RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons, dated 29 June 1860—

A "COPY of LORD CANNING'S DESPATCH, dated Simla, the 5th day of May 1860."

India Office, 29 June 1860.

HERMAN MERIVALE.

The Governor General of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated Simla, 5 May 1860.

Sir,

1. I have the honour to transmit for your information the accompanying communication from the Quartermaster General of the Army, detailing the views of his Excellency the Commander in Chief in India on the amount of European force required for the safe defence of the Presidency of Bengal, and submitting a scheme for the disposition of the troops of all arms, European and native, under the orders of the Commander in Chief.

2. These details have been furnished in consequence of my having requested Lord Clyde to favour me with his final opinion as to the European force necessary for this Presidency, it being requisite, in determining the total amount of troops to be henceforward maintained, to begin by deciding what number of European troops is indispensable.

3. The necessary amount of native troops, and the strength of the police force which must be kept up, are also considerations obviously involved in the subject. So far as the police is concerned, I must for the present postpone my remarks. That part of the subject is under my consideration, and will be hereafter reported on; and, so far as the native troops are concerned, although the Commander in Chief has made certain propositions, these must of course be understood to depend, more or less, on the strength of the police which it may eventually be determined to maintain.

4. The Quartermaster General's letter is accompanied by a tabular statement, a complete return of all the stations under this Presidency, comprising Bengal proper, Oude, the North-West Provinces, and the Punjab, and showing the amount of force of all arms which the Commander in Chief recommends for their future garrison. That force is as follows:

**EUROPEAN.**

- Troops or batteries of artillery - 40, and 2 post guns.
- Reserve companies of artillery - 17
- Regiments of cavalry - 10
- Regiments of infantry - 43

**NATIVES.**

- Sappers - 1 regiment and companies.
- Artillery.
  - Cavalry, irregular - 29 regiments.
  - Infantry, regular and irregular - 60

The civil corps and contingents under the Government of India and the Punjab Irregular Force, are not included in this Return.

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5. To
5. To meet the requirements of this Presidency in European and native troops, there are available, exclusive of the corps despatched to China,—

42 Troops or field batteries of European artillery, including the Royal Artillery.
11 Reserve companies of European artillery.
10 Regiments of European cavalry, including the Lahore Light Horse.
58 Regiments, Her Majesty's Line.
45 6 Regiments, Indian forces.
1 Eurasian regiment.
1 Regiment and 2 companies of native sappers.
24. Regiments of irregular cavalry.
58 Regiments native infantry, including the three regiments coming back from China.

6. If, therefore, the force, and the composition of it, as recommended by the Commander in Chief be adopted for this Presidency, it is shown that two troops or field batteries of artillery are in excess, as well as two regiments of European infantry.

The Commander in Chief, however, expresses his opinion that two additional infantry regiments, making four in all, can be spared from Bengal next cold season, and these he would take from Allahabad and Roorkee, where two regiments are occupying temporary quarters; from the Peshawur Division, one regiment; and from the Hills one regiment. This estimate of the number of regiments which can be spared at the end of this year has been made after consideration of the subject by his Excellency and myself. I think that two regiments may be spared, but I am not prepared at present to recommend that more be sent away.

7. The deficiency of reserve artillery is noticed by the Commander in Chief as a serious requirement, both for garrison duties and to man the heavy field batteries which are to be located at the head quarters of most of the divisions of the army, and of which the details and the number are now under the consideration of a select committee of artillery officers at Meerut. And, as several important forts, Agra, Gwalior, Jhansi, Moozlan, and Attock, are without the necessary garrison companies, his Excellency recommends that the super-numerary field batteries be reduced, and the men formed into reserve companies.

8. In irregular cavalry, 24 regiments are available, while the Commander in Chief's scheme provides for 29 regiments. But when the two corps of irregular cavalry now with the China expedition shall have returned, they would in part make up the deficiency; and if the three regiments now serving in the Gwalior Division can be brought away, by any arrangement under which the corps now being organized by Captain Mayne for Central India could take their place, the number required by the Commander in Chief would be complete.

9. To make up the 69 regiments of native infantry which the Commander in Chief considers requisite for this Presidency, it is shown that there are 58 available, besides two Punjab corps, now at his Excellency's disposal. And when the native infantry regiments return from the China expedition, it will probably be practicable to reduce the strength of this arm. But any final determination as to the requisite amount of native force must depend, as before observed, on the number of the police to be henceforward maintained.

