

No. 5.

Colonial Office, May 21, 1828.

My Dear Duke—In justice to myself I cannot acquiesce for a moment in the construction which your letter of last night puts upon my conduct.

You cannot refuse me the right of knowing the motives of my own actions, and I solemnly declare, that, in both my letters, I was actuated by one and the same feeling. It was simply this:—That it was not for me but for you, as the head of the Government, to decide how far my vote made it expedient to remove me from his Majesty's Service. I felt that I had no alternative, consistently with personal honour, (in a difficulty not of my own seeking or creating but to give that vote; that the question in itself was one of minor importance; that the disunion was more in appearance than in reality: but I also felt that, possibly, you might take a different view of it, and that, in case you should, I ought (as I had done on a similar occasion with Lord Liverpool) to relieve you from any difficulty, arising out of personal consideration towards me, in deciding upon a step to which you might find it your public duty to resort on the occasion.

It was under this impression alone that I wrote to you immediately upon my return from the House of Commons.

If you had not misconceived that impression, as well as the purport of my second letter, I am persuaded that you could not suppose me guilty of the arrogance of expecting "that you, and his Majesty's Government should submit yourselves to the necessity of soliciting me to remain in my office," or do me the injustice of believing that I could be capable of placing you in the alternative of choosing between the continuance of my services (such as they are) and the loss to your Administration of one particle of character, which, I agree with you, is the foundation of public confidence.

If understanding my Communication as I intended it to be understood, you had, in any way, intimated to me, either that the occurrence, however unfortunate, was not one of sufficient moment, to render it necessary for you on public grounds, to act in the manner in which I had assumed that you possibly might think it necessary, or that you were under that necessity, in either case, there would have been an end of the matter. In the first supposition, I should have felt that I had done what, in honour and fairness towards you, I was bound to do; but it never could have entered my imagination that I had claimed or received any sacrifice whatever from you, or any Member of His Majesty's Government.

On the other hand, nothing can be further from my intention than to express an opinion that the occasion was not one in which you might fairly consider it your duty to advise his Majesty to withdraw from me the Seal of Office, on the ground of this vote. I do not therefore, complain; but I cannot allow that my removal shall be placed on any other ground. I cannot allow that it was my own act: still less can I admit that when I had no other intention than to relieve the question on which you had to decide from any personal embarrassment, this step, on my part, should be ascribed to feelings the very reverse of those by which alone I was actuated, either towards you or His Majesty's Government.

Believe me to be, my dear Duke,

Yours very sincerely,

[Signed] W. HUSKISSON.

No. 6.

London, May 21, 1828.

My dear Huskisson,—In consequence of your last letter, I feel it to be necessary to recal to your recollection the circumstances under which I received your letter of Tuesday morning.

It is addressed to me at two o'clock in the morning, immediately after a debate and division in the House of Commons. It informs me that you lose no time in affording me an opportunity of placing your office in other hands, as the only means in your power of preventing an injury to the King's Service, which you describe. It concludes by "regretting the necessity of troubling me with this Communication."

Could I consider this in any other light than as a formal tender of the resignation of your office, or that I had any alternative but either to solicit you to remain in office contrary to your sense of duty, or to submit your letter to the King.

If you had called on me the next morning after

your vote, and explained to me in conversation what had passed in the House of Commons, the character of the Communication would have been quite different, and I might have felt myself at liberty to discuss the whole subject with you, and freely to give an opinion upon any point connected with it. But I must still think that if I had not considered a letter, couched in the terms in which that letter is couched, and received under the circumstances under which I received it, as a tender of resignation, and had not laid it before the King, I should have exposed the King's Government and myself to very painful misconstructions. My answer to your letter will have informed you that it surprised me much, and that it gave me great concern. I must consider, therefore, the resignation of your office as your own act, and not as mine.

Ever yours most sincerely,

[Signed] WELLINGTON.

The Right Hon. W. Huskisson.

No. 7.

Downing Street, 25th May, 1828.

My dear Duke,—On Tuesday last I wrote to the King to solicit an audience. His Majesty has not yet been pleased to grant me this honour.

In the expectation (not unnatural for me to entertain in the situation which I hold) of being afforded an opportunity of waiting upon his Majesty, I have deferred acknowledging your letter of the 21st, which, passing by altogether all that is stated in mine of the same date, you conclude in the following words:—"I must therefore consider the resignation of your office, as your own act, and not as mine."

I will not revert to the full explanation which I have already given you on the subject. Not denying that my first letter might be capable of the construction which you put upon it, I would ask you whether it be usual, after a construction has been from the first moment explicitly disavowed, to persist that it is the right one? It being, however, the construction to which you adhere, I must assume, as you laid the letter before his Majesty, that you advised his Majesty upon it, and that his Majesty is therefore under the same misapprehension as yourself of what I meant; the more especially, as I have no means of knowing whether any subsequent letters have been laid before his Majesty.

It was for the purpose of setting aright any erroneous impression on the Royal mind, that I sought to be admitted, as soon as possible, into his Majesty's presence.

