

## CHAPTER 11

### THE COMMITTEE OF SAFETY

With the threat of war every day getting more ominous Parliament decided to establish on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1642 a Committee of Safety, “to take into consideration whatsoever may concern the safety of the Kingdom, the defence of the Parliament, and the preservation of the peace of the Kingdom”. This consisted of 5 peers and 10 commoners of whom Pym and Hampden were the most conspicuous<sup>1</sup>. The first consideration was military; on the 6<sup>th</sup> both houses agreed to raise 10,000 men for active service, and a declaration for this was published. On the 7<sup>th</sup> they took powers to remove arms from the Tower and other arsenals as necessary. On July 8<sup>th</sup> Pym reported to the House that royalist forces were being raised in the West Midlands; on the 12<sup>th</sup> Lord Essex was appointed commander of all parliamentary forces. At the same time Parliament declared that by threatening Hull where there was a large arsenal, the King had in fact declared war.

On July 18<sup>th</sup> Hampden reported to the committee letters he had received from Hull stating confidence in its position and success by their ships in the River Humber. He then delivered another letter from Hotham, the governor of Hull asking for money, presumably to pay his troops. Hampden then reported the measures the committee had taken for the defence of Hull, viz. that £10,000 be sent to them, that Hotham and two other were to have the full power of a committee, and that thanks given to the two naval captains. On the 19<sup>th</sup> he moved that some members be sent into Somerset and Dorset to “advance the subscription of money, plate and horse”<sup>3</sup>. On the 29<sup>th</sup> he again reported from Hull that the cost of the garrison was now £600 a week, that Hotham had only £400 for next week, that his (Hotham’s) personal condition was in a bad state owing to the rifling of his house and grounds (which was near Hull) and cattle and asking that if the war continued he “might have liberty to make up his losses by the spoil of their enemy”<sup>4</sup>. Hampden then went on to state the measures taken to remedy this; that £100,000 of plate had gone to the Tower for minting (this was money destined for Ireland), and that money and troops destined for Ireland were being diverted for home use.

This appears to be the last time that Hampden is mentioned taking an active part in the Parliamentary records; from now on he was a soldier.

This committee became, when the Scots entered the war, the “Committee of Both Kingdoms” which conducted the war until the successful end in 1647.