**Bonds and recognisances**

For Henry, the more money he had, the more control he had over his nobles. According to Professor Lander, 46 out of 62 were tied financially to Henry with 36 by bonds/recognisances. In the words of Edward Dudley, Henry VII “wished to have many people in danger at his pleasure.”

Bonds

Bonds were the giving out of loans with the proviso that if the receiver misbehaved they would have to pay it back. Bonds of good behaviour were given out after the Battle of Stoke Field in 1487.

*Why they were introduced*

Henry VII had to introduce bonds because asking for a grant from Parliament made the King look weak. Taxes were an alternative in gaining money but these came from the country and many people didn’t like them because the poor had to pay, also.

*Examples*

They were used by merchants to delay custom dues and as a bribe against murder.

Between 1485 and 1495, 191 bonds were collected.

In 1493, £3,000 were gained by Henry and by 1505, Henry was earning £35,000 a year.

After the Lambert Simnel plot, the Marquis of Dorset had to pay a bond of £3000 in 1493 and £75,000 in 1504-5.

Recognisances

Recognisances: when a person formally acknowledged actual debt; more formal than bonds. Began to be used as a punishment after 1502. It meant that the individual was tied to Henry. If they didn’t pay back their debt, there would be a judicial decision as to the punishment which would almost certainly go in Henry’s favour because the court was influenced by him. No recognisances could be issued without Henry’s consent which signifies their importance.

*Example*

After the Battle of Bosworth, the Earl of Northumberland and Viscount Beaumont of Poswick had to pay £10,000 as guarantees of their loyalty. If they were considered disloyal, they would have lost the money.

Statues of retaining.

Retaining was where nobles paid those lower in the social status to support them and raise their status, even if that meant fighting in a private army. Those in the retinue were given a livery (uniform) which showed who their master was.

It was used in the War of the Roses, for example, to advance their positions.

*History*

Past Kings accepted retaining because nobles needed an army to assert their authority in their district. It also enabled an army to be gathered quickly so they could fight in foreign campaigns. In fact, Edward IV had a law which “lawful” retinue was legal but it was too vague so any nobles could say their army was “lawful”. Thus, Henry’s new laws clarified the situation.

*Henry’s Laws*

Henry VII increased control over retaining but he couldn’t ban it completely because he himself relied on retainers as he had no personal army and Lovell’s rebellion was put down by Northumberland’s retainers.

In 1485, nobles had to swear against retaining illegally.

In 1504, legislation was extended that a king’s license had to be obtained to have an army. The license was only valid for the King’s lifetime and had to have a seal from the Privy Council. This new legislation allowed Henry to have a retinue among his most trusted nobles but didn’t let nobles become too powerful. It was an attempt to limit the power of the magnates.

*Examples*

In 1506, Lord Abergavenny was found to have too many retainers so was fined £5 for each retainer which totalled around £70,000. However, Henry suspended the sum which achieved two things:

* Firstly, the total horrified many nobles at the high cost.
* Secondly, Henry gained approval from Lord Burgavenny for reducing the fine. He had been involved in the Cornish Rebellion.

Henry was impartial to who received recognisances. When the Earl of Oxford had his retainers flank the royal carriage, Henry fined him 15,000 marks for having too many!