FOR most of the eighteenth century Governors of Jamaica were appointed from the armed forces and from Parliament. The office was usually bestowed as a long-awaited reward for faithful political service, or because the candidate wielded sufficient political power to be useful to a Ministry; more rarely for personal service.

It was a desirable position, akin to the Viceroyalty of India in the next century. Only a wealthy man would not consider the emoluments worth having. Successful parliamentarians and ambitious naval and military men felt an efficient period as Administrator could win further promotion at home—providing the climate and tropical diseases did not finish them off, or at least incapacitate them first. Generally the calibre was high, though a disastrous administration or an unsuccessful military expedition blighted the hopes of some.²

The Earl of Balcarres seemed suitable on every count. He had already declared his Tory interest when, a returning prisoner of war after Ticonderoga, George III introduced him to General Benedict Arnold.³ He called him a traitor to his face, ¹

¹ The author is particularly grateful to the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, K.T., G.B.E., D.Litt., for permission to make such extensive use of the Crawford Muniments in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. He wishes also to thank especially the Earl of Clarendon and Mrs. R. F. Stafford for allowing him to use, respectively, certain papers in the Clarendon Deposit, Bodleian Library, and the Steel-Maitland collection, H.M. General Register House. A research grant kindly made available by the Canada Council assisted with subsistence and travel expenses.


³ Arnold had changed sides. Balcarres had fought against him at Bemis Heights, in 1777. Fox once said: “No public events, not excluding Saratoga and Yorktown, ever happened that gave me so much delight [as the French victory at Valmy]” (quoted from John W. Derry, William Pitt (London, 1962), p. 95).
and a duel ensued, Arnold being supported by the Whigs. In 1780 he seconded William Fullarton against Lord Shelburne. Thus he was already publicly and purposefully opposed to radicalism, American rebellion, the French revolution, and the Whigs.

A Scottish Representative Peer ever since 1784, he acted from the first as a government supporter in general and a follower of Henry Dundas in particular. In August 1789 Dundas, looking for a "steady friend of government" to oppose the opulent Ferguson of Raith in the burgh of Kinghorn in Fife, chose Balcarres' brother, the Hon. Robert Lindsay, who spent some £3,000 until forced to withdraw for lack of money. Thanks

1 1754–1808, army officer and politician. Raised at his own expense the 98th Regiment and in May 1780 was gazetted its Lt.-Col. Commandant, whereupon Shelburne spoke in the Lords against awarding "occasional rank" to untrained men, ridiculing Fullarton who, as M.P. for Plympton, attacked the earl in the Commons. Fox defended Shelburne whilst Fullarton accused Shelburne (and thus the Whigs) of being in correspondence with Britain's enemies, viz. Benjamin Franklin. The duel saw Shelburne significantly seconded by Lord Frederick Cavendish, M.P. for Derby and a connection of the duke of Devonshire. Derby was under the patronage of the dukes of Devonshire, where they held one seat without a break from 1715 to 1835. Usually held by the Cavendishes themselves, from 1797 to 1807 it was occupied by George Walpole (see p. 346, n.1 below), grandson of the 3rd Duke (Lewis Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (London, 1963), pp. 104 ff.; ed. W. L. Lewis, et. al., Horace Walpole Correspondence (Yale, 1955), ii. 12, letter, Walpole to W. Mason, 22 March 1780; The Parliamentary History of England (London, 1814), xxi. cols. 293, 319, 327).

2 He got in comfortably, receiving 40 votes (see ed. A. Aspinall, The Later Correspondence of George III (Cambridge, 1962), vol. i, no. 78, Lord Sydney to George III, 11 May 1784). He sat continuously, with the exception of the 1796 parliament (being abroad at the election), until after the end of the French War, "uniformly" supporting government, as he explained to Liverpool when trying, at last successfully, for an English peerage (B.M. Add. MS. 38,379, fo. 273, Balcarres to Liverpool, 2 May 1818).

3 Elected for Midlothian, 1774, he began to build up his family interest far beyond his native county. In May 1775 he was appointed Lord Advocate, resigning when the Fox–North coalition came in, 1783. In the 1784 election he disdained to traffic with the Whigs and for many years managed Scotland for Pitt the younger.

to the Lindsays' groundwork, a government man got in, however, the Lindsays having stood three quarters of the cost.  

1 Edinburgh University Library, MS. Dk 7.63, no. 1, letter of 28 August 1788 from Balcarres at Edinburgh to Dundas regarding his brother who had returned with a fortune from India: "I find his ideas with respect to coming into Parliament at next election, sufficiently liberal and to my wish—with respect to a Brush at this moment he is more narrow—when he landed, he expected to find an easy fortune and immediate ease, instead of that he found all his ready money locked up with the Mures, instead of ease, he was obliged to enter deeply into all that intricate affairs of Atkinsons in which my sisters are so much involved—Having made his escape from these disagreeable scenes he expected a little quiet in Fife—but before he had time to draw in his chair this contest occurs. As he has lived all his life out of the world, this has for a moment bewildered him...." He asked for eight days to consider and Balcarres undertook to do his best to persuade him. He accepted "your very kind offer of your interest and that of government" (ibid. no. 2, letter of 2 September, Balcarres to Dundas). Balcarres never created any 40s. freeholders' votes by granting life-rents like some landowners. The Register of Sasines (H.M. General Register House, Edinburgh, Fife, 1, 1781-4, nos. 2474-7, 2487) does contain a number of life-rents granted in February and March 1790 to his in-laws, the Dalrymples of North Berwick, but these are concerned not with votes, but with a mortgage, though they were all government supporters (see Edinburgh Univ. Lib. Laing MS. II. 500, letters of 10 October 1789 and 19 June 1790, Sir William Dick to Dundas) as were the Dick family of Prestonfield (see National Library of Scotland, Melville Papers, MS. 1, fo. 62, letter of 3 April 1795, Alexander Mackenzie to Dundas, and fos. 79, 83, Hew Dalrymple corr.) who also figure in the transactions. (See also H.M. General Register House, Particular Register of Sasines, Fife, xxxvi, p. 205: Sir David Carnegie of Southesk had lent £20,600, and had been seized in parts of the barony of Leuchars Forbes (alias Leuchars Ramsay). It was this mortgage which was being rearranged.) In any case none appears in the roll of voters in the Cupar Sheriff court records (Register Ho., SC. 20/45/4 etc.). The View of the Political State of Scotland in the last Century...1788, ed. C. E. Adam (Edinburgh, 1887), p. 120, noted of Fife: "there are few estates in it of such magnitude as to give much influence by creating life-rent votes." There were a good number of small freeholders—ex-army, navy, customs or excise men—where the Minister's patronage prevailed anyway. Balcarres is not mentioned among the sixteen main families in the county who had a plurality of votes. Fife depended on the Wemyss interest and that of the Earl of Fife. Dundas attached Wemyss by an Auditorship of the Exchequer and by certain West Indian appointments. In the July 1788 by-election for the shire, Colonel William Wemyss was elected with a firm understanding that he would support Pitt's government. Thus, Dundas did not need the Balcarres influence in the county, but he did need it in the Dysart District burghs of Dysart, Kirkcaldy, Burntisland and Kinghorn, where he had formerly been frustrated (Holden Furber, Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville (Oxford, 1931), pp. 193, 220, 231). Balcarres' father-in-law, however, (View of the Pol. State of Scotland, p. 165), was one of the leading interests in "Haddingtonshire", with "a great estate and great expectations from Mr. Hamilton of Bargany in Ayrshire".
Dundas does not seem to have paid much attention to the Peers until 1790, when the election saw perhaps the most acrimonious contest amongst them since the Union. In April, Pitt’s supporters held a meeting in London to decide on a campaign to frustrate an association of Scottish peers calling themselves “independents”. Government then agreed upon a tentative list of thirteen (out of a total of sixteen). Individual friendly peers were to be asked to say how many government nominees they would support and by June Dundas was in continuous correspondence. On 13 July a meeting Dundas held with other peers decided to approach Lord Crawford. Balcarres was deputed to talk to him, since he was a kinsman. He promised immediately to give Balcarres his vote, and he soon agreed to seven out of the remaining twelve, but it took Balcarres “many hours” to get his consent to the other five. Balcarres pointedly reminded him that now was the time to oblige the administration: “next week it was very probable that government might have the game in their hand independent of the vote of the Earl of Crawford.” Eventually he consented to vote for twelve. It was a considerable achievement, for he had found on arriving at Crawford’s house a servant of Lord Selkirk, the Opposition’s leader, just leaving, whilst Lord Saltoune was already there and Lords Breadablane and Kinnaird were expected—all three Opposition peers due to dine with Lord Crawford.1 In the end, after the election, fifteen of the sixteen peers declared for the Dundas interest. After that he felt more secure—the French revolution brought in most landed interests to government anyway—and Dundas left their management to others including Balcarres.

Dundas was attracted to women and they usually responded.

1 Edinburgh University Library, MS. Dk. 7.63, no. 3, Balcarres to Dundas, 15 July 1790. The twelve Crawford accepted were Lords Elphinstone, Murray, Kellie, Elgin, Balcarres, Stair, Glasgow, Cathcart, Sommerville, Torphican, Napier, Eglinton. Balcarres promised Crawford Dundas’s full support in getting him the rank of Lt.-Col. At the election Dundas secured nine of the sixteen. Contested elections gave him two more. See also Historical Manuscripts Commission, 13th Report, App. part iii, Fortescue (Grenville) MSS. (Dropmore) (London, 1892), p. 590, W. W. Grenville to Dundas, 30 June 1790, for Balcarres’ advice in the 1790 election.
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His acquaintance with pretty, witty, sensitive, Lady Anne Lindsay dated from about 1783. Her friendship with the Prince of Wales was well known; she was one of the three main influences in persuading him, in 1788, to become reconciled with the king and then to open negotiations with his Ministers. Since Dundas seems to have been the originator of this plan, his gratitude was no doubt considerable. In particular she made it her duty to counteract the influence of Sheridan and his Whig friends with the prince. After 1788 Dundas became quite deeply attached to her. In 1790 she perceived she might lose a valued friend if he should become her lover, and so the following year she told him she was going to Paris. He, knowing William Wyndham was in that city, and rightly fearing a rival, proposed. At their next meeting she kept her brother Hugh in the room so that Dundas had to confine himself to generalities. Later, Hugh, speaking of the brilliant but mercurial Wyndham, said to her: "That man uses you like a dog, and you use Dundas like one." However, in 1793 Anne married Andrew Barnard, the Bishop of Limerick's son—the same year in which Dundas married his second wife, Lady Jane Hope. It was said to be an unhappy choice on Dundas's part and he did not cease to call in at Berkeley Square, where Anne spent much of her time in the house of her widowed sister Margaret. Here, as usual, he continued to deposit his political secrets, and, perhaps, a part of his heart as well. In 1796 he made her husband secretary to the Governor of Cape Colony, where he knew Anne's charm and tact would help to conciliate the Dutch.

