

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS UPON
THE PROBABLE EFFECTS OF ANY
MEASURES WHICH HAVE FOR
THEIR OBJECT THE INCREASE OF
THE REGULAR ARMY**

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General Observations upon the Probable Effects of Any Measures Which Have for Their Object the Increase of the Regular Army by A. M. Mackenzie

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A. M. MACKENZIE

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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

PROBABLE EFFECTS OF ANY MEASURES WHICH
HAVE FOR THEIR OBJECT

THE

INCREASE

OF THE

REGULAR ARMY;

AND UPON

THE PRINCIPLES WHICH SHOULD REGULATE THE
SYSTEM FOR CALLING OUT THE GREAT
BODY OF THE PEOPLE

IN

DEFENCE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

BY

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN. *viz*

Sir Alex. Minis Mackenzie, Bart.

C'EST A LA POLITIQUE INTERIEURE A CONSTITUER SES FORCES MILI-
TAIRES, RELATIVEMENT AU GENIE ET AUX MOYENS DE LA NATION.
Essai General de Tactique, par Guibert, Disc. Prelim.

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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS,

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MUCH as the means of adding to our national force have occupied the Public attention, it appears to me, that in all the publications on that interesting subject which I have had an opportunity to peruse, as well as in the discussions which have taken place in Parliament, the peculiar situation of Great Britain as a nation, and the habits and general character of the great body of the people, have not been sufficiently attended to. And yet it would seem, that it is upon full knowledge, and due consideration of these, that a system of national defence, permanent in its establishment and efficient in its operation, can alone be founded.

Circumstances having led my attention to this subject, and having enabled me to remark the effects produced on the minds of the people by the different measures adopted, and the manner in which they affected their general habits, I venture to lay before the Public the result of these observations. Unambitious of literary reputation, and totally unqualified to attain it, my only inducement is to endeavour to direct the attention of those, whose talents and situation enable them to influence the councils of the nation, to some practical considerations which may not have occurred to their minds, busied in the active bustle of public life. A private country Gentleman, called upon from his situation to carry on the detail of the measures adopted by Government, has many opportunities of observing effects which must escape the attention of those to whom such details are less familiar; and I trust that I have not gone far beyond the sphere of such a character in any of the following remarks, or in suggesting a plan founded on the observations I have made. All that I propose to attempt, is to state some general remarks on the probable effects of any measure which may have the increase of our

regular army for its object, and on the principles which I conceive should regulate any system for calling out the great body of the people in defence of our country.

First, then, as to the Increase of our Regular Army.

It were idle to enter into declamation respecting the present state of Europe, and the undenied necessity of straining every nerve to increase the means of resisting our powerful and implacable enemy. It were equally futile to enter into any discussion to prove, that by the increase of our *regular army* we should *best* provide against the danger that threatens us. No man of common understanding disputes this. The real question, then, in which we are interested, is, whether we can entertain reasonable hopes of considerably increasing our regular troops? and, if not, what are the best means of procuring a subsidiary force, to make up, as far as possible, for the deficiency of number in our regulars?

The peculiarity of our situation, as a nation, cannot fail to strike the most inattentive observer. Our population is much inferior to that of many of those nations which consti-

tuted the civilized world, several of which are now swallowed up by one overgrown power; and the demands on that population are much more extensive than in any other empire, with whose history I am acquainted. The support of that naval superiority, without which we could not exist as a nation, requires a force which alone bears no small proportion to the whole of our numbers. We have many and extensive distant colonies to protect; while, to carry on that widely diffused commerce, and those numerous manufactures on which our unequalled resources depend, a very large proportion of our population must be constantly employed, either in the shops of our manufacturers, or the vessels of our merchants—limited therefore, indeed, must be the numbers who can be set apart exclusively for the profession of arms.

But, admitting the full force of the above observation, it may be demanded, whether, in fact, our regular army has yet reached that boundary which it ought not to pass? a question which, I conceive, must be answered in the affirmative.

If, in the first place, we compare our population with that of neighbouring nations, and at

the same time compare the proportion of that population, employed *publicly* and *externally*, it will appear that we have a greater proportion so employed than any other State; so far at least as I have been able to learn, this is the case*.

If, secondly, we examine into the facts which have occurred during the last ten years, we must, I think, be satisfied, that our population, under existing circumstances, cannot afford a larger draft than what has already been made from it. It cannot be pretended, that it is

* Taking our Regular Army and Militia, including the trifling number of Fencibles at present employed, at the same number as stated by Lord Hawkesbury in his speech in the House of Peers in 1801, and it is hardly to be supposed that the numbers are smaller, viz.

| | |
|---|---------|
| | 186,733 |
| Artillery and Engineer forces, | 11,618 |
| Seamen and Marines, | 126,279 |
| Seamen employed under the Board of Customs, | 897 |
| Do. employed and registered in trading vessels, | 143,661 |

Total, 469,188

Supposing that the gross amount of the population of Great Britain and Ireland is 14,000,000—469,188 is something more than one in 30 of this total population, or rather more than one in 15 of our male population.

only of late that the importance of increasing our regular army, has become an object of anxious attention to our rulers. Various are the expedients which have been resorted to, and various have been their effects ; but one conclusion I conceive to be unavoidably deducible from them all, viz. that to raise men for the profession of arms, is in this country a matter of much difficulty. The very fact, indeed, of the late changes in our military arrangements, evinces this truth, as they were introduced on the avowed principle of acting as a stimulus on those who it was wished should enter into that profession ; and the failure of this last expedient, as well as of the others, must be surely looked for from some more permanent and efficient cause, than the mere inadequacy of the particular measure. Were there abundance of men, ready to engage in the military profession, it certainly would not require such an accumulation of inducements, such a variety of expedients, to gain them to it ; while it is perfectly plain, that if a scarcity of this description of men does really exist, these expedients and these inducements cannot increase the number to any considerable *degree*. A review of the modes, which, at dif-