Wm. Knox

(Lord North's)

4879

Anecdotes and Characters of the late Administration 1782

In the end of the year 1764 after the Resolution had passed that it might be proper to impose Stamp Duties in the Colonies, Dr Franklyn came over with the appointments of Agent for Pensylvania and assistant to Mr Jackson Agent for Connecticut. At the opening of the following Session the Agents had a meeting at which I was present being then Agent for Georgia and East Florida. The Agent for New York had a Petition transmitted to him which questioned the authority of Parliament to impose the Tax. Dr Franklyn objected to its being presented on that account, for said he to Mr Montagu Agent for Virginia some superintending & controling Power is necessary to act as Umpire among us. You know how Maryland refused to contribute any thing to the late war when it first

broke out because her Frontiers were covered by your Province and mine and I think we ought to apply to Parliament to oblige her to reimburse us her proportion. but the point the People of Pensylvania wish to see carried is the grant of Representatives to sit in Parliament, and if that was obtained they would readily contribute to the public expences.

Mr Jackson who was in Parliament and then Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the Stamp Duties were moved for, threw out in the House of Commons with Mr Grenvilles privity a proposition of giving Representatives to the Colonies but the Country Gentlemen would not hear of it. and Mr Grenville has said to me after he was out of Office and I became particularily intimate with him, that he thought the Colonies had a right to Representatives in Parliament and that Ireland ought to have Representatives also, and I accordingly proposed the measure in the State of the Nation published in 1768

Mr Grenville had not however any plan or settled Ideas respecting either their mode of Election, Powers or continuance or even Number, he was indeed but ill informed of the circumstances of the Colonies at large or of any particular Province. He had no knowledge of their Internal State, civil polity or modes of Government, and he had so little apprehension of America becoming independant of Great Britain that he only feared it would fall under the power of France from our inability to protect it, and he actualy tho' secretly joined with a Mr Nelson in the purchase of considerable Tracts of Land in the New England Provinces thinking them most likely to defend themselves, when he told me this he enjoined me the most strict silence upon the subject. His subsequent engagement with Sir Wm Duncan & Dr Dumbull was against his own judgement and at the Instance of Mrs Grenville who was enamoured of the project. His great Friendship for & entire confidence in me led him to speak his opinions of public matters to me without

reserve. He had very gloomy Ideas of the con-
-dition & circumstances of this Country and he
foresaw that a break would happen between
it and America in a little time. His expression
was, That this Country would run a Muck
against America, when he joined the
Opposition he had given up all expectation
of being again Minister. The last Evening
I past with him at Wootton, he told me
he felt himself sinking in Constitution
& reduced in Spirits & Animation. I am
not said he the Man I was when I ~~first~~
was appointed first Commissioner of the
Treasury and I never desire to be it again.
Had I thought of being Minister again
I should have been many Miles length
nearer it by walking about these Grounds
than heading the most formidable
Opposition, for I know the thing is not
to be forced nor ought he, but my Mother
(Lord Temple) who has been exceeding
good to me & mine forced me to join
Opposition. The cry was, why will you
alone prevent a Union that must succ-
-ceed, you still retain your old antipathies
when every body else is burying theirs

Well, Well said. I you shall not have to say I prevented you from getting in. I'll go with you, and so Sir you see me taking a part against both my Judgement and Inclination. No Man was ever more thoroughly attached to the prosperity of England, perhaps he thought too much of England and too little of the other parts of the Empire, for he allowed no equality between the Head & the Members, all advantages were to center here, and England was to be served by all the Members as the Mistress of the Realm. He loved the thing but he had strong feelings of his dimination, and he was so zealous for the honor & dignity of Government that no difficulty or danger could have deterd him from enforcing the Laws at home or revenging any insult from abroad. His Integrity was incomptable and his Industry not to be wearied and he possessd great abilities for domestick affairs but his notions were too contracted for the Minister of a Great Empire, tho' he loved Money and wishd to make his Children rich he was purity itself in managing the public Purse. It was

488

his constant practise to live upon his own private Income and save the profits of whatever Office he held, so that his being in or out made no perceivable difference in his expences.

