come a long way since his first appearance at the Navy Board in 1668, which is a testimony to his ability as Treasurer of the Navy as well as to his political success. On 19 June 1673 a warrant was passed to grant the office of Treasurer of the Navy to

¹ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.20, 8 March 1672.

² BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.26, 17 September 1672.

³ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.27, 31 October 1672.

Edward Seymour, Speaker of the Commons, and Osborne left the Navy Board shortly after the Duke of York left the Admiralty.¹

From his diary there can be no doubt that Osborne had been a very energetic Treasurer and had not been restricted in his actions by the 1671 Instructions. He was very active in attending the Navy Board and Treasury Commissioners, and was noted for his ability to borrow money. The advent of another war, when the debts of the last were not fully cleared, was to cause the usual chaos in naval accounts, but the underlying problem was not to be solved at the Navy Board, even with a Treasurer of the calibre of Osborne. Of all the occupants of the Navy Treasury from 1660 to 1673, Osborne was by far the most efficient and energetic, and after his initial hostility to the Duke of York and the Navy Board, he appears to have co-operated very well with them.

¹ CSPD 1673, p.380.

THE COMPTROLLER OF THE NAVY

The Comptroller ranked second in precedence after the Treasurer at meetings of the Navy Board. On some occasions the social standing of other members of the Board, such as Lord Brouncker, enabled them to claim the chair in the absence of the Treasurer, but at most meetings the Comptroller could point to the fifth Article of his Instructions which recognised him as having 'precedence of place' amongst the other officers. This position was also recognised in the salary of the Comptroller which, after the Restoration, was £500 per annum, whilst the Surveyor received £490 and the Clerk of the Acts £350.¹ The Comptroller was initially envisaged as a check on the activities of the other officers, and in this capacity he has been described as the 'head clerk of the navy'.² However, the notion of the Comptroller being a 'clerk' should not be pressed too far, because his responsibilities and supervision of the other officers elevated him to a higher position at the Navy Board. With the expansion of the navy, which had taken place since the office had come into being, the responsibility for checking, or 'comptrolling', the work of the whole Navy Board had become too vast for one individual. If there is any single area in which the Duke of York's Instructions of 1662 can be regarded as outdated, it is in respect of the duties assigned to a single person as Comptroller. This difficulty became widely recognised during the Restoration period and several attempts were made to spread the burden of the work. It is in this particular that significant advances were made in naval administration during the 1660s.

¹ Catalogue, I, 9.

² Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, p.181.

In addition to the volume of work associated with this office, its efficiency was further impaired by the inadequacy of accounting methods in the seventeenth century. The Comptroller's ability to keep a check on the work of his colleagues was seriously hampered because of the large number of books and ledgers and the inadequacy of indexes or cross-references. A third factor which made the Comptroller the least efficient of the Principal Officers lay in the shortcomings of the individual holders of the office, and in particular Sir John Mennes. The personal weakness, if not incompetence, of Mennes, as well as his poor health, did not help an office which was already overburdened with work and lacking in administrative means. One of the basic problems of the office was that it was usually exercised by seamen who were not accountants, and they were assisted by clerks, who may have had some degree of competence in bookkeeping, but lacked sufficient knowledge of the sea and naval affairs. Ideally, therefore, the Comptroller should have been a person who possessed an understanding of accountancy and financial matters, and was also well versed in the problems and practices of the navy. That no individual possessed these dual qualities during this period, further illustrates the problems of the office.

The origins of the Comptroller's office can be traced back into the early Tudor period, and subsequent evolutionary changes were given formal recognition in Letter of Patent in 1546.¹ The first Comptroller to be appointed was William Broke as 'Comptroller of all our shippes' with a fee of £50 a year, plus 4 shillings a day for travelling expenses, £8 for boat hire, and 1s. 4d. per day for the wages of two clerks.² Initially the basic duties of the Comptroller were to act as a check on the actions of his fellow officers to prevent fraud, waste and extravagance. He was to

¹ Davies, 'The Administration of the Royal Navy under Henry VIII: the origins of the Navy Board', EHR, LXXX, p.269.

² Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.85.

supervise the accounts of the Treasurer and Surveyor and inspect the stores and storekeepers' books. This may have been a reasonable expectation when the navy was small but as it increased, particularly in the mid-seventeenth century when it developed at a great rate, the possibility of these duties being efficiently executed rapidly decreased. The office was therefore basically that of an accountant with complete oversight of naval finances.

When the Navy Board was restored in 1660 there was already an awareness of the difficult nature of the Comptrollership but no attempt was made at that stage to rectify the situation. In a document, probably prepared in June 1660 and attributed to Sir William Penn, it was recognised that 'it hath never been known to any one man now living in the navy, that ever he [the Comptroller] could perform his particular duty in keeping check or control on the Treasurer's payments, or the cash committed to his charge, or auditing storekeepers accounts, as he is enjoined'.¹ Penn questioned whether the duties of the Comptroller had ever been performed satisfactorily and he expressed doubts, because of the increased size of the navy, as to the practicability of the office. His remedy was to abolish the Principal Officers and to replace them with Commissioners, who would have collective responsibility for the work. In particular he felt that the part of the Comptroller's work relating to the Treasurer's accounts should be performed by someone in the Treasurer's office. The idea of Commissioners was too closely associated with the Interregnum for it to have been acceptable in 1660. A further realisation of the difficulties involved in this office, came from the new Comptroller, Sir Robert Slingsby. His Discourse of the Navy was presented to the Duke of York in 1661 and can

¹ NMM, WYN 11/3, it is not clear whether this document was ever presented to the King, Duke of York, or the Committee of the Privy Council when the revival of the Navy Board was being considered in June 1660. *Infra.* p.305n2.

be regarded as an attempt to gain favour.¹ In it Slingsby mentioned some of the defects in naval administration, but, as with Penn's document, it had little initial impact, although some of its suggestions were to be taken up later. One of the most serious impediments recognised by Slingsby was the insufficient number of clerks allowed to the Comptroller. The situation was rectified over the next ten years, and the Duke of York's letter of 22 March 1665 was particularly helpful in this.² Slingsby was sceptical about the notion of creating more officers, either under, or in association with the Comptroller. Rather than have a separate officer to check the Victualler's accounts, he suggested that a reform of the present officers would be sufficient. The idea of an officer to keep a more exact account of the stores was dismissed as an attempt in which its 'projector aims at as an employment to himself'.³ But Slingsby's main proposal was simple and unimaginative and it harked back to the lack of clerks. He suggested that, after an examination of the duties of the respective Principal Officers, each should be allowed 'such a number of clerks as may be proportionable to the duty required of that office'.⁴ Thus the first Comptroller after the Restoration did recognise the volume of work associated with his office, made some proposals to reduce it, but did not offer any new solutions. The only other relevant suggestion made by Slingsby was his request to the Duke of York to issue a set of instructions, 'as a direction for every officer to walk by in the execution of the duty of his place.'⁵

¹ Sir Robert Slingsby, 'A Discourse upon the Past and Present State of His Majesty's Navy', printed in Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses of the Navy, pp.327-59.

² PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.118, 22 March 1665.

³ Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses, p.341.

⁴ Tanner, op.cit., p.344.

⁵ Tanner, op.cit., p.342.

The Lord High Admiral's decision to issue a set of Instructions in 1662, which had no apparent connection with the prompt from Slingsby, was in response to a much wider appeal for directions and codifications of responsibility. The Comptroller had the longest list of Articles in the 1662 Instructions; these numbered eleven compared with eight each for the Treasurer and Surveyor, and five for the Clerk of the Acts.¹ The Comptroller's Articles stress the accounting aspect of his work, and of his being a check on the waste, extravagance and neglect of his fellow officers. The idea of one officer acting as a check on the actions of his fellows, was thought to be one of the best ways of obtaining a greater degree of honesty in an age when office holding was often regarded as a reward, or as a means of making profit, rather than as a duty to be performed. The general Articles to the Navy Board collectively illustrate this clearly; Article 18 required each member of the Board to 'be able to trace one another in their distinct and several duties'. The Comptroller had the specific responsibility of checking the Treasurer's and Victualler's accounts, but he also had the right to examine the Surveyor's books and all other ledgers and papers relating to the Navy Board.

The first two Articles of the Comptroller's duty were concerned with the rating of wages and hire charges and the current rates for the purchase of provisions. He had to avoid abuse to the King and to his subjects by preventing the erroneous rating of men, both on ships and in the dockyards; he also had to ensure that the under officers did not operate any frauds in association with private individuals over the hire of additional workmen or vessels. The fourth Article was potentially one of the most important as it was designed to prevent waste and abuses in the making of contracts. When contracts were being made the Comptroller was to be fully

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, not foliated, the Lord High Admiral's Instructions, 1662.

comptrol of the Treasurer's and Victualler's accounts' so that he could 'trace' them at their signing and also be able to cite precedents and give guidance for future occasions. Similarly, by the ninth Article, he was to keep a separate account of all 'imprests', which would be cancelled at the balancing of the accounts to avoid double-payments; it would also enable him to keep a check on payments made by the Treasurer and the money still in hand. This was extended in the tenth Article, by which the Comptroller was to keep a copy of all 'estimates, privy seals, assignments, or other orders for money' made to the Treasurer or Victualler. He was to consult the Treasurer's books to ascertain how much of this had actually been received and how much issued by the Treasurer. This is associated with the last Article (11) where the Comptroller was to 'ballance, as an auditor, the state of the Treasurer's and Victualler's accounts' to the end of each year. The last Article goes further than any other in declaring the accounting role of the Comptroller. It illustrates the extent to which he should have been a person of considerable financial and auditing ability; this need was probably greater than that of being well acquainted with the affairs of the navy. As a well balanced combination of both these requirements was unlikely, it was better that the Comptroller should be well versed in accounts rather than in the ways of the sea. Although not recognised at the time, this does indicate the way in which the Comptroller's role had moved further away from the practical aspect of seamanship to that of being purely administrative. Thus, when it is stated that the restored Navy Board largely contained men of experience, it is only partially correct with regard to the post of Comptroller, because the experience of Slingsby, Mennes and Allin had been as commanders at sea and not as accountants, and this rendered them less effective in large areas of their duty.¹

¹ Catalogue, I, 10; Pool, Navy Board Contracts, p.2.

informed on the current rates and prices and was to 'lead the rest of his fellow officers'. The importance of this Article should not be underestimated, and its significance is shown by the repetition of the general point that the other officers of the Board should not be excluded from advising or 'comptrolling' the Comptroller in this. It also contained the recognition that this Article, if unchecked, could give the Comptroller widespread powers and influence in the making of contracts, thereby creating many opportunities for abuse.

The remaining eight Articles were concerned with the keeping and auditing of accounts and with the Comptroller's responsibility for presenting a running, as well as an annual, account of naval finances to the Navy Board and the Lord High Admiral. In the first place the third Article dealt with the storekeeper's books; these were to be examined quarterly and audited annually, and the final account of stores expended and those still in stock was to be presented to the whole Navy Board for ratification. Secondly, by a series of Articles (5, 6, 7, 9 and 10) the Comptroller had to keep a check and audit of the Treasurer's and Victualler's accounts, which, in volume, was the largest part of the Comptroller's work and, as will become evident, was the least successfully accomplished. The intention of these Articles was clearly to keep an internal check on the expenditure of what was the most costly government department in the seventeenth century, but this was rarely achieved because of the volume of the work involved and the inadequacy of contemporary accounting methods. As far as the Treasurer's Accounts were concerned the Comptroller was required by the fifth Article to 'comptrol all wilful neglects and oversights'. He was to assist the Treasurer (Article 6) by ensuring that all bills were associated with the correct estimates and thereby be able to keep his own 'comptroll of counter-books'. By the seventh Article he had to keep 'fair written and engrossed, a ledger book or books of

Finally, by the eighth Article, the Comptroller was made accountable to the Lord High Admiral for keeping an accurate and up-to-date record of naval finances, so that he could inform the Lord High Admiral of what money had been issued for each service and what was still in the Treasurer's hands. He was also responsible for watching over the expenditure of stores and for preventing wrong prices being paid for hire charges or in contracts. It is evident, therefore, that all aspects of the naval financial system should have come before the Comptroller. He did not have a specific section of naval administration directly under his control, his theoretical role being one of supervision over all his fellow officers.

Despite the fact that some of the difficulties of the office had been recognised in 1660, no attempt was made either then, or when the Instructions were issued in 1662, to rectify the situation, but between 1663 and 1673 there were several additions and alterations to the Comptrollership. By 1673 these changes had led to a number of officers being responsible for various aspects of the Comptroller's work. Although often opposed by Sir John Mennes from 1663 onwards, pressure of work, especially during the Dutch War, and Mennes' own clear incapacity made these changes inevitable.

The first indication of a serious attempt to alter the Comptrollership was in January 1663 when the Duke of York required the Attorney General to prepare a bill for Sir William Penn to 'assist and join with Sir John Mennes ... in the execution of the said office of Comptroller'. The reason for this proposal was the desire to have the office 'fully and punctually executed' and it reflects the realisation that the work of the office could not be 'exactly performed by one person'.¹ Apart from the

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.34, 5 January 1663.

motives suggested in the Duke's letter, another reason for the change was put forward by Coventry, who suggested that the joining of Mennes and Penn was only to set a precedent for joining Commissioner Pett with the Surveyor, Sir William Batten. If this was correct then a very involved expedient was being devised to bring about a relatively simple alteration, but it does not tally with an earlier comment made by Pepys on 27 October 1662, when he recorded that it was Mennes who had asked for assistance; it was decided that Penn should join him and that Pett should help Batten.¹ The choice of Penn to assist Mennes would appear to have been logical as he had exercised some of the Comptroller's duties while Mennes had been at sea in 1661/2.² This proposition would have given assistance where needed, yet it would not have entailed any additional expense to the King as Penn was to receive the same salary and allowances for clerks, but it did not get very far. Despite his earlier request for assistance, Mennes put up a stiff and successful opposition to any reduction in his status. On 27 February 1663 Mennes told Pepys of the alteration and expressed his hostility to it; Pepys watched with delight the subsequent strained relations between Mennes and Penn.³ Although the proposal was a live issue for a few weeks, Mennes was able to insist on his position and prevent any alteration. It is possible that Mennes' friendship with Clarendon may have been very useful in fighting off this challenge to his position. Apart from the loss in status which a joint Comptrollership would have meant, it is likely that Mennes would have wanted to retain sole control over the perquisites of the office. He may also have been aware of his own shortcomings and was therefore reluctant to have anyone in a position to criticise his

¹ Diary, 27 October 1662; 16 March 1663.

² Pepys MS.2242, f.74.

³ Diary, 27 February 1663; 3 March 1663.

affairs. The question of the division of the Comptroller's work was brought up again less than a year later. On 14 January 1664 the Navy Board 'sat long upon our design of dividing the Comptroller's work into some of the rest of our hands for the better doing of it'.¹ Again Mennes offered stiff resistance and 'would not yield to it'; by this time he was so entrenched that the Board had to be content with his assurance that the work would be improved. The discussion was confined to the Board, and as the Dutch War approached nothing effective had been done to make the Comptrollership more efficient.

During the course of 1665 and 1666 the difficulties facing the Navy Board increased, due not only to the deterioration in the financial position but also to the sudden expansion of the service. The normal peace-time administration was severely stretched by this increased work, and the pressure can be seen most clearly in the Comptroller's affairs. The basic inadequacy of Sir John Mennes in his office also exacerbated the situation. The deficiencies of Mennes were becoming more serious throughout the war, and from October 1666 a more definite move was made to push him aside. The campaign appears to have been led by Coventry, who was provided with assistance and information by Pepys. On 6 October Coventry told Pepys that one reason for the 'sad condition' of the navy was the 'want of a Controller', and he thought that it would have been better if the King had given Mennes £100,000 rather than keep him in office.² Most of the detail concerning the proposed changes are obscure, and there is little indication of either the Duke of York's attitude or of the Navy Board as a whole being consulted. Similarly there is no evidence to illustrate the role played by the King, Albemarle, or any other prominent individual associated with the navy. The

¹ Diary, 14 January 1664.

² Diary, 6 October 1666.

proposed changes would appear to have been pushed by Coventry and accepted by the Duke, with Pepys as an interested observer. But Coventry was often cautious in his proceedings, and did not want to reveal the internal weakness of the Navy Board when there was a possibility of external, that is Parliamentary, investigation into naval administration. At the same time he was determined to improve the situation by removing Mennes.¹ The final decision on the changes was probably reserved for the Duke of York, who frequently relied on Coventry for advice. The difficulty lay in trying to ease Mennes aside without admitting, by implication, that naval administration needed reform. The best way of doing this was seen independently by both Coventry and Pepys, who thought that Mennes should be made a Commissioner with his current salary but little direct responsibility. This amounted to an internal reorganisation of the Navy Board, but it would not attract much public, or more pertinently, Parliamentary comment, and would not be seen as an attack on one currently held view on office holding. In the seventeenth century office was usually regarded as being the holder's personal property. Pepys approved the idea, although he had reservations about his personal rival, Sir William Penn, replacing Mennes.²

The first official indication of this proposed alteration in the Comptrollership came on 7 November 1666, when the Duke of York informed the Board that Mennes was to be made a Commissioner of the navy and the office of Comptroller was to be executed jointly by Penn and Lord Brouncker.³ Once more the scheme was met with stiff opposition from Mennes, which clearly demonstrates the difficulty of removing an official for incompetence or incapacity. The reluctance of the Duke to bring

1 Diary, 13 October 1666.

2 Diary, 17 October 1666.

3 PRO, Adm.2/1740, f.171, 7 November 1666.

unwelcome publicity to naval affairs greatly assisted Mennes in his resistance to the changes. On 23 November Pepys was told that Mennes was refusing to resign his place and 'so the whole matter is again at a stand'.¹

On this occasion, however, the matter was not allowed to stand and, as Mennes had proved intractable, a stronger method had to be used to secure his removal. As the initial settlement of the Navy Board in July 1660 had been made in the Privy Council, it was logical and necessary that any later changes would also have to be registered there and Mennes would be unable to obstruct any changes ordered in this manner. To avoid any suggestion of removing Mennes completely from affairs and replacing him with Penn and Brouncker, as had been the intention in November 1666, the expedient adopted in the Order in Council of 16 January 1667 was to add them to Mennes in his execution of the office of Comptroller.² This had the effect of dividing the work between three officers, or it can be seen as putting the Comptrollership into Commission. Thus the final form taken in the reorganisation of the Comptrollership resulted, in detail at least, from the refusal of Mennes to resign his place and the more general problem of removing an incompetent official without exposing the internal weakness of the Navy Board. The wording of the Order did pay slight respect to Mennes' position by describing Penn and Brouncker as 'assistants to be added to Sir John Mennes'. Penn and Brouncker were not officially described as Comptrollers of the Victualler's or Treasurer's accounts, although these titles were frequently applied to them and their successors, but the Order certainly deprived Mennes of a great deal of his responsibilities. That part of the Comptroller's duty concerning 'the keeping checks and counter books upon

¹ Diary, 23 November 1666.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.204, 16 January 1667.

the treasurer ... and comptrolling the same' was to be exercised by Lord Brouncker. The comptrolling of the Victualler's and pursers' accounts was to be given to Penn. Thus the office was effectively divided among three members of the existing Board, but involved no increase in its size or wages. The changes would appear to have been welcomed by all except Mennes, and though Pepys himself was pleased, he was 'troubled' by Mennes' discomfiture.¹

The division of the Comptroller's work was discussed at the Board on 25 January 1667, when there was apparent agreement on the implementation of the Order in Council, but Mennes was still reluctant to accept the changes and made one last attempt to appeal to the King and the Duke of York.² This proved abortive, for the Duke's reply, which came in two letters, merely elaborated the Order in Council and was of little comfort to Mennes. The division of the Comptroller's work left Mennes still in charge of the first four Articles of the Comptroller's duty, which related to wages, prices of provisions, rates for water carriage etc., and examining the storekeepers' books.³ The large and extremely important part of the Comptroller's work, which related to keeping a check on the Treasurer's work (Articles 5, 6 and 9, and part of 7, 8, 10 and 11), was to be the responsibility of Brouncker. The remainder of the work, as defined in Articles 7, 8, 10 and 11, was associated with the Victualler's accounts and was left to Penn. This division of the Comptrollership was introduced too late to be of any effect in the war, especially as the financial position in 1667 was considerably worse than in any previous war. These changes could not be expected to lead to any immediate improvement because the basic problem of finance was still present, and some time elapsed before they were fully understood and implemented by the Navy Board. On 1 February 1667 the Duke of York

¹ Diary, 25 January 1667.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.450, 29 January 1667.

³ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.34r, 18 January 1667.

ordered that no bill was to be paid until it had been entered into Brouncker's books as well as the Treasurer's. This was to prevent any payments 'out of course' as well as to enable Brouncker to be accurate in his check on the Treasurer.¹

The supervision of the Victualler's accounts called for a more lengthy exposition from the Duke; it was intended principally to direct Penn and the Victualler but the rest of the Board were required to assist where necessary.² The Duke's letter also indicated the failure of Mennes to keep an adequate check on the Victualler's accounts, and shows the Navy Board to have been over a year behind in making-up the accounts. The Victualler was required to state his accounts up to Christmas 1665, with 'as near a balance as he can', and to send in full records of victuals issued and received, all Privy Seals and assignments, or bills of imprest, which he had received since that date. Closely associated with the Victualler's accounts were those of the pursers. These were by far the most difficult to oversee, and the virtual impossibility of keeping anything more than a superficial watch on the pursers was usually realised. Henceforth these accounts were to be checked by Penn, who had to pass them on to the Victualler within ten days for his agreement.

The changes introduced into the Comptroller's office during 1667 were by far the most important of the Restoration period, but in themselves they were not adequate to solve the fundamental difficulty of the office, namely, the volume of work and the inadequacy of seventeenth century accounting methods. Although Mennes' incompetent execution of the office, especially under the strain of war, had led to the changes in 1667, there

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.154r, 1 February 1667.

² PRO, Adm.106/14, f.353, 20 February 1667.

was still a feeling that the work of the office should be undertaken by additional persons.

The next most important aspect of the Comptrollership lay in the balancing of the stores and the storekeepers' accounts. This was expressed in the third Article of the Comptroller's duty, in which he was required 'to peruse and examine the storekeepers' books at the end of every quarter' and to make annual 'general audit of their accounts of all provisions received, issued, and expended upon all works and services proper for the year'.¹ The impetus for amending this part of the Comptroller's work may have come from Pepys, for in 1668 he was largely responsible for the Duke of York's letter reflecting on the performance of the officers of the Navy Board. In particular the letter mentions the failure of the Comptroller to follow the 1662 Instructions with regard to the balancing of the storekeepers' accounts.² At the same time Pepys was trying to draw up a scheme to enable this work to be done more effectively. He approached Francis Hosier, the Muster Master at Gravesend, and found him 'upon an extraordinary good work of designing a method of keeping our Storekeeper's Accounts'.³ It is not at all clear whether Hosier devised the scheme on his own initiative, or whether he had been prompted by Pepys to revise some ideas on this subject which dated from 1662 and 1663, but there is no doubt that the scheme itself was worked out in detail by Hosier with little assistance from Pepys.⁴

Spurred on by the Duke of York's criticism of his conduct and also by the activities of the Commissioners for Accounts, Mennes devised his own

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, third Article of the Comptroller's Duty.

² Pepys MS.2242, f.67.

³ Diary, 6 September 1668.

⁴ Diary, 24 November 1668.

scheme for balancing the storekeepers' accounts. He may have heard of Hosier's scheme and wanted to correct his own negligence before it was done for him, and accordingly requested more assistance but did not propose any new method of balancing the accounts.¹ The result was a marriage of Mennes' request and Hosier's method; it was embodied in an Order in Council on 12th February 1669 which allocated £450 per annum for clerks to assist the Comptroller.² This did not mean a radical change in the Comptrollership, nor did it reduce the power and activities of Mennes. It was essentially an attempt to rectify an impossible situation within the existing framework of the Comptroller's office, but in this it was only partially successful, for in 1671 it was thought desirable to complete the separation of the balancing of the storekeepers' accounts from the remaining duties of the Comptroller. On 23 June 1671 Sir John Ernle was added to the Navy Board as Comptroller of the Storekeepers' Accounts.³ Thus by 1671 the Comptroller's office had been effectively divided into four parts, three persons dealing separately with the Treasurer's, Victualler's, and Storekeepers' Accounts, with the remaining duties being handled by the Comptroller himself, who still had precedence over his fellow officers.

One of the more controversial aspects of the Comptroller's work was his responsibility for supervising the payment of wages, and the extension of this in the 'ticket' system. The first Article of the Comptroller's duty required him to 'attend all payments of all wages to seamen, shipwrights, caulkers etc.' and to control the rating of all wages.⁴ This part of the work does not call for much comment prior to 1667, and there

¹ BM, Add.MS,9,311, f.186, 4 February 1669.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.367, 12 February 1669.

³ Catalogue, I, 17.

⁴ PRO, Adm.7/633, first Article of the Comptroller's Duty.

are several mentions of Mennes going to Deptford, Chatham and Portsmouth to be present at paying the yards and ships.¹ The ability to perform this part of the duty obviously depended on the availability of money. As the financial situation deteriorated under the strain of war, far greater use was made of the system of issuing men with 'tickets', which theoretically should have been redeemed for their full face value at the Navy Treasury in London. The payments of wages and the difficulties of the ticket system will be discussed later; for the present only the Comptroller's involvement, which was concerned with accounts rather than actual payments, will be considered. When the main division of the Comptroller's work was implemented in January 1667, the first four Articles of the Comptroller's duty were 'reserved to the particular care and performance of Sir John Mennes'.² But, at the same time, Lord Brouncker was brought in to supervise the Treasurer's accounts, which included wages; in practice therefore Mennes was deprived of this part of his duty, and in an undated memorandum Mennes observed that 'Lord Brouncker in February 1667 did thenceforward take more particular care and charge of the ticket office and muster books'.³ The division of duties was confirmed in December 1668, following the Duke of York's letter of 25 November 1668 reflecting on the performance of the Navy Board, but this letter left some doubt as to whether examining the accounts or tickets was to be done by Mennes or Brouncker. The Navy Board asked for clarification, and recommended that the work should be done by Brouncker; Mennes, who appears to have had no objection, was to be allowed full access to the relevant account ledgers.⁴ The Duke accepted this

¹ Diary, 5 June 1663; 26 July 1665; 23 October 1666.

² PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.34r, 18 January 1667.

³ Bodl., Tanner MS.296, f.120.

⁴ NMM, SER 78, f.98r, 3 December 1668.

suggestion without hesitation.¹ Brouncker continued to fulfil this part of the Comptroller's work until the end of December 1672, when the Third Dutch war once again resulted in the widespread use of tickets. As a result Brouncker asked for assistance, and Edward Seymour, who had recently been appointed as a Commissioner of the Navy without direct responsibility, was given charge of 'comptrolling' the tickets and related ledgers.² By the end of the period under consideration, therefore, the office of Comptroller was being exercised by five people, Sir Thomas Allin, who had succeeded Mennes in April 1671; Sir Jeremy Smith, who had replaced Penn in overseeing the Victualler's and pursers' accounts in June 1669; Lord Brouncker, who retained control over the Treasurer's accounts; Sir John Ernle, who had been added in June 1671 to control the storekeepers' accounts, and Seymour, who was responsible for tickets from the beginning of 1673.³ This in itself indicates the changes which had taken place in the office since Slingsby was appointed as sole Comptroller in 1660. Undoubtedly the strain of war and the incompetence of Mennes had, by 1673, forced the Navy Board and the Admiralty to realise the vast nature of the Comptroller's work and to introduce more officers of senior status to undertake it; the pattern, thus established, was to remain a permanent feature of naval administration until the abolition of the Navy Board in 1832.

The individuals who held the office of Comptroller between 1660 and 1673 were three in number; Sir Robert Slingsby from August 1660 until his death on 26 October 1661; Sir John Mennes from 30 October 1661 until his death on 18 February 1671; and Sir Thomas Allin from 15th April 1671 to March 1680.⁴

¹ PRO, Adm.106/17, f.250, 8 December 1668.

² PRO, Adm.2/1, not foliated, 30 November 1672.

³ Catalogue, I, 12, 17, 18n2.

⁴ Catalogue, I, 12, 59.

The brevity of Slingsby's tenure of office affords little opportunity to assess his competence as Comptroller. Like his successors, Mennes and Allin, his background was closely associated with the sea. He was the son of a former Comptroller under James I, and had held several commands at sea in the 1630s, but his support for the royalist cause meant he was denied further service after 1642.¹ Slingsby suffered imprisonment and exile and, along with a large number of royalists, he hoped for a generous reward in 1660. He had been promised the lucrative office of Treasurer of the Navy by Charles I, but this post was granted to Carteret and Slingsby was appointed as Comptroller.² Slingsby's chief memorial is his Discourse upon the Past and Present State of His Majesty's Navy, which has been fully discussed by J R Tanner.³ Tanner's comment that the Discourse is 'rambling and ineffective' but contains one or two sensible suggestions, can be endorsed.⁴ While at the Navy Board Slingsby was not faced with the financial difficulties of later years, nor was he in office long enough to enable a well founded judgement of his capacity to be made. The only positive comment that can be deduced from Pepys is that Slingsby might have acted to counter balance the ambitions of Batten and Penn to control the Navy Board, but his death on 26 October 1661, after a short illness, prevented any possibility of this.⁵

¹ Tanner (ed), Holland's Discourses, pp.lxx-lxxxiii.

² Tanner, op.cit., p.lxxix, Tanner remarks that the Comptrollership 'was but a poor reward' and this may be accepted in general terms, but as far as the navy was concerned Slingsby recognised that Carteret had prior, or equal, claims on the King's generosity, and there is nothing to suggest that Slingsby regarded himself badly treated. He was further rewarded by a knighthood on 18 March 1661.

³ Tanner, op.cit., pp.lxxxii-lxxxiii.

⁴ Tanner, op.cit., p.lxxxii; Diary, 22 January 1661, this was the general opinion of Pepys who thought that Slingsby had 'too good an opinion' of his own proposals, even though Pepys still had a great deal to learn about the navy at this stage.

⁵ Diary, 27 October 1661.

For the majority of the period under consideration the office of Comptroller was executed by Sir John Mennes, whose patent was dated 28 November 1661.¹ There can be no doubt of Mennes' knowledge of the sea or of his suffering for the royalist cause. He had been given various commands at sea during the 1620s and 1630s, and by the outbreak of the Civil War was regarded as one of the most senior captains in the navy.² Like Slingsby, his own sympathy for the royalist cause made him unacceptable when the fleet declared for Parliament in 1642. Clarendon recognised Mennes as one who was 'of clear and unalterable affection' and of 'unquestionable integrity' to the King.³ This may have been a reflection of the friendship which developed between them at a later date. Mennes had been employed with the King's army and then at sea with Prince Rupert, but for the most part of the Interregnum he devoted himself to his hobby of writing poetry. It is possible that his wanderings on the Continent prevented him from being present at the Restoration, and the first indication that he had returned and was to be given some recognition for his past services came in April 1661 when he visited the Henry; this was to be his flagship in his new command as Vice-Admiral of the summer guard in the Channel.⁴ The untimely death of Slingsby left a vacancy at the Navy Board, and Mennes, with his knowledge of the sea and past support for the crown, was an obvious choice for the post. For most of 1662 Mennes was at sea employed on voyages to Tangier, and Lisbon, and until September he was Commander-in Chief in the Downs. Afterwards he came ashore and took up his duties as Comptroller, which in the interim had been executed by Sir William Penn.⁵ This move ashore, together with his

¹ Catalogue, I, 12, his salary was paid from 30 October and his first appearance at the Board was on 2 November, Diary.

² DNB, XXXVII, 235; Callender, 'Sir John Mennes', MM. XXVI, 276-85.

³ Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, II, 281, 222.

⁴ Diary, 10 April 1661.

⁵ Pepys MS.2242, f74.

advanced years (61 or 62) meant that Mennes saw little further active service. The last mention of him being considered for a command at sea was in November 1664 when he was nominated to be Rupert's Vice-Admiral, but nothing was to come of this.¹ Thereafter his connection with the fleet was limited to a series of short visits to the Nore, the Downs and yards. Writing in the 1680s, Pepys suggests that Mennes, and others, were given offices 'only in the excuse for the not suffering them to be longer at sea'; if this was the case it will go far to explain the lack of diligence, if not incompetence, which was associated with Mennes.²

Mennes made regular visits to the yards, and on occasions to the fleet itself, to supervise the payment of wages and to ensure that the seamen were 'rated' correctly. The normal procedure was for him to accompany the Treasurer, or his paymaster, and the Surveyor with their clerks to the various yards, but with the shortage of money and the increased use of tickets, these visits became less frequent.³ As far as Mennes was concerned, his visits to the yards decreased further after January 1667 when Brouncker was given responsibility for supervising the Treasurer's accounts, including tickets. During 1667 Mennes did attend

¹ CSPD 1664-5, p.66.

² Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.69. Others mentioned in the same context were Allin, Batten and Smith.

³ Mennes and Batten were at Portsmouth in December 1662, and July and November 1663; the visits of 1662 and July 1663 were definitely for the purpose of paying the yards and some ships, Diary, 13, 23 December 1662; 12, 22 January 1663; 30 July, 8 August and 19 November 1663. The Chatham yard received a lengthy visit from 26 September to 7 October 1662 and another visit in July 1663, Diary, 26 September - 7 October 1662, 7 July 1663. The yards at Deptford and Woolwich, being close at hand, did not require such expeditions but one or both of them were visited by the Comptroller, often accompanied by Batten and Pepys in March, June, August and September 1663, Diary, 6 March, 5 June, 23 August, 3 and 25 September 1663.

some of the pays which took place, but this was more in his capacity as one of the Principal Officers, who were required by the general Articles of the 1662 Instructions to be present at all pays, than as Comptroller; he went to the Nore in March and April, to Harwich in April, to Chatham in June, and in July and October of the following year he returned to Chatham to pay part of that yard.¹ After November 1668 there is no further mention of Mennes being sent to supervise the pays, no doubt his ill-health and infirmity, as well as the assistants added to the Comptrollership, prevented him from functioning in this capacity.²

At the Navy Board there was a gradual and growing awareness that he was not able to cope with his work as Comptroller. The alterations made in the Comptrollership by the addition of assistant and extra officers, has already been discussed.³ It has also been suggested that it was the obvious incapacity of Mennes which served to highlight the basic difficulty of one person trying to execute all the Comptroller's duties. Mennes' failings were therefore responsible for a greater appreciation of this problem during the 1660s, and they also acted as a precipitant for the subsequent changes. In certain aspects of his work, however, Mennes was worthy of praise, especially when he had been involved in contact with the fleet and the dockyards, but when removed from this practical element, which had formed the majority of his career, he was unable to cope with

¹ Mennes was at the Nore in March and April 1667, CSPD 1666-7, p.557; CSPD 1667, p.27; at Harwich also in April 1667, CSPD 1667, p.38; and in June 1667, July and October 1668 he was at Chatham, CSPD 1667, p.195; CSPD 1667-8, p.482; CSPD 1668-9, p.32.

² The accuracy of Mennes in performing this work is to be doubted, for on 18 December 1668 the Commissioners of Accounts were examining old ships' books and Pepys discovered them 'finding of errors in a ship's book, where he showed me many, which must end in the ruin, I doubt, of the Comptroller, who found them not out in the pay of the ship...', Diary, 18 December 1668.

³ Supra. pp.217-20.

the administrative burdens and intricate accountancy of the Comptrollership.¹

Most of the evidence about Mennes' incompetence comes from Pepys, either from the Diary or from his letters to the Duke of York and Coventry. Whilst it would be unwise to accept all of Pepys's comments at their face value, his very persistence and the evidence he provides to support his case, must lead to some acceptance of his general conclusions. Until the Second Dutch War wrought its disastrous effects on naval administration, Pepys had been inclined to regard Mennes as being somewhat slow witted, easily led, and verging on senility, but, at the same time, he was conscious of the more serious repercussions which the Comptroller's failings were having on the navy.² As early as April 1663 Pepys was muttering about the neglectful way in which Mennes, and his associate Batten, carried out their duties.³ In the following year when Mennes was being praised by Prince Rupert for his 'diligence' at Portsmouth, he was being criticised by Pepys, who commented on 'how ill his matters were done' and how Mennes understood 'not one word' of the Treasurer's accounts.⁴ This again illustrates that, however useful Mennes might have been in hurrying out the fleet, he was at a loss when it came to understanding the accounts and ledgers, which

¹ CSPD 1664-5, p.56, in the preparations for the fleet in November 1664 Prince Rupert had said of Mennes that 'none can go beyond his diligence'. In the following April Mennes was at Chatham hastening out the ships and Commissioner Pett praised his 'zeal'. PRO, SP29/118, f.39. 15 April 1665.

² During the course of the Diary Mennes is frequently referred to as a 'coxcomb' (10 January, 2 December 1663), and his 'folly' is often noted (8 April 1663, 28 February 1664, 10 November 1664, 20 October 1666), he is also called a 'dotard' or 'doting fool' (23 June 1663, 2 April 1664, 16 September 1665 and 2 March 1668). But in a less flippant vein Pepys doubted Mennes' capacity for the job, regarding him as 'a simple man as to the business of his office', (6 March 1663), and talks of his 'simplicity and unsteadiness' (5 October 1663). Pepys also thought that Mennes was unduly influenced by Batten (1 April 1663, 30 June 1663 and 2 April 1664).

³ Diary, 6 April 1663.

⁴ Diary, 17, 21 November 1664.

formed a central part of the Comptroller's work.

There were two serious attempts to reduce Mennes' involvement in naval affairs. The first, in January 1667, resulted in the addition of assistants, and the second, which introduced new methods to audit the storekeepers' accounts, lasted from early 1668 and continued by way of the Duke's Letter of Reflections until 1669. It is clear that the idea of office holding then current, together with the claim which Mennes had to some reward for his past services and the general political climate, all combined to prevent his removal from office. One obvious and clear-cut solution, such as granting him a pension, does not seem to have been widely considered, nor was there any suggestion of his complete removal from the Navy Board. The initial campaign to improve the execution of the Comptroller's work had met with some success, but it still left Mennes with a large share of the work, and as the situation was still unsatisfactory, Coventry, with Pepys's assistance, tried to ease Mennes aside. With the fall of Clarendon, Mennes had lost a powerful ally at Court and, at the same time, Coventry had been elevated to the more influential position of a Treasury Commissioner. It is reasonable to suggest that Coventry was prepared to allow the changes of 1667 an opportunity to work, but his other duties probably afforded him less time for the particular problems of the navy. Pepys was still in close contact with Mennes and he came to realise that there could be no marked improvement in the office so long as Mennes remained. On 23 December 1667 Coventry said that by Pepys's 'desire he hath moved the Duke of York that Sir J. Mennes might be removed from the Navy, at least the Comptroller's place'.¹ In the following year Pepys himself renewed the attack and resolved to speak to the Duke about 'Sir J. Minnes, his being

¹ Diary, 23 December 1667.

unable to do the King any service'.¹ It is not clear whether on that occasion Pepys had had the opportunity to speak his mind to the Duke, but he did not drop the idea and his resolution was reinforced on 19 May when Coventry also expressed a desire to hasten Mennes' departure.²

The Duke of York's desire to be seen rooting out the faults and neglects of the Navy Board provided an excellent opportunity to illuminate the failings of the Comptroller. The Duke's Letter of Reflections, which was largely the work of Pepys, hit at the Comptroller more fiercely than at any other member of the Board. This document, with its searching criticisms of the members of the Board, is a summary of the incapacity of Mennes as an administrator. The Duke's Letter was read at the Board on 29 August 1668, and it included comments on all but one (the second) of the eleven Articles of the Comptroller's duty.³ The Board's various replies were presented during September and were passed on to Pepys. The first Article of the Comptroller's duty related to his supervision of the payment and rating of wages, and the importance of this was emphasised in the Duke's Letter when it was pointed out that since the Restoration over £2,000,000 had been paid out in wages. Mennes was alleged to have ignored the ships' muster books and not ensured that any check had been made on the diligence of the Muster Masters. Furthermore, those muster books which had found their way into the Comptroller's office, had been used improperly and had been given out to 'strangers' to add up. It was also stated that the Comptroller had not cast up the ships' books before pays and had not

¹ Diary, 25 March 1668.

² Diary, 19 May 1668.

³ PRO, Adm.49/54, ff.113-20.

kept an exact account with the Treasurer of money paid in wages and tickets.¹ The whole tone of Mennes' reply, which reached the Duke by 13 September, was one of evasion. He attempted to argue for collective responsibility and pleaded increased work because of the war. Mennes also laid great stress on the fact that he was following the practice of his predecessors, who by implication must have been either acceptable or equally negligent. In answer to the first Reflection Mennes argued that the establishment of a separate Ticket Office had relieved him of any responsibility therein.² However, a very large number of tickets had been issued during 1665 and 1666, before the assistants were added in January 1667, when the responsibility was solely his. Certainly the separate Ticket Office and the increased work had made Mennes' task more difficult, but, nevertheless, he does not seem to have made any serious attempt to fulfil that part of his duty. With regard to the muster books, Mennes blamed the Muster Masters for not sending the books up to him, whereas it was his task to see that this was done; he also denied all knowledge of 'strangers' being used to cast up the few books which did reach his office. So far as examining the books before pays was concerned, he claimed to have compared the pay and muster books when he visited the fleet at the Hope, Sheerness, the Nore, and at pays at Deptford and in the Thames. This defence cannot be completely dismissed for Mennes was indeed present at several pays, but the extent to which the various books were examined and compared may be doubted.³ Mennes claimed to have reduced the rating of many seamen, thereby saving the King 'many hundreds of pounds', but at this distance the claim is impossible to verify. Much of the work at the

¹ PRO, Adm.49/54, ff.113-4.

² Pepys MS.2242, ff.63-5.

³ Diary, 18 December 1668.

pays would always be done by the clerks, but there is little doubt that Mennes had not supervised them adequately. In justification, Mennes said that in 'former times' at least two members of the Board had assisted him, but that of late, he alone had been 'exposed to all weathers' and that as a result he had contracted several 'sharp and tedious sicknesses'.¹

The second Article requiring the Comptroller to keep the Board informed of the current market prices etc. was not challenged, and it may be assumed that this was performed relatively well, but the third Article calling for an audit of the storekeepers' accounts certainly warranted comment. This Reflection was all the more important, as in 1668 it was still left to Mennes to fulfil this Article of his duty, and he was in fact charged with not having called any storekeeper to account either in peace or war. Beyond the obvious lack of supervision in the expenditure of stores, this neglect also meant that the exact state of the stores was never known and there was a danger of the stores being either oversupplied or 'clogged' with one commodity, or being empty of another.² In his reply Mennes fell back on the practice of his predecessor, saying that Slingsby had never attempted this balance. With considerable justification he pointed to the vast increase of work in his office, asking 'how was it possible for me to keep cheque upon the Treasurer and Victualler; attend all pays in person; be present at all meetings and to balance the storekeepers' accounts yearly...'. Mennes said that he and Batten had surveyed the stores at Portsmouth in 1663 but they 'could not so far proceed as to a balance'.

¹ This ill-health was to be a constant irritation to Mennes, especially after 1666. On 18 August 1666 he was 'ill of an ague', Coventry MS. Vol.97, f.25, and he was reported to be dying on 20 August, Diary. In the following year he was ill at Chatham, and in July it was thought that he would 'hardly survive a day', NMM, LBK 8, f.493. Mennes' constitution was more robust than his fellow officers realised and he survived until February 1671.

² PRO, Adm.49/54, f.115.

They suggested a method to balance the books during 1664, but the war and 'God's hand of visitation being upon us' prevented this from being implemented. The basis of Mennes' answer is an admission that this part of his duty had not been performed, although he claims to have pressed the storekeepers to send up their accounts, and therefore 'not to have been wanting in that part of my duty'.¹ This amounts to a virtual admission of his own failings, as well as making a reasonable objection to the difficulty of the task. His objection no doubt prompted Pepys to approach Hosier to devise a method of balancing the accounts; this was introduced by an Order in Council on 12 February 1669.²

In a similar way the Duke's Reflections on the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Articles accused the Comptroller of having failed in his duty. He is blamed for considerable delays in adjusting the accounts and perfecting bills, which was both a great annoyance to the individual contractors and detrimental to the King, as it allowed factors unfavourable to the contractor to be forgotten. The importance of this was considerable because more than £2,500,000 had been issued on bills to contractors since 1660. These Articles also directed the Comptroller to keep ledgers, to check the Treasurer's and Victualler's accounts; it was said that not one of their accounts is 'capable of being traced by any book of comptrol provided for that purpose', nor had any counter-books been kept to check the receipts and issues of money.³

In his reply Mennes mentioned his health and the absences from the Board which his attendance at pays necessitated, and he again sought refuge in the precedents of his office. While admitting that some bills may have

¹ Pepys MS.2242, ff.66-7.

² Supra pp.221-22.

³ PRO, Adm.49/54, f.117.

'lain some time', he suggests that this was more the fault of the whole Board, since he personally had been active in giving dispatch and expediting business. As for keeping a comptrol on the Treasurer and Victualler, he again stressed the practice of his predecessors and the impossibility of the work, claiming to have kept 'the same (if not a stricter)' check than any of them. This practice had merely been to compare the relevant pages of the Treasurer's books with the Comptroller's counter-books, and it had never been the Comptroller's practice to answer for the money received and spent. Further, Mennes correctly asserted that the Treasurer's habit of bringing one year's bills to account in the following year's ledger made it impossible to perform that part of his duty in full.¹

The ninth Article required the Comptroller to keep an account of all imprests and money remaining in the Treasurer's hands, but this 'has so far from being complied with ... that several imprests to five and six years date are said to remain at this day uncleared'. The accounts of many purveyors had never been examined, and because of deaths and insolvency the King was in danger of losing a considerable sum of money. It was stated that £229,041 19s. 3d. still remained 'in imprest uncleared in your certificates'.² Mennes largely admitted the truth of this Reflection, but pointed out that part of the fault lay with the Treasurer, who had not informed him which of the outstanding imprests had been cleared 'notwithstanding the earnest solicitation I have used several times to be satisfied therein'. To illustrate his zeal in this matter, the Comptroller quoted his prosecution of one, Mr. Cutler, who had been paid £3,000 for goods

¹ Pepys MS.2242, ff.68-71.

² PRO, Adm.49/54, f.118.

supposedly delivered but who could not provide any accounts for them. Other persons were also being prosecuted, although Mennes did 'not find any precedent for this prosecution of them a duty incumbent upon me'.¹

Mennes was charged with having failed completely to keep an exact account of the Treasurer's and Victualler's accounts and of the money remaining in their hands. Once more he claimed that this had never been done by his predecessors and that his several absences from London in attending pays had made it impossible to trace the Treasurer's accounts. He also blamed the Treasurer for not supplying adequate information about his borrowing of money. There was an element of truth in this as Carteret had been accused of being too secretive about his financial proceedings.²

The Reflection on the last Article of the Comptroller's duty alleged that there were between four and seven years of accounts for the Treasurer and Victualler which had not been balanced, besides 'many hundred accounts of pursers unstated'. This state of affairs which was 'of so ill-consequence and such scandal' to the navy, would have led to a considerable loss of money due to the death, insolvency and effective disappearance of many pursers.³ Beyond the usual hint at the practice of his predecessors, Mennes built his defence on the volume of work and his other commitments. His involvement at pays and the advent of war meant that no time could 'be conveniently spared' from the preparations to examine the Victualler's and pursers' accounts. Other interruptions such as the plague, his stay on the East India prizes in 1665, the fitting of the fleet in 1666, and his illness were 'very great obstructions in dispatching of divers accounts'.

¹ Pepys MS.2242, f.71.

² Pepys MS.2242, f.72.

³ PRO, Adm.49/54, f.119.

Having admitted his failings, Mennes tried somewhat unconvincingly to suggest that it was the impossibility of the work and the interruptions rather than his failings, which led to Brouncker and Penn being appointed as his assistants in January 1667.¹ This section is probably the weakest of Mennes' defence and justified the criticisms made of him. Mennes concluded his answer by some general comments on his diligent attendance at the Board which had led to the neglect of his own affairs. He mentioned the disturbance at the office caused by the plague, fire, the removal of the office to Greenwich, and the division of papers between himself, Brouncker and Penn, and, in conclusion, he once more reiterated that he had 'followed the steps of my predecessors'.² But there can be no doubt that his execution of the Comptroller's office had been extremely inadequate.

The Duke of York sent a further letter to the Navy Board on 25 November 1668, in which he (or rather Pepys) commented on the replies received from the Board. In this the defence so often used by Mennes of the practice of his predecessors was not found acceptable as 'every man ought to justify himself by a positive compliance with his own duty and not be comparing it with other men'.³ It was further pointed out that the Board had been allowed additional assistance to cope with the increased volume of work. The Duke would no 'longer suffer a neglect in the performance' of this 'notwithstanding any pretension that may be made of the difficulty in doing of it'. The Duke next cited the further excuse used by Mennes, that of ill-health, and insisted that every officer should ensure that in case of illness his work was to be carried on by a deputy. The fourth

¹ Pepys MS.2242, f.75.

² Pepys MS.2242, f.79.

³ PRO, Adm.49/54, f.130.

general excuse made by the Board, that of attending at distant places, had also been used by Mennes, and it would appear that Pepys was determined to point out the weakness of the Comptroller's reply as well as his failure to perform his duties. This point had been laboured too heavily by Mennes and it was dismissed by the Duke, who expected full performance of duty both in London and distant parts. Finally, the Duke commented on the apparent ignorance of the full content of his Instructions, particularly the Comptroller's neglect in collecting the muster books and his lack of knowledge about the money remaining in the Treasury as well as the amount that had been paid out. It is clear that the case against Mennes had been largely proved and that many of his excuses were not accepted, but he was able to survive this criticism and remain in office. No doubt Pepys would have been pleased to see the Comptroller retired or reduced to a Commissioner, but an important political reason made the Duke reluctant to publicise the Navy Board's failure by dismissing one of its leading members. In this way at least Mennes benefited from the criticism and enquiries which were levelled at naval administration in 1668 and 1669.

The Duke of York's Letter of Reflections did not result in any obvious improvement in Mennes' performance. Pepys became more outspoken and bold in his attack on the aged Comptroller and decided to continue the policy of outflanking Mennes by reducing the amount of work under his direction; for example, he wanted to introduce a more efficient method of balancing the storekeepers' accounts. To this end he composed several letters on Mennes' inadequacy, but these were of no avail and after mid-1669 Pepys had to be content with having circumscribed, but not removed the Comptroller. Pepys enlisted the support of Brouncker and they both presented a memorandum to the Duke about the Comptroller being 'wholly incapable of executing his place'. The Duke, however, was not prepared to take the matter up with the King because 'the troublesomeness of the

present time in relation to the censuring and changing of offices and officers made it seem unseasonable for him now to propose it ... and so it rests'.¹ Undiscouraged Pepys approached the Duke's secretary, Matthew Wren, early in January 1669, and even though Wren was in agreement, he thought it would be unwise to cause 'public disparagement' by the removal 'of so old and faithful a servant of the Kings as Sir John Mennes'.²

There indeed the matter rested and Pepys had to accept that Mennes was not going to be set aside. But in 1670 when the report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts was being discussed, there was one advantage to be found in the situation, as the inadequacy of Mennes provided a good excuse for the failure, as alleged by the Commissioners, in certain parts of naval administration. In January 1670 Pepys spoke privately to the King and Duke, and admitted that 'failures there had been' in the management of the navy, but 'the greater part of them would be found imputable to the age and weakness of a servant, by name Sir John Mennes'.³ Pepys recognised the past services of Mennes to the Crown and his 'integrity', and stated that his present 'weakness both of mind and body' had been hastened by his recent 'labours in his Majesty's service'. The intention of this conversation was to obtain the King's permission to refer to Mennes with 'tenderness' and also as one whom the King had been 'pleased to indulge under a more imperfect execution of his duty than what ought and would have been expected from another'.⁴

The first hint of criticism aimed at Mennes came on 20 January; the

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.550, 4 December 1668.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.556, 3 January 1669.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.394.

⁴ Pepys MS.2874, f.395.

Commissioners had been sidetracked on to a discussion of the surveys taken in the stores and the books used to calculate what was needed. Thomson produced one of the Comptroller's books and Pepys found 'him with too much reason objecting against its want of method', and he thought it best to 'put it off with fewest words and best grace'.¹ A more direct attack on Mennes came on 7 February when the eighth observation of the Commissioners was reached. This dealt with the Board's failure to balance the storekeepers' accounts and the damage arising to the King from this lack of knowledge.² The responsibility of balancing these accounts lay with the Comptroller, and Pepys had to admit that 'partly by his age and sickness, and partly by the multitude of other works ... has not been able to perform it. Wherein he is humbly submitted to his Majesty's indulgence ...'.³ In defence of the rest of the Board, Pepys mentioned the efforts to 'ease' Mennes of some part of his work and tried to demonstrate, largely by the length and complexity of his discourse, that the complicated nature and volume of work was too great to have been undertaken during the war, and that in reality the service had not suffered from the lack of an annual survey or balance of the stores. The King declared his satisfaction with the answer, and the Commissioners 'offered nothing in reply but that these works being enjoined and found not performed they thought it was their duties to represent them in the manner they had done'; no further evidence was offered by them against Mennes.⁴ Mennes remained in office until his death on 18 February 1671, still enjoying the King's indulgence for his incapacity.

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.412.

² Pepys MS.2554, not foliated.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.460.

⁴ Pepys MS.2874, f.463.

The third and last Comptroller to be appointed during the Duke of York's period as Lord High Admiral, was Sir Thomas Allin. Like Mennes and Slingsby before him, Allin had been a successful commander at sea and he came to the Board with considerable practical experience. He had also been a well-known royalist and had suffered imprisonment and loss of property during the Interregnum.¹ After the Restoration, he was employed at sea and made several voyages to the Mediterranean and the Channel, and during the Second Dutch War he gained a respectable reputation. Thereafter he was again employed in the Channel, and from December 1668 to September 1670 he made two voyages to the Mediterranean to deal with the Algiers and Barbary pirates. At this time Allin was being mentioned as an assistant and possible successor to Mennes; Pepys makes a mysterious comment in June 1669 about Allin's 'designation for the Comptrollership and its being the true ground of our present unsuccessfulness in our endeavours touching Sir John Mennes'.² As Allin was in England from April until 17 July 1669, he would have been available to fill the post, but it is possible that Pepys's comment referred to the 'endeavours' of December 1668 and January 1669 when Allin was in the Mediterranean. In the event Allin was promised the Comptrollership before the death of Mennes, and his patent was passed on 15 April 1671.³ He held office, except for a brief period at sea in 1678, until March 1680 when he went into retirement. The office which Allin entered was considerably different from that taken over by Mennes in 1661, as it had two senior officials appointed to assist in its execution and was shortly to have a third. Because Allin was expected to do a great deal less than his predecessors, his task was much more realistic, but the greater part of his Comptrollership falls outside our period and the absence of any useful comments or criticisms prior to June 1673, precludes any further relevant discussion.

¹ Anderson (ed), Journals of Sir Thomas Allin, I, xi-xiii.

² Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, p.241.

³ CSPD 1671, p.102, Catalogue, I, 12.

The difficulties of the Comptroller's office were recognised by the appointment of assistants. The most important additions were made in 1667 when, with Mennes' growing incapacity, it was realised that the work of the office was too much for one person. The first was the addition of the two existing Commissioners, Lord Brouncker to comptrol the Treasurer's accounts and Sir William Penn to comptrol the Victualler's accounts.¹ This division of the Comptroller's work was one of the most lasting and important contributions of the Restoration period to naval administration.

After the Order in Council had been received, Brouncker took charge of the books and ledgers relating to the Treasurer's accounts and was given additional clerical assistance at an 'extraordinary' meeting of the Navy Board on 9 March 1667.² To all appearances Brouncker was more efficient than the Comptroller, and although he was discovered to have made some mistakes, there is no doubt that he was a marked improvement on Mennes. This opinion was supported by Pepys, who pressed throughout 1668 and 1669 for Brouncker to be given greater responsibility over the Comptrollership.³ The Duke of York was sympathetic to the idea of easing Mennes aside rather than removing him completely, and on 2 April 1669 the Duke agreed to an order giving Brouncker more of the Comptroller's work.⁴

In company with his fellow officers, Brouncker was required to answer the Duke of York's Letter of Reflections in 1668, and his reply was sent to the Duke on 11 September 1668.⁵ The Duke's letter did not differentiate

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.204, 16 January 1667.

² Diary, 9 March 1667.

³ Diary, 23 December 1667.

⁴ Pepys MS.2581, f.186.

⁵ Pepys MS.2242, f.58.

between the three officers associated with the Comptroller's work, and Brouncker was obliged to reply to the criticisms of those Articles of the Comptroller's work which had been left to him by the Order in Council of 16 January 1667. Brouncker claimed to be able to trace the Treasurer's ledgers, and maintained that, if he had not done this, he would have been unable to send the weekly certificates of money received and issued which were demanded by the Treasury Commissioners. He possessed full certificates from the Auditor of the Exchequer to prove that he had kept a full check on the money received and issued by the Treasurer.¹ However, he did admit by implication, that the Article requiring an annual balance of the Treasurer's accounts had not been fulfilled, although he said that Carteret's accounts were being adjusted and Anglesey's were 'making ready'. In conclusion, he pointed to his frequent attendance at the Board and recommended that an attendance register should be kept for all meetings of the Board. This suggestion was approved and taken up by the Duke in his reply to the Board on 25 November.² Brouncker, therefore, emerged relatively unscathed from the Reflections on the Navy Board.

To a certain extent Brouncker's additional duties placed him in greater contact with the Treasurer's office, and this is illustrated by his control over books and ledgers relating to tickets; the question of wages and 'tickets' will be discussed later.³ But of direct relevance to the Comptroller's duty was the balancing of the storekeepers' accounts. It has already been indicated that Pepys and the Duke of York wanted to relieve Mennes of the work, and for some time at least Brouncker was being suggested as a successor. This idea was first broached in December 1668, but it was

¹ Pepys MS.2242, f.59.

² PRO, Adm.49/54, f.131.

³ *Infra.* pp, 398-425.

not accepted completely and Mennes retained control, with more assistance, by the Order in Council of 12 February 1669.¹ Either as a result of Mennes' further opposition to losing more of his work, or out of a desire to allow the amendments to work, nothing further was done. After Mennes' death there was no opposition to a senior officer being appointed, and on 23 June 1671 Sir John Ernle was added as Comptroller of Storekeepers' Accounts.²

The other assistant given to the Comptroller in 1667 was Sir William Penn, whose duty it was to check the Victualler's and pursers' accounts, but his performance was only slightly better than that of Mennes.³ Initially Pepys had thought that this would mean an improvement, as the passing of the pursers' accounts would be closely watched with Penn 'to mind that business'.⁴ In order to remove any doubt or ignorance, which may have existed about this work, the Duke of York wrote to the Navy Board on 20 February 1667 to clarify what was required of Penn, the Victualler, and the pursers.⁵ The Victualler was to provide full accounts of what victuals, Privy Seals, and assignments or bills of imprests he had received. The pursers' books, after examination by Penn, were to be passed to the Victualler, who was to 'clear the accounts within ten days' and return them to Penn. The expectations of a good appointment having been made in Penn were not fulfilled, and on 1 February 1668 Pepys and Penn had 'high words' as a result of Pepys 'finding fault with him for his neglect of duty'.⁶ But

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.554, 24 December 1668; PRO, PC6/1, f.367, 12 February 1669.

² Catalogue, I, 17.

³ Catalogue, I, 17.

⁴ Diary, 5 March 1667.

⁵ PRO, Adm.106/14, f.353, 20 February 1667.

⁶ Diary, 1 February 1668.

it is the Lord High Admiral's Letter of Reflections which provides the strongest criticism of Penn's conduct. As in the case of Brouncker, Penn replied to the references relating to the Comptroller's Articles, although he was at first content to point out his employment on other duties up to January 1667.¹ When he eventually attempted to explain why no attempt had been made to balance the Victualler's and pursers' accounts, or to state what money had been issued to them and what still remained in their hands, he made several excuses. He complained of obstacles and delays by the pursers, his other duties and attendance at Parliament, and the 'infirmity of my health'; he stated that all these had interrupted his work. Despite such difficulties he pointed out that he had examined over 330 pursers' accounts, which he regarded as being a 'great work' and claimed that, as a result of this, he had saved the King £18,000. Penn admitted that he had not balanced the Victualler's accounts, but said that this was impossible because the Victualler had accounts which were between four and six years old, before his responsibility for them began.

As in Mennes' case, the Duke was not prepared to regard, either attendance in other places or ill-health, as being sufficient reason for neglect of duty. The Duke also took up Penn's excuse of accounts being four to six years old, regarding this as a matter of 'great prejudice' to the King. He urged that these should be 'speedily dispatched' and the Board were to inform him of any obstruction they came across when complying with his instructions.² Further evidence of Penn's neglect came after he had retired from the Board when Brouncker told of a failure to cancel pursers' certificates on Gauden's accounts; this would have enabled Gauden to

¹ Pepys MS.2242, ff.82-7.

² PRO, Adm.49/54, f.135.

present the certificates a second time, but apparently he had sent them 'uncancelled' to the Board.¹ By late 1668 Penn, who had been under attack in Parliament and from the Commissioners of Accounts, decided to leave the Navy Board and become a partner to the Victualler, Sir Denis Gauden.² He remained at the Board until the new victualling contract was signed in February 1669.³

Penn was succeeded by Vice-Admiral Sir Jeremy Smith as Comptroller of the Victualler's accounts. Smith had been suggested for this appointment by the Duke of York in November 1668, but the King, pushed by the Duke of Buckingham, seemed to prefer a merchant, Mr. Child.⁴ After Penn's retirement, the King changed his mind and 'of his own account named Sir Jeremy Smith'. Smith's appointment was taken as a sign that the Buckingham group were losing ground in their attempt to discredit the Duke of York and the Navy Board.⁵ Pepys thought little of this choice; the only apparent advantage was Smith's naval career, but in the main Pepys thought him only 'moderately qualified' and decided to press for an additional clause to be inserted in Smith's patent.⁶ The clause was an attempt to ensure that Smith was directly responsible for 'examining, comptrolling, and balancing the accounts of the Victualler and pursers and all other persons concerned in the victualling of his Majesty's ships'.

¹ Pepys MS.2581, f.239.

² Diary, 4 November 1668.

³ CSPD 1668-9, p.208.

⁴ Diary, 5 November 1668.

⁵ Diary, 10 May 1669.

⁶ Pepys MS.2581, f.201

Smith was to be able to inform the Lord High Admiral 'in every matter relating to the expense, debt and managment' of the new victualling contract. But this clause was of limited value, for in December 1669 Smith admitted that he had not read the contract, but promised to 'betake himself forthwith to the reading and informing himself in the whole of the Victualler's contract'.¹ Smith held office until 1675, but there is nothing further up to the Duke of York's resignation which could assist in measuring his performance.

By 1673 the office of Comptroller had changed considerably; it was to be exercised by four or five persons, and the division of work between them was clearly understood. Although there were periods when one section of this division would not be filled, for the most part the Comptrollership remained divided. This helped to make the office more manageable and enabled the 1662 Instructions to be adequately performed, but there was still ample opportunity for individual weakness and neglect. Furthermore, the cumbersome nature of accounts and the slowness of communicating still militated against a completely efficient check on the various aspects of the Comptroller's work.

¹ Pepys MS.2581, f.244.