Two other sisters were especially active on Balcarres' behalf and in 1784 Dundas seems to have put him forward to be "second in command in the East Indies". But something went wrong. Writing years later to Dundas, Balcarres said of the incident "why my little bark was then overset I know not". Lady Elizabeth Lindsay married Philip, third earl of Hardwicke, and both she and her husband did their best to refloat Balcarres. In 1789 Hardwicke advised him to try India, where "nothing less than the government of one of the three Presidencies would answer your purpose, or indeed be proper to your station". Dundas was the fountain of Indian patronage and Hardwicke
was willing to lay anything necessary before him, though he did not know, he said, if anything was attainable. Both Lady Elizabeth and her sister Lady Margaret Fordyce (later Burges) added their entreaties. Margaret was a privileged visitor and she always, she told her brother, took care "to convince D. that you look to him alone as your friend and patron". All three sisters clearly played a significant part in getting their "dear Bal", as they affectionately addressed him, launched successfully in the world. ¹

Although Balcarres spent two years at the University of Göttingen and in 1788 entered into a partnership with his rich brother Robert and James Corbett, an ironfounder in Wigan, he was not really happy in tranquillity. ² Taciturn, imaginative yet brave,


Wyndham, born like Anne in 1730, was a liberal Whig. Very rich, cultivated, at Eton with Fox, a polar explorer and hot-air balloonist, he was one of Dr. Johnson’s pall-bearers and a great admirer of Burke. His first public speech was against a public subscription to pay for the American war. Later, on Burke’s advice, he reluctantly took office under Pitt, and became Secretary at War. He died in 1810. At times Wyndham’s politics must have embarrassed Anne, however much she adored his intellect and panache.

² For his iron-works see esp. Alan Birch, “The Haig Ironworks, 1789-1856”, BULLETIN, xxxv (1952-3), 316-33. Balcarres’ wife, his cousin-german, Elizabeth Dalrymple of North Berwick, had inherited Haigh Hall, near Wigan, through her mother, Elizabeth Bradshaigh, in 1787 (Victoria County History, Lancashire, iv (London, 1911), 118.) Lady Margaret Fordyce, September 1777, writing to Balcarres, congratulating him on his lucky escape in the American campaign, remarked she would be brief as he was “not overfond of a multitude of words… Lord Harcourt talks very handsomely of your gallant behaviour on this occasion which he assured us he had heard from several people—now you must know dear Bal that when one fears (as I do who know you) to hear of your turning tail to the enemy what a relief that must be! ” (Crawford Mun. 23/1/29). The high-strung imagination of boyhood was now under control, perhaps the best kind of bravery. A disinclination for paper-work persisted however. The Speaker of the Jamaican Assembly needed to remind him constantly to hold sessions for urgent business; his reluctance to study regulations before taking administrative
he was already a skilled professional soldier and his success would probably have led him to high command in the end, though interest and seniority were, of course, the golden rules governing the services. In 1777 he had driven off repeated attacks at Bemis Heights led by Major-General Arnold, the most formidable opponent in America. Colin Lindsay, another brother, and a soldier too, told him General Burgoyne was particularly satisfied with his service; in 1778 he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in the 24th Regiment.¹

Until the end of the nineteenth century, bush-fighting was not part of the army's normal training. Burgoyne and his staff were "taught by experience", as the General himself said.² Balcarres learnt to fight with Indian auxiliaries and discovered the effectiveness of howitzers against abbatiss where, as in the cockpits of Jamaica, the enemy were confined in small spaces.³ He understood the value of good maps and communications, and how to treat each company as a distinct body of men, used independently of their battalions, and taught self-reliance.⁴ He learnt, in fact, to throw away the drill book. Skill in manoeuvring regiments in and out of confined areas like Hyde Park, excellency of exercise, were of little use in America except in pitched battles which the British usually won. It was the American riflemen and sharpshooters who proved such a scourge. "To prime, load, and charge with the bayonet expeditiously were the chief

¹ The judgement on Arnold as a soldier is from Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* (London, 1915), iii. 410. Fortescue is unfairly critical of Dundas and thus of Balcarres. See also Crawford Mun. 23/1/55, Colin Lindsay, Philadelphia, to Balcarres, Boston, February 1778; and John Burgoyne, *A State of the Expedition from Canada*, as laid before the House of Commons... (London, 1780), p. 17 and App. p. li., for Balcarres’ defence of the lines against Arnold.

² *A State of the Expedition from Canada*, p. 36.

³ Ibid. p. 68.

⁴ *A Supplement to the State of the Expedition from Canada* (London, 1780), General Orders from Major-General Philips, 11 May 1777.
points worthy of attention". Balcarres mastered them all, and used them later in Jamaica. After Saratoga the army were taken to New England, where the Militia bullied them, and subsequently to Virginia. Finally, in 1781, in direct contravention of the capitulation, the men were separated from their officers. Returning home, he gave evidence at the investigation upon Burgoyne, showing tact and professionalism as well as that esprit de corps in the face of civilian criticism which henceforth marked his actions. In view of the charges subsequently laid against him, that he was responsible for betraying the Maroons in Jamaica after their surrender, his American experience is significant. Having been betrayed himself, this was unlikely. Rather, professional distrust of the Militia and of colonial politicians developed a caution which showed up later in Kingston. Even Washington admitted his Militia turned out only if victory seemed likely.

By 1781 Balcarres was short of money. Politics were expensive; connections and birth, too, had led the family to live above its means. "Nobility and Elections have been the cause of their depression," he said. There were his own military commissions to be purchased and the fact that he wanted "to bustle in the world". The estate of Balcarres was small, often on the point of being sold, seldom bringing in more than £1,100 a year, scraped together with difficulty.

1 R. Lamb, Memoirs of his Own Life (1811). One is reminded of Wellington's success in the Peninsula. He learnt his fighting under similar circumstances in India, and was looked down on as a "Sepoy General", but it was precisely these skills that were needed in Spain and Portugal, as in Jamaica.

2 Fortescue, op. cit. iii. 241, 405.


4 The American generals, respecting Burgoyne's men, had agreed to allow them to surrender with all honours of war, and to return to England. It was the politicians who did otherwise.

5 Crawford Mun. 23/1/338, no date, but certainly after 1798, the date of his appointment as a Lt.-General which he mentions to his son, Lord Lindsay. The titles connected with the Lindsay family were created as follows: Crawford, 1398, Lindsay, 1633, Balcarres 1651, Balneil 1651. (In 1826 an English peerage, Baron Wigan, was bestowed). Balcarres' personal income at this time was less than £150 (Crawford Mun. 23/14/10, vol. 2).

6 Crawford Mun. 23/1/361, Balcarres to Hon. Robert Lindsay, 22 March 1813.
It soon lay under a load of debt, largely acquired by paying the portions of ten brothers and sisters, in managing their various concerns, and in the consequent fees of Writers, lawyers and factors. His father had warned him he might need to sell, and having been bought recently (Balcarres thought in the reign of Charles I, but actually in the sixteenth century) Balcarres himself said it was never very dear to his heart. His aristocracy, he felt, would be in no way impugned if he disposed of it, which he did partly to his brother Robert, in 1781. Likewise Haigh Hall, Wigan, when he took it over, carried a debt of £6,000, and was in terrible condition: the house gutted, all stock sold, the mines supposedly ruined. Worse, Corbett, in charge of the ironworks, defrauded him trying to surpass John Wilkinson, the great iron-master of the day, running Balcarres into terrible expense.

In 1789 he proposed living in Edinburgh, where it was easier to retrench than at Balcarres, and began to seek appointment to one of the three Presidencies in India—a natural decision in view of his patron Dundas's preeminence in affairs there. Failing that, and determined to shake the banyan tree if he could, he hoped for a senior military post.

Repeated requests for military employment anywhere were turned down, however, until, at the outbreak of war in 1793, he was gazetted Major-General and put in command of the forces in Jersey. Once more left largely to fend for himself, without any staff, with no Quarters nor General Hospital, surrounded by French refugees, establishing communication with the Royalist army in the Vendée, he did not know, he said, whether he was more of a military man, an engineer, or a diplomat, but he felt

1 Robert, who had offered to lend him the money if he preferred, paid £20,000 for his portion (Crawford Mun. 23/1/350, Balcarres to Hon. Robert Lindsay, 23rd August 1791.)
2 Crawford Mun. 23/1/319, Philip, 3rd Earl of Hardwicke (his brother-in-law) to Balcarres, 26 December 1789.
3 Balcarres tried Dundas, again unsuccessfully, for a Presidency (Madras) or the Commander-in-Chief’s appointment in 1794 (Crawford Mun. 23/1/31, Lady Margaret Fordyce to Balcarres, 1797). See also p. 346, n. 3 below.
4 Crawford Mun. 23/2/17, Richard Atkinson, Fenchurch St., to Balcarres, 29 October 1784, regarding a newspaper rumour that Balcarres was to be second in command to General Sloper.
being left on his own was "on the whole a very good school". ¹

It was not very rewarding financially, however, and he must have been delighted to receive Portland's offer of Jamaica in September 1794. ² Borrowing £4,000 from Hardwicke, he spent three-quarters of it outfitting. He was soon complaining that people were deceived about a Jamaican Governor's emoluments; that with the utmost economy it was impossible to save more than £1,500 a year. Worse, he found that though his appointment dated from 20 October 1794, his pay would commence only from April 1795, when he was sworn in. ³

He quickly discovered he had no dread of climate, whilst he had already proved to himself, as he remarked, that he was not afraid of death. When the Maroon rising began within a few weeks of his arrival, he happily engaged in all those professional problems of fighting an elusive enemy in rough country for which his American and Jersey experiences had so aptly prepared him. He found, of course, too much military pomp and ceremony, troops marching in proper regimentals with drums beating, as if fighting in Europe. This was changed, the Militia being given light green or blue jackets and trousers, and, instead of cross-belts, a light cartouch-box, and no bayonet (that being useless in the thick bush). ⁴ The dress of the regulars was also