During the Session of 1765 Mr Allen Chief Justice of Pensylvania was in England, and exceedingly clamarous against the passing the Stamp Act. He made frequent visits to Hayes and when he returned to America at the close of the Session he was authorised by Lords Chatham & Campden to give assurances to the Colonies that if they resisted the execution of the Act they would find support from them. of this I was informed at the time and Mr Galloway has lately told me Mr Allen communicated it to him when he came to Philadelphia. Allen accordingly set the example of refusing obedience to the Act, by declaring from the Bench that he would admit all Law proceedings as valid, altho' the paper they should be written upon was not Stampt. Mr Allen has lived to see in consequence of that measure, his own property the largest that any Individual had ever

acquired in North America taken from him his Son in Law the Proprietor and Governor of the Province banished and his State confiscated. One of his Sons commanding a Regiment of Loyalists against the very Insurgents he had excited to rebel and the other Son supported in England by the bounty of the Government he had labound to overturn. I told this story in the year 1780 at the Archbishop of Cashel's Table in Dublin sitting between Lord Shannon & the Speaker, and in finishing I turnd to the Speaker & repeated the Latin adage, Felix quem faciunt aliene pericula cautum, which struck him exceedingly & gave great pleasure to Lord Shannon & the Archbishop.

It was a great misfortune that Mr Pownal had been so long at the Board of Trade and so well acquainted with its Records when Lord Hillsborough made him his Under Secretary of State, and it was still more unfortunate that his Lordships had been formerly at the head of that Board and continued to preside

488

there, for he had imbibed its Notions and was in the habit of submitting his judgement to its authorities which Journal had in readiness to produce upon all occasions and which he recommended as necessary to be followed however great the change of circumstances.

The principle which appears to have governd all former proceedings at the Board of Trade was, that the Colonies were planted for the sole purposes of increasing the Wealth & Commerce of Great Britain. A Watchful Eye was therefore kept upon every steps they took which pointed to a new channel of Trade or to the introduction of any manufacture, but their modes of Government, their religious Establishments and their manners and dispositions were little attended to. Neither of the Ancient Secretaries of State circulated their Papers to Lord Hillsborough untill after all the other Members of the Cabinet had seen them, considering him only as First Lord of Trade, with Cabinet. His Lordship therefore laboured the more to shew the

utility & necessity of his office by multiplying business in which he was well assisted by Mr. Pownal. Long Letters were written, but as they could not venture to speak for Administration, little was said that could be understood as Orders. The Letters were indeed rather Essays than Despatches especialy those to General Gage New Commander in Chief and to Sir Francis Bernard Lieutenant Governor Hutchinson of the Massachusetts bay. those Gentlemen in return sent speculating answers and nothing substantial or decisive was resolved upon, while the mischief was fermenting in the Province. Sir Francis Bernard having married a near relation of Lord Barringtons this Lordships being the most intimate Freind of Lord Hillsborough Sir Francis had much more attention shewn him than he had a just claim to unfortunately his plan for new moddelling the Constitution of Massachusets bay was in part adopted. I prevailed to

have their Juries untouched - Much bustle was made about the burning a Revenue Cutter at Rhode Island, but as the other Ministers did not lend themselves to the business the enquiry only served to shew the Colonies that the Laws of this Country might be violated & its authority insulted with impunity, Lord Hillsborough was earnestly desirous to be thought a Man of business at the same time he could not but feel that he wanted some of the essential qualities of that character viz. clearness in perception, promptness in decision and activity in execution, His indolence with holding him from action he spent much time in discourse, His good Nature & Politeness made him pleasing to every body as a Man, but his tediousness and Formals fast & loose manner prevented him from acquiring popularity as a Minister, assuming to have greater abilities than he really possed and knowing he did not possess them, occasioned him to put on an air of mystery and to affect caution and doubting which acquired him the character of a dissembler, suspicions

and a deep Intriguer, By professing himself attached to the King only he excited the Jealousy of all his Colleques except Lord North. They looked upon him as a Tale bearer and whatever he proposed in Cabinet was ridiculed & rejected. The Bedford party hated him & Lord Suffolk despised him. The mortifications he met with and the necessity he found himself under of concealing his feelings gave him a habit of simulation and by attempting to act cunningly he became the Dupe of his own policy and brought himself into a situation with the other Members of the Cabinet that made it necessary for him to resign, at last Formal represented it to be such and urged him to quit the Seals for which his Lordship has never forgiven him. It should seem that his Colleques only stood upon the passing the Ohio Grant in order to get rid of him, for the Attorney General now Lord

