Answered September 2nd

Carisbrook Castle

24 August 1803

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st with copies of His Majesty’s proclamation respecting Aliens, and directions for attention to His Majety’s commands in respect to it. I shall not fail to further the exectuion of this important object by every means in my power, and I was very pleased to have an opportunity yesterday of communicating it to the Gentleman assembled at Winchester as Magistrates and Deputy Lieutenants, and to exhort them to be [?] attentive in their respective neighnourhoods. I also desired them to address any particular observations immediately to your department.

I am instructed by Lord Hobart with his Majesty’s Command to correspond in future with you upon matters relating to the Militia and Volunteers of this County and the Isle of Wight and I shall obey them with great satisfaction, craving at the same time your kind indulgence for the trouble, which I may think myself occasionally bound to give you, by my representations or applications. I beg you however to be always most completely assured, that I will avoid every unneccessary intrusion, as much as possible.

I hope, that Lord Hobart will have had the goodness by his communications to you to make it needless and indeed improper in me to state the circumstances which have induced me to make particular claim for some distinct regard to the position and local important of this County, especially in respect to Portsmouth and its immediate dependencies as a Great Garrison and Chief Port of Dock of the Kingdom. On that account, I have, in concurrence with the earnest wish and exhortation of the General Commanding there taken infinite pains to bring about an Union of Volunteer Forces by Companies, amounting in the whole, exclusive of the Persons belonging to the Victualling Office and Dock Yard (for which I hope arrangement will be made forthwith) to one or two and twenty hundred men, who by taking upon emergency the duty of the Garrison and charge of the works under proper command will liberate a very important portion of the regular force for other purposes. In order to prevent all personal or local jealousies, which cannot but be supposed to exist in such places, as well as to cause proper instruction and regulation for such a body of men, I have desired to be allowed to recommend Lieutenant Colonel Duke (now upon half pay) for the particular command and management of them under the Lieutenant General or General commanding or some superior officer of the staff at Portsmouth. I have requested only in respect to allowances, that he may during this engagement be put upon full pay. That Captain Meredith of the artillery, now upon full pay, may be allowed to assist and direct the instruction of each of the companies, as may be attached to the Great Guns, and that Captain Missing of the South Hampshire Militia may quit that situation, and be appointed adjutant to these Companies.

I have further desired, that Captain Duncan of the Navy may be appointed to command the People belonging to the Victualling Office at Portsmouth and Gosport as a separate Corps under officers to be recommended from among them. I conceive the strength of this Corps will exceed two hundred and fifty men.

I hope that Sir Charles Saxton will propose some plan for forming into Companies the Men of the Dockyard, who I understand from him, might easily, to the number of seven or eight hundred be rendered extremely usefull about the Works.

This is the general outline of the plan for this peculiarly important and almost singular object, and I most earnest hope for the earliest communication of His Majesty’s most gracious approbation and orders for the accomplishment of it.

With respect to the other Volunteer Force of the County I have the honor to enclose a proposition for it in regular order. Many of the Corps have been accepted and are marked as such. Many are now specifically mentioned for the first time, but have been generally announced before, and for the acceptance of which, upon my assurance of attention to propriety, I had Lord Hobart’s private satisfaction. Under all circumstances their numbers are not I am sure taken too high. They must be subject to diminution and will lose upon a revision which I have now recommended. But I conjure you to enable me forthwith to authorize their proceedings in drill etc for which they are impatient as also for arms. I request a supply of them to be sent to Winchester, where they may be safely kept in the Town Hall till distributed, which I shall seek to do as soon after their arrival as may be. I cannot learn, that any arms (except one hundred and eighty Prussian Firelocks, etc) were not returned to the stores at Portsmouth upon disembodying the Volunteers at the end of the last war.

I have a very few questions, with which to trouble you, about the means of retaining the Members of Volunteer Corps in the service and about the colour and uniformity of Cloathing, and about the mode and expence of erecting necessary Beacons and alarm Posts etc but I wish to postpone them till tomorrow, when also I will send up the names of Officers, whom I would wish to recommend for the several Companies or Corps. After which I strongly hope, that my occasions of intruding upon you may not be frequent or troublesome or contrary.

I make no further apologies for this scrawl, [?] would be better arranged, if the state of my health would allow me to devote more time to method and writing.

I have the honor to be

Sir

Your most obedient humble servant

Bolton

Accepted 1 September