

# On Her Majesty's Service

WASC 527



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The attached is a copy of an extract from a printed account of a debate in the House of Commons (not Hansard, according to the House of Commons library).

The date "Friday, March 10", appears on the reverse of the original; from this, other evidence on the reverse, and contemporary Hansard it appears that the year is 1809. 10.9.64.

Mr. W. Pole said that the buildings at Waltham Abbey were rendered necessary to supply the want of gunpowder, the annual expenditure of which was from 50 to 60,000 barrels. These buildings were erected under the auspices of Gen. Congreve, and instead of 10 or 12,000 barrels a year being produced, as formerly, 22,000, of a better quality, were now manufactured. The expense of the Martello Towers became necessary on account of the clamour out of doors respecting Invasion. Things were indeed different now; for invasion was now almost morally impossible, as the enemy had it not in his power to put out two sail of the line from any port from Gibraltar to the North Cape. These Towers had been built with great difficulty and expense.

WALC 217

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10.3.09

Mr. W. Smith was astonished to see upwards of 100,000l. set against such buildings as those at Waltham Abbey; but the public he knew paid full 30 per cent. more for such works than individuals would. The works at Woolwich too had cost this year 78,000l. and the expence of the last four years was 422,000l !!! To what extent was the House to be called upon for these works? How was the country to be relieved but by economy in its expenditure, and by checking even the smallest abuse? He fully believed that there was scarcely a single public office in which the national interest was not made subservient to some individual object.

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