4884

Thurlow never made a report upon the Warrant and the Grant was never pressed to pass nor did it pass. His removal was not regretted by the Public for with the best natural dispositions and the most amiable Qualities he wanted the Talents of a great Minister. When the project of sending out the Tea to America was agreed upon between the Treasury and East India Directors no intimation of it was given to Lord Dartmouth then Secretary of State, and consequently no orders were given or dispositions made for its reception, as soon as the Accounts came of its destruction at Boston, Witnesses were examined and the Attorney & Solicitor Genl. orderd to prepare Warrants for the apprehension of the Leaders of the riot, to be signed by six of the Privy Council, but the Attorney & Solicitor did not think the Evidence sufficient and the matter dropt, the Attorney General exposed himself

to Mr Pownall & me upon the occasion in these words - "Dont you see these fellows (the Ministers) want to throw the whole of this business upon Wedderburn and me and keep themselves out of responsibility, and who would be such fools as to risque any thing for such paltry fellows. Now if Grenville was there I would go to hell with him for he was so damned obstinate he would never give up any thing but stick to one to the last." Mr Penn was accompanied by Dr Franklyn when he brought the Congress Petition to the King to Lord Dartmouth. the Dr had frequent communications with his Ladship thro' the means of Lord Clarendon and having in the project of a Province upon the Ohio laid his ground for the Independence of America he watchd all occasions of bringing it forward. The Americans, however unwilling to submit to Parliamentary Taxes, were then universally Loyal

and it was his policy to endeavour to withdraw their affection from the King. The Answer delivered by Lord Dartmouth to the Petition which unfortunately was not written, furnished Franklyn with the means of misrepresenting His Majesty to the Colonies. His Lordship had said the King could give no Answer as it related to matters belonging to His Parliament, but he would lay it before them when they met. His Lordship continued to converse them, and upright & undisguised as his own mind is, he was not aware of the craft of those he spoke to. His own Sentiments were adverse to Taxation by Parliament, and he heartily wish'd to make America content, this led him to discover that his own wishes & opinions were not the same with those of other Ministers who had more influence. Franklyn in reporting the Answer & Conversation insinuated to the Americans that it was the King himself, who was adverse to the granting their request. He told them His Majesty would give no Answer to the Congress Petition. That his

disposition was arbitrary and that he was determined to rule them with severity that Lord Dartmouth had not weight to change this purpose and that they must look to themselves. As the business of the Office was carried on entirely under Mr Pownalls direction there are no traces of his Lordships Talents as a Secretary of State to be found in it. The correspondence being Pownalls bears the marks of his character. his Lordships abilities are not however mean. his perception is clear. his judgement good and his Mind firm. and had not Pownall obtained so unbounded an ascendency over him he would have acted more decidedly and with more wisdom. yet a private condition is more adapted to his Nature and Habits than an active public employment. The goodness of his heart inclines him to listen to every Tale of distress and leads him to adopt the cause of the sufferer however worthless. for his judgement

4886

cannot overcome the feelings of his humanity. He knows little of mankind and is apt to conceive of the whole of a Mans character from the religious part of it, which exposed him to become the Patron of Hypocritical reprobates, and outcasts. His Ideas of American affairs were liberal and just but he thought too humbly of himself to assume to dictate to others, and neither his good sense or desposition would allow him to adopt Meer propositions of severity. He therefore understoon nothing and the Rebellion was suffered to form and extend itself without any plan being laid or any attempt made to prevent or suppress it. Mr. Pownal proposed sending out Commissioners as had been done in the reign of Charles the Second and Lord North gave his consent and I believe the whole Cabinet approved of the measure, but it was thought fit that all the Commissioners should be Members of Parliament which excluded Pownal, who

intended being one and to govern the rest. He therefore changed his plan and proposed that a Lord high Commissioner should be sent with sole power, meaning Lord Dartmouth to be that Commissioner and himself his Secretary. Lord North rediculed the Idea and so the matter dropt. When Parliament met and both Houses by a joint address declared their resolution to maintain the Supremacy of the Legislature over the Colonies, I expected Troops would be immediately raised and a large Force sent out, but before any thing was done Lord Howe authorised by several Members who had voted for the address insisted with Lord North that some propositions should be made to the Colonies before any hostile step was taken. The resolution of the 20th February 1775 was prepared in consequence, but it underwent a variety of alterations before it was proposed in the House of Commons. I writ it

4887

over not lay them nineteen times before it was agreed upon. The last copy I made I carried to Lord Dartmouths House where Lord North was, and when I presented it to him he asked me how I liked it. I answerd not at all for I thought it would not satisfy, He desired to know my reasons. I told him that when Mr Grenville brought in the Stamp Act, I among the other agents represented to him that as the Revenue arising from it might be applied to the purposes of the civil Government our Assemblies would be rendered useless or unnecessary. That Mr Grenville declared he had no such intention, his only purpose was to make America pay her own Military Establishment as Ireland did, and he altered the Bill so as to confine the application of the Revenue to Military purposes. Now my Lord said I is this a time to extend your demands of Revenue from America which this Resolution does by requiring the Colonies to contribute to the common defence, would not your Lordships be satisfied if they did what

