A STUDY IN THE FAILURE OF COLONIAL CONCILIATION:

With Special Reference to the Personality of the Earl of Dartmouth, and the Evolutionary Inadequacies of the Office of Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1772 - 1775

A Thesis Presented for the Degree of Master of Arts

by

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1947

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WILLIAM LEGGE, THE SECOND EARL OF DARTMOUTH, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (1772 - 1775): The original of this portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds is in the possession of the present Earl. A copy of it was made by another artist named Reynolds, probably Samuel W. Reynolds, and presented to Dartmouth College in 1829. The accompanying photograph was produced from this latter copy, and is used here with the permission of the authorities of Dartmouth College.
PREFACE

The history of mankind is dotted with numerous examples of ironic situations. From the conversion of Paul to the Gallipoli Campaign instances can be found in which the forces of destiny seemed to be shaping the course of events in one manner, only to produce an entirely different result. In many respects the attempts at reconciliation between Great Britain and her American colonies belong within this classification. For example, the creation of the colonial secretaryship, and the placing of Lord Dartmouth in charge of that office, should have done much toward achieving a pacific settlement. Some of the reasons why the opposite result occurred are presented in the succeeding chapters.

Authors of historical studies occasionally indulge in speculation on what might have been. While such toying with eventualities can scarcely be accepted as factual research, it is, nevertheless, a justifiable device for emphasizing the actual happenings in a particular instance, when the contrast is sharply drawn. Thus, the full significance of the failure of conciliation can be gained only when one realizes both how nearly successful that policy was, and what the probable consequences of suc-
cess might have been.

In 1768 a third Secretary of State was appointed for the specific task of taking charge of colonial affairs. In many ways this step was a good omen. Colonial business had been steadily increasing prior to that date, and had really warranted a separate office for its execution long before. The older arrangement, which gave the Secretary of State for the Southern Department control of colonial affairs, had become antiquated and inefficient; the Southern Secretary was greatly overburdened with his other duties. Consequently, business from the colonies was often delayed, or overlooked entirely.

While the need for a separate colonial office had been recognized by many before 1768, not all were agreed that a third secretaryship of state was necessary. It was suggested by some that the First Lord of Trade be given Cabinet rank and more extensive powers with regard to the colonies and plantations. That this step was not taken may also be regarded as a happy omen for the possibility of successful reconciliation. A Secretary of State was in a much more favorable position to effect policy than a First Lord of Trade.

Although the secretaryship was not the oldest office in the British Government of the Eighteenth Century, it had been in existence for several hundred years. During the course of its long, slow development it had become an
extremely powerful organ. The holders of secretarial seals had once been limited almost exclusively to stenographic functions. Gradually, they had acquired broad, loosely defined powers until, in the middle of the Eighteenth Century, a strong character in the secretariat might control royal policy at home and abroad.

The desire of King George III to be something more than a figurehead, of course, had its effects on the office of the Secretary of State. Yet, even in the 1760's and 1770's, the secretaryship was considered an important position. The creation of a separate Colonial Secretary should have meant that all colonial business would be co-ordinated in the hands of a single, responsible official, possessing great prestige and authority, and who should have been able to formulate policy and execute important measures virtually unhindered. The inherent power of the secretaryship was such that an evil or vindictive man could have done irreparable harm to the colonial cause; while, on the other hand, a kindly or generous man ought to have been able to aid that cause, in so far as was compatible with the British Constitution.

The colonial secretaryship was unable to exercise, before 1775, the full extent of the authority which it had inherited. The office was denounced by the Opposition as a sinecure, and attacked by the other two Secretaries, who were too jealous of their powers to share them. As a result,
a position that should have been one of the strongest in the government was actually among the weakest. Nor did the Colonial Secretary gain possession of his rightful powers, until it was too late to further the cause of conciliation.

The resignation (in 1772) of Lord Hillsborough caused the Earl of Dartmouth to be appointed to the colonial office. This was another good omen for the success of a policy of accommodation. Lord Dartmouth was noted for his sympathy and friendship for the colonies. His qualities of piety, amibility, and honesty were universally recognized and generally respected throughout the British Isles and the American Colonies. Placing the secretarial seals in the hands of such a man should have done more for the furtherance of conciliation than any other single act since the repeal of the Stamp Act.

It was another of the ironies of whatever Fate presided over the event that Lord Dartmouth made no material contribution toward the prevention of the conflict known as the American Revolution. In possession, as he was, of a greatly weakened secretariship, and totally lacking in qualities of aggressiveness and self-assertion, Dartmouth was never able to stem or turn the tide of events that swept England and her Colonies on to open warfare.

In the following chapters will be found a survey of the development of the secretariship in general, and a commentary on secretarial duties in the Eighteenth Century. This material will serve as background for the discussion of the colonial
secretaryship, which follows. It is hoped in this way to demonstrate the contrast between the great power evolved by the two Principal Secretaries of State and the restrictive nature of the authority of the American Department. In addition to these constitutional weaknesses of the colonial office, the main body of the thesis is concerned with the ineptitude of Lord Dartmouth as a colonial conciliator. The discussion at this point is designed to emphasize the Earl's inexperience in public office and his traits of personality, as the contributing factors in the failure of reconciliation, rather than any lack of sincerity or good intentions on his part.

In order to picture Dartmouth in the proper historical environment, it has been necessary to survey the principal political developments in England and in the colonies during the period 1772 - 1775. The most important phase of this portion of the thesis deals with events which directly affected the course of conciliation, e.g., the Gaspee incident and the Tea Party; and examples of actually proposed plans for compromise, e.g., Franklin's "Hints," Lord Chatham's Provisional Bill, and Lord North's Motion. If Dartmouth's participation in these and other instances seems rather shadowy, it is not entirely unintentional on the writer's part. The Earl's indecisive and vacillating character prevented him from taking an active part in any of these
affairs, or from influencing to any appreciable extent the outcome of the events with which he was even indirectly concerned. To slot to him, then, a more prominent place in the discussion would be, in some respects, to misrepresent the facts.

The tragic aspects of the failure of the policy of conciliation can be clearly seen, without in any way interfering with the demands of patriotism. Less than two hundred years after the severance of our political ties with Great Britain, we find ourselves seeking ever closer associations with her, by means of diplomatic negotiations. Our common heritage demands this co-operation, in order that principles and traditions which we both value might be protected from possible destruction by alien concepts. Who can say with certainty that this association would not be more effective today, if some modus of accommodation had been found in the Eighteenth Century?

It is most assuredly true that many colonial customs and traditional institutions had developed along paths that diverged more or less sharply from those followed by the Mother Country. The colonists retained, however, much in common with the English. Most notable among these common features was the conception of personal and civil liberty, which was unequalled anywhere in the world of that period. In the modern world such ideals are even more important than
they were in the Eighteenth Century. The still unmended schism which developed then between two groups of the same people, owing to their failure to conciliate their differences, may well be largely responsible for the difficulty which that conception of liberty encounters in its effort to survive to-day.

It is interesting to speculate whether or not the Americans, the British, and the world in general, might be in a better position, if the policy of conciliation had been successful. To what extent might the course of the history of civilization have been changed (and in which direction?), if a compromise had been effected in the decade after 1770? If the United States had remained within the fabric of the British Commonwealth of Nations, would we occupy a stronger, or a weaker, place at world conferences in the Twentieth Century? Finally, if the potential enemies of the United States and Great Britain could have known in advance that our resources would be pooled for our mutual defense, would military history have been unchanged?

While the answers to these questions are largely conjectural, there can be little doubt that the British were latently capable of making the necessary adjustments for a continued union, under different circumstances. The establishment of the self-governing Dominions at a later date reveals the possibilities of this situation. The Americans,
too, could have been persuaded to make the necessary adjustments in favor of continued union, if granted a few basic economic and political concessions. The cause of conciliation did not become hopeless until the obstinate refusal of each side to compromise made it so.

That the course of imperial relations might have been rough and dangerous, even after this accommodation, no one would deny. Yet, if a spirit of conciliation were allowed free rein on both sides of the Atlantic, might not later difficulties also have been settled peacefully? The Dominions of the present day often disagree with the Mother Country, and show a high degree of independence of action on some occasions; but no one seriously questions their loyalty to the British tradition. Surely, the United States would have had nothing more to lose, and much more to gain, than these autonomous colonies, by the continued union of all the English-speaking people of the globe in one political body.

As it actually happened, however, the American Revolution took place and the United States became an independent nation. Only within the last fifty years have we begun to realize the importance of close co-operation with nations with similar traditions; but there is little hope now that this co-operation will ever be implemented by a strong political organization. One of the reasons for this ironic situation is the failure of Dartmouth and his colleagues to
find a workable means of compromise, during the former's secretaryship, 1772 - 1775.

B. D. B.

Columbus, Ohio, 1947
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CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION OF THE SECRETARYSHIP

An examination of Mr. Attlee's government, formed during the summer of 1945, reveals that there were no fewer than eight gentlemen who bore the title, "One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State". Although each Secretary is listed as heading a separate department of government (i.e., Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Dominion Affairs, India and Burma, Colonies, War, Air, and Scotland), it is interesting to note that in theory there is only one secretariat and that each Secretary has as much power as another. An interesting example of the application of this theory in modern times is given in Miss Evans' authoritative study of the office. During the first World War, "the Secretary of State for India signed warrants for the issue of supplies of munitions to the western front in the temporary absence of the

Secretary of State for War. ²

Since examples of this flexibility of office could be multiplied, the question naturally arises, what is there in the history of the secretaryship to enable it to have developed such a marvelous degree of elasticity? The purpose of this chapter is to examine the evolution of the office during the Eighteenth Century; but, since all phases of English history present a high degree of continuity of development, it will be necessary to begin the study before 1700, in order to understand fully the development of the office since that date.

A rapid glance at past history shows us that: 1) before 1433 there was one official known as the King's Clerk or Secretary; 2) from 1443 to the reign of Elizabeth there were usually two Secretaries, while it was customary for only one man to bear that title in Elizabethan times; and 3) the secretariat was generally divided between at least two, and occasionally three, men from 1600 until 1800. ³

In discussing the steps related above, it must be borne in mind that the English government has descended from feudal times when a kingdom was looked upon as a royal demesne -- to be managed by household officials, just

² F. M. G. Evans, *The Principal Secretary of State* (Manchester, 1923), p. 4 n.

as a large estate. The position of the King's Clerk or Secretary in the Royal Household and his domestic character play important parts in evolution of the office. One of the most important functions served by members of the Household was attending to the King's correspondence. At an earlier period the Lord Chancellor, then the Lord Privy Seal, had performed this task. But, as these two offices became more dignified, a third branch of the secretariat developed to take over their former duties; this was the Signet Office which was placed in the charge of the Keeper of the Signet, the King's Clerk.

The earliest mention of the King's Clerk will be found in the records of the reign of Henry III. For the next hundred years any gains in importance he may have made were necessarily small; but, beginning with the reign of Henry IV, the King no longer issued orders orally. Thus, it was necessary to have his Clerk prepare a warrant under the Signet which instructed the Keeper of the Privy Seal to send another warrant to the Chancellor, authorizing the latter to draft the necessary papers and seal them with the Great Seal.