10. On comparing the scheme proposed by the Commander in Chief with that which I proposed in 1858, it will be observed that in the principal point, the number of British infantry regiments to be maintained in Bengal, the difference is not great. I had proposed 45 regiments, of which 30 were to be local and of a considerably reduced strength. The Commander in Chief proposes 43, but does not suggest a reduction of strength in any. His Excellency's scheme, however, does not allude at all to the organization of the force, nor to its being local or otherwise, but merely states the amount of force requisite for the defence of this Presidency.

11. From the returns transmitted herewith, it will be seen that the cost of the European force comprised in my proposal in 1858 would be Re. (4,07,44,906) four crores, seven lacs, forty-four thousand, nine hundred and six per annum; and
and that of the European force, according to the scheme of the Commander in Chief, would be Rs. (3,68,00,627) three crores, sixty-eight lacs, six hundred and twenty-seven per annum. The difference is Rs. (39,44,279) thirty-nine lacs forty-four thousand, two hundred and seventy-five; but then in point of artillery my proposal considerably exceeds that of the Commander in Chief, and in European cavalry is also in excess of that of His Excellency.

12. The total cost of the troops, as they stood in 1856, just before the mutinies, was, Rs. (5,18,03,354) five crores, fifteen lacs, sixty-thousand three hundred and forty-four. The cost of my proposal of 1858 would be Rs. (6,39,77,328) five crores, thirty lacs, seventy-seven thousand three hundred and twenty-eight; and that of the Commander in Chief's scheme, Rs. (6,16,97,215) five crores, sixteen lacs, ninety-seven thousand two hundred and fifteen, and in all three the cost of the Punjab Irregular Force, and that of native contingents and civil corps, is omitted.

13. I should not object to the 45 regiments of British infantry proposed by me being reduced to 43; but, after mature consideration, I am disposed to prefer the apportionment of force as suggested by me in 1858, to that which has now been proposed by the Commander in Chief.

14. I attach the very highest importance to a commanding strength in artillery; and, upon the whole, I should prefer to see the larger amount of European cavalry as proposed by myself, to the larger amount of native cavalry, as proposed by the Commander in Chief. I have little doubt that 50 regiments of native infantry may be made to suffice. His Excellency the Commander in Chief's proposal is 60 regiments.

15. The subject of disposing of the officers of the Bengal army is one of great difficulty.

16. In my Memorandum of 1858, I stated that 48 cadres of officers, in addition to those already absorbed, in constituting the three latest-formed local regiments of European infantry, would be absorbed in making up the other 24 regiments required to complete the 30 local corps which I proposed; and I suggested that the remaining 20 cadres of officers should go to form 20 regiments of regular native infantry. Thus the whole of the 74 cadres of officers of the old native infantry were to be disposed of.

17. But at the termination of the late mutinies, there remained only 15 of the old native infantry regiments, and I am not inclined to propose that any addition to that number, constituted on the same footing, be authorised for the future. This, however, leaves five of the 20 cadres which I had proposed to assign to the formation of regular native infantry regiments to be disposed of, over and above the number required for the local European regiments.

18. At the present moment, the complement of the Bengal army consists of 2,785 officers of all ranks and of all arms; and it has also 41 unattached officers.

19. In the six existing corps of European infantry, there are 300 officers.

To constitute 24 additional regiments of European infantry, so as to complete the number of 39 regiments proposed by me in 1858, 46 cadres of officers are required, or, in other words, 1,224 officers.

In the artillery, at its present strength, 348 officers of all grades are employed.

In the engineers, 135 officers.

The five regiments of European cavalry have taken 225 officers, thus absorbing the whole of the number of officers of the old Native Light Cavalry.

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\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{This result, however, has arisen from calculating the regiments of local European cavalry in Lord Clyde's scheme at the reduced complement proposed by me. Reckoning those corps at the established complement, the result makes a difference of two lacs, sixty-eight thousand nine hundred and seventy-five; as against my original scheme, the difference is five lacs, thirty-five thousand two hundred and fifty. However, I am disposed to adhere to this revised scheme, as I am of opinion that the increased number of native officers will go far towards amalgamating the native infantry and cavalry, and that the greater number is preferable. As the attention of the Commander in Chief is directed to this point, I shall submit the accompanying table, showing the immediate economy which can be made in the reduction of the native forces to Rs. 9,06,729 below the cost of that proposed by the Commander in Chief.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\text{A return herewith transmitted, omitting five of the 20 regiments of native infantry, which I had at first proposed, shows correctly the habitual scheme which I now propose, and reduces the estimate to Rs. 9,06,729 below the cost of that proposed by the Commander in Chief.}\]
The fifteen remaining regiments of the Regular Native Infantry absorb 399 officers.