Mr Grenville required of them. Indeed Mr Knox answered Lord North I should be easily satisfied if it was only me that was to be satisfied, but I must satisfy my Friends, those who have long acted with me and they insist upon this, from thenceforth I considered him as a subordinate Minister acting under the control of certain Members of the ~~two Houses of Parliament~~. These Friends were Jenkinson, Wedderburn, Ellis, Cornwall and Lord Mansfield, Indeed Lord North in the House of Commons and Lord North in his own House or at a Cabinet meeting was as different from himself as any two Men could possibly be. In the former we see him taking the most comprehensive view of things, Manly, decided, and firm in his resolution. In his chamber and at the Cabinet, Inattentive, Indifferent and considering every proposition of a public Nature as wholly Irrelative to him. He was so far from leading the opinions of the other Ministers that he seldom gave his own & generally

slept the greatest part of the time he was with them, but notwithstanding this appearance of a disrelish for power he could not bear that any other should exercise what belonged to him, even the ordinary business of the Treasury Board stood still if he was not present. His perception was remarkably quick & clear and his judgement excellent when he could be roused to an exertion of his faculties. He seemed always out of his Element when he was required to consider any measure of Government and decide upon its propriety, his natural Indolence and bulky body required so much exertion to overcome them, that unless he was compelled by some extraordinary pressure to put the vast machine in motion it stood balanced by its own weight. This rendered him unfit for the place of first Minister, tho' no man could make a better second. His humour was not combated as it ought by the people about him, for business was not prepared for him nor

prefer upon him, His two Secretaries
tho' both excellent Men were not suited
to him. Mr Robinson was no Statesman
and Sir Grey Cooper was not a Man
of business. Robinsons want of Genius
was abundantly supplied by Atkinson as
far as Treasury transactions required it, for
no Man ever possessed a clearer Head or a
more active Mind or was more fertile in
resources, and to him it was owing that the
American Forces were so well supplied, for
he planned the business and wrote the
Orders and executed most of them. I do not
believe Robinson had any share in his
profits unless in those of the Loans
which I imagine he partook of, for
Atkinson gave me 50,000 of the last
which cleared me a profit of 3000.
Robinson got his money it is supposed
by Presents from Persons he and Lord
Sandwich obtained appointments for in
the East Indies. They governed the Directors
entirely and it would be strange if Men
who returned in a few years with vast
fortunes should not show some marks

of gratitude to those to whose friendships they were indebted for the opportunity of acquiring them. Lord Sackville chusing to transact his business with the other Offices by me instead of speaking to the Principals himself I had frequent occasions to inves: tigate their characters and to take measure of their abilities. When I was to attend Lord North I always carried my business stated upon a slip of Paper with the reasons annexed to the proposition and if I got hold of him I seldom failed of getting him to decide. Had his Secretaries done so, things would not have been so long delayd at that office, nor would Lord North's negligence be so much complained of. The requisitions of the Generals were not however kept back thro' the tardiness of the Treasury, for knowing Lord North would comply with them I gave them out to the persons who were to be employd in providing them and they were all provided by the time the Orders were issued. The last Indian Goods which were sent to

Canada were shipped the 20th March and the Treasury Order to me to provide them was dated the 23d of that Month. No consideration could prevail with Lord North to step out of his Department, altho' first Minister, he thought every other Minister had the same right to act within his own Line that he had in his, and he held himself in his Conscience responsible only for the conduct of the Treasury, tho' he was ready to take upon him in Parliament to answer for them all. Often as I have urged him to press the Admiralty to greater exertions and to a stricter hand over their Officers, I never was able to obtain even a promise from him that he would speak to Lord Sandwich, and it was the want of that general superintendency which a first Minister is allowed to exercise, that ruined all our plans in the execution. Nothing being ever ready in time, when the four Regiments

4890

were ordered to New York in 1775 I prepd Lord Dartmouth to obtain one more for Charles Town & his Lordship authorised me to speak to General Harvey & Lord Barrington for one, they joined in declaring not one could be spared from this Country. That no Recruits could be raised, the Nation being exhausted of Men by the waste of the late War, and accordingly none was sent there. They were both worthy Men but without Genius or military resources, which was a great misfortune at the time as Lord Dartmouth having no military Ideas of his own submitted at once to their opinion and the proposition was no more heard of & South Carolina & Georgia lost. Indeed had the four Regiments been suffered to have gone to New York according to their destination its probable the Rebellion could not have spread beyond Connecticut River as it was a Connecticut Mob that forced the people of New York to declare for the Congress. Lord Sackville's

appointment gave the Cabinet the Military information they so much wanted. His reputation for Talents & attainments was equally high in other respects and to so inefficient an administration as that he joined he was certainly a great acquisition, and could he have been prevailed on to stand forth as the Minister of the War and have asked for the immediate correspondence, and power over the Admirals as well as Generals in the American Department, America would not now in all probability be in dependant of Great Britain, but whether he felt that the Nation would not bear him because of former prejudices or that he really wanted that manly firmness which is requisite to sustain a great part, I cannot pretend to determine, but he always withstood my solicitations to that purpose, and I have been told