THE SURVEYOR

The third of the Principal Officers of the Navy was the Surveyor. The origins of this office were very similar to those of the Comptroller, both having evolved in the early Tudor period and recognised by Letters Patent in 1546. The first 'Surveyor of all our shippes' was Benjamin Gonson, who had a fee of £40 a year, and the same allowance for travel and boat hire as the Comptroller, but he was allowed only one clerk at 8d. per day to assist him.¹ Initially the duties associated with the 'Surveyor and Rigger' were not clearly defined, indeed there were few duties specifically attached to the office.² It was not until Buckingham's Instructions of 1628 that the office was given clearly defined duties. The first Surveyor after 1628 was Sir Thomas Aylesbury, who resigned in 1632. He was succeeded by Kenrick Edisbury, who was 'perhaps the most observant and energetic of the chief Officers, who held the post until his death in 1638'.³ During the Interregnum the Surveyor, along with the rest of the Navy Board, was replaced by the Navy Commissioners.

When the restoration of the Navy Board was being discussed in 1660 the paper attributed to Sir William Penn gave some of the traditional duties of the Surveyor.⁴ The Surveyor's duty 'is of great trust (called the mystery of the Navy)', but in the past too much of the work had been left to his clerks, thereby allowing ample opportunity for embezzlement of provisions and false accounts.⁵ In his proposed remedy Penn hit at one

¹ Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.85.

² Davies, 'Administration of the Royal Navy under Henry VIII', EHR, LXXX, p.272.

³ Oppenheim, *op.cit.*, p.281.

⁴ *Infra*.p.305n2.

⁵ NMM, WYN 11/3.

notion of office holding which was common at this period, namely, the ill effects resulting from clerks and inferior persons being accountable to the Surveyor personally rather than to the King or Lord High Admiral. The freedom to appoint, promote, or dismiss subordinate officials within their departments was common to all members of the Navy Board in the seventeenth century, but they gradually lost this power in the following century.¹ Although the Surveyor was responsible for the actions of his inferiors, it was thought that he would be more concerned in covering up their abuses and neglects than in being more diligent to ensure greater honesty. Penn suggested that the Surveyor's clerks should be appointed directly by the King and that they should present their accounts to the whole Board, which 'would make them more careful to preserve their reputations from dishonourable actions, and prevent many abuses, which small salaries from their masters may make them liable unto'.² But Penn's preference for Commissioners rather than Principal Officers rendered this scheme, or any part of it, unacceptable, and so no alterations were made to the Surveyor's, or his assistants', duty in 1660.

The general intention behind the office of Surveyor was to have an official directly responsible for the design, building and repairing of ships, and supervision of the yards, and to ensure an adequate supply of all materials needed for the navy. The Surveyor, therefore, was more closely associated with the practical, or, as in this case, the maritime aspects of naval administration. He was most closely associated with the reality of naval affairs, compared with the Treasurer and the Comptroller, who could have executed most of their duties in the London offices far removed from any ship or yard. The Treasurer's duty closely

¹ Baugh, Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, p.85.

² NMM, WYN 11/3.

complemented the work of the Surveyor by obtaining the means for the latter to provide the navy with all the materials necessary to carry out the King's service.

The Surveyor's duty was set out in eight Articles of the Duke of York's Instruction of January 1662, and all were relatively straightforward.¹ In the first place he was required to keep a check on the amount of provisions in store. He was to present an annual estimate of what 'proportions of hemp, tar, masts, deals, canvas, timber, boats, anchors and other provisions' would be needed for the following year, and, having taken a survey of what percentage of these items were in stock, he had to recommend what should be bought. It was the practice for the King in Council to make a declaration of how many ships would be required in the following year; this was usually done in October or November to enable both the Surveyor and the Victualler to make sure that the provisions were in store by the following Spring. One shortcoming of this practice is immediately obvious; if the King suddenly increased or decreased the number of ships to be set out, as he did in 1668, then the Surveyor could be left with either a serious shortage or a glut of stores. But this difficulty was more acute for the Victualler because of decaying provisions; the many items ordered by the Surveyor could usually be kept in store. The first Article was complemented by the third Article which related to the stores being delivered into the yard. The Surveyor, or his subordinates, was to survey all provisions and ensure that they were in 'goodness, length, breadth, and depth' according to contract. In theory, this was to avoid the acceptance of poor quality goods and to prevent the payments of bills for goods which were not according to contract. This Article was extremely important and

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, Instructions to the Surveyor of the Navy.

was open to considerable abuse, for not only was there ample opportunity for the clerks of the Survey to accept poor quality goods, but the Surveyor himself was also open to bribery and corruption. As well as the survey of the provisions in stock, the Surveyor was responsible, by the second Article, for the taking of an annual survey, with the assistance of the Master Shipwrights and Master Attendants in the yards, of all the hulls, masts and yardarms of all ships, and they were to present an estimate of what repairs were necessary. Similarly, the seventh Article required him to survey the store-houses, yards, docks, gates and all other passages, and to provide an estimate for repairs and new buildings where necessary.

Apart from the receipt of provisions, the Surveyor was to keep an account of their expenditure and to balance the accounts of the boatswains and carpenters. Whenever a ship was being set out, the Surveyor, or his subordinate, had to keep a check of all 'rigging, ground tackle and sea stores', and at the end of each voyage the remainder and expenditure of these stores had to be compared.¹ When ships were laid up he had to ensure that the stores and all other items of 'furniture' were preserved by the yard officials, and that all defects were to be made good for the following year.

Lastly, the fourth Article called upon the Surveyor to keep an account of stores being lent to private individuals, either from the yards or, more frequently, from ships at sea. In some cases private individuals, such as Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle, were allowed the use of the King's ships for private voyages.² But this Article usually referred to loans of a mast or some other piece of sailing equipment from the King's ships to a merchantman. The eighth and last Article may have been added

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, fifth and sixth Articles of the Surveyor's Duty.

² PRO, Adm.106/15, f.330, 18 February 1668, the Eagle was loaned to Rupert and Albemarle to search for a route through the North-West passage.

after 1640, when the Instructions were first framed.¹ This recognised the increased business of the navy and the fact that the Surveyor was unable to be in two places at the same time, hence he was obliged to rely on his 'instruments'. The Article was designed more as a check on the clerks of the Surveyor than the Surveyor himself, as they were not allowed to issue warrants, allow accounts, or to exercise any other part of the Surveyor's duty unless their action was approved by the Master Attendant or Master Shipwright; they were also not to pay extra expenses without first consulting the Surveyor.

The Surveyor was directly responsible for keeping a running account of the condition of the ships and the state of the stores. He was responsible for guiding the rest of the Board so far as the needs of the service regarding provisions were concerned, and as a result of this he was closely associated with the business of contracts. Of the Principal Officers, neither the Surveyor nor the Clerk of the Acts required any important alteration to their Instructions during this period. The Surveyor was not issued with a set of amended Instructions, nor was the work of the office divided, as the same financial and auditing experience desirable in the posts of Treasurer and Comptroller, was not required in this case. Unlike the Comptroller, there was no question of the Surveyor having to be an accountant as well as a seaman, but the office did require a considerable knowledge of shipbuilding and naval construction as well as a wide knowledge of the quality of stores needed. It would appear that the office required someone who was more of an administrator and a shipbuilder than a seaman. Of the people to execute this office during the Duke of York's period as Lord High Admiral, the first, Sir William Batten, was a seaman who had had long experience of the office.

¹ In certain copies this Article is missing, e.g. BM, Sloane MS.3232, f.104, but in Pepys MS.2611 and all later copies it is included; there is no doubt that this Article was in the 1662 Instructions.

Batten was followed by Thomas Middleton (1667 - 1672) who had had wide experience at the Portsmouth yards, as had his successor, John Tippetts (1672 - 1692). In this office, therefore, a trend was established whereby the incumbent was less of a seaman and more of a shipwright.

Of these three holders of the office, Batten and Middleton are of most concern in this dissertation. The first Surveyor after the Restoration was Sir William Batten, who had not had such a clear record of devotion to the royalist cause as Carteret, Slingsby and Mennes.¹ Batten had been appointed Surveyor in 1638, but it is not clear why this appointment was made. He was described by Clarendon as 'an obscure fellow, and (though a good seaman) unknown to the navy' until he was made Surveyor, in which post he behaved 'with great animosity against the King's service'.² At this time Batten was thought to have Presbyterian sympathies and, together with his hostility to the King, this will explain his appointment as one of the Commissioners appointed by Parliament to replace the Navy Board in 1642. In practice he continued as formerly and undertook the work he had previously done as Surveyor.³ However, in 1648 Batten became disenchanted with the Civil War and joined that part of the fleet which sailed to join the Prince of Wales in exile.⁴ His career from 1649 to 1660 is again obscure, but it is suggested that he returned to England and retired from public life.⁵ It is not at all clear therefore why Batten should have been given this office, unless he had performed some service for the King during the 1650s.

¹ Catalogue, I, 7, 13.

² Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, II, 23.

³ Dewar, 'Naval Administration of the Interregnum', MM, XII, 418.

⁴ Powell, The Navy in the English Civil War, pp.138-40, 152-67.

⁵ DNB, III, 418.

Whatever the reason for his appointment, Sir William Batten joined the other members of the Navy Board at their inaugural meeting on 3 July 1660 and he retained the office until his death on 5 October 1667. Once again a great deal of the evidence concerning Batten and his execution of the Surveyorship is taken from Pepys, and it is worth while repeating the caution that not all Pepys's comments can be taken as being impartial. Pepys was more often moved by personal jealousy and rivalry with Batten than with any other of his colleagues, and it is important, though difficult, to try to differentiate between Pepys's bias and his balanced and just criticism. J R Tanner has described Batten as 'a man upright for his times, whose whole career makes it most improbable that he was inefficient even towards the close of it'.¹ But it does not follow that such a career could not degenerate into inefficiency near its close and, in view of the fact that so much of Batten's career is obscure, it is difficult to accept Tanner's point. Indeed, even if a great number of Pepys's comments on Batten are ignored, there is still evidence to doubt the Surveyor's efficiency. On 28 August 1668 the Navy Board wrote to Sir William's executrix, Lady Batten, informing her that the present Surveyor could only find four books relating to the surveys of the navy and asking her to search Sir William's papers for any official correspondence.² Little was produced, as on 23 February 1669 Surveyor Middleton told the Board that, 'he had not to this day been possessed of one book or paper that showed evidence of Sir William Batten to have ever been Surveyor of his Majesty's navy, but one survey book of the year 1663'.³ Although the absence of books may have been exaggerated, it clearly indicates that, as far as keeping accounts of the stores and of the condition of the ships was concerned, Batten had been most remiss.

¹ Catalogue, I, 28.

² BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.175, 28 August.1668.

³ Pepys MS.2581, f.172.

The most important part of the Surveyor's work related to his inspection of the stores, provisions, ships and buildings belonging to the navy, and his recommendation for their replacement or repair. Shortly after taking office Batten visited Chatham and discovered that the stores were 'clogged' with some provisions but empty of others, and that there was an urgent need for tar and deals.¹ His findings led to a more general survey of the stores. On 3 October 1660 the Duke of York told that Board that he 'understood' that the stores of the navy were 'very much exhausted' and required the Board to estimate the cost of replenishing them.² On this occasion Batten confined himself to Deptford and Woolwich; he did not visit Portsmouth but used the Clerk of the Survey in that yard to make a 'general survey'.³ The results were reported to the Lord High Admiral on 26 November and the recommendation that several types of 'decayed' cordage and other provisions should be sold, was accepted, but the estimate for replenishing the stores has not been discovered, and it is impossible to assess how detailed it was from the contracts made.⁴ There was no attempt to survey the condition of the ships at this time, which was extremely unfortunate as most of the fleet was to be laid up for the winter. It would also appear that the 1660 survey did not lead to a widespread attempt to buy up stores for the navy, either in that year or in 1661. There is no specific mention of a survey being taken at any of the yards in 1661, and, although Batten was at Portsmouth in October 1661 and Chatham in November,

¹ PRO, SP29/8, f.17, 20 July 1660.

² PRO, Adm.106/2, f.158, 3 October 1660.

³ CSPD 1660-1, p.318.

⁴ These sales of provisions were periodic occasions and would be conducted by two or more members of the Navy Board. On some occasions hulks or small decayed ships would be sold; on 29 November 1660 Batten and Pepys presided over the sale of the Church, an old fifth rate, which, according to Pepys was sold for £440, Diary, 29 November 1660; but elsewhere it was said to have fetched £510, PRO, Adm.106/2, f.345, 3 December 1660.

there is nothing to suggest that he took one.¹ Despite this lack of positive evidence some knowledge of the state of the stores must have been kept, for in January 1662 the Navy Board were composing a reply to the Lord Treasurer's demands about naval debts and stores. Their reply indicated that the Board, and in particular the Surveyor, placed great reliance on the honesty and diligence of the inferior officers in the yards. They were awaiting a return from each yard to inform them what provisions had been bought since June 1660, but they provided an account of the provisions in store at the end of December 1661 and an estimate (£96,000) of the provisions needed to set out the summer fleet for 1662.² They reported their estimate for the purchase of a standing reserve of stores sufficient to supply the whole navy for one year in harbour and another full year at sea. This came to £457,220, and the Board stressed the importance of having 'a competent provision in store'. They also took the opportunity to press the Lord Treasurer to ensure that a supply of ready money was available in the spring, when most naval provisions came on to the market.

In April 1662 Batten visited Chatham, presumably to be at the pay of the yard, while Carteret, Penn and Pepys went to Portsmouth. In July he was reported to be conducting a survey at Woolwich, but Pepys and Coventry found him 'about his Survey; but so poorly and unlike a survey of the Navy, that I am ashamed of it'.³ It is from 1662 that Pepys's criticism of Batten began to increase, and in April he and Carteret talked about 'some faults in the office, particularly of Sir Wm. Batten's'.⁴ Later in

¹ Diary, 20 October 1661. Batten was said to be going with the Duke of York who was visiting Portsmouth in his capacity as Governor, Diary, 5 November 1661.

² PRO, Adm.106/6, f:149, 6 January 1662. Coventry sent a copy of the Lord Treasurer's letter; the Navy Board's reply was returned to the Duke of York on 16 January 1662, BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.78r.

³ Diary, 21 April, 31 July 1662.

⁴ Diary, 5 April 1662.

the year came the proposal to join assistants to both the Comptroller and the Surveyor, and Pett was appointed to assist Batten, but this came to nought and there is no further mention of Batten being given assistance.¹

In 1663 there is the first indication that Batten was attempting to conduct a full survey of the ships, stores and docks at Portsmouth. In January the Comptroller accompanied him to the yard, but the success of their survey was limited as Mennes admitted in 1668 that 'Sir William Batten and myself took a survey, examined the storekeepers' accounts of receipts and issues but could not so far proceed to a balance'.² Pepys noted that Batten had gone 'toward Portsmouth (to little purpose, God knows) upon his Survey' on 18 May, and was back in London on 25 May.³ On this occasion he was alone and the shortness of his absence would suggest a somewhat superficial examination of the yards. A third visit to Portsmouth was mentioned in July 1663 when both Mennes and Batten were there, but this was to pay the ships and yard and no mention is made of a survey.⁴ An early visit to Portsmouth for a survey was not repeated the following year. In 1664 the Board wrote to the Clerks of the Cheque and Ropeyard and to the Storekeeper ordering them, 'in the absence of the Surveyor', to take a survey with the Clerks of the Surveys of good delivered into their stores.⁵ The discomfort and inconvenience of a journey in winter is the most probable reason for Batten not going to Portsmouth at that time. He did, however, take a survey at Deptford with the assistance of Mennes from 2 to 5 February, and on 20 February he was at Chatham with Commissioner Pett intending to

¹ Diary, 27 October 1662.

² Diary, 12, 22 January 1663.; Pepys MS.2242, f.67.

³ Diary, 18, 25 May 1663.

⁴ CSPD 1663-4, p.219; Diary, 30 July 1663.

⁵ PRO, Adm.2/1740, f.151, 12 January 1664.

conduct a survey and to discharge the unnecessary men from the yard.¹ The surveys taken in 1664 were more thorough than those of previous years, and work on them, and making up the accounts, lasted until March. This increased effort on the part of the whole Board may indicate their awareness of the deterioration of relations with the Dutch. As 1664 progressed the Board, and especially the Surveyor, became more concerned to supply adequate stores. An extraordinary meeting of the Board took place on 3 June 'upon the business of our stores; but Lord, what a pitiful account the Surveyor makes of it ...'² At this time the Board was particularly concerned with the supply of masts, and may have felt that as the year advanced, they had lost the opportunity of buying when prices were lower and before rumours of war led to increased rates.³

During the war the Surveyor had less opportunity to embark on a wide-spread survey, but it would appear that up to 1664 he had only half-heartedly fulfilled that part of his duty. As far as the ships were concerned, Batten had left their surveying to his subordinates, and the general practice of only repairing ships when they were actually needed for sea, was followed. This practice, which was in no way peculiar to the Restoration period, was largely responsible for the slow pace of preparations for the fleet in 1665. It would be exaggerated to accuse Batten of particular negligence, as it was a defect of all naval administration during this period. During 1665 and 1666 Batten was frequently at Harwich and close to the fleet to examine the stores and damage to the ships. In January 1665 he wrote from Harwich about the condition of the ships, and returned there in April to assist Commissioner Taylor in getting the fleet ready. In this respect he had given up more of the

¹ Diary, 2, 5, February 1664; CSPD 1663-4, p.490.

² Diary, 3 June 1664.

³ The March survey revealed only 993 masts in store and it was estimated that 2190 masts would be needed from New England and Norway, Bodl., Rawl. MS. A 174, f.19.

duties of the Surveyor and, like Mennes at Chatham, was more concerned with the work involved in getting the fleet ready than in the particular duties of his office. In May 1665 he was again at Harwich and was ordered not to leave while the fleet was off the coast.¹ After the battle off Lowestoft in June 1665, Batten and Taylor were engaged in surveying the damage to the ships, and on 9 June they boarded the Royal Charles and 'went to view the defects thereof. They told the Duke that the principal stores of all kinds were at Harwich ...'² Batten was again ordered to remain at Harwich until the fleet sailed.³ When the fleet actions died down later in the year, Batten was once more free to resume his duties as Surveyor. A letter from the Duke of York of 10 July recommended the Board as a whole to ensure that there was an adequate provision of stores and to make a survey to enable them to estimate what was needed.⁴ Batten was at Portsmouth in November and December 1665, where, apart from paying some ships, he sent a list of cables, canvas and other stores which were needed there.⁵ There is much less evidence of Batten's activity during 1666; he is mentioned at Harwich in June, where he was paying some ships and intended to take a survey of the stores, and later that month he was at Deptford 'looking to the dispatch of some things ...'.⁶ As far as the general survey of the stores and the fleet was concerned, this would appear to have been largely neglected after 1664. In part the business of the war and the continual repairing of

¹ Batten was at Harwich from 7-10 January 1665, CSPD 1664-5, pp.165-7; 6-11 April, CSPD 1664-5, pp.297, 304; 17 May, Diary; 17 May 1665, CSPD 1664-5, p.377.

² Anderson, Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, p.231.

³ PRO, SP29/124, f.61, 14 June 1665; Batten had returned by 18 June, Diary.

⁴ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.126, 10 July 1665.

⁵ CSPD 1665-6, pp.65, 74, 89.

⁶ CSPD 1665-6, p.437; NMM, LBK 8, f.387, 28 June 1666.

ships made this difficult, but Batten did at least examine the condition of some ships after the 1666 campaign was over. However, he was not prepared to make this widely known because of the attitude of Prince Rupert. Batten had asked for a meeting with the Duke of York to discuss the condition of the fleet, but finding Prince Rupert present, he refrained from speaking out because of Rupert's violent animosity towards anyone suggesting that he had brought the fleet back in a shattered condition.¹ The lack of money and the decision to lay up the bulk of the fleet rendered a large part of the Surveyor's duty unnecessary, and Batten spent much of 1666 and 1667 at his country house at Walthamstow.²

Having seen that Batten had given an appearance, though little more, of conducting a survey, his activity in the provision of stores for the navy can be examined. Although the Surveyor was not specifically required by the Articles of his duty to take a leading part in the purchase of stores, it is obvious from the nature of his work that he would be the most logical member of the Navy Board to be active in this. A more general discussion of Navy Board contracts will follow.³ As far as Batten's personal involvement was concerned, a note of caution must be sounded about the source of much of the evidence, Pepys. In the placing of contracts both Pepys and Batten benefited from their association with merchants, but both favoured rival shipbuilders and contractors. The charges levelled by Pepys, therefore, cannot necessarily be taken at their face value, and it would be severe to condemn Batten too roundly for following the general practice of his age.

The business of naval contracts was the responsibility of the whole Board and, in this respect, Batten was one of many. As the Comptroller was charged with 'leading' his fellow officers with regard to the current price of

¹ Diary, 10 October 1666.

² Chappell (ed), Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p.83.

³ Infra. pp.340-76.

goods, he too, could claim a share in this vital work. It has already been suggested that Mennes was led, or influenced, by Batten, and a picture emerges of Board meetings with Batten and Mennes often united but being opposed by Pepys, who usually had to rely on Coventry for effective support. Thus there was at this time a clash of personalities as much as a clash of principles. But when this is noted, there is an extensive amount of evidence to show that Batten's concern for his own profit was greater than his concern for ensuring that the navy was supplied with good quality provisions. One or two examples of Batten's dealings will serve as illustration. Firstly, in August 1662 the Surveyor was alleged to have written a private letter instructing the clerk of the Ropeyard at Chatham to accept some hemp from Alderman Barker.¹ It is likely that this was of poor quality since it was referred to as the 'bad hemp' bought from Barker by 'some of our own eyes'.² The matter came to the notice of Pepys, who revealed it to Carteret and Coventry, and he persuaded Batten to get the hemp removed. Batten agreed, though he denied that there had been any 'sinister intentions' in his actions.³ In the following year there was a suggestion that Batten had secured the acceptance of poor quality hemp from Captain Cocke 'wherein the King is absolutely abused'.⁴ Secondly, both Pepys and Batten had their favourite merchants when it came to making contracts, and in September 1663 the large contract made for masts was largely the work of Pepys, who claimed to have saved the King a considerable amount of money. Pepys went out of his way to draw up tables and make comparisons between the timber offered by Sir William Warren and Captain Wood. Pepys greatly favoured Warren and proved, much to Batten's annoyance, that

¹ Diary, 4 August 1662.

² Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 174, f.454.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.16, 7 August 1662.

⁴ Diary, 23 June 1663.

Warren's tender was far better.¹ Batten attempted to discredit Pepys before the rest of the Board over the contracts, and 'inveighed against my contract'. Pepys was obliged to compose a long justification of his dealings which he sent to Carteret on 14 November 1663.² But, with the assistance of Mennes, Batten persisted in trying to discredit Pepys. On 15 December the 'greatest business was Sir J. Mennes and Sir W. Batten against me for Sir W. Warren's contract for masts', and by some means Pepys obtained a 'confession' from Wood 'which I shall make good use of against Sir W. Batten ... touching the contract of masts of Sir W. Warrens about which I have had so much trouble'.³ Pepys soon took the offensive and criticised masts which had been delivered by Wood. By this time the whole dispute between them had become far more personal. This illustrates the way in which naval contracts could be abused, yet it also reveals how opposing factions within the Board could cancel each other out.

Pepys made several slighting references to Batten's 'suspicious dealings', 'knavery', 'corruption', and tried to prevent excessive prices being paid because of Batten's 'corruption and underhand dealing'.⁴ Besides the suspicion of his dealings, it was complained that Batten had discouraged his subordinates from objecting about poor quality stores, presumably on the grounds that he had been involved in the contract or with the merchant concerned. A discovery of poor quality 'yarn' led to its trial before Batten and Pepys, which greatly pleased Pepys, who 'would not have the King's workmen discouraged (as Sir W. Batten doth most basely do) from

¹ Diary, 10 September 1663. Pepys's survey of the rival tenders is given in PRO, SP29/80, f.47, 10 September 1663.

² Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, pp.6-10.

³ Diary, 15, 16 December 1663.

⁴ Diary, 5, 14 October 1663; 24, 27 June 1663; 13 June 1663 over a tar contract.

representing the faults of merchants goods'.¹ In June 1664 Pepys was still complaining of Batten's discouraging 'every man that is honest' and was 'mightily troubled in my mind to hear how Sir W. Batten and Sir J. Mennes do labour all they can to abuse or enable others to abuse the King'.² He was given a considerable amount of information about Batten's 'rogueries' by one of his former clerks, and Pepys said that 'hardly anybody goes to sea or hath anything done by Sir W. Batten but it comes with a bribe'.³ It is certain therefore that Batten was quite widely known for accepting bribes, and for being ready to receive payment and rewards for his assistance. He had ample opportunity to exercise favouritism, and it was alleged by Coventry that he had an 'unaptness for business that he doth things without advice and rashly to gratify people that do eat and drink and play with him'.⁴

Batten's activities with regard to the Chatham Chest also left a great deal to be desired. He had been appointed Treasurer of the money held at Chatham for the relief of poor and injured seamen. The correspondence relating to his management of this charge is long and involved and not strictly relevant, but a few brief extracts will strengthen the notion of Batten's inadequacy. Batten consistently failed to produce his accounts for the Chest, and was suspected of having 'gone on in getting good allowances to himself and others out of the poor's money'.⁵ During 1665 the Chest accounts were being examined by Pepys and the Officers of

¹ Diary, 4 June 1662.

² Diary, 17 June 1664.

³ Diary, 3 May 1664.

⁴ Diary, 24 June 1663.

⁵ Diary, 13 April 1664.

the Chest; Batten claimed to owe only £150 to the Chest, whereas earlier he had admitted to owing £600.¹ A few months before his death Batten was still avoiding giving a statement of his accounts despite many 'demands thereof both public and private'.² Batten's death in October 1667 brought further confusion to the Chest accounts, and it required a great deal of work by Pepys and Brouncker to unravel his affairs. They agreed to accept what 'charges' Batten claimed as a result of his work, but would not allow the £500 he claimed as a 'reward'.³ Although there was no proof of Batten having misused or appropriated the funds of the Chest, his poor administration of the accounts is further proof of his dilatory conduct.

As with the previous Officers, the most telling criticism of his conduct came in the 1668 Letter of Reflections from the Duke of York. Even though Batten died in October 1667 and the letter was not written until the following June, it is a criticism of him far more than of his successor, Middleton, who had only held the office for a few months. The Duke, or Pepys, commented on five of the eight Articles of the Surveyor's duty. The first Article, relating to an annual estimate of provisions needed for the following year, had been neglected completely; 'no such annual state of the stores or annual demand of supplies have ever been hitherto prepared'.⁴ The second Article, relating to the survey of ships, 'hath been wholly unanswered ... nay so far hath the Surveyor been from a constant knowledge of the state of his Majesty's ships ... that I do not remember that I have hitherto upon any demand of what ships are in most readiness for this or that particular service, received other answer from the Surveyor than that

¹ Diary, 4 August 1665.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.454, 2 February 1667.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.524, 6 February 1668.

⁴ PRO, Adn.49/54, f.121.

he would send down to the yards to inform himself'. The fourth Article, which required an account to be kept of loans to private individuals, had been equally neglected. The Duke was informed that there had been many such loans, but no account had been presented to the Board. A further pointer to Batten's failings was his general failure to keep accounts, which meant that after his death there was no way of knowing what had been lent from the stores. It was further objected that Batten had failed to observe personally the fifth Article which required him to examine the boatswains' and carpenters' accounts. This had not been neglected, but the work had been given to under officers, when it should have been done by the Surveyor himself, which was all the more serious because the Board had been complaining to the Duke about the 'wastefulness and unfaithfulness' of the under officers. This again reflects Batten's tendency to rely too much upon the yard officers, and it highlights one of the main problems of this period, namely, the difficulty experienced by the central administration in keeping a check on the activities of their subordinates in places far from London. It is clear, as in the case of Portsmouth, that visits of a few days were totally insufficient to check and examine the honesty of the yard officers. Finally, reference is made to the Surveyor's failure to undertake the seventh Article, which related to a survey of the docks, stores, etc. and the need to present an estimate for their repair. In this there is also the suggestion that the surveys undertaken by Batten had been an expensive waste of time. The Duke said that not one general state of the storehouses, yards etc. (or the ships, according to the second Article) had ever been presented to the Board by the Surveyor.

The reply to this observation and whether they 'have met with any better compliance since the entrance of this present Surveyor' will be considered

presently.¹ It is unfortunate that Batten was not alive to pen his own reply to these accusations, but it is most likely that he would have followed his fellow officers in pleading the practice of his predecessors, ill health, the volume of work occasioned by the war, and the difficulty in supervising work in several places at the same time as attending Parliament. Batten had given a superficial appearance of attending to his duty, yet, despite being relatively intelligent and capable of executing his office, either through indolence, old age, or other interests, he did not. His ability was not devoted to the navy, and Batten saw his office as a means of profit and reward to a much greater degree than either Pepys or Coventry. In this, at least, Batten can be taken as being more typical of his age than Pepys.

Batten's death on 5 October 1667 followed a short illness, although he had been ill earlier that year and in previous years, and, according to Pepys, had looked ill for about two months.² Penn and Pepys immediately recommended Commissioner Middleton, whom they thought 'a most honest and understanding man, and fit for that place'.³ Unlike the other members of the Navy Board, Middleton possessed wide experience of the dockyards. He had been resident Commissioner at Portsmouth since November 1664 and appears to have been extremely energetic in that capacity. His earlier career is very obscure, although he may have been engaged in trade, and his commonly used title of 'colonel' would suggest that he had served as a soldier. Middleton's appointment was therefore a considerable departure from the practice of having former seamen as the Surveyor. As such it was a welcome progression and, so far as the Surveyorship was concerned, it set a pattern which was to be followed until the end of the century.

¹ *Infra.* pp.269-70.

² *Diary*, 3 October 1667.

³ *Diary*, 5 October 1667.

A few days prior to Batten's death, an Order in Council had been passed ordering the removal of Middleton from Portsmouth to 'Chatham or any other place or yard where his Majesty's service requires him'. It went on to say that in future no Commissioner was to be appointed whose attendance was restricted to one place.¹ But the Order, which would have abolished the idea of resident Commissioners, was never put into practice, and when first mooted, was probably a reaction to the disgrace at Chatham, whose resident Commissioner, Pett, had been blamed for all the misfortunes of the war. This Order may explain the delay in Middleton's appointment as Surveyor, as his patent was not passed until 25 November 1667.² A further delay resulted while he ordered his affairs and came up from Portsmouth, and on 19 December he 'first took his place at the Board as Surveyor of the Navy; and indeed I think will be an excellent officer I am sure, much beyond what his predecessor was'.³ Thus Pepys held out considerable hope for improvement with the new Surveyor, who held office until September 1672. From his letters Middleton appears to have been a firm, outspoken character, who would not suffer abuses but who seems to have lacked any courtly manner or refinement. He had a sharp temper and a formidable stern manner. He was fond of exaggerated phrases and sweeping statements, which he was not afraid to express; for example, he described the mast maker at Chatham as a 'rascal ... fitter for Tyburn than for any trust', and he told Pepys that, 'you can do the King no better service than to dismiss all the carpenters, boatswains, pursers and cooks' out of the ships laid up at Chatham.⁴

These comments came as a result of a lengthy examination of the affairs of Chatham yard, which had occupied Middleton during March, April, and June 1668.

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.234, 2 October 1667.

² Catalogue, I, 13. Middleton's patent still referred to the old fees of the office, namely, £40 per annum, although he, like Batten, was paid a salary of £490, CSPD 1667-8, p.55.

³ Diary, 19 December 1667.

⁴ CSPD 1667-8, p.316; PRO, SP29/238, f.8, 5 April 1668.

He was energetic in trying to put the affairs of the yard in order, which had been neglected due to the shortage of money, the effects of the Dutch raid, and the absence of a resident Commissioner since mid-1667. During his stay at Chatham Middleton saw to the launching of the Greenwich and to the repairs to the Rupert, he also started preparations for raising the wrecks in the Medway and tried to buy up stores for the yard.¹ He was hampered greatly in his work by the lack of money to pay seamen and buy up stores, which he discovered were in short supply. At times he found it necessary to borrow money locally. He urged the Board to send money to enable him to pay for goods when they were delivered because many merchants refused to leave provisions without payment.² Middleton found the affairs at Chatham very disturbing, and suggested that there was want of a 'general inspector' who knew the duties of every person in the yard.³ He informed the board of the 'scandalous condition' of the ships laid up there, and that the standing officers were leaving the ships unattended, which resulted in the widespread embezzlement of stores and furniture. In an attempt to combat this, he gave notice that those who were absent one or two days would lose two or four days' pay, and those absent for three days would be regarded as deserters.⁴

The realisation of the bad conditions of the navy came as no shock to most of the Board, and they, together with the Duke of York, began to think of repairs, replenishing the stores, and generally putting naval affairs in

¹ CSPD 1667-8, p.300; PRO, SP29/238, f.8, 5 April 1668; CSPD 1667-8, p.312.

² CSPD 1667-8, pp.371, 387, 439.

³ PRO, SP29/238, f.8, 5 April 1668.

⁴ Middleton proposed that the boatswain of the Anne and the former carpenter of the Royal Katherine should be suspended and their affairs examined as an example to others, BM, Add.MS.9,311 f.168, 9 May 1668.

better order. In particular the lack of a survey inhibited the work and, mindful of past neglects, the Board thought first to write a formal letter to Middleton requiring him to undertake a survey of the ships, yards and stores. He was to be assisted by the Master Shipwrights from all the yards except Portsmouth, where Commissioner Tippetts was conducting the survey.¹ This coincided with the Duke of York's Letter of Reflections and, although most of the comments were an indictment of Batten, it was Middleton who was obliged to reply.² He had only been in office since mid-December, but had already made a good start towards examining the state of the navy. In the circumstances Middleton's reply, which was written at Chatham, was brief, but it held out the promise of an effective performance in his duty in the future.³ He said a survey had been taken of the stores and that an estimate of what was needed had been prepared. The ships, docks, wharves etc. had also been surveyed, and he stated that an estimate for their repair would be presented in a few days after his return to London. An account of the loans 'that had happened in my time' had been given to the Board, as had an account of prize goods delivered into the King's stores. He stated that the boatswains' and carpenters' accounts of those ships which had gone into Portsmouth were ready for inspection, if required, but no mention was made of ships which had gone into other yards, where presumably little had been done, and, considering the virtual chaos which had existed at Chatham, this is not to be wondered at.

Although this reply gave more satisfaction than the Comptroller's, the Duke chose to make a further comment. The Duke had the impression that

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.175, 29 August 1668.

² For these Reflections see supra. pp.264-5.

³ Pepys MS.2242, f.90, 19 September 1668.

Middleton thought that he was obliged to survey the stores within the yards only, and he urged that a full survey of stores lying in other ports, such as Newcastle and St. Malo, and that the timber in the various forests which had been felled for the navy, should be included.¹ The Duke also invited the Surveyor, and any other member of the Board, to appeal to the whole Board, or himself, if they were in doubt as to the full meaning of any part of their Instructions. This invitation was taken up by Middleton, who questioned the fifth Article of his duty which related to the keeping of an account of the boatswains' and carpenters' stores. The Surveyor thought that no useful purpose would be served by both he and the Clerk of the Survey examining these accounts. He proposed that the ship's captain should account for stores and victuals. Pepys sharply dismissed these proposals as being 'a poor, silly thing' and thought they were devised in ignorance.² Nevertheless, he was careful to take a copy in case it should be needed. In their reply the Board would not accept that the commanders would do this work with any degree of satisfaction; they suspected that many of them would be in collusion with the carpenters and boatswains, while others would not bother to examine the accounts.³ The Board insisted that the Surveyor himself was the only person competent enough to undertake the examining of the accounts, and they allowed him an additional clerk for the work.

During 1669 and 1670 Middleton was engaged in at least two detailed surveys. The first was in response to an enquiry from the King and the Duke of York

¹ PRO, Adm.49/54, f.134, 25 November 1668.

² Diary, 28 February 1669.

³ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.187, 10 April 1669. Middleton still thought that his proposal was sound, and in October 1669 he said that the King was being cheated out of half or two-thirds of all stores and that 'it will always be so unless remedied as I propose'. But the Navy Board held, probably correctly, to their view and his idea was not accepted, PRO, SP29/266, f.69, 9 October 1669.

about the state of the navy, and on 16 January 1669 the Duke of York asked for an account of the stores, and wanted to know whether these were sufficient to set out the fleet for a whole year.¹ This followed a meeting held two days previously, when the Navy Board attended the King and 'cabinet' and were asked how long it would take to put the fleet into good repair. The Surveyor thought two years 'and not sooner', although Pepys gave hope of its being done by the summer of 1670 if there was an adequate supply of money.² During February and March 1669 Middleton was at Chatham conducting a survey and, having collected the information from the other yards, he reported on the amount of stores in hand and recommended the sale of decayed provisions.³

In 1670 the Board reported to the Duke of York on the condition of the stores and ships following Middleton's survey, and they presented his estimate of what was needed for the following year.⁴ Later that year a further, but less thorough, survey was required because of the general deterioration in relations with the Dutch and the fear that the earlier survey would be out of date. It is certain that little had been done following the earlier survey because of the shortage of money, and in August 1670 the navy was being promised a 'speedy supply' of money to enable them to put the fleet into full repair. On this occasion Middleton was ordered to concern himself only with Deptford and Woolwich, the resident Commissioners were to take care of matters at Chatham and Portsmouth.⁵

¹ PRO, Adm.106/17, f.333, 26 January 1669.

² Diary, 24 January 1669.

³ CSPD 1668-9, p.182. Middleton was surveying the yard at Chatham and his estimate of the provisions needed to replenish the stores sufficient for the whole fleet for one year came to £85,876 10s 6d, PRO SP29/255, f.154, 13 February 1669. He also sent in an account of unserviceable and decayed provisions, CSPD 1668-9, p.220.

⁴ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.200, 29 January 1670, the total estimate for repairing the ships and replenishing the stores came to £224,848 11s 8d.

⁵ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.213, 20 August 1670.

By the end of September the Surveyor had presented his estimate which included a list of forty-seven of the larger ships and the required repairs.¹ The following year the Surveyor was once more directed to survey the ships and stores. Even though there was a full survey, Middleton himself was not required to visit Chatham and Portsmouth. The respective Commissioners, Cox and Tippetts, were to perform the survey with the same authority and 'in as full a manner' as the Surveyor.² This may be a reflection on Middleton's age, as both he and Mennes were said to be too old.³

As far as Middleton was concerned, his activity in taking the required surveys and presenting the estimate to the Board cannot be faulted. But this was only the first stage of refitting the ships, and on the eve of the Third Dutch War a sudden crisis relating to the stores came to light, which reflected on Middleton and the whole Board. In April 1672 Pepys and Middleton were called to attend the Treasury Commissioners. Pepys asked the purpose of the meeting and was told that it was to give the 'King and their Lordships an account of the condition of our stores'. The King spoke about the matter, expressing surprise that the stores were so empty when the Board had told him they were full enough for twelve months' service.⁴ Pepys replied that the Surveyor had once 'inconsiderately let fall some such thing', but claimed that the Board as a whole had always given the true state of the stores.⁵ Middleton had apparently been at Chatham during much of 1672, and the discovery of the inadequacy of the stores may have

¹ CSPD 1670, p.459.

² PRO, Adm.106/21, f.144, 22 May 1671.

³ Diary, 29 March 1669.

⁴ PRO, SP29/324, f.32, 29 April 1672.

⁵ The King was reported to be 'much offended with the Commissioners of the Navy', BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.22, 9 May 1672.

led to his being kept there and to Tippetts being appointed to succeed him. The situation was thought to be so serious that Clifford, Shaftesbury and Osborne were sent to examine the stores at Deptford, Woolwich and Chatham.¹ They found that the stores were in bad condition and pressed the Board to make several contracts, promising to have money available. The deficiency of the stores meant that it was impossible to refit the fleet completely after the battle of Sole Bay in May 1672. It is not certain whether the removal of Middleton from the Surveyorship was directly associated with this failure, as the whole Board was implicated, but it may have contributed to the general feeling that Middleton was too old and was best suited to working in the yards rather than at the Board. Pepys wrote to the Duke of York on 29 April suggesting that 'the service suffers by the imperfect execution of the Surveyor's place'. He recommended that Tippetts should be appointed Surveyor and that Middleton should be left at Chatham as a Commissioner 'for which he cannot be denied to be much fitter qualified than that of the Surveyorship'.² The incident must be closed in a degree of uncertainty as it is not absolutely clear whether it was the business of the lack of stores in 1672, or Middleton's age, which led to his removal from the Surveyorship. In July 1672 Middleton was being considered as a replacement for Cox, who had been killed at sea in May, as resident Commissioner at Chatham.³ In some ways this move could be considered demotion, but it occurred during the war when there was far more work to be done at the ports than in London, and in the previous war Batten had spent much of his time at Harwich. Middleton died in December 1672 shortly after making this move.

As far as the other parts of the Surveyor's duties were concerned Middleton was apparently competent. Unlike Batten, there was no suggestion that

¹ Haley, First Earl of Shaftesbury, p.301.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.667, 29 April 1672.

³ CSPD 1672, p.384, Cox had been serving as the Duke of York's flag captain on the Prince.

he was too fond of individual contractors; indeed it would seem that Middleton played a less active role in making contracts than his predecessor. He did contract for goods, especially when he was at Chatham, and he expressed dissatisfaction with the Board's method of making contracts, suggesting that some other method be employed, although he put forward no proposal of his own.¹ With the exception of a small incident when he was at odds with Pepys, there is very little to show the extent of his involvement in contracts at the Navy Office.²

Finally, two brief illustrations of Middleton as Surveyor can be taken from Pepys's private journal. On 7 January 1669 Pepys recorded that Middleton would insist upon reading everything before signing it. This was probably a wise precaution, but it annoyed Penn, who was addressing the Board, and he told Middleton that there was no need to read everything, but 'the Surveyor with much earnestness answered him, I must and will read it before I sign it, for it may be a Bill for the sale of myself for ought I know'.³ In the second instance Pepys was dismayed that the Surveyor could not provide a full and accurate list of all the King's ships. Pepys had pressed for such a list, but after some delays the Surveyor presented a list which was a 'scandal' because of its omissions, especially as most of the missing ships had been surveyed by Middleton. This incident reveals not only the pedantic attitude of Pepys, but also the apparently widespread ignorance of the members of the Navy Board and their clerks about the exact number of ships in the navy. Pepys had already complained

¹ CSPD, 1668-9, p.521.

² Diary, 8 December 1668, this was over Middleton's suspicion that Hewer and Pepys were buying unnecessary kerseys, but Pepys proved that this was unfounded, and there the matter rested.

³ Pepys MS.2581, f.159, 7 January 1669.

that he could not compile a complete list of ships from the various lists given to him by the Treasurer, Brouncker, Mennes and Penn.¹

Middleton was succeeded by John Tippetts, who had spent most of his career at Portsmouth. He had been confirmed as Master Shipwright at Portsmouth on 14 July 1660 and had succeeded Middleton as resident Commissioner there in 1668.² He had been appointed 'Surveyor's Assistant', while Middleton was at Chatham, and in April 1672 Pepys recommended to the Duke of York that Tippetts should replace the Surveyor.³ His patent to succeed Middleton was dated 5 September 1672, he held office until 1686 and was reappointed in 1689.⁴ Thus the bulk of Tippetts's long career as Surveyor lies outside the scope of this thesis, but with his appointment, the practice of appointing a Surveyor from the dockyards was continued.

¹ Pepys MS.2581, f.203, 24 April 1669.

² PRO, Adm.2/1725, f.15r, 14 July 1660.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.667, 29 April 1672.

⁴ Catalogue, I, 13, 80, 89.

THE CLERK OF THE ACTS

The last, and most junior of the Principal Officers of the Navy, was the Clerk of the Acts, but this office had the most ancient origins, dating from the reign of King John when it was known as the 'Clerk of the Ships'.¹ At the beginning of Henry VIII's reign the Clerk of the Ships, Robert Brigandine, was 'the only official directly concerned with naval administration under the Lord Admiral ...'.² This office had often been known under different titles, varying from the Clerk of the Ships, the Clerk of Maritime Causes, the Clerk of the Navy, to the Clerk of the Records, and it was not until the seventeenth century that the style of 'Clerk of the Acts' became commonplace. This is not to suggest that the Clerk of the Acts was the direct descendant of the Clerk of the Ships, but the development of the other officers during the Tudor period had rendered 'Clerk of the Ships' too vague a title, as it implied control over the work currently being undertaken by the Comptroller or Surveyor. The emergence of these officers led to the Clerk of the Ships losing a great deal of his earlier wide responsibilities. The expansion of work which had produced the multiplication of officers, had the effect of reducing the scope of the work undertaken by the medieval official. Thus by 1628, when Buckingham issued his Instructions, the Clerk of the Acts was recognised as being of much less importance and quite distinct from the old Clerk of the Ships. The progress made in naval administration had rendered the

¹ Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.3, suggests that the office was of earlier date and was 'only reconstituted or enlarged in function by John, and now represented in descent by the Secretaryship of the Admiralty, is the oldest administrative employment in connection with the Navy'. This is supported by Brooks, English Naval Forces, pp.168-9.

² Davies, 'Administration of the Royal Navy under Henry VIII', EHR, LXXX, p.269.

medieval office obsolete, and although the Clerk of the Acts retained a few functions of the early office, by the seventeenth century it bore little relation to its progenitor.

The function of the Clerk of the Acts was to be a 'register to the rest of all actions done or fitting to be done' by his fellow officers, as stated by Hollond in 1638.¹ This was very far removed from the old Clerk of the Ships with his overall responsibility for naval administration. The primary role of the Clerk of the Acts was to be that of Secretary to the rest of the Navy Board, and in 1660 Penn declared that the Clerk was 'to prepare and set business for signing, and recording of proceedings'. Penn thought it immaterial whether these duties were performed by a Principal Officer or Commissioner, and he considered that beyond these duties the Clerk should be an 'excellent accountant, well versed in naval affairs and in subordinate officers' duties, otherwise many gross errors will ensue'.² Penn did have one original suggestion, which was that the Clerk of the Acts would be better able than the Comptroller to keep a check on the Treasurer's payments so long as his records were properly kept; this followed from his previous remarks about the difficulty facing the Comptroller in trying to keep a check on the Treasurer's ledgers as well as performing his other duties. There is no indication that the Clerks of the Acts before the Civil War had made any attempt to perform this work, and this suggestion, together with almost all Penn's other points, was not taken up.

Shortly after the Restoration the new and very inexperienced Clerk of the Acts, Samuel Pepys, was given an account of some of the duties of his office by his predecessor Thomas Barlow. He was required to present the letters

¹ Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses, p.100.

² NMM, WYN 11/3.

and warrants of the Lord High Admiral to the rest of the Board and to draw up their replies. All other letters, warrants, petitions etc. to and from the Board were to be treated in the same way. The Clerk was also to record agreements made for provisions and hiring of ships, contracts were to be drawn up by him or his clerks, and 'petty purveyance also belongs' to the Clerk of the Acts.¹

This letter gave Pepys some guidance as to the duties of his office until the Duke of York's Instructions were issued in 1662. The Instructions to the Clerk of the Acts were the shortest of all the Principal Officers and contained only five Articles.² The first Article laid down the largest part of the Clerk's duties and required him not to be absent from 'public meetings of his fellow officers', to record all 'orders, bills, contracts, and other business transacted that day', and all business which was before the Board but had not 'received a full issue of final determination'. This Article has led to the Clerk being described as the 'Chief Secretary of the Navy Office'.³ He was responsible for the smooth running and administration of the Navy Board itself, allowing him wide powers and influence over the daily running of the Navy Office. The Clerk was able to delay or promote letters as he pleased and could decide the order in which business was taken. He was to present to his fellow officers the 'present market price of all manner of petty provisions proper and requisite to the expense of naval affairs', and where and from whom these could be obtained, so that the King would not be forced to pay exorbitant prices 'for want of timely information of the market'. Although this related to 'petty provisions' there was no definition of what this meant. This Article complemented the Comptroller's

¹ Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 174, f.308, 29 September 1660.

² PRO, Adm.7/633, Duties of the Clerk of the Acts.

³ Baugh, Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, p.37.

duty in respect of current market prices, and underlined the premise which ran through the whole Instructions that each individual, and by implication the whole Board, was required to keep a check or control on the actions of his fellows. As initially conceived this Article would have been a preliminary requirement for the execution of the third Article, but with the change in emphasis in the latter Article, the second Article became less important, although Pepys was to use it to justify his greater role in the making of contracts.

A clear instance of how the Clerk of the Acts had lost many of the duties associated with the Clerk of the Ships is given in the third Article. This is one of the few Articles in the entire Instructions which varies considerably from the Buckingham and Northumberland Instructions. In these earlier Instructions the Clerk of the Acts (or Navy) had been required to 'purvey' all 'petty emptions' needed for the stores, and he was to 'govern' himself in this by monthly or quarterly certificates from the storekeepers as to the needs of each yard. This had been 'the petty purveyance' which Barlow had mentioned. In March 1661 Pepys had a clash with some of the Board 'about my claim to the place of Purveyor for petty provisions'. He had been asserting his claim and had come into conflict with Thomas Turner, who had a patent to supply petty provisions.¹ The conflict led to a compromise, and when the 1662 Instructions were issued the Clerk of the Acts was to 'supervise the performance of such as one appointed to purvey petty emptions'. The reason for this was not only the increased business of the navy, but past Clerks of the Acts had been unable to do this, as well as coping with other parts of their duty. This change, therefore, rendered part of the meaning of the second Article obsolete.

In the 1662 Instructions an additional Article (4) was added which was close in intention to the last part of the second Article. It required the Clerk

¹ Diary, 14, 16 March 1661.

of the Acts to take care that, through lack of information, the service did not suffer by having to purchase provisions from one merchant.

Finally, the Clerk of the Acts was to keep an exact account of all 'conclusions, orders, petitions, debates, estimates, warrants, letters, answers, etc. agitated at all meetings' so that precedents might be produced, and in the case of loss a 'true' copy of the original document could be obtained. This Article is an extension of the first Article and supports the secretarial role of the Clerk of the Acts. He was, therefore, the 'register' and secretary of the Navy Board, being responsible for keeping a record of all its transactions. With the exception of supervising the 'petty provisions' he was not required to have direct contact with the ships or yards except by correspondence. The Clerk of the Acts was more closely tied to the Navy Office than any of the other members of the Board, and the efficiency of the Board was closely related to the efficiency of the Clerk of the Acts.

Throughout the period under consideration the Clerk of the Acts was Samuel Pepys. His Diary, letters, records and other manuscripts have been indispensable in the preparation of this thesis, and the debt owed to him as a source of information is enormous. It is perhaps unfortunate that, although he left his opinions of his fellow officers and of naval administration, there are few contemporary remarks about him, but he was by no means representative of his fellow officers or of his successors as Clerk of the Acts, so far as diligence and industry were concerned. Pepys was, therefore, not a typical office holder; he arrested the decline of his office and made certain that the Clerk of the Acts became an essential part of naval administration. He ensured that his post was not reduced to one of subservience to his fellow officers, and by taking an extremely active part in all aspects of naval affairs, he prevented the Clerk of the Acts

from becoming solely a clerk with no influence at the Board.

Of all the members of the restored Navy Board, Pepys had the least justification for his place. He was too young to have served the late King, and during the Interregnum he had been a total nonentity with no claim to any reward for loyalty, activity, or suffering for the Royalist cause. He was almost entirely lacking in experience of the sea and naval administration and had had no military training. His appointment was due entirely to the influence of his patron Edward Montagu, later Earl of Sandwich. Pepys had served as Secretary to Montagu, and in this capacity had been to sea in 1659 and 1660. On 23 June 1660 Montagu had 'obtained a promise of the Clerk of the Acts place for me, at which I was glad'.¹ Due to Montagu's influence, Pepys was able to obtain this office despite the fact that a previous Clerk of the Acts, Thomas Barlow, was alive and rumoured to be claiming his office. However, Pepys was able to retain his office without any difficulty, as Barlow, who was 'old and consumptive', was willing to take a fee and not press his claim to the post; he had merely been trying to get what reward or compensation he could. This enabled Pepys to buy him off with £100 per annum. Barlow survived until February 1665, but after the initial threat he did not cause Pepys any further alarm.² Pepys was greatly tempted by an offer of £1,000 to surrender his place to a Mr. Man, but he resisted, perhaps because he became aware of the post's potential and was, in any case, reluctant to offend Sandwich.³

After these doubts and temptations Pepys settled down to his office, and from him a great deal can be deduced about the way in which official business

¹ Diary, 23 June 1660. Montagu was able to secure this place in spite of an attempt by Albemarle to have Thomas Turner appointed, although Pepys did not discover this until 1666, Diary, 30 January 1666.

² Diary, 9 February 1665. This was probably paid in half-yearly instalments as on 20 May 1661 Pepys record having paid £50 to Barlow's attorney. Diary, 20th May 1661.

³ Diary, 6, 10 August 1660.

was transacted. It is possible to see Pepys as an extremely able and hard working person. He was also very concerned to reduce the amount of corruption which he discovered, or suspected, in the actions of his fellow officers and subordinates. Yet, at the same time, he was by no means averse to engaging in dealing which would now be considered questionable in a person in his position. It would be too strong to accuse Pepys of hypocrisy, but he did show a dual standard in some of his moral attitudes. He was conscious of this and went out of his way in an attempt to justify some of his actions, often arguing that he had saved the King some money while making some profit for himself. Pepys was also a very methodical person who took great pains to provide himself with evidence and information, and through this he would often batter his opponents into silence by the sheer volume and complexity of his testimony. He was always anxious that his superiors should have a good opinion of him and be aware of his endeavours.¹ It is possible to imagine Pepys as an advocate, who could easily have been carried away by his own rhetoric. He was often self-righteous and pompous, yet he was also a loyal colleague, who was concerned in defending his friends or subordinates against unjust accusations.

For the first three years or so Pepys was learning his trade; he had an insatiable thirst for knowledge about naval affairs, and the trouble he took to learn about the technicalities of measuring timber for the building of ships is testimony to this.² The knowledge and expertise which he acquired

¹ In December 1661 he was working on 'a little treatise to present to the Duke' about the practice of striking the flag by foreign ships at sea, Diary, 31 December 1661.

² Diary, 30 October 1661, Pepys made an appointment with Captain Lambert of the Norwich to be shown 'every hole and corner of the ship, much to my information and the purpose of my going'. In August 1662 he was out 'informing myself of the stores', Diary, 8, 22 August 1662. Other examples include his 'learning to understand the course of the tide', 22 May 1663; the measuring of timber, 20 June 1663; shipbuilding, 7 May 1664; and for the more theoretical aspects of naval affairs, Pepys read Hollond's Discourse, which he thought hit at 'the very diseases of the Navy which we are troubled with nowadays', 25 July 1662.

made him an almost indispensable part of the Navy Office. During and after the Second Dutch War he built up a formidable reputation for himself, and, as a result, became a trusted associate of the Duke of York. For the most part Pepys was to enter his most responsible posts after the period of this dissertation, and we shall, therefore, only be concerned with his apprenticeship and early maturity.

Until 1664 the whole Navy Board went through a period of inactivity; this is reflected in the leisure Pepys found to attend plays and other amusements. It also enabled him to devote some time to learning about the navy and helped to rectify his initial disadvantage at the Board. He was still thought of as being the most junior member of the Board, and he was resentful that 'there was not the reverence due to' himself and Pett at the office.¹ At the same time he delighted in being in such an influential office, with many ships' captains and officers, dockyard officials and merchants paying him attention and respect. After a short holiday in the country in July 1661 he was very glad to be back at the office, 'to talk with persons of Quality and to be in command'.² During 1662 Pepys began to feel secure in his place, and being more confident, began to assert himself at the Board, resolving to be 'exact in my duty' after the Board had received the Duke's Instructions. He also set about winning the praise of the Duke, his Secretary, William Coventry, and the Treasurer, Sir George Carteret, whom he regarded as being the most influential people associated with the Navy Board. So far as his other colleagues were concerned, Pepys regarded them as rivals whom he could outdo by greater

¹ Diary, 28 November 1661. The notion that the Clerk of the Acts was inferior to the other officers was to persist. In June 1668 Pepys had been away for two weeks and Anglesey thought this was too long, Pepys was indignant that the Treasurer should think him 'more the servant of the Board than I am', Diary, 18 June 1668.

² Diary, 24 July 1661.

efficiency and application to work.¹ It is also clear that Pepys began to take over the direction of much of the routine business of the Board, and was able to use his growing knowledge to increase his influence. In short, Pepys began to adopt a deliberate policy of making himself indispensable in the eyes of the Duke and Coventry.

This spirit of application was to manifest itself in Pepys's decisions to make a list, or abstracts, of all contracts made since the Restoration, and to re-read and enter all letters sent by the Board into his books.² But in the privacy of the Diary he was prepared to admit that this application was not always consistent. In addition, he had commitments outside the Navy Board. On 17 September 1664 he declared, 'I am of late a little guilty of being remiss myself, of what I used to be', although he did not think this came from being 'idle', but because he had 'looked a little too much after Tangier and the Fishery'.³ At the beginning of the war his

- ¹ In November 1661 Pepys saw a way to 'make myself known' by preparing a paper on 'the business of striking sail', Diary, 29 November 1661. He cultivated Coventry by regular attendance on him and a constant flow of letters, and on 1 May 1662 Pepys talked of the 'interest I am making' with Carteret. In September 1662 he wrote, 'my joy is that I do think I have good hold in Sir George and Mr. Coventry', Diary, 14 September 1662. At the end of the month he complimented himself on his 'industry' which had raised his reputation 'and good hold I have of Mr. Coventry and Sir G. Carteret - which I am resolved, and it is necessary for me, to maintain be all fair means', Diary, 30 September 1662.
- ² Diary, 16 April 1662; 9, 22 June 1663. This work of making a list of contracts was neglected from time to time, partly because of other more urgent business, and in slack periods Pepys would continue it. On 24 February 1665 he was perfecting his contract book, which 'hath a long time lain without being entered in as I used to do from month to month'. A long gap then occurs, and it was not until July 1667 that he was 'abstracting' his contracts 'which I have by reason of the war omitted for above two years', Diary, 24 February 1665; 24 July 1667.
- ³ Diary, 17, 26 September 1664. Pepys was appointed a member of the Corporation for Royal Fisheries established in 1664 with the Duke of York as Governor. CSPD 1663-4, p.549. He had been appointed to the Commission for Tangier, due to the influence of Sandwich, in 1662, (Diary, 19 August 1662), and was to become Treasurer of the Commission in 1665.

conscience troubled him because Batten and Mennes 'do take notice that I am now-a-days much from the office, upon no office business'.¹ These other commitments, which took up a considerable amount of time, made Pepys afraid that others would be brought into the office, and in May 1665 he resolved 'to make myself appear eminently serviceable in attending at my office duly, and nowhere else'.² Later in the war he was to confess that the absence of the Duke of York and Coventry did 'imbolden' him in neglecting his business and 'being ... so much absent'.³ But this was a time of little business due to the laying up of the fleet and shortage of money, and Pepys's diligence and application to work often waned. For the most part these were only temporary lapses, and there is abundant evidence to support the more usually held view about his attention to duty. His proposals for alterations and reforms corroborates this opinion. Soon after he had learned something about the activities of the yards, Pepys thought up a scheme known as his 'call books'.⁴ In the autumn of 1662 he had discussions with the officers of Deptford and Woolwich about keeping a record of the work done in the yards. At first he had to contend with their reluctance to alter the established methods of the yards, but he had the authority to override them.⁵ The scheme was given a trial at Deptford and Woolwich during the first quarter of 1663.⁶ It appears to have been successful and was introduced into Chatham in the summer of 1663.⁷ It was

¹ Diary, 29 April 1665.

² Diary, 26 May 1665.

³ Diary, 20 April 1667.

⁴ These proposals resulted from visits made to all the yards from April to July 1662. The Board found matters somewhat disorganised and resolved on a general letter of 'reprehension' to all the yards which was drawn up by Pepys (Diary, 13 August) and sent to the yards on 21 August 1662, BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.83.

⁵ Diary, 24 October 1662.

⁶ NMM, LBK 8, f.32, 23 December 1662.

⁷ Diary, 13 July 1663.

not a particularly revolutionary innovation, yet it is one of the first signs of Pepys's administrative and methodical mind at work. It was also a step in the direction of increasing the Navy Board's ability to exercise more effective supervision over the yards, and became an established feature of dockyard administration.

A second and more complicated scheme devised by Pepys related to the difficult question of the pursers' accounts. He had been given some instruction about these by Thomas Lewis, one of the clerks in the Victualling Office in August 1662, and again in September, when Lewis was 'teaching me to understand the method of making up pursers accounts, which is very needful for me and very hard'.¹ The work was so difficult to understand that Pepys needed further instructions from Lewis in January 1663. This teaching provided the basis for an investigation by Pepys alone into the pursers' affairs in December 1665, which came shortly after he had been appointed Surveyor-General of Victualling, an appointment which would bring him into direct contact with the pursers and their accounts.² The result of Pepys's investigation and thoughts was a long, detailed and involved letter, which he sent to Coventry on 1 January 1666. This letter is sometimes called his 'New Year Gift', and is an excellent example of Pepys's grasp of a problem, his discussion of it and his subsequent recommendations.³ Pepys's

¹ Diary, 29 August, 12 September 1662.

² Apart from his normal duties as Clerk of the Acts, his membership of the Tangier and the Fishery Commissions, he was now the Surveyor of the Victualling. This pluralism did cause him some embarrassment, especially when Lord Brouncker took 'notice of the many places I have; and though I was a painful man, yet the Navy was enough for any man to go through with in his own single place there', Diary, 19 March 1666.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.337, 1 January 1666. In this Pepys discussed the traditional methods of victualling and the means used to check the pursers. He mentioned several of the practical difficulties facing the pursers and the problem forced on them by lack of ready money, he also recognised that in several cases the pursers were forced to issue short allowances and practised all forms of subterfuge to ensure that they did not lose financially from a voyage. Pepys wanted to return to an older method of making the purser accountable for the victualling, and being given allowances according to the length of the ship's voyage and number of men carried.

letter was passed by Coventry to Albemarle, who referred it to the Navy Board for their consideration.¹ On 12 January the Board recognised the work and effort put in by Pepys. Penn had some objections and saw one or two minor flaws in Pepys's argument, but the Board put off until later any final recommendation on Pepys's proposals. The Duke of York expressed his approval of the scheme but it does not appear to have ever been implemented, no doubt due to the difficulty of changing the system in the middle of the war, and, as far as can be ascertained, the whole scheme was allowed to lapse. Though this was not one of Pepys's more successful proposals, and there is no way of deciding how effective it would have been in practice, it still stands as evidence of Pepys's desire to introduce better methods for the victualling and pursers' accounts.

These two proposals were not strictly related to Pepys's duty as Clerk of the Acts, and they represent the additional, rather than the ordinary execution of his duty. Even though some of Pepys's lapses have been noted, he was relatively constant in his attendance to his work; indeed he pursued the policy of keeping much of the Board's correspondence and the running of its affairs in his hands. On several occasions he was the only member of the Board to be found at the Navy Office. Whether or not his fellow officers were more frequently sent to the yards or to sea, or were merely absent on their own affairs, it was Pepys who was left to ensure that the central organ of naval administration functioned smoothly. In July 1662 Pepys complained to Coventry that he was the only member of the Board in town, and pointed to the obvious disruptions which would occur if he were

¹ NMM, SER 78, f.32r, 10 January 1666. Pepys persuaded Albemarle to refer it to the Board before he had read it, 'for he will never understand it I am sure', Diary, 10 January 1666.

incapacitated.¹ In a memorandum of 1665 there appears the comment that 'Mr Pepys in '64 and '65 did frequently write to all persons himself in the name of the whole Board and particularly the beginning of '65'.² Not only does this reveal the burden of work which must have fallen on Pepys, but also the responsibility associated with it. On other occasions he mentioned being 'left wholly alone' and 'being still alone'.³ This situation was in some ways unavoidable when the other members were ordered elsewhere, or when business slackened because the fleet was at sea or laid up for the winter. During such times it was not expected that the whole Board should be together and, indeed, the additional tasks assigned to most members of the Board showed that, despite the intention of the Duke's Instructions, it was assumed that they would undertake duties other than those assigned to them by the letter of their Instructions. As a result of Pepys's continual presence at the Board, and of his being responsible for its correspondence, Coventry tended to address letters direct to Pepys instead of the whole Board, as if he were the Secretary.⁴ This caused a certain amount of irritation among the other members, who felt that Pepys and Coventry were ignoring them.

