

(1685)

VIII. Of the King's Revenues

The Revenue of the Crown is either ordinary or extraordinary. The former consists of 1. the Custody of the Temporalities of vacant Bishopricks, this was formerly a considerable branch of the revenue, but now reduced to nothing, for the new Bishop as soon as Consecrated and confirmed does homage to the King and receives the restitution of his temporalities.

2. First fruits and tenths of all Spiritual preferments in the Kingdom; these were originally part of the Papal usurpations over the Clergy of this Kingdom, the former was the profits of the spiritual preferment for one year, the latter the tenth part of the annual profit of each living, these were by Statutes 26. Henry VIII. c. 3. and 1. of Elizabeth c. 4. annexed to the Crown and the preferments new valued, by which the Clergy at present are rated; though they are discharged from the payment of first fruits all vicarages under ten pounds a year, and all rectories under ten marks, and in such livings as continued chargeable with this payment, if the incumbent lives but half a year only one quarter of the first fruits is to be paid; if a year then the half, if a year and half three quarters, and if two years the whole, likewise by Statute 27. Henry VIII. c. 8. no tenths are to be paid for the first year, as the first fruits are then due, and by other Statutes of the 5. and 6. Queen Anne if a benefice be under fifty pounds per annum, it shall be discharged of the payment of first fruits and tenths. but this Queen granted a Charter ~~and~~ was confirmed by Statute 2. Anne, C. 11. by which all the revenue of first fruits and tenths is vested in trustees forever to form a perpetual fund for the augmentation of poor livings; which is a most equitable provision, as it restores to the Church what had been forced from her, and applies the superfluities of the larger benefices to make up the deficiencies of the smaller.

5. The rents and profits of the Demesne lands of the Crown, which are either the share reserved to the Crown at the original distribution of landed property, or such as came afterwards by forfeitures or other means; these were formerly very considerable; but now much ^{contracted} diminished by having been almost entirely granted away to private subjects. This occasioned the Parliaments frequently interposing, and particularly when King William had greatly impoverished the Crown, an Act was passed 1. Anne St. 1. c. 7. declaring all future grants or leases from the Crown for a longer term than thirty one years or three lives void, except with regard to houses, which may be extended to fifty years, and no reversionary lease can be made to exceed with the estate in being the same term of three lives or thirty one years.

6. The profits which used to arise to the King from the military tenures, to which most lands in the Kingdom were subject, which was in great measure abolished by St. 12 Edw. 1. c. 24. also the prerogative of purveyance and pre-emption, or the right of buying provisions and other necessaries for the use of the Royal Household at an appraised valuation even without the consent of the owner, and also the forcibly impressing the carriages and horses of the subject, to do the Kings business on the public roads in the conveyance of timber, baggage, and the like at a settled price however inconvenient to the proprietor; besides the King's Household, as well as those of inferior lords were supported by specific renders of Corn, and other victuals from the tenants of the respective demesnes; but by degrees the powers of purveyance declined and by the suspension of Monarchy fell into disuse, King Charles at his restoration ^{consented}

consented to resign these branches of revenue and power, ^{in consequence} ~~and power~~ of which Parliament settled on him, his heirs, and successors for ever, the hereditary Excise of fifteen pence per barrel on all beer and ale sold in the Kingdom, and a proportionable sum for certain other liquors, so that this excise now makes the ~~first~~ ^{sixth} branch of the ordinary Revenue of the Crown.

7^o Wine licences, or the rents payable to the Crown by such persons as are licensed to sell wine by retail throughout the England except in a few privileged places; these were first settled on the Crown by St. 12. Charles II. c. 25. but was abolished by 30. George II. c. 19. and an annual sum of upwards of seven thousand pounds per annum, out of the new Stamp duties on wine licences settled in lieu thereof on the Crown.

8^o The profits arising from the Forests or waste grounds belonging to the King, replenished with all manner of beasts of chase or venary, which are under his protection, for the sake of his royal recreation and delight; for the preservation of which there are particular laws, privileges and courts that will be treated of hereafter the profits of them consist chiefly in amercements or fines levied for offences against the Forest laws, but as few such Courts have been held since 1632. 4. Charles I. it is needless to enquire any farther.

9^o The profits arising from the Kings ordinary courts of Justice, consist not only in fines imposed on offenders, forfeitures of recognizances, and amercements levied on defaulters; but in certain fees due to the Crown in a variety of legal matters, as for setting the Great Seal to Charters, original writs, and other legal proceedings, and for permitting fines to be levied of ~~the~~ lands in order to bar entails or otherwise insure their

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