I was then, as I am still, most anxious to assure His Majesty, that nothing could have been further from my intention, than that the letter in question should have been at all submitted to his Majesty, to make known to his Majesty the circumstances and feelings under which it had been written,—to point out to him that I had taken the precaution (usual between ministers in matters of a delicate and confidential nature, when it is wished to keep the subject as much as possible confined to the respective parties) of marking the letter "private and confidential;" that I understood that this letter, so marked specially to guard its object, had been, without previous communication of any sort with me, in respect to the transaction referred to, but not explained in the letter itself laid before his Majesty, as conveying to the foot of the Throne my positive resignation.

I should further have had to state to his Majesty the great pain and concern which I felt at finding that a paper should have been submitted to his Majesty, and described to him as conveying my resignation of the Seals, in a form so unusual, and with a restriction so unbecoming towards my Sovereign as is implied in the words "Private and confidential;" that in a necessity so painful (had I felt such a necessity) as that of asking his Majesty's permission to withdraw from his service, my first anxiety would have been to lay my reasons in a respectful, but direct communication from myself at his Majesty's feet; but that, most certainly, in whatever mode conveyed, the uppermost feeling of my heart would have been to have accompanied it with those expressions of dutiful attachment and respectful gratitude which I owe his Majesty for the many and uniform proofs of confidence and kindness with which he has been graciously pleased to honour me since I have held the Seals of the Colonial Department.

If I had been afforded an opportunity of thus relieving myself from the painful position in which I stand towards his Majesty, I should then have entreated of his Majesty's goodness and sense of justice to permit a letter, so improper for me to have

written, (if it could have been in my contemplation that it would have been laid before his Majesty as an act of resignation,) to be withdrawn. Neither should I have concealed from his Majesty my regret, considering the trouble which has unfortunately occurred, both to his Majesty and his Government, that I had not taken a different mode of doing what, for the reasons fully stated in my letter of the 21st, I found myself bound in honor to do, so as to have prevented, perhaps, the misconception arising out of my letter, written immediately after the debate.

I have now stated to you frankly, and without reserve, the substance of all that I was anxious to submit to the King. I have done so in the full confidence that you will do me the favour to lay this statement before his Majesty; and that I may be allowed to implore his Majesty that he will do me the justice to believe that, of all who have a right to prefer a claim to be admitted to his Royal Presence, I am the last, who, in a matter relating to myself, would press that claim in a manner unpleasant to his Majesty's wishes or inclinations. I bow to them with respectful deference, still retaining, however, a confidence founded on the rectitude of my intentions, that in being removed from his Majesty's Service, I may be allowed the consolation of knowing that I have not been debarred from the privilege of my office in consequence of my having incurred his Majesty's personal displeasure.

Believe me, my dear Duke,

Yours very sincerely,

[Signed] W. HUSKISSON.

His Grace the Duke of Wellington,

K. G. &c. &c. &c.

No. 8.

London, May 25, 1828.

My Dear Huskisson,—It is with great concern that I inform you that I have at last attended his Majesty, and have received his instructions respecting an arrangement to fill your office.

I sincerely regret the loss of your valuable assistance in the arduous task in which I am engaged.

Believe me ever, yours,

most sincerely,

[Signed] WELLINGTON.

The Right Hon. W. Huskisson.

No. 9.

Downing Street, half-past nine, P. M., 25th May, 1828.

My Dear Duke,—Lord Dudley has just sent to me, unopened, my letter to you, which I forwarded to Apsley-house about five o'clock this afternoon.

This letter was written as soon as I was given to understand by Lord Dudley, who called here after an interview with you this morning, that his Majesty had not signified any intention of granting me the honour of an audience. No other mode, therefore, remaining open to me of conveying my sentiments to the King, I address myself to you, for the purpose of bringing before his Majesty in the shape of a written communication, what I am prevented from stating to his Majesty in person.

I feel confident that you will not deny me this favour, and you will be satisfied by the contents of my letter (which I now return) that in writing it nothing was further from my intention than to intrude myself between you and the arrangements which upon my removal from Office (for such I have considered the result of our correspondence since your letter of the 21st) you have received his Majesty's Instructions to make.

Your letter, communicating this fact, reached me about half past seven this evening. I thank you for the information, and the kind manner in which you advert to my feeble assistance which I may have been able to give to your Administration, as well as for the expression of the concern, with which you have advised his Majesty to place my Office in other hands.

Believe me to be, my Dear Duke,

Ever yours, very sincerely,

[Signed] W. HUSKISSON.

No. 10.

London, May 26, 1828.

My Dear Huskisson,—I have received your letter of yesterday, accompanied by another letter from you dated also yesterday, which I had returned to Lord Dudley, under the impression, that I ought not to open it without your previous consent, under the circumstances that existed at the time that I received it.

I have laid both before the King. In answer I have only to repeat, that I considered your letter of the 20th as a formal tender of the resignation of your Office; and that the circumstance of its being marked "private and confidential," did not alter