

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

I AVAIL myself with satisfaction, in the present anxious state of public affairs, of the advice of my Parliament, which I have summoned to meet with the least possible delay.

I have directed that papers shall be laid before you, from which you will learn how earnest and unceasing have been my endeavours to preserve the peace of Europe.

Those endeavours have unhappily failed, and war has been declared between France and Sardinia on one side, and Austria on the other. Receiving assurances of friendship from both the contending parties, I intend to maintain between them a strict and impartial neutrality; and I hope, with God's assistance, to preserve to my people the blessings of continued peace,

Considering, however, the present state of Europe, I have deemed it necessary, for the security of my dominions and the honour of my Crown, to increase my naval forces to an amount exceeding that which has been sanctioned by Parliament.

I rely with confidence on your cordial concurrence in this precautionary measure of defensive policy.

The King of the Two Sicilies having announced to me the death of the King his father and his own accession, I have thought fit, in concert with the Emperor of the French, to renew my diplomatic intercourse with the Court of Naples, which had been suspended during the late reign.

All my other foreign relations continue on a perfectly satisfactory footing.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

The estimates for the year, for which provision has not been made by the late Parliament, will be immediately laid before you, together with such supplementary estimates as present circumstances render indispensably necessary for the public service.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

I have directed a bill to be prepared for giving effect, so far as the aid of Parliament may be required, to certain suggestions of the commissioners whom I had appointed to inquire into the best mode of efficiently manning the royal navy, and I recommend this important subject to your immediate attention.

Measures of legal and social improvement, the progress of which in the late Parliament was necessarily interrupted by the dissolution, will again be brought under your consideration.

I should with pleasure give my sanction to any well-considered measure for the amendment of the laws which regulate the representation of my people in Parliament; and should you be of opinion that the necessity of giving your immediate attention to measures of urgency relating to the defence and financial condition of the country will not leave you sufficient time for legislating with due deliberation during the present session on a subject at once so difficult and so extensive, I trust that at the commencement of the next session your earnest attention will be given to a question of which an early and satisfactory settlement would be greatly to the public advantage.

I feel assured that you will enter with zeal and diligence on the discharge of your parliamentary duties; and I pray that the result of your deliberations may tend to secure in the country the continuance of peace abroad and progressive improvement at home.

India Office, June 8, 1859.

THE Secretary of State for India in Council has received the following papers:

No. 1.

Major-General J. Michel, C.B., Commanding Malwa Division, to the Adjutant-General of the Bengal Army.

Camp, Nulkaira,

January 2, 1859.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to forward a Report of Major Roche, of the 72nd Highlanders, detailing an attack made by the rebel force, under the Rao Sahib and Tantia Topee, on a small column under his command, of about 500 men, and the enemy's signal defeat.

2. Major Roche, with his small force, has been very active, and done his duty well, during the short time that he has been acting against the enemy. I trust that his conduct on the present occasion, and that of the officers and soldiers under his command, will be approved by his Lordship the Commander-in-Chief, and that his recommendations will receive such attention as they may, in his Lordship's estimation, merit.

I have, &c.

J. MICHEL, Major-General,
Commanding Malwa Division of the Army.

No. 2.

Major R. Roche, Commanding the Neemuch Field Detachment, to the Deputy Quartermaster-General of the M. D. A.

Camp, Purtabghur,

December 26, 1858.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of Major-General Michel, C.B., that in compliance with your Letter, No. 52, of the 6th instant, I marched with a force (strength as per margin*), from Neemuch in the direction of Oodeypore, on the 12th instant.

2. Shortly after my departure, while encamped at Heeta, I received an express from Captain Showers, Political Agent of Meywar, stating that "certain information had been received that it was the intention of the rebels to attack the capital." I therefore pushed on to Dobuck, twelve miles from Oodeypore, the distance marched being twenty-eight miles, which was performed in twelve hours.

3. On my arrival at Dobuck, I was informed that the rebels had abandoned their intention of attacking Oodeypore, and were marching on Banda, from which place it was supposed they would proceed by Chittore across the River Chumbul.

4. In consequence of the above intelligence, I marched back at 3 A.M. the following morning to Kyrrowda. I was there informed that the rebels, having heard of my force being north of them, on the Neemuch road, had moved towards the south-east. I therefore marched the next morning to Heeta, and the following day to Burra Sadree.

5. While the force was encamped at the latter place, Captain Hutchinson, Political Agent, sent an express, stating that the force under Colonel Benson at Purtabghur, had been obliged to move southward, and requested that that place might be held by a detachment from Neemuch.

* Royal Artillery, 1 9-pounder gun, 1 24-pounder howitzer; 2nd Bombay Light Cavalry, 62 sabres; Sikh Horse, 75 sabres; Her Majesty's 72nd Highlanders, 143 rank and file; Her Majesty's 95th Regiment, 44 rank and file; 13th Regiment Native Infantry, 106 rank and file.