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4 Evans, op. cit., 1.
6 Anson, op. cit., II, 158.
7 Galbraith, op. cit., 25 - 6.
There was a close association between the rise of the King's Clerk and the development of the use of the Signet, for the Signet "became the recognized private seal of the king"\(^8\) in the Fourteenth Century, and the Clerk (the Keeper of the Signet) acquired the official designation of "king's secretary."\(^9\)

The original connotation of the term "Secretary" was similar to that of "confidant" or "secret emissary." The King's Secretary in the Thirteenth Century was, then, a man in whom state secrets were confided.\(^10\) Since the Signet Secretaries came into being at a time when the King was still in personal control of all phases of government, the handling of his correspondence naturally required great secrecy and confidence.\(^11\) These men were distinctly servants of the King; in the Fourteenth Century they were expected to carry out royal commands. Only in later times did they attempt to check the King's prerogative in any way.\(^12\) Only by a long process of slow development did

\(^8\) Evans, op. cit., 2.

\(^9\) Loc. cit.; cf., T. F. Tout, Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England (Manchester, 1933), IV, 263; V, 220 - 1.

\(^10\) Miss L. B. Dibben, "Secretaries in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," English Historical Review, XXV (July, 1910), 430 et seq.


\(^12\) Loc. cit.
this secret clerk become an officer of the state, and the title "Secretary" become highly respected.\textsuperscript{13}

The King's private secretaries were not regarded as public servants, or Ministers, until the Sixteenth Century. Under the Tudors, however, the office grew in importance, largely because of the increasing importance attached to the use of the Signet. In 1535 a statute provided that all writs passing under the Great Seal should first pass under the Signet, which the Secretary had in his custody. This gave the office a new degree of responsibility, which is reflected in the modern practice of appointing a Secretary "by the delivery of the seals, namely the signet, the lesser seal, and the cachet."\textsuperscript{14} Although letters patent were usually issued for newly appointed Secretaries between 1578 and c. 1850, the delivery of the seals has always marked the real entrance into office.\textsuperscript{15}

Although the Secretary remained a Household officer until the reign of Elizabeth, several significant events occurred during earlier reigns that indicate that he was making important gains in personal and official prestige. In 1433 two Secretaries were appointed, because the business of Henry V's French domains required a larger staff.

\textsuperscript{13} Dibben, loc. cit.


\textsuperscript{15} Thomson, loc. cit.
Ten years later, the importance of the Secretary was recognized in an ordinance requiring the affixing of the Signet to petitions before the Privy Seal was attached. The title, "Principal Secretary" was first used in 1476, indicating that the Secretary was no longer regarded as a mere clerk. 16

During the reign of Edward III, the Secretary had ranked below even the King's Physician, and had received the same pay as the Clerks of the Kitchen, of the Wardrobe, and of the Market. 17 By the reign of Henry VII, however, the Secretary was classed with the barons, and actually witnessed the treaty with Portugal in 1489. 18 In Henry VIII's "Establishment of a Councill" the Secretary is mentioned as one of the "honourable, virtuous, sādwise, experete, and discreet persons" who comprised the royal council. 19 The same year (1526) saw the rank of the Secretary advanced to a position between the Comptroller and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Thirteen years later he took precedence of all those below the King's Chamberlain. 20

16 Anson, op. cit., 158 - 161.
18 Ibid., 256.
20 Thoms, op. cit., 256 - 7.
By this time it was realized that a place must be made in Parliament for so important an official. Accordingly, a statute was passed in 1539 providing the "King's Majesty's Principal Secretaries" with place, rank and precedence in Parliament.\(^{21}\) After this time, "the Secretary, if a baron, is to sit above all other barons; if a bishop, above all other bishops; if not a peer he is to sit on the uppermost form or woolsack of the House."\(^{22}\) In the last instance he could not, of course, take part in debates.

The appointment of a second Secretary by Henry VIII marks an interesting departure from the historical evolution of the secretariat. Previously, the secretariat had grown by establishing new offices, as for instance when the Lord Privy Seal appeared, independent of the Chancellor, or the King's Clerk, separate from either. After the date of 1540, however, the secretariat developed by multiplication of personnel within the same office, and no new branches were needed.\(^{23}\)

It is possible that, when Henry appointed a second Secretary to share the burdens of the first, he may have had in mind the precedent of the appointment of two Secretaries in the reign of Henry V. The character of the office had

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\(^{21}\) Evans, op. cit., 34.

\(^{22}\) Anson, op. cit., II, 160.

\(^{23}\) Galbraith, op. cit., 53 - 4.
changed so much between 1433 and 1540, however, that even if Henry Tudor had concerned himself with precedents, he could have relied on this one only in reference to title. A second Secretary undoubtedly reflects an increase in the business of the time; but, what is more significant, the fact that the Secretary's position had risen so materially must have made Henry realize "not only the importance, but also the danger of a single over-great secretary." 24

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth "the man made the office." 25 Not only did the Secretary's emolument cease to be listed as an Household expense at this time; but the men who filled the office were of such high calibre that their title was altered to that of "Our Principal Secretary of Estate." The character and ability of Elizabeth's Secretaries of State was such that only one Secretary at a time was necessary to carry on the business of the State. Toward the close of her reign, however, a second Secretary was again appointed, to share the duties of the office with Sir Robert Cecil. The latter became the first to bear the new title mentioned above, while the second Secretary was called merely "One of our Secretaries of Estate." 26 From 1601 to 1708 the secretariat was usually shared by two

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24 Evans, op. cit., 3 - 4.
25 Ibid., 3.
26 Anson, op. cit., 161.
Secretaries.

The great Tudor contribution to the growth of the office of Secretary of State was their frequent reliance on it "to make their influence felt in council and in parliament and, through the diplomatic service, in foreign courts."27 This was a period when the importance of the office depended greatly upon the personality of the holder and of the monarch. Strong rulers usually employed strong Secretaries; weak rulers did not dare to do so. This accounts not only for the rise to importance of the secretariat under the Tudors, but also for its decline under the Stuarts. The latter preferred to surround themselves with favorites and mediocrities, while they attempted to control foreign policy directly.28

Cromwell employed a strong Secretary (Thurloe), but after the Restoration the trend was toward political responsibility and the Secretaries ceased to be merely "domestic confidants."29 The personality element continued to play an important part in the evolution of the Secretary's office, but its importance gradually waned as the theory of responsible government grew.

27 Evans, op. cit., 5.
28 Ibid., 3 - 4; Thompson, op. cit., 5 - 6.
29 Evans, op. cit., 3 - 4.
In order to understand the significance of the secretarial duties of the Eighteenth Century, a brief summary of these duties as they were performed by Seventeenth Century Secretaries is necessary.\(^{30}\) First of all, because of his custody of the signet, his function in obtaining the royal signature and in issuing letters patent, the Secretary of State became "the channel of communication between the crown and subjects...."\(^{31}\) Virtually all petitions passed through his office. Secondly, the Secretary of State had the privilege and duty of advising the Crown, since he was a member of the Privy Council. He could influence conciliatory policy to a considerable extent, because his office was generally depended on for information and advice relative to foreign affairs and certain domestic affairs, e. g., general discontent or rioting.\(^{32}\) The Secretary of State rendered a third, and very valuable, service to the Crown by representing royal policy in the Houses of Parliament. He occupied a seat with other Privy Councillors

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\(^{30}\) This section is based on Evans, \textit{op. cit.}, the most authoritative study of the secretaryship before 1682, \textit{q. v.}, if a more detailed discussion is desired.

\(^{31}\) Evans, \textit{op. cit.}, 6 – 7.

\(^{32}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 7.
and aided the passage of legislation approved by the administration. It also fell to him to transmit the messages of the King to the Parliament. 33

Fourthly, "the care of foreign affairs was the secretary's most important duty." 34 The King in Council usually determined broad policies, but the Secretary of State, as the executive officer, could exert more than a little influence, depending as always, upon his personality. His dealing with foreign courts can be considered an extension of the idea of a "channel of communication" between the Crown and brother rulers. To aid him in performing his duties, the secret service was in his sphere of control. The Secretary made use of spies not only to get information from abroad, but also from various quarters of England itself, wherever there might be enemies of the government. 35 It is interesting to note that the Secretary's control of the field in which he had the most important duties, and in which Secretaries of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries distinguished themselves (viz., foreign affairs), was distinctly limited in the Seventeenth Century by the King, the Council and its various committees. As late as the reign of Charles II a Secretary

33 Loc. cit.
34 Loc. cit.
35 Ibid., 8.
hesitated to give English ambassadors abroad definite instructions without consulting the Committee on Foreign Affairs. 36

Of lesser importance at this period, but of great potentialities, was the control exercised by the Secretary of State over domestic affairs. He early became the guardian of the peace by virtue of his position at the head of the secret service at home. The broad powers which he developed in this phase of his office were not seriously questioned or limited until late in the Eighteenth Century. 37

The Secretary's importance as an executive officer gradually increased during the Seventeenth Century. This was not accomplished without occasional set-backs, however, because the personality factor of the individual Secretaries was of the greatest importance. A Secretary of State could be content with being a mere go-between, or he could personally impress each matter that came to his office in relation to carrying out the will of the King in Parliament. There were "few actual powers or privileges attached ipso facto to the office of secretary, but he could make of it what he would." 38 Still it must be remembered that at no time before 1689 did the importance of his office exceed

36 Loc. cit.
37 Ibid., chap. IV.
38 Ibid., 5.
that of the Treasurer or the Chancellor.39

Miss Evans has accounted for the differences between
the Secretary and the other great officers of the Crown with
the words: "personality and prerogative."40 In the Seven-
teenth Century the duties and privileges of the great of-

ficers (e. g., the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Treasurer,
and the Lord Privy Seal), were fixed far more rigidly than
were those of the secretaryship. The latter office was
still evolving; consequently, the relative authority of the
Secretary of State depended on his own personality and on
that of the Monarch.41 The comparative newness of the sec-
etaryship accounts not only for the lack of fixed duties
and privileges, but also for the absence of rigid restric-
tions -- which is of far greater importance to the eventual
evolution of the office. The vagueness of authority in
this century contributed materially to the growth of author-
ity in the next.

Because of all these considerations, and especially be-
cause of the personality factor, "the story of the secre-
tariat [in the Seventeenth Century] is not merely political
and administrative, but also, very really, biographical,
and the whole gamut of political experience was open to the

39 Loc. cit.
40 Ibid., l.
41 Loc. cit.
king's principal secretary, who might be little more than a chief clerk or else the first minister of the crown."

Since the Secretary's dealings with foreign courts were among his most important duties, it might be advisable to inspect in some detail the manner in which these negotiations were institutionalized. Although it was a cardinal rule of the secretaryship that each of the two Secretaries be equal in every way to his colleague, an arrangement was reached under the Stuarts, whereby the care of foreign affairs was divided between two departments or provinces. For the sake of administrative convenience one Secretary was appointed to the Northern department, in which post he carried on negotiations with the countries of northern Europe (the Empire, Holland, Scandinavia, Poland, and Russia). The Secretary of the Southern Department was charged with the conduct of affairs with the states of southern Europe (France, Switzerland, Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, and Turkey), and also with Ireland, the colonies, and the Channel Islands. Domestic affairs were handled by both Secretaries, and one frequently interfered in the other's province of foreign business.

