

1319-21

copy
follows

1380

1322

should follow 1316

(1)

My Lord

The present situation of Things regard-
-ing the proposed Expedition to the South Seas which
it was my intention and inclination to have taken
an active share in will I trust render any other
Apology to your Lordship for this intrusion
unnecessary.

To avoid the appearance of inconsis-
-tency and to justify my Conduct in the Eyes of the
Public and your Lordship, I feel it incumbent
on me to state the reasons by which I am influ-
-enced to decline the Expedition

When it was first proposed to me by
your Lordship to go to the South Seas again if
His Majesty should think proper to send Ships to
perfect the Discoveries that had been begun in
the last Voyage, I joyfully embrac'd a proposal
of all others the best suited to my Disposition and
Pursuits. I pledgd myself then to your Lordship
and have since by the whole tenor of my Conversation
and Correspondence pledgd myself to all Europe
not only to go the Voyage but to take with me as
many able Artists as the Income of my Fortune
would allow me to pay: by whose means the learned
World in general might reap as much benefit as
possible from those Discoveries which my good
Fortune or Industry might enable me to make

The

Copy of a Letter
from Jos. Banks Esq.
to the Earl of Sandwich
dated the 30th May 1772

The Navy Board was in consequence ordered to purchase two Ships, to fit them up in a proper manner for our reception that we might be enabled to exert our utmost Endeavours to serve the Public, wheresoever the course of our Discoveries might induce us to proceed

Two Ships were accordingly purchased; but when I went down to see the principal Ship I immediately gave it as my opinion that she was very improper for the Voyage and went so far as to declare that if the alterations which I proposed would not be made I would not go in her.

In consequence of this the Surveyor of the Navy was sent to me with a Plan of the Ship; to him I stated my Proposals and laid down upon that Plan the quantity of room that I thought absolutely necessary to be allotted to me and my people for the carrying on our respective Employments

When these Alterations, and those which were judgd necessary also for the Accomodation of the Captain and the People were made, the Ship in falling down the River was found absolutely incapable of pursuing her intended Voyage

The Navy Board have attributed this incapacity to the alterations that had been made and are of opinion that when the Ship is reduced to her original Situation, that in which I before refused her, she will be the fittest that can be had for answering the Nautical purposes of the Expedition. Without suffering myself to controvert this Opinion of the Navy Board that the Ship will be very fit for sea
altho

although many able Seamen concur with me in
 doubting it, I must be allowed to say, that the Ship will
 thus be if not absolutely incapable at least exceedingly
 unfit for the intended Voyage

We have pledged ourselves my Lord, to your
 Lordship and this Nation to undertake what no
 Navigator before us has ever suggested to be practica-
 ble; we are to attempt at least to pass round the Globe
 through Seas of which we know no Circumstance
 but that of there being tempestuous in those very
 Latitudes, in passing through which, in Order to
 get round one Cape, the whole Squadron com-
 manded by Lord Anson narrowly escaped being
 destroyed. We have done more we have undertaken
 to approach as near the Southern Pole as we
 possibly can, and how near that may be no Man
 living can give the least guess

In Expeditions of this nature the Health
 and Accommodation of the People are essential to
 success; when Sickness and discontent are once
 introduced it will be absolutely impossible to con-
 tinue the Discovery; by the Alterations made
 the Accommodations of the People are very much
 reduced for the Spar Deck being cut away 30 of
 the Crew are to be removed under the Gun Deck
 before sufficiently crowded, which being very low &
 confined without a free Air must infallibly in
 so long a Voyage produce putrid Distempers and
 Scurvy; and what my Lord ought more to be

Dreaded

dreaded by a Discoverer than such a Calamity which must soon oblige him to quit his Discovery and very probably even put it out of his Power to bring Home any Account of what he has done previous to its fatal influence

The Accomodations in the Ship are much lessened by the Changes which have been made in the Equipment since the first Plan, the House of Commons have thought the Undertaking of so much importance as to vote the Sum of £4,000 to enable Dr. Lind to accompany us and assist us with his extensive Knowledge of natural Philosophy and Mechanics the Board of Longitude have also engaged an Astronomer to proceed in each Ship and an extraordinary Establishment of Officers was thought necessary on account of the difficulties and Dangers which we were likely to experience in the course of our Voyage