¹ Hardwicke Papers, B.M. Add. MS. 35,395, fo. 34, Balcarres, Jersey, to Hardwicke, 1 June 1794.
² Crawford Mun. 23/10/80, 18 September 1794.
³ B.M. Add. MS. 35,916, fo. 155, Balcarres to Carstairs, 30 June 1795.
⁴ Account of Jamaica, pp. 283, 292. The Maroons used a light fusee, powder-horn, matchet, wooden lance, and a horn for calling to one another. Unlike the
San Domingo blacks, who had been partly European trained, they had no knowledge of bayonet or artillery. The Maroons were often Asante (modern Ghana) in origin; many Asante-derived proper names survived. They descended immediately from two or three bands, rough cowboys with lances and bows, raiding the savannah lands for the cattle which roamed there before major clearances for sugar-cane began just before 1700. After the British conquest in 1655, Juan Lubolo (alias Juan de Bolas) had visited England and was styled on his return Colonel of the Black Militia, with magistrate's powers, all his followers over 18 being granted 30 acres by proclamation of 1 February 1663. Others remained loyal to Spain, living at Los Vermejelas (which corrupted became Vera Ma Hollis), never surrendering, being driven back into the Trelawney district, which was filled with hollows entered by narrow defiles, and known as Cockpit Country from their shape. By 1730 attempts to subdue them had cost a quarter of a million pounds. Two peace treaties of 1739 and 1740 were made: with Cudjoe (a corruption of the Asante Kojo) on behalf of the Leeward or Western Maroons; with Quao (Asante) for the Windward or Eastern Maroons. The articles gave them a restricted area of land to settle on, with their old privileges of hunting; required their help in suppressing rebellious slaves and in returning runaways; protected them against persecution by whites; gave their leaders right to punish minor crimes and appointed two whites to live amongst them. Four settlements were recognized: Accompong in the parish of St. Elizabeth; Cudjoe's Town in St. James—known as Trelawney Town, and later as Maroon Town; New Nanny Town (after an old obeah woman, the real leader 1728-34), later known as Moore Town; and Crawford Town, both in Portland, the two latter being the Windward Maroon settlements. In 1760 there was a slave rebellion under one Tacky (Asante Tackyi), and two conspiracies in 1765 and 1766, but it was the Maroons, numbering only c. 1,600, who were the real and continuing threat. In charge of a white Superintendent, under him they had their own "generals", "colonels", "majors" and "captains". Only in Trelawney Town, the largest settlement, was the Superintendent's office much more than a sinecure. It was held in 1794 by John James, son of a former manager in the First Maroon War. The father was tough, self-reliant and the equal of any Maroon; the son, appointed in 1791, was often absent on his own plantation and in 1794 was dismissed for non-residence and Thomas Craskell appointed in his place. The Maroons, furious when he began to interfere with their women, drove him out on 18 July 1795. The Maroon community was divided; the younger men despised the older generation, especially their vain, ineffective, elderly, usually conciliatory, leader, Colonel Montague, who now sought popularity by pressing for Craskell's removal. The other St. James' Maroons at Accompong had quarrelled with the Trelawney's over who should keep the original of the 1739 treaty and they did not help when the Trelawneys rose. The immediate cause was the public flogging, in July 1795, by a black overseer of workhouse slaves in Montego Bay, on the magistrates' orders, of two Maroons for stealing a pig—an intolerable insult to the free Maroons. The real grievances were deeper: their numbers had increased since 1740 (660 all told), but their arable land had not, indeed it was worn-out. They asked, modestly, for another 300 acres, and the local Custos Rotulorum in St. James supported them. There is no evidence that the Legislature ever considered the matter, however, and so, on 20 July 1795, as a defiant
considerably lightened, though here the Lieutenant-Governor had less latitude in view of the Commander-in-Chief's orders on these matters. Troops were trained to use Maroon tactics—working forward through the bush in pairs, each supporting alternately the other; ambushes were laid in the manner of their enemy.

Almost from the first the Lieutenant-Governor was criticized for his handling of the Maroons; for declaring Martial Law; for having "negro insurrection on the brain"; for being ignorant of Jamaican affairs; for using dogs; and for deporting those who surrendered. Martial law was, of course, unpopular since bluff, they had threatened violence. In fact, on 26 July, the J.P. at St. James, Samuel Vaughan, reported that Captain James junior being reinstated "the people are very peaceable... They are very well satisfied if they are let alone" (Public Record Office, Colonial Office, Governor's Despatches, Jamaica, C.O. 137/95, Council of War Minutes, 31 July 1795; see also P.R.O., War Office 1/92, p. 484, J. Perry to E. Corry, 26 October 1795; and C.O. 137/95, 3 August 1795, Balcarres to Portland). However, a number of circumstances combined to weaken authority: the relaxation of the former strong hand of the Superintendent, the ineffectiveness of Colonel Montague in controlling the young men, land shortage, and population pressure. At the same time the planters were more than usually nervous. The white population of the island was small (in 1786 estimated at 25,000) compared to the 255,710 slaves and 10,000 free blacks and mulattos. The Militia was therefore small, especially since large plantations had bought out the small men and absentee planters lived in England. There was great disparity between the populations of British and French islands. Revolution was abroad, San Domingo already fallen; there was evidence that mulatto French agents were at work in Jamaica.

1 Bryan Edwards' *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica in Regard to the Maroon Negroes* (London, 1796), provided an official version of documents some of which Balcarres felt the Speaker had no right to publish. Edwards, in London, sent Balcarres a copy of his book, "which", he said, "the opinions entertained of that unfortunate affair in this kingdom rendered necessary. If I have had the great fortune to vindicate the honor and humanity and goodwill of Your Lordship and the Assembly in the disposal of those people, I have repaid but a very small part of the obligation which every person having property in Jamaica owes to Your Lordship" (Crawford Mun. 23/11/16, 17 December 1796). R. C. Dallas's *History of the Maroons* (London, 1803), was inclined to white-wash the plantocracy. G. W. Bridges' (*Annals of Jamaica* (London, 1828)) was incredibly biased, lifting strictures on public figures verbatim from Gibbon. Even that able historian of the British Army, Fortescue, in his *History of the 17th Lancers* (London, 1895), says Balcarres was obsessed by insurrection—though he does justly add "he cannot be blamed at such a time for acting forcibly and swiftly" (p. 79). More recently Clinton Black (*The Story of Jamaica* (London, 1965), p. 123) says, hearing the Maroons were only
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every white man had to turn out at the slightest alarm—a weary chore for a small population needing to supervise plantation labour daily. In fact, the law gave the Governor authority over the planters' slaves and automatically suspended the courts, offending the lawyers who were influential in island life. Many estates were bought on credit from London; suspension of legal activity meant capital being tied up indefinitely, to the annoyance of London brokers and clients. Furthermore, martial law was expensive; an absentee planter estimated that, applied to the Maroons, it cost Jamaica between £520,000 and £580,000 and that taxes would accordingly be heavy in the coming year. It was, in fact, a classic, almost traditional, grievance against Jamaican Governors.1 Some in the Assembly, looking for cheap popularity, moved a tax of 40s. a head on the slaves of absentee proprietors. It was actually passed but was baulked in Council, where a £200,000 loan from Britain was sought instead. The motion threw the West India lobby at Westminster into disarray, waiting for a favourable moment, this "gave him the excuse he wanted. Martial Law was declared...". A Russian writer, A. D. Dridzo (translated in *The Jamaica Journal*, vi, no. 1 (March 1972), pp. 21-25 "The Origin of the Second Maroon War 1795-6" (Moscow, 1971)) even suggests the planters were behind the insurrection in order to influence British policy and stop her conquering adjacent French possessions—notably Haiti whose sugar production outdid their own. However, his thesis that they timed it for Balcarres' arrival, because he was new to the Island and it was possible to push him along the path they wanted (viz. to react positively to their "plot") just does not hold water. For instance, he says they got rid of Superintendent James as being someone unlikely to fall in with the scheme. It should be noted that James was dismissed nearly a year before Balcarres arrived, and, in any case, he was reinstated July 1795 (see p. 336, n. 4). Consideration should also be given to Admiral Parker's and Balcarres' very strong objection to evacuating San Domingo (see the text below).

1 Few planters, however rich, were out of debt. The Assembly passed two laws in 1779 curtailing the Governor's powers, especially regarding Martial Law, but Governor Dalling had refused his consent (George Metcalfe, *Royal Government and Political Conflict in Jamaica, 1729-1783* (London, 1965), p. 207).

For the expense of martial law see Bodleian Lib., Oxford, MS. Eng. Letters, Clarendon Deposit C357, 22 January 1796, James Wedderburn to Joseph Foster Barham. The Militia had been under arms since 20 July, supported by a detachment of light dragoons. On 4 August 1,000 men, the 83rd Regiment, landed, diverted from San Domingo. Small reinforcements from the 62nd Regiment and additional mounted and dismounted dragoons were also brought up, 380 more altogether (*Proceedings of the Governor's Assembly of Jamaica, in regard to the Maroon Negroes* (London, 1796), p. xlix).
however, at a time when the Lieutenant-Governor needed all the support there he could get.

The Militia was ill-disciplined, ineffective and riven with petty jealousies; at first so divided by faction that Balcarres could get no concerted action at all. It was this opposition which made him leave Headquarters and return to meet the Assembly in August.¹ He told Portland² it was "... impossible to draw service from the Militia. The fact is that they always go to the point of danger, but never encounter it".³ Before the end of August he disbanded them, though partly because they needed so much provisioning.⁴ Martial Law was the only way to stop them shirking, as they had nothing to fear otherwise except a few paltry fines.

Bridges said it was the £20 daily governor's allowance which motivated Balcarres and that he made £5,000 out of it.⁵ Bridges was a planter's protagonist, however. In truth the Governor had to consult his Council in important decisions, including proclaiming martial law. Balcarres' Council of War voted for it on 2 August 1795, and again, unanimously, confirmed it on 28 August.