4891

by Lords North, Hillsborough Sandwich and Stormont at different times that he never insisted upon any proposition in Cabinet as if he had the carrying it at heart. His perception was extremely quick and his apprehension clear, whoever understood a matter themselves could not fail of making him comprehend it, but he was apt to be too hearty in forming his opinions, and not sufficiently careful to measure his expressions of either Praise or blame as the matter struck him on the Instant, and as during his Ministry he had more occasions of displea: sure than satisfaction he made himself many Enemies among the Military. He was a most exact observer of time himself and could not brook being dis: appointed or made to wait, and this punctuality & impatience of delay he sometimes carried so far as to be the occasion of great detriment to the public service, In the Instance of General Burgoynes expedition

it was attended with fatal consequences.
Mr D'oyly assisted by General Burgoyne pre-
-pared the Draughts of the Letters to Genl
Carleton, and I never saw them 'till
they were written fair for signing,
while I was reading them over Lord Sack-
-ville stopped at the office in his way
to Stone land to sign them, and on laying
them before him I asked him if he did
not think Copies should be sent to
Sir William Howe with orders to co-
-operate, he replied to be sure, and called
D'oyly & asked him if he had not prepa-
-red a Letter to Howe to send the Copies
in, and upon D'oyly's saying he had not
I offered to write one immediately for
his signing, he fretted at the Idea of
the delay, looked out of the window
said there are all my Horses & Servants
standing in the Street, and appeared
so uneasy that D'oyly to restore himself
with him told him he would write

4892

to Howe and inclose the Copies in a Letter from himself, and his Ladships need not wait. to which he agreed & went off instantly. Mr D'oyly did send the Copies, but he made his Letter a private one and no entry was made of it nor any Extract kept in the Office, and if Howe had not acknowledged the receipt of the Copies it could not have been proved from the Office that they were ever sent, and they certainly were not accompanied with any signification of the Kings pleasure for his cooperation. Mr D'oyly probably told him something to that purpose which would have made against him if the Letter had been produced, but D'oyly upon my application declared he kept no Copy of the Letter it being a mere private one, and Howe would not find the original, after D'oyly withdrew I wrote all the military as well as civil Letters, for his Ladships had then conceived so good an opinion of my

abilities that he chose rather to correct my Draughts than prepare them himself. It was indeed very remarkable that he wrote much better off hand than upon deliberation, but to speak freely his performances would not have born the public Eye. When I laid before him the Draught of the Despatch to Sir Henry Clinton of the 8th March 1778 in which the whole purpose & object of the war is pointed out, and the mode in which it was wished to be carried on fully described, he was alarmed & would have rejected the whole, as making him responsible, until he found at the end, that notwithstanding what had been said to Clinton he was left to judge for himself and act from his own discretion. Lord Sackville's frank & communicative manner, his quick despatch & great punctuality in business made him an agreable Minister to the Merchants, and as he

laterally had an entire confidence in me & left me to do the business in my own time and way my situation was very comfortable, and of the Five Secretaries I have served under I should give him the preference were I to chuse a Principle. He always called for my own opinion and I never either disguised it or with: held it, unless I saw he had already em: barked himself and was eager in the pursuit, when I held my Tongue if I disapproved, and my doing so instantly alarmed him and he became calm, and I then spoke out. The Dutch war was a point we differd upon entirely, for I endeavoured to persuade him to oppose it, but his Spirit rose upon my remon: strances, and he swore he would not consent to lay down & be bitched by a Dutchman. The Peerage was his great object, and the fear of losing it by going out in ill humour made him less strenuous in his representations

to Lord North & Lord Sandwich there he ought to have been upon many occasions where the public welfare was at stake. and wherever he apprehended his business would be disagreeable he employ'd me to transact it. Lord Howe's appointment to the command of the American Squadron had been negociated by Lord Clarendon with Lord North and Lord Dartmouth, but Lord Sackville got the Seals before his Commission as Commissioner for restoring Peace was made out. Lord Howe insisted upon being sole Commissioner which Lord Sackville would not consent to he did not indeed wish him to go to America and the matter being, untill I was one day asked by Mr Keene from Lord North if Lord Sackville would risk the consequences of preventing Lord Howe from having the command in the American Seas whilst his Brother commanded the Army there & I mentioned the question to Lord Sackville & it made a strong impression, he gave way in some points and only insisted that the General should be joined