As Clerk of the Acts Pepys was responsible for drawing up the letters from the Board and for having them signed and dispatched. In routine cases

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.9, 22 July 1662. When he was alone at the Board, Pepys would write informing the dockyards of the Board's intentions and sent the official letter when he could gather two or three more signatures, e.g. letter to Tippetts and Pett, NMM, LBK 8, f.1, 10 July; f.18, 14 August 1662.

² BM, Add.MS.9,303, f.171r, undated.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.239, 25 August 1665; f.307, 25 November 1665.

⁴ Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 174, f.456, 10 April 1665.

this would be delegated to his clerks, but for several important letters Pepys drew them up himself and, having obtained the Board's approval, made the final draft ready for signing. A relatively early example of Pepys drawing up letters was his 'letter to the yards of reprehension and direction for the board to sign; in which I took great pains'.¹ This complained of a general slackness in all the yards and dismissed the usual excuse of ignorance of the Instructions. The most outstanding examples of Pepys composing important letters and having them accepted by the rest of the Board occurred during and after the Second Dutch War. In this he was fulfilling, on behalf of the Board, that part of their duty which required them to inform the Lord High Admiral of conditions in the navy. After the war they also served to excuse the Board from any suggestion that they had not informed the King and Duke about these conditions. During 1666 Pepys was employed in drawing up four long letters to the Duke of York, as well as letters to Coventry, Albemarle, and the Privy Council. These letters provide a clear and undisguised account of the problems facing the Navy Board, and express their fears of not being able to perform the work without more money. On 12 May 1666 Pepys was 'to draw up a letter for the Duke of York, relating to him the badness of our condition' for 'want of money', and on 14 July he made a final draft of a 'laborious letter I wrote, as from the Board, to the Duke of York, laying out our want of money again'.² Later that year, in November, he was 'drawing my great letter to the Duke of York of the state of the Navy for want of money'. This letter was designed to leave the Duke and the King in no doubt as to the 'ill condition' of the navy.³ From these a very sombre impression is gained of naval

¹ Diary, 13 August 1662, this letter was signed by Carteret, Batten, Coventry, Pett and Pepys and was sent to the yards on 21 August, BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.83.

² Diary, 12 May, 14 July 1666.

³ Diary, 16-18 November 1666.

affairs; money and credits were virtually exhausted, the debts were soaring, and the Board was being forced to agree to accept inflated prices and poor quality provisions as the stores were almost empty and the seamen were becoming mutinous for want of pay. This dismal picture held out little hope of improvement in the immediate future, and it was reinforced by similar letters in February and March 1667.¹ In this way it is very likely that the Navy Board unintentionally contributed to the decision not to set out the fleet in 1667. By impressing upon the King, the Duke of York and the Privy Council the low state of the stores, and by their estimate of the cost of repairing the fleet for another campaign, the

¹ The letters are:- 6 February 1666, Coventry MS.96, f.108. This followed a meeting on 27 January in which the Board told the Duke of the situation, and he directed them to put their comments into writing. They thought that over £100,000 would be needed to pay the debts, wages, etc. due from 1665, and that a further £1,415,318. 10s. Od. would be needed to set out the fleet, pay the yards and seamen, and finish building the ten ships. The second letter, 12 May 1666 Coventry MS.97, f.19, stressed the rising prices and declining credit of the office, and stated that they had not received the weekly money promised by the Lord Treasurer; the letter of 14 July 1666, Coventry MS.96, f.112, was similar. The 'great letter' of 17 November, Coventry MS.97, f.38, continued and emphasised what had already been said. It gave further examples of the high prices and refusals of merchants to trade with the Board, and ended with an estimate amounting to £179,793, 10s. Od. needed to repair and equip the fleet for another year's actions, and an estimate of the debt of the navy at £934,000. In the following year, when preparations should have been well underway, Pepys was again at work drawing up letters on the state of the navy. The letter of 23 February 1667, NMM, LBK 8, f.458, was 'abundantly providing for the vindication of this office, whatever the success be of our wants of money', Diary, 23 February 1667. This further mentioned the emptiness of the stores and gave an estimate of when the ships would be ready for sea 'upon a presumption of no lack of hands or stores'. This letter was read to the King, Duke of York and the Lord Treasurer by Pepys on 14 March, when the opportunity was taken to give a more detailed account of the condition of the navy to the King. Diary, 14 March 1667, and Pepys's discourse to the King, NMM, LBK 8, f.475. Further letters were written on 31 March and 16 June 1667 Diary. After the war Pepys was still drawing up letters on the poor condition of the navy; on 27 October 1667 Pepys dictated a letter which was to 'be of no purpose' but for the vindication of the Board 'in these bad times', Diary, 27 October 1667. In the following year Pepys was once more occupied 'concerning a solemm letter' to the Duke about the 'state of the things of the navy, for want of money, though I doubt it will be to little purpose', Diary, 4 February 1668.

Board, or more particularly Pepys, left little room for optimism. It would be pointless to speculate on whether the Board were too pessimistic in their appraisal of the situation, though with the benefit of hindsight it might be legitimate to draw this conclusion, but at that time they were certainly in the best position to judge the requirements of the service, and, although the intention of their letters was to elicit further financial supplies for the navy, the result was the cessation of naval action in 1667. Clearly the financial difficulties of the country were only partially revealed to the Board, but this factor was decisive. The suggestion therefore still remains that the Board, and particularly Pepys, played their part, albeit unwittingly, in the debate about laying up the fleet for the remainder of the war.

After the war Pepys found that the reputation he had acquired for hard work and efficiency stood him in good stead. His ability and knowledge and his sympathy with the Duke of York led to his being required to draw up the Duke's Letter of Reflections in 1668. This letter has already been quoted extensively with reference to the other members of the Board, and it has been pointed out how it was an attempt by the Duke to justify his position when he was being seriously threatened by the Buckingham faction.¹ The suggestion that this letter should be written came from Pepys himself, who had shown the Duke the 'weakness' of the office and 'did give him advice to call us to account for our duties, which he did take mighty well, and he desired me to draw up what I would have him write to the Office'.² During August 1668 Pepys read over the Instructions and other papers to the Board in preparation for the letter, which was completed on 20 August and given to the Duke the next day.³ This letter is an excellent example

¹ *Supra*, pp.93-4.

² *Diary*, 24 July 1668.

³ *Diary*, 14, 17, 20, 21 August 1668.

of Pepys's grasp and understanding of naval affairs. He showed a keen awareness of the failings of the Navy Board and its individual members. But it is essentially a conservative document which does not put forward any radical suggestions, and its main point was the Board's failure to observe the 1662 Instructions.¹ This then was not an attempt to alter the fabric of naval administration, which Pepys found to be sound, but was a call for a better performance by the Board within the existing framework.

As one would expect Pepys did not make any specific charges against himself, but in the Duke's name he said that there 'hath not yet occurred to me any particular wherewith to charge him with failure', and he was prepared to receive any information about the Clerk of the Acts' failure.² Despite the absence of any specific charges or reflections on his own conduct, Pepys characteristically wrote one of the longest answers in reply to his own letter. He went through the Articles of his duty claiming to have been constantly at the Board and to have drawn up all letters and kept the records as instructed.³ With regard to the general reflections on the Board, he claimed constant attendance, attention to duty, and not neglecting his work because of 'private fortune, pleasure, or health' during the war. Pepys challenged anyone to show neglect on his part, and he was even willing to have his books and registers examined. He made an interesting comparison between the number of letters issued in the First Dutch War (798) and those in the Second (8,848).⁴

¹ Pepys MS.2242, f.22.

² PRO, Adm.49/54, f.125.

³ Pepys MS.2242, f.94.

⁴ Catalogue, I, 31n3, Tanner points out that as the second war was 'nearly twice as long as the first, this means that business had increased about sixfold'.

When the other replies were received they were given to Pepys, who took copies for future reference; he was pleased to note that little was said which reflected adversely on him.¹ Penn, Mennes and Anglesey all hinted that the Duke should examine Pepys's books, but what they expected to find is not clear; Pepys was hardly disturbed by the threat. A month later the Duke 'did press' Pepys to prepare a second letter in reply to the answers of the Board, which he was pleased to do.² This letter was presented to the Duke's Secretary, Matthew Wren, on 13 November, who thought its tone unnecessarily sharp, and it was delivered to the Board in modified form on 25 November 1668.³ So far as Pepys was concerned this added nothing to the comments concerning him.

A second indication of the esteem and trust in which Pepys was held by the Duke of York occurred about the same time.⁴ On 28 August 1668 the Duke gave Pepys a paper 'about the exceptions taken against the management of the Navy'. Later that day, the Duke, Wren and Pepys read over the paper after the rest of the Board had left, but it was not thought to represent a serious attack on the navy.⁵ Nevertheless the Duke left Pepys and Wren to draw up a reply. Those behind the paper were Buckingham and 'other

¹ Diary, 13, 14, 16 September 1668.

² Diary, 26 October 1668.

³ Diary, 13 November 1668; PRO, Adm.49/54, f.130.

⁴ The link between Pepys and the Duke was just developing in the mid-1660s and was not to be very close until the 1670s. They became especially close in the period 1684-88. But at this time it was thought that Pepys might succeed Coventry as Secretary to the Duke; on 2 September 1667 Coventry told him of his impending resignation, and both Batten and Penn told Pepys 'that they had long cut me out for Secretary to the Duke of York' Diary, 2 September 1667. Later, in 1672 Pepys may have had hopes of succeeding Wren in the Secretaryship, as on 4 June 1672 Coventry sympathised with Pepys when he heard of Wren's retirement at sea because of illness and of his being succeeded by Henry Saville, Bodl., Rawl. MS. A 174, f.201.

⁵ Diary, 28 August 1668.

present reformers¹, who were more concerned to attack the Duke of York than to reform abuses in the navy. Pepys gave a reply to Wren on 18 September and was very pleased to be told of the Duke's approval on 21 September.¹ Even though Pepys had dismissed the objection as 'so silly, and the remedies so ridiculous', they did strike at some of the abuses in the navy. In his reply Pepys admitted that the ticket system was wasteful and expensive, but said that it was unavoidable because of the lack of money.² This was his standard excuse for all the criticism he accepted. To the other criticisms Pepys pointed out the existing Instructions and regulations governing them, but did not suggest that they were being effectively executed. Bearing in mind the criticisms of the Board which Pepys had drawn up, it is clear that his reply to these objections was very evasive. As the political situation improved there was no further mention of these criticisms and Pepys could feel more secure.

When discussing the activities of Batten as Surveyor, it was indicated that there was friction between him and Pepys over naval contracts. As Clerk of the Acts, Pepys had to keep a register of all contracts made by the Board. This was done on a monthly basis from 1663 to 1664 but was then neglected until the end of the war.³ The importance of this aspect of the Board's work did not escape Pepys, and he began to take an increasingly active part in it. In 1662, when Pepys was beginning to assert himself, his right and duty to draw up contracts was recognised by the Board, despite an attempt by Penn to claim this work for the Comptroller.⁴ Thereafter Pepys was active in learning the method of measuring masts, the relative

¹ Diary, 18-21 September 1668.

² Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 195, f.64, September 1668.

³ Supra. p.284.

⁴ Diary, 3 June 1662.

qualities of hemp, and he began to collect information on previous mast prices.¹ An early example which shows Pepys's involvement concerned a contract for hemp with Sir Robert Ford. This had been testified as poor by the ropemaker at Woolwich, William Hughes and Pepys had taken a leading part in calling for a trial to be made with it. On 4 June 1662 Pepys and Batten attended a trial between Ford's 'holland's yarne' and Riga hemp; Ford's was found to be 'very bad', which led to Pepys stopping the payment of Ford's bills at the Board meeting the following day.² This incident may have helped to increase the hostility between Pepys and Batten, as Batten had been favourable towards Ford. During the following year Pepys extended his knowledge to masts, which were an essential part of naval contracts, and he became deeply involved in this.

As a preliminary he had made extensive enquiries into the business of masts, how they were measured, their quality, and how the timber was sawn.³ During August and September 1663 Pepys negotiated with Sir William Warren for the purchase of masts; the contract was signed at the Board on 10 September, much to Pepys's delight, who thought it 'the best bargain of masts' for twenty-seven years.⁴ He also reflected on how easy it had been to obtain the Board's approval, for after it had been read the members signed it 'without the least care or consultation either of quality, price, number or need of them'.⁵ It is likely that Batten was absent from the Board that day

¹ Diary, 12 November 1662, he was making 'my collection of the prices of Masts for these twelve years'.

² Diary, 4, 5, June 1662.

³ Diary, 20 June 1663.

⁴ Pepys compared the tenders offered by Warren and William Wood and concluded that Warren's tender was 5-7% better, PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.14.

⁵ Diary, 10 September 1663.

because he subsequently attacked this contract during the next few weeks. Pepys had been away in the country at that time, and on his return he heard how Batten had 'inveighed' against the contract.¹ Pepys wrote immediately in his own justification to Coventry, saying that Batten had 'reproached me most passionately', but Pepys claimed his contract was better than any 'anciently made' and that it was 15% better than Wood's.² He gave a more detailed vindication to Carteret on 14 November and the Treasurer accepted his argument; the contract stood and Pepys had stolen a considerable march on the Surveyor.³ On 15 December Batten, with Mennes in support, renewed his attempts, but to no avail.⁴

Undeterred by the opposition he had experienced, Pepys went on to conclude further and larger mast contracts with Warren in 1664. With delight Pepys recorded that the Board had contracted for 1,000 'Gottenburg' masts from Warren, 'the biggest that ever was made in the Navy and wholly of my composing, and a good one I hope it is for the King'.⁵ In August 1664 Pepys was with Warren about a 'great contract for New England masts, wherein

¹ Diary, 21 September 1663. *Supra.* p.262.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.76, 22 September 1663.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.84, 14 November 1663. Pepys declared Warren's price to be 5-7% less than Wood's, which was probable more accurate than the 15% he mentioned to Coventry, and declared that because Wood's masts had been in the river for some time, the best timber had been sold and it would cost up to £220 to send a third of the contract to Portsmouth, whereas Warren's masts could be delivered there directly. This letter is fully summarised by Pool, Navy Board Contracts 1660-1832, p.27.

⁴ Diary, 15 December 1663.

⁵ Diary, 21 July 1664.

I was very hard with him'.¹ With the approach of war in 1664 it was necessary to make further contracts for masts, and again Pepys supported Warren. On 18 October a 'great contract' for 3,000 loads of timber was made with Warren despite Batten's opposition. The Duke of York was anxious to conclude the contract to ensure that the stores were well stocked.² This was another personal success for Pepys against Batten, who had favoured rival contracts. Thus by the outbreak of war Pepys had established himself as a leading figure in making the Board's contracts. During the war Pepys once more supported Warren against Batten and Mennes, and he continued to play an active part as long as money was available.³

Pepys's close involvement in contracts allowed him plenty of scope to make a substantial profit. He appreciated the opportunities open to him when concluding Warren's contract in September 1663, 'but good God, to see what a man might do were I a knave - the whole business, from beginning to end, being done by me out of the office'.⁴ In the privacy of the Diary Pepys was to record several examples of being rewarded for his part in the

¹ Diary, 12 August 1664. These two contracts were to cause Pepys more trouble than the previous one with Warren. They brought accusations of favouritism and were the subject of investigations by the Committee of Public Accounts. Warren was eventually forced to return £6,578 14s 7d, Calendar of Treasury Books, 1676-9, p.1299. Pepys always maintained that the quality of the masts and their price at the time justified the contract.

² Diary, 18, 24 October 1664.

³ Diary, 4 January 1666. Pepys was a very determined person and when foiled he would scheme to get his own way. This can be seen over a hemp contract in 1666; at first the 'folly' of Batten had prevented a contract with Captain Cocke, which would have been 'profitable to the King and of good convenience to me', Diary, 7 November 1666. Pepys failed to get support from Coventry and was 'defeated and disappointed' but he resolved to carry on the business 'which I think I shall by my dexterity do, and to the King's advantage, as well as my own', Diary, 8, 10 November 1666. He was apparently successful as on 25 November he talked with Cocke about the contract 'made with us lately for hemp', Diary, 25 November 1666.

⁴ Diary, 10 September 1663.

awarding of contracts, but claimed that he had made better contracts and was not influenced by the thought of private reward. The distinction between Pepys and Batten was that the latter would make a contract with his own profit in mind, whereas Pepys would make a contract advantageous to the King, and would then accept a reward. Pepys's attitude to private gain is clearly demonstrated by an entry in the Diary for 27 April 1664, this was at the time when prices were beginning to rise; he wrote, 'I would be glad first to serve the King well, and next, if I could, I find myself now begin to cast how to get a penny for myself'.¹ This was a typical attitude of the period, although not all would have put serving the King before themselves.

As one would expect, the most contracts made with Warren resulted in a reward for Pepys, but even before they were concluded Warren had presented Pepys with a pair of gloves and a silver cup and dish.² Further rewards from Warren came in the form of forty pieces of gold in February 1664 and £100 in September 1664.³ When Pepys took on the Surveyorship of the Victualling, further possibilities for private profit opened to him, and after the adjusting of Gauden's accounts in January 1667 Pepys received £500 from the Victualler and in August 1667 a further £400 came 'on one account or other'.⁴ When the Navy Board came under close scrutiny in 1668, Pepys thought it wise to speak with Warren and Gauden 'about what presents I have had from them' and asked them not to 'publish them'. If they did they were to say that he had received nothing on the 'account of the Navy but Tangier'.

¹ Diary, 27 April 1664.

² Diary, 10 February 1663.

³ Diary, 2 February, 14 September 1664.

⁴ Diary, 31 January, 4 February, 2 August 1667.

Pepys claimed that he had never asked for presents and decided to make his attitude known.¹ It is well established that Pepys took advantage of his position to increase his wealth, but in so doing he was no worse than every contemporary office holder, and he did at least try to reduce corruption and bad contracts made by the Navy Office. There can be no doubt that, despite his lapses, Pepys was one of the most honest, efficient and able members of the Navy Board. By 1673 he had come a long way from the inexperienced fellow he had been at the Restoration. The resignation of the Duke of York brought an important promotion for him; he left the Navy Board and became Secretary to the Admiralty; that is, to the Commissioners appointed to execute the office of Lord High Admiral. It was in this post that Pepys was to be most influential and successful as a naval administrator.

¹ Diary, 2 March 1668. This type of revelation could have seriously damaged, if not ruined, his career particularly in 1668. Pepys showed caution by not accepting presents from everyone as in February 1667 he refused £100 from Young and Whistler, the flagmakers, 'not thinking them safe men to receive such a gratuity from', he wanted to be 'free from their reports' and to be able to say that he had 'refused their offer', Diary, 5 February 1667.

THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE NAVY

One of the most obvious ways in which the Navy Board had changed since before the Civil War was through the addition of a new type of official, known as the 'Commissioner'. Up to 1642 naval administration had generally been carried out by the four Principal Officers, (occasionally an additional 'Commissioner' had been appointed)¹. These were abolished by a Parliamentary Ordinance on 15 September 1642.² They were replaced by twelve Commissioners, who were to 'examine all payments, accounts and receipts which fell within the function of the Comptroller, Surveyor or Clerk, and to execute all business pertaining to the Navy which was formerly done by the Comptroller, Surveyor and Clerk of the Navy ...'. These Commissioners did not execute the old Treasurer's duties, which were left to the Parliamentary Committee of the Navy up to 1653 and then to the Admiralty Commissioners.³ Unlike their predecessors, these Commissioners were not assigned to any specific duty, but they were to undertake and be collectively responsible for all aspects of naval administration.⁴ The number of these Commissioners varied from five in 1652 to nine in 1655, although in most years they numbered six.

This was an alternative system of administration which was favoured by Penn when the composition of the Navy Board was under discussion in June 1660. He thought that with Commissioners 'both particular and joint duties may be

¹ Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses, p.329n5.

² Firth and Rait (eds), Acts and Ordinances, I, 27.

³ Dewar, 'Naval Administration of the Interregnum', MM, XII, 408, 417.

⁴ A possible exception to this was that Batten, and then Hollond, was to do the work formerly done by the Surveyor up to 1652.

effectively performed'; this would prevent one person from acting without the knowledge of his fellows and all things would be 'dispatched publicly', which would prevent matters being 'left to a particular person's appointment, which hath formerly begotten irregularity, confusion, discord, and emulation amongst them'.¹ This proposal was not acceptable in 1660, but neither was a simple return to the pre-1642 practice.² The result was a marriage between the traditional officers and newcomers, who were styled 'Commissioners', and from 1660 the full title of the Navy Board became the 'Principal Officers and Commissioners of his Majesty's Navy'. Clarendon suggests that the proposal to add Commissioners came from Coventry and was put forward by the Duke of York to the King in Council, 'where nobody thought fit to examine or debate what the duke proposed'.³ These Commissioners were at first extremely versatile in their work and were to be assigned specific tasks from time to time. Basically they were to assist the Principal Officers in coping with the greater volume of work. When, in 1669, he was asked to give a short description of the administration of the Navy, Pepys said that the advantage of Commissioners was in their 'being not limited to any, and yet furnished with power of acting and controlling every part both of the particular and common duties of the office, have full opportunity given them as well of understanding the defects of the whole and applying their assistance where it may be most useful'.⁴ But the Commissioners were gradually to lose this vague association, and they became recognised as having distinct duties either in the dockyards, or as assistants to the Comptroller or other members of the Board. By 1673 the original concept

¹ NMM, WYN 11/3.

² *Supra*. pp. 142-43.

³ Clarendon, Continuation of the Life, II, 331, Clarendon believed that Coventry was motivated by a desire to reduce the influence of Carteret.

⁴ NMM, LBK 8, f.589, 17 April 1669.

of a 'Commissioner' had given way to an officer who was to undertake clearly defined work. The Navy Board then consisted of the four ancient Principal Officers and three or four Commissioners, who were in effect additional Principal Officers. The initial flexibility of this office was never completely lost and the number of Commissioners, sometimes styled 'additional' or 'extra', varied from three in 1660 to seven from 1665-7. This variation obviously depended on the volume of work at the Board, and during peacetime the usual number of Commissioners was four. For the period under consideration a total of fifteen persons, of varying degrees of competence, were appointed as Commissioners.¹ Broadly there emerged two types of Commissioners, firstly, those appointed to work at the Board, and secondly, inferior Commissioners appointed to reside in the dockyards. This distinction was to become firmly established during the 1660s and, although there were individuals who were promoted from the dockyards to the Board itself, the 'resident' Commissioners retained a separate identity. This distinction was emphasised by the salaries paid to the respective Commissioners, those at the Board were paid £500, whilst those at the dockyards received £350.² There were no collective instructions for them and they were to act in accordance with the general Articles of the 1662 Instructions. In cases where a Commissioner was appointed to a specific task, for example, Penn and Brouncker, who were to audit the Victualler's and Treasurer's accounts, ad hoc instructions were issued. It will be more convenient, therefore, to discuss the individual Commissioners and their own orders and instructions as the need arises.

¹ A list of these Commissioners by the date of their appointment or patent would be: Lord Berkeley; Sir William Penn and Peter Pett (Chatham) on 4 July 1660; William Coventry, 12 May 1662; Lord Brouncker, 12 November 1664; John Taylor (Harwich) and Thomas Middleton (Portsmouth), November/December 1664; Sir Thomas Harvey, 30 January 1665; John Tippetts (Portsmouth), 28 February 1668; John Cox (Chatham) 29 March 1669; Sir Jeremy Smith, 17 June 1670; Sir John Ernle, 23 June 1671; Anthony Deane (Portsmouth) 3 July 1672; Edward Seymour, 30 August 1672; Richard Beach (Chatham) 26 December 1672; Catalogue, I, 7-16.

² Catalogue, I, 9, 13.

It is possible to dispose quickly of two of the Commissioners appointed, either because the evidence about them is so scant, or because they took little part in the affairs of the Navy Board; they were Lord Berkeley and Sir Thomas Harvey. Both of them were described as having been 'brought into the Navy for want of other ways of gratification'.¹ Berkeley had been an active soldier during the Civil War, and during the Interregnum he had gained considerable influence over the young Duke of York. He had been a member of the Duke's household and had accompanied him on campaigns with Turenne from 1652 to 1655.² He was completely ignorant of naval affairs, and his association with the Navy Board after 1660 does nothing to suggest an interest or even an attempt to involve himself in naval affairs. According to Clarendon he 'understood nothing that related either to the office or employment, and therefore seldom was present in the execution' of it.³ There is also no suggestion of his being considered as a possible commander at sea, but he held his Commissionership from July 1660 until he transferred to the Ordnance Commission in October 1664.⁴ During this period he is rarely mentioned in connection with the Board and it is unlikely that he spent much time at the office.⁵ He was occasionally with the Duke when the Board made their weekly visit, but apart from this there is no reason to doubt Pepys's comment that his appointment was an exercise in patronage.

¹ Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.257.

² DNB, IV, 361.

³ Clarendon, Continuation of the Life, II, 332-3.

⁴ CSPD 1664-5, p.41.

⁵ There are four probable occasions when he was at the Board, 4 July, 8, 15 December 1663, and 14 June 1664, Diary. He is mentioned as a regular attender of the Tangier Committee and on 11 November 1663 was added to the Committee for the Admiralty and Navy, PRO, PC6/1, f.51, 11 November 1663.

The second person brought on to the Navy Board by way of 'gratification' was Sir Thomas Harvey, who admitted to having purchased his place from Berkeley.¹ He is described as the 'only nonentity who held office on the navy board during this period'. His tenure was from 30 January 1665 to 25 March 1668.² Yet Harvey was more active at the Board than Berkeley had ever been, and during 1667 he was primarily concerned with the making up of Sir George Carteret's accounts. In November and December 1667 he was certainly engaged on this, for he had some difficulty in getting sufficient books and in keeping the clerks at work.³ He is also mentioned more often than Berkeley as having attended pays, going with the Board to the Duke and being at the office. Despite this he made very little impact. During the plague Harvey left town with the rest of the Board, but he does not appear to have accompanied them to Greenwich, where they functioned from August 1665 to January 1666. His first appearance at the Board after their return was on 10 February 1666 when he was 'coldly received', and, in fact, left before the day's business was concluded, making him appear 'a man less necessary'.⁴ Pepys described him as an 'idle fellow', who would 'never be better in the business of the Navy'.⁵ His departure from the Board in 1668 was hastened by the desire for retrenchment after the war, and by his own fear that a Parliamentary enquiry would expose his inadequacy. These two Commissioners are the only clear examples of the Navy Board being used as a source of patronage, and they are in no way typical of the other Commissioners appointed during this period.

¹ Diary, 26 June 1667. Clarendon said that he paid £3,000, op.cit., II, 333.

² Catalogue, I, 14.

³ PRO, SP46/136, f.621, 30 November 1667; BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.154, 5 December 1667.

⁴ Diary, 10 February 1666. During his absence Pepys and Brouncker had talked about trying to get him replaced by John Evelyn or Sir Robert Murray, Diary, 28 January 1666.

⁵ Diary, 16 November 1667, 7 November 1666.

Far more representative of the Commissioners was Sir William Penn, who was appointed in July 1660 at the same time as Berkeley. Penn had had a long and distinguished naval career dating from the 1640s. He had served in the Parliamentary fleet, and rose to be Vice-Admiral under Blake in the First Dutch War. During this war he saw considerable action, but his failure to support Blake at the battle off the Kentish Knock in 1652 and the unsuccessful attack on Hispaniola in 1655 cast doubt on his ability.¹ He was not employed by the Protectorate after this; in 1656 he was suspected of Royalist sympathies and suffered a short imprisonment before being forced to retire to his estates in Ireland. During this retirement he began corresponding with the exiled court. There was no doubt of Penn's qualifications, and his appointment to the Navy Board was certainly a sound step. With his previous experience he may have been called upon to prepare a paper on the administration of the navy, which was possibly debated on June 1660 at the Committee established to consider the constitution of the navy. But there is no evidence that Penn attended the Committee and his proposals were certainly not adopted.² It is impossible to determine whether the decision to appoint additional Commissioners owed anything to Penn, and claims that he was the architect of the restored Navy Board have not been substantiated.³

¹ DNB, XLIV, 308; Penn, Memorials of Sir William Penn. This is the only biography of Penn; it is in no way critical of Penn and mainly consists of extracts from Pepys, and various State Papers. Certain aspects of Penn's career in the 1650's are mentioned by Powell, Robert Blake, pp.169-74, 209-14, 235-7, 252, 255-66, 272-3.

² NMM, WYN 11/3; PRO, PC6/1, f.1, 27 June 1660, Penn was not named as one of those to serve on the Committee and nowhere is it stated that the 'paper' presented to the Committee by the Duke of York was the one usually attributed to Penn. The authorship of Penn's paper has not been previously doubted but an entry in the Diary does suggest that the paper was composed by Thomas Turner, a Navy Officer clerk, and that Penn had presented it to Coventry 'as from himself' and he 'never owned anything of Mr. Turner in them', Diary, 21 May 1667.

³ Bryant, Pepys, The Man in the Making, p.122, Bryant claims that Penn 'had drafted the memorandum which laid down the nature and duties of the new Navy Board'. Similar claims on Penn's behalf have been advanced by Tedder, Navy of the Restoration, p.42, and Pool, Navy Board Contracts, p.2.

At first Penn fulfilled the initial concept of the 'Commissioner', in that he assisted the Principal Officers wherever necessary. He paid off ships and inspected Chatham dockyard in March 1661, chose masters for the ships in May 1661, and is often mentioned as being at the Navy Office.¹ But Penn also attended to his Irish estates and during 1662 and 1663 he was often ill, usually with gout.² The proposal to join Penn with Mennes in the execution of the Comptrollership in 1663 was not implemented largely because of the opposition of Mennes.³ Penn did, however, undertake parts of the Comptroller's duties while Mennes was still at sea in November 1661.⁴

Penn's reputation was always high; he enjoyed the respect of the Duke of York and with the approach of war in 1664 was greatly in demand to give advice and hasten the preparations. He returned from Portsmouth in June 1664 'full of great reports of his service and the state of the ships there'.⁵ Penn was further elevated when he was taken to sea as the Duke's flag captain; Pepys envied Penn who 'doth grow every day more and more regarded by the Duke', although Pepys had little desire to hazard his own life at sea.⁶ Pepys thought that this appointment was because of Penn's

¹ Diary, 29 March, 20 May 1661; CSPD, 1660-1, p.551.

² Diary, 31 August, 18, 23 October 1662, 4 August 1663.

³ Supra. p.215.

⁴ PRO, SP29/44, f.59, 16 November 1661.

⁵ Diary, 18 June 1664; PRO, Adm.106/8, f.463, 18 May 1664.

⁶ Diary, 3, 4, 10 October 1664.

'service heretofore in the Dutch War'. and that it had been encouraged by Coventry. In November, and in the following spring, Penn was active in pushing preparations for the fleet, usually at Chatham, and he also advised the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy as well as several members of the Privy Council.¹

For most of 1665 Penn reverted to his earlier role of seaman and, with the exception of a few brief appearances, he was not seen at the Navy Board. Though his conduct at sea, when he served under the Duke of York, has generally been praised, it is not strictly relevant to this discussion.² His reputation was initially greatly enhanced, and Pepys heard 'well of him for his serviceableness in this late great action'.³ But he was to lose this respect later in the year because of the scandal caused by breaking into the prize cargoes; both he and Sandwich were deeply involved, and the odium which the incident created certainly prevented Sandwich being reappointed to command in 1666. Penn was only slightly less guilty, and when it was decided that Rupert and Albemarle should command in 1666, there was no thought of Penn's joining them.⁴

¹ CSPD 1664-5, p.75; Diary, 3 November 1664, 15 January 1665, when Penn played a leading part in the discussions relating to moving the fleet. He was with the fleet for most of the time between February 1665 and shortly after the battle off Lowestoft in June 1665, Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 174, f.50; CSPD 1664-5, pp.289, 364.

² It is likely that Penn advised the Duke on sailing and fleet manoeuvres prior to and during the battle off Lowestoft. He was a strong supporter of the 'line' of battle as opposed to 'mêlée' tactics, see supra. p.124, also Tedder, Navy of the Restoration, pp.122-5, 130-2; Anderson (ed), Journal of the Earl of Sandwich, pp.lvii-lx; Corbett (ed), Fighting Instructions, pp.110-72.

³ Diary, 17 June 1665.

⁴ Harris, Life of Sandwich, II, 1-32; Anderson, op.cit., p.lxix. It is suggested that Sandwich lost further ground when a small Dutch squadron appeared off the Thames in November 1665, he was also the victim of Albemarle's jealousy and intrigues at court. The failure of the raid on Dutch shipping in Bergen also marred his reputation, Harris, op.cit., I, 314-46.

During 1666 he reverted to his role as Commissioner and was once again employed in hastening repairs and fitting ships. At the request of Rupert and Albermarle he was sent down the Thames 'to look after the sending out of ships that are there ... and I know Sir William Penn will be very careful and stirring in it'.¹ Penn's success in this did much to restore his reputation. Pepys found it 'necessary to keep in with him - his good service at Sherennesse in getting out the fleet being much taken notice of, and reported to the King and Duke, even from the Prince and Duke of Albemarle'.² He was ordered down to Sheerness on 20 July, and Pepys noted that, 'he is, of all the men of the office at present most manifestly useful, and best thought of'.³ Penn's instructions were to man and hasten out those ships he could and to be ready to receive damaged ships; he was empowered to inspect ships which had left the fleet because of minor damage and to ensure their speedy return to the fleet.⁴

With the abatement of naval activity later in the year, there was no opportunity for Penn to be used where he was obviously most successful. Instead he was brought into the Comptroller's office as an assistant to Mennes. Penn had few reservations about accepting this post, indeed he may have hoped to replace Mennes as Comptroller.⁵ His work there tended to make him less active at the yards; as 1667 progressed he too was overcome by weariness and was less inclined to devote himself to work. With no fleet

¹ BM, Add. MS.32,094, f.205, 21 May 1666.

² Diary, 1 July 1666.

³ Diary, 20 July 1666.

⁴ PRO, Adm.2/1740, ff.9-11, 20, 21 July 1666. Penn may have put forward this last suggestion himself, because on 4 July he had told Pepys that ships too often returned to port 'when they are a little shattered' and he thought they should 'refit themselves the best they can, and stay out', Diary, 4 July 1666.

⁵ Diary, 22 August 1666.

to be set out and little money to hand, there was little for the Navy Board to do except audit old accounts. Penn was responsible for the Victualler's accounts, but he does not appear to have been very energetic in their execution. During 1668 Penn became a central target for the opposition factions in Parliament. His association with the Duke of York, the Medway disaster, the widespread desire to examine naval affairs, and the fact that he was a member of the Commons, made him an obvious butt. He was also extremely vulnerable because of his ill-considered involvement in the prize goods affairs of 1665. This gave his opponents excellent and irrefutable evidence to use against him. During March and April Penn's impeachment was one of the main concerns of the Commons. According to Pepys this issue was revived because of a rumour that Penn would be sent to sea in the summer of 1668, and to prevent this, the old charges of 1665 were revived, 'so he, by lying under an impeachment, may be prevented in his going to sea'.¹ This impeachment was certainly part of the wider attack on the Duke of York and the Navy Board, but the development of the feud between Lords and Commons over Skinner and the East India Company prevented its full prosecution.² However it effectively prevented Penn from being nominated to command at sea and it hastened his departure from the Navy Board, though, in fact, his illness and infirmity had been getting worse, and it is to be doubted whether he would have been capable of going to sea. His departure from the Navy Board was due to a combination of reasons; his age and infirmity prevented him from being so active, and when he was left to supervise accounts he was certainly less useful; his continued presence also invited further criticism of the Navy Board, and in this way Penn, to a lesser degree than Pett, became one of the scapegoats and victims of political intrigue, and, finally, Penn himself was prepared to move out

¹ Diary, 20, 26, 29 March 1668; 24, 27, 29 April 1668. Grey, Debates of the Commons, I, 133-146; Commons Journal, IX, 85-6; Lords Journal XII, 237-8.

² Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, p.89.

of the glare of a hostile Commons. During 1668/9 he was less interested and less involved in the Board's work. In May 1668 Pepys noted his reluctance to sign contracts or letters, saying that he had not been present at the Board when the items had been discussed.¹ In March 1669 Pepys recorded Penn's presence at the Board for the first time in two or three months; this was also expected to be his last appearance as a member of the Board.² But the last phase of Penn's career was by no means far removed from the navy. His association with the Victualler's accounts may have paved the way for his being joined with the Gaudens as naval victuallers. If Pepys can be believed the Gaudens did not welcome the addition, and he suggests that it was due to the Duke of York that Penn obtained this appointment.³ The new victualling contract was prepared during the second half of 1668; throughout this time Penn was almost a sleeping member of the Board. When he died in 1670, his inepeachment, of course, lapsed.

With Penn's resignation in March 1669 the only member of the 1660 Navy Board still in office was Pepys. But by this time other Commissioners had been added and had also resigned, and of these the most influential was undoubtedly William Coventry. He received more praise and respect from Pepys than any other member of the Board, a fact attributable as much to his position as Secretary to the Duke of York, as to his obvious capacity for the office. Coventry had been the Duke's Secretary before the Restoration and this, not his position at the Navy Board, was his primary concern. He acted in effect as Secretary to the Admiralty, and he was the main channel of contact between the Lord High Admiral and the Navy Board. Clearly naval business occupied a great deal of his attention, which was

¹ Pepys MS.2581, ff.110-11.

² Diary, 30 March 1669.

³ Diary, 23 December 1668.

increased after he was brought on to the Board, but he always had many other duties in attending the Duke, and his being required to accompany the court and to attend the Commons reduced the amount of time he could devote to Navy Board work.¹ He did not undertake much of the routine work of the Board, and his relationship with the Lord High Admiral put him in a separate category from the other additional Commissioners.

Apart from the convenience of the appointment, there is no obvious reason for Coventry joining the Board. Although there is no positive evidence, it is not unreasonable to suggest that he pushed for the appointment himself, partly to enable him to keep the Duke better informed about naval affairs, and also as a means of increasing his own influence and reputation at court, rather than at the Board. Coventry's appointment was first indicated on 30 April 1662 when the order was issued for the Commission, and the document granting him power to sit with the Board and sign contracts and other business was passed on 12 May.² However, it was not until 3 June 1662 that 'W. Coventry first sat and signed as a Commissioner'.³ At first Pepys had mixed feelings about the arrival of such an influential figure and was apprehensive about Coventry's desire to 'inquire into all the miscarriages of the office'.⁴

¹ This attendance with the Duke of York led to Coventry being absent for several lengthy periods in July 1662; the Duke and Coventry were at sea, NMM, LBK 8, f.9, 22 July; Diary, 29 July 1662. In August they were with the Court in the West Country, Diary, 23 August 1663. In November 1664, and again from April to June 1665, they were with the fleet, after this the Duke was in the North and then with the King at Oxford. For the political career of Coventry see Witcombe, 'The Political Career of Sir William and Henry Coventry', B.Litt. Oxford, 1954, and his Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons.

² CSPD 1661-2, pp.356, 368. An increase in the number of Naval Commissioners was no secret for on 29 April Sir Robert Ford, a merchant, asked Clarendon to be appointed to the Board, but nothing came of this, Clarendon State Papers, 76, f.185.

³ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.6r, 3 June 1662.

⁴ Diary, 15 May, 7 June 1662.

One longstanding accusation against Coventry had been that of making excessive profits through his fees and perquisites as Secretary to the Lord High Admiral. Shortly after joining the Board, Carteret commented that 'Mr. Coventry hath already feathered his nest in selling of places'.¹ These charges were repeated by Clarendon, who also added the accusation that Coventry favoured former Republicans.² The usual practice on the appointment of 'warrant officers' was for them to apply to the Admiralty for their warrant, which would be issued on the payment of a fee. In 1660 the Restoration meant that all former warrants were rendered invalid and Coventry was extremely busy issuing new ones, but he did attempt to ensure that competent people were appointed and that disaffected persons were not.³ There is nothing to suggest that Coventry charged excessive fees, although the volume of warrants issued in 1660 would certainly have brought in a handsome figure.⁴ The only recurrence of this charge against Coventry came from Parliament, and, like the impeachment of Penn, should be seen in the wider context of an attack on the Duke of York and the Court in 1667 and 1668.⁵

¹ Diary, 7 June 1662.

² Clarendon, Continuation of the Life, II, 329-30. Vale, 'Clarendon, Coventry, and the sale of Naval Offices', Cambridge Historical Journal XII, 107-25.

³ PRO, Adm.106/1, f.154, 10 July 1660. Coventry asked the Board to enquire into the suitability of persons recommended and he asked Evelyn to obtain information about the men, and their 'affection', employed in the yard and on ships at Deptford, BM, Add. MS.15,857, f.190, 17 July 1660.

⁴ The whole question of fees and allowances was muddled and caused confusion and 'clamour'; in April 1661 Coventry requested he be allowed certain prescribed fees and that these should be clearly known and understood, PRO, Adm.106/4, f.45, 19 April 1661. The Duke asked the Board for their advice, and even though they thought it 'distant' from their duty to do so, they gave in a scale of fees which were accepted by the Duke and Coventry, NMM, SER 78, f.5r, 19 April 1661. This scale gave the Secretary from 5/- for a purser, gunner or boatswain of a sixth rate, up to 30/- for the same places on first or second rates; carpenters were paid two-thirds of these rates and cooks half. This issue led to questions in the Commons in June 1663; In October and November Coventry had to defend himself to the Duke, and in April 1664 he asked the Duke that he might be given a salary instead of fees, Coventry MS.98, f.119, 25 April 1664. This was granted by a Privy Seal on 6 September 1664 and Coventry was to be paid a salary of £500, this presumably being in addition to his salary of £500 as a Commissioner of the Navy, Bodl., Rawl. MS A 185, f.451, 16 September 1664.

⁵ Vale, *op.cit.*, p.124; Coventry MS.101, ff.104, 107, 110, 112, 225-40.

More important than this are the constructive aspects of Coventry's career with the Navy Board. As already mentioned, he was in a unique position compared with the other Commissioners, due to his close contact with the Duke of York and because he was not expected to undertake much of the routine work of the Board. He soon showed a determination to look closely at the workings of the Navy Board. Within a week of his joining he was inspecting claims for travelling charges, and Pepys hoped to bring 'things, by Mr. Coventry's means, to a good condition in the office'.¹ Despite this vigour Coventry did not bring in any dramatic or fundamental changes, though he did tighten the laxity of the Board and acted as a spur to the more complacent members. He adopted the role of a supervisor, who could inspect the activities of the Board and make his report to the Duke. Beyond this, however, there is little to indicate that he was a great reformer, or that he had any deep and lasting effect on naval administration. He stood for greater efficiency within the existing framework rather than for any basic alterations.²

But Coventry was associated with three proposals which might have altered the development of naval affairs. Firstly, he proposed to pay creditors 'in course', and secondly, he supported Downing's Act to raise money in 1667. These were both purely financial matters, the latter dating from Coventry's period at the Treasury and not the Navy Board. Beyond these there was only one other area in which Coventry could claim to be a

¹ Diary, 7, 10 June 1662. Coventry objected to an apparent lack of discipline amongst new captains and also about laziness in dockyard offices, Diary, 2 July 1662.

² The notion of Coventry being a reformer is strongly brought out by Bryant in his biography of Pepys. Bryant says that Pepys 'enrolled himself' under Coventry's 'reforming Standard' and the 'two reformers' talked about the business of the office, Bryant, Samuel Pepys, The Man in the Making, p.183.

reformer and that was in connection with the removal, or reduction, of Mennes in the Comptrollership, but here it was his dislike of inefficiency rather than any proposal for alteration which motivated him.¹

The first two of these financial schemes date from the end of 1665 when the fiscal situation was clearly deteriorating. Coventry sent a paper to Pepys, in which he advocated the payment of merchants' bills strictly in the order in which they were received. This was a revival of a scheme first moved by Carteret in March 1663 that had not been implemented.² Carteret again proposed this in June 1665, but his departure to the court 'and our cash failing' left the Board 'very far from an ability to answer life and death payments, much less to offer at paying bills in course'.³ Coventry resurrected these ideas, possibly as a means of 'striking' at Carteret, but by then the flow of money into the Navy Treasury made it impracticable. Despite the difficulties, the draft was discussed by Pepys, who made several suggestions and minor alterations, and it was eventually put into effect in December 1665.⁴ The details of the proposal were largely the work of Coventry and they were not greatly altered by Pepys. So far as Coventry is concerned, he had merely revived an early proposal, but too late for it to have any marked effect. The financial weakness of the Board during 1666 meant that the idea could not be implemented properly, which, of course, was not Coventry's fault, but it is still difficult to give Coventry any great praise for his association with the proposal.

¹ Supra. pp.216-17.

² Diary, 16 March 1663.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.282, 9 November 1665.

⁴ Coventry's proposals and Pepys reply are in NMM, LBK 8, f.295, 21 November 1665. The Instructions were dated 8 December and a letter of clarification was sent to the Board on 26 December, PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.230-32.

Closely linked with this was the second financial proposal invented by Sir George Downing, which Coventry supported enthusiastically, and although not its originator, he used his drive and ability to support an idea which in itself was novel, and which could have considerably eased the financial situation. Downing hoped to increase the credit available to the Government on the strength of payment being guaranteed from the proceeds of an Act of Parliament.¹ Coventry and the Duke of York both pressed Pepys to support this Act and to persuade merchants to tender goods on credit.² Coventry, who was with the Duke of York at Oxford, was to use his influence and connections to get the Act accepted. It appealed to him because of its greater efficiency and because it would have reduced the freedom of payments allowed to Carteret. The extent to which Coventry was moved by his hostility to Carteret is not clear, but certainly he had always wanted to reduce the fees, or 'poundage', of the Treasurer.³ Coventry was more useful in working behind the scenes to improve the credit of the office, and in this way was of great service to the navy.

After Coventry left the Navy Board he produced a scheme to retrench naval expenditure, which was more representative of his intentions. This proposal shows that Coventry's main interest was in financial matters, and although he may have had considerable sympathy for the Navy and its problems, he did not allow it to divert him from his desire to reduce expenditure. In August 1667 he drew up a scheme for reducing the cost of the navy in peacetime to £200,000 per annum, but it too was a revival of an earlier

¹ For the Act and the full extent of Coventry's and Pepys's connection with it see Roseveare, 'The Advancement of the King's Credit', Cambridge Ph.D. 1962.

² Chappell, Shorthand Letters of Pepys. pp.74; 76.

³ *Supra* p.165.

scheme. In 1662 Southampton had allocated this sum to the navy and Carteret and Coventry had been ordered to report on its distribution to a Commons' Committee.¹ It is no coincidence that this figure was put forward in Coventry's proposal; what is surprising is that Coventry should have accepted this figure in 1667 knowing the increased prices, low credit, and large debts of the navy.² Admittedly this sum only covered the running costs of a small squadron and the figures were accepted by the Navy Board, but it did not make any provision for replenishing the stores, repairing the fleet, or paying the debts of wages, contracts and interest charged on naval accounts. Coventry's proposition was certainly the bare minimum, both with regard to the number of ships usually required at sea in peacetime and to the crews carried.³ He thought that 24 ships with 2,270 men would be sufficient for all the requirements, but in 1669, 50 ships were at sea with 4,653 men. These figures were from Pepys's estimate of the expense of the navy presented to Littleton and Osborne in March 1669, and his total for the fleet and certain repairs and stores etc. came to £313,721. 0s. 7d., plus another £94,980. 10s. 0d. to repair the fleet and replenish stores.⁴ Thus Coventry's proposal was unrealistic and was based on obsolete figures. It is, therefore difficult to envisage Coventry as a great reformer, or even retrencher, of the navy, but it must be said that Coventry was one of the few people actually putting forward positive suggestions, and even if his figures were inaccurate, he deserves credit for trying to do something, when so many others, both inside and outside the navy, were doing nothing.

¹ Diary, 29 December 1662; 2, May 1663. CSPD 1663-4, p.143.

² Coventry's proposal is printed in Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, pp.217-19.

³ Coventry estimated that the Summer Guard would consist of one second-rate carrying 280 men, but according to the peacetime establishment of men in 1667/8, most second-rates carried 300-350, only the two old second-rates built in the 1630's carried less, Catalogue, I, 267-9.

⁴ Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, pp.226-30.

If this aspect of Coventry's association with the navy is open to doubt, it is possible to be more positive about his practical associations. As Secretary to the Duke of York he conducted the correspondence with the Navy Board as well as with commanders at sea. When in London he was often at the Board and was nearly always present at the Board's meetings with the Lord High Admiral. It was through his industry and desire for improvement that Coventry contributed most to naval administration. There emanated from his a stream of letters reminding the Board to make contracts, order the preparation of ships, and a host of other instructions. In many cases he relayed the Duke's orders; he also wrote in response to letters directed to him from the individual commanders, who frequently sought to hasten the readying of their ships, or to obtain additional men and equipment by applying directly to the Lord High Admiral through his Secretary. It is as Secretary to the Lord High Admiral rather than as a Commissioner that Coventry received a vast amount of correspondence; he would either redirect this to the Duke of York or the Navy Board, or deal with it himself. Even when he was at sea Coventry sent lengthy letters on the state of the fleet and its requirements to the Board.¹

Far more interesting, yet virtually impossible to discern, is his relationship with the Duke of York and the influence he had over naval policy.

¹ From the many letters sent by Coventry to the Board, a few examples can be given. On 20 May 1661 he passed on the Duke's order for Penn to reside at Chatham to supervise the despatch of the Charles and other ships, PRO, Adm.106/4, f.368. In November 1663 he had to miss two consecutive meetings of the Board because of attending Committees of the Council and so wrote to remind them about purchasing timber, PRO, Adm. 106/8, f.221, 12 November 1663. He would signify the Duke's intention although there had been insufficient time to obtain a formal order, such as on 17 December 1663 when it was decided to issue the same victuals during Lent as the rest of the year, and on 18 May 1664 he warned the Board to expedite the Duke's order to fit out a considerable squadron, PRO, Adm. 106/8, f.274, 17 December 1663; Adm.106/8, f.463, 18 May 1664. In these and in several letters from the fleet in November 1664 and again from April to June 1665, he was acting in his secretarial capacity.

Apart from Carteret, and at some periods possibly Penn, he was the most elevated member of the Navy Board, and this eminence was reinforced by his appointment to the Privy Council in June 1665. But the available evidence does not enable us to build up a definite impression of Coventry's influence. Even the Duke of York's personal rôle is in question, and orders issued in his name could have been suggested by any one of a number of advisers. Coventry's position was relatively strong, but several others vied for the Duke's favour, and the intricate manoeuvres and constant changes of court politics remain obscure. It is only possible to say that Coventry appears to have been one of the confidential advisers of the Duke, but, in the absence of concrete evidence, no firm conclusion can be reached. He was obviously present at many high level discussions and Councils of war. A brief glimpse of this comes from Pepys, who was present at a meeting with the King, several Privy Councillors, Admirals and members of the Navy Board in January 1665. Coventry spoke out against allowing merchant ships to sail because of the need to recruit seamen. After his return from sea in June 1665, Coventry was with the Duke in Yorkshire, and later at Oxford. In January 1666 the Court returned to London and Coventry again resumed his personal contact with the Board. He was inspecting the Victualling Officers in May, and in June went to visit the fleet and hasten repairs.¹ But from this time Coventry began to feel either a sense of frustration or disenchantment with naval affairs, a mood which was to culminate in his departure from the Navy Board. On 29 June 1666 he was 'quite weary of the war', and on 16 August Coventry was said to be 'discouraged' from attending the Board

¹ Diary, 7, 14, 29 May, 16, 18 June 1666. Coventry has come in for some criticism for delays in sending information to Albemarle and Rupert following the division of the fleet in 1666. But in this his responsibility was slight and he dispatched letters as quickly as possible, Shelly, 'The Division of the English Fleet in 1666', MM, XXV, 178-96.

because of the little work they were able to do.¹ Shortage of money made him 'weary of coming to us'; with some exceptions he continued in this spirit for the rest of the year.² In this mood, and unable to see any hope of amendment, Coventry resigned his Commissionership in January 1667. Pepys thought that the reason for his resignation was 'done upon good grounds of security to himself, from all the blame which must attend our office this next year'. Coventry told Pepys that his 'business at Court' would not permit him to devote sufficient time to the navy.³ Coventry was still Secretary to the Duke of York, and in this capacity he continued to be associated with naval affairs and took a leading part in trying to remove Mennes from the Comptrollership. Later, in May 1667, he was appointed to the Treasury Commission, which kept up his contact with the navy. Shortly afterwards Coventry resigned his position in the Duke's household and on 2 September he revealed this to Pepys, saying he had desired 'it a good while since' but had said nothing of it in order to allow the Duke to choose a successor.⁴ Coventry said that this decision was not connected with his attack upon Clarendon, even though this incident did strain his relations with the Duke. Thereafter Coventry's association with the navy was through the Treasury.

It is clear that Coventry cannot be classed amongst the other Commissioners of the Navy and he did little to further the development of this office.

¹ Diary, 29 June, 16 August 1666.

² Diary, 21 August 1666. On 8 November Coventry was at the Board 'where he hath not been a great while' and on 16 December he was 'weary of anything to do, he says, in the Navy'.

³ Diary, 9, 16 January 1667.

⁴ Diary, 2 September 1667.

He was certainly a man of energy and ability, but this was not all devoted to the navy, his other duties were often more important and it is unlikely that he had any deep regrets about severing his relations with the service. Far more representative as a member of the Navy Board and an additional Commissioner was Lord Brouncker. He was added to the Board after Coventry, and the approach of war, which led to an expansion of naval activity, is sufficient to explain the additional Commissionership. But why Brouncker was chosen to fill the post is by no means clear. He is described by Tanner as 'a literary man, an intimate friend of Evelyn's, and first president of the Royal Society, who took something more than an amateur's interest in shipbuilding ...'¹ He was well known for his interest in mathematics, but was completely lacking in military, naval and administrative experience. The key to his appointment probably lies in his association with the Royal Society, which would have given him ample access to the King. He first came to the Board on 10 December to present his patent and was described as a 'modest civil person ... but wholly ignorant in the business of the Navy ...'² This was the somewhat inauspicious beginning to a long association with the navy, which culminated in 1681 with his appointment to the Admiralty Commission, a post he held until his death in 1684.³

Brouncker's career can be taken as an excellent illustration of the way in which the idea of additional Commissioners was implemented, and how it developed. Initially he was appointed without any direct responsibility

¹ Catalogue, I, 13. Brouncker's patent was dated 7 December 1664. The patent gives the increased number and tonnage of ships as the reason for increasing the size of the Navy Board. Brouncker was appointed to the Board with full power to act in all its dealings and his salary was to be £500 per annum, NMM, SER 77, f.65. The only other name mentioned as a possible addition to the Board was Sir William Rider, a merchant and because of this his appointment would have been unwise and was not pressed, Bodl., Rawl.MS.A 174, f.483.

² Diary, 10 December 1664.

³ James and Sutherland-Shaw, 'Admiralty Administration and Personnel', BIHR, XIV, 20.

and was expected to turn his attention to any part of the Board's work. In this capacity he attended the Duke of York, and in his absence, Albemarle, on naval business, worked on the accounts, visited the dockyards, and participated in making contracts.¹ From September to December 1665 Brouncker was sent down with Mennes to Erith to stand guard over the East India prize ships.² From all accounts Brouncker was reasonably competent in his work and this, together with his knowledge of mathematics, may account for his being given charge of that part of the Comptroller's work relating to the Treasurer's accounts.³ This is a clear case of an additional Commissioner being made directly responsible for a part of the Board's work, but this did not mean that he would not undertake any other duties and during 1667 he attended the yards, paid tickets, and is mentioned as being at several meetings of the Board.⁴

¹ Diary, 26 August 1665. He was helping to digest Carteret's accounts on 7 June 1665 and 17 September 1666, this was before he was directly responsible for inspecting the Treasurer's accounts. On 5 August 1665 and 22 January 1666 he was at Deptford yard and on 15 December 1666 he returned from visits to Harwich and Chatham. He took an active part in making a hemp contract with Cocke in December 1665 and supported Pepys against Mennes and Batten over Warren's contract in January 1666; Diary, 12 December 1665; 4 January 1666.

² Diary, 20 September, 9 December 1665.

³ *Supra.* p.219.

⁴ Diary, 24 February, 16 March, 24 April 1667. One of the more controversial aspects of Brouncker's career was concerned with his use of 'tickets'. He was also criticised for the part he played at Chatham in June 1667. He had been sent to the yard to assist Pett with Mennes on 11 June and they were joined by Albemarle, Lords Middleton and Douglas (in command of the troops) and Admiral Spragge. This number of senior officers only served to increase the confusion through their independent and often contradictory instructions, Rogers, The Dutch in the Medway, pp.84, 86, 89. He was examined about his proceedings by the Committee of Miscarriages in October 1667, (Diary, 25 October 1667, 19 November 1667) but no serious charges were levelled against him.

After the war a large amount of time was taken by the Board in preparing their defences against Parliamentary criticism. Brouncker took his share of this, he was censured for having discharged men by ticket, a system which will be considered in due course.¹ At the Board itself he became involved in a wrangle over the rights and, more accurately, the wrongs of his clerk Carcasse who had been dismissed for irregular dealings in tickets. This became a protracted affair which eventually involved Carcasse in petitioning the Privy Council.² It would appear that personal factors led Brouncker to uphold his clerk, and it also provided him with an opportunity to attack Batten (a fact pleasing to Pepys), who was implicated by Carcasse. Having gone so far, Brouncker refused to climb down fearing a loss of dignity, even when the damaging effects of the affair on the Board became obvious.³

Brouncker survived this episode as well as the Parliamentary enquiry into the miscarriages of the war, and, together with Pepys and Mennes, he became

¹ Infra pp.408-25.

² James Carcasse was one of the Board's clerks allocated to Brouncker, who was employed at the Ticket Office in 1666 and 1667. In February 1667 there were disturbances at the office by seamen, claiming that Carcasse had been buying tickets for a small price and then obtained full payment to himself. He was examined by the Board and implicated Batten in some dubious dealings. Brouncker defended his clerk, and the whole matter came up before the Duke of York on 8 March 1667, when Carteret, Coventry, Batten and Pepys came down against Brouncker and Pett. The Duke accepted the majority verdict and ordered Carcasse to be discharged. Carcasse was a persistent creature and caused a lot of trouble for the Board, by making accusations about the sale of tickets, and Brouncker, probably because of stubbornness, continued to support him. Pepys prepared a long account of the matter, which was again discussed with the Duke of York (15 May 1667) with the same result. But the clamour caused by the Dutch raid and the widespread allegations against the Navy Board, made the matter fair sport for those wishing to attack the navy. This led to Carcasse's petition being received by the Privy Council in August 1667; the Board's report was read but the Council came down in favour of Carcasse. There is little doubt that he was guilty of the charges against him, but these were overtaken by political factors which rendered his guilt meaningless. This incident, which caused far more trouble than it was worth, can be followed in the Diary from February 1667 to January 1668.

³ Diary, 21 26 February; 29 April; 3, 12 May; 16 November 1667.

a long serving member of the Board. His reply to the Duke's Letter of Reflections in September 1668 dealt mainly with his responsibility for comptrolling the Treasurer's accounts.¹ He did, however, give some reply to the general reflection on the Board, saying that he had always attended to his duty and had never failed in his attendance to business. His was one of the few replies which advanced a suggestion for improving the workings of the Board; he suggested that a 'journal' should be kept of those present at meetings, and that daily business should be recorded in it.² He and Pepys put pressure on the Duke to establish a Comptroller of the storekeepers' accounts. The Duke was receptive to the idea but wanted to reserve the post for Sir Thomas Allin, who was then in the Mediterranean. In the meantime Pepys suggested that Brouncker could assist Mennes; on 27 June 1669 the Duke accepted this measure and Brouncker, not unwillingly, agreed to take on the work.³ Brouncker retained the work until June 1671, when Sir John Ernle was appointed as an additional Commissioner directly responsible for comptrolling the storekeepers' accounts.⁴ By this time Brouncker had become recognised as an able member of the Board and, although it was suggested that he 'did mind his mathematics too much', he and Pepys were the only members of the Board who would not have automatically been ousted by the reformers.⁵ This in itself is sufficient testimony of

¹ Pepys MS.2242, f.58.

² Supra. pp.242-3.

³ NMM, LBK 8, ff.604-5, 24, 27 June 1669.

⁴ Catalogue, I, 17.

⁵ Diary, 25 August 1668. Pepys said that Brouncker was the 'best man of them all, and I would be glad, next to myself, to save him'. He and Pepys lamented the incapacity of Mennes and urged the Duke of York to stand up to the reforming Treasurer's, Littleton and Osborne, Diary, 23 December 1668, 4 January 1669. Brouncker's interest in mathematics was noticed by Clifford, Diary, 29 March 1669.

his ability and growing reputation. He continued as an active member of the Navy Board until his removal, because of the disastrous retrenchment policy introduced in 1679.¹ Brouncker's career provides a useful illustration of the development of the office of 'additional commissioner'; he was appointed in 1664 without direct responsibility and was used where necessary, but by 1673 he had taken over distinct duties, particularly from the Comptroller. Brouncker's was also a successful patronage appointment; he was reasonably able and devoted a good deal of time to navy business, and, unlike Berkeley and Harvey, he remained with the navy for a considerable time.

In the two years following the war the amount of business being transacted declined considerably and the need for Commissioners was thereby reduced. With the fall of Pett and the resignation of Harvey in 1668, the number of Commissioners at the Board was reduced to two, Penn and Brouncker. When Penn left the Board to join the victualling contractors he was succeeded by Sir Jeremy Smith. There is very little information available about Smith. He was appointed directly as Comptroller of the Victualler's and pursers' accounts, which in effect made him part of the Comptroller's department rather than an additional Commissioner, and in this respect he has already been mentioned.² Although Smith was paid as an additional Commissioner, it is evident that the original concept of the 'Commissioner' was being lost and there was a tendency to appoint additional officers to specific duties. This did not mean that they would only perform their particular duties, as they, together with the Principal Officers, were bound to execute the general Articles of the 1662 Instructions. The policy of appointing Commissioners with specific duties was continued when Sir John

¹ Catalogue, I, 62.

² Supra. pp.246-7.

Ernle became Comptroller of the storekeepers' accounts in June 1671.¹ The last Commissioner to be appointed at the Board before the Duke's resignation was Edward Seymour, and both he and Ernle were described as persons 'brought into the Navy for want of other ways of gratifications'.² Seymour was appointed during the approach of the Third Dutch War, initially without direct responsibility, but he was soon given charge of the Ticket Office with a separate set of instructions.³ He too then fell into the new concept of the additional Commissioner, and in June 1673 he succeeded Osborne as Treasurer of the Navy.⁴ In addition to these developments, there was a parallel evolution in the increased use of the 'resident' or dockyard Commissioner, and this will be considered later in the context of the supervision exercised by the Navy Board over the yards.⁵

¹ Catalogue, I, 17, Ernle is listed in Pepys's 'Register of Sea Officers' as having had some experience at sea in the early 1660's and again in 1670-1; beyond this there is nothing to explain his appointment. Initially his appointment was as an additional Commissioner, but on 5 June 1671 the Duke of York sent a second letter to the Attorney General ordering that an extra clause be added to the patent entrusting to Ernle that part of the Comptroller's concerning the balancing of the storekeepers accounts. PRO, Adm.2/1, not foliated, 5 June 1671.

² Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.257 and n5, n7.

³ BM. Add.MS.9,311, f.233, 2 January 1673.

