Ld. Sandwich /

Fortescue 2792

3541

Admiralty Octo: 10th 1779
10 o'clock A: M.

Lord Sandwich takes the liberty to inform your Majesty that he is now setting out for Sion, & when he returns to town will have the honour to add to this letter what passes between Mr Robinson & him, and in their conversation Lord Sandwich will pay particular attention to the hints conveyed in your Majestys letter.

Lord Sandwich did not think it adviseable to press Mr Rigby upon the subject of Ld: Gowers resignation, for fear of breaking the confidence by which he has been so highly honoured; it is therefore not to be understood that Rigby refused to open himself upon that point, as nothing was strongly urged to lead him to it.

Lord Hillsborough's name was mentioned in the conversation between Rigby & Ld Sandwich, and all the former said concerning him was

that he might do tolerably well but that he would not bring us any additional strength. Your Majesty will find in the box a letter from Sir Charles Hardy acknowledging the receipt of his sailing orders, and another containing an account of the melancholly catastrophe of the Quebec, in which it is to be feared that poor Captain Fermor with the greatest part of his gallant crew have been involved.

two o' clock P M.

Lord Sandwich is now returned from Mr Robinsons & has the honour to inform your Majesty, that he either did not or pretended not to know that Lord Gower had signified his intention of retiring. Lord Sandwich told him that from the conversation he had had with Rigby, and from what he himself had collected from Lord Gowers & Ld Carlisles language that he was convinced the former meant to withdraw himself from this administration tho' he did not think he would go into opposition;

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3541 (2)

and that therefore in his opinion Ld North ought
to act upon the idea that that event was certain
& form his arrangement without delay; that
if this resignation took place there was an
employment open for Ld Weymouth, who
Rigby said he was positive would accept
a less active employment than that he now
held, and Ld Sandwich said that from
that opening on the part of Rigby
he was ready, if it was thought right,
to ask Rigby to sound Ld Weymouth upon
the subject of taking a less active office.
Mr Robinson agreed in the propriety and
the necessity of making an immediate
arrangement & disposing of the vacancies
that were or might be made, he said that
if I was right about Ld Gowers intention
of resigning no time ought to be lost in
finding him a successor, that he was sure
Lord North would approve of Ld Weymouth
on that occasion, but that as to my sounding
him thro' Rigby's channel he thought that

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had better not be done, as he believed your Majesty would chuse to open it to Lord Weymouth yourself, having shewn ~~an~~ willingness to speak to him upon some former idea of arrangement which did not take place.

He said that on Tuesday last he had had a long & fuller conversation with Ld North than he ever had before, and had found him much calmer than usual, and determined at all events to go on with your Majesty's measures; seeing the very unpleasant situation he should leave your Majesty in if this wicked opposition should be suffered to break in upon you.

He said that if Ld Weymouth came to town on Tuesday (which he certainly does) & that Ld Gower acted as I thought he would he concluded the arrangement would take place in the course of this week, & that he saw the impropriety of its being delayed a moment longer.

He added that both he & Ld North saw

plainly that the only thing to be done was to go on with the friends we now had, that there was no hopes of any accession of strength, therefore we ought to exert ourselves to the utmost with the strength we were possessed of.

He agreed with me in opinion about Rigby's disposition that he would go on acting with Ld North for his own interest, tho' he wished for coalitions that might strengthen our hands.

Mr Robinson said that he was persuaded the Attorney general would go into opposition at the beginning of the Session.

Lord Sandwich has this moment recieved a very sensible letter from Admiral Hyde Parker, & two letters from Admiral Byron who is arrived in England.