489

with him as Commissioner, which Lord Howe at length consented to, but they were each impowered to act severally as well as jointly. Lord Howe did not however forgive Lord Sackville his opposition for he went out with enmity in his Heart against him. The General an honest stupid Man, before Lord Howes arrival expressed his astonishment at the greatness of the force sent out, and freely declared he thought it sufficient to put an end to the Rebellion in one Campaign, but Lord Howe unfortunately arrived before the Battle of Long Island where he took the command of the Army as well as Navy, and as he meant to have the credit of making the Peace and to give America terms that would save him with their & his Friends in England, he was fearful that the Rebels might be reduced too low to justify the granting them such terms, with the same view he sought to make the Ministers eager for Peace by the largeness of the demands and representations of the difficulty of succeeding. He therefore demanded Six Ships of the Line

in addition to the Fleet he had which then amounted to Fourscore sail of Things Ships and he prompted the General to write for 10,000 more Troops after Washington's Army had been defeated and dispersed, It was by his direction the Army returned out of Jersey & embarked for the Chesepeake the following year, and it is supposed his motive for it was to keep his Brother in his Hands for if the Army had marched to Philadel: phia thro' Jersey he must have left him and gone round with the Fleet to the Delaware. There is no doubt of his conniving at the Rebels receiving supplies and his repeated refusals to station Frigates in the Chesepeake & off the Bar of Charles Town is a full proof that he meant not to distress them as much as it was in his power, but I cannot think his delay to quit New York Harbour for three days after Sir James Wallace informed him

4895

of the French Admiral's Ships being intirely dismasted, was voluntary. Sir James told me that upon seeing her towed by another Ship he set all his sails & run thro the Sound and Hell gate at the rate of 17 Miles an hour to acquaint Lord Howe, but that his Lordship remained three days in the Harbour before he attempted to put to sea, which gave the French Ships the opportunity of getting into Boston one day before he arrived off the Harbour. The Intelligence that had been received of the destination of the Toulon fleet before it sailed was uncertain. Lord Sackville advised the sending the Squadron which was preparing to counteract it to Giberaltar, but it was found it could not be ready in time to give ground to hope it could arrive there before the French Fleet should pass the Straights. The conversation I had with Lords Sandwich & Sackville upon the

subject of the Instructions (the order for which I was to prepare) shewed me that much must be left to the discretion of the Commander of our Squadron and that consequently much depended upon his fitness for the trust. Sir Hugh Pallisser appeared to every body's mind the most proper man and I mentioned it to him but he begged I would not propose him or give a hint about him, he was however mentioned by Lord Sackville in the Cabinet and all the Lords were unanimous in recommending him to Lord Sandwich, but his Lordship declaring he could not spare him from the Board the recommendation was withdrawn, and he named Admiral Byron, when Lord Sackville told me this I took some pains to enquire Byron's character, I doubted his ability because of his misfortunes, for I never

knew any one generaly unfortunate who possess great abilities, and from his former Secretary I learnd that he had no confidence in his own judgement, asked every ones opinion and was generaly decided by the last he received, tho' that of a petit Officer. I reported this to Lord Sackville, who made an objection to Byron in the Cabinet, but Lord Sandwich stopped all further discussion of his unfitness, by saying he was approved by the King. His Ladyships never would allow that there was any material difference in Men and therefore thought himself at liberty to follow his own Inclination or Interest in all his appointments, His great object was to keep his Office and to that end prevent complaints which might immediately affect him. The guard of the channel was therefore first to be attended to, for whatever misfortunes happened abroad were more likely to be laid at the Door of the Admiral commanding

there then charged upon the first Lord of the Admiralty. He made no use of any of the Members of the Board after Sir Hugh Pelliser quitted it except Lord Mulgrave and seldom sat in the Board Room unless to sign Papers, all business was done in a Closet in his own House where Stephens went to him in the morning He was very desirous of having the good will of the Officers of the Navy and winked at their absences from their Ships & delays in port and other misbehaviour to the ruin of all discipline and dispatch in refitting, yet he seldom had the luck to send away any officer pleased with him and was the most unpopular of any first Lord that ever presided at that Board within my memory. Notwithstanding his long application to Naval Matters he was wonderfully deficient in geographical knowledge, and uninformed of the local circumstances of places and what is full as extraordinary Stephens was not in many cases able to set him right.