⁴ Catalogue, I, 40.

⁵ Infra. pp.460-69.

4. THE NAVY BOARD - FUNCTIONS

In addition to the duties assigned to individual members of the Navy Board, there were several areas in which the Board exercised collective responsibility; these were described in the 1662 Instructions as duties 'jointly considered'. These Instructions, laid down in twenty Articles, covered the entire scope of the Navy Board's activity. The first Article amounted to a general introduction to the whole Instructions; it required the Board to 'consult and advise together how to transact all affairs tending either to the well-being or well-governing of his Majesty's Navy', and the remaining nineteen Articles indicated how this should be done.¹ A second general principle in the Instructions was contained in the eighteenth Article, by which the Board was to be able to 'trace one another in their distinct duties'. This was an attempt to ensure a system of checks on the freedom enjoyed by individual officers, and made the Board collectively responsible for the actions of its members.

The majority of these duties were couched in general terms requiring the Board to know 'the present state and conditions of the Navy' with regard to the ships (their number, tonnage, age, defects etc), or the supply and distribution of stores (Article 2). They were to decide on the proportions of each commodity (cordage, masts, sails, anchors, tar, etc.) needed and, following a general survey, to make contracts for what was necessary to make up a full magazine (Articles 3 and 4). These contracts were to be made at public meetings of the Board when the 'quantity, goodness, dimensions and price' of each tender would be compared and the most advantageous accepted. A copy of each contract

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, 'Duties of the Principal Officers and Commissioners of his Majesty's Navy jointly considered'.

had to be sent to the yards to enable the Clerks of the Cheque or Stores to refuse substandard goods. The Board itself was to ensure an equal distribution of materials to each yard (Articles 5 and 6). The next three Articles (7, 8 and 9) are not contained in earlier copies of the Instructions and were almost certainly introduced in 1662. By these the Board had to familiarise itself with the current market price, not restrict itself to one merchant or supplier, and to make certain that the goods were delivered according to the terms of the contract. The members were to obtain from the Customs House a list of imported naval supplies, and ensure that neither they nor any of their inferior officers were engaged in trading in naval produce. By the tenth Article (the seventh in earlier editions), the Board had to provide the Lord High Admiral with an annual estimate of the charge of the navy in harbour under the headings of 'wages' and 'victuals'.¹ Similar estimates were to be provided for setting ships out 'upon all extraordinary services'. The Board was next empowered to issue instructions to subordinate officials in the dockyards, as well as to pursers, boatswains etc., on ships, and should be able to comment on the diligence, or otherwise, of these people (Article 11). This Article formed the basis for the Board's control over the dockyards, and it also contained the only explicit right of intervention in the duties of ships 'officers'.²

¹ These annual estimates were calculated from Midsummer Day, 24 June, in each year, that also having been the date in 1660 when the King took over the payment of the navy. Five such estimates were prepared up to the outbreak of the Second Dutch War showing the estimated charge of the Board itself, its clerks, the regular complement of the yards; the cost of wages, victuals and the cost of maintenance or repairs to ships in harbour, BM, Add.MS.9302, f.183.

² The term 'officer' applied to pursers, boatswains, carpenters, or cooks whose responsibilities were laid down by the Board, these were the 'warrant officers'; the term 'officer' was not applied to the captains, lieutenants, etc. even though they were officially styled 'commissioner officers'.

Linked with this was Article twelve, which required the Board to issue warrants for the supply of victuals, and to check the Victualler's accounts with the warrants and sea books. In this the main task of the Board was to ensure that the King was not being cheated by the Victualler or the pursers.

The next Article (13) instructed the members of the Board to live as closely together as possible and to publish the time and date of their public meetings. This Article was enlarged in the 1662 edition of the Instructions to include an order for the Comptroller, Surveyor, and Clerk of the Acts to keep 'distinct' offices within the enlarged Navy Office where they were to conduct business associated with their duties. There then followed four Articles (14-17) which related to the rating, allowing and passing of bills, and rates of pay. By these the Board was responsible for establishing rates for pilots, water transport, and wages, and the members were to ensure that all bills were properly drawn up and certified by the yard officers before passing them to the Treasurer for payment. They were not allowed to make any innovations 'beyond the precedent of the office' in rates of pay without informing the Lord High Admiral, or without a full and public debate on the matter. Lastly in this group was the Article directing the Board not to pass any bills without a certificate from the Clerk of the Cheque and store-keeper, which stated that the provisions were according to the terms of the contract.

The last two Articles required the Board to take a muster on ships in the Narrow Seas, or anywhere else where no Muster Master had been appointed. This was to enable the Treasurer to check the tickets, or bills, issued by the pursers, thereby protecting the King against fraud and the seamen against incorrect payment. The same check was to be kept with the dockyard

officials over men entered on ships during a period in harbour.

These Instructions, with the exception of Articles 7, 8, 9, and part of Article 13, were substantially the same as earlier editions, but in 1662 there was one significant omission. In earlier copies one Article had referred to the power of the Board to 'press and take up all seamen, ships, hoyes and provisions whatsoever ...' in return for payment, as established by precedent, or through agreement with the parties concerned. In cases of disagreement four 'indifferent' men were to decide on the price paid for goods.¹ This was the power of the press, which was always unpopular and the legality of which was in dispute. It was not mentioned in the 1662 Instructions, which may be a reflection of the Restoration government's desire to avoid claiming controversial powers. In practice, however, the strain of war led to the 'press' being used both with regard to men and ships, and when necessary an Order in Council was granted for the purpose.²

These Instructions, in addition to the duties assigned to individual members of the Board, established the framework for the activities of the Navy Board. The administrative duties of the Board were conducted from the Navy Office building situated in Seething Lane.³ Other centres of naval activity in London were at the Navy Treasury in Broad Street, the Victualling Offices on Tower Hill, and, at certain periods, a Ticket Office near Tower Hill. The residences of the Duke of York (either

¹ BM, Sloane MS.3232, f.92r.

² *Supra*, pp.46-50.

³ This site was taken over in 1654 and remained the home of the Navy Office until 1780. The offices and residential accommodation were enlarged during the Restoration period and, although they escaped the Great Fire of 1666, they were destroyed in a smaller fire in 1673, *Catalogue*, I, 23nl.

Whitehall or St. James's) and, in his absence, Albemarle's (the Cockpit beside Whitehall) were usually referred to as the 'Admiralty'. The Board held their public meetings at the Seething Lane office, as required by the thirteenth Article of the general Instructions. They were to hold at least two public meetings per week in addition to their private sessions. In June 1662, following the issuing of the Duke's Instructions, the Board laid down recognised days and times of public business; initially Tuesday and Thursday mornings were used, but Parliamentary sessions or the increase of business led to the times being changed.¹ To assist them in carrying out their duties, the members of the Board were allowed to employ clerks; usually their patents included an allowance for clerks, and they were made responsible not only for the payment of the clerks but also for their conduct and efficiency. This practice had been liable to abuse because members had become more concerned in defending their clerks, and by extension themselves, even when there were good grounds for suspecting fault. After the Restoration the Principal Officers and Commissioners were allowed a set number of clerks, who were to be paid directly from the Navy Treasury, but this did not prevent Board members from jumping to the defence of their clerks.² The normal establishment of the Navy Office was fourteen clerks from

¹ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.6r, 12 June 1662. Tuesday morning was set aside for signing bills and tickets, and Thursday morning for making agreements with merchants. In February 1663 Coventry asked that the Board change its public meetings because Carteret, Batten, Penn and himself were attending Parliament in the mornings. PRO, Adm.106/7, f.364, 14 February 1663. These meetings were changed to Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.11r, 17 February 1663. In 1664 Parliament caused the Board to sit on Monday and Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings, PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.18r, 15 March 1664. It was usual for the Board to revert to its Tuesday/Thursday morning sittings when Parliament was not in session, PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.19r, 19 May 1664.

² This could be a double-edged weapon in that it was clearly correct for Pepys to defend his clerk Hewer, against an unjust accusation from Middleton, *supra*. p.274 ; but less laudable was the dogmatic defence put up by Brouncker on behalf of his clerk, Carcasse., *supra*. p.322.

1660 to 1664, that was two clerks to each Principal Officer or Commissioner and two additional clerks.¹ In 1664, one of Pepys's clerks was to be permitted an additional allowance of £30 as a 'fitting endowment', or encouragement, and similarly a higher rate of £50 was to be paid to an extra clerk for the Comptroller in 1665.² It was only to be expected that, as in other fields of administration, the outbreak of the Dutch War would lead to an increase in the number of clerks. On 22 March 1665 the Duke of York allowed the Board freedom to employ additional assistance and most members took advantage of this.³ As a result a total of seven extra clerks was employed at the Navy Office (three at £50 and four at the ordinary rate of £30 per annum), and further clerks were needed at the Treasury and Ticket office.⁴ In the retrenchment which followed the war, they were all dismissed except for the clerks employed to perfect the Treasurer's accounts.⁵ Besides clerks, the Navy Office establishment included at least two messengers, a keeper, porter, labourer, and two watchmen at the Treasury.⁶

With the 1662 edition of the Lord High Admiral's Instructions, the Navy Board was provided with the guidelines, as well as the means, to administer the navy. The work, which fell under the responsibility of the Board as a whole as opposed to individual members, can be divided into four

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- ¹ BM, Add.MS.9,302, ff.128-35, the Treasurer had a separate set of clerks in Leaden Hall Street and later at Broad Street, the salary of all the clerks was £30 per annum.
- ² PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.88r, 3 August 1664; Adm.106/11, f.369, 26 December 1665.
- ³ PRO, Adm.106/10, f.309, 22 March 1665.
- ⁴ PRO, Adm.106/15, f.421, 31 March 1668.
- ⁵ BM, Add. MS.9,311, f.165, 8 April 1668.
- ⁶ BM, Add, MS.9,302, f.128.

main areas; the provision of materials for the service as well as for building ships; recruitment, but more directly the payment of officers and seamen; supervision of the Victualling system, and the overseeing of the workings of the dockyards. These compartments were not seen in isolation; indeed they tended to become the areas of conflict between members of the Board and, in the absence of any individual with direct control over them, there was every probability that corporate neglect would be as damaging as individual neglect.

(i)

SHIPBUILDING, CONTRACTS AND MATERIALS

Clearly one of the foremost responsibilities of the Navy Board was to ensure that the navy was an effective weapon. This involved the building and repairing of ships, as well as ensuring that an adequate supply of stores was maintained. In the case of shipbuilding, the Navy Board had the option of building in the King's own dockyards, in which case they would be responsible for obtaining materials, or they could make contracts for building a warship in private yards. During the Restoration period the demand for building and repairing was largely met in the King's yards, but had a larger programme been undertaken in any one year, it is doubtful whether these facilities would have been sufficient. From 1660 to 1673 thirty two ships (that is from first to sixth rates) and thirteen yachts were built. Another eight ships were considerably rebuilt.¹ Of the forty ships newly built, or listed as rebuilt, only seven were built outside the King's yards, and of these none was of the first or second rate, nor were any ships rebuilt privately.² The suggestion that the Royal Dockyards could cope with both repairs and a limited ship building programme, can be substantiated by examining the two major expansions in building, one in 1666 and the other in 1679. In both these years fourteen ships were completed; in 1666 four of these were built outside the King's yards and 1679 three were built outside. This was a very normal procedure, for it was to be expected that the bulk of building would be done in the King's yards, and only in times of

¹ Catalogue, I, 266-304; Anderson (ed), Lists of Men of War; English Ships, pp.23-35. The number of ships listed as having been rebuilt, or increased in size, may be misleading as an indication of the work undertaken during the period. There is no record of how much rebuilding was involved and several ships which were severely damaged in the Dutch Wars had, in practice, to be rebuilt, but are not listed as such.

² Three third-rates, three fourth-rates and one fifth-rate were built outside the royal dockyards, Catalogue, I, 266-304

heavy pressure would building by contract be considered. The Navy Board was always hostile to the idea of building outside the dockyards in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and they constantly criticised privately built ships.¹ The reason for this attitude had been expressed long before the Restoration by Hollond in his First Discourse of the Navy, written in 1638. Hollond came down firmly against the practice of making contracts for ships, or any other completed work, saying 'I am utterly against the doing either of all or any of his Majesty's works ... either by pre-contracts or post-rating by gross ...'.² He argued that contract work was always slow, difficult to supervise, was open to a whole series of frauds, and that it nearly always involved additional expenditure.³ This was reinforced by the charge that privately built ships frequently did not correspond with the specifications laid down in the contract; it was also said that inferior timber was used and that there was excessive wastage of materials. In the 1690s another argument was put forward against contract building; this was that ships built, or repaired, did not last as long as those built in the Royal yards, and examples were quoted of ships needing rebuilding after only a few months at sea.⁴ In fairness to private builders, who were not so experienced in warship construction, it should be stated that some of the delays and poor materials were the direct consequence of their not being supplied with money, and the lack of expert advice being given by, or through, the Navy Board. The reluctance of the Navy Board to place

¹ Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.73-79; Baugh, Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, pp.254-61.

² Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses, pp.36-43.

³ Pool, Navy Board Contracts, p.9. Pool wrongly attributes these criticisms to Penn, 'Sir William Penn ... in his Discourse of the Navy of England ...'. This tract is in fact a copy of Hollond's Discourse transcribed into a volume known as 'Sir William Penn's Naval Tracts', BM, Sloane MS.3232.

⁴ Merriman (ed), Sergison Papers, p.125.

contracts for shipbuilding could only be overcome when the royal yards were fully employed; such was the case in 1665/6.

The first indication that there was to be an increase in shipbuilding to meet the demands of a Dutch War, came in October and November 1664, when the Committee for the Admiralty and Navy recommended that nine ships should be built, including one third-rate by contract.¹ The problem then was to find a shipbuilder with facilities for warship building, who was prepared to risk uncertain payments. In the Thames, where most of the yards were, there was the added objection, so far as the Navy Board was concerned, that workmen employed privately were not available to be pressed or employed in the royal dockyards. This objection was not entirely valid as the men would be working on the King's ships whether they were being built in private or royal yards. The Navy Board was afraid that private shipbuilders would abuse certificates of protection from the press to employ additional workmen, who would then be used on private work. The only Thames builders to be awarded contracts were Henry Johnson of Blackwall and William Castle of Deptford.² In addition, it was decided to have a fifth-rate built at Yarmouth by the Edgar brothers, and a fourth-rate built at Bristol by Francis Baylie.³ In the case of ships being built at Bristol or Yarmouth, the objection that shipwrights would not be available for employment in the royal yards was less valid, but the problem of supervising building was more difficult. Another argument against building by contract is mentioned by D. Baugh, who has shown that in the 1740s it was common for the Thames shipbuilders

¹ PRO, PC2/57, f.292, 16 November 1664.

² CSPD 1664-5, pp.192, 397, 440, for the contract with Castle for building a third-rate, the Defiance, and BM, Add.MS.9,307, f.41, for the contract with Johnson, also for a third-rate, the Warspite.

³ CSPD 1664-5, p.305, for the Edgar's contract and PRO, SP29/141, no.268 for the contract with Baylie.

to act together and present a uniform price for the contract to prevent the Navy Board from obtaining competitive tenders.¹ This was also a danger in the 1660s and the Navy Agent at Yarmouth, James Johnson, warned the Board to conclude a contract with the Edgars 'at their first coming, to prevent a combination with the city builders'.² The tenders would be expressed in terms of a fixed price per ton, for example, a third-rate, the Warspite, was to be built for £7 per ton, thus the final price would depend on the completed tonnage of the ship, which, in view of the uncertainty of estimates, left considerable room for dispute.³

The usual practice was for the contract to be agreed in draft form at a meeting between the Navy Board and the individual shipbuilder; it would then be examined by the more experienced members of the Board, and in some cases it would be referred to the Shipwrights Company before being finally drawn up and signed.⁴ The contracts provided for an initial payment; in the case of the third-rates this was £1,750, with four subsequent payments to be made when the ships reached specified stages of construction. The Navy Board appointed local surveyors, who were often dockyard officers or members of the Shipwrights Company, to inspect the progress and to ensure that the workmanship and materials were according to contract. The Board relied completely on the advice of technical experts and once the contract was completed the role of the Board was limited to receiving progress reports and answering the builders' demands for payments.

From an examination of the correspondence connected with the building of

¹ Baugh, Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, p.255.

² PRO, SP29/117, f.75, 7 April 1665.

³ BM, Add.MS.9,307, f.41, this was the rate in April 1665 but by July 1666 a rate of £8 10s Od per ton was being asked, CSPD 1665-6, p.554.

⁴ PRO, SP29/122, f.101, 31 May 1665, the Masters and Wardens of the Shipwrights company had examined the contracts made with Johnson and Baylie and they appointed two wardens and three assistants to overlook the work.

the two third-rates on the Thames (the Warspite and Defiance), the one at Bristol (the Edgar), and the fourth-rate (the St. Patrick), also at Bristol, it will be seen that only some of the Navy Board's objections against private building can be substantiated, and even then not all the complaints occurred with each builder. For example, the complaint of slowness could not be levelled at the St. Patrick, which was contracted for in April 1665, launched in May 1666, and had completed her trials by July 1666; this was only one month behind schedule, whereas the Warspite was about six months' late.¹ Thus the Navy Board's objection to building by contract only warrants partial support, but it does reveal one of the severe difficulties which obstructed the private builder; this was slowness of payments by the Treasury, which forced builders to dismiss workmen and threaten to stop work on ships being built for the Navy. The surveyor appointed by the Navy Board to inspect the Edgar, grumbled constantly about the slow rate of work and the small number of workmen employed on her.² But in June 1667, Baylie, who was by no means unique in this respect, complained of the bad payments to him; he was still owed £800 for the St. Patrick, had not received the full advance for the Edgar, and was 'not so considerable a person as to build such a ship unless he receives his money'.³ At that particular time there was little hope of Baylie being given his money; indeed there is no mention of any large payments being made to him until January 1669, and in March 1669 he was still owed £1151. 4s. 9d.⁴ In

1. CSPD 1665-6, pp.135, 389; CSPD 1666-7, p.84; Pool, Navy Board Contracts, p.11.

2 CSPD 1667, p.310; CSPD 1667-8, pp.6, 272.

3 PRO, SP29/206, f.141, 22 June 1667.

4 CSPD 1668-9, p.158; NMM, LBK 8, f.583, 21 March 1669.

addition to the delays in getting payments authorised, there were further delays in the actual payment of money to the builder. This has been illustrated very clearly by B. Pool, who took the example of the Warspite. Johnson should have been given an initial payment of £1750 when the contract was signed in April 1665, but he did not receive the first part of this (£250) until August 1665, and the last part of the instalment was not received until March 1666.¹ In the case of the Edgar, the delay in completing her was certainly excessive, but the explanation appears sufficient. This objection to private building has not been proved, and the absence of comparable figures for similar ships built in the royal dockyards, does not help in coming to a more definite conclusion.

The second serious reservation expressed by the Navy Board was about the quality of the work undertaken in private yards. They were afraid that the private builders would use inferior materials and the standard of workmanship would not be as good. There was more justice in this complaint, but in most cases the defects were discovered by the surveyors appointed by the Navy Board, and remedied before the ship was completed. In July 1665, a survey of the Warspite by Christopher Pett revealed that 'defective' timber had been used by Johnson, and in August 1665 some poor quality timber was discovered in the Defiance. In both these cases the builder agreed to replace the timber.² In April 1666, when the Defiance had been launched, a final survey revealed a series of deficiencies; Castle accepted the survey's findings and agreed to correct them.³ The supervision carried out on behalf of the Navy Board was effective, even though it was sometimes difficult to watch every stage of the building. This was even more acute in the case of Baylie at Bristol, who was a long way from any

¹ Pool, Navy Board Contracts, p.10

² PRO, SP29/126, f.66, 10 July 1665; SP29/131, f.68, 30 August 1665.

³ PRO, SP29/153, f.67, 9 April 1666.

dockyard official. A check of sorts was maintained through a rival shipbuilder, Daniel Furzer, which may help to explain the frequent complaints about bad timber, slowness and the 'troublesome attitude' on Baylie's part. There is also mention of defective timber in the Edgar, which Baylie eventually agreed to replace.¹ Once in service, these ships appear to have been as successful and as good sailers as those built in the royal yards; the St. Patrick was described as a 'good ship', the Defiance was lost by accidental burning in 1668, but the Warspite and Edgar were still in service at the turn of the century. There was little difference in length of service between the third-rates built privately and those built in the royal yards; the Warspite was rebuilt in 1702, the Edgar in 1700, and similar ships from the royal yards were rebuilt as follows, the Rupert in 1703, the Resolution in 1698 and the Monmouth in 1700.²

Finally, there was the objection that ships built by contract did not always correspond with the dimensions specified in the contract, and this nearly always led to the builders claiming additional expenses; for example, the St. Patrick and Edgar were both slightly larger. There was therefore some truth in this objection, but as it was not possible until the 1670's to estimate accurately the ship's tonnage before building, such discrepancies were almost inevitable and, as the contract was calculated by tonnage, it was only natural that the builder would try to increase the tonnage and thereby exceed the dimensions.

* * *

¹ CSPD 1666-7, pp.487, 545, 547.

² Anderson, Lists of Men of War, English Ships, pp.29-30

The largest part of the Navy Board's work in building and repairing ships and in supplying the needs of the service, was in obtaining materials. This was done in several ways. Firstly, the Board appointed 'purveyors', who would either look for and report the presence, quantity, quality and price of naval supplies to the Board, or would themselves supply the service with a specific commodity. In the latter case the 'purveyor' would be the holder of what came to be known as a 'standing contract'. Associated with this system was the 'Purveyor of Petty Emptions', who provided various types of small or specialised items, and 'commissions' were issued to individual merchants, or others, to supply certain goods, usually from abroad. In many cases there is no clear distinction between the 'purveyor', 'standing contract' or 'commission'; these terms were used loosely and were often interchangeable. Secondly, there was the ordinary process of making contracts; this was usually for a specific commodity at an arranged price and fixed quantity, and sometimes stated time and place of delivery. These were the most common methods of obtaining materials from independent merchants or trades, but the navy also obtained a large amount of timber from the royal forests. This involved a complicated series of orders and warrants and could often be a very slow process. Lastly, the navy could benefit from the capture of prize goods during wartime. In practice this was of little value, as much prize cargo was sold on the open market, which the Navy Board was unable to buy because of the shortage of money. There was no rigid pattern established for obtaining stores, the needs of the service being satisfied by the most appropriate method. The ultimate responsibility for obtaining materials lay with the Navy Board, although in several cases the Board would act to ratify the agreements made by individual members of the Board, the resident Commissioners, or senior dockyard officials. Thus the process of obtaining materials for the navy was essentially flexible and capable of being adapted as required.

There were several factors which influenced the manner, and the terms of such agreements; these ranged from the availability of the commodity, the credit of the Navy Board, local and national price movements, and, especially in wartime, the increased needs of the service and the security of trade routes. During the Restoration period the Navy Board followed the practice of their predecessors in providing stores; little was done to alter the system except perhaps for a greater tendency to use 'standing contracts'. There was also a decline in the use of agents with commissions in foreign parts.¹ The most important single factor influencing the obtaining of materials was the availability of money and credit. This often dictated the cost and availability of stores for the fleet, which in turn would decide whether the fleet could be used as an instrument of policy. The amount of money involved in the work, and the opportunity for abuse, tended to make the provision of supplies, especially by contract, the object of suspicion and investigation, particularly by Parliament.

Initially the Navy Board had little guidance beyond the Articles of the 1662 Instructions for the provision of supplies. Certain of the Articles were couched in very general terms; the duties of the Board 'jointly considered' required them to ensure that there was an adequate 'magazine' of stores, and that contracts were to be made at public meetings when the 'quantity, quality, dimensions and price may be maturely scanned, and accordingly specified in the contract ...'.² More specific guidance was given in the seventh Article to the whole Board, which stated that the members of the Board were to enquire as to the market price of the 'East

¹ Edward Dering successfully petitioned the King to be granted a commission to supply the navy with Baltic or Eastland, goods, CSPD 1660-1, p.212. Despite this he was not very active and the most important merchant to supply the navy with Baltic produce was Sir William Warren. Warren was also given a 'commission' to supply hemp from Hamburg in 1664, but despite these instances the practice of issuing commissions virtually ceased.

² PRO, Adm.7/633 'Duties of the Principal Officers and Commissioners of his Majesty's Navy jointly considered' Articles 2-5.

County commodities' and they were to buy what was 'best cheap, not tying themselves to any particular man'. As will become evident the domination of certain merchants in, for example, the mast trade, prevented this Article from being properly observed. The Navy Board, and their inferior officers, were not to trade in naval commodities nor in 'any way to go sharer with any merchant in any whatsoever for such commodities as are sold to the Navy'. This Article was also not strictly observed, especially when the service was in desperate need of materials and its credit was bad. Of the individual members of the Board, the Comptroller was given greater responsibility in making contracts, and was to be well informed about the current prices and rates; the Clerk of the Acts was to keep a record of demands for stores, tenders of goods, and contracts made by the Board.

Before discussing the procedure in making contracts, other methods used by the Navy Board to obtain supplies of materials will be examined. In the first place they used the practice of appointing a 'purveyor' to supply certain commodities, or to provide manufactured items such as anchors or flags. This type of supplier was described as holding his position by 'warrant', 'commission' or 'standing contract', and for the most part they were small tradesmen, who restricted their activities to one product. Associated with this type of supplier were persons appointed to provide materials and to carry out the work of fitting them on the ships - the glaziers, plumbers and plasterers are examples of this category. The terms of their agreements usually followed the same pattern. A person appointed would hold his place 'so long as he shall perform the said service sufficiently and at as reasonable rate as any other man'. Immediately after the Restoration it was necessary to re-appoint such suppliers. In some cases they were to serve the navy with

a specialised product, for example, Matthew Hatten, Dennis Lydall and George Downing were confirmed as compass makers to the navy, John Young and Henry Whistler as flagmakers to the navy, Robert Foley as ironmonger and Robert Russell as chandler.¹ In addition several warrants were issued for appointments to particular yards, where the holder was to supply his materials and carry out work associated with them; for example, Robert Howell was engaged as 'turner' to the four main yards, and John Harris was assigned as sailmaker at Deptford, Woolwich and Portsmouth.² By the 1670s it became more common to appoint this type of supplier for a specific period, usually not less than a year, with the possibility of renewal. From this it can be seen that the navy relied on a series of small suppliers, who could be responsible for either the entire service or for several yards.

Beyond this the Navy Board resorted to sending their own officials to the more distant parts of the country to look for and buy up useful materials. This was most evident during the war when supplies were urgently needed. Those employed in this capacity could be members of the Board, senior dockyard officers, or naval agents in the smaller ports. There is ample evidence to show members of the Board making contracts; this is not the same as individual members playing a leading part in getting the whole Board to make a contract, although in all cases such contracts were for relatively small quantities. In 1668 Pepys sent a list of contracts made in 1665 to the Commissioners of Public Accounts, which shows Batten, Mennes and Pett as members of the Board, Middleton as a resident commissioner, and Anthony Deane as a dockyard official, making contracts for sailcloth, planks, hemp and timber.³ Also shown were Carteret's contracts with Sir

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1732, f.20, 17 July 1660; f.21r, 18 July 1660; f.17, 11 July 1660.

² PRO, Adm.2/1725, f.4, 19 June 1660.

³ Bodl., Tanner MS.44, f.286, 17 February 1668.

William Davidson for tar, pitch and hemp, and Pepys bought flags during a period of shortage in 1665.¹ In August 1665 Commissioner Middleton, at Portsmouth, made a contract for 1,500 loads of timber at 42/- per load, although this was subject to the Board's approval.² During the war one of the Pett family (probably Christopher) was sent to Scotland to look for suitable timber, but it would appear that this expedition was of limited value since only £210 worth of timber was brought back. The cost of transport made this source prohibitive except in time of war.³

By far the most important task in providing materials for the navy was in the making of contracts. The customary practice was for the Board to decide what was needed by a survey of the stores, and then to invite tenders from merchants. However, on many occasions it was discovered that a certain commodity was in short supply and the Board would have to search for a supplier. Alternatively a merchant would buy, or import goods, which he would then offer to the navy. There was no set period of the year when naval contracts were made, but it was often common for imported goods to arrive in England from June to November. For domestic products a variety of circumstances, such as the weather, local production, and the availability of transport, prevented any season of the year being regarded as the time for making contracts. During the Restoration period the variety of contracts, and the methods of making them, prevents all but the most general of conclusions. The Navy Board was able, as far as the financial situation allowed, to make an adequate provision of materials for the service. There were, however, frequent complaints of shortages, but these were often the direct result of factors beyond the Board's control. They arose from the slowness of the yards to inform the Board of a shortage, the lack of the commodity on

¹ Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 174, f.47, 16 February 1665; Diary, 28 January 1665.

² CSPD 1664-5, p.536.

³ Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 174, f.72, 1 February 1669.

the market, foreign embargoes and, most important, the reluctance of merchants to extend the credit of the navy.

The essential materials necessary for the navy were timber, masts, canvas, hemp and tar. These, with the exception of English oak and deal, were nearly all imported, which in itself was a serious restriction because it forced the Navy Board to conduct business with a relatively small group of merchants. This did not mean there was no competition, examples will be given later of rivalry between Warren and Wood, and this was especially true during peacetime when the Board could often bargain more freely. Naval produce, often called 'East Country' or 'East Land' goods, was handled primarily by Sir William Warren, George Cocke, William Wood, Joseph Childe, William Castle and Edward Dering, who dealt with masts or timber, whilst John Harbin, Constance Pley, and Bulleyn Reymes dealt in hemp and canvas. Other important figures included Sir William Rider, William Taylor, John Taylor and Edward Backwell, who supplied tar and pitch as well as timber. This is not to suggest that merchants were limited to one commodity, but it would appear that the larger and more important the merchant was, the greater would be the range of naval goods offered. The best example of this was Sir William Warren, who offered virtually everything which the navy used in bulk. Behind the big names was a much larger group of smaller men, who would usually restrict themselves to one product and were more likely to specialise in English materials. There is, therefore, a marked contrast between the major contractors, who dealt in overseas goods, and the smaller domestic traders. This group of smaller suppliers was hit most severely when the Board could not pay with ready money, and they were least able to extend the navy's credit. In addition there was a group of traders who offered more diversified goods to the navy; these items were not greatly in demand; for example, handspikes, brooms, bricks, or, more commonly,

smaller quantities of the usual naval goods.

In the building and repairing of ships, especially of the third-rates and above, three basic types of timber were used. Firstly, for the hull (that part of the ship constantly exposed to the sea and the weather), which required the most resistant type of timber, the preference was always for English oak.¹ Secondly, the decks and internal structure of the ship were made from deal and elm, though in a few cases beech was used, but this was inferior. For the most part timber used for the hull would be referred to by its name, or more simply as 'timber'. Thirdly, there were the masts and spars, and here a much more specialised knowledge of shipbuilding and of the quality of the timber was needed; the length and thickness or, more exactly, the 'size and proportions were the twin deities of the timber merchant and navy purveyor'.² For both the internal timber and the masts, the domestic supply was inadequate in quantity and, particularly for masts, quality, and merchants were therefore in great demand to supply the navy with timber and masts from the Baltic and New England.

As previously indicated, the Navy Board obtained its timber either by inviting merchants to present tenders, or by the merchants approaching the Board with an offer. Once the preliminaries were over the detailed bargaining would begin, and the terms of the contract would reflect the relative strength, or more often the weakness, of the Navy Board's negotiating position. Some examples can be given to illustrate the whole process of making timber contracts. On 6 September 1662 Pepys, in his capacity as Clerk of the Acts, wrote to Sir William Warren and Peter Blackborrow inviting them to offer tenders for the supply of masts at

¹ Albion, Forests and Sea Power, chapter I, There may have been too much reliance on English oak which caused shortages of timber, deforestation and a reluctance to use alternative supplies; Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.39-41.

² Ehrman, op. cit., p.41.

'their lowest price' and for 'ready money'.¹ Two days later Pepys discussed the price of masts with Warren but there is no evidence to suggest that this contract was concluded.² In November 1662 the Board did conclude a contract with William Wood, Warren's major rival, for New England masts, which would indicate that Warren had been unsuccessful.³ More frequently, however, it was the merchant who made the first approach with an offer to sell timber already in England, or for a contract to import it from the Baltic or New England. It appears that neither the Navy Board nor the merchants favoured the holding of open meetings where each merchant would offer his tender and, in theory, the best would be accepted by the Board (as laid down in the 1662 Instructions), but this system had the danger of making the merchants agree together on a fixed price, thereby reducing competition. In practice the merchants preferred to deal individually with the Board, hoping in some cases to influence its members, and because of the lack of a definite 'season' for the arrival of overseas produce, it was impractical to delay contracts in the hope that cheaper rates would be obtained at a later date. The fact that only a small number of merchants were engaged in importing timber, and that private shipbuilders would be in competition with the Navy Board, made the Board aware of the need to conclude a bargain with the merchants. Thus in the making of contracts the supply, demand and availability of funds did more to dictate the pattern than any set of rules or instructions. During 1663 and 1664 the Navy Board began to increase its contracts for masts and timber; this followed a survey of the stores made by the Surveyor (although not very thoroughly) in January and May 1663, and by

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.22, 6 September 1662.

² Diary, 8 September 1662.

³ Diary, 27 November 1662.

dockyard officials in January 1664.¹ It has already been shown that Pepys took an increasingly active role in making contracts, particularly for masts and timber, and this led to conflicts within the Board between Pepys and Batten, with Mennes usually supporting the Surveyor.² Pepys had been prompted to make a comparison between past and current prices, and was urged by Coventry to conclude a mast contract in August 1663.³ Having done some research, Pepys came to support Warren's tender and proceeded to reach an agreement with him during August and September 1663. On 10 September a mast contract worth £3,000 was signed between the Navy Board and Warren, and Pepys was able to say that 'the whole business, from beginning to end, being done by me out of the office'.⁴ This contract caused Pepys considerable trouble because Batten and Mennes did not conceal their annoyance and preference for a rival tender sent in by Wood. Pepys was forced to justify himself to Coventry and Carteret, and in this context the contract became a trial of strength and influence between the Clerk of the Acts and the Surveyor.⁵ In 1664 the requirements of the service were discovered by a more thorough survey conducted in March, which revealed that there were only 993 masts of all sizes in stock and it was estimated that a further 2190 masts (1213 from New England and 977 from the Baltic) were needed.⁶ It is most likely that, having discovered this information, the Board approached the principal merchants, Warren, Wood, Castle and Taylor and invited them to tender for masts which were to be imported later in the year. The completion of the mast and timber contracts in 1664 was a lengthy business, no doubt because the Board decided later

¹ *Supra.* p.251.

² *Supra.* p.261.

³ PRO, Adm.106/8, ff.,98,122, 13,24 August 1663.

⁴ Diary, 10 September 1663.

⁵ NMM, LBK 8, f.84, 14 November 1663.

⁶ Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 174, f.19, March 1664.

in the year to buy up further supplies. On 3 March Warren was at the Navy Board 'making a very great contract ... for provision for the year coming'.¹ This was for 'deals, planks' rather than for masts and it was not until July that the large contract for masts was completed.² Again it was Pepys who took a leading role in the mast contract; the extent to which he was motivated by hostility to the other merchants or by a desire to prevail over the Surveyor is not clear, but as usual he supported his case with strong arguments and, although he was by no means averse to some personal gain through his association with Warren, he was still genuinely attempting to obtain the best bargain for the King. The Board, or probably Pepys, had decided that all the masts needed from the Baltic, 'Gottenburg masts', were to be bought from Warren; on 21 July Pepys noted 'we sat all the morning ... making a contract with Sir W. Warren for almost 1,000 'Gottenburg masts, the biggest that ever was made in the Navy and wholly of my composing ...'³ Warren's position as the major mast supplier was reinforced in August 1664 when he was given a share in the New England masts, here too Pepys played a large part in the negotiations, although he claimed to have been 'very hard' with Warren.⁴ Finally, in 1664, Warren secured another timber contract; in this the personal rivalry between Pepys and Batten is strongly emphasised; 'we sat all the morning and finished Sir W. Warren's great contract for timber; with great content to me, because just in the terms I wrote last night to Sir W. Warren, and against the terms proposed by Sir W. Batten'.⁵ During 1664 it would appear that the bulk of the

¹ Diary, 3 March 1664.

² PRO, SP29/108, no.55.

³ Diary, 21 July 1664; PRO, SP29/108, nos.83-4

⁴ Diary, 12 August 1664; PRO, SP29/108, nos.90-1

⁵ Diary, 25 October 1664.

timber and mast contracts were awarded to Warren; the lists of contracts and warrants to storekeepers for the receipt of goods mention a few other names, but these were only for 100-150 masts compared with over 1,000 from Warren.¹ It was usual when making contracts for goods which were not already in the country to stipulate that all or part of the cargo should be delivered direct to one or more of the dockyards. In the case of New England masts it was more convenient to unload part of the cargo at Portsmouth, conversely part of Warren's Gottenburg masts were unloaded at Deptford first and the rest were sent to Chatham and Portsmouth.²

Until the outbreak of the Second Dutch War a similar pattern emerges from the other imported naval supplies. There was a select group dealing with each product, but there does not appear to be a merchant as dominant as Warren. Hemp was one of the most expensive items needed for the navy and, in an estimate prepared in November 1666, a total of £179,793. 10s. Od. was needed to set out the fleet; hemp was the most costly item with 1,300 tons being needed at an estimated cost of £72,800.³ It was obtained from the Baltic, Flanders and Italy, although there was a small amount of domestic production centred in the West Country and East Anglia. The principal merchants engaged in the trade were Harrington, Rider, Cocke, Barker, Pley, and to a lesser extent Warren. Hemp was also more susceptible to price fluctuation because of scarcity, increased demand, or difficulties in transport. The need for hemp was such that the Board would accept high prices as well as poor quality. In 1663 a 'parcel' of Riga hemp, delivered by Cocke, had proved to be 'very tender', but the Board agreed to keep it because of the scarcity and 'general badness of

¹ PRO, SP29/108, nos.171-2, 176, 194,238, 267.

² PRO, SP29/108, no.222.

³ Coventry MS.97, ff.38-42, 17 November 1666.

hemp this year, and our necessity as well as little credit'.¹ Hemp was provided either by contract or by giving a merchant a 'commission' to buy up hemp for the service. In March 1663 Harrington requested a commission of this nature but was turned down because the Board hoped the price would fall later in the year; in their deliberations on this matter the Board mentioned that Rider and Cocke already possessed commissions to supply hemp.² It was sometimes customary to buy hemp 'at the current market price', the merchant being responsible for any price increase should the hemp not be in England.³ An example of this is contained in a contract made with Sir William Davidson for tar, pitch and hemp in February 1665. Davidson was to be paid the 'highest price as is paid for equal quality of goods current one month before the delivery of the goods'.⁴ The same merchants who dealt in hemp also tended to deal in canvas, with the addition of Harbin and Waith, the latter being more concerned in supplying small amounts of canvas produced in East Anglia.

Before looking at the impact of a war situation on the naval contract system, mention can be made of domestic naval goods. Here there is a marked contrast with the few large merchants who dominated the supplying of imported items. The lists of goods tendered and contracted for contain a large variety of names and products. In many cases smaller items were handled by the system of purveyors and standing contracts, already mentioned. The largest item obtained from the home market was timber, especially oak, elm and ash. During 1664 a total of seventeen individuals (including Warren and Wood) contracted to supply various types of English timber.⁵

¹ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.12r, 22 June 1663.

² PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.12, 19 March 1663.

³ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.18r, 12 March 1664.

⁴ Bodl., Rawl. MS. A 174, f.47, 16 February 1665.

⁵ PRO, SP29/108.

The largest supplier of oak for the navy was, of course, the King himself; the royal forests still provided the largest percentage of timber for building warships, in spite of the long process of alienation and deforestation and the fact that it was often a slow and complicated process to transfer the oak, or other timber, from the royal forests to the dockyards.¹ Considerable quantities of oak were still supplied from private forests, but there was often great reluctance to fell this timber; indeed the Navy Board and its subordinates fell foul of the Lord Chancellor, Clarendon, in July 1664 when they had marked some of his trees for felling.² Beyond the supply of timber there was a series of items which were not provided by purveyors or standing contracts, and if the purveyor proved inadequate, the Board was forced to make additional contracts. In several instances items provided in this manner would be contracted for only once a year, or less frequently if they were not in great demand. The collection of miscellaneous items included fishing lines, cottons, iron hoops, train oil, spades, hammers and assorted tools. This list is by no means comprehensive, but in each case the item was supplied by a separate individual under contract to the Board, or by agreement with the resident dockyard Commissioners and officials.³

Until the Navy Board and the merchants became aware of the approach of war, the contract system operated in a relatively leisurely manner. But from the early summer of 1664 the rumours of war increased, and Coventry, who from his position at court was more aware of the drift towards war, urged the Board from May 1664 to make additional provisions of materials,

¹ Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.45-6.

² Diary, 14 July 1664.

³ PRO, SP29/108; a similar list for 1665 is SP29/141.

especially of those which had to be imported.¹ Because no serious hostilities occurred in 1664, the stores built up during that year were virtually intact and were used to set out the 1665 fleet, but by the end of 1664 and throughout the war, the Navy Board was required to make strenuous efforts to ensure that the fleet could be kept at sea. The war situation naturally increased the needs of the service; this in itself had a noticeable effect on market prices, but war also meant that it was much more dangerous for merchant ships to leave coastal waters, the main danger coming from privateers rather than the enemy battle fleet. The need for a naval escort often delayed sailings, and merchants tended to ask for higher rates on the grounds of increased risk. These were additional factors which helped to increase prices, but the main reason for increased costs was the demands of the service.

The Navy Board's ability to supply the fleet with materials in wartime depended almost entirely on its financial standing. For much of 1665 the Board was able to obtain supplies by relying on small cash advances and their credit, but by late 1665 the most persistent theme emerging from the Navy Board's correspondence, is the lack of credit and their inability to obtain supplies without the definite promise of payment. The larger merchants were better able to offer credit, but they protected themselves by demanding prices which were from 20-30% above current market rates. During 1665 and 1666 the Navy Board did its best to persuade merchants to supply goods; they adopted new expedients and were prepared to deal with anyone possessing naval goods, but their freedom to negotiate was always severely restricted by the large demands of the service and the Board's financial weakness. Both these factors were common knowledge. The tendency by the merchants to hold out for better prices was evident

¹ PRO, Adm.106/8, f.455, 14 May 1664.

as early as November 1664. Pepys told Coventry that 'tar rises mightily in town' and he bemoaned the lack of 'ready money' which would 'enable us to tempt merchants to sell, which I perceive everybody now desires to avail at any price almost, in confidence of gaining by keeping their goods in their hands'.¹ The suggestion that merchants were trying to force up prices by holding on to their stock was reinforced in May 1665 when William Bodham complained of a 'combination of merchants' charging inflated prices for hemp.²

It can easily be demonstrated that the price of naval commodities rose sharply during the war. In September 1666 Pepys composed a paper on the 'exhausting naval expenditure occasioned by the war', which included a comparison between contracts made from June 1661 to June 1664, and from January 1665 to July 1666.³ This list reveals that the small masts had almost doubled in price between September 1663 and May 1666; larger masts rose by 40-50%; hemp from £42 0s Od. per ton in October 1663 to £57 0s Od. in April 1666, and canvas from £15 8s Od, per bale in February 1662 to £18 10s Od. in October 1665. Hemp provides a more detailed example of price fluctuation. It should be noted that high prices could also be demanded in peacetime because of scarcity, as in 1662 when £55 per ton was paid.⁴ With improved naval credit and an increase in supply, the price dropped to £42 in 1663.⁵ Thereafter it began to rise, reaching £55 in May 1665 and £57 in 1666.⁶ In one of many letters on the state of the navy, Pepys complained about the attitude of merchants who offered hemp at £60 per ton to the navy but were persuaded to accept £57, 'being reproached by us

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.114, 3 November 1664.

² CSPD 1664-5, p.362.

³ Coventry MS.97, f.29, 16 September 1666.

⁴ NMM, LBK 8, f.398, 14 July 1666.

⁵ PRO, SP29/108, no.138.

⁶ NMM, LBK 8, f.398, 14 July 1666.

that a private person had very lately bought of the same goods at £49 10s Od., he immediately replied that he would thankfully exchange the price he had then agreed with us for of £57 for £49 to be paid by ready money ...'.¹

In December 1666 the Board made a contract with Cocke for 500 tons of hemp at £56.²

Closely associated with the rise in demand and prices caused by the war, was a decline in the Navy Board's credit and an increasing reluctance on the part of the merchants to supply goods, except for 'ready money'. This trend had the same impact on all the normal means used by the navy to obtain supplies. The purveyors, and the Board itself, found their activities in this direction constantly hampered, and the credit worthiness of the service was virtually non-existent by the latter part of 1665.

The Navy Board, and by extension the Treasury, had never been regarded as a particularly prompt payer of debts. In February 1665 Pepys told Coventry 'we are running apace into the old ill effects of bad payments, complaints beginning to grow loud on the merchants part', and this was recognised as an additional factor leading to increased prices.³ This prompted the merchants to demand that past debts should be paid before further goods were supplied. In April 1665 Harrington and his partner refused to sell hemp at less than £50 per ton, and even then, not at that or any other price 'till their last bills long since due be paid'.⁴ This type of refusal was as damaging to the merchant as it was to the service, and late in 1665 most merchants appreciated that they were unlikely to obtain much in the way of back-payment. They then adopted the tactic of demanding 'ready money' for goods or charging much higher rates.

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.394, 12 May 1666.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.462, 23 February 1667.

³ Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, p.38.

⁴ NMM, LBK 8, f.183, 8 April 1665.

This was demonstrated in July 1665 when the Board urgently needed kersey cloth. They contacted one of the usual suppliers, Meadows, who said he was already owed over £2,000 by the navy, 'part thereof in bills of 12 months standing'. He would not make any further supplies unless he was paid at a much higher rate; the Board were forced to agree or 'to undertake for the getting him ready payment for this parcel'.¹ A variation on this theme came from Constance Pley, who was willing to make contracts for canvas with the Board, being convinced that 'the late bad payments have arisen from the calamities of the times', but she would only supply her canvas on condition that half the money was 'advanced beforehand'.² A few days later Pepys stated that, 'no man will sell without promise of ready money', and he was afraid that the Board would be forced to stop buying stores, even though this meant waiting 'till our wants grow greater and our capacity of buying less'.³ The choice of doing without or being forced to pay excessive rates was clearly intolerable, but in the absence of 'ready money' it remained the only possibility before the Board.

By 1666 the Board's financial credibility had deteriorated even further, they still could not provide cash payments and, as a result, lost goods which had been reserved on promise of 'ready money'. The Board wrote to the Duke of York in November 1666 complaining that they had been unable to make essential contracts for the past three months, and had lost 'five parcels' which had been obtained for a promised down payment of £100, but it would appear that this sum was beyond the Board's means.⁴ By this time the merchants were so sceptical of the Navy's credit

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.227, 1 July 1665.

² CSPD 1665-6, p.60

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.228, 8 July 1665.

⁴ Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, p.148.

that they would not part with their goods, even at excessive rates; the Board 'cannot now at any rate prevail for any supplies without present money'.¹ To prove their point the Board told the Duke of a tender for iron furnaces at '30/- per cwt. ready money'; they had offered 50/- 'to be paid by bill' but had been refused. The Board also pointed out that this situation did not arise from the scarcity of most commodities; their purveyors sent in 'plenty of offers ... but with a peremptory demand of ready money or an utter refusal of treating with us upon any other terms'. The situation did not improve over the next few months, and again the Board told the Duke of York of the situation. In February 1667 the Board said that they had only been able to make four contracts, totalling under £4,000, 'whereas his Majesty's stores, after the continued exhaustings of a 2 years' war and under prospect of a third, would rather have required as many hundred thousands'. So far as gaining new credit by paying old debts was concerned, they had paid only £1315 out of a total debt of 'at least £150,000'.²

It is evident, therefore, that by the beginning of 1667 the Navy Board had been unable to replenish the stores; its credit was exhausted and there was little prospect of improvement. This situation had been developing since the middle of 1665, and it is necessary to ask how aware the Navy Board was of this development and what steps were taken by it, the Lord High Admiral, and the government in general, to rectify matters. The Board was aware of rising prices from the end of 1664 and, although the members complained of this, they were able to obtain supplies on credit by making part payments and agreeing to excessive rates for later payment. The system of obtaining materials, by contracts or

¹ Tanner, *op.cit.*, p.149.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.458, 23 February 1667.

through the purveyors, could only be successful when it was supported by adequate funds, and this clearly did not happen for much of the Second Dutch War. The Navy Board was being constantly reminded of the need for supplies by letters from the dockyards, and it was also being pressed by Coventry to secure goods. The fact that the fleet was successfully set out in 1665 and 1666 is evidence of its success, and it must be emphasised that the collapse of the supply system by late 1666 was not the fault of the Board but the general financial situation. The Board had been diligent, so far as circumstances had permitted, in obtaining goods, but a point was reached when merchants, large and small, would not continue to provide supplies on credit. The Board had done its best to remain creditworthy but had been let down by the lack of money. The Navy Board can also be exonerated from any suggestion that it had not informed the Lord High Admiral, the Lord Treasurer, or the King of the deterioration in credit. In April 1665, when the Duke of York was preparing to sail, the Navy Board became alarmed at the low state of finances and appealed to Albemarle, acting in the Lord High Admiral's absence, and the Lord Treasurer. On 6 and 7 April Carteret, Brouncker and Pepys explained the position to Albemarle, and on 12 April they all had an interview with the Lord Treasurer, Southampton, and the Lord Chancellor.¹ Pepys, in his usual manner, had prepared an estimate of the cost of the navy up to November 1665, and assured Coventry that he had 'not knowingly magnified one sum in it'. The interview was highly unsatisfactory, with Southampton giving 'signs of amazement and discontent' and protesting that no further money could be allocated to the navy.² Having been brushed off in this manner, the Board members were understandably reluctant to raise the matter for some time, and they returned

¹ Diary, 6, 7, 12, April 1665.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.191, 15 April 1665.

to their more immediate tasks, but the feeling that financial difficulties were approaching could not be forgotten. In July, and again in September, Pepys mentioned conversations with Carteret and Brouncker on the national financial situation and its effect on the navy.¹ On 8 October 1665 Pepys sent the Lord Treasurer's Secretary, Sir Philip Warwick, an estimate of naval expenditure from April to September 1665, together with a comparison between the prices before the war and during it.²

After his campaigns at sea and absence in the north, the Duke of York returned to play a more active role in naval administration, and in November 1665 he received the first, of what were to become frequent reports from the Navy Board, on the lack of money. The Duke was informed that the Board had 'neither money to pay for what is bought, nor credit to take up what is wanting ...'; the financial difficulties of the Victualler, and those building ships by contract, were also mentioned.³ Over the next two years at least nine letters were sent to the Duke of York setting out the bad financial situation of the navy; these covered the need for money to pay wages, to provide victuals and for replenishing the stores. For the most part these were drawn up by Pepys, accepted by the Navy Board, and then sent on to the Lord High Admiral. In this way the Board fully discharged its duty in reporting the conditions of the service to its superiors.⁴ At a meeting with the Duke of York at Hampton Court on 27 January 1666, he advised the Board to put its comments on the state of the navy into writing. The letter was discussed with the Lord Treasurer, the Navy Board, Ordnance Officers and the Duke of York on 12 February, 'but after long discourse ... we came to no issue, nor

¹ Diary, 6 July; 3, 5, September 1665.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.248, 8 October 1665.

³ Coventry MS.96, f.108, 15 November 1665.

⁴ *Supra.* p.290.

any money promised or like to be had, and yet the work must be done'.¹ A second meeting with the Lord Treasurer took place on 19 February when a more detailed account was presented, but Southampton could only reply that 'he was sorry for it, but had declared the utmost he could do for us ...'.² For the rest of 1666 the Board tried to keep its superiors informed of its position; in May, July, August, September, October and November there is mention of the Board, or Pepys, informing Sir Philip Warwick, the Lord Treasurer, or the Duke of York about its financial requirements.³ Following a request for this information, a full account of the cost of the war was presented to the Lord Treasurer on 29 September 1666.⁴ In October 1666 the 'ill state of the navy' was presented by the Board, with Pepys taking the lead, to the King, the Dukes of York and Albemarle, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer, and others of the Privy Council; but a sum of only £6,000 was granted 'when £100,000 were at this time but absolutely necessary'.⁵ The same dismal picture was repeated to the King, in the presence of the Lord Treasurer, on 14 March 1667; Pepys 'declared to his Majesty that none of the demands of money we have at any time made have either in quantity or time been answered ...'. The stores were exhausted, credit was non-existent, prices were still high, and debts were rising constantly.⁶ By this time the decision not to set

¹ Diary, 14 February 1666.

² Coventry MS. 97, f.15, 19 February 1666.

³ Diary, 12, 15, 23 May; 14, 18 July; 3, 5, 8 August; 11, 19 September; 4, 7, 8, 19, 24 October, 19 November 1666. Important letters on this subject were written to the Duke of York on 12 May, Coventry MS. 97, f.19; 14 July, Coventry MS. 96, f.112; and 12 November, Coventry MS. 97, f.38.

⁴ BM, Add. MS.9,302, f.162, 29 September 1666.

⁵ Diary, 7 October 1666.

⁶ NMM, LBK 8, f.475, 14 March 1667.

out the main fleet had already been taken, but the 'discourse' left the King in no doubt that the navy was incapable of being an effective weapon in 1667.

The Navy Board had done its best to keep its superiors informed of the financial situation but had been given very little comfort. More positively, however, two attempts were made to improve the situation. Firstly, the introduction of the system of 'payments in course' was an attempt to reassure merchants that their bills would be paid and there would be no favouritism. Secondly, on the advice of Sir George Downing, much wider attempts were made to improve the Crown's credit by persuading merchants and banks to lend goods, or money, on the credit of Acts of Parliament.

The introduction of 'payments in course' was directly designed to improve the Board's credit, thereby ensuring a flow of essential supplies.

The idea had been mentioned as early as March 1663 by Carteret, but he had done nothing further.¹ In June 1665 Carteret proposed that bills should be paid in the order they were signed by the Board, but due to 'our cash failing', the Board was unable to put the idea into practice.²

By November 1665 Pepys was sceptical about the success of the scheme because the financial situation was so bad, 'we have been very far from an ability to answer life-and-death payments, much less to offer paying bills in course'; he thought the scheme impractical because it 'implies an income in some near proportion to the expense'.³ Pepys was being asked for information about 'payments in course' by Coventry, and he had to admit that all that had been done was a 'signification of good intention';

¹ Diary, 16 March 1663.

² PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.26, 22 June 1665.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.282, 9 November 1665.

he repeated his scepticism, saying 'it cannot be made to operate in any degree, we are unable to answer such payments'.¹ Undeterred by these comments Coventry took the lead in pressing for the system to be adopted, and sent draft proposals to Pepys for discussion.² The instructions for 'payments in course' were sent in the Lord High Admiral's name to the Navy Board on 8 December 1665; these were incomplete, in some articles the meaning was not sufficiently clear and another letter had to be issued on 26 December.³ The intention of these instructions was to remove the suspicion that favoured merchants were given priority, and to try and foster a greater sense of confidence amongst the merchants that their bills would be paid. On 30 December the Board published a letter in the London Gazette, asking that all persons with bills for goods delivered for the navy, should bring them in so that an 'orderly course for payment' could be instituted. Two of the Board's clerks were to be available throughout January 1666 to receive and record such bills.⁴ A few days later Pepys reported to Coventry that 'we are entered upon the practice of our new rules for payments'.

The impact of the new method was probably very limited, at best it may have brought temporary relief and encouraged a few merchants to trust the Board with more goods on credit. The new system was certainly beneficial in regularising the waiting lists for payments, but at the same time it had been hoped that naval credit would be improved, and in this 'payments in course' had only a marginal effect, simply because very few payments were made. In itself this method was not intended to attack the fundamental

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.288, 14 November 1665.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.294, 21 November 1665.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.230, 8 December 1665.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.27, 30 December 1666.

problem of the lack of money, and because of this the pessimism voiced by Pepys proved to be correct. The very limited success of the measures in improving credit can be seen in an Order in Council of 21 February 1666.¹ The King and Council had been told that, although bills had been passed for goods delivered into the stores, the merchants had not been paid and the credit of the navy was 'greatly diminished'. It was agreed that the merchants would be paid interest at the rate of 6% when their original bill, which had been signed by the Navy Board, had not been paid within six months of signing.²

The second, and much wider attempt to improve the King's credit came in the proposal of Sir George Downing in late 1665. This was a much more definite attempt to tackle the general shortage of funds, and, in the case of naval supplies, it was hoped that merchants would be prepared to treat with the Navy Board if they were assured of a guaranteed payment by an Act of Parliament.³ Downing proposed his 'remarkable amendments' when the bill for An Additional Aid received its second reading in the Commons.⁴ Despite signs of restlessness about the cost of the war, this bill was passed quickly. Its intention was to ensure that new funds were available and could be applied directly to the prosecution of the war. Loans to the Crown were encouraged by an interest rate of 6%, and they were to be repaid, strictly in course, when money was available. Merchants were to be encouraged to supply more goods on condition that

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.142, 21 February 1666.

² It is not clear whether the merchant would receive 6% interest for the first six months or only after that period had elapsed.

³ The Act for An Additional Aid of £1,250,000, 17 Car IIc.i.

⁴ Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, p.35.

they too would be paid in course. In practice this was a serious blow for the Navy Treasurer, because all future payments for naval supplies would be made from the Treasury. This was one of the main reasons why Carteret was hostile to the Act, for he faced not only a loss of influence but also loss of his 'poundage'.¹ Two possible drawbacks of the new Act were, firstly, its novelty in England (it was derived from Downing's experience of Holland), and, secondly, it did not attempt to provide payments for goods already delivered. Its success, therefore, would depend largely on the willingness and ability of merchants to accept longer delays before they were paid for goods delivered in 1664 and 1665. The most enthusiastic support for the Act came from Coventry, who saw in it a means of reform as well as a possible method of attack on his rival Carteret. Coventry was certainly in favour at court and he, together with Downing, obtained the King's approval for the measure, apparently without reference to Clarendon, Southampton or Carteret.² Coventry and Downing persuaded Pepys that the Act was in the best interests of the service, but Pepys was at first reluctant because of the novelty of the measure, and because he appreciated that it would damage Carteret. Pepys's role was to persuade merchants to resume trading with the navy, which he saw as one of the few positive steps being taken to assist naval credit, and was prepared to put aside his scruples. The first success came on 16 December 1665, when Pepys made a contract for two shiploads of 'Norway goods' valued at over £3,000.³ One was for over £2,000 with Warren, and the other by Warren's 'example and mediation' at Harwich, but at the same time as he told Coventry of

¹ The passing of the Act, the roles of Downing, Coventry, Carteret, Clarendon and Pepys, and the effect of the Act are fully discussed by Roseveare, 'The Advancement of the King's Credit', Cambridge Ph.D., 1962.

² Roseveare, *op.cit.* pp.43-76.

³ Diary, 16 December 1665.

this promising start, Pepys hoped that he had not given excessive promises of repayment which might not be met by the Exchequer.¹

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that only the Act for An Additional Aid enabled the Navy Board to obtain vital supplies during the first half of 1666. Warren was one of the largest dealers on credit of the Act, lending goods to the value of over £20,000.² Other large contracts were made with John Mason for 800 loads of oak and 370 loads of other timbers, and William Chambers for 260 loads of timber.³ From January to July 1666 a total of £114,582 6s 6d. was registered on the Additional Act in receipt of goods delivered to the navy.⁴ Despite this apparent success, the Act only provided a temporary and incomplete respite for the Navy Board's credit. The continuing demands of the war meant that in the longer term, Downing's measure had only a limited success. Further, the Lord Treasurer, who had little sympathy with the Act, made no attempt to administer the funds, and the Navy Treasurer, Carteret, sulking over his loss of fees, made little effort to raise money for the service.⁵ The success of this type of financial innovation was also prejudiced by allowing too many bills to be registered on the Act; indeed, in December 1665, before the first loan had been raised, the Treasury had registered 'imprests' ordering the issue of money for the war to the value of £1,397,500.⁶

Further attempts to extend naval credit by this type of credit transaction came through the Poll Bill, the Eleven Months' Tax, and, in 1668, the

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.326, 16 December 1665.

² Roseveare, op.cit., pp.76-82.

³ PRO, SP29/185, ff.57,60, 18, 22 January 1666.

⁴ Roseveare, op.cit., p.82.

⁵ Roseveare, op.cit., p.91.

⁶ Roseveare, op.cit., p.75.

Board was trying to obtain goods on the credit of the Wine Act.¹ This remained the only form of financial measure designed to assist the prosecution of the war. Financial administration in general, and at the Navy Treasury in particular, added to the difficulties in obtaining and making use of money. By the middle of 1666 the Navy's credit had once again slumped and, on this occasion, could not be revived by financial expedients. The number of contracts made by the Board dwindled; their complaints about this and the lack of ready money increased, as did the pleas and petitions for payment which were sent to them. During the second half of 1666 and throughout 1667 the Navy Board was in a state of financial paralysis.

This state of affairs existed for some considerable time after the war and, as always, it was in the provision of materials that the lack of money was immediately felt. It was not until the middle of 1668 that the Treasury Commissioners began releasing greater sums of money to the navy, a large percentage of which was used to pay old debts and wages. The Second Dutch War had brought certain changes in the form of payment, if not in the form of supply, for materials for the navy. The purveyors, standing contracts, and the normal contract system were unchanged by the experience of the war. Those changes which did occur were associated with the problem of 'ready money' and credit, and the introduction of 'payments in course' in 1665 remained as a permanent feature of naval payments. The system was not perfect, for on 3 January 1674 'a method for the improving the rules now in being for the better methodizing the course of payment of navy bills', was introduced.² The debts for stores occasioned by the war were paid off gradually by the Treasury Commissioners, but the effect of bad payments and the lack of ready money continued to

¹ PRO, Adm.106/16, f.135, 6 May 1668:

² Catalogue, IV, 2.

trouble the service. There was no alteration in the system of providing stores, and consequently the old difficulties were bound to recur. In January 1669 Pepys presented a paper to the Board showing the advantages of having money in hand. This paper was concerned with those stores referred to as 'petty emptions'; these were miscellaneous items which were not provided by the purveyors, ordinary contracts or standing contracts. Such items included locks, door-handles, hinges, bolts, fire shovels etc., and it had been part of the duty of the Clerk of the Acts to provide their market prices. It had become the practice for one of the Navy Board's Clerks, with the title of Purveyor of Petty Emptions, to perform this duty and to arrange for the purchase of such items. In 1669 Thomas Hayter held the post and he supplied the market prices upon which Pepys based his paper.¹ Pepys demonstrated that, if the navy could buy at current market prices for ready money, a considerable saving could be made, for example, the market price for double locks was 2s. Od., whereas the King paid 2s. 6d., the price for doorhandles was 8s. Od. per dozen against 12s. 6d. paid by the King. By a list of further examples, Pepys clearly showed the advantage of having money available, but even when this was possible the legacy of suspicion and bad payments militated against the Board's dealings. On 3 February 1669 Pepys declared that 'the badness of our payments have long since discouraged all the timber merchants' near Portsmouth from trading with the navy. The only exception was Christopher Coles, who was then able to charge what price he liked. The situation was worse because none of the other timber merchants in that area had acquired 'materials fit for the King's service', so that even with an assurance of ready money, there was no competition and there was insufficient timber available for the navy.² Pepys concluded that

¹ Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, pp.207-12

² NMM, LBK 8, f.569, 3 February 1669.

this situation was a 'mischief ruinous to his Majesty, and not to be prevented without further proof of the amendments of our payments ...'. Thus again it can be seen that the Navy Board was well aware of the disastrous consequences of the lack of money, but was unable to do anything about it. As before, estimates of what was needed, were presented to the King and Council, but usually to little purpose.¹

By the outbreak of the Third Dutch War the system of providing the navy with supplies was unchanged; the purveyors, standing contracts and individual contracts, and the timber from the royal forests, provided virtually everything needed for the service. At the same time the problems of rising prices, shortages, and, above all, the lack of money, still undermined the work of the Navy Board. In 1671 the King gave his confidence in financial matters to Sir Thomas Clifford, who proposed an expedient known as the 'Stop of the Exchequer' to finance the setting out of the fleet in 1672.² The financial position of the crown was 'as grim in 1671 as it had been in 1667', the repayment of interest on past debts used up the available 'ready money' and it was then decided to postpone these repayments.³ The 'Stop' was not designed to apply to contracts made by the Navy Board, but it had the effect of seriously damaging the government's credit, especially in 1673. However, the immediate impact of the 'Stop', as far as the navy was concerned, was highly successful. The Navy Board had been unable to provide stores for much of 1671, and in December, Osborne, as Treasurer of the Navy, could not raise money on the credit of orders given to him.⁴ In January 1672 Clifford promised that

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.596, 8 May 1669; f.647, 9 May 1670.