The need was particularly urgent because the Party-Act (so-called because it provided for fitting out parties in pursuit of runaway slaves) was useless, even null, since it had no provision for moving or even employing regular troops, assuming the

¹ Crawford Mun. 23/11/69, Henry Shirley to Balcarres, 29 October 1796; B.M. Add. MS. 35,916, fo. 209, Balcarres to Hardwicke, 17 July 1796. The main planters to the southwest of the Maroon positions, where access was easier, were related to the dismissed James. They thwarted the Administration at all times. James's 20-year-old niece was married to the 80-year-old Militia Major-General Reid. Palmer, another member of this faction, was a Major-General. These two were the two senior Major-Generals in the Militia. A few free blacks were enrolled in the Militia (see Richard Pares, War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763 (Oxford, 1936), p. 237).
² The 3rd Duke (1738-1809), leader of the Old Whigs, reconciled with Pitt and rewarded with the Home Secretarship 1794-1801; married to a daughter of the 4th Duke of Devonshire.
³ Quoted in Lindsay, Lives of the Lindsays (London, 1849), iii. 79, 7 October 1795. Cf. Washington on the American Militia above.
⁴ Lindsay, op. cit. iii. 58. He used the Militia again, later.
⁵ See, for example, W. J. Gardiner, History of Jamaica (London, 1873), pp. 226, 236, who revived the canard.
Militia or the Maroons themselves were the islands’ forces. It did not permit a Governor or Commander-in-Chief to order parties to bring in runaways unless they were in a state of rebellion. Martial law was the only remedy in an emergency for avoiding rather than confronting trouble.¹ Balcarres would have preferred not to use it: "As nothing can be more severe upon this island than the continuing martial law unnecessarily, I have thought it right by the advice of the Speaker, to call together the legislature on the 22nd September and the first thing it will proceed to is the amending the Party Act Law, under which Act only I shall follow up the sentiments of the country in extirpating the Trelawney Maroons."²

Fortescue remarked "it was pretty clear that the idea of cordonning the Maroons was an absurdity, and that the destruction of their provision ground only drove them oftener afield to massacre, plunder and destroy". He misunderstood. The one great fear was that the plantation slaves might join the Maroons. The latter were known to be meticulous, when they burnt plantations, in explaining to the slaves that it was only the white man they were attacking—this was necessary since Maroons received a bounty for returning runaways. Balcarres destroyed the Maroon provision grounds to prevent the two uniting in the mountains.³ His prime aim in the early stages of the rising

¹ Lindsay, op. cit. iii. 62, Balcarres to Portland, 29 August 1795; Crawford Mun. 23/10/867, undated memo. c. 1795; C.O. 137/99, 3 March 1798, Balcarres to Portland.

² Lindsay, op. cit. iii. 62. In 1799, again trying to avoid Martial Law, Balcarres recollected "the extremely baneful and ruinous consequences" of 1795–6 (Crawford Mun. 23/10/1074, Secret, Balcarres to Speaker of the Assembly). He cannot be accused of employing it light-heartedly; nor can he be criticized for not calling Assembly and Council before 2 August 1795. On his arrival in April he had been advised everything was "in a state of perfect internal tranquility" (C.O. 137/95, 11 May 1795, Balcarres to Portland). Thereafter nearly all his Council and Assembly retired to their estates, preparing to ship their produce after Crop, in the Spring, and before 25 July, when double insurance rates traditionally began (C.O. 137/95, 28 June 1795, same to same).

³ As he explained to Portland on 25 October 1795 (Lindsay, op. cit. iii. 81 and 90). It is true, however, that the Maroons did raid frequently and successfully. Within a space of seven days in September they burnt George Gordon's Kenmure plantation, Jacob Graham's Lapland, Trought's Caradupa, John Shand's house at Great River Penn, and two other Settlements, one within only 6 miles of Montego Bay (Supp. to Royal Gazette, xvi, 26 September 1795).
was to keep them separate. He sent for cavalry, admittedly an offensive arm, because it was the best way of doing this.\(^1\) The planters approved, noting that through lack of salt and good food, the Maroons were suffering from the "flux", which would soon force them to surrender. On 20 July he was still hoping war had not come to Jamaica, but he had to prepare for the worst, he said, and act upon the offensive: "light cavalry is suited to our immediate opinions".\(^2\)

Jamaica was the jewel in the imperial Crown; its riches immense. No Governor could afford to take risks, but it was the Legislature which had the power of making war. Balcarres' secret Instructions were soon informing him that whilst he could, if he wished, send to Barbados for reinforcements (he had already diverted a few troops from San Domingo) he was to remember that so doing would "expose the whole plan of campaign in the Leeward Islands to the risk of total failure".\(^3\) Clearly he had better make do with what he had.\(^4\) Surrounding the Maroons, he began to ambush their foraging parties, and used howitzers to dislodge them from their cockpits. He erected small forts in the two towns captured and on every road leading to their country. In October he handed over to Major-General George Walpole, who eventually negotiated terms on 21 December 1795, when the rebels were given ten days to come in, surrender their arms, and give up all runaway slaves who had joined them. In a secret clause Walpole promised they would not be banished.\(^5\)

Later, feeling the time too short (many were delayed by sickness), Walpole accepted the surrender, under the treaty, of some four

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\(^1\) As he explained to Dundas, 21 July 1795 (Lindsay, op. cit. iii. 40).
\(^3\) Crawford Mun. 23/10/313, Dundas to Balcarres, 24 November 1795.
\(^4\) Namely, the 16th and 62nd Foot, both so weak from sickness as to number only 150 men each fit for duty, and the 20th or Light Dragoons and stray detachments of the 13th, 14th, 17th and 18th Light Dragoons, and of the 83rd Foot, in all amounting to little more than 400 men (J. W. Fortescue, *A History of the 17th Lancers* (London, 1895), p. 79.)
\(^5\) This usually meant being sent to some other island where they became slaves.
hundred others in January. It has been frequently stated that these were not received under the same terms.\textsuperscript{1} Balcarres wrote to him on 13 January 1796, however: “I think you may give them an opportunity until two o’clock tomorrow to come in, and then proceed against the remainder.”\textsuperscript{2} Walpole understood this to mean that surrenders were under the terms of the treaty, and told the Lieutenant-Governor so.\textsuperscript{3} On the 16th Balcarres replied, saying “I give you \textit{carte blanche}”.\textsuperscript{4}

Balcarres was essentially a soldier and he would have kept faith with a defeated enemy; but he was also Lieutenant-Governor, restricted by the powers of the Council Assembly, and Judiciary, and at the mercy of the London absentee planter lobby, several of whom were M.P.s with influence amongst the Board of Trade and the Secretaries of State. There were no politics as such, no Parties, in Jamaica, but always plenty of factions. With little patronage to offer—what Balcarres called “the loaves and fishes”\textsuperscript{5}—Governors were at the mercy of cabals. Planters had been scared too often by insurrections to be in a forgiving mood; several had been ruined. In a private letter to Walpole at Headquarters (upon which Balcarres’ family honourably remained silent in the ensuing bitterness) the Lieutenant-Governor had already written on Christmas Eve: “we are staggered here at the engagement you have entered into upon oath because we are not certain of carrying the country with us.” Fortunately the Assembly was adjourned for three weeks; the Council, though

\textsuperscript{1} For a recent example see John Fage, \textit{A History of West Africa} (Cambridge, 1969), (4th edn.), p. 120, which states the Maroons had “reached an agreement with the Government to transport them out of the Island”. Similarly, in Nova Scotia it has been said that disliking the life there “they contracted with the Sierra Leone Company to be sent to Freetown” (John Peterson, \textit{Province of Freedom} (London, 1969), p. 304, n. 36). In fact, the Secretary of State ordered Governor Wentworth, who had begun to parley with them, that they were not to be consulted but were to go wherever they were sent (C.O. 217/70, fo. 159, Governor’s Despatches, Nova Scotia).

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica . . .} (London, 1796), p. 27.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid. pp. 29, 30, 31, 84.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid. p. 32.

\textsuperscript{5} He complained their lack made it impossible to maintain that “Vice-royalty” necessary in a large and rich colony (C.O. 137/101, 9 February 1799, to Portland, quoted in Helen T. Manning, \textit{British Colonial Government after the American Revolution, 1782-1820} (Connecticut, 1966), p. 111.).
unenthusiastically, accepted the treaty by six votes to five with two abstentions.1

An overseer, writing to his London proprietor in January, hearing that sixty-two Maroons had surrendered, gave the general view: “we most ardently hope no terms short of their quitting the country for ever may be granted to them.” On 17 January Balcarres, seeing plainly the loophole the Legislature would use, for the first time openly expressed his reservations to Walpole: “I merely suggest a conversation may arise in the country that the Maroons have not surrendered in terms of the treaty.”2 On the 8th of January Portland ordered that the Maroons were not to be sent back to their districts; if possible they should be sent off the island.3 Balcarres showed the two Houses an extract and they, of the same mind, voted to pack the rebels off to Nova Scotia, a Special Committee on 20 April deciding (as Balcarres had feared) that the Maroons, not having kept their promise to surrender 150 runaways in time, the treaty was void.

The Lieutenant-Governor had misgivings, being uneasy about transportation in view of the treaty. He decided to temporize, keeping the Maroons on board the transports but at anchor, and not despatching them to Halifax. He preferred to await H.M.G.’s instructions which would relieve him of being personally involved in a breach of faith. In the end, lack of provisions and the Vice-Admiral’s need of the transports forced

1 C.O. 137/96, Balcarres to Walpole, 30 December 1795; C.O. 137/97, 24 December 1795, Balcarres to Walpole (private).

2 Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly..., p. 35. On 24 December, a handful of such members of both Council and Assembly as could attend Kings House, Spanish Town, had resolved Walpole’s secret clause would be acceptable only if the Maroons surrendered the runaways and laid down their arms, though no time limit was stipulated (ibid. p. 13). The full Legislature met on 1 March 1796. It is probably this December meeting Balcarres referred to in his letter to Walpole (see n. 1 above; Bodleian Lib., Eng. Letters, Clar. Dep. C. 357, Jamaica Corr., James Graham to Joseph Barham, 13 January 1796. See also Edwards’ opinion p. 338, n. 1 above).

3 Procs. of the Governor and Assembly..., pp. 42, 45, 53, 101. Walpole wanted more time; he thought other Maroons still out would come in. Balcarres was in a hurry, partly because of Portland’s secret instructions, partly because of island opinion, but more especially because he had impetuously informed H.M.G. they were secured already.
his hand and he sent them off. The island was jubilant, feeling safer than ever before and anticipating greater financial credit than ever.

There was a darker side. Plantations in general, and especially those in St. James and St. Elizabeth parishes, had suffered badly. Canes were entirely burnt, the ground requiring several years for re-establishment. With no crop to work, there were still slaves to be fed. Where the cane was standing, yields were poor, the season being especially dry. There was little hope either, in war-time, of getting it home easily, shipping being short, fleet convoys uncertain and insurance rates rising.

At home the Opposition used the war to attack Government. On 21 March 1796, General Macleod brought up the question of the hundred bloodhounds and their forty Spanish keepers used to track the Maroons. Sheridan leapt to the attack, speaking of oppression, floggings being a breach of the 1739 treaty, and of the Maroons taking up arms in vindication of their rights. Ministers, especially Dundas, did not care to have to defend Jamaica's policy in the House.

In fact Walpole had first brought the idea of bloodhounds to Balcarres' attention, though it was a committee of Spanish Town planters who formally pressed the plan on him a few days later. Dogs had been used before; for example, against North American Indians. Balcarres, when he saw them, thought they were "terrible monsters" and hoped he would not have to use them and that the terror of them alone would make the Maroons come in. The Assembly thought differently, holding there was no alternative. Balcarres had to give in, or risk a crisis.

