

hd. Chancellor
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Chancellor

3668 December 25th 1779.

The Commands, Your Majesty honoured Me with, were sufficiently difficult and delicate. But the Anxiety, with which I sat about to execute them, is much enhanced by observing, that I have had the misfortune to mislead Your Majesty into a wrong impression of some considerable Men. My Duty to Your Majesty, and Justice to them, call upon Me, to attempt a more accurate representation of these Passages, than I have yet had the good fortune to convey.

Your Majesty's Object undoubtedly was to form an Administration of the Wise, and Virtuous, and Respectable of all Parties. For which Purpose Your Majesty was pleased to express a disposition to admit into Your Service and Confidence any Men of Public Spirit and Talents, who would join with a Part of Your present Ministry, in forming one upon a more enlarged Plan; providing without for every Exception to preserve the Empire entire, and to prosecute the War with Vigour, and that Your Majesty's past Measures should be treated with proper respect. Such was the purport of the Paper, which Your Majesty was pleased to put into my hands on the 17th of November.

According to the possible extent of this Proposition, all or Most of the Cabinet might have been removed, except perhaps the Negotiator of the Change. And I might have seemed to the Ministers removed, and perhaps to a great part of the World, to have undermined them, in concert with their Successors. Such a Suspicion would certainly have been unjust; as I neither knew nor undertook to answer for the public or private views of Opposition: but proceeded
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merely on a doubt whether there existed in the Ministry strength enough to carry on Your Majesty's business in the actual situation of things. This Doubt I entertained in common with Lord Howe and Lord Weymouth; but knowing nothing of Lord North's opinion, such a suspicion might also have proved an Impediment to the progress of the business: I had the honour to be admitted twice to Your Majesty's presence on this Subject; On Thursday I found Lord North had informed Your Majesty, that he had mistaken my Ideas of the strength of Administration, and supposing that they turned chiefly upon the concurrence of Members in Parliament, had undertaken to reconsider his prospect in that particular. I explained to Your Majesty, that the strength of a Ministry in my notion consisted besides the credit and and esteem of Parliament in their Influence upon other parts of the Empire, and other great Bodies within the Kingdom, their Authority over the Courts, and Armies, and other Branches of Executive Government together with many other obvious Articles. However not presuming to urge any Opinion of mine, nor indeed wishing to do it without the privity of Your Majesty's other Servants, I humbly proposed it to Your Majesty to call for all their opinions on this Point, whether there really existed in Ministry strength enough to conduct the public business with Dignity and Effect, and this Idea seemed to meet with Your Majesty's Approbation.

Thus the Matter rested till the 22^d of November, when Lord North communicated to Me, His receipt of Your Majesty's commands to inform Lord Bathurst and Lord Hillsborough of Your Majesty's gracious purpose to appoint the first President of the Council, and the other Secretary of State. From this circumstance I inferred that Your Majesty meant to proceed no farther on the idea contained in the Paper of the 17th of November; and supposing that it would not be agreeable to leave that outstanding, I thought it my Duty to deliver it up to Your Majesty; which I did accordingly on the 23^d of November.

On the 3^d instant Your Majesty was pleased to replace the same paper

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paper in my hands adding withal, that Lord North 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 Office, or to make a part of any new Ministry which might be formed. I humbly suggested to Your Majesty, that the Paper was somewhat Indefinite; not specifying what part of the present Ministry was to be retained, or what number of others to be admitted; and that such questions would naturally occur to be asked, in answer to which only the Treasury could be offered, unless Your Majesty would condescend to specify what other Offices might be made the subjects of Arrangements. As Your Majesty did not think that course expedient, I further submitted whether it might not be proper to drop the Idea of making a direct proposal on the part of Your Majesty in that un defined Shape, and to try whether in conversation with Me they would be willing to disclose any Ideas of Coalition which might be fit for Your Majesty to consider farther, and shape into some more distinct proposal. Your Majesty gave me leave to pursue that method; and I took such opportunities as I could find to converse with Lord Camden, Lord Shelburne and others, but still as a private Man who wished a Coalition of Parties, and disclaiming all authority to make Proposals. They declined to enter into that sort of Conversation about Arrangements with Me, but they never imagined that they were returning an Answer to Your Majesty; so that if any Coldness or Disdain were shewn, which I really did not feel, it was directed solely to Me. It was indeed my Conjecture, that they would think a fuller proposal more gracious; nay that they flattered themselves with the expectation of a larger opening than I could observe to be in Your Majesty's contemplation, and even with that of being sent for. But they certainly did not presume to

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to propose any of those things to Your Majesty.

Your Majesty's commands on the 10th instant did not as I conceived them, extend beyond those of the 3^d in both Lord North's situation was considered as disposable; and in both it was put upon them to explain the extent of their Expectations; unless indeed it was Your Majesty's meaning to send a direct proposal in Your own Name. Understanding that otherwise, I only took an opportunity for my own satisfaction, to assure myself, that I had treated Lord North's situation as not likely to stand in the way of a proper Coalition; if on Thursday the 16th I expressed myself to a different effect from that mentioned before, I have been so unlucky as to mislead Your Majesty.

Upon this occasion I think it was that Your Majesty was pleased to enquire into the Expediency of sending a Proposal directly, and in Your own Name, offering Lord North's place, and expressing Your Majesty's desire to make a Coalition of the most respectable Men of all Parties, and calling for their Ideas of the openings that would amount to such a Coalition. Not being prepared for the sequel, I hesitated about the expediency of a Measure, from which I could form so little hope, and I further submitted to Your Majesty, whether after my former conversations with them, I should be the properest Bearer of such a Message.

This according to my Memory of it, is the sum of what hath passed. From which it must appear, that no Proposal hath yet been made to any part of Opposition; nor consequently any Answer received from them. They have a right to oblige my conjectures, and even to complain of them being hazarded at all. Therefore if it be thought expedient to hold out to the Publick, Your Majesty's gracious disposition to admit into Your Service and Confidence the most Eminent of all Parties, it seems necessary to cause some direct Offer of that sort to be made to them