² Lee, The Cabal, pp.150-55; Haley, First Earl of Shaftesbury, pp.294-96, 301, 305.

³ Lee, *op.cit.*, pp.146, 153.

⁴ BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.16, 30 December 1670.

the navy would be given the full £800,000 estimated as essential to set out the fleet and over the next few months regular payments were made to the service.¹ But the underlying financial problems affecting the country as a whole were not solved by expedients such as the 'Stop of the Exchequer'. With previous debts still unpaid there was, as in 1666/7, an understandable reluctance to provide more. There is evidence to suggest some negligence in the provision of stores, for in May 1672 the King was 'much offended with the Commissioners of the Navy' because the stores were discovered to be almost empty.² On 10 and 13 May Clifford, Shaftesbury and Osborne inspected the Stores at Deptford, Woolwich and Chatham, and found them 'inconsiderable'; much of the blame for this can be attributed to Middleton, as Surveyor of the Navy, but the late arrival of funds, the demands of the Victualler, and the need to settle wages and other payments, may also explain why the stores were so empty.³ The Navy Board was ordered to find out what naval provisions were available in London, and it reported that adequate supplies, except for large masts, could be obtained. On 16 May contracts were made for hemp, tar and New England masts, and by this prompt action the crisis was partially dealt with, although the lack of materials in the stores meant delays in refitting all the fleet after the battle of Sole Bay. Thereafter the complaints about the stores are not mentioned, and with a better supply of money in the summer of 1672, the system of obtaining provisions operated smoothly.

The provision of materials for the navy remained as one of the most important parts of the Navy Board's work; it did not change to any important degree between 1660 and 1673 and was beset with the same

¹ Lee, *op.cit.*, p.154.

² BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.22, 9 May 1672.

³ *Supra.* pp.272-3; BM, Add.MS.28,040, f.23, 10, 13 May 1672.

problems. The deficiencies of the system, which were largely exacerbated by the financial problems of the Restoration period, lay in an excessive reliance on particular merchants, especially in the supply of masts, an overcomplicated and unnecessarily slow procedure for obtaining timber from the royal forests, in leaving the service at the mercy of fluctuation in supply and price, and gave ample opportunity for fraud and corruption by the Navy Board, dockyard officers, or merchants. Thus the situation in the supply of materials could hardly be described as satisfactory, it was cumbersome, often chaotic, and nearly always expensive. These faults were inherited with the system and remained until greater honesty, stricter supervision of the materials available, and, above all, a degree of independence, which could only come about through financial solvency, were achieved.

The manner in which the Navy Board had provided the service with materials did not escape the attention of post-war investigations. In particular the Commissioners of Public Accounts made several references to this, especially relating to contracts with Sir William Warren. In their first observation on the 'proceedings of the navy', the Commissioners thought that some goods contracted for had not been delivered in accordance with the terms of the contract, and that 'less useful' and 'unserviceable' goods had been accepted into the stores with no 'remedy' being taken against the contractors; indeed, 'on the contrary great sums of money had been impressed to them'.¹ The Commissioners mentioned two contracts as evidence of their observation, the first was the contract with Warren for 'Gottenburg' masts made on 12 July 1664, and the second was the one made with Warren and Taylor for New England masts on 16 August 1664; neither was delivered

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, 29 September 1669, Report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts.

'according to contract in point of time and dimention'.¹ In the preliminary discussions on the Commissioners' report, it was agreed that the answer sent in by Pepys should be taken as the whole Board's reply, and that individual members would be called upon where necessary.² In his reply Pepys again pointed to the bad payments forced on to the Navy Board, which left them little 'remedy' against contractors for 'lapse of time', and he challenged the 'whole World' to prove one instance of 'unuseful, unfit or unserviceable' goods being accepted.³ To the criticism of Warren's first contract, Pepys pointed to the enquiry made by the Board on Albemarle's instructions in January 1666, which decided that Warren 'was not chargeable with any failure on his part'.⁴ Pepys was able to show that the contract was far better than the rival tenders from either Wood or Taylor, and he suggested that complaints about the contracts, which had been mentioned to the Commissioners, were little more than Wood having 'evermore endeavoured to bring disgrace upon this contract'.⁵ Having been blocked in their approaches, the Commissioners, led by Brereton and Thomson, produced evidence of the Board having been offered masts (by Shorter) at a cheaper rate than those supplied by Warren. This left Pepys without an answer, but the King intervened to say that Shorter had offered these cheaper rates only on the condition that he should be allowed to 'trade with the Dutch', and this 'unexpected stroke from the King himself ... struck them dumb'.⁶

¹ CSPD 1664-5, pp.132-5; PRO, SP29/108, no.90.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.399.

³ Pepys MS.2554, not foliated.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.34, 18 January 1666.

⁵ Pepys MS.2874, f.404.

⁶ Pepys MS.2874, f.404.

The King and Council resumed their hearing of the reply to the first observation on 20 January, with a discussion on Warren's New England mast contract. It was admitted that the masts had been delivered late, but this was because Warren had lost one ship at sea and had been delayed waiting for a convoy.¹ Any alteration in dimensions in these masts was shown to be the result of the Board's instructions, as it had been decided that smaller masts were needed. The King asked what damage his service had suffered by having these smaller masts; the Commissioners made no reply 'but suffered that point to be gained for our advantage'.² The Commissioners then produced an example of the Board having bought 'unuseful' stores, in this case Swedish iron, which had then been sold at a loss. Pepys complained that the Commissioners had acted unfairly by not informing the Board of this charge, thus preventing the presentation of an adequate answer. This was to be one of his favourite replies whenever the Commissioners produced charges which had not been in their report. To the charge itself he replied that shortage of money had forced the Board to give this iron, in lieu of payments, to the smiths, thereby enabling them to continue working.³

The last part of the observation related to large amounts of 'imprests' being assigned to Warren, but Pepys said that this was common practice when so much of the navy's stores were supplied on credit. He stated that, although large sums had indeed been granted to Warren, he was already owed far more money than the value of the imprests.⁴ In his

¹ Pepys MS.2554.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.407, in case the Commissioners changed tack and accused the Board of having too many large masts, as Pepys admitted they had, Pepys prepared an answer to the effect that the Board was required to provide for all types of necessities and could not foresee which would be most in demand.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.410.

⁴ Pepys MS.2874, f.414.

written answer Pepys had declared that during the first Dutch War payments had often been made by imprests, and he was instructed to read this part of his answer to the Council. To this, Thomson, one of the Commissioners of Public Accounts who had been a Parliamentary Commissioner of the navy during the Protectorate, agreed, but said that their use of imprests arose from 'want of money'. This gave Pepys an excellent opening, and he said he thought it 'very hard' that this could be acceptable to the Commissioners when applied to the first Dutch War but not to the second war.¹

The second observation of the Commissioners of Public Accounts also referred to the procuring of materials for the navy. This concerned a large amount (10,000 tons) of shipping which had been hired by the Navy Board to bring stores from overseas; such goods should have been delivered to the King's stores with a 'small charge'.² Pepys did not 'dispute' the calculation of the 10,000 tons but said that he was 'apprehensive of some misreckoning'. The only masts carried in the King's ships were imported later in the war because it was thought not only 'advantageous, but necessary' for the security of the ships. Warren had not been mentioned directly by the Commissioners, but in the discussions at the Council it became clear that they were hinting at the 'commissions', as opposed to the contracts, made in 1665, by which Warren was to bring over from Sweden as many masts as possible. Warren had pointed out that the high wages on merchant ships during wartime, the risk of losing men to the press, and the danger of enemy ships, made it advisable to bring the masts back in ships employed by the King. Consequently the Lord High Admiral had approved the hiring of ships to bring back the masts.

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.416.

² Pepys MS.2554.

Pepys did not deny that this had been a costly enterprise, but it had been dictated by the wartime situation.¹ The day's proceedings ended with Pepys declaring that these 'observations' were commonly thought to be 'judgements against us'. Although the Commissioners said their report was not a judgement, but 'matters wherein they were at present dissatisfied', the King expressed his 'resentment' at the method used by the Commissioners.

The Commissioners returned to the provision of materials in the second part of their seventh observation. Here they stated that 'provisions' had been supplied without contract, that in other cases the under officers in the stores had not been given a copy of the contract and were therefore unable to certify as to the 'goodness, usefulness and time of delivery', and that thereby the Board was 'at liberty to give what price they pleased and pass by defects as themselves should think fit'.² To this Pepys had little difficulty in demonstrating that the Navy Board had full authority to provide stores through purveyors, by using commissions to merchants, and by making direct purchases themselves.³ The Commissioners replied by pointing to the Lord High Admiral's Instructions, which directed the Board 'to provide no goods otherwise than by contract'. Pepys argued that to have abided by the letter of their Instructions would have left the service in a dangerous state. 'I asked what his Majesty would have said to us in such a case, he answered readily and as happily as I could have wished, that he would have said, we deserved to be hanged'.⁴ This was another example of the advantage being with Pepys, for he could always appeal confidently to the King for support. Thomson, for the

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.416-21.

² Pepys MS.2554.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.445.

⁴ Pepys MS.2874, f.448.

Commissioners, asked if this implied that the Board could dispense with any of their Instructions, but was told that these articles had been framed when the requirements of the service were much smaller and that, when the needs of the service were so pressing and would 'not permit of the nice attention to the rules', the Board could act 'by majority of voices'.¹ Once again the 'King and Admiral did most readily concur' with Pepys's reply. Returning to the observation in question, the Commissioners produced examples of the Board's warrants for receipt of goods when no copy of the contract had been sent. Pepys replied that these were goods which had been provided by verbal commissions and that no formal contract existed, but the storekeepers were required to send up certificates of the quality, dimensions etc. of all goods received by them, whether by contract or otherwise. Again the Commissioners were challenged to produce specific examples of any harm being done to the service by this practice, and, as previously, they were unable to do so.

Finally, the Commissioners of Public Accounts alleged, in the sixteenth observation, that in the buying of provisions the Board had 'preferred' some persons before others, and that they had 'tied themselves to take naval provisions from some, excluding others'. Again they named Sir William Warren as being one who was preferred 'when more would have served, but rejected'.² As usual Pepys began by reading his prepared reply; in this he bemoaned the lack of competition in the mast trade, and said that until 1663 the Board had been forced to buy from either Wood or Taylor.³ The first contract with Warren was in September 1663 for prices between 10% and 20% lower than anything bought in the previous ten years. During 1664 Warren, Wood, and other merchants were invited

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.449.

² Pepys MS.2554.

³ Pepys MS.2554.

to tender for masts, and again it had been Warren who had offered the most competitive prices; Wood had apparently refused either to lower his prices or tender for a new contract until his existing stock of masts had been sold.¹ The Commissioners were unable to offer any further evidence of preferential contracts, and changed tactics by accusing the Board of having given preference in payment, and of passing two bills for the same masts to Warren. Pepys replied that the Board could more easily be censured for their delay in passing bills than for any preferential payments; he mentioned Warren's petition to the Duke of York asking for his account to be finished speedily.² The point relating to the payment of two bills for the same masts was answered by Brouncker, who showed that one bill was for part of the total cost and had been requested by the Commissioners, and that the second bill was for the full cost; when it had been signed the first bill had been cancelled.³ This ended the Commissioners' observations relating to the supply of materials, contracts, and payment of bills. The onus of proof still remained with the Commissioners and the defence put up by Pepys was sound and adequate.

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¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.488.

² Pepys MS.2554.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.489.

(ii)

RECRUITMENT AND PAYMENT OF OFFICERS AND SEAMEN

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries one of the most difficult problems facing naval administration was that of manning the fleet. This problem was shared between individual admirals, or commanders, and the Admiralty; the Navy Board was associated only indirectly. During the period under consideration, the division of responsibility between the Admiralty and the Navy Board was less clearly defined because of the existence of a single Lord High Admiral, and particularly because of the appointment of his secretary, William Coventry, as a Commissioner of the Navy. Thus, during the Restoration period, the Navy Board was more closely associated with the problem of manning than it was to be in the following century. The problem of manning only applied in the case of seamen; there was apparently no shortage of ships' commanders, lieutenants, midshipmen and warrant officers. These appointments were made by the Lord High Admiral, sometimes on recommendations from the Navy Board, but usually the appointment, promotion, or dismissal of such people was an Admiralty matter and only came to the attention of the Navy Board for the calculation of pay.

The main controversy of the Restoration period as far as ships officers (in the modern sense of 'officers') were concerned, was over the appointment of 'gentlemen' or 'tarpaulins' to commands at sea. This was the result of changing attitudes towards naval service and naval expansion which only became appreciated in the 1660s and 1670s. The usual charges were that the 'gentlemen' were ill-disciplined and lacked a knowledge of

seamanship; this is outside the scope of this thesis, and it is sufficient to note that the former charge was more frequently made against 'tarpaulins' and that, during the 1670s, attempts were made to improve the knowledge of the 'gentlemen' by instituting examinations for lieutenants.¹

There are several reasons for the difficulties experienced by successive naval administrations in obtaining seamen, the first of which was simply the fact that England did not possess a sufficient number of seamen. Although there are no accurate estimates to substantiate this fact, it was a commonly held contemporary opinion that the seafaring population could provide for the needs of either the King's fleet or the mercantile fleet, but not both.² As a result there was severe competition between the navy and the merchant shippers for the available men, and the attempts by the King and Privy Council to deal with this problem will be mentioned shortly. A second difficulty for the navy arose out of the more attractive nature of service in the merchant ships. In wartime, the dangers, low rates of pay, and, above all, the long delays in pay, made seamen most reluctant to serve the King. Thirdly, service with the navy did not guarantee employment in peacetime. For most of the seventeenth century the size of the fleet during peacetime only required around a thousand seamen, which meant that there was no reserve supply of seamen readily available, and when the needs of the service rapidly expanded, as they did in 1664/5 and 1671/2, the Admiralty and Navy Board were hard pushed to supply the fleet's requirements.

The naval administration endeavoured to counter these disadvantages by

¹ For further discussion of this question see Catalogue, I, 200-205; Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.140-41.

² Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, p.111, this opinion was expressed by Admiral Ayscue in January 1665, Diary, 15 January 1665.

pointing out the benefits of service with the King's ships; for example, there was the possibility of wealth through the capture of enemy ships and the distribution of prize goods. In 1653 the government had tried to induce men to volunteer by introducing a scheme which allotted to the seamen 10s. per ton, £6 13s 4d. for every gun carried, and £10 per gun for every warship destroyed.¹ This was repeated in the form of a royal proclamation, known as the 'King's Declaration for the Encouragement of Seamen and Mariners', which was issued and printed for distribution in October 1664.² The Declaration also allowed seamen the 'pillage' of merchandise 'upon or above the gun deck', which was a customary right. Although this was in theory only applicable when the prize had resisted, in March 1665 the Duke of York instructed the Prize Commissioners to give this allowance even when the ship had not resisted, because 'restraining' the seamen from an 'indulgence formerly given them would have a consequence too dangerous to be recompensed' by the value of the goods saved.³ It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which this form of inducement encouraged volunteers, in all probability some were persuaded by the hope of a rich reward, but it is likely that most seamen were also aware of the uncertainty, dangers, and long delays in payment which attended the inducement. The seamen's share of prize goods was not thought to be very high. In the 1680s Pepys was told by a captain of 'the ill-usage which sea-commanders had in the last wars upon the score of their prizes, neither themselves nor the seamen ... being better for them', and it was alleged that most of the profit went to the Prize Commissioners.⁴ The

¹ Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.309.

² PRO, PC2/57, f.262, 28 October 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.117r, 8 March 1665.

⁴ Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, pp.64-5.

Declaration of October 1664 also reminded seamen of some other advantages of service in the King's ships, namely, the obligation of the state to take care of its wounded, the payment of pensions to those wounded in the service, and a pension, or gratuity, paid to widows and orphans. On the same day, 28 October, the Commissioners for Sick and Wounded were established, and in February 1666 they were appointed to distribute gratuities to widows and orphans.¹

To judge by the complaints from commanders about the lack of seamen and the measures taken by the administration to secure men, these 'encouragements' were almost totally useless as incentives to recruitment. It was, therefore, necessary to introduce methods of compulsion in order to man the fleet. To achieve this the King and Privy Council were enlisted to issue proclamations and Orders in Council. One way in which the Privy Council could assist was by placing an embargo on sailings abroad, and this was first introduced on 28 October 1664.² But this also indicates the conflicting interests which vied with each other for seamen. The embargo order exempted the coastal traders, fishing boats and the East India ships then preparing for a voyage. Together these sources would have provided a large supply of men, but political considerations and the influence of the merchant community tended to reduce the effectiveness of the embargo, and as a total embargo would have probably resulted in a cessation of trade, the navy had to be content with half measures. Furthermore, as the navy relied on a large percentage of imported goods from the Baltic and North America, they too could not afford to demand a total embargo. This compromise was repeated at the outbreak of the Third

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.60, 28 October 1664; f.140, 21 February 1666. For the activities of the Commissioners of Sick and Wounded see Shaw, 'The Commissioners of Sick and Wounded and Prisoners', MM, XXV, 306-27, and Keevil, Medicine and the Navy, II.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.58, 28 October 1664.

Dutch War by an Order in Council of 22 March 1672.¹ The orders for embargoes also allowed the Lord High Admiral to issue passes, or exemptions, to individual ships. These were eagerly sought after and, although not given too easily, they helped to reduce the effectiveness of the embargo as a means of securing seamen for the navy.² Another means of making a supply of seamen available before actually getting them into the navy, was by issuing proclamations forbidding seamen to serve in foreign countries. In April 1661 the Attorney General was to draw up a proclamation forbidding seamen and mariners to 'take pay' with foreign princes, and the King's ships were authorised to search for and remove the King's 'natural born subjects' from foreign ships.³ This proclamation was not enforced at the time, but on 18 May 1664 an Order in Council was issued to enact it and also to command seamen in foreign service to return home.⁴ This type of proclamation was almost worthless as it was impossible to enforce. The practice of seamen serving abroad had been quite widespread and could not be prevented by proclamations.⁵

Proclamations were also used as a means of communications to inform seamen of the needs of the service and to try to draw men back to the fleet. Such was the case on 22 December 1665 when the Attorney General was ordered to draw up a proclamation ordering seamen to return to their ships by the following 1 February, and promising to pay wages due for past service. At the same time those who failed to return were threatened with

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.482, 22 March 1672.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.59, 28 October 1664.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.13, 5 April 1661.

⁴ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.49, 18 May 1664.

⁵ For the same difficulties in the 1680's see Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, p.115.

Courts martial.¹

Neither the inducements offered nor the proclamations and embargoes issued were sufficient in themselves to recruit seamen; what was needed in all periods of increased naval activity was some form of compulsion. This was applied by the method of the 'press'. The Privy Council, or the Lord High Admiral, sent instructions to Chartered Companies, especially to the Watermen, town corporations, Lord Lieutenants, their deputies, and the Vice-Admirals, requiring them to provide a certain number of seamen. The main burden of enforcing the press fell on the navy itself, through individual commanders, and the Admiralty. The rôle of the Navy Board was, for the most part, to transmit orders and communications relating to the press to the relevant quarters; they were not directly involved in the work itself. The use of the press was unpopular and controversial. As a system it was condemned as inefficient and corrupt, and the men it produced were criticised for being mutinous, physically unfit, prone to desert and, in most cases, completely lacking in experience of the sea. Despite this the press remained the standard means of obtaining large numbers of seamen in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries due to the absence of any other successful means of recruitment. Thus the press was used, in spite of all its faults, because there was no other practical alternative.

The size of the problem facing the navy can be appreciated when it is realised that, from an anticipated Summer Guard of 2,500 men ordered in October 1663, the estimated number of seamen rose continually during 1664 until on 21 December the Navy Board was preparing estimates for a fleet of 30,000 men.² The role played by the Privy Council in issuing

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.131, 22 December 1665.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.38, 9 October 1663.

orders to Lord Lieutenants, and in appointing members of the Council to communicate with the Vice-Admirals, has already been mentioned.¹ An example of the Council's action can be seen in a letter of 23 December 1664 to the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, ordering him to assist the Vice-Admiral in the pressing of 150 seamen from Somerset and 500 from Bristol.² In January 1665 the Committee of the Privy Council for the Admiralty and Navy advised that the Duke of York should be given instructions to press 1,000 men from the Watermen's Company.³ This was a potentially rich source of recruits, but the reluctance of the Company to assist, and the poor performance of the pressmaster, led to the Duke of Albemarle, acting in the Duke of York's absence, being given full powers to press watermen from the Thames.⁴ In 1666 the lack of assistance from the Warden of the Watermen's Company led to the Privy Council threatening to issue a writ of Quo Warranto against their Charter.⁵ The degree to which letters from the Privy Council were of assistance in manning the fleet can be doubted; the majority of the work fell on the naval administration, especially the Vice-Admirals and Admiralty officials. It was found difficult even to man a small squadron without the use of the press. On 4 June 1664 the Navy Board told the Duke of York 'of the necessity there is of a power to Presse seamen, without which we cannot really raise men for this fleet of twelve sail'.⁶ The first press order was issued on 7 June 1664, on the following day the

¹ *Supra.* pp.46-50.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.80, 23 December 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.86, 2 January 1665.

⁴ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.112, 28 April 1665.

⁵ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.167, 11 July 1666.

⁶ Diary, 4 June 1664.

King in Council ordered a letter to be prepared for his signature directing the Lord High Admiral to issue orders for impressing seamen.¹ The King's warrant was issued on 13 June, and from the 14th the Duke of York began to issue a series of press orders. A typical example was one sent to the Marshal of the Admiralty Court, William Jones, ordering him to impress 120 seamen and send them to Portsmouth.² The order contained the standard formula which was theoretically applied to the press, each man was to receive 1s 'press money' and 1d per mile 'conduct money', men were not to be pressed out of merchant ships on outward voyages, no 'standing officers' were to be pressed and the press master was not to take any gratuity, or reward, for releasing a pressed man. In theory at least each pressed man had to be given his press money, and for most of 1665 there were instructions for repayment of money disbursed for the purpose. But in 1666 this payment became one of the many casualties caused by the shortage of money. On 30 June 1666 Pepys discussed the press with the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Bludworth, commenting that, although those pressed were often 'persons wholly unfit for sea', they were 'without being impressed with money legally, as they ought to be', and the Lord Mayor 'had not money to pay the prest-money to the men...'.³ On 15 June a whole series of press orders were issued to ships' commanders, specifying the number of men to be pressed, which indicates that a large part of the burden of pressing fell upon the commanders when the fleet was being prepared. The orders allowed Poole to press 300 men for the London; Gilpen 150 for the Dreadnought; Teddiman 100 for the Revenge, and at the same time the Watermen's Company was to press 300 men, who were to be allotted to the same list of ships.⁴ Press warrants

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.51, 8 June 1664.

² PRO, Adm.2/1725, f.14Or, 14 June 1664.

³ Diary, 30 June 1666.

⁴ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.80, 15 June 1664.

were not just restricted to seamen, for Anthony Deane was also authorised to press 20 carpenters and 18 caulkers who were to be sent to Portsmouth.¹ In the following months the Lord High Admiral increased the use of press warrants; the mayor and bailiffs of Yarmouth, Ipswich, Harwich, Dartmouth and Weymouth were to provide a total of 450 men; in this case the press and conduct money was to be provided by the Navy Board.² In October a list of Vice-Admirals was prepared and they were issued with instructions for pressing men and sending them to various ports; in this way it was hoped to gather 4,500 men.³ This then was the usual method of supplying the fleet, but even as early as November 1664 the shortage of men was apparent. The Duke of York was at Portsmouth in November and reported that the fleet was nearly ready except for men.⁴ The methods used in 1664 to supply the fleet were not thought to have been successful, and on 14 December the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy were ordered to consider the best way of providing for the following year's fleet.⁵ The Committee advised that the Vice-Admirals should be responsible for supplying a quota of men and that, in cases of difficulty, they should consult with a member of the Privy Council. Beyond this, however, there were no new ideas presented to the Council for manning the fleet.⁶

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.82, 23 June 1664.

² PRO, Adm.2/1733, ff.93r,97, 1, 12 September 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.104, 1 October 1664.

⁴ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.113, 11 November 1664. An expedient also used to bring in men was an order from the Lord High Admiral that seamen imprisoned for debt should be sent to the fleet provided that their creditors would agree to half the men's pay being used to discharge the debt, PRO, Adm.2/1725, f.142r, 20 June 1664.

⁵ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.77, 14 December 1664.

⁶ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.80, 23 December 1664.

For the rest of the war, and also for the Third Dutch War, the press remained the usual method of manning the fleet. The Admiralty, the Duke of York, or the Duke of Albemarle in his absence, were constantly occupied with issuing instructions to press men. In May 1665 six merchant ships returned from the Mediterranean and Albemarle ordered the Navy Board to send someone to impress the men, and the Board, acting as the centre of communication, passed the order to the Deputy Marshal of the Admiralty Court.¹ The number of complaints about the shortage of seamen for the fleet under the Duke of York, and then Sandwich, was not particularly high during 1665. When the season for naval activity was over the press could be suspended and this was done in October 1665.² But this respite did not last long, for in December 1665 the Privy Council issued a proclamation for seamen to return to the fleet in the following February.³ Letters were sent in February to the Lord Lieutenants urging them to assist the Vice-Admirals by ordering the constables to draw up lists of seamen who had previously served, and to arrest those failing to return to the fleet.⁴ This approach of persuasion and threat was tried widely in February 1666 when a notice was distributed stating that, when the men returned and the ships were paid, they would be paid for any 'former' service; but there was no indication of when this pay would take place.⁵ A stronger note was sounded at the beginning of May 1666, when another notice was published saying that pursers and others, who had not returned by 9 May would be discharged and lose any pay due to them.⁶ But again, in 1666, the major part of the work fell on the

¹ PRO, Adm.106/10, f.482, 29 May 1665.

² PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.55, 30 October 1665.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.131, 22 December 1665.

⁴ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.135, 8 February 1666.

⁵ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.54r, 10 February 1666.

⁶ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.53, 5 May 1666.

press system. The use of the press was regarded as 'a great tyranny' by Pepys, who had watched 'patient labouring men and housekeepers ... taken up on a sudden by strangers ... and that without press money, but forced against all law to be gone'.¹

The difficulty of manning the fleet could not be solved by issuing orders from the Privy Council. The reluctance of the Chartered Companies and town corporations, together with the failings of the press masters, led to several complaints from Rupert and Albemarle, the joint commanders in 1666. The Watermen's Company was threatened with proceedings against its Charter and the Admiralty began to issue press warrants directly for the impressing of watermen.² On 14 June 1666 the joint commanders wrote to the Bailiffs of Yarmouth repeating their need for men. They complained that 'you have hitherto been so remiss in complying with the desires we sent you before', and threatened to report them for their 'neglect to the King's Council'.³ The commanders also wrote letters to the mayors and bailiffs of Ipswich, Harwich, Canterbury, Dover, Aldburgh, Plymouth, Falmouth, and several other coastal towns, asking them to search for seamen and to use their 'utmost diligence' in this.⁴ It was usual to use some of the smaller ships to search for seamen in the Channel, the Irish Sea, and as far north as Hull. An example of the lengths to which the commanders went to procure seamen is illustrated in their letter to the captain of the Colchester; he was instructed to ply the Channel between Dover and Calais, and to take all the able seamen he could out of the privateers which were operating from Dover. He was, however, not to 'meddle' with them while they were ashore and was to 'keep our Instructions privily till you have obeyed them'.⁵ The Lilly was sent along

¹ Diary, 1 July 1666.

² PRO, Adm.106/13, f.26, 19 May 1666.

³ NMM, DAR 3, f.44, 14 June 1666.

⁴ NMM, DAR 3, ff.43-9, June 1666.

⁵ NMM, DAR 3, f.51, 27 June 1666.

the Kent coast to press men, and local officials were instructed to send men to her.¹ The extensive use of the press led to many complaints of abuse; the joint commanders recognised this but were 'at loss for the present' to prevent it and were prepared to punish offenders where necessary. It would appear that they were not too concerned by this, for they thought it 'impossible to prevent all the irregularities that will attend such an irregular impress as is now abroad, and tho' we have reason to be disturbed at any, yet we have some reason of content it hath produced us some seamen more than ordinary'.²

Although the 'press' was the only practical method of obtaining sufficient men, its effectiveness was reduced by the large number of 'protections' granted, which exempted whole ships and, more usually, a certain number of men, from the press, and also by the quality of the men it produced. Protections were given to the King's, the Duke of York's, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's barge crews, as well as to vessels employed by the Ordnance, Victualler and Commissioners of Sick and Wounded. More important, however, was the protection given to ships employed in coastal trade, and in September 1664 over 50 fishing vessels were protected, from March to May 1665 over 200 colliers were allowed to bring coal from Newcastle to London.³ The usual practice was for these ships to be allowed a master and a specific number of men and boys. The whole system was open to abuse, as Pepys discovered in 1667 when he was told of colliers with protections for 4 or 5 men actually carrying 16-20 men. They would leave the extra men at Aldeburgh, or another Suffolk port, to avoid the press, and collect them on the voyage north.⁴ Even allowing for exaggeration and the fact that every collier would not do

¹ NMM, DAR 3, f.57, 6 July 1666.

² NMM, DAR 3, f.65, 5 July 1666.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1733, ff.101,159-61, September 1664; March-May 1665.

⁴ Pepys MS.2581, f.108.

this, it can be seen that many experienced seamen were being lost to the service. Conversely, it should be mentioned that the pressmasters did not always pay attention to the protections, and this was especially true in 1666. Pepys noted that the press was taking up men from 'out of victualling ships ... out of the vessels of the Officers of the Ordnance' and that even the Navy Board's own messengers and boatmen were not safe.¹ The effect of the press was such that in London he could 'see many women nowadays of mean sort in the streets, but no men; men being so afeared of the press'.²

The activities of the pressmasters left much to be desired, but the needs of the service were so great that little was done to restrain them. The main problem was the lack of sufficient control over them, and although regulations existed, failure in this, as in many other areas of naval administration, resulted from the absence of discipline and supervision over the pressmasters. In fairness to the authorities it must be stated that when complaints against a press officer were substantiated he was dismissed; for example, in May 1666 Albemarle wrote ordering that a Lieutenant Edwards should be relieved of his post because of complaints of 'several Abuses' by him in the 'impressing of seamen'.³ Another abuse frequently committed by the pressmasters was to release men in return for payment; this was prohibited by every press warrant and when the master of the Sophia was discovered doing it he too was dismissed.⁴

One of the navy's most common complaints about the press was that the men brought in were either unfit or inexperienced, and were therefore

¹ Diary, 30 June 1666.

² Diary, 6 July 1666.

³ PRO, SP29/157, f.20, 26 May 1666.

⁴ Pepys MS.2581, f.106.

of little use at sea. There are several unflattering descriptions of the pressed men; they were described as being 'fitter to keep sheep than to sail in such great ships', or 'fit for nothing but to fill the ships full of vermin'.¹ In 1666 Commissioner Middleton told of 'lame' persons being sent to the fleet. The town corporations and the Watermen's Company were the worst offenders in sending useless men.² Both Rupert and Albemarle complained of 'very bad men' and of men who were 'not useful'.³ The complaints about pressed men being unfit probably referred to only a small proportion, but it was the extreme cases which caused comment; it was more commonly found that the men had no previous experience of the sea, which could be extremely dangerous if a ship was manned with a high percentage of inexperienced men.

Another method used to meet the requirements of the fleet was the use of soldiers and this led to the formation of marine regiments. On 28 October 1664 an Order in Council was issued for the raising of 1,200 'land soldiers', who were to be organised in companies for service with the fleet.⁴ In July 1666 Rupert and Albemarle reported that 'no frigate hath less than 30 soldiers in them'.⁵

It was not the end of the problem once the fleet had been provided with sufficient seamen as replacements were needed constantly for men killed and wounded, for those who fell sick, especially from the plague, and for the large number of desertions from the pressed men. The sick and wounded were cared for, albeit in a rudimentary manner, by the Commissioners

¹ CSPD 1664-5, pp.38, 100.

² Catalogue, I, 121-2.

³ NMM, DAR 3, ff.9,31, 5 April, 5 May 1666.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.77, 28 October 1664.

⁵ NMM, DAR 3, f.56, 5 July 1666.

appointed for that purpose. The problem of desertion, however, came more directly under the control of naval administration, and in tackling it, as in the initial procuring of seamen, the authority of the Privy Council was invoked to issue proclamations against desertion. The first of these was ordered at a Council meeting on 16 November 1664, and the Attorney General was also directed to prepare commissions of Oyer and Terminer to arrange for the trial of deserters.¹ This arose from a complaint and recommendation from the Duke of York at Portsmouth; he had been told of over 200 men running away in five days and that if it continued the pressing of seamen would be of little effect 'other than the expending of the King's treasure'.² In December 1664 the Attorney General was ordered to discuss the question of prosecuting deserters with the judges then in London.³ Later in the war the Privy Council issued orders to the Lord Lieutenants in the south-east and south Midlands to search for seamen working as labourers and to take deserters into 'strict custody'.⁴

Desertion became evident as soon as it had become necessary to force men to serve in the fleet; as early as July 1664, less than a month after the press had been introduced, the first of several orders was issued for the apprehension and imprisonment of deserters. On 8 July 1664 the Marshal of the High Court of Admiralty was informed that, of the 120 men pressed by him and sent to Portsmouth, only 65 had reported and he was to apprehend the others.⁵ This highlighted the lack of supervision which appears to

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.71, 16 November 1664.

² PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.113, 11 November 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.77, 14 December 1664.

⁴ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.161, 27 June 1666.

⁵ PRO, Adm.2/1725, f.144r, 8 July 1664.

have attended the transporting of pressed men to the fleet. This neglect was redeemed in 1665 when pressmasters were appointed and ships' press gangs were used more frequently; the Vice-Admirals were also to appoint a 'conductor' to bring the pressed men to the fleet or to a specified port.¹

Clearly the place to stop desertions was at the ships themselves. This would not present a problem when the fleet was at sea, but as so much time was spent in harbour or close to shore during the fitting and victualling of the ships, there was ample opportunity for desertion. This fact was appreciated by the Duke of York; in December 1664 he wrote to Rupert, Sandwich and Lawson saying that the practice of carrying men of one ship in another ship's boats provided opportunities for desertion, they were to prevent this by ordering that boats should not carry men from other ships.² Another order followed in February 1665 directing ships' commanders to take special care when in port not to let their men go ashore, as this often led to desertion.³ The need for this type of order is in itself a useful indication of the unattractive nature of naval service. In 1666 it was proposed that port officials at ferries and bridges near the Medway should keep two ketches near the fleet in order to search passing boats for deserters.⁴ But these measures to keep men on the ships had little effect, for as soon as the fleet returned to the coast desertion became rife. Sir John Banks told Pepys of passing '3 or 400 seamen, and he believes every day they come flocking from the fleet in like numbers'.⁵ By the end of 1666 seamen leaving the fleet had

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.82, 23 December 1664.

² PRO, Adm.2/1725, f.158r, 1 December 1664.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.151r, 21 February 1665.

⁴ NMM, DAR 3, f.39, 7 June 1666.

⁵ Diary, 11 June 1666.

reached such a proportion that it was doubted if a small squadron could be put to sea. Coventry suggested it should be threatened that those who had left and did not return would be classed as 'runs', and thereby lose their arrears of pay. This would seem to indicate that there was a reluctance to serve even amongst the volunteers who were not automatically classed as deserters if they left the ships for a short period.¹ The Navy Board was informed that on some ships over half the crew had left; for example, the Leopard had 165 entered on her books but a muster revealed only 80 present, and the Yarmouth could only muster 70 out of a crew of 180.² The basic reason for these mass desertions was the failure of the navy to pay its men, but despite this and the adverse conditions of service in the navy, it would appear that the English fleets of 1665, 1666 and 1672 were all tolerably well manned. The difficulties of the administration in providing men were indeed severe, but a comparison with the manning problems of 1739/40, as outlined by D. Baugh in his British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, would suggest that the problem was dealt with in a more satisfactory manner in the Restoration period.³

The difficulties in manning fleets were not always limited to wartime; in 1669 similar difficulties were encountered in obtaining men for the squadron being prepared for the Mediterranean under Sir Thomas Allin. Delays in sending the squadron out were partly due to the Victualler, but there was also the need for 300-400 men 'which cannot be supplied while we make a scruple about pressing'. The unwillingness of men to volunteer was attributed to poor treatment in the past, especially the

¹ Coventry MS.95, f.269, 3 November 1666.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.117r, 9 November 1666.

³ Baugh, Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, chapter 4.

'ill payment of wages', keeping men for long periods in the King's service and not allowing them to visit their families.¹ Many men had been so soured by their treatment that they were not prepared to enter the King's service again, and so strong was their reluctance that some men were prepared to lose up to £7 in back pay rather than serve again. Manning this type of squadron also depended on the reputation of individual commanders; Pepys was told that Hayward of the Foresight had manned his ship completely and was turning away volunteers, but, also in the Thames, Beach of the Jersey was still unmanned and was trying to 'press' men everywhere; he kept 'sentinels' on the ship with 'drawn cutlass to prevent desertion'.² In May 1669 the Board discussed the use of the press with the Lord High Admiral and admitted that in the last war the press had been used with 'such disorder and charge', and that it had been made worse by captains using their under-officers to conduct the press. This had resulted in indiscriminate pressing; 'where 40 is wanting it may be 80 are pressed', and those discharged would have to be paid their press money; this was an unnecessary cost as well as a great inconvenience to the men.³

Further abuses in the system included pressing men already entered on other ships, not paying press money to men pressed from merchant ships at sea, the under-officers claiming to have paid press money, which in fact they had retained for themselves, and harsh treatment by commanders.⁴

The connection between the manning problem, the use of the press and bad payment of wages is brought out very clearly in a letter from Pepys to Sandwich in November 1665. He tells of men refusing to work and of their

¹ Pepys MS.2581, ff.222-5.

² Pepys MS.2581, ff.206-7.

³ Pepys MS.2581, ff.175-7.

⁴ Pepys MS.2581, ff.197-8.

refusal to go into other ships 'till they are paid for their service in their present ships', and even though there was work to do there was a reluctance to use the press 'while we have so many idle in wages and victuals'.¹ The relationship between the Navy Board and the manning problem was indirect, but the Board came into its own so far as the number of men, rates of pay, and supervision of pays were concerned.²

J. R. Tanner blames the deficiencies of men at sea and in the dockyards 'mainly, if not entirely, due to the scandalous failures of the administration in the matter of pay'.³ This is largely correct but some qualification is necessary. In the first place the shortage of men was in no way confined to the Restoration period; the study of the 1690s by Ehrman, and of 1730-40 by Baugh, reveals the same problem. Secondly, as has been shown, the problem of lack of money was not caused by naval administration. It was due to the failure of the financial system of the period if the seamen were not paid regularly. The Navy Board were aware of the effects of the lack of money and informed the Lord High Admiral. If the Board itself was guilty of anything it was in not applying the funds at its disposal to paying the seamen, but if this had been done the other requirements of the fleet, i.e. the provision of materials, stores and victuals, would not have been met.

The question of the number of officers and seamen to be carried on each ship was decided by the Lord High Admiral in consultation with senior flag officers and the Navy Board. The method used in the first half of

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.287, 11 November 1665.

² In the introduction to the Sergison Papers, Merriman states that 'the manning of the Fleet and the payment of seamen were the direct responsibility of the Navy Board', p.164. I would consider that 'manning' was an Admiralty responsibility while 'payment' certainly rested with the Navy Board.

³ Catalogue, I, 117.

the seventeenth century was to calculate the number of men by the tonnage of the ship, one man to every four tons for ships between 40 and 400 tons, and one to every three tons for larger ships. This method was replaced in 1672 by calculations based on the number and size of the guns, with an additional allowance for handling the sails.¹ It was always the practice to have a lower complement in peacetime, but this would be increased at the outbreak of war. In certain lists a third figure was given for ships on a war footing but in service abroad.² In the 1660s it had become more common to calculate the number of men by the size and number of guns. In April 1663 it was decided to reduce expense by cutting back on the number of men carried in peacetime. The Navy Board was to consider an adequate complement for each ship 'to save the King's treasure, but not to endanger the running of the ship'.³ As a result a new establishment was issued in October 1663 which had the effect of reducing the guns by about 25% and the crew by 15%-20%.⁴ Just over a year later the approach of the Dutch War led to complements being increased to a wartime level.⁵ Later in the 1660s there was a tendency to increase the number and size of the guns carried, which led to a corresponding increase in the number of men.⁶ The lists for men and guns represent the theoretical numbers, but in practice these varied considerably. In 1666 the joint commanders informed the Navy Board of additional men being allowed to the flagships; the Monck and Fairfax were also to have an extra 20 men.⁷ Additional men carried above the official complement were

¹ Catalogue, I, 238-9.

² Catalogue, I, 266-95.

³ PRO, Adm.106/8, f.116, 22 August 1663.

⁴ BM, Sloane MS.2032, f.13, 17 October 1663.

⁵ BM, Add.MS.9,302, f.181, 17 November 1664.

⁶ Catalogue, I, 237-8

⁷ NMM, DAR 3, f.36, 22 May 1666.

referred to as 'supernumeraries'; their presence often caused confusion in muster and pay books and in calculations for the supply of victuals, and the practice of carrying them was often a cause for complaint against the commander by the administration. The advantage of having extra men to replace those killed or injured, to provide boarding parties, to man prizes, and to assist in bad conditions, was well known, but the practice was open to abuse and had to be sanctioned by the Lord High Admiral.

In 1661 the Duke of York attempted to deter the practice by ordering that, henceforward any additional men would be paid out of the commander's pay, and that this would be held until the ship was paid off.¹ This particular order was the result of the discovery of 22 supernumeraries entered on the Henrietta by Holmes, and the Duke was unwilling to make the men suffer because of Holmes's action.

During the war the number of supernumeraries with the fleet distorted all calculations and the practice was described as a 'great abuse'. It was also something of a contradiction to allow additional seamen on certain ships when the fleet was short of men. In February 1666 the Duke of York blamed the commanders for being negligent about this, but he did recognise that much of the problem arose from the failings of the pursers, who kept sick men on their books after they had been sent ashore.² In order to reduce this practice, the Duke issued instructions to all commanders ordering them not to add more men to the ships and to make certain that, when sick men were sent ashore, their names were removed from the ships' books. These instructions were printed and distributed throughout the fleet.³ It is difficult to ascertain the effect of these orders, but supernumeraries were still carried, and in some

¹ PRO, Adm.106/5, f.323, 10 September 1661.

² PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.134, 20 February 1666.

³ BM, Egerton MS.928, f.10, 10 May 1666.

cases the joint commanders ordered that they should be allowed on the ships books.¹

After the war the question of supernumeraries was still reserved for the Lord High Admiral's personal direction; in February 1668 the Duke of York ordered that the existing rules relating to them should still be enforced and anything not covered by the rules should be referred to him.² Thereafter he allowed supernumeraries to be carried on certain ships, usually because of the length or hazardous nature of the voyage to be undertaken.³ It would appear that some objections to the payment of supernumeraries had probably been raised by the Treasury Commissioners, as on 18 September 1668 the King in Council passed an order confirming the instructions laid down in May 1666 and authorising the Lord High Admiral to sanction such payments.⁴ The carrying of supernumeraries was effectively regulated by the late 1660s, and thereafter it became less common and less dependent on permission from the Lord High Admiral.

Once the number of men to be carried on the fleet had been laid down, the calculation of pay and the checking of the rating and muster books against the sea books was the responsibility of the Navy Board and its clerks. The 'rates', or scales of pay, for officers and seamen had risen during the first half of the century, and in 1653 Parliament accepted new rates of pay which were to remain in force for the rest of the century. The monthly scales of pay for the officers, standing officers and their mates, and the more skilled workmen, depended on the rate of the ship concerned; for example, the captain of a first-rate was paid £21 per month, compared

¹ NMM, DAR 3, ff.79,86, 17 August 1666, 27 August 1666; PRO, Adm.106/13, f.297, 20 July 1666, f.453, 3 October 1666.

² PRO, Adm.106/15, f.312, 7 February 1668.

³ PRO, Adm.106/16, f.269, 6 July 1668; Adm.106/17, f.252, 8 December 1668.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.343, 18 September 1668.

with £16 16s. Od. for the captain of a second-rate and £7 per month for the captain of a sixth-rate.¹ One noticeable feature of the scales is the considerable discrepancy between the captain and the other officers; on a first-rate the captain received £21, whilst the masters received £7, the lieutenants £4. 4s Od., and the purser, boatswain, gunners and carpenters £4 each. In addition to the standing officers were the 'mates' (the gunners, cook, carpenters, quartermaster etc.) and several skilled or specialist workmen (the armourer, yeomen of the powder, gunsmiths etc.), who were also paid on scales which related to the rate of the ship. The seamen, however, were paid at the same rate irrespective of their ship's rating; these rates ranged from £1.4s Od. per month for an able seaman to 19s. Od. for an ordinary seaman, and 9s. 6d. for boys. These monthly rates of pay applied to men and officers when the ship was taken into 'sea pay', that is, when she was virtually ready for action, but there was also a separate scale for rigging and harbour wages. Harbour wages were on a lower scale, often less than half the rates for active service, and were paid to the small number of men kept on the ships while they were laid up in winter or between active service. The scales depended on the rate of the ship and applied only to the standing officers and a few 'common men'.² On a first-rate the master received £3. 1s. 5d., the boatswain £2. 2s Od., and the purser, gunner and carpenter £1.6s. 8d.; the common men were paid 15s. Od. The scales for rigging wages, that is, when the ship was being prepared for sea, were more generous. In 1663 it was decided to pay captains and lieutenants from the date of their commissions and not, as had been the practice in the 1630s, from the date of the ship's entry into 'sea pay'.³ This had

¹ These scales are printed in Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.360; Catalogue, I, 150; Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.137-8.

² Pepys MS.488, not foliated.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.85r, 13 January 1663.

not proved to be an encouragement to captains to attend to their duty, 'it hath rather been an inducement to some of them to neglect the dispatch of the ships committed to their care'. To prevent this, in 1665 the Duke of York ordered that only one month's pay was to be given to commanders and lieutenants before the ships entered sea pay.¹ While the ship was rigging, the master was to have two-thirds of his full pay, but the other standing officers and able seamen were to have full pay.²

As far as the basic rates of pay were concerned the Restoration period saw no change, and these rates, particularly for seamen, became more unattractive in wartime when compared with the pay offered on merchant ships. It was said that the colliers would pay between £8 and £9 for an able seaman for one voyage 'which is as much as seven month's pay in the King's ships and may be performed in a month, and no limbs hazarded, the security against being pressed being added'.³ At the higher end of the service, however, improvements were introduced to make the navy a more attractive career. On 26 February 1666 an Order in Council was passed to increase the pay of flag officers; a Vice-Admiral was to receive £2.10s. Od. per day, a Rear Admiral £2.0s. Od., and the Vice and Rear Admirals of squadrons would be paid £1.10s. Od. and £1.0s. Od. respectively.⁴ Flag officers also received a small advantage for they were to be kept on full pay until a later date than the other commanders. In 1667 it was decided that all captains should be paid until 24 August, but by individual orders from the Lord High Admiral several flag officers were kept on until October 1667.⁵ This practice of paying off the majority.

¹ Duke of York, Memoirs of English Affairs, p.128.

² Pepys MS.488, not foliated.

³ PRO, SP29/121, f.128, 22 May 1665.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.175, 26 September 1666.

⁵ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.233, 27 September 1667; Adm.2/1745, ff.170r,171,177, 30 November, 3, 7, December 1667, Jordan, Holmes, Spragge, and Teddeman were paid until 10, 14, 15, 31 October respectively.

of the fleet in peacetime was an obvious economy, but it also revealed one of the main disadvantages of naval service, namely, the possibility of long periods of unemployment. In 1668 the first moves were made to introduce a system to make provision for naval officers while they were not employed at sea. By an Order in Council of 17 July 1668, a pension was to be paid to flag officers for that period when they were not in full pay. This was done on the recommendation of the Committee of the Privy Council for the Admiralty and Navy which enjoyed a revival in 1668.¹ The Order laid down a pension of £250 for Vice and Rear Admirals of the fleet, £200 for Vice-Admirals of squadrons, and £150 to Rear Admirals of squadrons and captains of the Admiral's ships; the cost of these pensions was borne by reducing the summer guard by 'one frigate'. On the 6 July the Duke of York had supported this proposal in a heated debate at the Committee.² But this was only the start of providing support for unemployed officers; it was extended in 1674 and 1675 to include captains of first and second-rates, commanders of smaller squadrons, and masters of the first two rates.³ These benefits clearly only assisted the service officers of the fleet, but in 1672 an Order in Council was issued on the advice of the Duke of York, which granted a pension to the warrant officers, who 'by age be rendered incapable of performing their duty'. They were to receive a pension equivalent to their full salary and known allowances, providing, in the case of boatswains, pursers, carpenters and gunners, they had served for 15 years, or 8 years in the case of those whose service was not constant, such as masters and surgeons.⁴

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.332, 17 July 1668.

² Diary, 6 July 1668.

³ Catalogue, I, 146-7.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.570, 6 December 1672.

These improvements in the conditions of service were an important advance but they did not reach the largest number of persons employed with the fleet. It was the seamen who suffered most from the conditions in the service and from delays in pay. The plight, frustration and anger of the seamen has been described by several writers, some using the descriptions provided in Pepys's Diary.¹ From Pepys we hear of 'poor seamen that lie starving in the streets for lack of money'; they were 'cursing, some swearing, and some praying to us'. On 4 November 1665 the crew of the Breda was outside the Navy Board's temporary office at Greenwich 'swearing below and cursing us and breaking the glass windows; and swear they will pull the house down on Tuesday next. I sent word of this to Court, but nothing will help it but money and a rope'.² The seamen's usual reaction to delays in pay was to leave their ships and go to London, either to the Navy Office or the Navy Treasury, and on several occasions there was the danger of riots and mutiny.³ So serious were these riots that the Navy Board did not feel safe behind the office wall and gates; in November 1665 Pepys told Sandwich of getting a 'troop of horse' to 'secure us in our office'.⁴ In 1666 a request was sent to the Ordnance Office for firelocks, powder and bullets 'for defence and securitie of the Navy Office', and in January 1667 the 'Guards of horse' were on the streets to contain mutinous seamen.⁵ The cause of these disturbances was due to the fact that the seamen had not been paid for some considerable time, and

¹ Ogg, England in the Reign of Charles II, II, 447; Bryant, Pepys, Man in the Making, p.277; Rogers, Dutch in the Medway, pp.48-9; Tedder, Navy of the Restoration, pp.63-4, 183-4.

² Diary, 7 October, 4 November 1665.

³ Diary, 19 October, 5 November 1666, 2 January 1667.

⁴ Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, p.78.

⁵ HMC, Hodgkin MS. p.167; Diary, 23 January 1667.

that many had been discharged by 'ticket', which had led to widespread abuse and the defrauding of seamen. In England there was no complaint about the rates of pay; they were higher than those paid in the Dutch service, but Dutch pay was 'certain' and therefore better for the seamen and his family.¹

The abuse of retaining the money due to seamen for many months, perhaps in some cases running into two or three years, became widespread during the mid-1660s, but again this grievance against 'long arrears of pay' was not limited to the service during the Restoration period. One of the first difficulties facing the restored government in 1660 was to pay off the wages due for service in the last years of the Commonwealth. In August 1660 it was estimated that over £300,000 was due in wages to seamen and officers.² Most of the work was conducted by the Parliamentary Commissioners for Disbanding the Army and Paying off the Fleet. The Navy Board provided them with a list of some of the ships in September 1660 together with information about the length of time for which they had been unpaid prior to April 1660.³ This list showed that the Griffin had been unpaid for 59 months, the Sorlings for 46 months, the Oxford for 45 months, the Hector and Nightingale for 40 months, and the Rosebud, for 7 months. The same problem existed in the 1690s; in 1694 over £1,120,000 was owed in arrears of wages and in 1695 mutinies occurred over wages.⁴ This abuse was certainly appreciated by members of the Navy Board and in his Discourse of the Navy, Slingsby talked of the 'present confusion' in the

¹ Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.86.

² BM, Add.MS.9,302, f.115, 21 August 1660.

³ BM, Add.MS.9,302, f.117, 17 September 1660.

⁴ Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.486, 584-5.

Navy Office saying that, 'the great cause of all is the great arrear of pay still due to the seamen'. He recognised that this was a running sore because the longer the men were in pay and performing no useful service, the greater the eventual cost of paying them off, and, at the same time, they were also consuming victuals.¹

The problem of arrears of pay could not be avoided when ships were on long voyages overseas. The men themselves were fed and clothed after a fashion on their ships, but no provision was made for their families at home. The complaints arose when the ships returned to port and the men were either dismissed with tickets or kept on board because of the lack of money to discharge them. After the Restoration the arrears for before 1660 were dealt with by the Parliamentary Commissioners, who did not begin their payments until February 1661, and as a result the seamen were 'highly incensed' against them.² Thereafter the Navy Board was responsible for paying ships and there are several mentions of some of the Board going to the various yards to supervise pays.³ There was little cause for complaint in peacetime as the small number of ships in service could be paid quite quickly; for example, on 17 May 1662 the Duke of York ordered that the Dartmouth and three smaller ships were to be unrigged and paid off, and her crew was paid at Deptford in September 1662.⁴ The situation inevitably deteriorated during the Dutch Wars; it was not so much that men were kept waiting longer for their pay than in 1660/1, but that there were many more ships with one or two years' wages due. It was the extent rather than the extremes which made this such a grievance in 1666/7. The following are examples of the long

¹ Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses, p.345.

² Diary, 27 February 1661.

³ Supra. pp.151, 227, 256.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/6, f.435, 17 May 1662; Adm.20/3, f.330, 9 September 1662.

delays which were experienced; the Oxford was 22 months in arrears in April 1667; the crews of the Little Victory and Pearl 'mutinied for pay', having been unpaid for 26 and 34 months.¹ Eventually the Government was forced to discharge the seamen without pay, even though this was regarded as an unprecedented and drastic measure.² The situation had become so serious by June 1667 that an Order in Council was issued on 25 June.³ Following this the members of the Navy Board were ordered to meet once a week in order to examine and give 'redress upon such complaints' about 'abuses' of 'miscarriages' in the payment of tickets.⁴ But it was not until money began to flow into the Treasury that it was possible to pay off the seamen, and this was done gradually during 1667 and 1668. The main cause of this abuse was the lack of money; in 1671 the same problem recurred with Pepys noting that there were many ships 'and great ones too' lying in the Thames and in the Downs 'for no other reason but want of money to pay them off, some lying in that condition (I very well remember) a longer time in victuals, wages, wear and tear than the time they had been abroad doing his Majesty's service'.⁵ There is no doubt that this abuse was one of the worst features of naval administration and that it was a constant discouragement to seamen.

The long arrears of pay and the fraudulent operation of the ticket system were the main discouragements facing the seamen, but there were several

¹ CSPD 1667, pp.46, 75.

² CSPD 1667-8, p.xvi.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.228, 25 June 1667. A committee consisting of the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, Albemarle, Anglesey, Lauderdale, Ashley, Arlington, Carteret, Berkeley, Coventry and Duncombe was to hear complaints

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.240, 14 August 1667.

⁵ Pepys MS.2581, f.262. This too had been practiced during the Commonwealth, Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses, p.137 n1.

other practices which could be just as objectionable. One such factor was the method used by the administration to discharge those who had been in service for the shortest time at the first opportunity. This was to allow the limited money available to be spread over as many ships as possible. It was not strictly an abuse but it was certainly unfair and a cause of grievance for those who had been in service for some time. The administrators were aware of this and often fully sympathised with the seamen but they did nothing to alter it; Pepys saw it as 'an unreasonable hardship' used because the 'least sum clears the most men'.¹ Another factor, which had been ordered by Albemarle in September 1665, was the practice of paying off the hired ships before the rest; this was in itself sensible because there was no need for these ships to be kept in pay, victuals and hire charges throughout the winter. The Navy Board replied by reminding him of the 'conditions of the poor seamen (whose families in these sickly times do call for double charity in the hastening their pay)' and also of the 'great' charge of the rest of the men, which was estimated at £1,850 per day for wages and victuals.² Another disadvantage so far as the seamen were concerned, was the practice of holding back part of their pay to encourage them to return to the service the following year. This was described as a 'new practised way of detaining three, four, or five months' wages in the State's hands to secure the party to their service' when it was used during the Commonwealth.³ This practice does not appear to have had the desired effect because of the slow payments and bad conditions of service in the Second Dutch War; Pepys noted examples of men giving up £7 in back pay, and of there being £700 left unpaid to men 'who had chosen rather to forfeit the

¹ Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.66.

² Coventry MS.96, f.107, 20 September 1665.

³ Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses, p.128 and n1

money, being £4, 5, or £6 a man, than to save it by returning to their ship'.¹ The seamen also suffered through the frauds practised by the pursers and commanders, and by the clerks at the Ticket Office and Navy Treasury. The purser was well known throughout the service for his underhand dealings; many of these related to issuing short or bad victuals, withholding wood and candles, giving short allowances of money, and for retaining men on his books who were dead or sent ashore or who had deserted. These practices made life more uncomfortable for the seamen but they did not affect their pay unless the pursers had, through ignorance or malice, rated them lower, or for a shorter period, than was the case. The purser was also known to buy up seamen's tickets in return for giving them extra victuals, clothes, or tobacco, but most of these frauds could not be easily detected by the Navy Board.² In 1669 Pepys was told by a flag officer, Sir Edward Spragg, of an abuse commonly practised by commanders, including himself, which was to enter dead seamen as discharged. This was done, allegedly, to allow the man's relations to claim his pay at the end of the voyage; in practice, however, the relations had difficulty either in knowing about the man's death or whether he had been given a ticket for past service. The commanders would often retain such tickets and obtain payment themselves regarding it as a 'windfall'.³ A similar fraud was practised by commanders over men who had 'run' from their ships. In one such case, that of Sir William Jennings, it was alleged that he had beaten a seaman until he 'ran' and

¹ Pepys MS.2581, ff.222, 236.

² For complaints against the pursers in the 1650's, see Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.356 and Tanner (ed), Holland's Discourses, pp.128-31, 163. Pepys investigated the pursers affairs and concluded that the purser 'without professed cheating, is a professed loser, twice as much as he gets', Diary, 22 November 1665. His conclusions were sent in a long letter to Coventry on 1 January 1666 and he thought that most of the frauds practiced by the pursers were at the expense of the King's treasure rather than the seamen, Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, pp.93-111.

³ Pepys MS.2581, f.227.

then obtained payment of the man's ticket to himself because of a 'pretended wrong the fellow had done him'. Pepys thought that it was from this 'fund' that commanders were able to 'live and spend after the rate they do, beyond what their known wages and allowances can maintain them in'.¹ How widespread these abuses were is impossible to ascertain, but their existence again reveals the weak position of the seamen.

The second major feature of naval administration over the question of pay was in the extensive use of the 'ticket' system. The use of the 'ticket' became widespread in the early seventeenth century and remained a feature, and abuse, of naval administration until it was abolished in 1825.² During the Restoration period there was considerable reluctance about using tickets, but the financial situation and the lack of an acceptable alternative left the naval administration with little choice. The use of 'tickets' was not considered to be an abuse, but the wholesale discharging of the fleet in 1666/7 without pay was regarded as a 'miscarriage', and as such was investigated by the Parliamentary Commissioners for Miscarriages and the Commissioners of Public Accounts. The whole question of 'tickets', the rules governing their use, the criticisms of the system and the defence offered by the Navy Board can now be examined.

The ticket was a note, or certificate, signed by the purser and commanders, which stated the quality of the seaman's rate and the length of time he had served. The ticket would be signed by the Clerks of the Cheque when men were discharged in the dockyards and would be presented for payment at the Navy Treasury in London. To prevent fraud the ship's sea books and muster books would be compared with the ticket, which had

¹ Pepys MS.2581, f.227.

² Lewis, Navy of Britain, p.185.

to be signed by a member of the Navy Board before it was eventually paid. To reduce the possibility of counterfeit tickets it became necessary to use printed forms with a counterfoil which could then be compared with the ticket. The system of issuing tickets had been introduced to avoid sending money with each ship or to the several ports and dockyards where ships were discharged. A draft letter intended for the Commissioners of Miscarriages contained a list of the occasions when tickets could be issued; these were for dead or wounded men, for unsuitable pressed men, for the transference of men to another warship or prize, and, also 'from a want of money men had been discharged by ticket to save wages and victuals in the King's ships'.¹ The use of tickets was described as being of 'longer date than any mans memory' and as a 'necessity', and it was pointed out that the petitions from seamen during the Second Dutch War did not complain about the use of tickets. The same letter, however, revealed the true nature of the problem which had 'rendered the use of tickets burdensome to the men'; this was the 'backwardness of pay' which forced the men and their families to 'many months vain attendance', or to part with their tickets at 'unreasonable rates' which were 'imposed on them by persons prepared to take advantage of their necessities'. The letter revealed the theory and the somewhat different practice associated with the ticket system.

Tickets were used in 1660 and 1661 to discharge the seamen who were still in pay from the Commonwealth period, and between this and the Second Dutch War they were only used on a few occasions. In June 1662 the Duke of York ordered that, when a ship was due to be paid off the commander could discharge men who 'desire' by ticket, which would be paid with the

¹ Bodl., Rawl.MS. A 191, f.242, undated.

rest of the ship.¹ There are a few mentions of counterfeit tickets and abuses of tickets before the outbreak of war but these were of little importance.² By the end of 1665 the situation had changed and the demands of seamen for payment of their tickets became more common. In November Pepys told Coventry of the 'ill effects of want of money among the seamen greaten daily, they flocking in crowds to the Duke of Albemarle with petitions for tickets and payment'.³ At this point the men were demanding to be discharged with tickets so that they could return to their families for the winter, but the Admiralty and Navy Board were reluctant to grant this fearing that the men would not return to the fleet when their tickets were paid in London. In December 1665 Albemarle proposed that all tickets should be recalled; it is not clear whether he intended that they should all be paid immediately (it is unlikely that this could have been done), or whether he was suggesting that they should be cancelled and payment postponed.⁴ Pepys strongly opposed the idea, regarding it as 'injurious to the seamen' and an 'evil he will hereafter suffer'. His fears that it would be accepted by the King appear to have been ill-founded because there is no record of any order or proclamation recalling tickets.⁵

Once the campaign season opened again the number of tickets decreased, and consequently the Navy Board and Admiralty did nothing of any great importance to improve the system. In December 1665, and again in January 1666, the Navy Board did order that their clerks were not to

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.76, 6 June 1662.

² Diary, 12 April 1661, 21 February 1665; PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.8, 23 September 1662.

³ Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, p.74.

⁴ Diary, 10 January 1666; NMM, LBK 8; f.334, 28 December 1665, f.355, 2 January 1666, f.356, 4 January 1666, f.358, 9 January 1666.