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1 P.R.O., War Office 1/92, fo. 335, Balcarres to Dundas, 20 April 1796; also Lindsay, op. cit. iii. 128-30; Bodleian Lib., MS., Clar. Dep. C. 357, Jamaica Corr., 17 June 1796, James Wedderburn to Joseph Foster Barham, and ibid. 7 June 1796, Thomas Plummer to Barham. Sugar prices varied greatly, being very high in 1798, greatly depressed in 1799, moderate in 1800. The cost of supplies had more than doubled in a tremendous inflation which began in 1788 (ibid. C. 360, bundle 6, undated memo. on the Customs House).


3 Crawford Mun. 23/1/332, Balcarres to his daughter, Elizabeth Keith Lindsay, 13 January 1796. This undoubtedly expressed his true and natural disgust; there was no need for prevarication here. For the Spanish Town planters, see Crawford Mun. 23/11/37, James Lawrence to Balcarres, 24 September 1795.
Walpole was Portland's protégé, as the Duke had once pointedly explained to Balcarres. He began to make political capital at home at the expense of his Commander-in-Chief, and in Jamaica with the disgruntled James faction. Refusing the island's 500 guinea Sword of Honour, he resigned, going home to his Whig relations, getting in for Derby and, on 21 October 1796, trying to get a Committee of the whole House to consider the conduct of the Assembly regarding the treaty. Only five members supported him; thirty-four voted against.¹

Balcarres was disgusted: "All I can say is the service is gone to the Devil, and when men bring into the army the politics of their families disturbance must ensue."² Disillusioned, he tried again for an Indian Presidency. Lady Margaret Fordyce, sounding Dundas, did not, naturally, find him as cordial as she could have wished. Perhaps, she wrote, Balcarres was not sufficiently mindful of politics, giving his opinions "like an honest, unprejudiced man which is not always safe with a Minister however liberal in most things".³

John Foster Barham, who had always supported Balcarres in the House of Commons,⁴ felt that Walpole's attempt might not be

¹ C.O. 217/69, fo. 5; 217/70, fos. 210/212. See p. 328, n. 1 above. The Hon. George Walpole (1758–1835), third son of the 2nd Lord Walpole of Wolterton (later 5th Earl of Orford). His mother was the third daughter of William, Duke of Devonshire. He was returned M.P. for Derby in January 1797, a follower of Fox; when the latter became Foreign Secretary, Walpole became his Under Secretary, February 1806. See also The Gentleman's Magazine, 1835, ii. 547.

² B.M. Add. MS. 35,916, fo. 207, Balcarres to Hardwicke, 17 July 1796, and enc. At one time Balcarres' Attorney-General contemplated prosecuting James, who ruled St. James' parish with a rod of iron, for treason. "I am sorry to say that General Walpole yielded to the treachery of this party, and submitted to be entirely ruled by these designing men... Their interested policy made it necessary to create a schism, if possible, between the first and second in command" (Lindsay, op. cit. iii. 137).

³ Crawford Mun. 23/1/31, Lady Margaret to Balcarres, 1797. Indian appointments were greatly influenced by Pitt and the Shipping Interests of the East India Company at this time (see Edward Ingram, Two Views of British India (London, 1970), p. 1). Balcarres' military prowess may have even counted against him with Dundas, who was more interested in retrenchment than conquest in India.

⁴ For example, Lindsay, op. cit., iii. 137–8; B.M. Add. MS. 35,916, fo. 199 Balcarres to Portland, 23 May 1796.
the last of the affair, but that if it recurred the West India lobby, now reunited, could stifle it so that it would rebound against its movers.\(^1\) Balcarres complained to Portland that he had been “infamously traduced”, and to Dundas that Walpole had given the public an unfair picture.\(^2\) Nonetheless Walpole had harmed his reputation with the Cabinet.

This was not quite the end of the Maroon problem, since the Assembly soon jibbed at the expense of continued subsistence in Nova Scotia. Balcarres, pressed from Whitehall, did all he could, but by July 1798 Jamaica had voted £49,400 and refused further support. It was understandable, but it was another black mark against Balcarres. The British Treasury had to take over and, as the cheapest remedy, shipped the Maroons to Sierra Leone in 1800.

War in the West Indies now led Balcarres inexorably into that classic dilemma of Jamaican Governors: how to raise enough revenue in the island to pay for the administration and for such defence as H.M.G. expected it to find, while at the same time obeying the wishes of the British Government and keeping in with the Jamaicans. A minor theme, also classic, was the tendency of Governors to fall out with their Senior Naval Officer.

The immediate problem arose from the evacuation of San Domingo. In October 1797 General Nesbitt, intended as Commander-in-Chief, San Domingo, but delayed, had been instructed that policy required San Domingo and Jamaica to remain neutral for the rest of the war. If Port au Prince was prepared to defend itself, stores and £60,000 were to be provided; if not, evacuation was to be arranged. Balcarres criticized this plan in a long letter to Portland. The loss of San Domingo would pin Jamaica down to an external defensive war and would cause her reviving credit in London to fail, risking withdrawal of British capital and the ruin of almost everyone. He would send reinforcements, as he was ordered—even though it was like

\(^1\) Barham felt most of their troubles arose from the lobby’s disarray hitherto (Crawford Mun. 23/11/4, Barham to Balcarres, 4 November 1796).

\(^2\) B.M. Add. MS. 35,916, fo. 199; fo. 260, Balcarres to Dundas, 1 October 1796.
lending money to a bankrupt man—but on one condition: that his Council concurred. They did.

However, in March 1798 Lieutenant-Colonel Maitland¹ arrived in San Domingo. Unpopular in the services, though a junior officer he enjoyed H.M.G.'s confidence more than any general in the West Indies, having a kind of roving commission to report on all military matters and personnel. By 18 May he had evacuated Port au Prince² and conciliated Toussaint L'Ouverture, the black leader. In July he consulted Balcarres about evacuating the whole island. The latter replied that, whilst admittedly certain places must be abandoned, he would not be answerable for total withdrawal. Jamaica was open to San Domingo's arms, and, what was ten times worse, to her opinions. The success of "brigands" there made the Jamaican slaves restless; threatened invasion meant Jamaica's interior must be occupied "coute que coute", constant patrols sent into the woods, and the former system of quartering white troops in lowland barracks abandoned, lower positions being occupied by men of colour immune to diseases of the coast. The Militia was enormously expensive: "ruinous in all its consequences"; Britain should take into her own hands the whole military establishment of Jamaica, paying half the expense. A negro force ought to be raised, as he had often urged publicly, but the planters "would rather lose their all, than admit the idea of arms being placed in the hands of a slave".³

¹ Sir Thomas Maitland (? 1759-1824), an eccentric, rough, old despot. In May 1796 he represented the Haddington burghs, and again in 1800-4, and was Commander-in-chief, Ceylon, 1806-11. He replaced Nesbitt in San Domingo, the latter having been taken ill at Madeira on his way out.

² Maitland remarked dryly: "It was most fortunately accomplished considering the nature of our friends and the style of our enemies" (Crawford Mun. 23/10/440, Maitland to Balcarres, 26 May 1798). To the Duke of York he wrote that though Sir Hyde Parker had sent ships for the purpose, if he afforded greater assistance "it would have tended much more to the attainment of the essential object in view". It was, he added, no use complaining; as H.R.H. well knew it would only generate bad blood between the services and one must be content with what one had got (H.M. General Register House, Edinburgh, Steel-Maitland Collection, GD 193/1/4, 3rd June 1798).

³ Crawford Mun. 23/10/453, 31 July, Maitland to Balcarres; Register House MS. GD 193/2/3, 4 July 1798, Balcarres to Maitland; BM. Add. MS. 35,916, fos. 202-4, Balcarres to Hardwicke, 5 June 1796; P.R.O., C.O. 137/100, Balcarres
Since Nesbitt's ship had been lost, Maitland had no written instructions, though he had read Nesbitt's instructions in Huskisson's office in London; at that time they had been signed by Portland but not yet by Dundas. They ordered the evacuation of San Domingo, except for the Mole and San Jeremie. Secret Instructions from Portland, dated 1 January 1798, required him to hold the two latter as cheaply as possible, and if attacked by superior forces to relinquish them, which he now decided to do. Balcarres and the Senior Naval Officer, Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, protested, and seem to have convinced Dundas it was a mistake. At any rate, on 7 June Dundas countermanded the order, but Maitland went ahead and the evacuation was completed by 3 October; fresh instructions to hold Jeremie and the Mole arrived as the operation was under way. Maitland presumed to make terms for Jamaica (Toussaint agreeing that neither should interfere with the other's political interest) without consulting Balcarres, his superior officer. Balcarres had been treated shabbily by Whitehall and he complained of Maitland "fenced in by his instructions, which I have never seen—and using on all occasions, the talisman of the King's name".

Parleying with Toussaint incensed every Jamaican planter, every naval and military man, and all French Royalists and emigrants. There was consternation at the prospect of Maitland's black troops being quartered in Jamaica; Balcarres had to tell

to Portland, 16 September 1798. The health of his troops was one of Balcarres' earliest concerns. He had written at length on it to Hardwicke in his letter of 5 June 1796. He had, however, changed his mind about the evacuation of San Domingo. In 1796 he had favoured it, in order to save his troops for the defence of Jamaica.

1 Register House MS. GD 193/1/6, 31 July, Maitland to Dundas. Maitland argued that the enemy had no naval force worth speaking of and that instead of protecting the Mole it would be more use to have his troops in Jamaica. His instructions were, he said, to save all unnecessary expense; he was not to spend more than £150,000 nor use more than 1,500 men, but he could not defend the Mole with that number. Sir Hyde Parker replied that the Mole secured the safety of convoys from Jamaica with only a small escort; if it were given up ships would have to pass through the Gulf of Florida and would need large escorts (Register House MS. GD 193/1/6, Parker to Maitland, 30 July 1798, and 24 August 1798). William Huskisson succeeded Sir Evan Nepean as Under Secretary at War, under Dundas, in 1795 when Nepean went to the Admiralty.
Maitland "I positively will not have any of the colonial troops". If they were going to arm blacks, the planters would prefer to arm their own, but that matter was, "of all others, the most delicate on the island". Evacuation angered Pitt's Cabinet since it reversed their, admittedly vacillating, policy. Portland was not surprised that the island was alarmed at Maitland's Convention with Toussaint; nevertheless, it must be ratified. Balcarres' job was to reassure the Assembly—no easy task, and more difficult in that Balcarres felt Jamaica now needed six thousand troops at least to defend herself.\(^1\) The navy were particularly angry because the Mole was their most useful dockyard and the Grand Anse had no safe anchorage at that time of year.