Shall I then my Lord, who have engaged to leave all that can make Life agreeable in my own Country, and throw on one side all the Pleasures to be reaped from three Years of the best of my Life merely to compass this undertaking pregnant enough with Dangers and Difficulties in its own Nature after having been promised every security and convenience that the Art of man could contrive without which Promise, no man in my situation would ever have undertaken the Voyage, be sent off at last in a doubtful Ship with Accomodations rather worse than those which I

at

at first absolutely refused, and after spending above
 £5,000 of my own Fortune in the Equipment, upon
 the Credit of those Accommodations which I saw
 actually built for me. Will the Public be so
 ungenerous as to expect me to go out in a Ship
 in which my People have not the room necessary
 for performing the different Duties of their Professions
 a Ship apparently unhealthy and probably unsafe
 merely in conformity to the official Opinion of the
 Navy Board, who purchased her without ever consult-
 ing me, and now in no degree consider the part
 which I have taken in the Voyage or the alterations
 which on my Remonstrance they concurred with me
 in thinking necessary, but have now taken away
 or should I embark could any thing material be
 done by People under Circumstances so highly
 discouraging? —

For my own part, my Lord, I am able and
 willing to put up with as small Accommodations
 as any man living can be content with, six
 feet square is more than sufficient for all my
 personal conveniences nor are any of my People
 desirous of a larger allotment. 'Tis our great Cabin
 which is too small, and that is in reality the Shop
 where we are all to work which if not sufficiently
 large will deprive the Workmen of a possibility of
 following their respective employments and prevent
 me from reaping the Fruit earned by voluntarily
 exposing myself to danger and incurring a materi-
 -al Expence.

Neither personal hazard nor expence however

will

will I withhold when likely with their proper encourage-
ment; born with an Attachment to a singular pursuit
I have already performed two Voyages, and in the
course of them have merited, I hope, some share of
the Public regard, and though my services are
upon this Occasion refused, I shall always hold
myself ready to go upon this or any undertaking
of the same Nature when ever I shall be furnished
with proper Accomodations for myself and my
People to exert their full abilities

To explore is my Wish; but the Place to which
I may be sent almost indifferent to me, whether the
sources of the Nile or the South Pole are to be visited
I am equally ready to embark in the undertaking
when ever the Public will furnish me with the
means of doing it properly but to undertake so
expensive a Pursuit, without any prospect but
Distress and Disappointment, is neither consistent
with Prudence or Public Spirit

As to the position of no other Ship being fit
for the Voyage, because no other could take the Ground
I cannot omit putting your Lordship in mind that
within these few weeks the Emerald one of our
sharpest Frigates lay on shore on the Gunfleet
a much longer time than the Endeavour did
upon the Coast of New Holland after which she was
got off. Sir John Lindsay also hauled up the
Stag another of our Frigates at Trincomaly
and shifted her Rudder Irons during the
course of his last Voyage

what

What more my Lord did the Endeavour do or what more could any Ship have done in that particular point on which the opinion of the Navy Board so materially rests?

If these then are capable to taking the ground how much more so must the Launceston (the Ship for which we have petitioned your Lordship) be as all Seamen know that the bottoms of that class of Ships are flatter than any others employed in His Majestys Service. For my own part I can only say that was your Lordship to think proper to let us have her for our intended Expedition, I would gladly embark on board a Ship in which safety and Accomodation, both which must be consulted in a Voyage of this kind are more nearly united than in any other kind of Ship I am acquainted with, and well know that there are many Commanders in His Majestys Service of undoubted Abilities and experience who would willingly undertake to proceed with her in the intended Expedition ambitious of shewing the World that the success of such an Undertaking depends more upon the Prudence and perseverance of the Commander than upon any particular Build of the Ship that may be employed.

I cannot dismiss this Letter without thanking your Lordship for the many particular Favors which I have received at your Lordships Hands in the commencement and during

(During the prosecution) of this my Favorite Under-
-taking of which I shall ever retain a most grateful
-sense. I do not doubt that was not your
-Lordship prevented by forms of Office I should
-still continue to receive the same Countenance
-and Assistance, and that if it should be thought
-proper to alter or enlarge the present Equipment
-your Lordship would still continue your
-Protection; As I am not conscious that
-by any part of my Conduct I have forfeited
-that claim to it which your Lordships
-great condescension and goodness originally
-conferred upon me

I am with the utmost respect

Your Lordships

most obliged and most
obedient Humble Servant,

Jos: Banks

May 20th 1772