Some of the Secretaries (e.g., Bolingbroke) distinguished themselves in foreign affairs, but not a few of

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42 Ibid., 336; end of summary from Evans.
43 Thomson, op. cit., 2 - 3.
them were nearly incompetent. Some knew no foreign languages save French and Lord Suffolk could not use even that tongue properly. Harley was negligent in many matters, Bedford was indolent, while Grafton and Richmond were young and inexperienced. This lack of first-rate ability is not too surprising when one realizes that the struggle for the position of leader or chief minister usually caused one Secretary to demand a complaisant colleague, while the First Lord of the Treasury generally insisted on mediocrities filling both secretarial posts. It is only fair to add that in the reign of George III not much more capable men could have been found, even if desired.\textsuperscript{44}

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Although the Secretaries were always considered as having equal prestige, one department or the other was generally regarded as superior until the accession of George III. Under the Stuarts the Southern Department was considered the more important, because of the relations with France. After 1674 a newly appointed Secretary was usually given the Northern Department, while his colleague (who had remained in office) was advanced to the Southern.\textsuperscript{45} Needless to say there were one or two exceptions to this

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 18 - 20.

\textsuperscript{45} Evans, \textit{op. cit.}, 132.
"rule" and, in 1706 when the Earl of Sunderland was appointed, it was decided that each Secretary should remain at his respective post until removed by death, resignation or dismissal.\(^{46}\)

With the Hanoverian Accession in 1714, however, one province again emerged as superior over the other -- this time it was the Northern Department. The latter was considered the more important, because of the various German alliances and because of England's increased interest in wars in Northern Europe.\(^{47}\) Also the first two Georges' visits to Hanover and their effect on the secretaryship should be noted, even though the consequences were only temporary. One Secretary always accompanied the King on these occasions, the other usually remaining in London. The details of administration were considerably complicated by this arrangement, for envoys were instructed to correspond with both. Furthermore, the Secretary in attendance was in an extremely advantageous position; he had escaped the control of his fellow Ministers, so he was free to intrigue against them with the King. Since Hanover was in the Northern Province, it was the Secretary for this department who usually accompanied the Sovereign.\(^{48}\)

\(^{46}\) Thomson, \textit{op. cit.}, 3.

\(^{47}\) \textit{Loc. cit.}

\(^{48}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 21 - 22.
After 1760, though, the royal visits to the Electorate ceased. Neither department was regarded as intrinsically more desirable than the other and transferences, when they were made, were made for other reasons.\textsuperscript{49}

Although this geographical division of labor required the Secretaries' attention for a wide diversity of matters, the work of any one Secretary was "greater in appearance than in reality."\textsuperscript{50} The cumbersome provincial arrangement remained, however, until the reforms of 1782 replaced it with a Foreign Office and a Home Office.

The personality factor, which Miss Evans emphasises, may be seen to operate even after the period covered by her study. For example, the decline in prestige, which was characteristic of the secretariat under the early Stuarts, continued in the reign of William III. The reasons why William's reign was not a period of truly great Secretaries are not far to seek. Typical of his early policy, one Tory and one Whig were usually appointed; the result was constant dissension. Even later, when both Secretaries were Whigs, the office did not grow noticeably, because William preferred to retain the control of foreign affairs in his

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}, 3 - 4.  
\textsuperscript{50} Anson, \textit{op. cit.}, 164.
own hands. His Secretaries were often kept ignorant of what was being negotiated, until presented with a fait accompli to which they had to apply the seal. Another striking example of the decline of the secretaryship in this reign is revealed by the fact that, although there were frequent periods when only one Secretary held office, the public service did not suffer, because William directed so much of the work personally. Indeed, he preferred to correspond with his envoys abroad through his private secretary. 51

The Secretary of State regained much of his prestige soon after 1700, however, due to several factors. The character of the holders of the office played an important part; Harley, St. John, and their successors were much stronger men than William's Secretaries. The personality of the Monarch is a vital -- if somewhat negative -- factor to be considered. "Anne's inability to keep business in her own hands contributed largely to the steady growth of ministerial power." 52 Similarly, the difficulty of the German-speaking Hanoverians in communicating with their subjects threw great weight into the balance in favor of the secretariat. Thus it is that in the Eighteenth Century we find Secretaries taking the initiative in many functions that had formerly consisted largely in

51 Thomson, op. cit., 7 - 12.
52 Ibid., 13.
countersigning a royal order.\footnote{Anson, op. cit., 163.}

With the appearance of less capable rulers and an increase in administrative business, the secretariat grew in importance. Anne's reign marks not only the beginning of the rise of the Secretaries of State, but also the commencement "of the struggle for Prime Ministership which they had a good chance of capturing."\footnote{Thomson, op. cit., 12 - 13. The term "Prime Minister" was not commonly used before 1800; in the reign of Anne it carried the connotation of "royal favorite" or one who led not only the Ministry, but the Sovereign as well. Strangely enough, the title was not legally recognized until 1907.} As soon as it became generally recognized that one Minister should be acknowledged Chief Minister, a conflict began among all the high offices of state for the honor. The holders of the posts of Lord Steward, Master of the Horse, Lord President, Lord Privy Seal, Lord Chancellor, and Lord High Admiral were eliminated from the competition rather early, because these offices were either too ancient, too insignificant, or too specialized in their functions to enable their incumbents to acquire such a great responsibility. The conflict devolved, then, chiefly upon the Lord Treasurer and the two Principal Secretaries of State.\footnote{Thomson, op. cit., 13 - 14.} Throughout the period 1702 - 82 [as Thomson has it] we find, now a Secretary of State, now the head of the Treasury in possession of pre-eminent
power in the Ministry."^56

The struggle within the Ministry for supremacy was long and involved. One need couple only such names as Harley and St. John, Stanhope and Townshend, Townshend and Carteret, Walpole and Townshend, Newcastle and Walpole, Pitt and Newcastle, in order to call to mind the chief protagonists in this conflict. Although the Secretaries were all strong and determined men, there were certain advantages on the side of the Treasurer that made the victory eventually fall to that officer. In the first place, he had no equal; each Secretary had to share his authority with a colleague who possessed fully as much legal right. The First Lord of the Treasury generally sat in the lower house, whereas the Secretaries were more often than not chosen from among the Lords. In a period when the Commons were making rapid strides toward supremacy, while the upper house was being correspondingly weakened, it was only natural that the Minister who could influence the former would have the more advantageous position. Specifically, the Treasurer was concerned with finance and domestic policy -- a field over which the Commons had long asserted their right to exercise control. The Secretary of State, on the other hand, was chiefly concerned with diplomacy and foreign policy -- a field which depended at

^56 Ibid., 16.
this time more directly upon the Crown and which required a representative of the Peerage for the sake of prestige.\textsuperscript{57}

The battle for the Prime Ministership was not definitely decided during the Eighteenth Century, but beginning in the reign of George I a new development appeared. The Ministers began to realize that, not only did they need a Chief Minister to lead them, but there was also need for capable leadership in the House of Commons. While the formation of the position of Leader was in its experimental stages, a Secretary of State was occasionally chosen. The similarity between these early Leaders and their modern counterparts is striking, because they also summoned members of their faction to meetings to discuss measures to be proposed in Parliament, and managed the passage of Government bills. For the performance of this task a Secretary like Addison proved to be inadequate, for he rarely spoke in Commons. Craggs, on the other hand, was possessed of considerable tact and ability; but, while he made an excellent Leader, he was not a good Secretary. After his death few commoners became Secretaries of State, so the Leadership of the House passed into other hands.\textsuperscript{58}

When the First Lord of the Treasury sat in the lower

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 14 - 17. The Secretary of State was generally a Peer of the Realm; from 1702 - 82 one of the Secretaries was always a nobleman.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 25 - 26.
house, he frowned on the practice of giving the leadership to a Secretary of State, and, as indicated above, usually saw to it that peers were chosen for the secretaryship. But this stratagem did not answer the question of leadership when the First Lord was also a member of the House of Lords. Several experiments were attempted to remedy the situation; the Duke of Newcastle even tried to get along without a Leader in the lower house. His plan was to have each Minister who sat in Commons take the lead in discussions which concerned their particular departments, but to choose no one person to manage Government business.\(^5^9\) Needless to say, this makeshift arrangement failed after only a short interval. Newcastle was forced to compromise with Henry Fox, grant him the secretarial seals and the position of Leader, in order to carry on his Government.\(^6^0\) The most successful arrangement, however, was achieved by William Pitt, the Elder, who assumed both posts of Leader and Secretary of State for the Southern Department. His successors were not so fortunate, nor so able as he had been, until Lord North became Leader in 1770.\(^6^1\)

By way of summary, then, it should be noted that after many vicissitudes the office of Secretary of State appeared

\(^5^9\) Ibid., 26.
\(^6^0\) Ibid., 27.
\(^6^1\) Ibid., 27 - 28.
in the reign of George III in a far better condition than had its ancestor at the time of Henry III. As the "channels of communication" between the Crown and subjects, the Secretaries possessed broad, ill-defined, powers in regard to foreign and domestic affairs. The secretariat was recognized as only one office, even when shared by two or three holders. At one time the Secretary of State had an opportunity to become the Chief Minister, but for many reasons he lost to the Treasurer.

Further chapters deal more specifically with the duties of the office in the Eighteenth Century, but here it might be appropriate to conclude this account of the evolution of the secretariat with the opinion of one who wrote less than fifty years after the close of the century under consideration. If we may assume that The Book of the Court depicts the gains of the Eighteenth Century with the proper perspective, this paragraph may be more valuable than contemporary opinion:

...the King's Secretary, from being little more than the clerical instrument for conveying his Sovereign's commands, has become one of the most influential Ministers of the State, whose signature is absolutely requisite to legalize nearly every act of the Crown, whose authority to use the King's name cannot be disputed by any one, except by the King himself;... and who... performs most of the functions of the Government with all but indefinable powers and unlimited authority. 62

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62 Thoms, op. cit., 259.
If such tremendous gains as these were made before 1844, then Thomson is certainly justified in writing that "the eighteenth century was the golden age for the Secretaries of State." 63

63 Thomson, op. cit., 162.
CHAPTER II

THE DUTIES OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES OF STATE

Perhaps the least important phase of the Secretary of State's duties concerned Ireland. Irish affairs were of such little interest during this period that there was no conflict between the two Secretaries as to who should handle them. It had become customary by the end of the Seventeenth Century for the Secretary for the Southern Department to control most of the business across the Irish Sea. Shrewsbury had made some attempt to intervene, while he was in the Northern Department, but after his resignation in 1698 "the Secretary for the Southern Department had practically a monopoly of Irish business."¹

During the whole of the Eighteenth Century, then, the Northern Secretary interfered in Irish business only when his colleague was indisposed, or absent from his office for some other reason. Even then he must have derived small

¹ Thomson, op. cit., 38 - 40; I have relied very heavily upon this work for the material contained in this chapter on Secretarial duties, because it is the most recent, best organized, and most authoritative study of the secretariat in the Eighteenth Century. Professor Thomson's unimpeachable sources include for the most part items not available to an American student.
satisfaction from exercising the increased authority, because the amount of business transacted with Ireland was slight. As a "channel of communication" it was the Secretary's duty to carry on correspondence with the Lord Lieutenant, the Lords Justices, and the Secretary of State of Ireland. When the latter office developed into a sinecure, the Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant became responsible for making reports on politics, Parliament and the army within Ireland.

This correspondence with Irish officials concerned chiefly the issuance of warrants, and other expressions of royal wishes or commands, by virtue of which the Secretary exercised control over the patronage of Irish posts. In all matters relating to revenue, however, the Lord Lieutenant was instructed to correspond directly with the Treasury, rather than the Secretary of State.