If the amicable relations briefly existing between the services were to be sustained, it required more diplomacy and tact than either the Lieutenant-Governor or the Vice-Admiral possessed, especially in the small, even petty, world of the plantocracy. Balcarres, as Administrator, from time to time had to give instructions to the Admiral and there had already been several moments of strain. In August 1795 they quarrelled over Balcarres' infringing the right of the Naval Commander-in-Chief, Jamaica, to appoint an Acting Commissary-General. In the same month Parker delayed Balcarres' despatching a truce party to parley with San Domingo over prisoners of war, on the grounds that the boat needed was under his command as officer in charge of the Sick and Hurt Board. He also insisted on victualling his ships at Kingston, where wharves were already crowded, and merchants had complained. The victuallers, too, protested at the long unnecessary journey from Port Royal. In 1797 American citizens in Kingston harbour were rounded up by Parker's press-gangs and Balcarres received a diplomatic note. Magistrates inveighed against the "continuous riots and bloodshed" the gangs caused; slave ships no longer discharged at Kingston for fear of them.\(^2\) Parker protested to the Admiralty that the Jamaican courts made improper requisitions for the discharge

\(^1\) B.M. Add. MS. 35,916, fos. 202-4, Balcarres to Hardwicke, 5 June 1796; Register House MS. CD 193/2/3, 31 July, 19 August 1798, Balcarres to Maitland.

\(^2\) C.O. 138/49, 12 February 1797; Crawford Mun. 23/10/516, 1101 and 23/12/11, 21.
of seamen. Portland referred Balcarres to the Act of 19 George III, c. 30 which prohibited seamen in the navy from withdrawing or being inveigled from the King's service. The Lieutenant-Governor and his Council were curtly ordered not to forget it. The navy was uncooperative about the evacuation of San Domingo, as Maitland had reported to the Duke of York. Balcarres suggested ships' long-boats should be fitted with a cannon at the prow as a precaution against attack from San Domingo and Portland had authorized this, but nothing was done, mainly because the dock-yards were too busy with Parker's prizes. An additional frustration was the well-known tetchiness of the Master-General of Ordnance when requested to supply cannon.¹ The naval help sought by Lieutenant-Colonel Barrow against a Spanish force in Honduras was withheld until Portland complained to the Admiralty.²

However, the significant areas of disagreement were: the transporting of the French émigrés' slaves out of Jamaica, the Lieutenant-Governor's issuing of trade licences to merchant shipping, and the Navy's searches of civilian vessels.

The Council and Assembly were not in a cooperative mood. In September 1795 Dundas hoped they would provide and pay for a black corps or two, for service outside the island. In November he instructed Balcarres to get them to provide four vessels to protect merchant shipping, which he tried to do the following March. They refused; they had had enough expense with the Maroons and were adamant that "the House cannot relinquish its just claim to the protection of the mother country in an equal degree with other parts of the Empire as long as this island contributes so considerably to its revenue".³ Asked to tolerate the French slaves, they resolved it was the Lieutenant-Governor's duty to get them removed. They accused him of issuing passports for the entry of some slaves into the interior. His

¹ Crawford Mun. 23/10/548, Parker to Balcarres, 12 October 1799; Rhodes House, Oxford, MS. West Indies S.11, Nugent—Duckworth corr., 17 January 1805.
² Crawford Mun. 23/10/498, Maitland to Rear-Admiral Bligh, 3 August 1798; C.O. 137/101, Portland to Balcarres, 5 January 1799.
³ Crawford Mun. 23/10/1066, Council, 5 March 1796; C.O. 138/39, 30 September 1795, Dundas to Balcarres. American colonists had felt the same.
friends in the Assembly, in a scribbled note sent from the Chamber (21 December 1798), had to advise him to call his Council immediately and pass such laws as had been presented, or, failing that, prorogue them at once before "resolutions of a very indecent nature are passed against you".1 In 1798-9 there was a French plot, managed by Isaac Sas Portas, a small-pocked, Jewish-looking, spy with large whiskers and a "downcast sheepish look". It included poisoning Balcarres’ morning coffee and, through a Maroon from Nanny Town called Charles, attacking the Jamaican forts by a joint invasion of Toussaint’s best troops from the sea and a descent from the mountains. Balcarres was instructed in January 1799 to allay the leading planters’ suspicions of Maitland’s Convention with Toussaint by telling them that San Domingo would be dependent for food on Britain being able to persuade America to send it, and would thus not commit any hostile act. It was doubtful if any planter was comforted.2 Portland, affecting not to comprehend Balcarres’

1 Crawford Mun. 23/10/667, Henry Shirley to Balcarres (no date, but December 1798; see 23/10/1073). In November 1798 Balcarres drew up a list of Assembly Members who were for and against him. He could count on 14 for, 17 against, 2 doubtful, and 5 to whom he attached no label. For: Taylor, Telfer, Deans, Cockburn, Dawson, Jacques, Oliver, Christie, Redwood, Lyon, Cuthbert, Ross Johnson, Shirley. Against: Fitch, Shaw, Hirckle, Turner, McLeod, Thomson, the Chief-Justice, Quier, Swaley, "the new member", Reid, Perry, Mowat, Irwin, Henry, Murphy, Grant. Doubtful: Charles Bryan, Fuller. No Comment: Fraser, Osborne, Henderson, Fullarton, Campbell (Crawford Mun. 23/10/1088). Sir George Nugent, his successor, considered Thomas Murphy and Charles Grant, members for St. Mary’s, “heads of the democratic party” and leaders of the opposition to Balcarres; see ed. Philip Wright, Lady Nugent’s Journal (Kingston, 1966), p. 154, n. 2.

2 Crawford Mun. 23/10/136, Portland to Balcarres, 5 January 1799. French émigrés fell into four classes: whites, coloured artisans, domestic servants, plantation slaves. There were also white French prisoners of war quartered in hulks off-shore. Of course, few émigrés were disloyal, many not indigent. Some, like the Comte de Vaudreuil, had 100 or more slaves (shipped out by Maitland) who, mortgaged, provided capital for a partnership in a plantation (Crawford Mun. 23/12/62-5). Others set up profitably as milliners, bakers etc. There was even a miniature portrait painter. Some, leaving their families in Jamaica, took their slaves to America to make a fresh start (Crawford Mun. 23/12/86.) In 1795, the first full year Balcarres and his Secretary, Major James Alston (who was also agent for the émigrés, having held that office in Jersey under Balcarres), were in charge of the émigrés, H.M.G. paid out c. £4,800. In 1800, their last full year, £15,600. As in Jersey, Balcarres connected the payments to
difficulties, wrote that the Assembly "Upon reflection is expected to see the necessity of the temporary residence in Jamaica of French slaves". However, they, with their French owners, were costing H.M.G. a large sum in subsistence—£7,480 from June to October 1796, alone—and early in 1800 Portland ordered all émigré slaves not required for the army to be shipped to Martinique.

Martinique was not pleased. Its own slaves were still loyal and docile; it had been in the habit of transporting malefactors to San Domingo, and certainly did not want them back. The Sas Portas plot at its height, Balcarres with typical humanity reached an understanding with his Assembly that, in return for his sending away all the disbanded French officers considered dangerous, they would connive at the female and boy slaves remaining. He even persuaded the Assembly to pay for removing French male slaves over twelve years old, and he wrote to Sir Hyde Parker saying that he was putting them in his charge. Parker declined, stating he had no instructions from the Admiralty. In April 1800 Balcarres wrote to the Admiral enquiring, in a police register. Firmly believing the Maroon rebellion was fanned by M. Fouché from New York, that the Assembly over-reacted towards the potential danger from émigrés and thus led him into constitutional difficulties and that San Domingo's republican example was a constant threat, Balcarres wrote afterwards: "the admission of the French Emigrants into the island of Jamaica and its consequences form the history of my administration in that island" (Crawford Mun. 23/13/189).

1 Crawford Mun. 23/10/146, Portland to Balcarres, 7 August 1799; 23/10/374, Dundas to Lt.-Gen. Trigge, 5 March 1799.

2 Crawford Mun. 23/12/111, autograph memo.; 23/12/122, General Orders, H.Q., 31 December 1799; 23/12/126, Public Notice, 18 April 1799; 23/10/558, Parker to Balcarres, 1 February 1800. Though Toussaint was supposed to be supporting the French Directory's declared intention of invading Jamaica, Balcarres shrewdly believed that in private he was playing the French off against Britain to secure greater independence. Balcarres wanted to treat the French slaves as fairly as possible and was anxious H.M.G. should accept responsibility for them. The plot frightened the opposition and on 21 December 1799, in view of the Christmas holidays, the Assembly asked for Martial Law. He eagerly accepted since it gave him powers to set aside civil law, and it would enable him to ameliorate the slaves' lot, and to procrastinate until he heard from Whitehall, which he did in February 1800, when ordered to transport them to Martinique (C.O. 137/103, Balcarres to Portland, 2nd January 1800 (private), 24 February 1800).
the event of the slaves not being permitted to land at Martinique, or even Trinidad, what suggestions he could make? Parker did not miss his cue: "never having been consulted ... in the first instance, I cannot now advise".¹

No longer on speaking terms with him, Balcarres complained to London. The Admiral thereupon reported Balcarres’ "loose manner" of granting British subjects licences to trade with the Spanish colonies.² In particular he complained that tunnages, sailing dates and ship’s descriptions were left blank, licences being sent to wherever the ship happened to be, enabling it to make any voyage it liked, and, if stopped by Parker’s cruisers, rendering it inviolable. Portland wrote coldly that in future Balcarres was to take care.³

Balcarres was mindful of his duty to the planters, however. Council had frequently debated the question of trade and had decided not to place restrictions on it. At one time there had been dry goods to the value of one million pounds lying in Kingston, "imported under the faith and continuance of this intercourse". The new licenses had ended this; so had overzealous prize-hunting by Parker’s officers. In one very short period, Balcarres complained, no less than 1,300 prizes were condemned in the Court of Admiralty. One ship, described as a brig, was brought in as being not a brig but a "hermaphrodite scow" by reason of insignificant differences in the rigging. The Assembly’s committee on foreign trade in 1799 reported that commerce had declined "very materially by the interruption it has suffered from British cruisers whose practice it has too often been, to detain and bring in the vessels ... on very slight grounds".⁴ The Lieutenant-Governor consulted a committee of merchants in Kingston and discussed matters with his Council who supported him. Trade with the old licences, it was said,

¹ Crawford Mun. 23/10/567, 8 April 1800. He also added: "It is with pain I feel myself under the necessity to remark that I was never before implicated in any Service in which so many inconsistencies have arisen."
² Crawford Mun. 23/10/164, Balcarres to Portland, 25 May 1800.
³ Crawford Mun. 23/10/155, 2 August 1799.
⁴ Crawford Mun. 23/10/164, Balcarres to Portland and encs., 25 May 1800; and 23/10/307, W. Dowdeswell, Governor of Bahamas, to Balcarres, 12 January 1801.
had kept the price of cattle down by 40 per cent, and had saved Montego Bay almost from starvation. And so, on 10 May 1800, Council suspended the tighter restrictions recommended by Portland.