⁵ NMM, LBK 8, f.334, 28 December 1665, f.355, 2 January 1666; Diary, 10 January 1666.

receive money for paying or checking tickets handed in, persons still 'agrieved' by such action were invited to complain to the Board.¹ In February 1666 they ordered that no 'stranger' was to be employed in examining and 'casting up' the tickets.² This had little effect, for on 19 March Brouncker, Coventry and Pepys were at the Ticket Office 'to see in what little order things are there', and a week later they exhibited a greater concern for the abuse suffered by the King through inaccurate addition and fraud, than for the seamen who were still waiting to be paid.³ A similar order against having to pay clerks of the Navy Treasury for the payment of tickets was issued on 9 December 1666.⁴ By this time the use of tickets was again increasing; Pepys records having signed 500 on 12 November.⁵

The situation at the Ticket Office had become little short of chaotic by the end of 1666. Pepys visited it on 22 December, 'there to be informed in the method and disorder of that office, which I find infinite great - of infinite concernment to be mended'.⁶ With characteristic application Pepys worked to understand the nature of the problem and put forward a method to control the payment of tickets. This 'method' was the first set of regulations issued to control the calculation and payment of tickets; it was accepted by the Navy Board and sent to the Ticket Office on 17 January 1667 to be put into operation from 21 January. The four clerks at the Ticket Office, Whitfield, Barbour, Carcasæ, and Seddon, were

¹ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.55, 12 December 1665, f.27r, 24 January 1666.

² PRO, Adm.2/1740, f.163, 20 February 1666.

³ Diary, 19, 26 March 1666.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.32r. 9 December 1666.

⁵ Diary, 12 November 1666.

⁶ Diary, 22 December 1666.

to divide the tickets between them on an alphabetical basis, and 'reduce' the several books (sea books and muster books) to one 'perfect' book for each ship, with each ticket numbered to prevent double payment. They were assigned to one member of the Navy Board for signing the tickets and that member was responsible for any errors made by their clerks.¹ The clerks were not to examine any 'written' tickets and were to compare each ticket with its counterfoil, or 'duplicate'. This system for preventing double payments had been 'of late wholly neglected'. They were also ordered not to 'receive or demand any reward' or 'gratuity' in carrying out this work. These instructions brought some sense of order and procedure into the Ticket Office, but they were drawn up too late in the war, when the volume of tickets was considerable, to have had any real effect. The whole system depended on the honesty of the clerks and a supply of money to honour the tickets, and both of these were lacking. On 18 January Carteret issued a public letter calling for information by any soldier or seamen who had been forced to give money or 'to lose part of their wages to recover the rest' and he promised to make 'double satisfaction to the party's so grieved'.²

The Treasury and the rest of the Navy Board were well aware that the seamen were being forced to sell their tickets at a considerable loss as well as having to pay the clerks in order to secure their pay, as can be seen by their repeated orders against the practice. Even before the increased use of tickets Pepys had discovered that the Navy Paymaster, John Fenn, had made a considerable profit out of his office, taking 'but $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of

¹ BM, Add.MS.11;602, f.317, 17 January 1667. Whitfield was to have tickets under his inspection with letters A to E and signed by Batten; Barbour letters F to K, signed by Penn; Carcass letters L to R, signed by Mennes; Seddon, letters S to Z, signed by Pepys.

² PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.34, 18 January 1667.

all he pays' including tickets.¹ The most serious accusations of abuse, both against the seamen and the King's treasure, were made against James Carcasæ, one of the Ticket Office clerks. There appears to be no reason to doubt that Carcasæ was guilty of double payments, of demanding money for tickets which he accepted, of buying tickets at reduced rates, and of generally trying to make as much money as he could out of the business.² His dismissal, after discussions with the Lord High Admiral, and its aftermath with appeals to the Privy Council, caused the Navy Board a considerable amount of trouble during 1667. The position was exacerbated by Carcasæ's willingness to blame others, including Batten, and to spread tales about the Navy Board to the Commissioners of Accounts.³ The extent to which Carcasæ was guilty of these practices cannot be determined, but his activities were a further slur on naval administration, which was more damaging because he was condemned by 'the whole world's report'.⁴ When faced with the delays in payment, the seamen were often forced to sell their tickets in order to obtain money for themselves and their families; they were usually offered rates well below the value of the ticket and there was virtually nothing the Navy Board could do to prevent this. In November 1665 one of 'the most scandalous circumstances' was the seamen themselves offering their tickets for sale in Lombard Street at rates of '5s, 6s, or 7s,' in the pound less than their value.⁵ There also existed a number of people, often women, who would buy up the seamen's tickets; a Mrs. Salesbury was well known for buying tickets at '5s. per pound or more loss to the seamen'.⁶ Another person mentioned was a 'broker'

¹ Diary, 21 February 1665.

² Diary, 16, 23, February, 12 March, 7 May, 18 July 1667.

³ Supra. p.322.

⁴ Diary, 12 March 1667.

⁵ NMM, LBK 8, f.278, 4 November 1665.

⁶ Catalogue, I, 142.

called Addle, who brought seamen to 'an able Citizen's wife' who claimed to have taken an 'abatement' of 4 per cent, although she may have acted out of charity to the seamen.¹

The situation at the Ticket Office continued to deteriorate during the last few months of the war. On 13 February there was 'a very great disorder' and the following day the Navy Board were considering how to keep 'the Peace' there.² At the same time Pepys revealed the lack of control and responsibility for the affairs of the Ticket Office, 'it is plain that the care of that office is nobody's work, and that is it that makes it stand in the ill condition it doth'. On 15 February the Board complained to the Duke of York of the disorders amongst the seamen at the Ticket Office, 'and that it arises from lack of money'; they wanted more funds or 'to have nothing more to do with the payment of tickets, it being not our duty'.³ Two days later they had a further word with the Duke when there was 'a hot encounter', the Board arguing that they should not be troubled with paying after they had examined the tickets.⁴ It is uncertain whether the Board was implying that payment was the Treasurer's responsibility and had nothing to do with the rest of the Board, or whether, and perhaps less probably, it felt the whole business should be dealt with elsewhere. In any case, despite having the Duke's agreement, nothing was done and tickets remained the responsibility of the Board.

Having failed to shift the burden of responsibility, the Navy Board became the object of severe criticism because of the scandalous situation at the Ticket Office. In June 1667 the complaints of the seamen about being

¹ Chappell (ed), Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p:87.

² Diary, 13, 14 February 1667.

³ Diary, 15 February 1667.

⁴ Diary, 17 February 1667.

'constrained to give money or lose some part of their wages in order to recover the rest' had reached the Privy Council, and a Committee was set up to examine 'complaints against excesses practiced by sub-officers and clerks of the Navy Board'.¹ Thereafter the members of the Navy Board, especially Pepys, were particularly concerned to justify their own conduct to the Parliamentary Commissioners in the payment of tickets. When the Commons met in October 1667 they were anxious to investigate the 'miscarriages' and the expenditure of the war. On 17 October a Committee was appointed to examine the alleged failures in the conduct and administration of the war; initially it consisted of 56 members but a further 11 names were added in November.² One member of the House, who kept a diary for this period, was John Milward and he noted that the Committee was 'especially to enquire into the abuse of paying the seamen with tickets'.³ The Committee was chaired by Sir Robert Brooke and much of its attention was directed to the division of the fleet in 1666, the failure to follow up the victory in June 1665, and the lack of defences around the Medway, but they also pressed the Navy Board on the question of paying off the fleet with tickets. Pepys was ordered to send up his registers, and he discovered that the Committee was searching for the Navy Board's order to discharge ships by ticket.⁴ The Committee suspected that the Navy Board was concealing its directions, but this suspicion was apparently ill-founded as no general order was issued by the Board itself for discharging the fleet. Any directions to discharge a large percentage of the fleet was probably a verbal order from the Duke of York to Brouncker, and the Duke was reluctant to have this brought out into the open for fear of the political capital which might have been made.

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.213, 25 June 1667.

² Commons Journal, IX, 4,24.

³ Robbins (ed), Diary of John Milward, p.89.

⁴ Diary, 19 November 1667.

On 14 February 1668 Pepys records that the Duke was 'willing not to be troubled with occasions of having his name used among the Parliament, though he himself do declare that he did give direction to Lord Brouncker to discharge the men at Chatham by ticket, and will own it, if the House call for it, but not else'.¹ The Committee having discovered that Lord Brouncker had made considerable use of tickets centred their enquiries around him, and he and Pepys drew up a defence of the Board, 'as if it was a crime'.² The Committee of Miscarriages made its report to the Commons on 14 February 1668 and on 22 February the House debated the part which related to tickets.³ The report admitted that tickets had often been used in the past but 'the discharging of whole ships by Ticket was never heard of or attempted' until the end of 1666, when Brouncker had discharged men 'out of the great ships without any money; giving them tickets only for their service'. This had been made worse by the 'disorderly' payment of the tickets and the Navy Board's failure to observe its own rules. The report also noted the other grievances which have already been mentioned; the long delays before payment, the seamen being forced to sell tickets at a heavy discount, and of their having to pay the clerks at the Ticket Office. They concluded that the practice had 'alienated the hearts of the seamen for his Majesties service' forcing them to take service with the Dutch. The House debated the report and for the most part blamed Brouncker; they did not condemn the use of tickets as such but considered that the 'general payment by tickets' was bad, and they concluded by voting 'that to pay ships and seamen by tickets was a great miscarriage'.⁴ In the debate Penn and Carteret stated that

¹ Diary, 14 February 1668.

² Diary, 29 October 1667.

³ Commons Journal, IX, 50,55.

⁴ Robbins (ed), Diary of Milward, pp.196-7.

they had been against the use of tickets; Batten was also mentioned in this context, which left the rest of the Navy Board to carry the full weight of the Common's disapproval. Penn, however, did speak in defence of the Board and moved that the Board should be heard in their own defence at the Bar of the House. Penn's suggestion was not taken up immediately but, when the debate was resumed on 28 February, the orders concerning the 'method' of payment were read and the Navy Board were instructed to appear before the House to explain their neglect of this order and why they paid by ticket.¹

On 5 March the Navy Board attended at the Bar of the House and 'one Pepys undertook the whole business for all the rest'.² Pepys, having fortified himself with 'half a pint of mulled sack' and a 'dram of brandy', made a long speech lasting about three hours.³ He pointed out that tickets were necessary in the case of death, removal to another ship, and 'where there is not ready money' and that, 5,000 men had been paid off with tickets by the Navy Board and 'treble that number have been paid by the admirals'.⁴ Pepys admitted that there had been 'some irregularity in paying'; he was referring to the order of payment, which had been left by the Lord High Admiral to the discretion of the Board. One aspect of his defence which is not convincing, is the statement that the 'order for the due payment of seamen', which it was alleged had not been observed 'above one week', was an order 'only spoke of and designed, but was never ratified nor signed'; in fact this order had been prepared and had been sent to the Ticket Office to be implemented in January 1667.⁵ Finally, Pepys returned to

¹ Commons Journal, IX, 58.

² Robbins (ed), Diary of Milward, pp.207-8.

³ Diary, 5 March 1668.

⁴ Robbins, *op.cit.*, pp.208-9.

⁵ *Supra.* pp.411-12.

the old theme that lack of money was the 'only reason why they paid by tickets'. Thereafter the House and the Committee of Miscarriages turned their attention to charges and impeachments against Pett and Penn, the business of tickets having been apparently forgotten. It was probably Pepys's defence which saved the Board, especially Brouncker, from further prosecution.

The Navy Board was still under investigation by the Commissioners for Public Accounts, who had been appointed on 12 December 1667.¹ After several delays and a considerable amount of time spent looking through the ledgers, account books and letter books of the Navy Board, the Commissioners sent a copy of their report to the Navy Board in September 1669 and invited the Board to reply quickly as Parliament was soon to sit.² The Commissioners' primary concern was the use of the money allocated for the war; they did not involve themselves with the abuses of the ticket system, as this had already been condemned by the Committee for Miscarriages. In the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth observations in their report, they criticised the Navy Board's proceedings; firstly, because it had failed to ensure that the clerks examined the ticket with its counterfoil, which had allowed the clerks to give these counterfoils 'to persons, who have made use of them to make false tickets by'. Secondly, in the twelfth observation, they asserted that the tickets had not been compared with the sea books and muster books; this had allowed false tickets to be paid and had also facilitated incorrect

¹ Commons Journal, IX, 36, nine Commissioners were appointed, Lord Brereton, Sir George Savile, Giles Dunster, William Pierpoint, Sir James Langham, Henry Osborne, Sir William Turner, George Thompson and John Gregory.

² Pepys Mss. 2554, not foliated.

rating.¹ Thirdly, the Board was censured for not having kept a 'register' of tickets 'passed', or examined, nor had they asked the Treasurer for a list of tickets paid; this had led to 'inconveniences' and had 'occasioned the passing of double tickets'.² The Navy Board's answer was penned by Pepys on his return from France and sent to the Commissioners on 29 November 1669. In it he gave a 'joint' answer to these three observations, admitting that because of the 'necessitys of multiplying tickets have been increased, and consequently the manifold disorders attending them, it ought not to be doubted but errors will be found'; he thought that an examination of the accounts of the previous war would reveal similar mistakes. The Board further stated that no Article or Instructions had ever been sent requiring them to compare the tickets with the sea and muster books, and that as a whole they did not have any such responsibility, although the Comptroller was accountable for examining payments made by the Treasurer. A copy of their order of January 1667 for introducing a more orderly method at the Ticket Office

¹ The Commissioners, who were only concerned to examine the use of money, could well have extended their criticisms to include the manner in which the Muster Masters had failed to serve their intended purpose. These officials were supposed to act as a check on the sea books, which were made up by the pursers, and from the muster books an accurate list of the men, their 'quality', those who had deserted (runs), or who had been sent home sick, could be composed. The Muster Masters were completely incapable; additional Muster Masters had been appointed and issued with instructions by the Lord High Admiral in March 1664 PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.246, 19 March 1666. In November 1666 the Navy Board asked James Hayes (Secretary to Prince Rupert) for a report on the diligence of the Muster Masters during that year, BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.117, 8 November 1666. Hayes replied that only one Muster Master, Balthazar St. Michael, Pepys's brother-in-law, 'hath done anything towards his duty', NMM, LB 8, f.411, 10 November 1666. The Board passed this information to the Duke of York who ordered that having 'failed in this duty' they were not to be paid, - St. Michael and one other Muster Master were exempted from this directive. PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.153, 19 January 1667. The inadequacy of the Muster Masters meant that their books were unreliable and this added to the confusion and false payments at the Ticket Office.

² Pepys Mss. 2554, not foliated.

was then given, despite the fact that they had earlier denied its existence to the Committee of Miscarriages.¹ Thus the Navy Board's answer did nothing to challenge the accusations made against them, although the Commissioners had refused to tell the Board of the instances upon which these accusations had been based. It is clear from the preceding discussions on the operation of the ticket system that it had been chaotic, and in their reply the Navy Board were unable to deny it.

The last stage in the accusations against the Navy Board took place in the early months of 1670, when the Commissioners of Public Accounts laid their report before the King in Council and the Navy Board attended the Council to give their defence. Once again the burden of defence fell on Pepys and from his journal of the proceedings it is possible to abstract that part relating to the use and payment of tickets.²

The proceedings began on 17 January 1670, but it was not until 12 February that the Observations 11-13 relating to tickets were reached.³ These observations stated that the Navy Board had not ensured that tickets had been compared with their counterparts, thereby enabling 'false' tickets to be made; they had not compared the tickets with the sea and muster books, which had led to incorrect rating of men, and, lastly, they had not kept registers and lists of tickets to prevent double payments. All these observations were substantiated 'by depositions before us on oath'.⁴ Pepys greatly elaborated on his written answer to the Commissioners and said that, in the case of the Board's not ensuring that their clerks

¹ Supra. p.417 ; BM, Add.MS.11,602, f.317, 17 January 1667.

² Pepys MS.2874, ff.385-504.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.465.

⁴ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32; Eleventh, Twelfth and Thirteenth Observations.

compared the counterfoil with the ticket, this was impracticable when there were so many tickets, particularly for men who had served in several ships and were thereby entered in several pay books. He thought that this type of comparison would have served little purpose, particularly if the clerks had been untrustworthy, and that, in any case, it had been done until the 'hurry of the war' made it impossible.¹ In the case of the clerks not comparing the tickets with the sea and muster books, Pepys stated that this would have been of little use as the sea books were only made up after the ship had been paid off, whereas tickets were often issued during the course of a voyage. Pepys, however, glossed over the use of muster books, saying 'it is not owned by any clerk and if proved' provision was made to indemnify the King from the clerk's master.² So far as keeping a list of the tickets passed was concerned, Pepys thought this was useful for preventing fraud and injury to seamen in cases of lost tickets, and the practice had been observed 'at least as much as the hurry of the war would admit', but that it had become impracticable because of the increase in the volume of tickets, the number of places where ships were paid off, and the practice of turning men from one ship, with tickets, on to another. A list of tickets paid was 'nowhere enjoined ... never practised ... wholly useless' when the ticket had already been examined and passed, and, as for tickets wrongly paid or fraudulently obtained, this list 'is but to endeavour to shut the door after the steed is stolen'.³ The defence offered by Pepys was powerful but it still did not excuse the Navy Board as a whole, or the Comptroller particularly, for having failed to ensure that the Ticket Office was properly organised. Indeed the inadequacy of the Comptroller had been one of Pepys's own.

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.475.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.476.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.478.

themes and had been expressed in the Duke of York's Letter of Reflections of August 1668.¹

Some of the observations made by the Commissioners were well dealt with, especially the uselessness of lists, but even though Pepys was able to bluff his way through these observations at the Council, it still appears that the Commissioners of Accounts had highlighted one of the worst failures in naval administration. One small embarrassment suffered by Pepys was on 21 February when Lord Brereton, for the Commissioners, produced evidence of one ticket which had been paid to Pepys. This was certainly an attempt to discredit him and his defence of the Navy Board, but it had little success as the King ended the matter by saying he thought 'it a vain thing to believe that one having so great trust, and therein acting without any exception therein, in matters of the greatest moment should descend to so poor a thing!'.²

While these investigations were being undertaken, the question of paying the seamen had been tackled by the King in Council. On 30 August 1667 he ordered that part of the money allocated to naval debts should be used to pay the seamen, and on 27 September the Navy Board was to use the money in their hands to pay wages for service in 1667; tickets were to be issued for past service. At the same time the Council ordered a weekly supply of money to be made available for paying tickets.³ Due to the shortage of funds very slow progress was made with payments, and in 1668 the difficulties in manning the fleet led to a promise that seamen offering to serve again would have their tickets for past service paid. In July 1668 the Council ordered the Treasury Commissioners to provide

¹ Supra. p.223.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.498.

³ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.227, 30 August 1667, f.232, 27 September 1667.

money for this.¹ The use of tickets was generally thought to be unsatisfactory and on 8 July 1668 the Navy Board was ordered to consider 'expedients how to put a speedy stop to the signing of tickets and thereby prevent the ill consequences that attend the same'.² The Navy Board's reply was read on 17 July and in it they gave the usual reasons for the use of tickets; death, discharge, removal into other ships, reduction of the ship's complement, and the saving of the King's treasure; they considered that the current use of tickets could not be abolished 'other than by a supply of money in every place and at all times where men would be discharged etc'.³ This was clearly impracticable and, as a result, the use of tickets continued even though the inconvenience and abuses of the system were well known.

The payment of past tickets continued until the outbreak of the Third Dutch War. In August 1669 the King in Council ordered the joint Treasurers of the Navy, Littleton and Osborne, to continue paying £500 per week for tickets even though the funds allocated for this purpose had been used up for service in the 'late war' and in 1668.⁴ In July 1671 the Navy Board attended the Council and were asked to advise the best method for discovering the debt on tickets owed from the King's restoration until the end of 1667. They advised, and their advice was accepted, that Lord Brouncker, who had been most closely associated with the examination of tickets since January 1667, should prepare a 'register' of unpaid tickets.⁵ It is uncertain whether this was ever completed and the return of war in 1672, meant that tickets had again to be used on a large scale. On these occasions

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.327, 3 July 1668.

² PRO, PC6/1, f.329, 8 July 1668.

³ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.137, 10 July 1668.

⁴ PRO, PC6/1, f.393, 6 August 1669.

⁵ PRO, PC6/1, f.452, 8 September 1671.

Lord Brouncker, having learnt from the Navy Board's past experience, asked the Duke of York if he could be given assistance in his duty of examining, or 'comptrolling', the Treasurers' accounts, which included tickets. On 30 November 1672 the Duke wrote to Edward Seymour, recently appointed as an additional Commissioner but without any direct responsibility, saying, 'it seems of utmost importance to the weal of his Majesty's service, that the charge of the Ticket Office' be given to a member of the Navy Board. Seymour was instructed to take over that part of the Comptroller's work relating to examining and passing tickets.¹ To assist the operation of the Ticket Office, the Duke of York issued a set of twelve instructions, thus putting on a formal and more extensive basis the Navy Board's own order of January 1667.² These stated that the information from the muster books was to be collected at the Ticket Office, compared with preceding books, and tickets were to be examined with the sea books before pays. The tickets were to be checked with the 'counterparts' and then carefully 'cast', and an account of examined tickets was to be sent to the Navy Treasury on a weekly basis; equally a list of paid tickets was to be returned to the Ticket Office, (despite the substance of these articles being declared useless by Pepys in his defence of the Board before the Commissioners of Accounts in 1670).³

These instructions did much to regularise the proceedings of the Ticket Office and some of the abuses of the ticket system were thus avoided. The Navy Board had become belatedly aware of the failures of the Ticket Office at the end of 1666, but their attempts to deal with the problem had little initial success. It is certain that the use of tickets could not be avoided and that the abuses of the system were excessive, but there was no possibility

¹ Duke of York, Memoirs of English Affairs, p.267.

² PRO, Adm.7/639, f.332, supra. pp.411-12.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.478.

of widespread improvement until, as Pepys noted in the 1680s, 'the poor seamen can be paid once in a year at furthest and tickets answered like bills of exchange'.¹

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¹ Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.24.

THE VICTUALLING SYSTEM

The third major area of the Navy Board's collective responsibility concerned the victualling system. Much depended on the efficiency of this system, as shortages or lack of victuals could delay the sailings of whole fleets and could bring active operations to a premature end. The efficiency of the victualling system and the quality of the provisions were to be severely criticised by commanders and seamen. The importance of the victualling system was recognised by Pepys, who observed that, 'seamen, love their bellies above anything else, and therefore it must always be remembered in the management of the victualling of the Navy that to make any abatement from them in the quantity or agreeableness of the victuals is to discourage and provoke them in the tenderest point'.¹ The first question to be decided by the Restoration naval administration was whether the victualling should be carried out by contract or by a number of commissioners. As in many other aspects of naval affairs it was decided to return to the pre-civil war method of victualling the service, which had been by the appointment of one or more persons who would provide the King's ships with victuals at a rate agreed in a contract. During the Interregnum this system had been changed; in 1654 the contractors, headed by Colonel Pride, were the subject of many complaints, and in consequence they resigned the contract. These contractors were replaced by a new victualling department 'under the immediate care of the Navy Commissioners'; in 1657 this was in turn succeeded by three Navy Commissioners, Thompson, Bourne and Willoughby with the title of 'Commissioners of Navy and Victualling'.² These changes do not appear to have improved

¹ Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, p.250.

² Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, pp.324-27.

either the quality or the quantity of the victuals and, despite the fact that the weakness of the victualling system was recognised as stemming from financial difficulties, there was little reason to recommend the continuation of this system after the Restoration.

The decision to appoint a single victualler must have been taken at the end of June or the beginning of July 1660, because on 10 July John Davis was appointed.¹ However, Davis was ordered not to commence work until he was given further instructions; these were never issued and on 21 August the Duke of York directed the Attorney General, Sir Jeffrey Palmer, to prepare a bill for the appointment of Dennis Gauden as Victualler.²

Gauden could claim previous experience in this capacity as he had been one of the contractors from 1650 to 1654, and had been closely associated with the victualling up to the Restoration. His appointment may also have been as compensation for past debts, as he had petitioned the King asking for some reward for the provisions he had delivered before the Restoration and for the cost of repairs carried out on the victualler's storehouses.³ It is not clear why the earlier order, naming Davis, had been issued; it is true that he had been associated with the victualling system, but not to the same extent as Gauden, and the claim advanced by his widow in 1668 that he had been passed over by those who 'dreaded his sincerity' does not help to clarify the situation.⁴ It appears that in the scramble for places which followed the Restoration, Gauden had been able to exercise greater influence.

In the first few months after the Restoration the Commonwealth Victualling Commissioners continued to act, but they were dismissed by an Order in Council on 9 November 1660 and were instructed to hand over the stores and

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1732, f.17, 10 July 1660.

² PRO, Adm.2/1732, f.33r, 21 August 1660.

³ CSPD 1660-1, p.280, dated 'September?', but it may have been earlier than this.

⁴ CSPD 1667-8, p.322.

storehouses to Gauden, who was given the title of 'Surveyor General of all victuals to be provided for his Majesty's ships and Maritime causes'.¹ Initially there was no agreement concerning the terms of Gauden's contract; it was recognised that he would calculate his 'entry' to the victualling from 1 November. On 14 December an interim agreement was reached on the rates for the victualling; this provided that Gauden would be paid 6d. per man per day for seamen on ships in harbour, that is on 'petty warrant victuals', and 8d. per man per day for those on sea victuals.² These rates in fact were to be continued when the formal contract was drawn up, which was delayed until April 1661, and the size and importance of the victualling contract meant that negotiations were conducted by the Lord Treasurer's department on the King's behalf, and Gauden. It does not appear that either the Navy Board or the Navy Treasurer were formally consulted on these rates, but it is likely that their opinion would have been sought at some point. As it had been decided to appoint a single person to conduct the victualling and Gauden had obtained the position, there was no question of rival tenders being discussed. The negotiations relating to the contract were completed by the end of March 1661 and the agreement was presented to the King in Council for approval. The adoption of this procedure was certainly due to the magnitude of the contract; it is unlikely that it received much discussion and its passage would have been little more than a formality.³ This contract or 'indenture' passed the Great Seal on 6 April 1661 and was to apply to the period since 1 November 1660.⁴

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.7, 9 November 1660.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.9, 14 December 1660.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.13, 22 March 1661.

⁴ The contract is in BM, Add.MS.11,602, f.258.

In common with other administrative legislation at the beginning of the Restoration period, the 1661 Victualling contract was largely based on previous contracts. The first clause specified the weekly allowance per man for each type of provision; these scales were basically unaltered in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹ In these scales there was no attempt to differentiate between the rank of seamen or standing officers, only the commissioned officers could hope for better fare by purchasing additional food when the ship was in port. These rates were usually considered to be adequate in terms of quantity, but the main deficiencies were the monotony of the diet, the frequently bad quality of the food and beer and, on some occasions, the recourse to 'short' allowances. In addition to provisions, the Victualler was to supply the purser with money at the rate of 6d. per man per month for the purchase of 'necessaries', such as wood, candles and dishes. For his part the Victualler agreed to deliver the provisions, in response to a warrant from the Lord High Admiral or two members of the Navy Board, to any of the King's ships off the coasts of England, Scotland or Ireland without claiming additional expenses for distance. Other clauses stated that the Victualler would bear the cost of waste and loss on victuals, except where his ships were wrecked or captured by an enemy. Should the Victualler be required to provide a large quantity of victuals which were subsequently not needed for the service, he could either sell the excess or would be allowed to export them without the usual customs duties. By the 1661 contract Gauden was to keep a permanent supply of victuals in store sufficient for the equivalent of 4,000 men for two months; this supply was to be provided at

¹ Tanner (ed), Hollond's Discourses, p.153; Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.121, 144; Baugh, Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, p.375. The weekly diet per man consisted of 7lbs. biscuits; 4lbs. beef; 2lbs pork; 2 pints peas; $\frac{1}{2}$ of a sized fish; 6 oz. butter; 12 oz. cheese and 7 gallons of beer.

fourteen days' notice at London, Dover, Rochester, Portsmouth or Plymouth. The idea of having a reserve of this nature was clearly sensible, but it was to be discovered that, with the expansion of naval services in the early and middle part of the century, the size of this reserve was inadequate. But to have had a very large reserve of perishable provisions would have led to excessive waste in peacetime, and to compensate for this the Victualler would have charged a higher rate per man. The problem of preserving provisions was not to be solved until the introduction of modern refrigeration, until that time there was a continual dispute between the Victualler and the pursers as to when provisions should be declared unfit. To help the Victualler guard against unnecessary waste, he was allowed to appoint one man to each ship, who would be counted as part of the complement; this man would certify defective supplies with the purser and would be empowered to purchase additional stores if the ship was delayed for any reason. But apart from providing the pursers with 'necessary money', the Victualler was not obliged to make any allowance, either financial or in kind, for ships which were on lengthy voyages. This arose from the assumption that the fleet would always be fairly close to home bases, and the victualling system was therefore not usually geared to supply overseas' bases or expeditions.¹

To assist him in his work the Victualler was allowed the use of a number of the King's brewhouses, bakehouses, mills, granaries and storehouses at Tower Hill (the site of the main victualling centre in London), and those at Dover, Rochester and Kinsale.

¹ From the middle of the seventeenth century it became the practice to send squadrons to the Mediterranean, West Africa, the Far East and the American Colonies, apart from being victualled at home initially these ships often had to obtain their own supplies, in some cases an agent, or consul, would be appointed in foreign ports for example Thomas Clutterbuck in Leghorn. Obtaining supplies abroad clearly depended on the local political situation and relations between England and the individual sovereigns.

The eleventh article in the 1661 contract laid down the rates which would be paid to the Victualler; these were the same as those laid down in the interim agreement in 1660, 6d. per man per day in harbour and 8d. at sea. The Victualler was not allowed to claim additional allowances because of rising prices, except where he had been required initially to provide for a maximum of four months' service, which had then been increased. After his accounts had been made up and passed by the Navy Board, payment was made, up to 1667, from the Navy Treasury; this meant that the Victualler's payments were constantly in arrears. This difficulty was partly overcome, in peacetime at least, by allowing the Victualler a monthly sum of £467 to provide for the seamen on ships in harbour and to enable preparations to begin for active service. The contract stated, as a portent of what was to come, that this monthly sum would be paid 'infallibly by God's assistance', and the first of these payments was made on 31 March 1661. Finally, Gauden was granted a fee of £50 per year and 8d. per day for a clerk, and it was agreed that no one else would be allowed to 'meddle' or 'intrude' in the victualling.

This contract provided the framework for the management of naval victualling until changes were brought in during the Second Dutch War. Once a decision had been taken to prepare a number of ships for sea, the usual procedure was for the Navy Board to prepare estimates, which would be presented by the Lord High Admiral to the King in Council. After acceptance a Privy Seal would be passed to authorise the provision of money to the Victualler.¹ The main criticism of the victualling system was to come during the wars,

¹ This process can be illustrated by examining the King's declaration of 12 October 1665 for 35,000 men to serve in the 1666 fleet, Gauden was informed and the Navy Board was to provide an estimate. On 14 October the estimate was prepared, it was obtained by multiplying the number of men by 13 months and 1 day (the lunar month was always used in the calculation of this type of estimate), this gave 12,775,000 men for 1 day at 8d. per man which amounted to £524,833, 6s. 8d. PRO, Adm.106/11, f.128, 12 October 1665; BM, Add.MS.9,302, f.155r, 14 October 1665.

but it is also suggested that the system could not always cope with increased peacetime activity. In March 1662 Coventry wrote to the Navy Board informing them that the Duke of York was concerned that ships being prepared for a voyage to the East Indies were being delayed because of shortages of victuals, and they were to investigate the matter.¹

Similarly in the following year, Pepys clashed with Gauden, who defended himself 'in the readiness of his provision when I know that ships everywhere stay for them'.² If the efficiency of the system was being questioned during peacetime when the summer squadrons did not exceed 8,000 men, it is no surprise that difficulties were soon apparent as the estimates for 1665 rose from 13,000 in September to 30,000 in December 1664.³ As relations with the Dutch had deteriorated in 1664, it was decided to hold a demonstration of strength in the Channel and a fleet was sent out in November, but this was too late in the year to achieve anything. However, the preparations did reveal some of the weaknesses in the victualling arrangements. On 11 November the Duke of York, who went down to Portsmouth to hasten preparations, informed Secretary Bennet that the fleet was well forward except in men and victuals, and he thought it likely that he would have to sail with a smaller proportion of victuals than had previously been intended.⁴

This was the first sign of the frequent complaints by the commanders in the Dutch War that they were being held back by the inefficiency of the

¹ PRO, Adm.106/6, f.299, 2 March 1662.

² Diary, 2 February, 1663.

³ PRO, Adm.106/9, f.172, 13 September 1664; Adm.106/9, f.489, 13 December 1664.

⁴ CSPD 1664-5, p.62.

Victualler. In the following spring the fleet was much larger, and in April 1665, when other preparations were said to be well advanced, Coventry blamed Gauden for not sending sufficient supplies, Coventry also suspected that the Victualler did not have the necessary supplies in store.¹ Gauden was in the habit of claiming to have much more in store than he actually had; his estimate of having victuals for 4,000 men at Portsmouth was contradicted by his agent's report, which mentioned only supplies for 1,700 men. This discrepancy had been noted by the 'Council', but Gauden had not even been 'chided' and had done nothing to improve his supplies.² The deficiencies in the victualling in 1665, which resulted in the fleet being delayed, were thought by Coventry to be even more inexcusable because Gauden had been given ample warning, about four months, in which to make his preparations. On 15 April 1665 Coventry again complained that 'the victualler hath not fully played his part' and that he 'is a man who ever gives good words'.³ These criticisms were reinforced a few days later when the Duke of York, on the Royal Charles, wrote to the King, 'I am very sorry the victualler hath so failed us in point of beer as we shall be able, for the first time, to stay so little on their coast, but I hope you will give orders that in the future your Majesty's service may not be disappointed as it is now, after all the fair promises he gave us'.⁴ A combination of bad weather and reduced, but not exhausted, victuals, led to the return of the fleet from the Dutch coast. The main shortage appears to have been in

¹ PRO, SP29/118, f.12, 13 April 1665.

² PRO, SP29/118, f.12, 13 April 1665.

³ PRO, SP29/118, f.36, 15 April 1665.

⁴ PRO, SP29/118, f.97, 20 April 1665.

beer. On a visit to the fleet Gauden promised to supply 500 tons per week; this was sufficient for about 18,000 men when, even by the Victualler's own figures, the fleet consisted of 23,000 men and Pepys calculated that the weekly consumption of beer was around 700 tons.¹ There was little improvement in the delivery of beer as the summer progressed, and on 25 August Pepys was told that the Victualler could provide only enough beer to last until 10 September 'so that if our prize wines help us not with beverage the Lord have mercy on us'.² The prize wines did bring temporary relief to the situation, but with the general deterioration of naval finances, the victualling also began to suffer because of this. Not only did Gauden have cause to complain about high prices, late payment and shortages, but the inability of the Navy Board to discharge seamen for the winter because of the lack of money to pay them, meant that there was little reduction in the demand for victuals when the fleet was first laid up. On 28 September the Victualler told the Duke of Albemarle that he could only provide 'wet provisions' for 5,200 men 'and what that will do to a fleet of 23,000 men ... you will easily compute'.³

Despite the mounting complaints against the Victualler in 1665 nothing was done to alter the system; in May the Duke of York proposed that some changes should be made but nothing was done.⁴ It was generally recognised that Gauden had started his preparations too late in the year to meet the large demands of a wartime fleet, but it was thought even greater confusion would be caused by trying to alter the system in the middle of the

¹ PRO, Adm.106/3520, f.24, 31 March 1665.

² NMM, LBK 8, f.239, 25 August 1665.

³ Chappell (ed), Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p.52.

⁴ PRO, SP29/121, f.113, 20 May 1665.

campaigning season. James proposed that Gauden should be given some assistance in the following year, but this 'belongs to my Lord Treasurer and a Committee of the Council' to decide.¹ The time needed to survey the stores and audit the accounts were used as arguments to prevent any immediate change; the danger of confusion and the fact that it was stated in the 1661 contract that twelve months' notice was required before any alteration could be implemented, effectively blocked any major alteration in the victualling system. Thus for practical and contractual reasons it was decided to attempt to improve the existing system by introducing greater efficiency.

On 28 August 1665 Coventry told Arlington that 'the Victualling of the Navy hath not this year, been dispatched as it ought, either in time nor quantity'; he was aware of the danger of relying on one individual, for if Gauden had died then the business 'must probably have stood still'.² Coventry suggested that one possible remedy would be to join other contractors with Gauden, hoping that this would also make additional credit available for the victualling. This could be done quite simply by either increasing the number of contractors centrally, or by appointing a contractor at each of the main victualling ports. Coventry also hoped that the victualling contract could be altered fairly quickly because it had been based on contracts of 'the late King's time when fleets were small', and its major defect was that it did not require the Victualler to keep a sufficiently large store of victuals in readiness for an expansion in the service. Negotiations continued throughout September between Gauden and

¹ PRO, SP29/122, f.48, 26 May 1665.

² PRO, SP29/131, f.72, 30 August 1665.

Albemarle in London, and the Court, which was at Oxford because of the plague. Pepys was required to draw up a paper on the various alternatives, including the possibility of putting the victualling into commission. In this his own personal intentions and ambitions were revealed. After a meeting with Albemarle on 5 October Pepys wrote that he hoped 'to do myself a job of work in it', and the very next day he was 'contracting a great friendship' with Gauden.¹ On 13 October his mind was full of the victualling business, 'that I may make some profit out of it' but, as ever, Pepys liked to cloak his personal ambitions with the hope 'justly to do, to the King's advantage'.²

The first possible alteration in the management of the victualling, that of adding partners to Gauden, was quickly dismissed because it 'will require more time in the doing than can render the bringing in of partners practicable'.³ The main reason against this proposal was that there was an unwillingness on the part of possible partners to join Gauden. Pepys approached '3 or four of the likeliest men the plague hath left' in London, Sir William Rider, Sir John Banks, Josiah Child and Captain Beckford, all of whom refused.⁴ In his investigation into the victualling Pepys came to appreciate the dangers to the service which would arise from Gauden's death (not that this was likely on grounds of ill health but the plague could carry off the healthiest), and he came to understand some of the Victualler's difficulties, in particular he discovered that Gauden was owed £125,000 at that time. The remedy proposed by Pepys was the appointment of a 'surveyor of victuals' in London,

¹ Diary, 5, 6 October 1665.

² Diary, 13 October 1665.

³ Chappell (ed), Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p.57.

⁴ PRO, SP29/134, f.46, 6 October 1665.

who would oversee the central administration of the system and would be assisted by agents in the main victualling ports. Whilst this proposal was designed to lead to greater efficiency in the administrative aspects of the victualling, it did not try and tackle the difficulty of obtaining provisions when money was almost non-existent and credit virtually exhausted.

The advantage of this proposal was that it would not require any major alteration to the victualling system during the war; there would be no need to survey the stores and audit the accounts before handing over to new contractors, and money would not be needed to pay off Gauden or his creditors. Pepys argued that the agents, or surveyors, in the ports would enable a more accurate check to be kept on the supply and reserves of victuals, and he probably thought that the system would be able to operate in the event of Gauden's death. The idea of a commission for victualling was rejected for the same reasons used against changing the contractors, and for the added reason that a commission would have to be supplied immediately with funds. The rejection of a commission did not result from the absence of possible members, because Sir William Rider, who had refused the idea of partnership with Gauden was desirous 'to be of the Commission, if there be one'.¹ The paper prepared by Pepys was read before the 'King, Duke, and the Caball with complete applause and satisfaction' and he was required to suggest how it could be put into operation.² He proposed the appointment of six surveyors, one at each of the following ports, Dover, Plymouth and Yarmouth (each with a salary of £100), Harwich and and Portsmouth (with a salary of £150), and London, where the salary would be £200. The work of these six surveyors would be supervised by an additional

¹ Diary, 7 October 1665.

² Diary, 14 October 1665.

person in London with a salary of £300, who would receive the weekly returns from the ports and would compile an accurate statement of the victuals.¹ Thus, with an expenditure in wages of £1,100 per annum, Pepys hoped to introduce efficiency into the administration of the victualling. Next, Pepys had to promote his own personal interests by ensuring that he was appointed as one of the London surveyors; he admitted that, 'I cannot say but I have an eye to the reward', and in this context his contact with Coventry and the Duke was of the greatest assistance.² Having suggested himself for the post of Surveyor General, Pepys was rewarded on 4 November with the warrant for his own appointment.³ In the next couple of weeks, with the assistance of his clerks Thomas Hayter and Thomas Wilson, he drew up a set of instructions for the surveyors in the ports 'that we might be doing something to earne our money'.⁴ These were approved by the Lord High Admiral on 7 December 1665.⁵ In the first instance the surveyors were required to send returns of the victuals received and supplied, and of money and bills of credit given to the pursers. In turn the pursers were to certify the amount of provisions received, expended, wasted, and the number of men, including supernumeraries, carried on their ships, together with the length of time the ship had been in sea victuals. This formed the basis of the improvements in the victualling system; it may be praised as a useful administrative reform, but it is open to question whether

¹ Chappell (ed), Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p.65.

² Diary, 19 October 1665.

³ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.215, 4 November 1665.

⁴ Diary, 22 November 1665.

⁵ PRO, Adm.2/1733, f.222, 7 December 1665.

this system did much to improve either the flow of victuals to the fleet or the quality of those provisions.

It would be unreasonable to expect any dramatic or immediate improvement in the victualling, especially as the reforms did not attack one of the main problems facing the Victualler, that of finance. During the preparations for the 1666 campaign there was the usual number of complaints against the victualling. In February Middleton commented on the slow build up of provisions at Portsmouth and, in particular, he complained about 'broken' provisions; for example, one ship had two months' bread, one month's beer, and butter and cheese for two weeks.¹ As preparations advanced, the joint commanders, Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle, decided that they wanted to sail with four months' provisions stored on each ship. They pressed Coventry to try and send more victuals so that the sea provisions would not be used while the ships were fitting out, but this had little success, for on the eve of their departure on 17 May they wrote, 'our victualling ships come very slowly to us, and as yet we eat our provisions faster than we have them'.² The fleet was not able to sail for a few days because of contrary winds, and on 21 May the joint commanders wrote a strong letter to the King, and similarly to the Duke of York that, 'We think it our duty to acquaint your Majesty that there is little or no provisions at all for the victualling of your Majesty's ships here. That part of the Straits fleet that are at Sheerness are clean out of victuals, and likewise the Sovereign, and several ships here want provisions, so that unless

¹ PRO, SP29/149, f.52, 27 February 1666.

² Powell and Timings (eds), Rupert and Monck Letter Book, p.48.

your Majty. take some other course with the Victllr. getting him to be more careful, in despatching victuals to us, your service is like to suffer much this summer'.¹ Once the fleet sailed the main objection was about the beer; it had been supplied in wooden instead of iron bound casks and these were easily broken; surveys showed large amounts of defective beer and the quantity was 'twenty gallons in a butt short of what it ought to be'. In his Narrative, which he presented to the House of Commons after the war, Albemarle complained of the 'negligence' in not providing the fleet with supplies during the campaign of 1666.² The result of this particular shortage was a reduction in the ration of beer by giving 'unto 6 men but 4 mens allowance'.³

Pepys composed a strong defence against these criticisms. On 26 July he presented his accounts of the victualling to the Duke and the rest of the Navy Board, and was at pains to extract from the Duke a statement to the effect that 'the business of the victualling was much in a better condition than it was the last year'.⁴ But this type of assurance was unlikely to satisfy the joint commanders, and a month later further complaints were received from them; they blamed the late departure and early return from the Dutch coast on the shortage of victuals, and expressed irritation at being sent accounts of provisions rather than the provisions themselves. Again Pepys was able to demonstrate, in the absence of the commanders, that the situation was much better than alleged.⁵ There was clearly a serious difference of opinion between the commanders

¹ Powell and Timings, (eds), Rupert and Monck Letter Book, p.52.

² BM, Harleian MS.7170, ff.56, 57.

³ Powell and Timings, op.cit., p.134.

⁴ Diary, 26 July 1666.

⁵ Diary, 26 August 1666.

at sea and the administration ashore, and the claim put forward by Pepys that there had been a marked improvement in the victualling was not shared by Rupert and Albemarle. On balance it would appear that there had been a slight improvement in the victualling in 1666 but not sufficient to satisfy the seamen; there was certainly a greater and more accurate knowledge about the logistical situation, but it did not necessarily follow that the fleet was better supplied as a result of the administrative measures introduced by Pepys.

There were a number of factors which operated against the Victualler. He was still operating in accordance with the terms of the 1661 contract, even though the size of the fleet had grown out of all proportion and he was suffering increasingly from financial difficulties. It would appear that, except in the case of beer, the majority of the complaints were directed against shortages rather than the quality of the victuals. As far as the shortage of beer was concerned, this was partly caused by a lack of casks which 'sticks upon workmanship, and not materials'.¹ The shortage of casks was made worse by breakages, especially of the wooden bound casks, which in turn caused beer to be wasted. Further, it was the practice to clear ships of all unnecessary wood before action in order to reduce the likelihood of injury by flying splinters, and the empty casks were often thrown overboard.² Thus not all the blame for the shortage of beer can be attributed to the Victualler. Another problem for Gauden was that his men were often pressed into service with the fleet. On 30 June 1665 Pepys noted that the men had been pressed from the 'William Thomas', victualler on Wednesday last and she hath lain laden and disabled to sail ever since'.³ In October 1665 Gauden asked for protections from the press for his men so that they would not be 'carried away by every inferior officer as they

¹ BM, Add.MS.32,094, f.127, 31 May 1666.

² Chappell (ed), Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p.80

³ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.113r, 30 June 1665.

have been frequently this year'.¹ A number of protections were issued to the victualler's ships, but these were not always respected by the press officers; in December 1666 Pepys was wishing that 'something could be done for the prevention of the many ill effects of impresting of men out of the victuallers'.² Another irritation which affected the Victualler was the embezzlement of his stores, although his were by no means the only naval stores which suffered in this way, but embezzlement began to reach serious proportions towards the end of 1665. Coventry commented on the problem, but at the same time he did not think that it took 'the whole blame off Mr. Gauden' for the shortages that year.³

One of the most serious obstacles facing the Victualler, and again he was not unique in this, was the shortage of money and credit and the delays in payment. Even before the outbreak of war there were signs of this difficulty. By his contract Gauden was to receive a monthly payment of £467 for the ordinary expenses of the fleet in harbour. This was often in arrears and in August 1663 the Treasurer's ledgers show the sum of £1,868 for Gauden's payments for the preceding four months, and in September he was paid £934 for the previous two months.⁴ By later standards these delays and the sums involved were quite trivial, as much greater sums were involved in the additional, or extraordinary, expenses of victualling. In October 1661, and again in June 1662, Gauden petitioned the King in Council asking for the payment of his arrears as he

¹ PRO, SP29/134, f.54, 7 October 1665.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.118r, 5 December 1666.

³ PRO, SP29/132, f.73, 11 September 1665.

⁴ PRO, Adm.20/4, no.1691, 29 August 1663.

was being forced to buy goods on credit at high rates, and he stated that, unless he was given some of the money due to him, he would not be able to fulfil his commitments for that year.¹ This was referred to the Lord Treasurer, and in August 1662 Gauden was paid £6,381 12. 6d. for his additional expenses from November 1660 to March 1662.² The pressure of war naturally reflected on the Victualler's position; by October 1665 Gauden was asking for a 'certain' weekly payment, otherwise he would be unable to provide for the following year's service. He estimated that he was owed £425,933 6s. 8d., including an estimated £75,500 which was needed to buy the pork and beef needed for the following year.³ In November Gauden repeated his difficulties, and Pepys supported him in a letter to the Duke of York, which stated that the Victualler required a 'speedy and effectual supply of money'.⁴ The Victualler did benefit to a certain extent from the new financial measures introduced by Downing at the end of 1665, for at a meeting with Downing and Carteret the Victualler was promised £150,000 from the proceeds to be raised.⁵ But funds were slow to come in and there were many other demands on the money received. On 11 January 1666 Pepys heard that of the £150,000 'so peremptorily undertaken to be paid him by the 20th of this month, and whereof I hear not of any' only £14,000 had been provided.⁶ Gauden must have been given

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.23, 7 October 1661, f.33, 22 June 1662.

² PRO, Adm.20/3, no.1729, 28 August 1662.

³ PRO, SP29/134, f.29, 21 October 1665; SP29/134, f.57, 24 October 1665.

⁴ Coventry MS. 96, f.108, 15 November 1665.

⁵ *Supra*, pp.315, 363-65.

⁶ Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, p.114.

considerable sums during 1666, as the fleet was provided with victuals, although not to the satisfaction of the commanders. By the beginning of 1667 Gauden claimed that he was owed £180,413 18s. 1d., the bulk of which was £120,000 for the victuals provided in 1666.¹ The decision not to send out the fleet in 1667 probably came as a relief to the Victualler.

The period following the Second Dutch War was one of immediate retrenchment, followed by a series of investigations into naval finances and administration, which included the victualling system. Despite the financial advantages of the position held by Pepys, in addition to his salary of £300 he was given £500 by Gauden 'for the services I do him in my victualling business', he thought it prudent to resign the place before 'I am forced to it'.² His resignation brought to an end the use of surveyors in London and the victualling ports, which had been introduced at the end of 1665. The next task was to examine the Victualler's accounts and prepare for any possible enquiry into the operation of the victualling system. In January 1667 Sir William Penn had been appointed to assist the Comptroller and was assigned to examine the Victualler's accounts. This was a lengthy business especially the examination of the additional claims put in by Gauden. Over the next three years the Victualler, the Navy Board and the Treasury Commissioners were asked by the Privy Council, 'in whom alone the interpretation of the contract ... lieth', to discuss and make recommendations on the Victualler's claims.³

¹ PRO, SP29/189, f.60, 25 January 1667.

² Diary, 4 February 1667, 28 July 1667.

³ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.122r, 19 February 1667.

In these financial examinations Pepys was regarded as an impartial observer, but he was in fact active in supporting Gauden. In March 1667 he went 'to look over the Victualler's contract and draw up some arguments for him to plead for his charges...'.¹ After lengthy discussions lasting until the summer of 1669, which involved at least two reports from the Navy Board to the Privy Council, it was recommended by the Treasury Commissioners that Gauden should be paid an additional £9,357 13s. 9½d. for providing 'flesh' during Lent and for transport costs.² A second, but unspecified claim, was for compensation for victuals lost when they were transferred from one ship to another; this was considered by the Committee of the Privy Council for the Affairs of the Admiralty and Navy. The Navy Board decided that the Victualler's claims were 'just and reasonable to be done and agreeable to all former practices and precedents' and they were allowed.³ Gauden's third claim concerned interest payments made by him. He had become involved 'by accident' in the borrowing of money because of 'want of due payment made him by his Majesty according to contract' from November 1660 to December 1668; his total claim amounted to £70,000.⁴ This was not accepted in full; the Treasury auditors examined the Navy Treasurer's ledgers, the bills of imprest to Gauden, Gauden's ledgers and the victualling declarations for each year, and calculated that at a rate of interest of 6% Gauden would be owed £45,176 11s. 3d. This sum was agreed upon, and in total Gauden received an additional £54,534 5s. 0½d., as well as an unspecified amount for the 'lost' provisions.⁵ Apart from these

¹ Diary, 14 March 1667.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.135r, 13 September 1667; f.182, 29 October 1668; f.193r, 12 August 1669.

³ PRO, PC6/1, f.366, 27 January 1669.

⁴ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.204r, 19 April 1670.

⁵ CSPD 1670, p.278.

investigations the victualling received slight attention from the Parliamentary Commissioners of Accounts; it was mentioned in passing by Albemarle in his Narrative to the Commons but was not followed up.¹

While the various examinations of accounts had been taking place the Navy Board had been considering the advisability of an alteration in the victualling system. On 11 September 1667 the Board informed the Privy Council that a year's notice had to be given to terminate the existing contract; this was ordered and the Board were to start negotiations for a new contract.² At this stage there was no suggestion of appointing commissioners for victualling, and it was generally assumed that the deficiencies in the system, which had been revealed in the last war, were caused by the inadequacy of the 1661 contract. In December 1667 the Navy Board was instructed to prepare a draft of a new contract, but its members do not appear to have been very diligent, because several months later Downing, for the Treasury Commissioners, said that they had 'long expected' the Board's reply and anticipated a full report by 1 July 1668.³ The Board was, therefore, prompted into action and, unlike the passage of the 1661 contract, it was involved in all the discussions for the new contract. The Navy Board presented its report on 30 July 1668. In the first instance it recommended that provision should be made for ending the observation of Lent in the navy; this had fallen into 'disuse' and had been the cause of frequent 'disputes between his Majesty and the Victualler'.⁴ The Board

¹ BM, Harleian MS.7170, f.56, 31 October 1667.

² PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.228, 11 September 1667.

³ CSPD 1667-8, p.429.

⁴ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.174, 30 July 1668.

then took up a point, which had been made frequently during the last war, that the business was too important to depend on the health and solvency of a single person.

In 1668, unlike 1661, it was decided to invite a number of tenders from various people who thought themselves capable of victualling the navy. In all four tenders were sent in; Gauden as the present holder of the office was in a reasonably strong position, since there was no suggestion that he had been a failure. The strongest competition to Gauden came from Josiah Child and his partners Thomas Papillon and Sir Thomas Littleton. Other tenders were received from two outsiders, Doddington and King. During August 1668 the Navy Board and the Treasury Commissioners discussed the four tenders. The Privy Council called on the Navy Board to make a report on the tenders and to state whether it considered it best to carry out the victualling by contract or commission. This report was basically the work of Pepys, with the approval of 'Brouncker and the rest', but beneath the impartial appearance of the report he favoured Gauden, 'being very desirous for the King's sake, as well as my own that he may keep it ...'.¹ The report was debated at the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy, with Sir Thomas Clifford representing the reforming interest. He was anxious 'for removing of old officers', and disliked the idea of one person controlling such a large part of naval expenditure for so long; he therefore favoured Child's tender. Clifford came into conflict with the Duke of York and there were 'hot words' because the Duke was 'not for removing old servants that have done well'.²

¹ Diary, 24 September 1668.

² Diary, 25 September 1668.

The report was debated at a full Council meeting. It began with an account of the victualling since the 1620s, and the Navy Board came out in favour of a contract rather than a commission, simply because they knew of no example of better 'husbandry' through the appointment of a commission.¹ The Board felt that it was more difficult to estimate the cost involved in victualling by commission, but they did not say why this should be so. A more positive reason given against a commission was that in the past rates of 9d or 10d per man per day had been charged by victualling commissioners and that such rates had never been reached with contracts. It was further stated, that to put the victualling into commission would require an immediate sum of £32,000 to enable a start to be made in obtaining victuals for the 1668/9 winter guard. Finally, the Navy Board thought that a contract had a decided advantage over a commission because contractors would be more willing to use their personal credit to obtain supplies. It was also thought that contractors would be better able to dispose of excess victuals and would be themselves responsible for waste.

The Council then went on to discuss the four tenders. Gauden was virtually asking for an extension of the existing rates; Child was willing to offer the same rates, but insisted on being exempt from excise duty on brandy and salt; he also wanted to be allowed to alter the contract by appealing to the King in Council, to the Lord High Admiral or to the Treasury Commissioners. It was thought that this would allow too much opportunity to alter the contract and would lead to abuses.² Doddington and King were

¹ BM Add.MS.9,311, f.176, 25 September 1668.

² BM Add.MS.9,311, f.176.

The terms per man per day were:-	Harbour Victuals	Sea Victuals	South of 27°N
Gauden (existing rates)	6d	8d	8½d
Child	6d	8d	9d
King	6½d	8½d	9d
Doddington	6½d	8½d	9d

both willing to accept the draft contract which had been made by the Navy Board, but they wanted higher rates per man than either Gauden or Child. In passing, the Navy Board mentioned that they had received offers to undertake the old contract but with higher rates per man. These were not considered to be acceptable, because the old contract had been designed for a smaller fleet and experience had shown it to be unsatisfactory. The main debate concerned the tenders of Gauden and Child and it was eventually decided in Gauden's favour.¹ This was mainly due to the low rates he had offered, and even though it was carried for him 'with great difficulty', his experience must have helped. It was said that he had previously executed the office with 'great fidelity, care and dexterity...', but to guard against some of the dangers of a single person holding the office, it was decided that Gauden should have two other persons, to be approved by the King, joined with him in partnership. These partners were not named at the Council but were to be Gauden's son Benjamin and Sir William Penn, who was retiring from the Navy Board. The new contract was signed on 24 February 1669.² It can hardly be said to have made any radical changes in the management of naval victualling, as it was little more than the implementation of some of the ideas proposed by Coventry and others in 1665.

The new victualling contract was much longer than its predecessor, but there was no change in the weekly allowance of beef, pork, beer, bread, cheese etc. to the seamen. It did, however, contain provision for alternative victuals to be served on ships going on distant voyages.³

¹ PRO, SP29/246, f.154, 26 September 1668.

² CSPD 1668-9, p.208.

³ The contract is in Bodl., Rawl. MS. A 216, ff.217-37.

This, and the majority of the alterations, were designed to meet the deficiencies of the old contract, especially the feeling that the larger fleets were now accepted as a permanent feature of naval life. But in spite of this the Victuallers were to keep in hand the same reserve of 4,000 men's provision for two months. The Navy Board was to inform the Victuallers by 15 October what number of men would be employed in the following year and was empowered to examine the Victuallers' stores, contracts and accounts at any time. The Victuallers would be paid at the old rates of 6d per man in harbour, 8d per man at sea (for ships sailing to the south of latitude 27° north 8½d would be paid), and they would also be paid the same monthly allowance of £467. Despite the fact that this contract was longer it did not differ in any major respect from its predecessor. Apart from increasing the reserve of victuals, the only significant change was that there were now three persons responsible for carrying out the work.

This contract was to remain in force until the beginning of 1674 when the Third Dutch War had revealed some of its defects, but the Admiralty Commissioners again rejected the suggestion of a commission. Between this contract coming into force in January 1669 and its demise at the end of 1673 there were a number of alterations in the personnel executing it. The first change was caused by Penn's death in 1670; it was then decided that Sir Denny Ashburnham and John Ashburnham should be joined with the two Gaudens.¹ This did not come about because of John Ashburnham's death. By September 1671 agreement had been reached that the Gaudens should be joined by their former rival, Josiah Child, and Sir Thomas Littleton and Sir Denny Ashburnham.² Ashburnham decided to withdraw in December 1671 and was

¹ PRO, SP29/299, f.146, 31 August 1671.

² CSPD 1671, p.506.

replaced by the merchant Thomas Papillon, who, together with the Gaudens, Child and Littleton became the new victualling contractors.¹ They commenced their duties on 1 January 1672 shortly before the outbreak of the Third Dutch War. The new partnership faced the usual complaints about shortages and the poor quality of the beer; they answered by pointing to the difficulties of brewing, the shortage of casks, and, almost inevitably, the shortage of money. Within a few days of taking over the new contractors said it would be impossible for them to proceed unless they were paid in accordance with the terms of their contract.² In April 1672 they wrote 'we are wholly destitute of provisions', and in May they were 'not in a condition to victual' a number of ships because of the lack of money.³ In August 1672 they informed the Navy Board that 'our condition in respect of money is so exceeding strait at present that we fear, if it be not timely prevented, the service may suffer thereby for want of provisions ...'.⁴

The shortage of money represents the main difficulty faced by the Victuallers, but from the naval side came the usual complaints about the quality of the beer, the shortage of water casks, and the 'stinking', or 'mouldy', bread.⁵ It was alleged that bad beer had been the cause of 'great sickness' in the fleet, and that this had caused a 'great charge to his Majesty, and the death of many of his subjects in the service'.⁶ Despite these accusations there was no attempt to alter the victualling system;

¹ CSPD 1671-2, p.37.

² CSPD 1671-2, p.66.

³ CSPD 1671-2, p.395; PRO, SP29/325, f.113, 29 May 1672.

⁴ PRO, SP29/328, f.58, 13 August 1672.

⁵ PRO, SP29/331, f.58, 10 December 1672; CSPD 1672, pp.650, 659.

⁶ PRO, SP29/331, f.58, 10 December 1672.

the old arguments against a change in wartime and the disruption which would follow were used. But in 1673 when the complaints against the Victuallers had lessened, a change was forced because of a dispute which emerged among the victualling partners. It is possible that the Gaudens were being eased aside by their partners, and certainly Sir Dennis Gauden is much less in evidence in the correspondence relating to the victualling in 1673. The exact cause of the differences is not clear, but it was probably associated with the methods and contracts used to obtain victuals and the distribution of the profits. On 14 May 1673 the dispute was heard before the King in Council. The Lord Treasurer and Lord Chancellor had previously met the Victuallers 'to endeavour a composition of the differences between' them, but there was still no indication of the nature of these differences. It was agreed that, although a year's notice was required to end the present contract, it could, by consent, be terminated in December 1673. In the interim the Gaudens were not to 'act' in anything, but were to have a 'share in the profits and loss' and be allowed to inspect the accounts.¹ During the summer of 1673 the victualling was performed by Child, Littleton and Papillon, though with no great success, for in June Rupert told Arlington 'I cannot but wonder at the impudency of the Victuallers to assure his Majesty that all is come down, when most of the beer is wanting at this very minute ...'.² The new Admiralty Commissioners began negotiations for a new contract. This was signed in November 1673 and remained in force until the end of 1677. By it the Gaudens returned to office, and they were to be assisted by Sir Denny Ashburnham, Anthony Sturt and Abraham Jaggard.³

¹ CSPD 1673, p.254.

² CSPD 1673, p.398.

³ Catalogue, 1, 165.

Naval victualling was always a source of complaint and irritation and the Restoration period proved to be no exception. The first mistake had been the revival of the pre-civil war contract, and thereafter it proved a slow and tortuous business to implement any changes. The victualling situation was often blamed for delays in sailing and for forcing the fleet to return after a short period at sea. There was certainly justice in this complaint, but it was only one of a number of factors which combined to produce such delays; these included the shortages of seamen, the time taken to repair and prepare the ships, and contrary winds. The quality of the victuals was often poor, especially the beer which was prone to go bad during hot weather, and there are innumerable examples of individual ships being provided with rotten meat, bread or cheese. It is a matter of speculation whether the victualling would have been more efficient if managed by a commission, but as the financial difficulties would affect both contractors and commissioners, it is unlikely that there would have been any improvement. The role played by Dennis Gauden was extremely important; between 1660 and 1671 he bore the brunt of the victualling, and it would appear that, despite the many difficulties which faced him, he had honestly endeavoured to perform his task.

(iv)

DOCKYARDS

The last area in which the Navy Board exercised collective responsibility was in the supervision of the dockyards. Certain of the Articles of the 1662 Instructions 'jointly considered' mention the yards; the Board members were to take a survey of the yards and stores, and ensure that the necessary stores were obtained and distributed to the yards; they were also to issue additional instructions to guide the actions of the 'inferior Officers' and make certain that all orders and instructions sent to the yards were observed.¹ The Board was responsible for checking and balancing the accounts of wages and stores which had been prepared by the yard officers. The administration of the dockyards was supervised in two ways, either by members of the Board visiting the yards, theoretically on a fairly frequent basis, or by the Board delegating many of its powers and responsibilities to a resident Commissioner. In both cases the affairs of the yards were directed by constant communication between the Board and the Commissioners or officers of the yards. The type of supervision depended on the geographical location of the respective yards, and on the nature of naval action required due to the prevailing international situation. In practice this meant that the Thames yards at Deptford and Woolwich were supervised directly from the Navy Office in London; Chatham had a resident Commissioner for most of the period, and Portsmouth, which was to come into prominence during the later wars with France, had a resident Commissioner in wartime. In addition to these main yards it was also considered desirable in wartime to have an advanced base; in the Second Dutch War it was Harwich, with a resident

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, 'Duties of the Principal Officers and Commissioners ... Jointly Considered'.

