

E. of Sandwich
Admiralty Dec. 23^d 1781.

Fortescue 3481

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Lord Sandwich takes the liberty to inform your Majesty that he yesterday had a very long & friendly communication with Mr Rigby; they met by accident in St. James's Park, and walked together above an hour the whole of which was employed in conversing upon the subject of the naval enquiry.

Lord Sandwich said that he feared nothing from that enquiry, unless there should be a party among the friends of government who wished a change of administration, & meant to effect their purpose by forcing out the first Lord of the Admiralty who probably they considered as a principal outwork, which must occasion a surrender of the place: that he knew he could prove to demonstration that the exertions while he had been at the head of the department had been carried on to the utmost extent that

the strength of this country would admit of,
and had infinitely exceeded anything that
was ever done before; and that if the case
was examined by unprejudiced hearers,
he was certain (& in which he was confirmed
by the Comptroller of the Navy who was
perfectly master of the subject) that the
event would turn out highly to his credit,
& that therefore he ought to court the enquiry.

Mr Rigby professed the warmest friendship
for Lord Sandwich, protested that he knew
of no such party as Lord J. pointed out,
that as for himself he would attend the
enquiry from first to last, and that if
things turned out in any degree as Lord
J. had now said he would be his warmest
advocate; that he would come to the house
with all his original prejudices in his
favour, & would in the mean time
give him all the advice & intelligence
that he thought could be usefull to him.
He said that he knew of the message
that Lord J. had sent by Robinson to ^{the} Advocate
advocate, and that notwithstanding he did

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not encourage the interview, he could be answerable that the advocate had no prejudices against Lord S., and that he would come into the house with the same dispositions as himself.

Lord Sandwich then said that he had some ground to apprehend that there was such a party as he had described, that he had heard so from persons well informed, and that Lord Chancellors inveteracy against Lord S. was a strong symptom that his apprehensions were not ill founded.

Mr Rigby acknowledged that Lord C: was very hostile to L: S. which he knew not how to account for, but that as for himself he made the most solemn protestations that he should not pay the least attention to the absurd prejudices of L: C: or any other person whatsoever, and that he was certain that Lord S. had nothing to fear from any cabal among those now acting with government, provided his cause was a good one. He then went on to give his advice as to the mode of conducting the enquiry, which

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he said ought to be particularly attended to
& well digested between Lord North & Lord
Sandwich; that he desired Lord North might
be apprized that the Opposition had not
pledged themselves to conduct the enquiry,
and that if they knew that their ground
was not good with regard to the want of
exertion in augmenting the fleet, which
is the principal point, he did not think they
would put themselves at the head of it,
what was then to be done? he saw great
danger, & was clearly of opinion that L:^d
ought not on ^{any} account to adopt the measure
of attempting to quash the business in its
outset, but to go some way into it and to
take advantage of occurrences to put an
end to it; that this ought to be very seriously
considered, and all our measures prepared
before the business came on, that we might
not in the house be of different opinions
what should be done.

He concluded by saying that he had the
means of finding out what part the Opposition
intended to take, of which he would not fail
to apprize L:^d in a few days, & that he
should be glad to have another interview with