One important development in regard to procedure is worth noting. During the early part of the Eighteenth Century Lords Lieutenant of Ireland had occasionally attended

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2 This official is also referred to as the "Secretary of State in Ireland" and the "Secretary of State for Ireland." To avoid confusing the title with that of officials in modern times, I have used the modifying term "of Ireland." For further information on this office, see: Herbert Wood, "The Offices of Secretary of State for Ireland and Keeper of the Signet or Privy Seal," Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, XXXVIII, Sec. C, No. IV, pp 51 - 68.

3 Thomson, op. cit., 40.

4 Loc. cit.
Cabinet meetings, while on visits to London. After 1780, however, they were not expected to do so, for a Cabinet minute of that year records that it is "customary" for the Lord Lieutenant to receive all royal commands through the Secretary of State for the Southern Department and not directly from the King. Thus, a precedent was established which became a strict constitutional convention.

The domestic affairs of England and Wales were cared for by the Secretaries for the Northern and Southern Departments conjointly -- acting as two equal holders of the same office. Although the theory should have included the Scottish and Colonial Secretaries as well, they were never able to exert as much influence in internal business as their older colleagues. "The duties of the Secretaries with respect to domestic affairs were neither very numerous nor, apart from criminal business, very important. In the days when there was little social legislation this could scarcely be otherwise." The Secretaries received, for example, all petitions addressed to the Sovereign and either attended to them or referred them to the proper department.

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6 Thomson, op. cit., 105.
7 Ibid., 126.
(Financial matters, thus, were immediately turned over to the Treasury.) While receiving petitions and securing the royal sign manual had once been important functions, they had become largely formalized by the Eighteenth Century and could be entrusted to clerks. The Secretaries' influence could scarcely grow as a result of this power.  

The Secretaries were vaguely concerned with local government, but their interest in such matters rarely extended beyond the control of the patronage of such posts as Lord Lieutenant and Sheriff. Since the secretariat directed the militia, it was also necessary to issue warrants and orders to the Lords Lieutenant in the various counties. Closely connected with this control of the militia and the direction of troop movements was the Secretary's responsibility for the preservation of the King's Peace throughout the realm. This power was attacked by Burke and others, but it was the only possible solution to the problem of keeping order without a police force.

The duties which usually fall to a Ministry of Justice (a post unknown to the British Constitution) are performed by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs in present day

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8 Ibid., 125.


England; in the Eighteenth Century such duties were divided between the two Principal Secretaries of State. In this connexion "it is interesting to note the way in which the Secretaries strove to make themselves into Magistrates. The elasticity of their office rendered it easy for them to extend their powers unless checked by the Courts."12

All royal pardons and important writs (e.g., nolle prosequi) required the approval of a Secretary of State.13 "The duties of the Secretaries with respect to the prevention and punishment of political offences [however] were most important."14 By utilizing their powers to maintain a secret service at home and abroad, to secure information from opening private and diplomatic correspondence, and to issue warrants for arrest and committal, the Secretaries were in a position to detect and forestall treasonable activity anywhere in Great Britain or Ireland.15 They were not, of course, particularly interested in ordinary criminals, nor in breaches of civil law, but since 1681 it had been "a regular practice for the Secretaries to issue warrants for the arrest of suspected political criminals."16

11 Ibid., 109; Williams, op. cit., 54 - 5.
12 Thomson, op. cit., 111.
13 Ibid., 109.
14 Ibid., 111.
15 Ibid., 150 - 5, 111.
16 Ibid., 111, 112.
In addition to treason, the Secretaries were able to act in cases of libel; they often had authors, printers, and publishers of politically libelous literature apprehended. This could be accomplished in two ways: either an ordinary warrant would be issued, naming the author who had been foolish enough to sign his real name to a piece of seditious literature; or, as was more often the case, a general warrant would be issued, authorizing the arrest of all those responsible for the writing, printing and publishing of a designated publication. The Messenger who executed the latter warrant was entrusted with very broad power, for, since the offender was not specifically named, papers could be seized and many people arrested in an effort to identify the libeler.\footnote{Ibid., 114 - 5.}

The right of the Secretaries to issue general warrants, which was already recognized at the opening of the Eighteenth Century, probably depended on the Licensing Acts. Their powers in this respect were occasionally challenged, but their authority was preserved until judicial decisions were handed down in the Wilkes Case (1763) and in others of a similar nature.\footnote{The Earl of Albemarle, \textit{Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham and his Contemporaries} (London, 1852), I, 246.} While "general warrants for arrest were never formally condemned in Court,... the practical effect...was the same."\footnote{Thomson, \textit{op. cit.}, 124.} Public opinion was aroused and in 1766
the House of Commons passed a resolution to the effect that
general warrants were illegal in misdemeanors.20 This res-
olution did not, of course, have the force of law, but ever
since 1775 Secretaries have felt obliged to restrict the
issuance of general warrants to high treason.21 At the pre-
sent time, according to Professor Dicey, the Secretary of State "cannot at his discretion and for reasons of state ar-
rest, imprison, or punish any man, except...where special
powers are conferred upon him by statute...."22 Thus, the
Secretary was prevented from expanding his authority in re-
gard to justice -- to the indubitable benefit of the Con-
stitution, and probably for the good of the office of Secre-
tary of State as well.

The management of foreign affairs was another important
phase of the Secretaries' duties in the Eighteenth Century.
Their control of this field may also be accounted to the
fact that they were "channels of communication," but it
seems to have fallen into their hands largely through chance.
The other Ministers were apparently "too occupied with the

20 Albemarle, op. cit., I, 324; Parliamentary History
(Cobbett's), XVI, 207 - 10.

21 Thomson, op. cit., 125. The most important cases of
this period were Wilkes v. Wood, and Entick v. Carrington.

22 A. V. Dicey, Introduction to the Study of the Law
specific work of their various offices to take over the conduct of foreign affairs as well.\textsuperscript{23}

As the personal correspondence of the King grew in scope and in importance, and as the expression "foreign affairs" took on its modern connotation, the Secretary found himself possessed of an increasingly influential position. The amount of business transacted in this respect had grown so by the reign of Charles I that a division of labor was felt to be necessary. After considerable experimentation the "provincial system" was finally developed, to remain a feature of the English Government from the Restoration in 1660 until 1782.\textsuperscript{24}

During the century under consideration only the Secretaries for the Northern and Southern Departments had any control over foreign affairs; with the single exception of Queensbury's brief control of correspondence with foreign envoys, the Scottish and Colonial Secretaries were excluded from this field.\textsuperscript{25} This tendency of jurisdictions to solidify became still more apparent during the Eighteenth Century, as it came to be regarded as highly irregular for one Secretary to interfere in the other's department. There were, of course, exceptional cases (e.g., the illness, absence or incapacity of a colleague), but generally on those

\textsuperscript{23} Thomson, \textit{op. cit.}, 90.
\textsuperscript{24} Evans, \textit{op. cit.}, 102.
\textsuperscript{25} Thomson, \textit{op. cit.}, 90.
rare occasions when unauthorized intervention took place it was a clear indication that one of the Secretaries was greedy for increased power and patronage. The Duke of Newcastle might be cited as a notable violator of the accepted custom, for after George III's accession "the Secretaries seem generally to have minded their own business." More and more it was realized that to intervene in a colleague's province, for any reason, required special permission from the King. 26

The Secretaries' control of foreign affairs depended largely on (1) their correspondence with British envoys abroad and (2) the power to nominate the appointments in their respective departments. 27 In the first instance, the Secretaries issued "Instructions," despatches, and letters (private, secret, and confidential) to envoys. 28 The "Instructions" were issued to newly appointed envoys and informed him in general terms of his duties; he was to promote trade and friendly relations, and to correspond with other British envoys abroad as well as with the Secretary of State who instructed him. 29 As might be expected, the despatches vary greatly in detail and in content -- depending on the personality of the writer. An industrious

26 Ibid., 90 - 94
27 Ibid., 90 et seq.
28 Ibid., 95 - 7.
29 Ibid., 95.
Secretary like Pitt might attend to the minutest of details, while less diligent Ministers like Carteret might leave most of the work to subordinates.\textsuperscript{30} In theory at least, the private letters of the Secretaries differed from despatches in that they need not have been filed in the foreign office or read to the Cabinet. Needless to say, the theory was not always followed.\textsuperscript{31} Although the line between private and public correspondence has always been a faint one, it was common practice for retiring Secretaries to take away with them whatever documents they chose. Most of them were "fairly unscrupulous"\textsuperscript{32} in exercising their discriminatory powers and, thus, many valuable documents are perhaps irretrievably lost.

In the second instance of secretarial control of foreign affairs, it was generally accepted that the Secretaries should select the envoys with whom they would have to work in their respective provinces. Normally, then, all the British representatives in northern Europe would be chosen by the Secretary of State for the Northern Department, whereas his colleague in the Southern Department would choose the envoys to the south European states. Like all generalizations, however, there were exceptions to this "rule," for vigorous politicians of the Newcastle type

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 96.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 97 - 8.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 144.
\end{itemize}
would often control the patronage of both provinces.\textsuperscript{33}

In concluding these brief remarks on foreign affairs, it should be noted that Secretaries of the period under consideration often complained of the difficulty in obtaining capable men to serve as envoys. Foreigners were not infrequently employed; and although British subjects of high rank were preferred, the records show that commoners (e. g., Stepney and Robinson) made the best diplomats. The great, well-trained Foreign Service was not destined to make its appearance in this century, but on the whole, considering the patronage -- which had to be respected -- they did not do much worse than we do today.\textsuperscript{34}

With the administrative changes in 1782, divided conduct of foreign affairs came to an end. The old provincial system gave way to a Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who (according to an official report of 1786) had charge of dealings with all the foreign countries of Europe and the United States.\textsuperscript{35} A more detailed examination of how this came about will be found in the next chapter.

Since the Eighteenth Century was a period of frequent

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 101 - 2.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 102 - 4.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 135.
and lengthy wars, any discussion of secretarial duties during this century must of necessity consider the Secretary of State's connexion with the Army and the Navy.

The War Office had received some attention during the reign of Charles II and had been organized under a Secretary at War. 36 This official was not made a member of the Cabinet, however, and it was the Secretaries of State who acted again as "channels of communication" between the King and his troops. Since the Sovereign had direct control of the Army in the Eighteenth Century, the Secretaries had correspondingly great authority in military affairs. 37 Furthermore, it is to be noted that the Secretaries' power over the Army continued to increase all through the century. William III was a soldier himself and kept military matters firmly in his own hands, allowing his Secretaries of State small scope for initiative. Queen Anne, on the other hand, was forced to depend to a much larger extent on her Ministers and on the Duke of Marlborough. The inability of George I to speak English made the Secretary of State indispensable in communicating with the Army. The number of wars in which England participated under George II further increased the business of the secretariat. 38 Nor did the

37 Thomson, op. cit., 65.
38 Ibid., 67, 68, 72, 73.
importance of the Secretary of State diminish in the suc-
ceeding reign.