Commissioner, which fulfilled this purpose; Sheerness was also used, but to a lesser extent. In the later wars Plymouth became more important. The importance of the Thames yards and Chatham was partly the result of strategic considerations, but of equal importance was the amount of existing equipment and facilities. These factors explain the continued use of these yards when dangerous silting of the Thames and the Medway, and the increased size of ships, made the approaches to the yards very hazardous. The Thames yards owed a great deal of their importance to their proximity to London, which was the major market for naval materials and a source of labour. The economic importance of the dockyards has been discussed by D. C. Coleman in his article on the 'Naval Dockyards under the Later Stuarts', but his concern was to 'examine the nature of the naval dockyards as industrial entities' and he did not attempt to consider their administration.¹

The importance of the dockyards is self-evident, for their efficiency was directly related to the speed of repairs and preparation of the fleet for service. In peacetime their main occupation was to maintain the ships which were laid up, to carry out repairs, and to prepare the relatively small number of ships for the summer and winter guards and those being sent on expeditions to the Mediterranean and other parts. In the spring during wartime the work increased rapidly, as did the cost of the yards and the labour force employed; at Chatham and in the Thames yards this tended to be reduced during the summer months, but it would pick up again at the end of the campaigning season. In the other yards the work was more evenly spread in the summer. The permanent nature of the Thames yards, Chatham and Portsmouth necessitated the appointment of

¹ Coleman, 'Naval Dockyards under the Later Stuarts, Ec.HR, second series VI, 134-55. Descriptions of the dockyards with plans and an account of their development, with particular reference to the 1690's, are given in Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.79-108.

a number of full-time, or 'standing', officers. Their number depended on the size of the yard; there were the administrative officers, the Clerk of the Cheque, the Storekeeper and the Clerk of the Survey, as well as the more practical officers, the Master Shipwright and the Master Attendant, who were assisted by a number of more junior officers, the Master Caulker, the Master Carpenter, the Master Boatmaker, the Master Mastmaker and the Boatswain of the yard.¹ In addition there were ropeyards at Chatham, Woolwich and Portsmouth, each with its Clerk of the Ropeyard and Master Ropemaker. The ropeyard was usually considered as a separate unit even though it was situated inside, or beside, the yards. In most of the yards the permanent staff would include a number of assistants to the senior standing officers, clerks, watchmen, porters, and sometimes a surgeon and a minister.² In terms of the number of men in the yards, the workmen were obviously the most numerous and the most variable; they included sawyers, caulkers, sailmakers, joiners, shipwrights, coopers and labourers. It has been found impossible to offer any exact calculation of the number of men of each description employed in the various yards during the period, and the conclusions of Coleman and Ehrman have not been challenged on the basis of any information surviving from 1660-1673.

The standing officers in the yards were issued with a set of Instructions at the same time as the Navy Board in January 1662; these were virtually a re-issue of the 1640 Instructions and it is likely that they had been in force unofficially since that time. A brief description of the duties of the standing officers will be useful as an introduction to the supervision exercised by the Navy Board. The Clerk of the Cheque was to keep a record of the men employed in the yard, their work, length of service

¹ Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, pp.98-100.

² BM, Add.MS.9,302, ff.183-191.

and absences. To do this he had to take musters of the yard at least once, if not more often, each day, and he had to do the same for the men employed on the ships while they were laid up. From this information the Clerk of the Cheque prepared the pay books for the yards and ships. He was also to act as a check on some of the other officers; for example, the porter at the gate, but he was particularly to keep counter books with the Storekeeper of the receipts and issues from the stores, and countersign the bills, or certificates, relating to the quality and quantity of the stores delivered to the yards. His duties were probably the most difficult to perform and they were certainly open to abuse and neglect.¹ The duties of the Storekeeper were more straightforward; he was to receive and inspect all materials which were delivered to the yards by the purveyors or contractors, provided that he had first received a warrant from the Navy Board empowering him to accept the goods. He was also to be supplied with a copy of the contract for the goods to enable him to certify that they conformed to contract in quantity, quality and dimensions, and he was able to refuse those which did not come up to standard. He had to keep an account, or ledger, of all goods delivered to the stores and of their subsequent issue to the other officers; his accounts were to be balanced quarterly or annually, as directed by the Navy Board. These accounts would be checked by the Clerk of the Cheque and the Clerk of the Survey before they were presented to the Navy Board. This is another example of the principle of having officials acting as a check on each other and of their being collectively responsible for the accuracy of the accounts. The third of the clerical officers in the yards was the Clerk of the Survey; apart from checking the storekeepers' work he was to take a survey of the ships'

¹ PRO, Adm.7/633, Duties of the Officers of the Yards.

equipment when they came into the yards, and in particular he was to survey the stores with the other clerical officers and certify with them the requirements of the yards; he was also to check the stores which were removed from ships as they were laid up.

Of the practical officers of the yard, the most senior was the Master Shipwright, who was responsible for the work undertaken in the yards; he directed the workmen and supervised the progress on building and repairing ships as well as preparing them for sea. In addition, the Master Shipwright had to authorise the issuing of stores and check the storekeepers' accounts. Secondly, there were the Master Attendants, who were more directly concerned with the ships themselves, that is, their docking, cleaning, movement within the yards and anchorages. He also supervised the preparations for setting the ships out and for laying them up at the end of the season. The Master Attendant complemented the Master Shipwright in being responsible for the ships after they had been built or repaired. The other permanent officers in the yards were either assistants to the Master Shipwright and Master Attendant, or were specialists in a particular trade.

The salaries paid to these officers will serve as an indication of their importance within the yard, and of the relative importance of the individual yards. For example, from 1661 to 1665 the Clerk of the Cheque at Chatham was paid £120 per annum; at Deptford £80, at Woolwich £70 and at Portsmouth £68. 13s. 10d. (this had risen to £80 by 1684). The Storekeeper at Chatham received £100, at Deptford £144. 18s. 4d., at Woolwich £70 and at Portsmouth £50; this is a reflection of the greater importance of Deptford as a centre for the receipt and distribution of stores.¹ In addition to their salaries

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,302, ff.183-191.

these officers were given an allowance for paper etc. and clerks; in the case of the Clerk of the Cheque at Chatham, he received £5 for paper money and £56. 10s. 0d. for two clerks. In terms of the salaries paid, the most expensive yard to maintain was Chatham, in 1660/1, 1661/2 and 1662/3 this came to £1,610. 6s. 10d. but was reduced to £1,586 16s. 6d. in 1664/5; in the same period Deptford averaged £978, Portsmouth £713 rising to £754, and Woolwich remained at £603.¹ Most of the salaries and allowances remained the same for the rest of the century, although a few increases are mentioned; for example, the Master Shipwrights at all the yards were given the same salary of £104 10s. 0d.² Other increases in the cost of the yards came through the appointment of additional clerks; at Woolwich the allowance for clerks rose from £36 10s. 0d. in 1660 to £244 0s. 0d. by 1684, and by raising the salary of individual officers often to the level of the same officer at another yard; for example in, 1662 the Boatswain of Deptford was allowed £60, which was the level of his counterpart at Woolwich.³

The workmen were the most expensive element in the dockyards. From the incomplete evidence available it is only possible to present a few of the totals for the 'extra', and it has not been possible to differentiate between the numbers of each type of workman. This cost depended on the amount of work to be done and was prone to seasonal fluctuations, the midsummer quarter at Chatham varied from £4,824 12s. 9d. in 1661 to £2,883 10s. 5d. in 1662, £3,087 4s. 3½d. in 1663, £3,035 8s. 1½d. in 1664, £7,511 14s. 0½d. in 1665 and £2,557 12s. 6d. in 1667.⁴ The Christmas quarter also reveals fluctuations from £4,559 5s. 6½d. in 1661 to

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,302, ff.183-191.

² Catalogue, I, 114; Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, p.104.

³ PRO, Adm.106/7, f.214, 14 October 1662.

⁴ PRO, Adm.42/143, Yard Books, Chatham Extra.

£2,890 Os. 6d. in 1662, £2,248 15s. 11½d. in 1663, £6,852 13s. 6½d. in 1665, £3,910 8s. 7d. in 1666, and £2,050 13s. 2½d. in 1667. In the Third Dutch War the midsummer quarters of 1672 and 1673 were £8,295 Os. 1d. and £7,877 19s. 4d., respectively. The condition of the men in the yards was seriously affected by the shortage of money, and in the years prior to the outbreak of the Second Dutch War they were paid irregularly. The wages for the period from 1 July 1662 to 30 June 1663 were paid on 10 December 1663, but it is uncertain whether this was the only occasion on which these quarters were paid, as Pepys mentions Mennes being at Chatham to conduct pays in December 1662 and July 1663.¹ The pays for the quarters during 1666/7 were not made until the Third Dutch War in 1672/3 when one of the old quarters, and a more recent one, were paid at the same time; the Michaelmas 1667 and midsummer 1672 quarters were made on 22/23 September 1672. This indicates that the worst period for paying the yards was from the mid 1660s, and confirms the point made on several occasions that the collapse of financial support lay at the root of the failures of naval administration at this time.

So far as the administrative supervision of the yards was concerned, the most obvious method of tackling the problem of distance from London was by the appointment of a senior official in the yards. The need for such an officer had been acknowledged for some time, although it was not until the First Dutch War that resident Commissioners were appointed.² Pett was appointed as resident Commissioner at Chatham, Willoughby at Portsmouth, and Bourne at Harwich; the Navy Commissioners (and then the Navy Board) supervised the work at Deptford and Woolwich.³ After the

¹ PRO, Adm.42/143; Diary, 24 December 1662, 7, 10 July 1663.

² Tanner (ed), Hollonds's Discourses, p.84. Tanner notes that Monson had talked about resident Commissioners being appointed in 1618, but nothing came of this.

³ Oppenheim, Administration of the Royal Navy, p.348.

war Harwich was run down and Willoughby returned from Portsmouth to the Navy Commissioners in London leaving Pett as the only remaining resident Commissioner. This practice was continued at the settlement of naval administration in 1660, and Pett was included in the Order in Council of 4 July provided that he 'be not obliged to a continual personal attendance jointly with the other Officers, but that his chief care be employed at Chatham, the place of his residence'.¹

From this time the resident Commissioners were regarded as being inferior to their colleagues, and the beginnings of what was to be a long feud between the Board and the resident Commissioners began to emerge. This resulted from the anomalous nature of the 1662 Instructions, which required the Board to sanction all actions, yet at the same time allowed some latitude of independence to the resident Commissioners. The inferior position of Pett was not only evident because of his absence from the Board, thereby reducing his advice and influence, but was also reflected in his lower salary.² The subordinate role of the resident Commissioner was expressly stated in 1664 when it was decided to appoint Commissioners at Portsmouth and Harwich. On 18 November 1664 the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy ordered warrants to be drawn up for 'particular Commissioners for the said ports, where they are to reside and observe such orders from' the Board, but they were not to have the same 'power to sit and act' with the Board.³ Secretary Bennet suggested the title 'sub-commissioner' but Pepys thought that this would reduce their authority over the yards because of their 'restrained power ... where their

¹ PRO, PC6/1, f.3, 4 July 1660.

² Catalogue, I, 9. In 1661 Pepys complained of the lack of respect shown to Pett and himself in the absence of the other officers, Diary, 28 November 1661.

³ PRO, Adm.106/9, f.422, 18 November 1664.

authority is so sufficiently circumscribed'.¹ In the following May, Taylor and Middleton were given further directions on the latitude of independence allowed them. When time would not allow waiting for the Duke's or the Board's order for victualling or issuing stores to ships, the Commissioner would issue the orders, but 'where more time permits you will seek the advice of the Board in anything that is not ordinary'.² This allowed the Commissioners to look after routine matters in the yard, but for any 'extra' service (which included virtually everything associated with the dispatch of the fleet) they had to apply to London. This subordinate position was expressed when members of the Board were sent to the yards to hasten out the fleet and to lend authority to orders issued. During the Second Dutch War there was little indication of the rivalry between the resident Commissioners and the Navy Board, but this was to become apparent in the following century.³

The position of the resident Commissioners called for a further letter in 1670. It is unlikely that the letters to Taylor and Middleton were passed on to their successors, as on 3 February 1670 the Board informed the Duke of York that they had been asked by Tippetts at Portsmouth and Cox at Chatham for advice on how they should act when time did not permit waiting for the Duke's directions. The subordinate officers in the yards also wanted to be justified in obeying the Commissioner's orders in these cases, and the Board asked the Duke to 'confirm or correct' their belief that the Commissioners of the 'out-ports have power to act when time does not permit consulting the whole Board ...'.⁴ The Duke's reply confirmed

¹ Chappell (ed), Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p.7.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.50, 9 May 1665.

³ Baugh, Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, pp.289-91.

⁴ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.201, 3 February 1670.

the 1665 situation and allowed the Commissioners 'power to do whatsoever might or ought to be done by the whole Board' when haste was essential. But to avoid repeated or 'cross-orders' the Commissioners were to keep the Board informed of their actions, and keep a 'journal' which had to be sent up to the Board every month.¹

One of the most important differences between the Dockyard Commissioners and those at the Board was the need for technical experience. It would have been impossible to send an inexperienced person to the yards, and the very fact that seamen and shipbuilders were bound to be of a lower social standing than some of the courtly element at the Board, emphasised the lower status of the resident Commissioners. The resident Commissionership can be seen as the peak of a career in the dockyards, and during this period only Tippetts rose from being a Master Shipwright, through a resident Commissionership, to the Navy Board itself.² This strictly professional aspect came out in all the resident Commissioners appointed, for they all came from either shipbuilding or the sea.³ In comparison with later resident Commissioners, Pett enjoyed a more elevated status because he was allowed to sit with full power at the Board. But his absence from London tended to reduce this advantage, and in practice he was the least influential member of the Board. He had been Commissioner at Chatham since 1648 and came from a 'large shipbuilding family'.⁴ His confirmation

¹ NMM, SER 122, not foliated, 15 March 1670.

² Of the 24 individuals appointed to the Navy Board at various stages from 1660 to 1673, only Middleton and Tippetts came from the outports to the Board. This tendency was confirmed from 1688-1698 when only one out of 25 rose in this way, Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, p.183 n2.

³ Pett, Middleton (?), Taylor, Tippetts and Deane were shipwrights by trade, Cox and Beach were seamen.

⁴ The Pett family had a long history in shipbuilding but there is considerable confusion as to which Pett is being mentioned because of the repeated use of the Christian names 'Phineas' and 'Peter'; Johns, 'Phineas Pett', MM, XII, p.430.

at Chatham in 1660 was not only because of his experience in shipbuilding but also because he had no serious rival.¹ During 1660 and the first part of 1661 Pett was resident at Deptford, where he was building the yacht Katherine for the King; even at this time he rarely attended the Board.² He was not required to return to Chatham until May 1661, when the decision to fit out the Charles and several other ships led to the Duke of York ordering him to look after them personally.³ When at Chatham Pett was involved in running the yard and he remained there for most of the time, only occasionally going up to London. Pett's conduct has often been criticised because of his close family association with Chatham, which made him reluctant to discipline members of the yard. Pepys and Mennes were at Chatham on 11 July 1663 and the next day Pepys confessed that he was 'much dissatisfied' with Pett, whom he thought 'is not able to exercise that command in the yard over the officers that he ought to do'.⁴ In August Pepys and Coventry 'pressed' Pett 'to take upon him a power to correct and suspend officers that do not their duty', and they decided that he 'is not able to do the good in that yard that he might and can and it may be will do in another - what with his old faults and the relations that he hath to most people that act there'.⁵ Pepys and Coventry

¹ Pett's ability as a shipbuilder was recognised throughout the period; he had been responsible for building four fourth-rates and one first-rate during the Interregnum. In the period following the Restoration there was little shipbuilding and he only had the opportunity to build the Katherine and Jemmy yachts. While at Chatham he was responsible for the rebuilding of a first-rate, the Royal Prince, which was a prolonged operation. He closely guarded the secrets of his trade and he is alleged to have thought that his models were of greater value than anything else when the Dutch were raiding the Medway.

² Diary, 13 January, 10 April 1661.

³ PRO, Adm.106/4, f.368, 20 May 1661.

⁴ Diary, 12 July 1663.

⁵ Diary, 1 August 1663.

reminded Pett of his power to suspend the subordinate officers and he promised to act accordingly. This visit gave rise to a letter from the Duke of York urging Pett to investigate and, if necessary, discharge negligent officers.¹ Other criticisms of Pett cannot be examined in any depth; Pepys made one comment in May 1665 when he and Mennes were angry with Pett 'about his neglecting his duty and absenting himself, unknown to us, from his place at Chatham'.² Pett's neglect and his lack of control over Chatham caused annoyance during 1666; Rupert and Albemarle urged him to hasten out the ships from Chatham hoping that 'there will be no further neglect, seeing there hath been too much already'.³ These complaints reached the King, and Pepys thought it would be a good thing to move Pett to another yard.⁴ But the most crushing indictment of him followed his negligence at Chatham in 1667. It is now clearly recognised that he was made the scapegoat for the inadequate defence of the yard and for the disaster which occurred. His fall, imprisonment and appearance before the Committee of Miscarriages are not relevant to this discussion.⁵ But it can be noted that after his fall the idea of resident Commissioners was seriously criticised and in 1668 he was dismissed from the service (Taylor was also dismissed at the same time on grounds of economy).⁶ No successor was appointed at Chatham until March 1669 and Middleton was to move around the yards as required; an Order in Council of 2 October 1667 declared that in future no Commissioner was to be appointed whose attendance was

¹ PRO, Adm.106/8, f.112, 21 August 1663.

² Diary, 17 May 1665.

³ NMM, DAR 3, f.48, 24 June 1666.

⁴ Diary, 29 June 1666.

⁵ The Medway disaster is well described in Rogers, Dutch in the Medway, pp.70-150.

⁶ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.247, 3 January 1668.

restricted to one place.¹ This was the short-term reaction to a particular situation and the continuing need for resident Commissioners was appreciated before long.

In 1664 the approaching conflict led to the appointment of two other resident Commissioners, Thomas Middleton at Portsmouth and John Taylor at Harwich, who did not have the right to sit at the Board and were very evidently secondary officers.² Taylor had been a shipbuilder during the Interregnum and had been Master Shipwright at Chatham, but at the Restoration he lost his place 'on the duchess of Albemarle's earnest interposition for another'.³ He appears to have taken up residence in Harwich in April 1665 and was soon active in restoring the yard to a serviceable condition.⁴ Following the battle off Lowestoft in June 1665 many of the damaged ships were repaired at Harwich, but this yard was never to rival Chatham, or later Portsmouth, as a major dockyard. Taylor was essentially a practical man with little formal learning and unable to express himself about his craft, 'for it seems he cannot give a good account of what he doth as an Artist'.⁵ It is therefore not surprising that Taylor was not very familiar

¹ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.234, 2 October 1667.

² The choice of John Taylor caused some opposition in the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy. His nomination was discussed there on 14 November 1664 but it was several months before he was finally accepted, BM, Egerton MS.2543, f.144. Taylor had been recommended by Lawson, Penn and Mennes but was objected to because he had been a 'fanatic' (Batten having informed the Committee of this); the Duke of York supported his appointment and it was largely due to this that he was accepted, CSPD 1664-5, pp.68,75, 107, 129; Chappell, Shorthand Letters of Pepys, p.18. It was not until March 1665 that Taylor was free to take up his place, Diary, 15 March 1665.

³ PRO, SP29/104, f.104, 14 November 1664.

⁴ Part of his time at Harwich was spent in conflict with the Master Shipwright Anthony Deane, who had been promoted to Harwich on Pepys's recommendation; it is unlikely that this fact caused any serious disruption to the service. Tanner (ed), Further Correspondence of Pepys, pp.122-4.

⁵ Diary, 21 April 1666. When it came to making his accounts up for building the London he went about this 'dully ... and yet plaguy wise sayings will come from the man sometimes', Diary, 11 March 1667.

with the Duke's Instructions; indeed he may never have read them for on 10 February 1666 he received a rebuke from the Board. Taylor had advanced some proposals for the 'better regularity' of Harwich yard, but the 'same are already abundantly provided for in his Royal Highness's Instructions', and the Board advised Taylor to acquaint himself with the Instructions and ensure that they were carried out.¹ In the absence of other letters of reproach or complaint it must be assumed that Taylor performed his duties satisfactorily. During 1666 Taylor, while still looking after Harwich, was also engaged in building a second-rate, the Loyal London, at Deptford.² There is no hint of criticism from there, where Taylor was meeting the requirements of Rupert and Albemarle. In 1667 the financial situation affected Harwich, and Taylor wrote several letters to the Board on the state of the yard informing them that the service was at a standstill for want of stores and lack of credit. These letters were used, together with similar ones from Middleton, as evidence to emphasise to the King and the Duke the bankrupt state of naval affairs.³ There was little that Taylor could do except inform the Board of the situation. With the need for economy Harwich was an obvious yard to be run down, and on 15 December 1667 the Duke informed the Board of the King's decision to pay off the yard; only Deane was to be kept on there to ensure that the buildings and wharves were kept in good repair.⁴ In the following January Taylor was dismissed and his commission terminated.⁵

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.101, 10 February 1666.

² This ship was built to replace the previous London which had been blown up in 1664, but it too was destined for an unfortunate end when the Dutch entered the Medway, Catalogue, I, 226.

³ Tanner (ed) Further Correspondence of Pepys, pp.170-73.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/15, f.100, 15 December 1667. His retention was probably due to his friendship with Pepys.

⁵ PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.247, 3 January 1668.

Taylor's fellow resident Commissioner was Thomas Middleton, who has already been discussed in the role of Surveyor.¹ Middleton is often styled 'colonel', which was a relic of his service in the Parliamentary army, but beyond this there is nothing to illustrate his past career. Middleton took up his duties in November 1664 and, except for one or two short absences, he remained at Portsmouth throughout the war.² Because of the delay in issuing the patent, Middleton met with some 'obstruction' in performing his duty and had cause to 'repent of his sudden coming to Portsmouth, before his Instructions were finished'. Pepys had undertaken to send the Duke's instructions as soon as possible so that Middleton was equipped with the necessary authority to act.³ By all accounts Middleton was extremely able and active down at Portsmouth; he sent a stream of almost indecipherable letters to the Board on the state of the yard, the progress on ships, and eventually of the need for money to carry on the work. The majority of these letters are in the State Papers and are of ephemeral importance; they reveal a blunt, outspoken, character who seemed capable of taking strong and determined action.⁴ As with Taylor, there is no indication of any criticism of Middleton and, except for interruptions caused by the plague and later by shortage of money, he kept the yard in good order. Indeed his ability was recognised by his

¹ Supra. pp.266-75.

² His patent was issued on 3 January 1665, Bodl., Rawl.MS.A.216, f.277, and officially he was paid from that date, but as he had taken up his duties earlier, a special warrant was obtained from the Duke of York to pay him from 10 November 1664, NMM, LBK 8, f.217.

³ PRO, SP29/110, f.61, 10 January 1665.

⁴ CSPD 1664-5, p.192, 6 February 1665. Middleton believed that 1,000 men would desert when the ships came in to be cleaned and he recommended setting up a gallows in every town between Portsmouth and London and hanging every tenth man who departed without leave. In November 1665 a mutiny broke out in the yard because of unpaid wages, and Middleton seized a 'good cudgel' and set about the men and reported with satisfaction that he had not been troubled since. Supra. pp.267-8, CSPD 1665-6, pp.32, 53.

elevation from the resident Commissionership to Surveyor in 1667.

Middleton was succeeded at Portsmouth by the Master Shipwright John Tippetts, who had been appointed initially as a Commissioner without a specific location.¹ In this capacity he was allowed to sit at the Board on 3 March 1668 'as a Commissioner, in the room of Commissioner Pett'.² In July 1668 he was assigned to Portsmouth yard, where he remained as a resident Commissioner until he succeeded Middleton as Surveyor in 1672. Tippetts continued the purely professional aspect of the resident Commissioner, having been employed in the dockyard since before the Restoration. This practice was further continued when Anthony Deane succeeded Tippetts at Portsmouth in 1672. At Chatham the resident Commissionership was left vacant after the fall of Pett, but on 29 March 1669 Captain John Cox was appointed to that yard.³ Both he and his successor Richard Beach were seamen rather than shipbuilders. These appointments did not alter the position of resident Commissioners but confirmed their separation and subordination to the Navy Board. When the Third Dutch War opened the reduced importance of Harwich was testified by the decision not to appoint a resident Commissioner there. With Cox, then Middleton and Beach at Chatham, and Tippetts, then Deane, at Portsmouth, the major yards were adequately supervised.

In addition to the resident Commissioners, the yards were supervised by

¹ Bodl., Rawl.MS.A.216, f.125, 20 February 1668.

² Diary, 3 March 1668. This was to comply with the Order in Council of 2 October 1667, PRO, Adm.1/5246, f.234, which stated that Commissioners should not be tied down to any one yard, but the Order soon lapsed, *Supra*. p.267.

³ Catalogue, I, 15-16. At one point it was suggested that Cox and Tippetts were to alternate at Portsmouth and Chatham, but there is no indication that this was ever implemented. Diary, 8 February 1669. Cox was killed at the battle of Sole Bay in April 1672, and for the rest of the year Middleton took charge of the yard.

visits, or inspections, by members of the Navy Board. In the more distant yards these occurred three or four times a year and were usually associated with pays of ships and the yards, or surveys of the stores. In contrast the Thames yards, being directly under Navy Board supervision, were visited much more frequently. A clear picture of this type of supervision can be seen in 1662; by then the Navy Board had settled into their duties and had been given their Instructions in January. In his letter accompanying the Instructions the Duke of York told the Board to take an 'exact accompt of the behaviour of the several officers in the yards ...' and to dismiss the unnecessary or unfit workmen.¹ In April 1662 Batten went to Chatham, while Carteret, Penn and Pepys went down to Portsmouth to muster and pay the yard and to decide on some 'regulations' for its management.² After his return to London Pepys composed a letter to Portsmouth 'in those things wherein we ... did think to reforme'; this concerned the number of men listed as servants in the yard as well as the number of unnecessary workmen.³ The same problem was evident at Chatham; in August 1662 Pepys found 'great disorder by multitude of servants and old decrepitt men'.⁴ These discoveries led to a strong letter from the Navy Board to all the yards complaining about the 'remissness' of all the yard officers, and calling for strict observance of the Instructions, which had been sent to the yards at the beginning of the year.⁵ Members of the Navy Board visited Chatham in September, October and December 1662, and they were at Portsmouth in December; these visits were usually made to pay the yard or ships.⁶ During the same year at least ten visits were

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.66r, 24 January 1662.

² Diary, 21, 25, 29 April 1662.

³ Diary, 10 May 1662; PRO, Adm.106/2507, no.13, 10 May 1662.

⁴ Diary, 4 August 1662.

⁵ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.83, 21 August 1662.

⁶ Diary, 26 September, 7 October, 23, 24 December 1662.

made to Woolwich and seventeen to Deptford; apart from making pays, inspecting the stores and other unspecified business, Pepys displayed considerable zeal in trying to discover abuses in the yards. In July 1662 Coventry, Pett and Pepys were at Deptford and found 'much laziness' in the yard books and 'I do not perceive that there is one-third of their duties performed', Pepys hoped that Coventry 'will have things reformed'.¹ One of the initial problems in supervising the yards was that the members of the Board were not constantly present, and that even when they were their own knowledge of the abuses was limited. On 8 August 1662 Pepys 'surprized' Deptford by calling a muster, and he discovered many abuses which he hoped he would be able to 'understand hereafter and amend'.² The main problem was to try to ensure that, in the absence of a competent and trustworthy senior official, the standing officers carried out their duties adequately. An attempt to improve the administration of the yards was made by Pepys when he devised and introduced his 'call books'. The purpose of these books was to keep a distinct and separate account of all the work carried out in the yard. They were first introduced for a trial period at Deptford and Woolwich and were then extended to the other yards. These books did not solve the problem of supervision, but they were at least an attempt in the right direction and remained a permanent feature of dockyard administration.³

A similar pattern of supervision existed in 1663 when members of the Navy Board made five visits to Chatham, four to Portsmouth, about fourteen to Woolwich and twenty-three to Deptford. With the exception of the Thames

¹ Diary, 2 July 1662.

² Diary, 8 August 1662.

³ Diary, 24 October 1662; NMM, LBK 8, f.32, 23 December 1662; Diary, 20 February, 20 March, 13 July 1663.

yards, which might have received more frequent visits from individual members of the Board, it is unlikely that the other yards received very close supervision. This was a serious deficiency, particularly in the case of Portsmouth where there was no resident Commissioner. After the war the visits to the yard became even less frequent as no money was available to pay the yards or buy stores; thus two of the main reasons for going to the yards ceased to exist. In March 1669 Pepys, who had been a regular visitor to Deptford, revealed that he had 'walked to Deptford, where I have not been, I think, these twelve months'.¹ The situation changed with the advent of war; Portsmouth and Harwich had their resident Commissioners and members of the Board were sent for longer periods to assist the resident Commissioners in the preparing and repairing of the fleet. During 1665 Batten was sent to Harwich and Portsmouth, and Mennes, Penn and Brouncker were at Chatham, and occasionally at Portsmouth.² But the Thames yards received less attention because they were less important when the fleet was at sea, and in the summer of the war years the Thames yards had less work, apart from the receipt and distribution of stores. In the Third Dutch War members of the Board were again sent to the yards, Middleton went to Chatham (initially in his capacity as Surveyor and then as the resident Commissioner), and Tippetts visited Harwich. It would appear that in the war greater reliance was placed upon the resident Commissioners.

Apart from their personal visits, which were not particularly frequent, the main form of communication between the Navy Board and the yards was by correspondence. Clearly the vast majority of this correspondence was connected with routine affairs, such as the fitting out and repairing of ships, the use of stores, and a whole range of matters affecting the yard. The Navy Board also tried to supplement the 1662 Instructions by issuing

¹ Diary, 4 March 1669.

² Supra. pp.259, 307, 321.

a number of additional regulations, a few of which can be given as examples of this type of supervision. One way in which stores and money could be wasted was by unnecessary or over elaborate repairs; this had been brought to the Duke of York's attention and he ordered that no repairs were to be carried out unless a full estimate had been sent to, and approved by, him. In the case of small sums (although what constituted a small sum was not defined) the Navy Board could authorise the repairs themselves, but large items had to have the Duke's approval.¹ This was transmitted to the yards with a reminder that the Board wanted to be kept constantly informed about the condition of the ships when they entered, and remained in, the yards.² The Navy Board also tried to regularise the system of requesting stores for the yards; they decided that the senior officers, the Master Shipwright, Master Attendant and the Storekeeper should hold weekly meetings to decide on the requirements of the yard, and this would then be transmitted to the Board for approval.³ On other occasions the Board had to intervene to settle disputes between the yard officers. In 1663 there was a certain amount of ambiguity about the 1662 Instructions in relation to the 'disposal' of labourers in the yards. After consulting the Duke the Board decided that for routine business the labourers should be allocated their work by the Master Shipwright, but for the launching of a ship, which involved a large number of men, or when the 'safety' of the yard necessitated it, the Master Attendant was to direct the workmen.⁴ Another difficulty facing the Board in supervising the yards was in trying to ensure that the standing officers were honest in signing bills and receipts; this was also associated with the need to make the officers responsible for the stores entrusted

¹ PRO, Adm.2/1745, f.44, 23 May 1661.

² PRO, Adm.106/2507, no.6, 24 May 1661.

³ PRO, Adm.106/2507, no.15, 26 July 1662.

⁴ PRO, Adm.2/1740, f.146, 20 August 1663.

to them. The usual solution to this problem in all branches of naval administration was to make several individuals sign the respective bills, making them collectively responsible and encouraging them to keep a close watch on their associates. Although this had already been mentioned in the 1662 Instructions, it would appear that the yard officers had not always kept counter books or countersigned bills. In January 1664 the Board wrote to all the Clerks of the Cheque reminding them of their duty to keep a copy, or counter book, of the Storekeepers' issues and receipts.¹ These books were to be sent up quarterly to enable the Comptroller to check the storekeepers' accounts, but in view of the criticisms of the Comptroller's failure to audit the storekeepers' accounts, it is unlikely that this had much effect; at best it may have improved the diligence of the yard officers. A month later the Board directed the storekeepers to ensure that they signed all bills with the Clerks of the Cheque for stores and the movement of stores to other yards, as the practice had 'latterly been omitted'.²

Despite the evidence of visits to the yards and constant communications, there is still doubt as to whether the supervision exercised by the Navy Board over the dockyards was sufficient. It may be thought that this was not really practicable in view of the other duties performed by the members of the Board and because the resident Commissioners were supposed to perform this task; these were the reasons offered by Pepys in 1670 to the Commissioners of Public Accounts in reply to their seventh 'observation', which alleged that the Board had not issued sufficient directions to the 'inferior officers' in the yards.³ But as in many cases the Commissioners were unable to substantiate their observations by producing conclusive

¹ PRO, Adm.106/2507, no.23, 25 January 1664.

² PRO, Adm.49/132, no.28, 25 February 1664.

³ *Infra.* pp.493-5 ; BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32; Pepys MS.2874, f.444.

evidence of neglect. To a large extent the dockyards were regarded as being almost separate, or distinct, from the main stream of administrative activity. The dockyards formed a third element in naval affairs, but they were more closely involved with the ships themselves through repairs, preparation and dispatch to sea, than with the purely administrative side of naval business.

5. THE COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

In the four years following the end of the Second Dutch War, naval administration was under internal scrutiny from the Lord High Admiral and external examination from the Parliamentary Committee of Miscarriages and Commissioners of Public Accounts. The Duke of York's Letter of Reflections has been mentioned frequently, and the only administrative question to be discussed by the Committee of Miscarriages, the criticism of the ticket system, has also been mentioned.¹ The longest and potentially most troublesome investigation was by the Commissioners of Public Accounts. They were established by Act of Parliament in 'An Act for Taking Account of the Several Sums of Money mentioned therein' (19 & 20 Car. II c. 1), and their main purpose was to examine the manner in which the various grants of money for the war had been used.² The Commissioners were to present their report to the 'King's Majestie and to both Houses of Parliament if then sitting'. Although their primary concern was with the use of funds allocated for the war, their investigations were to include the making of contracts and the operation of the ticket system. The Commissioners were empowered to examine all naval accounts and to call before them any naval official, who was required to give evidence on oath; the penalty for refusing to co-operate was imprisonment. Although the Commissioners began work with a flourish of activity in January 1668, their report was not ready until September 1669 and was not considered

¹ *Supra*, pp. 415-22.

² Statutes of the Realm, V, 624. The Commissioners appointed were Lord Brereton, William Pierpont, Sir George Savile, Giles Dunster, Sir James Langham, Henry Osborne, Sir William Turner, George Tompson (Thomson) and John Gregory.

by the King and Council until January 1670. The Commissioners began by asking the Navy Board to provide information about the number of ships in service and in port in September 1664, the rate and number of men carried, the length of time the ships had been in service, the stores in stock in September 1664 and those bought during the war, and for any other 'circumstances' which the Board thought should be known.¹ It was obvious that the Commissioners wanted a large amount of information and the Board decided to pass the questions to its relevant members. The Treasurer, with assistance from the Clerks of the Cheque, was to reply about the ships and their length of service; the Surveyor and Comptroller were to deal with the stores in hand before and after the war, and those expended during the war, and the Clerk of the Acts was to provide a list and full details of contracts.² On 7 February 1668 a total of 165 sea books, 3 contract books, 3 order books, 12 bill books from Mennes, and 11 other books from Brouncker were delivered to the Commissioners by Pepys. The Board asked that the books should be returned immediately as they were in constant use, and the Commissioners should either examine or 'transcribe' them at the Navy Office; the contract books were sent back on 14 February.³ During the next few months the Commissioners received a further 168 sea books, several of the Treasurer's ledgers, a copy of the Lord High Admiral's Instructions, and the orders for payments in course.⁴ Pepys was usually responsible for sending the various books and he was also questioned by the Commissioners on several occasions. Because of his desire to be on good terms with influential people, Pepys paid a visit to Colonel Thomson, as 'I would be glad to have a

¹ PRO, Adm.106/15, f.243, 21 January 1668.

² PRO, Adm.106/2886, not foliated, 28 January 1668.

³ PRO, Adm.106/2886, 7, 14 February 1668.

⁴ PRO, Adm.106/2886, 21 February 4, 10, 12 March 1668.

good understanding with him'.¹ His visits to the Commissioners involved a considerable amount of work in answering their questions and providing information, and by 16 February he was weary of being 'forced to dance after them'.² Throughout this period Pepys was aware that, although he was often treated with great respect by the Commissioners, his main task was to avoid revealing the defects of the Navy Board as a whole and to defend his own position should some of his colleagues fall. At the same time as they were examining the Navy Board's books, the Commissioners looked for additional information relating to tickets. For this purpose they had an office near Bishopsgate Street 'to receive complaints of all people about tickets: and I believe he will have work enough':³ Pepys also heard that the merchants Captain Cocke and Sir William Warren were being asked for evidence; the former on the distribution of prize goods, and the latter for 'what presents' had been made to members of the Board.⁴ Warren was also investigated for the 'commission' awarded to him to bring back timber from Hamburg, which also involved Carteret and Coventry; Pepys noted that one of the Commissioners, Lord Halifax (Sir George Savile) 'was industrious on my side, in behalf of his uncle Coventry'.⁵ The question of Warren's commission was to cause considerable embarrassment to the Board, although in itself it does not appear to have been a particularly serious matter. Coventry was 'much concerned' and 'troubled', and during August

¹ Diary, 14 February 1668.

² Diary, 17 February 1668.

³ Diary, 31 January 1668.

⁴ Diary, 3, 25 February 1668.

⁵ Diary, 3 July 1668.

and September 1668 the Commissioners were pressing for a satisfactory answer to their enquiries. On 5 and 26 August and 16 September, they complained that the Board had not answered them.¹ This was the first indication that the members of the Navy Board were trying to hold up the investigation by delaying their replies. In February 1669 Pepys thought it expedient to remind his colleagues of the need to answer the Commissioners 'whom we have neglected, and I have done this as a record in my justification hereafter, when it shall come to be examined'.² In his letter he reminded the Board that the Commissioners had 'several times' demanded answers and he urged the Board to set a date for the completion of their replies.³ A second reason for the delay in the Board's answer lays in the inadequacy of some of its members; answers from Carteret were described as 'imperfect', but more damaging was the 'weakness in Sir John Mennes'. This has been mentioned before, and the failure of Pepys, Brouncker and Wren to get Mennes 'eased of an office wherein his infirmities render his continuance unsafe to his Majesty as well as burdensome to the Board', led to Pepys's fear that the Board would be unable to give the Commissioners 'any laudable reply'.⁴ The Board was guilty of further delays and in July 1669 Pepys again reminded his colleagues of the need to compose the Board's reply to the 'demands of the Commissioners of Accounts, some of which have been with us more than a year and half'; he proposed that the Board should decide speedily on either a joint reply or allow each member to make an individual answer.⁵ Pepys sent a letter to the Commissioners in August 1669, which

¹ PRO, Adm.106/16, f.348, 5 September; f.377, 26 August 1668; Adm.106/17, f.3, 16 September 1668.

² Diary, 9 February 1669.

³ NMM, LBK 8, f.572, 9 February 1669.

⁴ NMM, LBK 8, f.581, 11 March 1669.

⁵ NMM, LBK 8, f.618, 24 July 1669.

related to points concerning him and his involvement in the sale of provisions, particularly flags, to the navy, but there is no record of the other members making any reply to the Commissioners.¹ The Commissioners of Accounts completed their report on the basis of the information collected from the large number of Navy Office books which they had examined, and from the evidence collected from individual members of the Board and those who had been concerned with naval contracts, prizes and finances in general. The report was ready in September 1669 and was to be laid before the forthcoming session of Parliament; the Commissioners sent a copy to the Navy Board and asked that they should reply with haste.² At this time Pepys had obtained permission to visit France, and the reply to the Commissioners' report was left until his return at the end of October 1669; his answer was completed by the end of November and sent to the Commissioners on 29 November.³ In the context of the political climate the report of the Commissioners of Accounts turned out to be a great disappointment for the opposition. In November 1669 the Commons were sufficiently roused to condemn Carteret for the disorder in his accounts. This has been described as 'genuine "country" indignation', but after several debates he was suspended from the House by a small majority (100 to 97); it was left to the Lords to conduct a more thorough examination of his accounts and Carteret's explanations were finally accepted.⁴ The report of the Commissioners of Accounts was not discussed in the first few weeks of the session, perhaps because they had not received the Navy Board's reply in time. Relations between the two Houses became strained and then reached

¹ NMM, LBK 8, f.622, 18 August 1669.

² Pepys MS.2554, not foliated, 29 September 1669.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.387.

⁴ Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, pp.93-4.

deadlock over Skinner's case, which meant that there was no opportunity to discuss the report before the session was prorogued on 11 December 1669.¹ This probably pleased the King and the Navy Board, who were then able to discuss the report, and the Board's reply, in the friendlier atmosphere of the Council chamber during the prorogation of Parliament.

The report of the Commissioners of Accounts consisted of eighteen Articles or 'observations', and these will be discussed in conjunction with the Navy Board's reply and the ensuing debate before the King in Council. As a preliminary to the discussion of the main report, the first two weeks of January 1670 were devoted to clearing up certain points relating to Carteret's accounts; this was done in association with the Lords Committee. On 5 January Pepys appeared as an able defender of the former Treasurer, and on 10 January the Navy Board was ordered to appear before the King in Council to present their answer to the observations of the Commissioners of Accounts.² Before the Council met Pepys had an audience with the King, and he requested permission to use the argument of the weakness 'both of mind and body' of Mennes as an excuse for some of the failings of the Board. He was careful to add that he would mention Mennes with 'tenderness' and would recollect the past services of the Comptroller; the suggestion was supported by the Duke of York and then approved by the King.³ The meeting on 10 January proved to be a false start, for the Commissioners of Accounts,

¹ Haley, First Earl of Shaftesbury, p.274.

² Pepys MS.2874, ff.388-94.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.395.

with Lord Brereton as their spokesman, asked for a postponement as they had not yet been able to make use of the replies sent by the Navy Board. This request was granted on condition that the Commissioners should declare openly which parts of their report had been satisfactorily answered by the Navy Board. It was agreed that the Commissioners would be ready in a week's time and that in the interval they would call the Navy Board before them to discuss the Board's answers. Two days later the members of the Navy Board attended the Commissioners at their meeting place, Brook House, but on this occasion they lacked unity and were unprepared. The exception was Pepys, who was determined not to be found guilty through what he regarded to be the incompetence and foolishness of his colleagues, especially Mennes. Brouncker and Mennes were asked, on oath, whether the 'general answer' of the Board, which had been sent by Pepys, was true, and they agreed it was, although Mennes 'had not seen one word of it'. Pepys confused the entire proceedings by stating that the answer was his personal reply and was not intended to represent the whole Board. This point was not taken up by the Commissioners, who, together with the other members of the Board, had assumed that Pepys had written on behalf of all his colleagues, and this assumption was still adhered to despite Pepys's remark and the fact that additional papers were presented by Mennes and Brouncker.¹

On 17 January the King and Council again met with the Commissioners of Accounts and the Navy Board and a start was made by reading the first observation in the report. The burden of presenting the Commissioners' report fell on Lord Brereton and Colonel Thomson. The latter, having been a Commonwealth Commissioner of the Navy, liked to assume expert knowledge.

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.396-98. The following discussion is based on three main sources, the Report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts, BM.Add.MS.9,311, f.32 also PRO, Adm.106/18, ff.416-21; the written reply sent by Pepys to the Commissioners, Pepys MS.2554, not foliated; and a lengthy account of the consideration of the Report before the King and Council. Pepys MS.2874, ff.385-504. A summary of the proceedings has been given by Bryant, Pepys, The Years of Peril, pp.31-6, but this is excessive in its praise of Pepys and in places is misleading.

and only very occasionally did other members of the Commission intervene. The first observation related to contracts which had been made in July and August 1664 with Sir William Warren for a supply of 'Gottenburg' and New England masts.¹ The Commissioners alleged that these contracts had not been completed because not all the masts had been delivered and those which had been were 'unserviceable'. They also claimed that the Navy Board had not taken any action against the contractor for these failings; instead, 'great sums of money have been impressed' to him.² In defence of the Navy Board Pepys read his written answer, which had been sent to the Commissioners in November 1669. This was the answer which Pepys claimed to be his personal reply, but it was read and regarded 'as if it were the general answer of the Board'. Pepys stated that, according to the Duke of York's Instructions, the supervision of contracts and the inspection of the stores was the responsibility of the Surveyor and his subordinates. He challenged the 'whole world' to show any occasion when the Board had ordered the acceptance of materials which had been certified as unfit by the Surveyor or his officers.³ Pepys also pointed out that certain complaints had been made against the performance of Warren's contracts in 1665, and the Duke of Albemarle, acting in the Lord High Admiral's absence, had ordered an enquiry by the Navy Board, which resulted in them declaring that Warren was not 'chargeable with any failure'. With regard to the amount of money said to have been impressed to Warren, it was stated that when the credit of the Navy Board had been so low it had been impossible

¹ Supra.pp.370-73, the contract in July 1664 was described by Pepys as 'the biggest that ever was made in the navy', Diary, 21 July 1664.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, First Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the First Observation.

to pay for goods in any other way than by bills of imprest. The debate was then opened between Brereton and Pepys, with the King occasionally coming to the assistance of the Board. This was evident when Brereton objected to the cost involved in sending an escort to bring Warren's timber back to England; the King pointed out that this protection had been requested by several merchants and that about forty ships were brought back at the same time.¹ Having been checked on this point, the Commissioners returned to criticise the size of the masts; they said that the majority were too small and that the stores had become 'clogged' with useless small masts. Thomson tried to demonstrate his knowledge of naval affairs by saying, 'ignorantly' thought Pepys, that there was more use for large than small masts, but his argument was 'run' down by Admiral Sir Jeremy Smith, the Comptroller of the Victualler's Accounts. Brereton tried to substantiate the criticism by producing an 'affidavit' from former Commissioner Pett, in which he complained of the size of the masts and of the 'illness of this contract'. This gave Pepys the opportunity to comment on the unfairness of the Act establishing the Commissioners because it contained no rules to govern their investigations. He said it was unjust that those who were accused had no opportunity to confront their accuser at the time of giving evidence, but on the point in question he was able to produce a memorandum by the Navy Board stating that Warren had satisfactorily performed the contract, and this memorandum had been signed by Pett. This destroyed the Commissioners' evidence and the King noted the 'villainy and hypocrisy of Pett'.²

The Commissioners moved onto another tack by producing an affidavit from Wood, one of Warren's rivals in the mast trade, which alleged that the masts could have been bought at better terms. Pepys replied that Wood had been

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.399-401.

² Pepys MS.2874, ff.401-2.

invited to tender for masts but had not done so, and that he had always resented the way in which Warren had been awarded Navy Board contracts 'so that he hath evermore endeavoured to bring disgrace upon this Contract'. Finally, on this observation, the Commissioners stated that offers had been made to supply masts at cheaper rates 'upon condition', but at this point the King intervened decisively to say that these offers were made on condition that the merchants should be allowed to trade with the Dutch during the war. This effectively silenced any further comment, and the day ended in 'perfect satisfaction' to the King, the Navy Board and 'all bystanders'.¹

On 20 January the debate on the first observation was resumed, with the Commissioners raising similar objections to the second contract made with Warren during August 1664. However, before they could begin the Commissioners were thrown onto the defensive when Pepys declared that the Act of Parliament establishing the Commissioners had limited their enquiries to five headings 'by the names of negligence, abuses, frauds, exactions and defaults', and he asked which of these was to be applied to the delays in performing Warren's contract that had been caused by 'the dangers of the sea and want of convoy'.² The Commissioners were startled, and answered that their report was a series of observations and was not intended as a judgement, but the King and Pepys said that the report was commonly regarded as a judgement on the Navy Board. The King then expressed 'great resentment' at the proceedings of the Commissioners. Returning to Warren's contracts, the Commissioners, in answer to a question from the King, were unable to prove how the navy had suffered from the lack of any particular size of mast. Pepys was concerned that the Commissioners could justifiably blame the Board for

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.403-4.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.421.

having bought too many large masts which were, by his own admission, lying 'useless'. The Commissioners did not seize this opportunity and adhered to their original objection to the number of small masts in the stores. Pepys's defence, which would have been that it was the duty of the Board to make provision in advance for all possible requirements, was therefore not needed.¹ After a rambling and somewhat irrelevant exchange on the question of importing iron ore from Sweden, the Commissioners turned to the last part of the first observation which related to the bills of imprest that had been given to Warren. Pepys replied that there were many reasons, in addition to the payment for contracts, why bills of imprest were used, and in Warren's case the merchant had always been owed more than double the value of the imprests given to him. In passing, Pepys mentioned that Warren's accounts were not yet finished; this gave the Commissioners an opportunity to comment on the delays, but Pepys was able to excuse this by citing the incapacity of Mennes, who was responsible for inspecting and completing these accounts.² Still on the question of imprests, the Duke of York proposed that part of Pepys's answer, which compared the use of imprests with the practice during the first Dutch War, should be read in order to demonstrate that the situation had not deteriorated as much as was commonly alleged. This forced Thomson to admit that at the end of the Commonwealth period there was a shortage of money payments had been bad, and this had led to the extensive use of imprests. Pepys was not slow to make the point that the same difficulty had forced the Navy Board to use imprests in the last war.³

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.406-8.

² Pepys MS.2874, ff.409-15.

³ Pepys MS.2874, ff.415-17.

The Commissioners then proceeded to read the second observation; this stated that a large amount of money had been used to hire merchant shipping to bring home goods which should, by the terms of the contracts, have been delivered to the stores at very little transportation cost to the King.¹ They cited 10,000 tons of shipping which had been hired to carry masts and other goods. In his written reply, Pepys, while not quoting his reasons, doubted the accuracy of the figure of 10,000 tons, but in his main point he suggested that the Commissioners had confused the terms of several contracts for masts which had been made before and during the war, as in the later contracts it had been thought advantageous, because of the need for speed, security and the lower rates of pay in the King's ships, to use hired ships instead of relying on the merchant to deliver the masts directly to the stores.² In reading his answer at the Council Pepys expanded his argument by showing that the wages paid to able seamen in the King's ships were 24s. per month, while those in merchant ships were able to command wages of 40s. and 50s. during the war. He further stated that the Navy Board had debated the matter fully and had decided that their principal concern was to obtain the masts, and hiring ships was the best way to do this.³ The Commissioners did not try to dispute these reasons but alleged that the cost of hiring ships had been excessive, amounting to £30,000 or £40,000. Pepys countered by saying that the Board had deducted any part of the cost which should have been borne by the merchants, and that the main reason for this sum was that the hired ships

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Second Observation.

² Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Second Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2874, ff.418-20.

had been forced to wait for a considerable time before an escort could be sent to them. Even when allowance is made for the fact that the transcript of these proceedings was made by Pepys, who was bound to favour his own arguments, it does not appear that the Commissioners were able to substantiate this particular observation.

The Commissioners were unexpectedly called before the King and Council on the following day, 21 January, but Pepys missed this meeting because of his 'endeavours of seeing du Vall carried to his execution I happened to come after the business was over'.¹ The meeting had been concerned with the King expressing 'resentment' at the Commissioners of Accounts for having implied that he had diverted 'so many £100,000's to other uses than the war', yet they had neither substantiated nor withdrawn their implication.

Brereton agreed to look at this matter again and promised that the Commissioners would make a further report in a week's time. The subject was resumed on 28 January with a 'great audience' present, but the session was not particularly satisfactory to the King as the Commissioners neither retracted nor proved their implication, and their additional paper only seemed to repeat their doubts that the King had not spent all the funds which had been voted for the war on the navy. The ensuing debate was equally unhelpful to the King, and in private Pepys was forced to admit doubt about the navy's ability to demonstrate that the £500,000 had actually been spent on the preparations for the war.² The question was left unresolved and it was decided that the Lord Keeper would mention some of the King's arguments in his speech at the re-opening of Parliament. Pepys felt that the King and his supporters had reason to be 'exceedingly

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.422.

² Pepys MS.2874, ff.429-34.

dissatisfied with this night's work'.

In the meantime the Commissioners had started to discuss their third observation, which stated that the Navy Board had signed the Treasurer's ledgers even though the date on which the bills had been passed had not been stated. This meant that the ledgers were 'rendered untrue in fact', thus preventing the Commissioners from ascertaining whether preference had been given in payment.¹ It was also stated that the Board had passed bills in one year which had then been charged to the previous year's accounts. To the first part of this observation Pepys replied that nowhere was the Board required to take note of the date of the Treasurer's payments, this had never been done in the past and was impractical; the Commissioners 'answered with silence'. The Commissioners made no direct answer to the rest of Pepys's comments, except to say that they thought it their duty to 'represent' matters which they thought to be unsatisfactory; the King noted the haste with which the Commissioners gave 'judgement upon men before they were heard'.² This appears to have been the main defect and weakness in the proceedings of the Commissioners of Accounts. They were so intent on finding fault with the administration, that they had put forward their observations without having fully considered the answers of the Navy Board. They were also not sufficiently prepared to counter Pepys's replies. Consequently the Commissioners often lost the initiative when their report was being considered, and they were forced onto the defensive, and sometimes into silence, when faced with Pepys's answers. The Commissioners also made a serious tactical error in the terminology of their report. They had used the word 'observation' rather than 'accusation' or 'charge', knowing that

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Third Observation.

² Pepys MS.2874, ff.424-5.

their report would be commonly thought to have the weight of a series of accusations, but they were unable to substantiate their observations in the light of Pepys's answers. This made them look foolish and exposed them to the King's anger and ridicule. The Commissioners would have been on much stronger ground had they debated the report in the Commons, or if they had taken the Navy Board's answers into consideration, and only proceeded with those observations which could have been proved as accusations. If, on the other hand, it was sufficient for the Commissioners to have embarrassed the government by investigating the Navy Board, then they had had some success, as the distinction between observation and accusation was not generally appreciated, and the King was forced to complain that his officers were being held guilty without their defences having been considered. The main effect of the Commissioners' report was that their observations had a superficial attraction, and the suggestion of malpractice was nearly as damaging as the proof. A second suggestion, which was implicit in the proceedings of the Commissioners but which was not stated openly, was that the management of naval affairs had been much more effective under the Commonwealth than in the recent Dutch War. Pepys complained that the best aspects of the Commonwealth period were being compared with the worst features of the recent administration, but that no allowance was being made for the difficulties experienced in recent operations.

After this exchange the Commissioners left the third observation and proceeded with the next one, which related to the passage of imprests. It stated that the Navy Board had signed complete bills, as well as bills of imprest for the same item, thereby risking loss of money if the 'party that receives it should prove insolvent', and that even if it was repaid

the King would have lost the use of it in the meantime.¹ Pepys denied that this practice had ever damaged the King, and Brouncker added that the whole sum involved did not exceed £1,000 and that, as all parties involved were very solvent, there was no danger of the King losing anything. Once again the Commissioners were not able to challenge this reply; they said 'it was their duty to lay the whole before his Majesty as they found it, and that indeed they had not yet time to examine these matters and our answers ...'.² This left a position of stalemate on the fourth observation with the Commissioners neither accepting nor rejecting the Navy Board's reply.

Consideration of the report was resumed on 1 February when the fifth observation was read; this stated that the Navy Board had signed the Treasurer's books even though they contained several sums which had not previously been approved by the Board. This was said to be contrary to the fourteenth Article of the Instructions to the Navy Board 'jointly considered'; the sums involved amounted to over £50,000.³ In reply Pepys read, and then elaborated upon, his written answer. He pointed out that it had never been the practice of their predecessors to do this (this was a defence which he had not thought satisfactory when it had been used by several of his colleagues in answer to the Duke of York's Letter of Reflections in 1668), and that in any case the only occasions when the Board had not cancelled warrants or bills at the signing of the Treasurer's accounts, as required in the 1662 Instructions, was when no such warrant or bill existed.⁴ Once again the Commissioners did not follow

¹ BM. Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Fourth Observation.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.428.

³ BM. Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Fifth Observation.

⁴ Pepys MS.2874, ff.435-6.

up this reply and proceeded immediately to the sixth observation. In this members of the Board were alleged to have passed bills for 'very great sums of money' and had signed the Treasurer's ledgers for them when no mention had been made either of the 'service or species or quantity' or of the stores into which the goods had been delivered. With this observation the Commissioners gave the example of bills paid to the navy agent at Plymouth, Mr. Lanyon, to support their case.¹ The Board denied that bills had ever been sent to Lanyon from the Navy office which did not contain full information, and in the absence of any further evidence Pepys was content with the simple denial of the truth of this observation.² The Commissioners countered by saying that they had several other examples at hand, but they were reminded of an earlier request that they should state what their other examples were so that the Board could provide a satisfactory explanation. Brereton said 'we should have them before they had finished their examinations and before we should be called to answer them elsewhere', which indicated that the Commissioners wanted the final and, presumably, successful acceptance of the report to be left to the Commons.³ The Commissioners were pressed to give further evidence and they produced two further papers, but on examination these proved to be inconclusive and Pepys turned to the attack by asking what damage the King had suffered by this practice. The King usually supported Pepys over this type of comment and he 'took notice largely of their so frequent acknowledging their unreadiness to make good and want of examination of

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Sixth Observation.

² Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Sixth Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.439.

their full matters wherewith they charge us, as so many crimes'.¹ As usual the Commissioners protested that their report was simply a series of observations which required to be answered, and that these should not be taken as judgements; they were also unable to demonstrate how the service had suffered as a result of the omission mentioned in their observation.

By 5 February the Commissioners reached their seventh observation, which alleged that the Navy Board had neglected to examine the proceedings of their under officers in the management of the King's affairs, and in particular they had not ensured that the storekeepers had kept a record of goods received. It was further stated that in some cases goods had been accepted without a contract having been made, and that in other cases the Board had not supplied the storekeepers with a copy of the contracts. This meant that the storekeepers had been unable to certify whether the goods were according to contract, and that the Board could ignore defects and give what price they pleased to the 'prejudice' of the King's affairs.² In his written reply Pepys expressed confidence that the Board could show that they had taken action against any of their under officers when cases of neglect had been brought to their attention, and that they had punished offenders by loss of pay, deprivation of office, and in some cases by imprisonment.³ Once again he complained that the Commissioners had not given any specific examples of this abuse, and he had therefore been prevented from giving them complete satisfaction. He admitted that during the last war members of the Board had not visited the 'out ports' as often as they should, but this was because of the volume of business

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.441.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Seventh Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.444.

in London, and, in any case, the appointment of resident Commissioners at Portsmouth and Harwich, in addition to Chatham, had ensured that these ports were supervised. Having learned from past experience the Commissioners produced a list which purported to substantiate this observation; but upon examination Pepys declared it contained 'nothing' except a few instances of 'double entries', and he challenged the Commissioners to prove any instance of the Board's failure to examine and punish negligent officials.¹ To the second part of the observation, which related to the storekeepers not having kept a record of goods received, Pepys asked for examples to be given, 'to which they answered that they were not yet prepared to show any but were upon examination thereof which is their constant answer, and to which I always reply by taking notice of their charging us only with possible evils rather than not at all, where they want actual ones ...'.² The Commissioners were more prepared for this argument by now, and they produced a list enumerating a number of occasions on which goods had been received without a contract having been made. Contrary to his usual practice Pepys, much to his subsequent regret because he omitted several points, did not read his prepared answer. He admitted that several items had been bought without a formal contract being made, but pointed out that there was nothing unusual in this as the Navy Board was allowed to obtain materials by awarding commissions, or through the use of purveyors, and that this had often been done in the past. The Commissioners argued that this was a contradiction of the Board's general Instructions and would allow them to dispense with the 1662 Instructions as they pleased. Pepys denied that this was the case, and stated that it was the Board's duty to ensure

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.444.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.445.

that the service was supplied with materials, even if it meant going outside a narrow interpretation of the Instructions; he was supported in this by the King.¹ Pepys admitted that the 1662 Instructions were based on those of 1640, and that as such they were inappropriate for the increased work of the Navy Board. This might have been taken as a serious weakness in the constitution of the Navy Board, or as a reflection on the inadequacy of the 1662 Instructions, but the point was not taken up by the Commissioners, most probably because it was beyond the scope of their investigation and would have certainly led to a more direct confrontation with the King and Duke of York. The third point made by the Commissioners was that the Navy Board had not sent copies of contracts to the storekeepers, and as proof they produced another list of examples. These turned out to be a series of warrants for the receipt of goods where no initial contract had been made, and related to goods delivered by the purveyors.² This exchange left the Commissioners without a reply, and they were forced to admit that they had not properly examined the Board's answers and were therefore unable to prove this observation. The Commissioners appeared even more foolish because they had presented additional papers to support their claims, and these had been disproved by Pepys.

On 7 February there was a digression while Pepys proved to Thomson that the Commonwealth, as well as the King, had paid parish duties on behalf of their servants. This was a relatively minor point but it again demonstrates that the Commissioners were not very strong in some of their facts. Consideration was then given to the eighth observation, which

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.446-8.

² Pepys MS.2874, ff.449-52.

alleged that the Navy Board had not taken an annual survey of the stores, and therefore did not know what was in hand or what was needed.¹ This observation was certainly very telling. Before the Dutch War Pepys had often commented on the poor way in which the surveys had been conducted, and in the 1668 Letter of Reflections he had accused the Comptroller and Surveyor of neglect in this.² There was no doubt as to the general validity of this observation, and Pepys had to exercise all his knowledge of naval affairs, as well as the art of rhetoric, to offer an acceptable explanation. He began with a lengthy exposition on the nature of the work involved, the many different types of stores, and the increased amount of work during the war, which was made more difficult by the constant arrival and issuing of materials from the stores.³ Pepys then turned to his written answer, which he expanded in delivery, and in it admitted that no survey of the stores had been taken. He tried to demonstrate how this was impossible during the war and that its omission had not had disastrous consequences for the service.⁴ Pepys next pointed out that a survey had just been taken, but that even in a peacetime situation, it was still not finished after five months' work, which gave added weight to his argument that, with the heavy duties of all members of the Board in wartime, it would have been completely impossible to have undertaken a survey at that time. So far as the balancing of the storekeepers' accounts was concerned, he pointed out that this was the responsibility of the Comptroller, who, it was admitted, had not discharged his duty. Pepys

¹ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Eighth Observation.

² *Supra* pp.221, 233-4, 255-60, 264. PRO, Adm.49/54, f.115.

³ Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Eighth Observation.

⁴ Pepys MS.2874, ff.457-8.

explained that Mennes' failure was due partly to his 'age and sickness' and partly to the volume of other tasks, and that for his failings had 'humbly submitted to his Majesty's indulgence'.¹ Pepys then went on to demonstrate how the Board as a whole had been conscious of this neglect; the storekeepers had been pressed to prepare their accounts, and in 1666 and 1667 there had been attempts to relieve Mennes of part of his duty. The Commissioners suggested that the failure to balance the accounts had increased the possibility of embezzlement. This was certainly a problem, but it is unlikely that balanced accounts would have been of any use in recovering goods already embezzled, and, as Pepys pointed out, there were other ways of securing the stores against embezzlement; for example, by making the storekeepers, the clerks of the cheque, and the porters in the yards responsible for security. Pepys stated that a comparison with former naval administrations would show that no balance of the storekeepers' accounts had ever been undertaken, and he appealed to Thomson, who had claimed to have looked into naval administration as far back as Elizabeth's reign, to state whether any such balance had ever been taken.² Pepys moved to the last part of his answer, which stated that the Board had always been well informed about the needs of the stores, that they had done their best to obtain materials, and that the absence of balanced storekeepers' accounts had in no way prevented this.³ Finally, he brought to the Council's attention the fact that, in November 1668 the Duke of York had called for a full examination and balance of the stores to be made, and in February 1669 further assistance had been given to the Comptroller to carry

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.459.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.462.

³ Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Eighth Observation.

this out, and it was hoped that the results of this survey would soon be at hand.¹ It would appear that Pepys had held the floor for quite some time, and his answer had probably either convinced or confused the Council. The consideration of this observation ended with the 'King and Lords expressing full satisfaction in this matter and the Commissioners of Accounts offering nothing in reply ...' except 'they thought it was their duty' to show that these particulars had not been performed.² This discussion again revealed that one of the weaknesses of naval administration was that the 1662 Instructions had not been modified in the light of experience and the growth of the navy. It also showed that, even when the Commissioners of Accounts were able to demonstrate a failure on the part of the Navy Board, they were unable to take full advantage of their point because of the eloquence of Pepys and the strength of his answers. It also showed that the Commissioners were still unable to reply to the answer sent to them by Pepys in November 1669, which he used as the basis of his answers at the Council. The Commissioners were also at a disadvantage as the King was always ready to come to the aid of the Navy Board, and he did not disguise his hostility to the form in which the Commissioners had presented their report, or to their inability to substantiate some of their observations.

The King called for the ninth observation to be read; this stated that neither the Navy Board nor their clerks had mustered the fleet once in every three months, as required by the 1662 Instructions.³ This was not a serious observation and was quickly dealt with by Pepys when he showed that the Commissioners had not fully quoted the Article of the Instructions, which required the Board to conduct these musters only when Muster Masters had not been appointed for this purpose, and during the last Dutch War at first five

¹ Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Eighth Observation.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.463.

³ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Ninth Observation.

and then nine Muster Masters had been appointed. Some cases of neglect had been discovered among the Muster Masters, but these had been reported to the Lord High Admiral, and the Board had supplemented the Muster Masters by conducting additional musters themselves. The King pressed home the success of the answer by remarking to Thomson that he should 'be once in his life ingenious and own his being satisfied'.¹

The Council immediately proceeded to the tenth observation, which stated that the Navy Board had passed the boatswains' and carpenters' accounts without having first compared them with the pursers' books, and that they had also neglected to compare the pursers' books with those of the slopsellers, thereby facilitating the embezzlement of stores and clothes.² To the first point Pepys said that the Board as a whole was not required to act as a check on these accounts; it was the duty of the Surveyor alone to oversee these matters. It was, however, admitted that this had not been done very well in the past and the Duke of York had demanded a better performance in the future. This was accepted as satisfactory and was not pressed further. With regard to the question of the pursers and slopsellers, it was said that the slopsellers were not the King's officers and were more likely to be in league with the pursers in any cases of embezzlement, and in any event the Board was not required to compare these accounts. The Commissioners received these answers in silence and the proceedings broke up 'with most ample satisfaction'.³

Consideration of the report was resumed on 12 February when the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth observations were taken together as they all related to the use, and alleged abuse, of the ticket system; these observations

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.463.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Tenth Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.464.

have been considered previously in the context of seamen's pay.¹

After somewhat lengthy exchanges on the question of tickets the Commissioners proceeded to their fourteenth observation, in which they said that, because of the Navy Board's failure to prevent the pursers being given money instead of victuals, men on some ships had been put on short allowances.² It was accepted that some ships, including those in the Channel, had been on short allowances and that this was not a good thing, but Pepys disagreed that it had been caused by giving the pursers money instead of victuals. He thought this had been caused by a number of reasons, deficiencies in the victualling system, throwing victuals and casks overboard when ships were cleared for action, and by the large number of supernumeraries carried in the fleet, and that much of the responsibility for this failing lay with the commanders of individual ships rather than with the Navy Board.³ Lord Brereton countered by saying that their general Instructions directed the Board to keep a watch over their inferior officers, and this included the pursers. Pepys retorted that this was impossible because of the number of ships involved and because they were victualled at several different ports. He further argued that the Commissioners in the out ports and the victualling agents should have reported any abuses to the Board. It had often happened that the ships were ordered to be victualled for long periods and, because they were unable to hold all the victuals, the pursers had to be given money in lieu. This observation led to another clash between Pepys and Thomson, the latter implying that things had been managed better under the Commonwealth, but nothing of substance resulted from this disagreement,

¹ Supra. pp.418-23.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Fourteenth Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Fourteenth Observation.

and Pepys ended by saying that he could not understand why the Commissioners blamed any faults in this connection on the Navy Board.¹

Although the next session of Parliament had opened on 14 February 1670, it did not interfere with the consideration of the report of the Commissioners of Accounts; this had been in progress since 17 January and when discussion was resumed on 17 February they had reached the fifteenth observation. This stated that the Navy Board had purchased materials at excessive prices; hemp, which had reached £57 per ton, was cited as an example.² There can be little doubt about the accuracy of this observation, but it was the extent to which the Navy Board itself could be held responsible which was at stake. In his written answer Pepys certainly accepted that the Board had been forced to pay excessive prices, but he argued it was imperative that the service should not be hindered because of the lack of materials. In this connection he quoted a letter from the Duke of York which urged the Board to obtain supplies and warned that that 'too great husbandry and thrift' would not be an acceptable excuse in the event of any 'miscarriage'.³ In order to justify the Board having paid such high prices, Pepys returned to the old problem of the shortage of money, and he was able to quote from letters which had been sent to the King, the Duke of York, the Lord Treasurer, and then to the Treasury Commissioners, which pointed out the full extent of the problem. In particular he quoted at length from the Board's letter of 12 May 1666 to the Duke of York.⁴ Pepys again tried to

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.480-83.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Fifteenth Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.485.

⁴ NMM, LBK 8, f.394, 12 May 1666.

show that the common assumption, and accusation, that the Commonwealth administration had been more efficient was not always correct, and pointed out that in the first Dutch War higher prices had been paid for cordage, tar and pitch than in the last war.¹ The Commissioners responded by producing examples of higher prices which had been paid before the earliest letter mentioned by Pepys, and said that private merchants had bought materials throughout the war at lower prices than the navy. Pepys offered to look for earlier examples of the Board complaining of this problem, but he said that in 1665 many of their comments on this matter had been made verbally. He was not able to answer on behalf of private merchants and could only repeat that the lack of money forced the navy to pay higher prices. This observation ended with the King declaring his full satisfaction with the Navy Board and calling for the next observation.² Thus, even when the Commissioners had a reasonable objection, they were unable to overcome Pepys's answer, and they could not escape the point that many of the Navy Board's difficulties were caused by the lack of money.

The sixteenth observation alleged that the Navy Board had shown preference to certain merchants, both in the purchase of provisions and in making out bills; Sir William Warren was quoted as an example of one who had been thus favoured.³ In his written answer Pepys said that Warren had not been a contractor with the navy until 1663 when he, and other merchants, had been invited to send in tenders for the supply of masts. The subsequent contract resulted from the fact that Warren had offered cheaper rates than any of the other merchants, and this was also the case in the further contracts made in 1664. The terms of later contracts were all very

¹ Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Fifteenth Observation.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.486.

³ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Sixteenth Observation.

competitive and Pepys showed a copy of his letter inviting other merchants to tender for goods. As far as giving preference in the passage of bills was concerned, he thought that there might be more room to censure the Board for the delays in passing Warren's accounts than for anything else.¹ Pepys also denied that, so far as it concerned him, there was any question of having given preference in either the passing or rating of Warren's contracts, especially in the case of the New England mast contract made in 1664. To the suggestion that the Board had excluded other contractors who could have provided the materials as well as Warren, it was answered that the cost and nature of the contracts obliged the Board to agree to a clause in the contracts which prohibited them from making other contracts for masts at the same time. This was inserted to protect the contractor; it also helped to avoid raising the price through several merchants trying to purchase the same items, and in any case most of the other contractors, including Wood who was mentioned as an alternative to Warren, insisted on the inclusion of this type of clause. Further, the Board had always instructed the purveyors to send information about other merchants who were willing to trade in naval goods. The Board had always observed its own Instructions by holding public meetings to consider contracts, and the variety of merchants who traded with the navy during the war was given as evidence that there had not been any favouritism.² Despite the fact that they had possessed this reply for over two months, the Commissioners had not thought to question or challenge Pepys, but they did comment in passing that two bills had been made out by Brouncker for the same 'parcel, of masts'.³

¹ Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Sixteenth Observation.

² Pepys MS.2554, Answer to the Sixteenth Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2874, f.487.

On 21 February, the final session of the Council on the report, Brouncker proved that the second bill which had been mentioned had in fact been drawn up to answer a specific demand from the Commissioners themselves, and he stated that when this second bill had been signed, the first was cancelled. This was said to the 'satisfaction of his Majesty and the total silencing of those Commissioners'.¹

Consideration was then given to the seventeenth observation, which stated that the Board had not paid off ships speedily, and this had led to an inflated wage bill and to paying off ships by ticket to the 'discontent' of the seamen.² This was certainly a valid criticism, but again the fault was not wholly that of the Navy Board's, for as Pepys pointed out, the Board was 'evermore under a want of money' to pay off the ships. This meant that they had either to keep the men on the ships and be accused of incurring unnecessary expenditure on wages, or the men could be discharged with tickets, which left the Board open to the charge of having caused discontent amongst the seamen. The Board had been aware of the problem and had informed the Lord High Admiral. Pepys had sent a number of letters to the Duke demonstrating the Board's concern, but he was not required to read them as the King declared himself satisfied.³

Before the last observation was read Lord Brereton tried to discredit Pepys by producing a ticket, valued at £7, which was endorsed 'paid to Mr. Pepys'. This had obviously been brought up to embarrass the official who had caused

¹ Pepys MS.2874, f.493.

² BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Seventeenth Observation.

³ Pepys MS.2874, ff.493-96.

the Commissioners so much discomfort, and also because during the discussion on tickets Pepys had asserted that he had never received any money from tickets.¹ Pepys repeated the denial and said that, although he and the other members of the Board had signed the tickets, this did not prove that he had taken any money. A difficult situation was saved by the King's intervention; he said he did not believe that a person in such a position of trust and responsibility would 'descend to so poor a thing ... and so this matter ended'.² Because the matter was not followed up it is still uncertain whether Pepys had been in receipt of any tickets, but this is unlikely. Although it was perhaps an attempt to discredit Pepys, the incident did not jeopardise the defence against the Commissioners of Accounts.

Finally, the eighteenth observation was read, this stated that several prize ships and goods had been sent to the navy, but the Board had kept no record of them.³ Although not stated, this carried with it the suggestion that the Board had disposed of some of these goods to their own advantage, and as such it was an echo of the accusations made by the Commissioners of Miscarriages in 1667. For this observation Brereton and Thomson, who had carried the burden of presenting the Commissioners' report, gave way to Gregory, who provided a new list of ships and goods which had not been accounted for. Pepys objected to the manner in which the Commissioners had produced a new list without having given the Board an opportunity to prepare an answer. He also thought it unfair that this new list did not mention a large number of ships and goods which had been included in past lists and had subsequently been satisfactorily explained

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.497-8.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.499.

³ BM, Add.MS.9,311, f.32, Eighteenth Observation.

to the Commissioners. As before the Commissioners had not publicly commented when they had been given an adequate answer by the Navy Board. This procedure of the Commissioners was not only thought to be unfair but it also contradicted the promise Brereton and Thomson had given, that the Navy Board would be shown all new evidence to enable them to prepare an answer before the evidence was produced before the King in Council.¹ The point was taken by the King and Duke. The main part of Pepys's defence concentrated on the fact that the observation did not contain any criticism which could be applied to the Navy Board, and he suggested that any dubious dealings were the responsibility of the under officers. Gregory answered that the books of the Prize Commissioners showed items delivered to the 'officers of the navy'. Pepys replied that he was not responsible for the wording of the books and that the entry probably meant under officers. At this point the Earl of Lauderdale, who had been one of the Prize Commissioners, intervened to say that had they known this evidence was going to be produced, their sub-Commissioners would have been ordered to attend the Council to explain the books, and he was satisfied that the ships and goods mentioned had been delivered, not to the members of the Navy Board, but to their under officers. With an offer to the Commissioners of Accounts to examine the Sub-Commissioners of Prizes, the discussion of the final observation ended and 'the whole business of these observations ended with a profession of all satisfaction on his Majesty's part in reference to every particular ...'²

¹ Pepys MS.2874, ff.500-3.

² Pepys MS.2874, f.504.

This marked the effective end of the Commissioners of Public Accounts; their report had been presented and discussed at length, but it had not destroyed the Navy Board, far less the government. Parliament had been in session since 14 February 1670 but the Commons had lost interest in the events of the Dutch War, and even though the Commissioners tried to stir up the House by mentioning 'prize' goods, there was no enthusiasm for their report and thereafter the Commissioners faded into oblivion.¹

¹ Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, p.102.

6. CONCLUSION

The intention of this thesis has been to provide a study of the administrative developments in the navy from the Restoration to the resignation of the Duke of York as Lord High Admiral in 1673. The administration has been examined closely and this has revealed the weakness, failures and the difficulties facing those associated with the navy; the attempts at reform as well as investigation of naval affairs have also been discussed. However, it is obvious that naval administration cannot be seen in isolation from the rest of Restoration government. During the course of the previous chapters a number of references have been made to wider issues, and it is now appropriate to evaluate the period from 1660 to 1673 in these terms; firstly the purely naval developments, and secondly, the number of administrative and constitutional advances which were taking place during the seventeenth century.

These wider issues include the development of bureaucracy and relations between the leading departments of state, particularly between the navy and the Treasury. There are also the questions of the conditions of service, tenure of office and the contemporary notion of office holding. One extremely important issue relates to the composition of the Boards, or Commissions, which controlled the navy; should these be under civilian control and can we detect the emergence of a professional non-political civilian administration? This is closely associated with an important constitutional issue which centred on the struggle between the Crown and Parliament for control of, or sovereignty over the armed forces. This issue of sovereignty also relates to the question of accountability, in the sense that the navy could be held accountable, or responsible, for its operational, as well as its administrative and financial affairs to the King

or Parliament. The question of control of the armed forces revives an issue which had been extremely important at the outbreak of the civil war and which required to be defined and settled at the Restoration.

As far as naval developments were concerned, it would be reasonable to suggest that, had it not been for the national humiliation of the Dutch raid on the Medway in 1667, the Restoration navy would have received general praise, and the failings of the service, both at sea and in administration, would not have been so closely examined by contemporaries and successive generations of naval historians. In general terms it should be remembered that the Restoration navy was equal, and was frequently able to demonstrate its superiority, to the leading foreign navies of the mid-seventeenth century. In one sense it is unfortunate that naval history has been dominated by the Nelsonian period; this has led to unfavourable comparisons with less successful periods. There is also a tendency to assume that periods of expansion, change and attempts at reform are more significant than periods of consolidation. The Restoration navy can certainly be described as consolidating the advances made during the Interregnum; though contemporaries compared the post-1660 navy unfavourably with its immediate predecessor and often assumed that the Commonwealth and Protectorate navy had been more efficient and effective.

Until the mid-seventeenth century the use of the navy as an instrument of policy had only occasionally been appreciated in England. Naval activity had often been limited to providing protection and transport for military expeditions to the Continent and protecting convoys and coastal areas from invasion, or piracy. Not until the Elizabethan period is there evidence of an increased and constant awareness of the value of naval power; this was partly in response to the pressure from the mercantile communities and

partly from an appreciation of the potentially rich trade routes which had been opened up with the Americas and the East Indies. This also followed from the loss of the last Continental outpost, Calais, which made England more aware of its island status and the importance of the sea as the first line of defence. The necessity of having naval defences, in the form of a fleet, was also brought home to the Elizabethans during the Armada period. Furthermore, the advantages of the sea as a means of communication and of naval intervention was demonstrated by English expeditions to the Netherlands and France, the attack upon Cadiz and the support provided by naval forces against the Irish rebellion. Despite this, the navy suffered from the financial difficulties of Elizabeth and the early Stuarts, and it was still too easy to rely upon a small force of royal ships, which could be supplemented by large heavily armed merchantmen in time of war. The separation between warships and armed merchantmen developed gradually during the seventeenth century, and even as late as the 1660's it was thought natural to include merchant ships in the battle fleet. But in one sense at least the navy had already acquired separate recognition through the medieval office of Lord High Admiral and the establishment of the Navy Board in 1546.

During the first half of the seventeenth century England began to appreciate more fully the necessity of having a permanent navy; this took the form of a fleet which could be mobilized in a matter of months. But it was not until the 1630's that this lesson was fully understood. The destruction of the Spanish fleet by the Dutch off the English coast at the battle of the Downs provided a clear demonstration of the value of naval power and the sea was by now completely accepted as a legitimate theatre of warfare in its own right. During the 1630's a start was made on building a new fleet, financed largely by ship money contributions, and this fleet provided the basis for the much greater expansion after the civil war. The most significant

building programme took place between 1650 and 1654, when 43 ships of over 30 guns were built.¹ This was the result of the Rump's desire to build a strong fleet 'for guard of the narrow seas, protection and preservation of trade, reducing of the revolted ships, and for the necessary defence of England and Ireland.'² This was in response to the rivalry between England and the United Provinces which had been mounting throughout the century and had resulted from disputes over colonial possessions, fishing disputes, uncertain international questions relating to sovereignty over coastal waters and the growing notion of national feeling, as shown in clashes over salutes at sea and the recognition of the English flag in the Channel. The climax of this antagonism was reached with the passage of the Navigation Act in 1651, which, although not the cause of the first Anglo-Dutch war, certainly helped to precipitate the conflict.

Henceforward the use of naval power as an instrument of policy was accepted completely. Its value was demonstrated by subsequent naval victories, even though it was apparent that such victories did not guarantee the winning of the war. Due largely to the construction of the ships, it was rare for a ship to be lost in battle, except through fire or capture. Thus even the inability of one fleet to destroy the other did not destroy the belief in naval power. Indeed, failure at sea did not lead to the navy being abandoned, for as long as the sea provided a means of communication and intervention and carried an increasing volume of trade, any nation involved in such ventures could only ignore its naval defences at its own peril- England learned this lesson by bitter experience in 1667. The value of the naval weapon was further appreciated with the expeditions

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1. Anderson, Lists of Men of War, English Ships, pp.11-20.
 2. Worden, The Rump Parliament, pp.59, 166.

to the Mediterranean and the West Indies; and the diplomatic pressure which could be exerted through the navy was demonstrated by the dispatch of the fleet to the Baltic in 1658.

Thus by the time of the Restoration most of the uses of naval power had been appreciated, and now that the sea was fully recognised as an arena of conflict it could not be abandoned by any nation which used it for commerce. Indeed, from the 1650's until the Continental campaigns of William and Anne, it was the navy which was the main weapon of English foreign policy. Thereafter it became established that British foreign policy would be exercised through the navy supported by Continental alliances and backed up by a relatively small army. This predominance of the navy was largely a reflection of increasing world trade and colonial possessions, but it was also partly a reaction against the army. The army had demonstrated both a desire and an ability to interfere effectively in domestic politics, and fear of the army was one of the most enduring lessons of the civil war and Interregnum; this was demonstrated by an almost continual hostility to the concept of a permanent, or standing, army. The navy, by its very nature, was much less capable of intervention in internal affairs, and compared with the army had played a much less controversial role during the Interregnum.

Apart from lacking both the potential and the tradition of intervening in domestic politics, there was another important difference between the army and the navy; this lay in the stronger emphasis on civilian control over the navy. The concept of civilian control was seen during the Interregnum when the majority of the Admiralty and Navy Commissioners, and the members of the various committees, were civilians. After the Restoration the Lord High Admiralship of the Duke of York was a qualified continuation of this

trend; his military experience and periods of command at sea do not make him entirely a professional seaman. The Duke's successors at the Admiralty were certainly a continuation of the trend of civilian control, with the majority of those appointed to the Admiralty Commissions after 1673 being civilians.

The predominance of the navy in the second half of the seventeenth century can only partly be explained in terms of the reaction of civilian politicians against the army; it was dictated largely by international rivalries from the 1650's to the 1680's, which centred mainly on hostility towards the maritime commerce of the Dutch Republic. While it is generally acceptable to argue that the first and second Anglo-Dutch wars were the product of commercial and colonial rivalry, this is not the whole explanation. Successive governments from the 1650's saw that financial and prestigious advantages were to be obtained from a successful naval war. In terms of finance, this could be derived from such short term advantages as the capture of prize goods, and in the longer term from improvements in trade, which could lead to increased revenue from customs, freight charges and insurance. This was associated with the concept of mercantilism, which in crude terms held that expansion in wealth had to be at the expense of another nation and this had to be achieved by the introduction of commercial legislation. This was illustrated by the Navigation Acts of the Rump and the Restoration governments and the use of the navy to enforce commercial legislation was one significant development of the mid-seventeenth century. The introduction of this 'police' role for the navy also provided the service with a permanent peacetime function. This notion of a 'police' role had increased from the middle of the century; initially it had been seen as a reaction against piracy in home waters but was gradually

extended to include expeditions to the Mediterranean. The suppression of piracy in the Mediterranean allowed for a measure of uneasy co-operation between the English and the Dutch, which transcended normal rivalries.

This 'police' role was closely linked with the expansion of trade and the acquisition of overseas possessions. Initially merchant ships, especially the East Indiamen, were capable of protecting themselves, but increasingly the merchant communities pressed for naval protection. This demand for protection was seen even in peacetime, when it was usual to provide an escort for the fishing convoys and those engaged in trade with Newfoundland, North and central America and the Mediterranean. This again gave the navy a permanent peacetime function. The demand for protection naturally increased in wartime, but it introduced a conflict over the type of naval strategy to be employed. Should the primary purpose of the fleet be to defend commerce, or should it seek out and destroy the enemy fleet, thereby making the seas more secure for trade? This divergence in strategy and the accusation that the navy had not protected the coasts and shipping was to become one of the most frequent complaints against the navy, and was one which was often echoed in the House of Commons. The popularity of naval warfare was in part a reflection of the assumption that war would lead to an increase in trade, this was widely accepted in the 1650's and to a slightly lesser degree up to 1665, but the experience of the Dutch wars, especially the second one, tended to contradict this, and by 1666 there was a marked decline in support for the war. The link between the concept of increasing trade through naval warfare and the merchant community, as represented in the Commons, as the main supporters of the war, should not be pressed too far, as there were many other interest groups represented in the Commons.

Disappointment with the commercial advantages of war to the merchant interests was associated with a 'country' reaction against the higher taxation caused by the war. This produced increased criticism of the war, especially in 1666, but not of the navy as a legitimate weapon. Another change in attitude occurred at the same time, and this was caused by the emergence of France as the dominant European power, which had the effect of making naval warfare with the Dutch seen unnecessary. It was not until the mid 1670's, when the dangers of French naval power were appreciated, that the navy again enjoyed the support of Parliament. But even then, for a time, the suspicion that the King was too closely associated with France, prevented the provision of funds for the navy.

Apart from assisting trade the navy could provide a useful boost to the prestige of successive governments; this motive was undoubtedly present in the attitude of the Rump and Protectorate governments. A successful war could both raise the international prestige of any regime, especially a new one, and direct attention away from controversial domestic problems. In 1653 the Rump was under considerable pressure from the army on the question of law reform and poor relief, and the news of Blake's victory off Portland, 'gave a considerable boost to parliamentary morale'.¹ In the same way it was hoped that the Dutch wars of the Restoration would increase the popularity of the government and encourage co-operation between the King and Parliament. During 1665 the Duke of York, who was strongly in favour of the war as a means of gaining personal prestige, became very popular after his victory off Lowestoft. The importance of prestige, and the desire for revenge, were strong motive for continuing Anglo-Dutch hostility into the 1670's.

A further feature in the development of naval power can be seen in the

1. Worden, The Rump Parliament, p.377.

appreciation of the value of overseas bases, with permanent establishments capable of providing supplies and certain repair facilities. The full realisation of this trend is not seen until the early eighteenth century, but the establishment of Tangier during the 1660's, with the building of forts, a mole to protect the harbour and limited repair facilities, was a move in this direction. Thus by the second half of the century the navy had become accepted as a permanent force, and most of the features of naval warfare had developed. The importance of the navy naturally made it the subject of public interest and, on occasions, of controversy. This will be mentioned shortly.

The second area of development relates to the evolution of bureaucracy during the seventeenth century. Professor Aylmer has commented on the growth of bureaucracy after the civil war and concluded that 'bureaucracies seem to have grown even faster in the aftermath of civil war and revolution than under any other conditions except those of modern "total" war'.¹ In his previous book, The King's Servants, Professor Aylmer states that 'bureaucracy certainly existed in Caroline England'; but he qualifies this by saying that by being small this bureaucracy, 'may thereby have failed to operate in the manner which this definition normally entails', and that 'this bureaucracy had some other very un-modern characteristics, which seem to invalidate most analogies or comparisons with more recent bureaucracies'.² It is more straightforward to accept the dictionary definition of bureaucracy as being (1) government by bureau, that is by departments of public administrators, and (2) the officials who staff those departments.³

1. Aylmer, The State's Servants, pp.104,339.

2. Aylmer, The King's Servants, p.460.

3. Oxford English Dictionary.

Used in this sense, as opposed to the concept of a permanent civil service discussed by Parris, we may evaluate seventeenth century bureaucratic developments as exemplified by naval administration.¹

The first aspect of bureaucracy which requires discussion is the office of Lord High Admiral; this had a dual function, that of commander in chief at sea, and that of administrative head of the navy. (There were also a number of judicial duties attached to the office, but these have been left for consideration by a legal historian.)

It has been shown that there was a clear distinction between the administrative and the active, or sea going, duties of the Lord High Admiral. It was fully recognised after the Restoration that these two roles could not be combined. When the Duke of York wanted to enhance his reputation as a military (naval) personality, he was obliged to delegate his administrative duties to the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy in 1664, to Albemarle in 1665, and to Prince Rupert in 1672. James was an exception to the general trends of administrative developments in two ways; firstly, because of his personal ambition to ~~command~~ command the fleet in action, and secondly because he was the sole holder of the office of Lord High Admiral. James's qualifications for command at sea were very limited, and had it not been for his social position coupled with his personal ambition, it is unlikely that he would ever have been associated with the navy. Of greater significance in the development of bureaucracy was the introduction of a commission to execute the administrative duties of the post. There was also a growing acceptance of the fact that the fleet should be commanded by a professional; this, despite the use of 'land Admirals', gained strength rendering the active part of the Lord High Admiral's duties

1. Parris, Constitutional Bureaucracy, p.22.

unnecessary. In 1628, after the assassination of Buckingham, the office was put into commission for the first time. After 1709 it was always to be in commission, (except for a brief period between April 1827 and September 1828 when the Duke of Clarence was sole holder of the office). In the intervening period the office tended to alternate between a single person and a commission, although the trend, especially after 1673, was for a commission. The decline of the 'single person' concept was retarded but not prevented by the Duke of York's period at the Admiralty. After 1673, even when a single person executed the office, he was usually assisted by an advisor, or an advisory committee. From this, and through the increased use of commissions, the concept of First Commissioner, or in its naval sense the First Lord of the Admiralty, emerged with the person occupying this position becoming the titular, or political head of the service. The evidence of this process can be seen immediately after the resignation of the Duke in 1673; the King took over the duties of the office personally, but within a month a commission headed by Prince Rupert was appointed. In 1684 Charles again took over the office, advised by the Duke of York, and in 1685 the Duke, as James II, continued this practice, with the assistance of Pepys as Secretary of the Admiralty. For a brief period in 1689, before a commission was appointed, William III acted as Lord High Admiral and in 1702, Prince George of Denmark, advised by a committee, held the post. Thereafter, with the exception of the Duke of Clarence in 1827/8, there was an unbroken line of commissions headed by the First Lord.

Even during the Duke of York's period at the Admiralty the idea of a commission was not completely ignored. In 1664 the administrative duties of the post were left to a commission in the form of the Committee of the

Admiralty and Navy. Although this expedient proved to be short lived, and was not repeated in 1665 or 1672, the Committee can be seen as an alternative Admiralty administration. During those periods when it met with the Duke on a more regular basis, it can be regarded as an advisory committee assisting the Lord High Admiral. This committee's lack of permanence can be attributed directly to the Duke's desire not to be restricted in exercising his Admiralty powers.

It is possible to demonstrate a greater sense of continuity by examining the type of person appointed to the Committee of the Admiralty and Navy between 1660 and 1673, and those appointed to the Admiralty Commissions between 1673 and 1684. In both these periods a list of those appointed reads like a catalogue of leading political figures, with few having any direct experience of the navy. The use of the Committee, and later the Admiralty Commission, was an exercise in political patronage, and this has been held responsible for 'naval inefficiency', especially between 1679 and 1684; the same suggestion, but in a milder form, was made by Pepys in 1664.¹ Those who were appointed to the Committee prior to 1673, and to the Commission after that date, included Prince Rupert, Ashley, Anglesey, Buckingham, Arlington, Lauderdale, Ormonde and Carteret.² The trend of political appointments continued after 1673 with Danby, Heneage Finch (who replaced Shaftesbury when the latter fell out of favour), Monmouth and Edward Seymour. Of these, only Prince Rupert could claim any practical knowledge of naval affairs, although Carteret, Anglesey, Danby and Seymour had all served with the Navy Board as Treasurers.

1. Aiken and Hennings (eds), Conflict in Stuart England, p.205; supra p.67.

2. Supra p.63; James and Sutherland Shaw, 'Admiralty Administration and Personnel', BIHR 1936, pp.19-20.

The most obvious example of the Admiralty Commission being used for purely political ends occurred in 1679 when a completely new commission was appointed; this included moderate opposition politicians as well as those who were being courted by the King for their support. It was a 'studied objective on the part of Charles and Danby to split the opposition ... ', and can be seen as a continuation of the remodelling of the Privy Council in the same year.¹

With a few exceptions, therefore, those appointed to the Admiralty Commissions, and to the Committee before 1673, were civilians with no experience of the Navy. While the concept of civilian control can be demonstrated clearly at the Admiralty, this was increasingly less obvious at the Navy Board. A distinction may be made between those civilians with no experience of naval matters whatsoever, and those who, although civilians in the normal sense, possessed useful experience in related fields of administration, or who acquired a considerable knowledge of naval affairs during their period in office. However, the main sources of recruitment to the Navy Board were from commanders, dockyard commissioners and clerks of the Navy Board, who earned promotion to the Board itself. Between 1660 and 1686 a total of 30 individuals held office as Principal Officers or Commissioners (excluding resident dockyard commissioners), and if the term civilian is assumed to mean a lack of direct naval experience, 11 persons fall into this group; 19 had sea, dockyard or clerical backgrounds.² The figure of 11 is misleading when it is realised that it includes Anglesey and Berkeley who had related experience in finance and the army respectively. Furthermore the figure also includes Pepys, Coventry, Brouncker, Osborne, and to a lesser extent Littleton, who all became competent in naval affairs

1. Aiken and Hennings (eds), op.cit. p.206.

2. Catalogue, I, pp.10-14,40-1,59.

and introduced an element of professional administrative personnel into the Navy Board. It is also worthy of comment that of these 11 civilians, 9 were appointed before 1673, and of these Berkeley, Harvey and Anglesey either were with the Board for a short period or played little part in its proceedings. It is also evident that many of these outsiders, or civilians, appointed up to 1686 were associated with the navy Treasury (Anglesey, Littleton, Osborne, Seymour and Falkland); this involved them in a particular area of naval activity in which it was of limited advantage to have had any direct naval experience. Increasingly the Navy Board was composed of professionals, either in the naval or administrative fields, and this trend was continued into the 1690's and after¹. This was in direct contrast to the trend towards civilian control which was evident in the Admiralty Commissions, and it was the beginning of future conflicts between the professionals, represented by the Navy Board, and the civilian amateurs of the Admiralty, who were in a superior position and possessed the authority to instruct or direct the experts.²

The developments in administration can also be discussed in relation to the conditions of bureaucratic development in terms of tenure, and the attitude towards office holding which was prevalent in the seventeenth century. The inadequate conditions which existed in certain administrative spheres will indicate the limitations of applying the term 'bureaucracy' in anything like the modern sense. In the conclusion to the State's Servants Professor Aylmer states that, 'on one view the Restoration delayed serious administrative reforms for 150 years, anyway until the 1780's ...' and 'in some ways a new administrative system, was coming into existence in republican England until its development was retarded, if not reversed, by the events of 1660'.³ Whilst this view may be open to debate, there

1. Ehrman, Navy in the War of William III, p.183.

2. Baugh, British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, p.83.

3. Aylmer, The State's Servants, pp.337,341.

can be little doubt that the restored naval administration contained many aspects which were outmoded and inadequate. The 1662 Instructions themselves reflect this; they had been drawn up to meet the requirements of a small fleet in the 1640's, and their almost wholesale reintroduction in 1662 can be taken as a sign that little of the experience of the previous decade or so had been understood or assimilated. On another level the inadequacy of bureaucracy was reflected in the navy Treasury through the continued use of roman numerals, and by the extremely cumbersome nature of the ledgers. The inadequacy of accountancy methods was certainly not confined to the navy; but it did mean that there was a general inability throughout the nation's finances to present an accurate picture of the state of the exchequer.

It is, however, in the navy Treasury and Comptrollership that some of the most important bureaucratic developments of the period can be seen. The Treasurer had traditionally been the senior member of the Navy Board, and this was heightened by the appointment of political figures to that post. In the appointment of Carteret (although he did have previous associations with the navy), Anglesey, Littleton, Osborne, Seymour and Falkland, the principle of civilian and political control over the navy was upheld. From this, as well as from the fact that the navy was usually the largest spending department, there was a definite move to separate the navy Treasury from the rest of the Board. This was true in physical terms, as the Treasury was in separate offices, and also because the Treasurers did not automatically attend Board meetings, except when financial matters were to be discussed. The importance of the navy also meant that it was continually under pressure from the Treasury proper and on occasions from within naval administration, as in 1667, when it was suggested that the navy Treasurer

should be reduced to the status of a cashier. Of much greater significance, however, were the attempts by the Treasury proper to expand its control over the other spending departments and to regard the navy Treasury as subordinate. This was not a new development after the Restoration; in 1628 Lord Treasurer Weston, and during the civil war the Parliamentary Committee of the Navy and Customs, had encroached on the independence of the navy Treasury. The increased powers of the national Treasury 'in the last forty years of the seventeenth century is not to be measured, for the most part, in specific grants of power but in terms of the growing use of powers which had been granted long before 1660.¹ During the 1660's the most obvious sign of a desire to reduce the independence of the navy Treasury came after the establishment of the Treasury Commission in 1667. But even before this the navy Treasury had lost some of its financial attraction by the introduction of 'payment in course', and, in certain cases, by direct payment from the Exchequer. From the middle of 1667 the new Treasury Commissions introduced a new zeal into the management of financial affairs, which led to an increased desire to supervise the treasuries of the various spending departments. The introduction of Commissioners, instead of a single Lord Treasurer, is also indicative of the wider use of commissions, as previously mentioned in connection with the Lord High Admiral. The relative weakness of the navy Treasurer, against the Treasury proper can be seen when it is appreciated that however knowledgeable that individual might be about the navy, he did not possess an overall view of the nation's finances. Also, the Lord Treasurer, and the Treasury Commissioners, would be supported by a small but fairly experienced staff, who could provide information which was not available to the

1. Baxter, The Development of the Treasury, p.167.

individual spending departments.

There are a number of indications that the Treasury was trying to exercise greater supervision over naval finances; for example, its demand that all spending departments should send in weekly statements of their receipts and issues. In January 1668 the Treasury Commissions invoked the authority of the King in Council to re-establish Treasury authority over the various spending departments. In particular they demanded that all warrants signed by the Treasurers of the navy, household, guards etc. should be countersigned by the Treasury Commissioners.¹ This was not only from the desire to extend Treasury control, but it also reflected the suspicion that the navy Treasury in particular was less than efficient. Similar thoughts were voiced in the Commons, although here the main fear was that the money granted for the war had been diverted to other uses. The weakness of the navy Treasury through its use of roman numerals, cumbersome ledgers, and the absence of an effective cross-reference system have been mentioned; the tremendous expansion of naval activity during wartime meant that, even with the increased number of clerks, the navy Treasury could not cope with the volume of work. While the internal weaknesses of the navy Treasury explains part of the poor conditions of bureaucracy in this period, it was not the whole explanation. The Treasury itself suffered from similar defects, but in particular it was the inability to keep the navy supplied with money which was a more fundamental problem. As a further illustration of the relative decline of the navy Treasury, the increased financial requirements of the Dutch wars led to the Navy Board often appearing as supplicants at the Treasury; pleading and virtually begging for more money to be made available. After 1667 the Treasury's desire to control naval spending was evident in the way in which

1. CSPD 1667/8, p.197.

Anglesey was forced to pay close attention to the instructions of the Treasury and Privy Council in the use of money allocated to the navy. At the same time Anglesey was under pressure from the Duke of York to observe more strictly the letter of the 1662 Instructions, and in his Letter of Reflections the Duke declared that he would not accept the 'practice of one's predecessors' as an excuse for the non-observation of the Instructions. The weakness of these Instructions, and possibly also the slackness of their application by Carteret, was revealed when Anglesey, and then Littleton and Osborne, found it necessary to appeal to the Privy Council for guidance and authority. The desire for reform led to the amendment of the Treasurer's instructions in 1669 and their significant alteration in 1671. The 1671 Instructions were a definite attempt to reduce the powers of the navy Treasurer; these powers were restored in 1673 only to be curtailed again in 1686.¹

One general feature of Restoration administration was its somewhat spasmodic character. There were periods of intense reforming activity; for example, between 1667 and 1669, but in some cases the reforming impulse would lose its impetus and within a few years there would be a return to a more lax application of the instructions. The problem was not one of the lack of established rules, or even the inadequacy of those rules; in the navy, as well as the Treasury, 'the rules were there and for a time they might be enforced. But then the atmosphere would change, enforcement would become slack, ..., and finally the rules would be re-issued ... what was needed was not a better set of rules but adequate enforcement of any set of rules.'² The subordination of the navy Treasurer to the rest of the Board and to the Treasury was a gradual process, and in the 'course of time the

1. Ehrman, The Navy in the War of William III, p.180.

2. Baxter, The Development of the Treasury, p.70.

Treasurership of the Navy became less of an office of business and more a sinecure.¹

A second area of bureaucratic inadequacy lay in the Comptrollership. Here the problem was exacerbated by the personal weakness, if not incompetence, of the holder of this office for much of the period under consideration, Sir John Mennes. Although the personal failings of the Comptroller help to illustrate and account for this problem, it was not just Mennes but a much more fundamental weakness which affected the Comptrollership. The duties of the Comptroller involved supervising virtually everything, especially where accounts were involved, connected with the work of the other members of the Navy Board. It is questionable, in view of the comments made by Penn and Slingsby, whether the intention of the 1640 Instructions had even been fulfilled, and in 1662 no allowance was made for the fact that the navy had grown so much since 1640. The complete execution of the Comptroller's duties was an objective which was not achieved for most of the seventeenth century. The purpose of this office, as described in the 1662 Instructions, was to provide a check on the diligence of the other members of the Board, and this notion was typical of the system of having officials to vouch for each other, which was very common in early modern bureaucracies. The Comptrollership also provides one of the best examples of the inadequate and backward nature of bureaucracy in this period. It has been seen that the Comptroller was expected to have a knowledge of all rates of pay and contracts, and be able to audit the accounts of the Treasurer, victualler and storekeepers. It would have been a source of wonder if all this could have been accomplished by one person. The basic inadequacy of the 1662 Instructions lay in their being

1. Baugh, British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole, p.36.

based on a small fleet. In peacetime the Comptroller may have been better placed to execute his duties, although even this is to be doubted, but he could not hope to do this during a war. Furthermore, in view of the long time taken by the Treasurers and other members of the Board to prepare their accounts, the best that could be hoped for was that the Comptroller would correct errors which had been made a year or more previously. Gradually an attempt was made to find a solution to this problem; this was simply by increasing the size of the bureaucracy by adding a number of assistants to the Comptroller. The increase in the size of the Navy Board was also reflected through the use of additional commissioners. In 1660, when this idea was adopted, the purpose was to provide assistance for the Principal Officers where necessary, but by 1673 this concept had largely disappeared, and the Commissioners were nearly all allocated to specific duties, and were particularly associated with the Comptrollership.

Finally, when discussing bureaucratic developments some mention can be made of attitudes to office holding and conditions of tenure. It has been shown that the navy was in advance of other departments in ending life tenure amongst its patent officers. In 1632 the Surveyor, and in 1638/9 the other Principal Officers were appointed during pleasure instead of for life, which was a 'considerable achievement but was uncharacteristic of the general run of offices'.¹ During the reign of Charles II, especially between 1668 and 1672, and again after 1679, there was widespread use of appointment during pleasure in the Exchequer, Ordnance, Mint, Privy Council and Household posts; after 1668 the same was also true of judicial appointments. The widespread introduction of appointment during pleasure 'while almost certainly envisaged at the outset as a purely administrative

1. Sainty, 'Reform in the Tenure of Office in the Reign of Charles II'. BIHR, XL I (1968) p.154.

reform, had political consequences that can hardly have been foreseen at the time'.¹ Tenure by pleasure rendered the holder more susceptible to political pressure, and this became linked with the hostility shown towards 'placemen' by the country opposition in the Commons. This was not so much of a controversial issue during the 1660's when several members of the Navy Board sat in the Commons (Carteret, Coventry, Penn, Batten, Littleton, Osborne and Seymour); but in the 1670's placemen became a controversial issue once again.²

The members of the Navy Board can be taken to illustrate certain contemporary attitudes towards office holding. Office was sometimes seen as a reward for past services and suffering for the royalist cause; the King's obligations to such people will in part explain the appointment of Carteret, Slingsby, Mennes, and to a lesser degree Batten in the early 1660's. At the same time it should be noted that all of these had past associations with the navy, and thereby a certain amount of experience, and with the passage of time the need to fulfil past obligations in this manner naturally decreased. Experience of the navy was also responsible for the appointment of former Protectorate officials such as Penn and Pett. Again from the early 1660's, the best examples of purely patronage appointments are Pepys, Berkeley and Brouncker. It has already been mentioned that an increasing number of appointments to the Navy Board were from dockyard and serving officers; but the Navy Board was also being used more extensively as a source of patronage. Pepys lists 9 individuals who were appointed 'for want of other ways of gratification', and a further 6 sea commanders, who were brought on to the Board 'only in the excuse for not

1. Sainty, *op.cit.*, p.165.

2. Aylmer, 'Place bills and the Separation of Powers', *TRHS*, XV (1965) pp.45-69.

suffering them to be longer at sea'.¹ The way in which the members of the Navy Board regarded their offices varied considerably; Pepys saw his post as one of service to the Crown and only secondly as an opportunity to obtain financial advantage to himself; the same can be said of Coventry. The opposite attitude, that of regarding office as a reward for past service and by implication to be enjoyed for life and exploited at will, was shown by Batten, who had a reputation for expecting a reward or bribe before performing a service. The attitude of regarding office as personal property was probably stronger among the older members of the Board; it is among the younger generation of Pepys, Coventry and Osborne that it is possible to detect the emergence of a new professional class of administrator with a higher concept of service to the state. This was also seen in the increasing use of sea and dockyard officials; they were often drawn from a lower social order and from a non-political background. The use of the Navy Board as a source of patronage was evident; but was limited and kept within reasonable bounds. The idea of office as being property was declining, although the distinction is by no means complete and clear cut at this time. Old practices die hard and the taking away of official papers by members of the Board at their retirement, Pepys being one of the best examples, shows that the older concept lingered on till the end of the century at least.

Despite this trend and the introduction of tenure during pleasure, it would still appear that dismissal, or even changes in office, required the agreement of the holder. This is seen very clearly when Carteret exchanged places with Anglesey in what was virtually a private arrangement, but as this was an exchange it was therefore somewhat different from the sale of offices. The sale of judicial and revenue offices had been

1. Tanner (ed), Pepys's Naval Minutes, pp257, 69.

forbidden since the 1551 Sale of Offices Act, but the Crown, particularly under James I and again from 1638-40, had found it a useful revenue device. The Act of Edward VI was extended by an ordinance of the Long Parliament in 1645, but apart from this little was done during the civil war and Interregnum to end the sale of offices.¹ A distinction may be drawn between sale of office and compensation for the loss of office; during the 1660's compensation was normally given in the form of an alternative post, such as Carteret going, by agreement, to Ireland, Penn and Littleton moving to the Victualling Commissions and Berkeley going to the Ordnance Commissioners. For the most part direct sale of office was rare; the only known example is that of Berkeley selling his Commissionership to Harvey in 1664. In 1660 Pepys refused an offer of £1,000 to sell his place; this sum indicated the financial potential of the place as well as being regarded as compensation for loss of office. The difficulty in removing office holders was demonstrated in the case of Mennes; despite his advanced age and abundant evidence of his incompetence, he was able to resist all attempts to move him aside, and he remained in office until his death in 1671. His resistance to change was assisted by a reluctance to admit publically that such a weakness existed in the Navy Board, and, to a lesser extent, from a desire to recognise and reward his past service. Also his removal may have been seen by other office holders as undermining the tenure they expected to enjoy in return for giving political support to the government. However, when it was considered absolutely necessary to remove an office holder this could be done. In 1668 Anglesey was suspended rather than dismissed, because for some unknown reason he had been granted a patent for life instead of the more usual tenure during pleasure. His removal was for purely political reasons, and his claim

1. Aylmer, The State's Servants, p.78.

for compensation for loss of office was respected, although the payment of his salary in the form of a pension may have been delayed until his accounts were passed in 1672. The situation in respect of attitudes to office holding was by no means clear; the resistance of Mennes and the compensation to Anglesey indicate that different values were being applied at roughly the same time.

In the lower posts, where appointment was made by the Lord High Admiral's warrant, tenure was usually during pleasure, although a number of life appointments were made during the 1660's in the more specialist trades or suppliers. The question of the sale of these lower offices involved the Lord High Admiral's secretary, Coventry, on a number of occasions.

Hostility towards the sale of offices was quite common and was not restricted to naval offices, and in the Commons a 'demand for an enquiry was always well supported'.¹ In April 1663, Sir Richard Temple proposed that a committee should be established to investigate the sale of offices. This can also be linked with the hostility of the Cavaliers in the Commons towards Dissenters holding office. Again, in 1663 Lord Bruce proposed a bill to place all civil and military offices in the hands of Anglicans, an extension of the 1661 Corporation Act. The effect of such a bill would have been to endanger the posts of 'Albemarle and Sandwich, to say nothing of half the captains of the fleet'.² Both these proposals were lost with the prorogation of Parliament; they do, however, illustrate certain attitudes which were commonly held during the Restoration Parliaments, namely, the suspicion and hostility against office holders and the sale of offices, and the desire to maintain the Anglican monopoly of office holding.

1. Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, p.13

2. Witcombe, *op.cit.*, p.14.

The criticism of Coventry over the sale of naval offices and the related question of fees was not motivated solely by a desire to end an abuse, it also contained an element of jealousy and political motivation; for example when, in 1663, Carteret accused Coventry of taking excessive fees. Furthermore, such accusations were known to excite the 'country' opposition in the Commons and could be used as a means of generating hostility and resentment against government figures. Such as the case in October 1667 when, apart from the other miscarriages and the suspicion over naval accounts, 'Coventry was "the chief person aimed at" by a turbulent and vindictive House'.¹ Coventry, who had by this time risen to greater prominence through his appointment to the Treasury Commission, was also being attacked by the supporters of Clarendon, who thought that Coventry had played a leading role in the attempts to remove the Chancellor. During 1668 Coventry was obliged to defend himself against what he regarded to be mainly political attacks. For some time he had appreciated the drawbacks of the old system of taking fees for the warrants he had issued as secretary to the Lord High Admiral, and in 1664 he had requested an additional salary instead of the fees; this was granted. From 1664, therefore, Coventry was a salaried official who no longer had to rely upon fees. This, rather than the retrospective and politically motivated attacks, was the most important feature of the sale of naval offices. It was also a significant advance in the attitude to office holding, and it had the advantage of removing any suggestion of corruption and favouritism, which was associated with the taking of fees.

The last section of this conclusion will be devoted to the discussion of a number of constitutional implications which can be drawn from the

1. Vale, 'Clarendon, Coventry, and the Sale of Naval Offices', Cambridge Historical Journal, XII (1956), p.115.

previous study. In the first place there is the question of sovereignty, or control, over the armed forces. This had been of vital importance at the outbreak of the civil war. Although it was related more closely to the army, the role played by the military during the Interregnum increased the opposition of the civilians towards the army and heightened their desire to control whatever military force remained after the Restoration. Anti-army sentiment had developed during the 1620's and reached crisis proportions prior to the outbreak of the civil war, during the Interregnum and again in the late 1690's. In the intervening periods this sentiment was muted, but never far from the surface; it broke out in 1667 and gained in strength during the 1670's.¹ This hostility was rarely shown towards the navy; there seemed to be no desire to reduce the 'standing' navy even when the service was being criticised and investigated. The reason for this is perhaps fairly obvious; the navy had a very limited capacity for intervention in domestic affairs, and it could not be used to overawe Parliament or impose arbitrary rule on the country. During the Interregnum the political role of the navy had been limited, and one of its few decisive actions had been to support the call for the return of the Rump in December 1659². Furthermore the navy was not a 'standing' force in the same sense as the army. In peacetime the only 'standing' element was a small squadron kept for the protection and regulation of trade; the rest of the fleet in home waters was in effect demobilised. In only one sense did the navy become the object of anti-military sentiment; this was when it was feared that the marine regiments raised in 1664/5 were a standing army, like the garrisons, under another name.

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1. Schwoerer, No Standing Armies, The Antiarmy Ideology in Seventeenth Century England.
 2. Davies, The Restoration of Charles II, p.302.

The question of control over the armed forces was apparently settled during the first year of the Restoration; 'the principle that Parliament should have control over the armed forces of the nation, a proposition which was so vigorously advocated during the Interregnum, was lost without public outcry'.¹ A distinction needs to be drawn between the army, as a permanent and professional military force, which was almost totally disbanded during 1660/1, and the militia, which was thought to mean an amateur force controlled by the county nobility and gentry. The Militia Act of 1661 declared that 'the supreme government, command and disposition of the militia, and all forces by sea and land ... is the undoubted right of his Majesty', and this was the first time that statutory definition had been given to the Crown's control over the armed forces. But this apparently sweeping success, and settlement of a controversial issue in the King's favour had two serious drawbacks. Firstly, it is implicit that anything made in Parliament can be unmade there, and the settlement of these powers in the King's hands did not mean that the controversy could not be revived at a future date. As an extension of this point it could be argued that the fact that the Crown accepted Parliament's settlement of this issue, was an admission of weakness indicating that the royal prerogative and the traditional assumption of royal control over the armed forces had been so badly shattered by the civil war and Interregnum that it was no longer adequate. Secondly, the most important weakness of the Crown, which in practice undermined the value of the Militia Act, lay in its inadequate financial position. The Crown could not maintain a standing army, or navy, of any size out of its ordinary revenue, and in being obliged to seek financial assistance from Parliament, the Crown was unable to pursue policies which did not enjoy the support of Parliament. It was in this way

1. Schwoerer, No Standing Armies, p.76.

that Parliament retained practical, if not theoretical, control over the existence of the standing army, and through this financial lever strong pressure could be exerted on the Crown to follow a foreign policy, and to use the armed forces in pursuit of that policy, which had its support. This practical limitation on the Crown's freedom of action was of vital importance in an age in which warfare as an extension of diplomacy was so common.

The importance of financial assistance from Parliament was evident in the two Anglo-Dutch wars of the reign. In the first, although a generous grant was made initially, it was insufficient and the shortage of money forced the cessation of naval activity in 1667. The refusal of Parliament to support the continuation of the third Dutch war led to its being abandoned in 1674. The relatively docile role played by England in the international conflicts of the rest of the reign was a direct consequence of a fundamental disagreement between the King and Parliament over the direction of English foreign policy. During the 1670's the Commons in particular became increasingly suspicious of the King's intentions in foreign affairs and on several occasions this found expression in the hostility shown towards the Anglo-Scottish regiments in French service, as well as in the difficulty experienced by the government in obtaining further financial assistance.

One result of the increasing tension and suspicion between the King and Parliament was that the navy was kept short of funds. During the 1660's this had not been so obvious and Parliament had granted unprecedented sums for the second Dutch war. But lack of complete success at sea, suspicion of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds, and a growing feeling that the Dutch were no longer the principal enemies, led to the ending of this

Parliamentary support for the Crown's foreign policy. During the 1670s the navy fell into a bad state of repair, but the attitude of the Commons was by no means hostile to the navy itself. The House appreciated the rise of French naval strength, but was not disposed to assist the King's general financial position by granting him additional funds, even if these were specifically tied to the navy. In April 1675 Danby failed to persuade the House to grant more money for the navy, but in the following November, after Shaftesbury had warned of the danger of French naval strength, the House in committee voted £300,000 for building new ships. The session ended in deadlock following the revival of the Shirley v Fagg dispute, and the money was not granted for the navy. Although the King wanted money for the navy, he was not prepared to obtain it at the price of allowing a number of hostile 'country' measures to be passed and the navy suffered as a result of this.¹ In 1677 a grant of £600,000 was made for building new ships; it was not as much as the government wanted and it is noticeable that it passed when Shaftesbury was in the Tower and therefore unable to provide the necessary leadership and co-ordination among the various opposition groups in the Commons. This illustrates how the navy became the victim of political disputes between Charles and the opposition. It also shows that Parliament was not hostile to the navy itself but to the idea of assisting the King.

The question of control over the armed forces, having been theoretically settled in the Crown's favour, was in practice limited in two further respects. Firstly, through the passage of Parliamentary legislation, which affected the navy directly, and secondly through the activities of the Committee of Miscarriages and the Commissioners of Public Accounts. From

1. Haley, The First Earl of Shaftesbury, pp.381,396-8.

1660 to 1673, apart from the various acts to pay off the armed forces and the Militia Act, there were two statutes which directly affected the navy. An Act for the better government of the navy was passed in 1661; and in 1664, 1666, and in an extended version in 1671 similar acts were passed to prevent 'disturbances of seamen' and to preserve the stores. The significance of these acts lies in the fact that additional, that is, Parliamentary authority was now regarded as being necessary to extend the powers of the Lord High Admiral and the Navy Board. These acts also meant that naval administration was becoming more dependent on Parliament than the Crown for the exercise of judicial disciplinary powers. They also illustrate the decline and limitations of the patent as the basis of the Lord High Admiral's authority over his subordinates and in those cases where civilians were involved; for example, those accused of receiving embezzled stores. The 1661 naval discipline Act represented an extension of the judicial authority of the Lord High Admiral for offences committed outside the territorial jurisdiction of the English courts. This in turn was a recognition of the permanence of naval activity at sea and in distant parts, and represented Parliamentary 'acceptance of the principle of a standing navy'.¹ A vacuum had been created in the judicial powers of the Crown and its leading officers with the abolition of the prerogative courts and this was replaced with Parliamentary authority. The 1661 naval discipline Act was not only the recognition of the existence of a standing navy but it also illustrates the different attitude of Parliament towards the two branches of the armed forces; it was not until 1689 that the Mutiny Act recognised and granted similar disciplinary powers to the army authorities.

1. Browning, English Historical Documents, p.789.

Finally there is the question of whether the navy was to be accountable to the Crown or Parliament, for its actions at sea and for its financial transactions. The situation was simply that the King could not afford additional naval activity out of his normal revenues. The Crown was increasingly dependent on the financial support of the Commons for war and for any important shipbuilding programme; the power of the purse strings was the strongest weapon at the disposal of the Commons. On occasions, as in 1664 and 1665, the House could be generous, but there was always the strong 'country' element which had a strong dislike of higher taxation. There was a natural desire to be satisfied that the money had been well spent once the House had decided to provide funds for the war. The Commons wanted to ensure that the weapon maintained largely by Parliamentary grants was efficient, and that the money voted for the war had not been diverted to other purposes. One aspect of this is seen in the establishment of the Committees of Miscarriages, which looked into the failure to follow up the victory off Lowestoft, the division of the fleet in 1666, the lack of defences at Chatham, and the wholesale use of tickets to discharge the men. It should be noted that the setting up of this committee was not an attempt by the Commons to direct the conduct of the war, it was, however, part of a desire to make the navy answer to Parliament for its failures rather than to the Crown. The significance of this committee lies in the fact the House of Commons was allowed, with apparently little hindrance, to investigate the activities of a leading department of state. In the process of this investigation they were allowed to question various Crown officials, including Secretary Morrice, the joint commanders of 1666, other sea officers, and the members of the Navy Board. The establishment of the committee is also a sign that the Commons had little confidence in the

willingness of the King to investigate, and if necessary to punish those of his servants who had been associated with, and were responsible for, the various naval failures. Most of the episodes investigated by the committee were fairly obvious failures, perhaps even disasters, but the House and the committee were allowed to give their own interpretation of what constituted a 'miscarriage'. The proceedings of the committee and the debates in the House also revealed the conflicts and rivalry between court politicians. In particular Buckingham and his supporters saw in this committee the opportunity to discredit those of their rivals who had been associated with the wartime administration, such as Arlington and Coventry. This was also evident in the attacks upon Clarendon; the seventeenth article of impeachment alleged that he had been responsible for the 'fatal counsel of dividing the fleet about June 1666.'¹ It is questionable whether the Commons was capable of conducting a searching and objective enquiry into the miscarriages of the war, and 'amid a babble of accusations and denials no positive conclusions were reached'. What did emerge was a 'mood of widespread hostility towards the wartime administration, and this seems to have developed into a general reluctance to trust any administration further than was absolutely necessary.'² This was reflected in the reluctance to give the King financial assistance during the 1670's. During the debate on the report of the Committee of Miscarriages, Sir Robert Brooke advanced the radical claim that the proper body to advise the King was not the Council or one of its committees, but Parliament. Although nothing came of this, it did appear that some members of the House were advancing claims that the Commons should advise the King on the use and disposition of the armed forces, and this appeared to revive the spirit of

1. Browning, English Historical Documents, p.194.

2. Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, p.80.

1641.¹ It may be suggested that much of what was said in the House was simply an explosion of righteous indignation, and with the passage of time and the introduction of new issues the House would lose interest in the miscarriages of the war. Certainly a number of episodes were condemned as miscarriages; Penn was prevented from going to sea in 1668 by the introduction of articles of impeachment, Pett was sent to the Tower, and the Navy Board and its former Treasurer, Carteret, were given a severe jolt. Yet little was actually achieved by the investigation of the Committee of Miscarriages. The significance of the committee lies in the warning given to the administration, and in the precedent established for later investigations of government activity, and in the advancement of the Commons' claim to make the leading departments of state responsible to Parliament rather than to the King.

The second part of the Parliamentary investigation centred on the Commissioners of Public Accounts. A full examination of their investigations appears in the previous chapter, and it is now appropriate to end with a discussion of the wider implications of the Commissioners' activities. The desire to investigate the way in which Parliamentary funds had been spent was part of a long process which had begun when the Crown became dependent on financial assistance for the conduct of 'that most expensive of royal hobbies - war.'² The Commons' desire to be satisfied that the money was well spent was perfectly natural in itself, but the suspicion that there had been mismanagement of funds meant that the investigation was much more than an exercise in accountancy. It carried the implication that the King was unable to be trusted with money granted

1. Witcombe, *op.cit.*, p.80.

2. Russell (ed), Origins of the English Civil War, p.91.

by Parliament. It was also an expression of the principle that if money was to be granted by Parliament, then Parliament should have the right to satisfy itself that it had been spent properly. Part of the suspicion in the Commons was a continuation of an old trend of hostility towards increased expenditure in any form. In the settlement of the King's revenue it had been widely assumed that he had been given an adequate, if not generous, settlement. It was extremely difficult for the Commons to understand the shortcomings of the revenue system, the poor methods of collection, the evasions and abuses in assessment, and above all the length of time taken to get the money into the Exchequer. As most members of the Commons did not have any experience of government, and certainly few had experience of financial offices, they found it very difficult to understand how the whole of the huge sum granted for the war could have been spent properly. In this way the Commissioners of Accounts gave expression to the longstanding 'country' suspicion, prejudice and ignorance. Furthermore, the King was badly served by those members of his administration who sat in the Commons; Carteret, for example, should have been well placed to explain the financial problems of the government to the Commons, but he failed completely to act as a spokesman in this sense.

The establishment of the Commissioners of Accounts was in direct response to the disaster of 1667 and the political upheaval which followed; yet it had been foreshadowed as early as October 1665. At the end of that session of Parliament 'one last blow' had been struck at the court when the Commons asked for the accounts of the navy, ordnance and stores to be presented at the next session.¹ The first resolution of the new session in September 1666 was to commit themselves to supplying more money for the war, providing that the House was informed of the state of the accounts so that

1. Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, p.40.

they could ascertain the King's needs. The Commons were not prepared to accept the King's own estimate of his requirements without question. The court did obtain money in 1666, 'thrown to them almost contemptuously by the opposition', and it 'barely staved off an enquiry into accounts.'¹ The Commons had not been completely hostile to the court, but the disastrous end to the war opened the doors to a widespread attack upon the administration. During 1667 and 1668 the entire administration was subject to attack and investigation. This attack resulted from a combination of 'country' indignation, permanent opposition members and ambitious office seekers. The unity of the opposition crumbled once the fall of Clarendon had removed one of the most important bonds between these various groups, and others including Buckingham, and his supporter Osborne, had been bought off with office.

The length of time taken in presenting the report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts can be explained partly by the inability of certain members of the Navy Board to provide answers for the Commissioners, but it also probably reflects a deliberate policy of delay on the part of the administration, in the expectation that this would allow the storm which had led to the investigation to subside. The competence of the Commissioners to conduct a searching investigation of naval accounts can also be doubted; the number of books and papers submitted to the Commissioners presented a fairly minor problem compared with the difficulties facing them in trying to deduce, or extract, damaging information from those books. The weakness of the Commissioners was illustrated on a number of occasions when they were unable to substantiate their observations when challenged by Pepys. Lastly, it is noticeable that of the nine Commissions appointed in 1667 only two,

1. Witcombe, op.cit., p.61.

Brereton and Thompson who apparently did most of the work, saw the report through to its final discussion in the Privy Council in 1670.

Both the establishment and the eventual demise of the Commissioners can be explained in terms of the prevailing political situation. A fairly lengthy prorogation from May 1668 to October 1669 helped to reduce tension and interest in the investigation. The fact that Parliament was not in session for this period meant that the opposition groups lacked a platform from which to attack the administration, and they were therefore virtually powerless. When the Commissioners' report was finally presented to the Commons in November 1669, the indignation of 1667 had subsided. It is true that Cartaret had been the victim of 'private vendettas merged with genuine "country" indignation', but after his suspension, the House was much more concerned with the new Conventicle bill. When Parliament met again in 1670 there was another attempt to obtain money; but a concession had to be made to the Anglican cavaliers and this took the form of a new, and stiffer, Conventicle Act. It is suggested that this act was the price paid by the King for a supply bill, and the cavaliers may well have given a tacit understanding not to cause the government further embarrassment by pressing for a discussion of the report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts.¹ Even the attempt to revive the report by mentioning the misappropriation of prize goods failed to excite the House. The demise of the Commissioners was, therefore, the result of a temporary understanding between the King and the majority of the Commons, which again highlights the basically political motivation behind the establishment of the Commissioners in 1667. It should also be stated, and emphasised, that the

1. Witcombe, Charles II and the Cavalier House of Commons, pp.98-9.

consideration of the Commissioners' report, cut off as it was from the political manoeuvring, was very much a triumph for the administration. Largely due to Pepys, the Commissioners found that they could not substantiate their observations, and for the most part their investigation served to exonerate the Navy Board. The failure of the Commissioners of Public Accounts does not, however, detract from the constitutional importance of such an investigation into a major department of state; an important precedent had been established, 'which was taken up after the Revolution'.¹

1. Kenyon, The Stuart Constitution, p.389.

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