the last Instruction which they had prepared for Admiral Rowley and gave me to make the substance of a Letter from Lord Sackville to the Board was a full proof of this, for altho' it was highly probable that before the order could reach Jamaica the combined Fleet would be arrived at Cape Francois (and the event proved that the Spanish Ships were there some time before) Rowley was to order his Ships of the Line to beat up to the Leeward Islands without any qualification, I however took the liberty (Lord Sackville being out of Town) to put in such exceptions as prevented the Ships from coming. That Instruction gave occasion to a brisk altercation between Lord Sandwich and me upon the subject of Admiral Graves, who it directed to remain at Jamaica to assist in the defence of that Island. These words I absolutely refused to insert in the Letter, declaring that nothing but the Kings express commands or Lord Sackvills orders should make me write what appeared to shew confidence in him or retain him in a situation

of eventually commanding the Jamaica and perhaps the Leeward Island Squadrons, his Lordship answered that the Cabinet had approved the Draft of the Instructions, I replied that the Cabinet were not informed as well as I was of Mr Graves's misbehaviour, I had seen a Letter from Sir Samuel Hood charging him with the most atrocious Cowardice on the 5th April and his Lordship knew there was such a Letter, Well then said he shall I say to the Cabinet that Lord Sackville thinks Mr Graves unfit to command, I have no orders from Lord Sackville upon the Subject but I believe he thinks as ill of Mr Graves as I do, and I am preparing a State of his conduct in the three points of towing the French East India Man 18 days across the Atlantick when his orders were to make the greatest dispatch to New York, his suffering the French Fleet at Rhode Island to embark all the Cannon from the Ramparts and take in all their Stores and load Light Transports & he sailed three days without

his knowing it & even then only learning it by a cartel sent by the French Admiral, and his cowardice in the engagement, and I shall add some remarks upon his voluntary delay at New York after the engagement which I propose to give Lord Sackville to lay before the King and the Cabinet as the ground of ordering Mr Graves to be tried by a Court martial, what will Lord North say to that gentleman Mr Stephens, I answered I have authority from Lord North to say he will not protect him and Mr Thurne told you the same Mr Stephens, and Sir Richard Sutton his Brother in Law told me that from a private Letter of his to his Brother here he knew he would not endeavour to relieve Lord Cornwallis before he sailed, & that he thought he ought to be punished. I am no protector of Mr Graves said Lord Sandwich but I think the Generals ought to be tried as well as the Admirals. I agree with your Lordships in that tho' I know you only meant to over load the Cart, but

I should rejoice in seeing them all made examples of. I gave my charges against Graves to Lord Sackville and he proposed his being tried in Cabinet but Lord Sandwich making the same defence there as he had done to me, the matter dropt and Graves had leave sent him to come to England. Lord Sandwich I verily believe had as ill an opinion of him as I had, but altho' Lord North declined supporting him his near connexion with Lady North, made Lord Sandwich conceive Lord North would take it as a kindness if he saved him from disgrace, and as the Session was begun and he expected an attack would be made upon him he wished to oblige Lord North that he might be the more strenuous in his defence. It had been the usual course for the Admiralty to send the American Admirals Dispatches or Copies of them to the Secretary of State to be by him laid before the King & afterwards circulated to the other Ministers. This course Lord Sandwich stopt entirely, having in

scarcely any Instance for Four years past transmitted any Despatches to the Secretary of State, He sent them immediately to the King as was very fitting, but the Admiralty having no circulation with the other Ministers the Despatches were never read by any of them, hence it was that Lord Sandwich had it in his power to conceal from the Cabinet the real condition of the foreign Squadrons and he did not fail to avail himself of it. Stephens had always permitted me to read the American Admirals Letters untill I once brought Lord Sandwich to shame for having stated Parkers Squadron in the Leward Islands to be more numerous & in better condition than it actualy was, and from thence forward he kept back the States & Conditions from me as well as all Letters of complaint. To counteract Lord Sand: with his finesse, I often urged Lord Sackville to ask for an order for the Admirals to correspond directly with him as was the

4899 (

case in the other Departments, but he appre-
hended he should not be able to obtain it
and he was afraid to embroil himself with
Lord Sandwich. I stated this to Lord Shelburne
immediately upon his appointment to the
American Department and had the satis-
faction to prepare & settle the Draft of
the Order with Lord Keppel directing the
Lord Sackvilles Shyness to interfere, Lord
Sandwich's desire to keep every thing to himself,
and Stephens's distraction from the variety
& multiplicity of his business, occasioned
many things to be neglected, Rhodney
had no distinct orders respecting North
America the last or the former year, and
he would have gone without any in
the present, notwithstanding I had pre-
pared them & Lord Sackville carried them
in his pocket to the Cabinet (for Lord
Sandwich told him they were unnecessary
before he produced them) if I had not
shewn them privately to Stephens who
begd them in order to assist him in
drawing his Instructions, and finding