With the respect to Army affairs, the Secretary dealt
with: the Secretary at War, the Board of Ordnance, and
the Treasury. Because he lacked Ministerial position and
powers, the Secretary at War could never aspire to as com-
plete control as that exercised by the Secretary of State. 39
The latter's duties were numerous and varied. He issued
warrants for supplies, had charge of the general movement
of troops, countersigned commissions to officers, and con-
sulted with the Treasury on contracts for the victualling
of the men in arms. At times a Secretary of State was even
responsible for the strategy of war. Perhaps the best il-
lustration of the comparative powers of the Secretary at
War and the Secretary of State is indicated by the fact
that the Army was supplied with weapons, ammunition, and
other military supplies, such as tents, as the result of
warrants issued by the Secretary of State to the Board of
Ordnance -- not even the Secretary at War could procure
military supplies without a warrant signed by a Secretary
of State. 40

The Secretaries of State were not limited in their
correspondence, however, and often dealt directly with

39 Ibid., 65, 66.
40 Ibid., 74 - 6.
officers in the field. It was one of the duties of the secretariat to prepare the "Instructions" which were issued to officers upon their assuming command. These frequently ordered the officer to make written reports to the Secretary of State who had sent the "Instructions," thus maintaining direct communication between the two.\textsuperscript{41} The question as to which Secretary of State should correspond with officers in this manner was answered with a typical expedient; during the Eighteenth Century matters were arranged so that "each Secretary directed the forces in his own Province."\textsuperscript{42} For example, the Secretary for the Southern Department generally determined policy for the troops in America, while the Northern Secretary concerned himself with the conduct of military campaigns in the Netherlands. During the period that the Colonial Secretaryship was in existence (1768 - 82), the procedure altered only slightly -- "the newly-created Colonial Secretary gradually took over military business in so far as it concerned the Colonies."\textsuperscript{43} True, during the Revolutionary War, Lord George Germain did tend to become more important than his colleagues, by virtue of his authority over the troops, but this was only a temporary condition.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 68.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 73.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 75.
There was no real Ministry of War until 1794. Consequently, military organization was defective and confused most of the time. 44 Professor Anson lists six different offices that shared responsibility in military affairs by the end of the Eighteenth Century; the Home Secretary, the Secretary at War, the Master General of the Ordnance, the Treasury, the Board of General Officers, and the Commander-in-Chief. The inefficiency of such a system was made so obvious by the war with France that a new arrangement had to be made. 45 Thus it came about that William Pitt, the Younger, "instead of allowing Grenville [in the Foreign Office] to direct the campaign in Flanders, and Dundas [in the Home Office] to control operation in the West Indies, according to precedent, threw the conduct of the war in every quarter into the hands of a single Minister; and set the seal upon this novelty in 1794 by making this Minister Secretary of State for War." 46

The creation of the new post within the secretariat did not immediately bring about efficient management of military affairs, however, because authority still had to be shared with the Secretary at War, the Commander-in-Chief,

44 Ibid., 76.
45 Anson, op. cit., II, 166.
and the Board of Ordnance. Also the presence of a Coalition Government hindered effective action for a while; yet the importance of the new step was recognized from the start. The administration of Colonial affairs was added to the War Secretaryship in 1798, the Minister being known as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies from then until 1854. The wisdom in this union will be readily perceived when it is remembered that (1) British colonial possessions had been greatly reduced with the loss of the Thirteen Colonies, and that (2) almost all the remaining colonies were or had been scenes of active military operations.

Although a more detailed discussion of the Colonial Secretaryship has been reserved for the next chapter, it might be well to finish this account of the military duties of the secretariat with a few remarks about later developments. The peace that followed Napoleon's fall in 1815 greatly decreased the amount of military business transacted by the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. The Crimean War revealed such negligence along these lines that a separation was effected in 1854 whereby a new Principal Secretary of State for War was appointed, the former office retaining Colonial Affairs.

\[47\] Ibid., 872 - 881.
\[48\] Anson, op. cit., II, 166 - 7.
The Secretaries of State had gained control of the Navy in the reign of William III, at a time when the Admiralty was rather too weak to voice serious objections. In later years, even though the Admiralty secured representation in the Cabinet, the Secretaries did not relinquish their authority but actually developed it. Thus, "throughout the period 1689 - 1782 the Secretaries or one of them exercised much authority over the Navy."\(^{49}\)

Although the responsibility for naval policy and strategy was shared by the Admiralty and the Secretaries of State, the latter were not confined to dealing with the former. Rather, the Secretaries often sent orders directly to admirals at sea. At other times the Secretaries would direct the Admiralty to prepare orders or "Instructions" for the officers and thus exercise considerable -- if indirect -- influence.\(^{50}\)

Both Secretaries were empowered to attend to naval affairs. Under William, however, one had tended to monopolize the business. By 1709 a compromise had been effected and the established custom was that each Secretary should control the fleets within his particular Province. The ultimate result of thus sharing the authority was that the Secretary in the Southern Department became the more important.\(^{51}\)

\(^{49}\) Thomson, op. cit., 86, 88.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 77 - 9.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 80 - 2.
The creation of a third Secretaryship in 1768 complicated the situation somewhat, because the other two resented having to surrender authority to the new-comer. When the quarrel over transport showed signs of becoming quite bitter, another compromise was reached: the Secretary of State for the Southern Province was to direct the transportation of troops to the Colonies, while the Secretary of State for the Colonies was to be in charge of the fleet in American waters and the transportation of troops from the Colonies.\footnote{Ibid., 84 - 6.}

Such an arrangement was doomed to fail from the start. The outbreak of the American War and the desire of Lord George Germain to extend the power of his office combined to reveal the defects of the compromise. The result was that the other Secretaries gradually ceased to issue orders for transporting troops, while Germain assumed the direction of all military and most of the naval operations.\footnote{Ibid., 86.}

By way of summation, Professor Thomson has this to say:

Complicated though the system of Ministerial control over the Army and Navy was, the results were on the whole good, when the Secretaries were competent. A combined military and naval operation required the cooperation of the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Ordnance. This could only be obtained when all obeyed a Secretary of State. On him everything ultimately depended.\footnote{Ibid., 88.}
Most assuredly the system had its weaknesses; but a strong man could make it work with remarkable effectiveness. Pitt's control of the Army and Navy while Secretary of the Southern Department may have been exceptional, but it shows what was possible of achievement.\(^{55}\) This was the way in which Eighteenth Century England attempted (not entirely without success) to establish a unified command.

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The purpose of this chapter has been to examine in some detail the various duties of the two Principal Secretaries of State. It has been noted, explicitly or otherwise that: (1) Irish affairs were among the least important of the secretarial duties, but that the control of the patronage in that country was of some value; (2) domestic business was small before the age of social legislation and that in the one phase of any importance -- issuance of general warrants -- the Secretaries' flexible powers were definitely limited by the Courts, by Parliamentary resolution, and to a very great extent by public opinion; (3) although foreign affairs were of ever increasing consequence during the Eighteenth Century, the administrative system that had been established to handle them had become superannuated long before the changes of 1782; and (4) the Secretary of State lent a

coordinating influence to the conduct of military affairs. Throughout this discussion of duties, Miss Evans' valuable dictum should be borne in mind -- the personality of the individual Secretary was often the deciding factor in determining both how much work would be done and how well it would be done.
CHAPTER III

THE COLONIAL SECRETARYSHIP PRIOR TO 1772

In Eighteenth Century politics, when the control of patronage meant so much, the erection of a new department like the Colonial Office would naturally bring about a corresponding increase in influence for the Court faction. The Opposition would be bound to attempt to prevent its formation, if possible, and the Administration must of necessity justify its actions. There were already, before and during the Eighteenth Century, several precedents for the creation of a third secretoryship. Three Secretaries had served for brief periods in 1553 and again in 1616-17. During the debate on Lord George Germain's right to sit in the House of Commons (1779), Mr. De Grev, Under-secretary of State in the Colonial Office, produced evidence to prove that there were at least six precedents for a third

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1 Margaret A. Spector, The American Department of the British Government (Columbia University Studies in History, etc., #466), New York, 1940, pp. 15 - 16. This work is a brief but very excellent study of the formation, composition, and ultimate effect of the Colonial secretoryship, q. v., if greater detail is desired.

2 Ibid., 12.
Secretary since Queen Anne's time. On one occasion there were even four serving at the same time.  

Most of the above-mentioned precedents were, however, rather vague and ephemeral. The best example of a third secretaryship before 1768 was that of the Scottish secretariat, which was in intermittent existence from 3 February, 1709, until 3 January, 1746. The man who filled this office was generally a Scottish nobleman, but there were three lapses of office during which the other two Principal Secretaries of State managed Scottish affairs with the advice of Scots holding other offices. The burden of Scotland's business could be added to other secretarial duties without serious difficulties, because it was slight. 

The duties of the Secretary of State for Scotland were confined largely to countersigning a few warrants, issuing occasional letters or orders to Sheriffs, or royal commands to others. He also received all petitions from Scotland, with the exception of those relating to revenue, which were considered outside the Secretary's jurisdiction and were referred to the Treasury. The warrants issued were not very numerous, nor the quantity of work in general very great, because the Lord Advocate of Scotland, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Lord Justice Clerk relieved the Secretary

3 Parl. Hist., XX, 267.

4 Vide Thomson, op. cit., 185, for a list of the Scottish Secretaries and the dates when each held office.
of State of many administrative details. 5

If this be the case, the question might naturally arise, what justification is there for having a separate office at all? The answer to a modern inquirer, and the justification for an Eighteenth Century politician, is contained in the single word, "patronage." The third secretaryship provided the Government with another office with which to reward, or bribe, a Scot supporter. The Secretary of State for Scotland was then in a position to exert more than a little control over elections in that part of the united Kingdom; he could, for example, practically assure the Government of the return of sixteen favorable Scottish Peers at each election. 6

While Scotland had her own Parliament prior to 1707, she also had her own Secretaries of State. Lord Har and Lord Loudon were serving in this capacity at the time of the Union. The former continued to serve until May 1708 and the latter was not dismissed until February of the following year. At that time the Duke of Queensbury was appointed to manage Scottish affairs. His warrant stated that whereas "the public business of this Her Majesty's Kingdom increasing, Her Majesty is gratiously pleased to constitute James, Duke of Queensbury and Dover one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries, besides those now in

6 Ibid., 38.
being, during Her Majesty's pleasure.”

Theoretically, of course, this third Secretary was equal in rank to the other two, since he was not appointed to a new office, strictly speaking, but was sharing an old office with two other holders. Queen Anne announced in Council, however, that she contemplated no alteration in the conduct of foreign affairs and, in practice Queensbury "monopolized Scotch business, while he had very little to do with English affairs.” Nor did he exercise any great influence in foreign relations.

After Queensbury's death in 1711, the Scottish secretaryship lapsed for slightly more than two years. During this period Henry St. John (later, Viscount Bolingbroke) assumed the direction of the business of Scotland from the Northern Department. The Earl of Oxford was of the opinion that his old rival was gaining too much influence, however, so he revived the office with the appointment of the Earl of Mar in 1713. Lord Mar was dismissed the following year, on the accession of George I, because of corruption and doubtful loyalty.