20. The several numbers aggregate a total of 2,628 officers, leaving the five surplus cadres of infantry officers, in all 130, who, with 27 supernumerary colonels, complete the number of 2,755, besides the 41 unattached officers. The colonels, here called supernumerary, are the residue of the cadres of officers taken to form the three latest raised European infantry regiments, and the 24 additional corps of the same class of which mention is made above. These 27 regiments absorb 54 cadres of officers, in each of which there is a colonel; but, as in the complement of each of these regiments only one colonel is allowed, though each is composed of two cadres, one-half of the colonels become supernumerary.

21. But the irregular corps of cavalry and infantry have to be furnished with officers, and the requirements of the staff to be provided for. And the established rule is, that each regiment or cadre of officers may give six officers for staff and detached employ, including under that designation the irregular corps under the Commander-in-Chief, the Punjab forces, and other corps under the Government, the general staff of the army and its departments, civil and political appointments, and the military police.

22. According to the scheme of the Commander in Chief there are 28 (or 29) regiments of irregular cavalry, and it is certain that six officers to each would render these corps much more efficient than they have hitherto been. On active service less than that number does not suffice. Also, his Excellency proposes 45 regiments of irregular infantry (in addition to the 15 regular native infantry regiments), to each of which I would assign six officers. On this plan, the cavalry corps would require 168 officers, and the infantry 270; both together, 438 officers.

23. According to my proposal of 1858, 18 regiments of irregular cavalry and 20 of irregular infantry would have to be provided with offices; and, at the rate of six officers to each, the cavalry would require 108, and the infantry 210; in all, 318 officers.

24. For the staff and for detached employment of all kinds, exclusive of the military police, there are about 1,122 officers required; and at present there are 124 officers employed in the police. The total of these numbers is 1,246 officers; and, added to the 318 officers required for the irregular cavalry and infantry, the aggregate number is 1,564 officers.

25. Were each of the regiments of European artillery, cavalry, and infantry, the engineers, and the regular native infantry, to furnish six officers for staff and detached employ, the total number so contributed would be 693. Besides these, there are the five surplus cadres of officers, giving (without their colonels), 125 individuals; there are the 41 unattached officers, and there are 103-colonels of all the arms, of whom very few serve or reside in India. Reckoning together all these numbers, there would be 964 officers available, a number far short of the requirements of the staff and detached employment of all descriptions.

26. But then it is to be remembered that, for detached employ of most kinds, officers of the British regiments serving in India, and officers of the Madras and Bombay establishments are eligible, and with their aid the staff and detached appointments are provided for, though not without calling in uncovenanted persons likewise.

27. In my Memorandum of 1858, I stated it "to be most important that in the event of an amalgamation of the local army with the Line being found to be too difficult for adjustment, too expensive, or for other reasons not advisable, some arrangement should still be provided by which the local European army should be made to feel that it is composed of the same staff, and is in all respects in an equally honourable position with the Line;" that it was "very desirable that officers should be enabled to pass from the one into the other, though here also the difficulties are not slight; that there should be a clear understanding that the senior officers, whose service and ability may render them 'fit for such marks of Her Majesty's confidence,' shall be permitted to serve Her Majesty out
of India as well as in this country; and that divisional and brigade commands should be distributed between the two armies in a fair proportion." I also observed that, "on the other hand, the officers of the Line should have a larger share of staff employment than they have hitherto had." These remarks I now desire to reiterate.

28. But I adhere to the opinion that the interests of India require that there should be an army devoted to India. I am confirmed in it by the experience which I have acquired, after much intercourse with officers of Her Majesty's regiments of the Line in India, of the unwillingness which appears to prevail amongst them to look to India as the scene of their profession for any considerable length of time. During the excitement of active service, this feeling was not so perceptible; though, even in 1838, the applications for leave to return to England were numerous; but since the cessation of military operations it has become very strong, and it is not too much to say that it is a rare occurrence to meet with an officer of the Line who looks forward contentedly to a long stay in India.

29. I do not think that the unwillingness will be removed by throwing open the door to their employment in every kind of staff or irregular service. Making every allowance for the events of the last three years, for the disjointed and uncertain condition of service in India to which those events have led, and for all the discomforts of frequent and unreasonable movements of corps, and indifferent accommodation, the feeling is, I fear, likely to prove a lasting one amongst those who are brought to India only accidentally. I believe that there are very few Englishmen indeed who will readily make up their minds to devote themselves to a career in this country unless they are trained to look to it, and are bound to it from their youth.