them so much more comprehensive than he had any Notion of shewed them to Lord Sandwich, who then desired they might come to him officialy. My earnestness to avert the Dutch war, and after it was made to restore Peace with Holland, induced me to open a correspondence with Doctor Maclean at the Hague who had been my Brothers School fellow, and I directed my Brother to encourage the Dr to open himself upon the subject of accommodation, he did so, and tho' in guarded terms discoverd to me that tho' attached by friendship to Sir Joseph Yorke he held him ignorant of the Constitution of Holland and misinformed of the Sentiments of the people and of consequence that he had misled the British Ministry. His Ideas (Sir Josephs) were that to support the party of the Prince of Orange was to support the Interests of England, and that those who were adverse to the Stadholder were enemies of England, whereas the truth of the matter was that all the good

Republicans were inclined to England as the Friend of Liberty, but by England's supporting the Stadholder & endeavouring to make him a Monarch, they were driven to attach themselves to France in order to ballance the English Influence, and thus by our weak policy in becoming the abettors of what the republicans called Tyranny, we taught them to look to France as the stay of their Constitution. The adoption of this mistaken System the Amsterdammers imputed to Sir Joseph Yorke's representations and having got rid of him they hoped matters would take a different turn, They owned they had so far entangled themselves with France that they could not make Peace with us without her Consent, but that they thought could be obtained by means of Russia. They recommended therefore that we should offer them the terms of the armed neutrality which would induce Russia to insist with France that she should permit Holland to accept them, and when by that

means they should become Friends with us, and had got out of France's hands, they wd readily agree to restrain themselves by a commercial Treaty in the carriage of Naval Stores to an Enemy, for they were sensible of the many inconveniencies which such a liberty would produce and they did not think it an object of such great importance as to deserve being made a point of. I stated all this to Lord Stormont, but he flew out upon the mention of granting to them the terms of the armed neutrality, and declared that the Man who would sign such a Treaty ought to be deemed the greatest Enemy this Country ever saw, I asked him what did we yield to France by it, when the Imperialists the Swedes, the Russians could all carry those Stores, and the Dutch might borrow any of their Colours? He answerd it was an Evil that any should do it, and we must, by not positively allowing it, keep at liberty to refuse it at a proper

time, and do it away by Treaty, but if we once allowed it we were fixed for ever. I did not enter into the force of his Lordships reasoning, but as I saw he was warm I dropt argument, and begd he would consider what was likely to be our own situation. How were we to get supplies tho' the North Seas Were we able to guard both ends, and what encouragement were we holding out to America to persevere, We were well nigh the end of our resources in Finance, and as we must make sacrifices to obtain Peace had we not best do it before we were intirely exhausted, yes returnd he quickly. That is the common cry. that we are undone & must become Bankrupts if I knew it or believed it would happen in six Months I would not let my Twin Brother know it - but you would my Lord act as knowing it said I - The conversation then changd to America and I took my leave convinced that

while

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his Lordship remained Secretary of State we should have no Peace with Holland or any other Country if the negociation passd thro' his hands, his Lordship was of all Men the least qualified to gain the friendships or even good Will of the foreign Ministers who resided here, He gave more offence by his austere diligence than Lord Weymouth did by his indolent negligence, with very great Talents for official business and much knowledge of the subsisting Treaties and connexions of the different States of Europe he was without skill in negociation for he knew not how to obtain an Influence over the Minds of others, on the contrary, as he was full of his own Ideas and swelled with his own importance, he disdained to sooth or comply in order to gain, and not unfrequently revolted the Heart by the arrogance of his manner while he subdued the understanding by the force of his reasoning, He was uninformed of the State of this Country and of the temper of the

People, and so anxious was he to acquire the reputation of an able negociator with posterity, that he would have suffered Great Britain to approach the very brink of destruction and even tumble down the Precipice rather than yield a punctillio of Deplo:matic Ettiquette, to soften an Enemy or gain a Friend. In the course of the first confidential conversation I had with Lord Shelburne I related to him what I had stated to Lord Stormont, he appeared much struck with it, and desired me to run immediately to Mr Fox and relate it all to him, but then recollecting himself and thinking he had better leave the credit of it, he called me back saying there was to be a Cabinet that morning, and I might wait at his office and when the business was over he would send for me, I did wait but he never sent. I gave him all my Ideas and plans and furnished him with every point of

4902

Information that I thought could be of use to him in carrying on the Kings Service avoiding at the same time every thing that might lead to a discovery of his measures, having told him when he first acquainted me that he meant to examine the abilities of all the people in both offices and to select those he should find most capable. That I begd he would leave me out of his Survey, as I wished to retire. His Lordships is however an existing Minister and my observations are confined to the Department in July 1782.