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7 Ibid., 30.
8 The Earl of Mar attended the Council meeting and reported the content of the Queen's speech in a letter to his brother, Lord Grange, 3 February, 1708 - 9. MSS. of Mar and Kellie (Historical Manuscripts Commission), 480.
9 Thomson, op. cit., 30.
10 Ibid., 32 - 3.
The first Hanoverian Monarch appointed the Duke of Montrose to succeed Mar. Typical of most eighteenth Century appointments this one was dictated by political considerations, for the Government wished to gain the support of the "Squadrone" faction of which Montrose was the leader. The uprising in 1715 caused the Duke's fall, however, because the Administration thought that the affairs of Scotland should be in the hands of a military man like the Duke of Argyll. This situation was considerably complicated by the fact that Argyll and Montrose were enemies; therefore, the former could hardly be expected to serve under the latter, nor could the Government risk offending Montrose by replacing him with his enemy. By way of solution, the secretaryship for Scotland was allowed to lapse again -- for about a year -- while Townshend and Stanhope were constituted joint keepers of the Scottish signet in the interim.\footnote{11}{Ibid., 34.}

Political shifts in 1716 caused King George to dismiss the Duke of Argyll as Commander-in-Chief of the troops in Scotland and to appoint another leader of the "Squadrone" faction, the Duke of Roxburgh, Secretary of State for Scotland. The latter held this position until 1725 when Walpole persuaded the King to dismiss him.\footnote{12}{Ibid., 34 - 5.}
During the period 1725 - 41, Sir Robert Walpole decided that it suited his policies better not to have a Secretary of State for Scotland. The business was divided between the other two Secretaries in theory, though in practice the Duke of Newcastle assumed the major part of the executive work. He directed Scottish affairs from the Southern Department until his transfer to the Northern Province, at which time he succeeded in transferring Scotland's business with him -- no mean accomplishment. The most important person in north Britain was the Lord Advocate, for it was through him that Newcastle operated. The Duke of Argyll and his brother continued to exercise great influence over the patronage, however, and it was partially due to the former's quarrel with Walpole that that Minister fell in 1741. When the Opposition came to power the third secretaryship was again revived in the person of the Marquis of Tweeddale, 16 February, 1741.  

The unfortunate Marquis, who was purely a political appointee, demonstrated his incompetence during the crisis of "the '45." The Government obtained some letters which indicated that someone in the Scottish secretariat was actually corresponding with the rebels.  

\[13\] Ibid., 35 - 6.  

shadow over the whole department and led eventually to its permanent discontinuance in 1746. Tweeddale's resignation followed soon after the fall of his political allies; whereupon Newcastle resumed the management of Scottish affairs. This was the death blow for the Scottish secretaryship, from which it never recovered in the Eighteenth Century.\textsuperscript{15} Apparently the office never had been taken too seriously, because whenever its business became especially important or difficult it was generally transferred to one of the other two Secretaries. This was true during the two great uprisings of 1715 and 1745, at which time the Secretary supposed to deal with affairs in Scotland was dismissed.\textsuperscript{16}

There was no Secretary of State for the Colonies before 1768. Until that date colonial affairs had been handled by one or both of the two Principal Secretaries of State, with varying degrees of advice and assistance from the Board of Trade. The Eighteenth Century, generally speaking, is a period when the control of colonial affairs was gradually transferred from the Board of Trade to the Secretary of State's office. This was not accomplished.

\textsuperscript{15} Thomson, \textit{op. cit.}, 36 - 7.

\textsuperscript{16} Williams, \textit{Whig Supremacy}, 33 note.
without "continual fighting and occasional set-backs -- as for instance when Lord Halifax controlled the Board from 1748 to 1761 -- [but eventually] the Board lost whatever degree of executive power it once possessed, and became an advisory department."\(^{17}\)

In the reign of Charles II both Secretaries could deal with the Colonies, but the tendency grew to consider this business more properly within the bounds of the Southern Department. Actually the amount of work done by any Secretary of this period depended largely on his own personality and inclinations. The duties were "undefined partly because they were not very important."\(^{18}\) From 1675 until 1693 most of the routine business was handled by a special committee of the Privy Council, the Committee of Trade and Plantations. Under William III, however, this Committee had fallen into disrepute. It was dissolved in 1696, to be replaced by the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations (less formally known as the Board of Trade).\(^ {19}\)

The Secretaries of State were connected with the Board of Trade in two respects: in all matters concerned with foreign trade in general, and, of much greater importance,


\(^{18}\) Thomson, op. cit., 41.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., et seq.
in matters pertaining to colonial affairs. "The Secretaries of State performed with regard to Colonial administration all the executive duties which did not fall to the Admiralty or Treasury. The purpose of the Board of Trade was to supply advice." 20

The years 1706 to 1737 comprise a period when the powers of the Board were more sharply defined. Sunderland and Newcastle especially insisted on the Board's submission to a Secretary in many cases. Sunderland forced the Board to channel all their representations to the Queen through his office -- a precedent followed by all his successors. Newcastle succeeded in having the Board respect his control of the colonial patronage. In spite of these losses, the Board was still able to exercise considerable influence on general policy by its power to render advice. 21

The imminence of war from 1737 to 1748 caused many civil organs of the government, including the Board of Trade, to diminish in importance. Contrasting sharply with this period of little influence, the next, or "Halifax," period was one of great gains for the Board. The energetic, ambitious, and determined Earl of Halifax became President of the Board of Trade in 1748. Setting out to increase the Board's, and incidentally his own, power, he succeeded in

20 Ibid., 45.
21 Ibid., 47 - 9.
carrying out many of his ideas concerning colonial policy. For example, he secured the control of considerable colonial patronage for the Board of Trade, as well as the right to prepare the "Instructions" for colonial officials. This latter right customarily obliged the officials instructed to send their reports to the Board. It was so in this case, because they were ordered to correspond with the Secretary of State only in cases of emergency.

Although the Board was able to make noticeable gains under Halifax, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department continued to retain executive powers in his hands. This caused Halifax to complain as late as 1756 of his "inferior rank" and the little weight his opinion carried in government circles. When the Earl realized that he could do no more towards establishing an efficient colonial administration within his board, he began to agitate for a separate secretaryship. A plan was worked out as early as the 1750's, probably by Halifax himself, for the

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22 Ibid., 49 - 50.
24 MSS. of Miss E. E. Matcham (Bubb Dodington's MSS), Hist. MSS. Comm., Various Collections, VI, 36.
creation of a colonial secretaryship. The Scottish secretaryship was quite naturally used as a precedent, but the scheme was not accepted at this time.26 Newcastle's support was secured and Halifax might very well have become Colonial Secretary with the incoming Ministry of 1757, but William Pitt, the Elder, unconditionally vetoed the proposal.27 Halifax's disappointment was so great that he resigned (1761) from the Presidency of the Board of Trade, whereupon Pitt immediately curtailed many of its reasserted powers.28

After Halifax's resignation the Board of Trade declined rapidly in power and authority. After 1761 it no longer nominated colonial officers; by 1766 it had lost its monopoly of correspondence with colonial governors and also its right of original representation. It eventually became a board of advice and report only, more and more subservient to the Secretary of State for the Southern Department.29 With its loss of power came a corresponding

27 The Diary of the Late George Bubb Dodington (London, 1785), 396 - 7.
28 Thomson, op. cit., 52 - 4; see also, Order in Council of 15 May, 1761, Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial Series), IV, 157, for the Board's loss of patronage; Almon's Anecdotes of Pitt, III, 383 note (*), for Pitt's attitude toward a Colonial Secretary; and Spector, op. cit., 13 - 14, for further information on the Halifax period.
29 A. H. Basye, The Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations; Commonly Known as the Board of Trade, 1748 - 1782 (New Haven, 1925), 178.
loss of respect. The Board of Trade sank so low in the esteem of the men of this period — especially those of the Opposition — that Edmund Burke described it in these words:

This Board is a sort of temperate bed of influence; a sort of gently ripening hothouse, where eight members of Parliament received salaries of a thousand a year, for a certain given time, in order to mature at a proper season, a claim to two thousand, granted for doing less, and on the credit of having toiled so long in that inferior laborious department. 30

Burke also asserted that the Board was of no assistance to commerce nor to the colonies; it was, in short, "of no use at all ... a job." 31 Remembering that these are the words of an opponent of the Administration, they still convey an interesting idea of contemporary opinion.

Lord Dartmouth's term as President of the Board of Trade is important in the story of the development of colonial administration, but a detailed discussion must wait until later. 32 Suffice it to say here that when the Earl of Hillsborough succeeded him in 1766 the Board of Trade had become so weak that Hillsborough consented to accept the Presidency only on the condition that it be still further

31 Ibid., 56 - 60.  
32 Vide infra, Chapter IV.
weakened. Since he could no longer hope to influence policy, he refused to assume the responsibility involved, unless the Board were reduced to rendering advice and reports on request only. After some protesting the Government issued an Order in Council (8 August, 1766), depriving the Board of its power of original representation, and reducing it to virtually complete reliance on the Secretary of State for the Southern Department. Dr. Basye is inclined to question just how materially this Order altered the status of the Board; "its place in the governmental machine was practically unchanged," he writes, and it continued to perform many of the disagreeable tasks which Hillsborough had hoped to escape. Whatever the final verdict on this subject may be, it cannot be denied that Lord Shelburne in the Southern Department became one of the most powerful men in England, as the result of the Order in Council of 1766. He controlled the domestic affairs of Great Britain and Ireland, foreign relations with southern Europe, and colonial affairs as well; the patronage involved was immense.

This concentration of so much power in the hands of one of his subordinates did not please the Duke of

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33 Thomson, op. cit., 55.
34 Basye, Board of Trade, 157 - 65.
35 Ibid., 166.
Grafton. After Pitt's physical incapacity had caused his influence in the Ministry to diminish, the Duke decided to create a third secretaryship for the Colonies. His dislike of Shelburne doubtless had much to do with this decision, but the sincere belief that the work of the Southern Department had become too heterogeneous for any one man, coupled with a serious political situation in 1767, also played important parts. The Colonial secretaryship came into being in 1768, then, as the immediate result of the need for political compromise with the Bedford faction of the Whigs; yet fundamentally it must have been recognized that such an office had long been necessary. The American situation had grown steadily worse since the passage of the Townshend Acts, but the volume of business being transacted by the Southern Department prevented colonial affairs from receiving the prompt attention they deserved.  


37 Basye, Board of Trade, 167 - 9; Thomson, op. cit., 55 - 6.
Needless to say, Lord Shelburne did not appreciate Grafton's earnest desire to create more efficiency out of the confusion and congestion that existed in his province. He opposed this reduction of his power and prestige, but Grafton enlisted the King's support and forced Shelburne reluctantly to yield. \(^{38}\) Nor was he the only one who had to be "convinced;" a debate of some length took place in the House of Lords, when Lord Hillsborough's appointment was introduced, in which not only the expediency, but the legality, of the third secretaryship were questioned. The Opposition alleged that: (1) it was against the custom of the Constitution, since there had been only two Secretaries of State since the reign of Henry VIII -- the Scottish secretariat being irrelevant; (2) it was contrary to the Regency Act which mentioned only two Secretaries; (3) it violated the Place Acts of Queen Anne, which regulated the establishment of new offices; (4) it was unwise and conducive to instability to multiply the great offices of state; (5) it would emphasize differences between Britain and America, rather than contribute to a settlement of those differences. \(^{39}\) These views did not prevail at the

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\(^{38}\) Basye, Board of Trade, 166 - 7; Thomson, op. cit., 56.

\(^{39}\) Basye, A. H. R., XXVIII, 19; the only account of this debate to be preserved was written by Wedderburn, who was opposed to the establishment of a third secretaryship and recorded only the reasons against Hillsborough's appointment; see Thomson, op. cit., pp. 57 and 171-3 (App.
time and the Earl of Hillsborough was confirmed in his office. The arguments put forth by the Opposition continued to be believed by many, however, and indirectly contributed to the instability of the third secretaryship during its existence, and its eventual dissolution in 1782.