If there was one matter more than another on which the Lieutenant-Governor and the island did not see eye to eye it was over the garrison for Jamaica. After the American war there had been attempts to economize with the military, but 1787 saw a series of diplomatic crises between Britain and France and an increase in garrisons and fortifications. H.M.G. expected Governors to persuade Assemblies to foot a large amount of the increasing expenses—in all about £700,000, half spent in the West Indies.

The risings in San Domingo in 1791–3 wrought a change in planters' attitudes, though they were still reluctant to allow Governors much authority over military resources, which was relegated to a Committee of Defence by the Assembly. Fortifications were paid for by authority of the Deputy Receiver-General, who was closely watched.

The American war had shown that the Navy alone (hitherto heavily relied on to protect the West Indies) was not a sufficient shield. Seven islands were captured by the French in five years. A minimum force of 6,000, half in Jamaica, half in the Windward Islands, was felt necessary, though the army establishment in 1784 was only 3,000. Troops could not live abroad on ordinary pay, and provisions had to be sent out—in 1783 the two West Indies Commanders-in-Chief drew £300,000 for such "regular" additional expenses. The planters, threatened by invasion as well as insurrection, were willing to contribute, offering an allowance known as "island pay" or "additional subsistence".

In January 1791 Jamaica applied for additional forces to protect them and offered "island pay". A year later Dundas replied; the situation in Europe being more favourable, he intended to reduce the Jamaican establishment. If Jamaica wanted more troops he would provide them, but any above 1,000—a reasonable

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1 Crawford Mun. 23/10/600, John Perry to Col. Alston, 4 August 1801. For Alston see also Reg. House MS. GD 1/394, 37-56.

2 Crawford Mun. 23/10/1083, Council Minutes.
detachment in his view—would have to be entirely supported by the island. Jamaica agreed under protest and an additional corps of dragoons were sent, reckoned to cost £13,000. War began in 1793; far from reducing the military in other islands unless they paid up like Jamaica, as had been anticipated, Britain had to send five extra regiments to the islands, quickly followed by fourteen more. Jamaica agreed to pay for another 2,000—in addition to the first thousand already supported—but still felt H.M.G. should protect the Empire. In 1796 she proposed removing the 20th Light Dragoons. Balcarres was ordered to dissuade them and to remind the Assembly that the Dragoons were understood to be permanent, representing a force sent in peacetime at the island's special request.

Disease was rampant, especially yellow fever, and in 1795 West India Regiments were formed from slaves purchased by H.M.G. Black troops had been outstandingly loyal and useful to the Dutch in Surinam against fugitive slaves and indigenous rebels—the very dangers threatening Jamaica. Dundas proposed that two new battalions, each of 1,000 blacks, should be raised, the non-commissioned officers to come from the rank-and-file whites of the 16th Regiment. One battalion was to be always in Jamaica. The Assembly flatly rejected the concept of black troops.

Jamaican society comprised four rigid classes: whites; free people of colour with special privileges granted by Private Acts in the Assembly; free people of colour without such privileges; slaves. When employed in public service they were kept separate; in the Militia there were even separate companies of whites, browns, and blacks. Slaves were used only as pioneers and partymen. Manumission was only for faithful service and there was an outcry about H.M.G.'s granting it indiscriminately. Coloured free people, if employed as regulars, "would entertain notions of Equality". The island's laws forbade arming slaves,

who could not be manumitted anyway (which might have been a way round the problem) unless surety was given to the Church-wardens for settling a pecuniary provision on them for life. Balcarres, in that outspoken manner against which his sister Margaret had warned him, suggested that Portland might be ignorant of all this, and proceeded to instruct him. Eventually Britain pledged herself not to raise troops of any colour on the island.¹

As attacks from San Domingo became more likely, the situation worsened. Balcarres estimated that in peace time he needed at least one battalion to cover the eastern end of the island, to control the Windward Maroons. The posts at Stony Hill, Up Park and Spanish Town required 500 men each. The interior, which it was necessary to occupy because of Maroon threats, required 300, and the leeward part of the Island (St. Anne's Bay to Black River) together with Old Maroon Town, a further 600. This, with artillery, gave 3,080, yet there were only 2,234 on the island, 313 of them sick.² In war-time Balcarres reckoned 6,000 were necessary; now that San Domingo was lost, Jamaica should pay and support half. He complained he could get planters to think of nothing but "the making of sugar and their pecuniary embarrassments".³

They had some justification. In 1796 when they refused to ratify outright Dundas's 1792 agreement over the 20th Light Dragoons, that regiment, for a start, needed some 170 horses, which, at £45 each, alone came to almost £8,000. Moreover, each company of regulars had several black pioneers attached, for menial work. Hitherto these had been cheap, many refugees from the American revolutionary war being glad to serve for 6d. a day. That generation had almost died out and men had to be hired at a minimum of 3s. 4d. a day, costing £20,000 a year. The great question was: did Britain or Jamaica pay this? Balcarres had to agree that the Paymasters of each regiment

¹ It seems the Assembly agreed to raise two companies of mulattos, however, and two of blacks in 1795 (Crawford Mun. 23/10/92, Portland to Balcarres, 8 January 1796).
² Four regiments in three months lost some sixty officers from yellow fever (B.M. Add. MS. 35,916, fo. 262, Balcarres to Hardwicke, 2 October 1796).
paid 6d. a day to the Jamaican Receiver-General for each pioneer. In February 1797 he squeezed £8,000 out of the Assembly to repair the forts.

Early that year Portland sent instructions to raise eight companies for a "regiment of colour", the Assembly to be reconciled and induced to bear a considerable part of the cost. The island, however, cut off now from Spanish coin, was short of ready cash, which in any case got drawn into San Domingo where so many troops were gathered. In April Balcarres tried new tactics: a regiment officered by white planters who would purchase commissions by providing their own slaves as rank and file (ten slaves bought a lieutenant's commission). The Commission of Public Accounts would not have it, however, and he went ahead as best he could carrying out Portland's commands. He found he could raise twenty men in each company from free men. The other forty would have to be purchased and he thought it had better be done before the Assembly met! In June he reported that the island hoped to be out of debt by 1799 and, though the proposed 6th West India Regiment would never get through the Legislature, there was a possibility of supplies for 2-3,000 white troops. In July some of his friends in the Assembly proposed that 2,500 Confidential Negroes (presumably like the Lieutenant-Governor's suggestion in April) should be attached to the Militia, but they were defeated. Then the absentee planters in England offered Portland money to raise and support a white regiment so long as they were spared black troops. In September Portland instructed Balcarres to accept, providing the Assembly agreed. Balcarres found that what that body wanted was not to raise men of its own, but to have a number of British regiments quartered permanently, who, when discharged, might be persuaded to settle, thus increasing the white population which expensive immigration schemes had done little to augment.¹ Eventually the Assembly agreed to pay the total expenses (£32,000 a year) of yet another 2,000 troops—

¹ Between 1739 and 1752 alone, with 3 Acts, the Assembly spent £17,300 on settlers. Rear-Admiral Charles Knowles reckoned it had cost £30,000 to get 700 settled (Richard Pares, War and Trade in the West Indies (London, 1963), p. 230).
German mercenaries—intended as settlers. This agreement was kept for two years, Britain refraining from sending black troops and the Assembly raising the military appropriation to £250,000.¹

By now Balcarres was spending much time in managing his “party” in the Assembly. The resolution of 28 November 1797, to pay and subsist 2,000 men, had passed by only twenty votes to eighteen. Within twelve months his “party” had lost four men by death and other causes, the opposition only one. Even so, he did not expect to lose the vote on the island’s continuing to subsist the Maroons because he felt the opposition by its violence had alienated all leading men in Jamaica, a situation he preferred to the former “fluctuating principles” of support. If by chance he did lose the Maroon vote, he had decided on dissolution, having solid grounds to appeal to the people: magistrates, more powerful than any in the Empire, had been brazenly deporting the slaves of French émigrés; a select Committee of Safety was formed in the Assembly and a very violent report was expected from it. In fact, it asked for all foreign blacks to be rounded up. These proceedings so engrossed the Legislature that by the end of 1798 Balcarres had been unable to get anything done about either the Maroons or the proposed 2,000 men. He now realized it was not going to be easy to dissolve them, since it would be hard to find suitable people ready to step forward as new candidates.

According to the Colonial constitution a Governor was supposed to be of no Party, official business being carried on by messages from the Legislature and disposed of without Party consideration. All went smoothly so long as Britain did not require unusual financial support; in that event the Governor became a Party man. With virtually no patronage, his position was almost insupportable. From the moment he carried the vote on 28 November, Balcarres said, he “became by command a Party man”. All the old and respectable interests on the island (whose ascendency had returned about the time of his arrival),

¹ C.O. 137/98, 12 December 1796 and 10 January 1797, Portland to Balcarres; 28 January, 24 February, 7, 11 April, 23 May, 6 June 1797, Balcarres to Portland (private); Jamaican Assembly, Journals, x. 134, 287–91, 462–5, 578; B.M. Add. MS. 38,379, fo. 273, Balcarres to Lord Liverpool, 2 May 1818.
whence he had drawn his support, had now become a minority. He hoped his "party" might prevail, however, since three of the most violent opposition members were leaving the island, whilst none of his were.

He felt more hopeful in March 1799, having regained the support of three and having now fifteen friends and fifteen enemies, with six undecided. Even so, the island was no longer willing to pay for white troops; the opposition wanted to cram a bill down down his throat deporting 1,600 or so French slaves. Balcarres argued these had arrived as an "event of war" and were therefore H.M.G.'s responsibility.

His support come mostly from men of property, and the opposition knew that these would shortly have to leave Kingston to look after their crops. He could not afford much more than a week longer, but the opposition continually had the question postponed. Indeed, they put off the Maroon question until they reassembled in October, on the excuse that the accounts from Nova Scotia had not arrived in time—though they came through on 13 March, the day before the prorogation. However, on 7 March, he got them to vote £50,000 per annum for the troops. He felt he had done all he could, asking to be promoted Governor in time to meet his next session: "I have stood a fiery ordeal in this Assembly."

