

George Shee to Col. McC Mahon

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Private

My dear Col. McC Mahon

I have read the inclosed letter with attention, and with every disposition to think favourably of the Writer, but really the transaction which he states is of so serious a nature that I do not know how to recommend any mode of serving him. — A greater Trust can not be reposed in a Messenger than the custody of an official Box, and a higher Offence can not be committed by him than getting a false Key made to it. — The Excuse that he only intended to smuggle appears to me to be quite frivolous, and the assertion that the Offence is justified by usage quite unfounded. —

The Locks of all the Cabinet Boxes are opened by
the

the same Key: The possession of one of which is only entrusted to Cabinet Ministers, Under Secretaries of State, and perhaps two or three other confidential Servants: — The most secret Dispatches and other such Papers are conveyed in these Boxes without any Seal, as the Messengers are supposed to be of a Description of Persons quite above the Treachery of opening them. — Now, you know, the possession of a false Key puts so much in a Messenger's Power that even the safety of the State may be risked by his making use of the Information within his reach — the Temptation to such Conduct you may easily judge of in Times when the Stocks are high or low in proportion to the Knowledge on the Exchange of continental Transactions. — If the Offence were punishable by Law the necessity for dismissal from Office for it would not be quite so absolute as it now appears, and if a Provision were to be made for those dismissed, the punishment would not be

George Shee to Col. Keekahou

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by be felt, ~~not~~ would the Example be of any
use. — I feel an awkwardness in thus
troubling you with an opinion instead of pointing
out a mode; but I am sure of my good
nature will attribute my doing so to my real
motives, & wish that you should not interest
yourself in any matter that is not fit for your
interference. — Believe me to be
ever faithfully yours
George Shee

It is singular that K. should acknowledge
having kept an office Box two years in his
Possession

Geo. Mac
June 26. 1807