The appointment of the Earl of Hillsborough as Secretary of State for the Colonies (20 January, 1768), had small effect on the Board of Trade. "Hillsborough simply took over that portion of Shelburne's duties which related to the plantations, and the board stood in the same relation to the secretary of state for the southern department." As a Secretary of State Lord Hillsborough was of course an ex officio member of the Board, along with other great officers of state. In July of the year of his appointment, however, Lord Clare, the President of the Board, resigned and the Secretary of State for the Colonies was directed to assume the Presidency. Thus, the greater

V.) for Wedderburn's data. It is not known what reasons were advanced by the Administration to justify Hillsborough's appointment but Mrs. Spector feels that Opposition's reason on the legal side were "definitely weak," although their objections to the expediency of the appointment are more to the point -- see, Spector, op. cit., 29.

40 Basye, Board of Trade, 178, Thomson, op. cit., 56.
office absorbed the lesser.  

This fusion (or confusion) of offices was further complicated by the fact that Hillsborough’s secretarial warrant had stated: "Whereas the public business of our colonies and plantations increasing, it seemeth expedient to us to appoint one other principal secretary of state besides our two ancient secretaries...." Without a doubt the third Secretary was appointed with the purpose of dealing with the Colonies; the question that was to plague the Eighteenth Century was: Is he necessarily limited to colonial affairs, and does he consequently occupy a position inferior to the other two Secretaries? The opinion of many of Hillsborough’s contemporaries, that his rank depended more on his position as President of Board of Trade than as Secretary of State, is not justifiable on ground of strict precedence. Dr. Basye has pointed out for example, that the Secretary did not acquire the Presidency until several months after his commission.

The Colonial Secretary continued to fill the office of President until 1779. It is true that this union of offices eliminated many conflicts by providing "a more

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41 Basye, A. H. R., XXVIII, 15.
42 Quoted in Basye, A. H. R., XXVIII, 14.
44 Basye, A. H. R., XXVIII, 16.
complete co-ordination of the three departments of government [concerned with colonial affairs] -- the board, the secretary of state, and the Privy Council -- and a simplification of the routine of office."45 Professor Thomson believes, however, that since the Board was no longer serving any useful purpose, it would have been simpler to have abolished it at this time, rather than fourteen years later. 46

Lord Hillsborough was very faithful in attending to his dual office; he missed just 20 meetings of the board out of 226 that were held during his term. This fidelity to duty, however, only lent weight to the argument of the Opposition that he was simply a "First Lord of Trade with Seals and Cabinet," rather than a ranking Secretary of State. Although Mr. Basye has done his best to disabuse the modern reader of this erroneous conception, it cannot be denied that Hillsborough's own conduct appeared to be in line with his opponents' ideas. He would not, for instance, "sanction a report or endorse an opinion of the Board for which he would not be willing to stand sponsor before the cabinet and the Privy Council."47 When the Council refused to approve a report of the Board of Trade

45 Idem, Board of Trade, 180 - l.
46 Thomson, op. cit., 56.
47 Basye, Board of Trade, 182, 181, 179; idem, A. H. R. XXVIII, 16.
concerning Ohio land grants, Hillsborough resigned both his offices. It is certainly significant that the rejection of a proposal from the Board could drive him from the secretaryship as well; the close connexion between the two offices is clearly revealed.48

To assume, however, that the ostensible reason for Hillsborough's resignation (Ohio grants) was the only factor would be to oversimplify a highly complicated situation. The factional strife within the Government of George III has been commented upon by numerous writers,49 and need not concern us in great detail at this point. Suffice it to say that the enemies of Lord North within the Cabinet (especially Rochford, Suffolk, and Gower) hoped to weaken the Prime Minister by driving out Hillsborough, who was one of his personal supporters. Furthermore, the Earl of Rochford was Secretary of State for the Southern Department in 1772 and it was his fond hope that Hillsborough's resignation would mean the end of the colonial secretaryship -- thus re-attaching colonial affairs to his province.50

48 Idem, Board of Trade, 186; A. H. R., XXVIII, 20.


50 Thomson, op. cit., 58.
Lord North was extremely upset by the split in the Cabinet over Hillsborough's report. Horace Walpole wrote that he actually feared that it meant the end of the Ministry and talked of resigning. He soon gained control of himself however, and was able to offer the seals to his stepbrother, Lord Dartmouth — after they had been "haughtily" declined by Lord Weymouth. The latter based his refusal on the idea that the colonial secretaryship was not a real secretaryship at all — which presents an interesting contemporary interpretation of the status of the third Secretary.

Contemporary opinion of Lord Hillsborough himself is to be found in the collected writings of Benjamin Franklin, colonial agent in London at this time. The Secretary of State did not impress Dr. Franklin very favorably. He was often abrupt and sharp with him, and gave the agent the impression that he was conceited and obstinate. Franklin was able to console himself with the thought that the colleagues of Hillsborough in the Cabinet did not like him any better than he did; but he felt that the Colonies could not expect either justice or favor while he held the secretarial seals. Franklin's work was seriously impeded by Hillsborough's refusal to recognize him as the agent.

52 Basye, A. H. R., XXVIII, 17.
of the Massachusetts Assembly. It was, therefore, with more than a little pleasure that Franklin saw Hillsborough retire in 1772, although it is difficult to say just how large a part he might have played in bringing about this situation.

Lord Dartmouth succeeded to the Colonial Office at this point; but, since his administration will be dealt with in much greater detail in another chapter, the following section is concerned with the internal arrangements of the Department, as he must have found them in 1772.

The office of the American Department was located at Whitehall, in the Treasury Building, and near the Board of Trade. One of the few contemporary references to its location places Under-secretary Pownall's office in what was formerly the Duke of Monmouth's bed chamber. Not much is known of the details of the organization of the

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53 Writings of Franklin (Smyth, ed.), V, 298 - 9, 304, Franklin to Samuel Cooper, 5 February, 1771.
54 John Bigelow, ed., The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin (New York, 1888), IV, 495 - 6, Franklin to his son, 17 August, 1772.
55 Spector, op. cit., 33.
department, though it is assumed that it was similar to that in the other two departments, and, therefore, much information can be supplied by analogy.\textsuperscript{57} William Knox credited John Pownall with having created such an orderly machine for the newly-established office, that few changes were ever necessary.\textsuperscript{58} According to Richard Cumberland, however, there were apparently several "circumlocutory reports and inefficient forms" still in existence when Germain assumed office in 1775, who, he reports, swept them away.\textsuperscript{59} Pownall's organizing ability must not be underestimated, though, for he was a very capable worker; he was also well aware of the need for better organs for formulating colonial policy. His booklet on the \textit{Administration of the Colonies} (published, 1764) attacked the divided authority then responsible for colonial affairs, and was a contributory factor in the eventual establishment of the colonial secretaryship.\textsuperscript{60}

The staff of the colonial office in 1768 consisted of: a Secretary of State, two Under-secretaries, one first

\textsuperscript{57} Spector, \textit{op. cit.}, 34. What little is known of the colonial department's organization will be found in this admirable study, upon which I have drawn very largely for the information in this section.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}, 33 - 4.

\textsuperscript{59} Richard Cumberland, \textit{Memoirs} (Philadelphia, 1856), 201.

\textsuperscript{60} Spector, \textit{op. cit.}, 11.
clerk, two senior clerks, two ordinary clerks, one chamber
to practice in the other Secretaries' offices, this staff
was virtually permanent. Lord Dartmouth established a pre-
cedent by retaining his predecessor's subordinates, with
the result that many of the original appointees were still
holding office when the colonial department was abolished
in 1782. The staffs of the older Secretaries were al-
ways larger than that of the colonial office; even during
the American Revolution the latter's number did not in-
crease at a rate commensurate with its responsibilities.

The most important subordinate members of the staff
were the two Under-secretaries. In the other two Secreta-
ries' offices they were frequently promoted clerks, but
this was never the case in the colonial department.
There they were either recruited from other administra-
tive offices in England, or from colonial officialdom,
or were newcomers to government service. It is

61 Ibid., 34 - 5.
62 Thomson, op. cit., 130.
63 Spector, op. cit., 35.
64 Ibid., 34. The Southern Department averaged 10
clerks, the Northern 8, while the Colonial Office had only
5 as late as 1775.
65 Thomson, op. cit., 130 - 1.
66 Spector, op. cit., 37.
interesting to speculate what would have been the result, if Franklin had been invited to become an Under-secretary, as was advocated by Lord North and Lord Grafton when the third secretaryship was first established. Unfortunately, Franklin was "too much of an American" to be offered such a position. 67

The Under-secretaries who were chosen were John Pownall and Richard Phelps. When the latter resigned in 1770, William Knox replaced him, and continued to serve with Pownall through Dartmouth's administration. 68 Officially there was no distinction between the two Under-secretaries, yet one of them was always regarded as the Senior, and the other as the Junior, Under-secretary. They were both appointed by the Secretary of State (not by the Crown) and were in general supposed to receive and supervise the execution of his orders. 69 The distribution of business between the Under-secretaries and the clerks was not strictly regulated. Correspondence was the most important task of an Under-secretary, the major part of the work going to the Senior Under-secretary. 70 A tendency also developed to

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67 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), V, 90, Franklin to his son, 9 January, 1768.
68 Spector, op. cit., 46 n. 17.
69 Ibid., 37.
70 Ibid., 38 - 9. So important did Mrs. Spector judge the task of correspondence to be, that she has devoted an entire chapter to its discussion, q. v., if desired.
delegate a particular type of correspondence to one Under-secretary exclusively; for example, Pownall handled all business concerning Indian presents until his resignation.\textsuperscript{71}

In addition to their many routine tasks in their own office, Colonial Under-secretaries were often requested to compile information for the use of other departments or officials.\textsuperscript{72} In 1773, for instance, Lord North asked Pownall to prepare a "précis of the affairs of Quebec" to help the Ministry with the projected Quebec Act.\textsuperscript{73} Knox and Pownall were both consulted on the American portions of the King’s speech to Parliament in 1775, and Knox made some alterations in the reply of the House.\textsuperscript{74} Pownall was less successful in his attempt to draw up a bill for the Ministry to present to Parliament, providing for the sending of special commissioners to hear the grievances of the Colonies, for it was rejected by the Cabinet.\textsuperscript{75}

Mrs. Spector has included in her book a chapter dealing with the influence of the Under-secretaries on colonial policy, the details of which cannot be reproduced here; but

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 39 - 40.
\textsuperscript{73} The Manuscripts of Captain H. V. Knox (Hist. Man. Comm.), Various Collections, VI, III, Pownall to Knox, 3 December, 1773.
\textsuperscript{74} Knox MSS., 258.
\textsuperscript{75} Loc. cit.
it will be seen from the foregoing paragraph that that influence may well have been pronounced. The Under-Secretaries could exert even more influence within their departments, because their relations with the Secretary of State were "friendly and even intimate" on occasion. 76 This state of things would enable them to impress their own ideas upon the formulation of high policy, to say nothing of the routine execution of business. If this be granted, it might be well to inquire, what direction would their influence be inclined to take?