While events moved inexorably on, Portland received his despatches after the usual, uncertain, delay. The Duke warned Balcarres that H.M.G. could not be put under any obligation for white troops. Britain had offered black troops, Jamaica had refused them and had themselves suggested the whites—troops, moreover, for their own exclusive use. "I am totally at a loss," he wrote, "to discover how the question of providing for the 2,000 white troops can have any unfavourable effect upon the administration of your government, or upon your influence in the conduct of it." 1 Balcarres did what he could by asking the Assembly, at the height of the Sas Portas scare, for 1,200 blacks to be made into a

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1 Rhodes House MS., West Indies s. 11, Nugent-Duckworth Corr., 14 May 1802; C.O. 137/101, Balcarres to Portland, 2 December 1798 (private) and encs.; C.O. 137/102, same to same, 20 May, 15 July 1799; Crawford Mun. 23/10/146, Portland to Balcarres, 7 April 1799.
regiment under white officers,¹ but in his reply to Portland, revert­ing to a concept he had discussed with Maitland in 1798, he sugges­ted the island’s whole military establishment should be put under Britain until the war ended. Portland was appalled at the implications, no doubt largely the financial ones: “the words in which this sentiment is expressed imply an opinion so incon­sistent with that I hold of the powers, with which the person, who administers the Government, and who commands His Majesty’s Forces in Jamaica is vested, that it is impossible for me not to suppose that a different meaning is intended . . . from that which the ordinary construction of the words will bear.”² Governors, he went on, were “wholly independent” of Council and Assembly; as Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Balcarres already had control of all troops and was responsi­ble only to His Majesty.

Balcarres did not spare his adumbration. The Commander-in-Chief, Jamaica, was a “cypher” who could not order a nail without the Assembly’s vote and could not even move troops about the island without their authority, since he had no means of obtaining transport. For thirty years, he continued, warming to his lecture, there had been a persistent plot to reduce the Gover­nor’s powers. There was now a Board of Works, replacing the Board of Forts and Fortifications, with its own chairman and a distinct establishment, having the appropriation of all monies voted for Works of every description. If a Governor applied to it, weeks elapsed before it met; contracts, he added darkly, were not always awarded to the best man: “Multitudes of soldiers have perished from the evil construction of this Board”—composed principally of merchants, always willing to obstruct the military. “This Board was devised by some of the ablest Gentlemen of this island . . . with, I believe, the sole view of reducing the power of the Governor and Council.” These, in turn, had been overthrown by petty interests, and it was evident “the business of the Military Establishment in Jamaica, con­sidered abstractly from the command of the troops, is placed in bad hands and ought to be removed”. With San Domingo

¹ Crawford Mun. 23/10/1074, Balcarres to Speaker of Assembly, 18 November 1799 (secret). ² Crawford Mun. 23/10/162, 11 February 1800.
gone, a considerable establishment was needed; since one could not have a competent white force, then a competent black one was needed. The island would not accept that and he had done his best to get them to provide white ones. He had also, he pointed out, greatly improved the Barracks Department, reducing the death-rate by two-thirds and erecting forts and barracks on the east end of the island.

He enclosed a duplicate of a report to the Commander-in-Chief in which he explained that the island was only twelve hours sailing from Cuba, whence an attack could be mounted on the Bay of Bueno. Two posts in the interior should be established and men should occupy the coast from Rio Bueno to Lucea. The east end of the island faced San Domingo. With the introduction of the new Bourbon cane, which would grow in the hills, the Blue Mountains, hitherto sparsely populated, had been opened up, new roads leading along the north coast where additional block-houses and posts were consequently required. Stony Hill, where men could be rapidly deployed either to the north or the east, had become important. He had asked Sir Hyde Parker to ship blockhouses to the east end of the island, but the Admiral had refused.¹

His quandary epitomized the inherent incompatibility of interests between Britain and her colonies.² His facts were correct and his exasperation justified—"for five years past I have


² For further discussion see Helen Manning, *British Colonial Government after the Revolution, 1782-1820*, pp. 242 ff. In the end Dundas informed Sewell, Jamaica's London Agent, that Britain, needing more troops, had decided on black ones. Just before Balcarres' successor, Sir George Nugent, arrived, the 2nd W.I. Regiment—500 blacks with white officers—disembarked. Britain thus deliberately broke her agreement not to send blacks in return for the Assembly picking up the bills, and returned to the former method of providing white troops with the island undertaking merely additional subsistence. H.M.G. does not, on the whole, come very well out of the matter. They were trying to get what they could from the Assembly while that body had strictly kept all their agreements in the matter since 1787. Moreover, there was a distinct hint of blackmail in the repeated threats to quarter black troops on the island unless the Assembly came to heel. In 1802, upon the Assembly's refusing to vote additional military supplies, Nugent wrote his Naval Officer he felt it his duty to reland the 2nd W.I. Regiment (Rhodes House MS. West Indies s. 11, Nugent-Duckworth corr., 22 June 1802.

been in continual hot water ... under every disadvantage”—but it was not the way ambitious Governors address a Secretary of State. Portland’s disapprobation grew. Why did he ask advice on the right moment to dissolve his Assembly? That must depend on circumstances.¹ He cannot find that ships’ longboats have been armed as required: “I have expected with a considerable degree of impatience to receive accounts from your Lordship of the Execution of my orders....”² He cannot withhold his astonishment at the reasons for delay. It was Admiral Parker’s duty to have seen to it and Balcarres’ to have ensured it was so.³ In May 1800 he wrote that American ships should not be permitted to take away Jamaican produce in return for lumber and other provisions: “Your Lordship can hardly expect that the reason assigned by you as justification of a breach of so important a part of your duty, considering how repeatedly and how particularly your attention had been called to it, should have been deemed satisfactory.” The Duke was referring to the fact that Americans had been paid in sugar, coffee, and in other ways than those permitted under the Act, but Balcarres had precedent behind him. Seven years before, the island’s Collector and Controller had sought an interpretation of a Circular Despatch on Free Ports. In particular, he asked the Council whether Americans could clear sugar and coffee, and had been instructed that in special circumstances application could be made to the Governor, that neutral ships might export anything British ships exported.⁴ Governors clearly had a discretionary power, and, considering carefully the circumstances, Balcarres used it, despite an Order in Council (17 July 1800) preventing exports of produce in American bottoms. Bad weather in November 1800 destroyed many crops. It was forbidden, in war time, to import provisions from Britain. The permitted rum, molasses, ginger, and pimento would not pay even for the American lumber, urgently needed in their own shortage. With so many troops on the island, how could they feed every one? Slaves needed

¹ Crawford Mun. 23/10/146, 7 April 1799, Portland to Balcarres.
² Ibid. 23/10/1055, 2 August 1799.
³ Ibid. 23/10/162, 11 February 1800.
⁴ Ibid. 23/10/1062, Extract Council Minutes, 11 August 1793; C.O. 137/104, 27 July 1800, Balcarres to Portland.
the American salt-fish to balance their vegetable diet. Where else, Council asked Balcarres (30 January 1801), were they to get them? Prices, too, were high (and coin short); how else were they to pay except partly in sugar and coffee? The Lieutenant-Governor yielded to common sense and assented. Unfortunately he had never seen Portland’s Circular Despatch of 9 December 1796 on the question.1 He told the duke it must have gone straight to the Council. As he had never been good at paperwork, it would not have been difficult to keep it from him.

Portland, however mediocre his intellect, could seize a political advantage readily enough. In May 1800, quoting 7 and 8 William III, c. 22, sec. 4, he had virtually threatened Balcarres with the penalties of neglecting his duties—removal from office, even a £1,000 fine.2 Balcarres must have known for some time he was finished, and in September 1800 Major-General John Knox was appointed to succeed him. He never arrived, being lost in a hurricane. Balcarres worked conscientiously on with the Assembly, getting better barracks built, which particularly pleased him, and arranging how troops should be subsisted when on a march in the island, something never settled before. He now had a majority of twenty to seventeen, with six neutral, or absent, members in the Assembly. Even so, in other points he failed, notably in getting money either for the Maroons or for the payment of his blockhouses imported from America. He prorogued them in mid-March 1801. On the 21st he made arrangements to evacuate Honduras. The following day, still smarting from his reprimand over the gun-boats, he wrote to Portland reminding him he had served thirty-five years without one; he hoped his pretensions such as they were, would not sink under misconceptions. There were still plenty of enemies. In June he came across a letter from John Wigglesworth, deceased Consul in San Domingo, accusing him of frustrating Maitland’s agreement with Toussaint L’Ouverture. This was untrue. Toussaint had liked him. Balcarres fulminated against “little-minded undermining tricks”. In mid-1801 he was superseded

1 C.O. 137/104, 26 July 1800, Balcarres to Portland; Crawford Mun. 23/10/1085, Address, Assembly to Balcarres, 14 March 1801.
by Sir George Nugent, who did not scruple to suggest to Portland that Balcarres never got his black troops from the Assembly because he had shown the duke’s letter of 19 March 1801 to the Attorney-General or some other Member. The letter, not marked secret however, had instructed him, should the Assembly continue to refuse black troops, to give in to them.¹

The Assembly voted £1,000 for a piece of plate for him and addresses poured in from every parish, speaking of “ indefatigable zeal and strict integrity ”. Lady Balcarres wrote from Edinburgh to welcome him, mentioning her pride at his conduct and the very moderate sum he was bringing home—better that than a larger one amassed unscrupulously.²

He was not to reach the great heights Arthur Wellesley did, but their careers have some affinity. Balcarres’ father had been “ out ” in the Fifteen; family difficulties can hardly have been blacker, but he overcame them, like the Duke. Both quickly mastered the different kind of warfare which India, America and the Peninsula required. Too experienced in the ways and civilizations of the world to imagine, with the Abolitionists and Evangelicals, that all human nature was the same, there is no evidence that he saw himself any more than Wellington did as part of any civilizing mission, or even that he considered progress inevitable. Pragmatic, often unorthodox, aristocratic and military, he saw the world as it was and appreciated the significant social changes taking place in his youth, and the usefulness of having as a friend Henry Dundas, a patron from a small landed family with a legal and administrative background, rather than merely his peers. He set out “ to make a bustle ” in the world and succeeded tolerably well for a time. In retirement—he was now fifty—he continued to nurture the family fortune; few would begrudge him his pride when he said in 1825 “ we have once more reared our heads.”³

¹ C.O. 137/105, 16 March 1801, Balcarres to Portland, 21 June 1801, Balcarres to J. King; 137/106, 1 November, 21 December 1801, Nugent to Portland.
² Crawford Mun. 23/1/62, 4 January 1802. He and Alston, who received about one-seventh, grossed about £75,000 sterling, mostly from negotiating government bills to subsist the French émigrés (Crawford Mun. 23/13/5–36, 93, 96).
³ Quoted from W. E. A. Axon, Lancashire Gleanings (Manchester, 1885), p. 348.