

A. H. to Hd, Chancellor
(Fair copy of last)

3650

Queens House Dec. 14. 1779.

My Lord, I have considered the Report you made to Me on Thursday of the final Result of your Endeavours to sound the Dispositions of the Opposition on the Plan, I had authorized you to propose, of forming an Administration strong enough to carry on the Public business smoothly in the present arduous state of Affairs, consisting of the Wise, the Virtuous, and the Respectable of all Parties. You then told Me you were convinced that any Proposition of this sort made in my Name would be declined, as the Members of Opposition would not consent to join any of My present Ministers. A profession like this so totally destroys the only Ground on which I can bring myself to accept the Services of Men of that Description, and is in my Opinion so contrary to the Public Good, that I should not have said one Word more on this Subject, but from a desire of stating to you fully the Grounds of My Conduct, and of shewing you with what Sincerity and Zeal I have wished to bring about so desirable an Event, though the sort of cold treatment I have met with through the whole course of this business would have disgusted any Prince who did not act on Public Motives as I have done.

When I found you My Lord, Lord Gower, Lord Weymouth, and Lord North thought it right to endeavour to form a Coalition of Parties, I yielded to such respectable Opinions; with this View I put into your hands about a fortnight before the Meeting of Parliament a Paper containing the Plan on which I thought it
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proper to authorize You to treat; to this You did not appear to Me to have any objection, and the Business at that time stopt from a Delicacy of Sentiment in You, not to commence such a Negotiation till Lord North should have declared that He could not go on. No step was therefore taken, and You returned the Paper to Me two days before the Meeting of Parliament. But Lord North having on the 1st of this Month declared to Me that He thought it advisable to make an Attempt to form an Administration on a broader Basis, and that in order to promote so desirable a Measure, He did not wish to retain His present Office, or to make a part of any new Ministry that might be formed; I on the 3^d informed You of this, and authorized You again to proceed giving You a fresh Copy of my Paper. A few days after You informed Me that having consulted Lord Camden, He declined the Task of sounding the Inclinations and Opinions of His Friends either as to the Principles on which they were disposed to carry on Public Measures, or as to a Coalition with any part of the present Ministry. You then Addressed Yourself to Lord Shelburne, who would not open Himself farther, than that He thought that the more Connection that could be preserved with America the better; but He did not say what the nature of that Connection should be; and He added that He did not pretend to be a Director of Opposition, and could not tell whether a Coalition of Parties would answer the Ideas of Opposition, and that it would be gracious in Me to declare what openings I would make, that they might judge whether their Sentiments and Mine could agree. Cold and Distant as I had reason to think

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this Mode of Proceeding to be, I still judged it right to make every Advance that was proper, or that could be expected of Me; and I gave the most authentic proof that it was possible for Me to give that I meant of a Coalition, and not merely to draw them over to the Support of the present Administration, by authorizing You on the 11th to declare that Lord North's situation would not stand in the way of any new Arrangement of which He did not desire to make a part; and I then desired You to call on them to state fairly to Me the Principles on which they were disposed to carry on Public Measures, and what Changes with respect to Men they expected I should make, for the purpose of effecting the desirable End of a Coalition; to which on Thursday I was able to obtain no other Answer, but that a Coalition seem'd not to answer their Views.

From the cold Demeanour with which I am thus treated; it is evident to Me what treatment I am to expect from Opposition, if I was to call them now to my service; Nothing less will satisfy them than a total Change of Measures and Men; to obtain their Support, I must deliver up My Person, My Principles, and My Dominions into their hands; I must also abandon every Old, Meritorious, and Faithful Servant I have, to be treated as their Resentment or their Mercy may incline them. These would be hard Terms indeed to a Sovereign in any Situation, I trust to God that mine is not yet so bad as this; I will never make My Inclinations alone, nor even my own Opinions the sole rule of my Conduct in Public Measures, my first Object shall be the Good of my People; I will at all times consult my Ministers and place in them as entire a Confidence as the Nature of this Government can be supposed to require of Me;
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You my Lord and all who have ever served Me, can do Me the justice to testify that I have not been deficient in this respect. But none of my Ministers can after this Trial advise Me to change my Government totally, and to admit Opposition without any terms. My Parliaments have already shewn since their Meeting, that they are in opinion against such a desperate Measure; and I am confident from all I can learn that it is not the wish of my People at large; they wish that I would strengthen my Government by bringing into it all that is eminent and respectable; but they do not wish that I should turn out one set of Men merely for the purpose of bringing in another.

Nothing therefore remains for Me to do, but to exert Myself and to call upon all those who serve Me to exert themselves in support of My Legal Authority, and to resist this formidable and desperate Opposition; and I shall do it with more confidence and spirit, from a consciousness that I have done all which it becomes a Sovereign to do, to reclaim the factions, to form a Coalition of the Great and Virtuous, and to unite all my Subjects.

I have only to add, that if among your acquaintance and Connections, you can point out any one whose Talents and Industry my Government can be strengthened in any of its Departments, I shall be happy to receive your Advice, and I wish to have it before I talk to Lord North, which I mean to do very soon on the subject; and I have no doubt that after all you have seen of my conduct, you will endeavour to convince your Friends and particularly those who have lately left my Service, that nothing has been wanting on my part to bring about a proper Coalition.