H. E. the North

Jan. 13 1778

Fortescue 2161

2750

Lord North, I have read the very voluminous and undigested letters from Mr. Wentworth, whose productions I confess it is hard labour to wade through; from which I collect that he has been too precipitate in looking on a declaration of War as immediate, for things seem to be on the same uncertain ground as the last year, a trifle may any hour cause War to break out, and though the French Ministers wish to avoid it, yet they will not leave off their dealings with Rebels, by which they every day may be drawn into what they do not desire.

It also appears from these letters that Franklin and Deane either have no power of treating or that they are not inclined to furnish any light how an accommodation can be effected; for whilst nothing short of Independency will be accepted, I do not think there is a Man either bold or Mad enough to presume to treat for the Mother Country on such a basis; perhaps the time may come when it will be wise to abandon all North America but Canada, Nova Scotia and the Floridas, but then the generality of the Nation must see it first in that light; but to treat with Independency

H. R. H. the Duke of York

Jan. 13 1778

can never be possible.

~~I talked with~~ Lord Amherst Yesterday, who though with every expression of duty declined, in fact, thought out of delicacy on being strongly pressed he took time to consider though gave no room to expect he will accept. Thus I have done all I could to effect what the Cabinet unanimously thought the most desirable step.

What I have now to propose is that without loss of time the mode of conducting the American War be deliberated upon, that Lord Amherst be examined at the Cabinet on the subject; it is clear that after the disaster of Burgoyne not less than an additional Army to what is there at present of 40,000 Men can carry on with any effect an Offensive Land War. That a Sea War is the only wise plan, that the preventing the arrivals of Military Stores, Cloathing, and the other Articles necessary from Europe must distress them and make them come into what Britain may shortly

2750 (2)

consent to; that at this hour they will laugh at any proposition.

After the mode of War is settled then the General who is to command; it will be difficult to get Sir W. Howe to remain and not less so to get Ld G. Germain to act in such a manner towards him as will make the efforts of others not prove abortive on that Lead.

What is still more material to be settled is the plan on which Administration is to repell the different attacks of Opposition when Parliament meets, as to the calling for Papers, the proposing enquiries &c. this must be digested by you and I hope is already so nearly ready that you may open the whole to the Cabinet when next it meets, and have a minute taken that when the Debate in both Houses on the state of the Nation from want of previous concert the conduct may not be opposite

Queens House
Jan. 13th 1778 ½ pt 8. P.M.

13 Jan 1778

Supplied by the Royal Archives/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2019