

Ad. Balthurst to H. P. A.

22370-1

Downing Street  
21<sup>st</sup> Dec 1819

Sir

I have this morning been inform'd that your Royal Highness has express'd an Intention of having a Chapter on Friday next for the purpose of investing with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath a certain number of Officers in the Army & Navy, whose Services *de jure* date, could not therefore be ~~then~~ considered consistent with the Regulations established in 1815

With respect to the Army, it is undoubtedly true that there are many distinguished General Officers whose great Services <sup>to</sup> may entitle them to such a distinction; but I have always entertain'd great apprehensions whether the selection, which I am afraid must be made on the invidious principle of competition

Merit would not give occasion of complaint more than of satisfaction.

The applications for the most of your Royal Highness's favour from highly-meritorious General Officers have been very numerous, & the answer which they have receiv'd that the existing Regulations did not allow of your Royal Highness taking that mode of making your gracious Service to their Service has hitherto satisfied them, & prevented several applications. If the proposed addition be not, as I apprehend it cannot be, founded upon a clear principle of selection, I humbly leave it to your Royal Highness to judge of the Dissatisfaction it may create.

Your Royal Highness has not condescended to make to me any communication of the Names of the General Officers, on whom your Royal Highness intend to confer this Honour, or of your final decision that this Addition was to be made. I thank your Royal Highness to believe that it does not proceed from any mortification which I may feel on this score, when I beg your Royal Highness to consider to what painful applications you will expose yourself, if the principle be adopted of notifying the intention of conferring these distinctions, except through the usual Official Channel. As long as the communication is made by a confidential Minister, it is he, and not your Royal Highness who bears the ill-will which Selections of this description too frequently create.

Ed. Balthurst to H. P. A.

22371

Even if there were no serious objection to the proposed addition, I must  
try to submit to your Royal Highness that it is not advisable to  
adopt a measure calculated to excite much emotion &  
some disappointment, at the present critical moment, when  
Parliament is just assembled, & no opportunity <sup>with</sup> omitted of  
making incisive comments.

These considerations however <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>little</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>importance</sup>  
to what I shall <sup>be</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>my</sup> ~~my <sup>duty</sup> ~~duty~~ to <sup>submit</sup> ~~submit~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>your</sup> ~~your~~ <sup>Royal</sup> ~~Royal <sup>Highness</sup> ~~Highness~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~for~~ <sup>your</sup> ~~your~~ <sup>most</sup> ~~most~~ <sup>serious</sup> ~~serious~~ <sup>consideration</sup> ~~consideration~~.~~~~

Your Royal Highness has wisely decided on extending these  
Honours to the Navy, & you have been pleased to communicate  
to Lord Melville the Names of those Admirals, on whom you  
propose to confer them. His Lord Melville's Opinion that  
the including of G. Campbell, & P. B. Boscawen will stand upon a  
commendable principle, & is calculated to give the most serious  
dissatisfaction in the Profession. His Lordship is absent <sup>at</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>Wimbledon</sup> ~~Wimbledon~~, & it has not been thought advisable to  
communicate to him P. A. Ashmole's letter which was  
received this morning. But I am assured that his Lordship is  
so strongly convinced that this measure is calculated to make  
an impression highly prejudicial to your Royal Highness's  
Service, that he will think it his bounden duty again to submit

the opinion to your Royal Highness.

Under these circumstances, I most humbly beg your Royal Highness will be graciously pleased to please, before you proceed further in this business, as I have too much reason to apprehend that it may be followed by serious consequences if your Royal Highness are now to decide.

Since writing part of this letter, Lord Kingsbrooke has informed me that he has thought it his duty to tell Mr Watson, who waited on him, that he had better defer giving the directions for the Chester being held on Friday next.

I have the honor to subscribe myself

Yr

Most obedient servant

J<sup>r</sup> Royal Highness and Dutifully  
J. Watson