30. This does not apply to military officers alone. Professional men, engineers, merchants and others, furnish frequent instances of distress for the country overcoming pecuniary and all other inducements to remain in it. No one would dream of attempting to administer the civil affairs of India through officers who were not attached to the Government by some other tie than the receipt of Indian salaries. And inasmuch as the efficiency of our military service, in those branches of it which are of daily importance to the peace and safety of the country, such as the management of irregular regiments, or the conduct of the half-political, half-military operations on the frontiers, and in native states, depends mainly upon the application which the officer gives to his early training, upon the heartiness with which he undertakes his duty, and upon his persevering adherence to it, I should greatly deplore seeing Her Majesty's army in India officered entirely, or even in the greater part, by men who are at liberty to cast themselves loose from the country at their pleasure, and at an insignificant sacrifice of their interests.

31. Speedily to raise a European army for India, and to officer it efficiently from our present body of officers, is impossible. But I think that a considerable sacrifice both of money and of time should be incurred in composing an army, exclusively Indian, rather than that Her Majesty's Government should commit itself to depriving India, as a final measure, of its own peculiar service. I would, if necessary, sacrifice something even of perfection of discipline. The European troops of the East India Company's army were much below those of the Line in this respect, and probably it would not have been possible to keep them up to the mark of their brother soldiers trained in England; but neither officers nor men had fair play. It appears that though these troops, forming as they did, a very small fraction of the Indian army, had been until lately almost overlooked by their successive Commanders in Chief. Upon no other supposition can I account for the fact that there did not exist for the Bengal European regiments any code of instructions or regulations teaching the officers the first elements of their duty.

32. I know of no mode of effectually or speedily training the local European troops to the required degree of efficiency, which is more likely to be successful than that of obtaining for a time from the Line regiments, whether serving in India or elsewhere, the assistance of officers of experience. No doubt this measure will be, to a certain extent, distasteful to the officers of Her Majesty's Indian forces,
forces, and not without some unpleasantness to the officers of the Line selected for the purpose, and much tact and mutual consideration will be requisite on both sides. But if the Army of the Line will lend to the Indian Army officers of sufficient standing and experience, and if such Indian officers as are about to be attached to the new Local European Regiments are admitted to learn their duty with Line regiments until their services are required with their own corps, I believe that the measure may be carried out with good prospect of success.

33. I am aware that it is the opinion of many high authorities that the maintenance of perfect discipline will be difficult if two distinct English armies are preserved in India; and that the complete order and economy of regiments is greatly promoted by their return, from time to time, to home service. I do not contend that, if judged mainly with reference to soldierly efficiency, the question would be decided more satisfactorily by substituting one army for two. But I do not regard this as the only or the most important consideration; I hold that there is quite as much to be said against as for the bringing together, in this remote dependency, of one vast English army, pervaded by an identity of feeling and interest, and likely to be swayed in the same direction by any accident or influence that may arise. I would, within safe bounds, give up something of perfection in discipline for the sake of keeping up an Indian spirit amongst the many officers whom, be the arrangement what it may, we must strive by some means or other to bind to India for all the best years of their manhood.

Moreover, if the opinion to which I have referred had been founded very much upon recent events in the Local European Army, I doubt whether due allowance has been made for the very exceptional circumstances which attended them. I have already spoken of the imperfect training of the officers to whose care some of the European troops were unavoidably entrusted. This is obviously capable of remedy; but the men themselves were at a disadvantage. A body of raw lads, strange to each other and to their officers, undrilled, unused to obey, landed in India and immediately marched to the central provinces, where, with little hope of sharing in the campaign, they were put to severe regimental training in the hottest part of the year. Such were very many of the young soldiers who in 1858 and 1859 forgot their duty, and committed themselves by acts of grave insubordination; and although there were other older soldiers whose misconduct was a much more serious imputation upon the discipline of the Local European Army in Bengal, I do not think that the occurrences to which I refer furnish grounds for abolishing that army as incapable of being brought into order.

34. I have said in the Memorandum of 1858, that the proportion in which it appeared to me desirable that the European troops in Bengal should be divided between the Line and the Local Army, is two-thirds of the latter and one-third of the former. The proportion is not very material, if a Local Army be preserved; but I should regret to see the Local European regiments fixed at a much smaller number, prospectively, than that of the regiments of the Line.

It is to be desired that the importance and dignity of a Local Army of the Crown should be sustained, and this will not be easy if it becomes essentially a Sepoy army.

I have, &c.

Canning.

To the Right Honourable Sir C. Wood, Bart., M.P.,
Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.
EAST INDIA (LORD CANNING'S DESPATCH).

COPY of LORD CANNING'S DESPATCH, dated
Sindia, 5 May 1860.

(Sir Minto Farquhar.)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
3 July 1860.

429. Under 1 oz.