John Pownall was secretary to the Board of Trade from 1761 until 1776. It can be assumed from this that he had considerable knowledge of colonial affairs; but -- since he had never been out of England -- he could not have been very much more sympathetic with the American contentions than a great many other Englishmen. Consequently, Americans could not have relied on him to protect their interests in his office. 77

William Knox, on the other hand, had spent some time in the Colonies, as Provost Marshall of Georgia for five years. He owned a large amount of land there, however, and combined the characteristics of a persecuted Loyalist

76 Spector, op. cit., 38.
77 Ibid., 37.
with those of a colonial bureaucrat. Thus, he could hardly be expected to forward the cause of radical Americans who thought more and more about independence and the confiscation of Loyalists' property. His ideas about colonial matters are best revealed in his "Proceeding in Relation to the American Colonies," in which he states, "Colonies should obey the sovereign authority of Parliament, [but] taxation ought to be given up in practice...." This idea was certainly not original with Knox, but, like so many other Englishmen of his period, he overlooked the fact that compromise on these grounds at this period would have been almost impossible.

The Under-secretaries were assisted in their routine work by a chief clerk, William Follock, who was noted for his methodical efficiency, and by a varying number of subordinate clerks, whose anonymity is almost as complete as that of the thousands of civil servants in modern governments. There was also a Porter at the door to run short errands and keep out undesirable callers. Franklin told

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78 Ibid., 37 - 8.
79 Knox MSS., 258.
81 Specter, op. cit., 40 - 1.
82 Ibid., 34 - 5.
83 Ibid., 41.
of being refused admittance by the Porter, when he knew that Hillsborough was in his office, and of being forced to wait in the anteroom for three or four hours, before the Secretary would see him.

Twenty-two King's Messengers attended the colonial office. They were employed to carry important government despatches to the absent Secretary and to the packets, or to carry messages to other officials in or near London. The system was so slow and so uncertain that Mrs. Spector has declared:

> It seems justifiable to assume that in time of crisis the inefficient and inadequate messenger service may have been a contributory factor in the delay or defeat of important administrative projects.

If efficiency alone had been desired, the Board of Trade might have been elevated to a secretaryship, as Halifax had wanted. A separate department duplicated functions, but it increased the patronage at the disposal of the King and his "Friends." To the Opposition the department always appeared to be a mere "job," and they were not satisfied until it was eventually abolished in 1782.

One should not be surprised that the colonial office was not exceptionally efficient, however, because reform

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84 *Franklin's Writings* (Smyth, ed.), V, 413.
86 *Spector, op. cit.*, 43.
or improvement of the administration of the empire appears
to have been only a secondary interest of those concerned
with its establishment. They most assuredly had no desire
to create a model department; political exigencies and
personal ambitions usually took precedence over efficiency
in the Eighteenth Century. Quite naturally, however, the
coordination of colonial affairs would have been more de-
sirable than the previously existing division of author-
ity. 88

There was a considerable amount of nepotism in the
colonial department. To take just one illustration, John
Pownall had three relatives serving in the British bureau-
cracy: one son was a clerk in the colonial office, and
was later transferred to the Board of Trade; another son
was secretary of the Quebec council; while his more famous
brother, Thomas Pownall, was once Governor of Massachu-
setts Bay Colony and former member of the Board of Trade. 89
In spite of the inefficient messenger service and the rank
favoratism present in the American department, Mrs. Spec-
tor has conceded that it "compares favorably" with other
governmental departments of the time in regard to organ-
ization and personnel. 90

88 Ibid., 21, 17.
89 Ibid., 35 - 6.
90 Ibid., 43.
The immediate result of the establishment of the colonial secretaryship was a consolidation of the King's influence; thus, its effects on English politics were more pronounced than on colonial. In so far as "its advent represented a triumph for the King's system, however, there could be little hope for a policy of toleration and liberality when colonial controversies occurred." The writer of the Anecdotes of Pitt exaggerated the "malicious" intentions of the royal government, when he wrote several years after the event that Hillsborough's appointment caused great alarm throughout the colonies. Contemporary references to the establishment of the colonial office are so rare that it is virtually impossible to say what the opinion of the colonists was; it would seem that they were not particularly concerned one way or the other at the time.

Looking back on the past from our vantage point in the present, "It seems unfortunate that the American Department failed to secure more co-operation from liberal-minded Englishmen or Americans at the time of its inauguration." The American Secretary had constantly to

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91 Ibid., 20.
92 Almon, op. cit., II, 137 n.
93 Spector, op. cit., 25.
94 Ibid., 26.
defend his province from his colleagues in the secretariat, which weakened and diverted his energies; while even broad-visioned men like Edmund Burke refused to see any good in this office. In his great frontal attack on the Administration in 1780, Burke labeled the third secretaryship a sinecure, and professed himself unable to find a better explanation for its establishment than what he called "an Irishman's reason: ... the other two secretaries [Weymouth and Conway] were doing nothing, and a third was appointed to help him."\textsuperscript{95} This humorous, but far from profound, reasoning reveals the unfortunate, if not tragic, situation into which Lord Dartmouth entered in August, 1772; a time when the greatest of patience and understanding were essential to the preservation of the empire, and a time when those very qualities were lacking in the places where they were required. Or, to sum up the situation in the words of Mrs. Spector:

Not until 1768, at a time when the first empire was threatened with disintegration, was a colonial or American department established in the British government. The new department was destined to function under abnormal conditions of crisis and revolution, and to be manned by officials who had little or no understanding of colonial psychology, until it was finally abolished in 1782 when the American colonies had virtually attained their independence. Although the American Department contributed nothing to the building of the Empire, and although it failed to prevent the revolt of the colonies, it occupied a strategic position during

\textsuperscript{95} Parl. Hist., XXI, 205; the debate on the Civil Establishment Bill.
the American Revolution, the course of which it helped more than a little to determine. 96

96 Spector, op. cit., 11.
CHAPTER IV

LORD DARTMOUTH: HIS PERSONALITY AND HIS POLITICAL CAREER PRIOR TO 1772

The Legge family of England has possessed the lordship of Dartmouth since the middle of the Seventeenth Century when George Legge, Admiral of the Fleet under James II, was created Baron Dartmouth. His son, William Legge (1672 - 1750), a Secretary of State in Queen Anne's time, was raised in the peerage and given the title Viscount Lewisham and first Earl of Dartmouth. George Legge, the son of the first Earl, known by the courtesy title Lord Lewisham, died before his father, leaving as the heir to the family estates and title his son William Legge (1731 - 1801), who became the second Earl of Dartmouth upon the death of his grandfather in 1750.¹ Lord Dartmouth's mother, the former Elizabeth Kaye, remarried in 1736 Francis, Baron North (later, first Earl of Guilford) thus bringing her young son into close companionship with Frederick, afterwards Lord, North

Suspected no page 78.
Young William received his education in the approved Eighteenth Century manner, at Westminster School and Oxford University. He matriculated at the university 14 January, 1748-9, was granted an M. A. 21 March, 1750-1, and a D. C. L. 28 April, 1756. The two stepbrothers, North and Dartmouth, made the conventional tour of the continent together in the early 1750's. When they returned Lady Anne Furnese honored them with a party, attended by among others -- Horace Walpole, who wrote to a friend that "nothing passed worth relating; ...".

Although modern historians strive, rightly or wrongly, to write scientifically objective history, occasionally the results of their creative efforts betray hints of a common human frailty -- prejudice in some form or other. It is remarkable to read, however, a number of accounts and descriptions of Lord Dartmouth, both contemporary and modern, English and American, and discover how unanimous public opinion has been in regard to certain features of his

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3 Loc. cit.
5 Walpole's Letters (Toynbee, ed.), III, #391, to John Chute, 30 April, 1754.
6 Vide, J. B. Black, The Art of History (New York, 1926), I - 28, for a criticism of "objective" history.
personality. Virtually everyone who ever penned a line about him has felt compelled to use one or more of the following adjectives: amiable, pious, mild, honest, well-meaning, upright, conciliatory.\(^7\) Even the radical American propagandists of the 1770's, who usually found it so easy to malign royal Ministers of the period, had a difficult time convincing the colonists that Dartmouth had any serious faults, for he "was living evidence that not all the British aristocracy was corrupt."\(^8\)

The Earl was a sincere friend of the colonists; the reasons for his great popularity there give valuable clues to his personality. His reputation as a humanitarian and philanthropist was not undeserved, for his interest in the welfare and education of the American Indians led him to act as patron of a school established in New Hampshire. His benefactions were so effective that the school thrrove, later took his name out of gratitude, and still exists in a matured form, as Dartmouth College. It need only be

\(^7\) No book-length biographies of Lord Dartmouth exist, but a few of the recent historians who have included descriptive paragraphs of him in their works are: Thomson, op. cit., 58; Basye, Board of Trade, 153 - 4, 195; and C. W. Alvord, The Mississippi Valley in British Politics (Cleveland, 1917), I, 235. Numberless other references to contemporary sources will be found in the course of this study.

\(^8\) J. C. Miller, The Origins of the American Revolution (Boston, 1943), 424.
added here that Lord Dartmouth's interest in the Indian school was entirely genuine, since it began "long before official position [might have] made it worth his while to court popularity in the colonies,..."9

Dartmouth's great piety was renown on both sides of the Atlantic, although it won him less respect in England than it did in the Colonies. The Earl of Bute refused to appoint him one of the Gentlemen of the King's Bedchamber in the 1760's, because he feared "so sanctimonious a man should gain too far on his Majesty's piety."10 While serving in Lord North's Ministry the members of the Opposition unkindly referred to him as "The Psalm-Singer."11 More than balancing this slighting sobriquet, however, is the well-known verse from the poet Cowper's "Truth," where Dartmouth is extolled as: "one that wears a coronet and prays:..."12

Among the colonists, Dartmouth's religious views made him especially popular. He has often been called a

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Methodist, but this is not entirely accurate, for he never withdrew from the Anglican fold. He was very friendly with many of the Methodist sect, however, including Wesley, Whitefield, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, and the Rev. John Newton. His own position might better be described as Evangelical, for he belonged to those who opposed rationalism and worldliness in the Church of England, but who hoped to bring about a more spiritual attitude by working from within. The influence of the Methodists on this Evangelical group was pronounced, of course, but it was not necessary for Dartmouth to leave the Church in order to retain his popularity in the colonies, so long as he opposed some of the things for which the established church stood. This opposition gave him a common bond with many of the dissenting groups in America.

Another factor that played an important part in endearing the Earl to the colonists was his attitude toward the westward expansion of the colonies. The American historian Bancroft erred greatly when he wrote that Dartmouth opposed the Ohio grants in 1772. Actually, he was

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14 Trevelyan, op. cit., 150.
in favor of colonial expansion, both in theory and in practice. He and his four sons received a grant of 100,000 acres of land in East Florida in 1770,\(^{16}\) which would have been of no value or use to them, if the colonies were to be restricted to their original area. Furthermore, Alvard points out that Dartmouth also looked with favor on plans to settle the Ohio country at the time of his appointment to the secretaryship.\(^{17}\)

In spite of these admirable and winning traits of his personality, one should not be blinded to the Earl of Dartmouth's shortcomings. Some historians\(^ {18}\) have been inclined to mistake his great goodness for ability. That Dartmouth was a truly good man, no one will deny; but, unfortunately, good intentions do not necessarily make a good minister. His contemporaries noted this failing. One of them, being rather kind, wrote that Dartmouth was

an amiable man ... -- a man of literature, as well as good natural sense. His greatest foible is an excess of humanity, which makes him apt sometimes to think more favorably of some men than they deserve: ....\(^ {19}\)

The Duke of Grafton, doubtless, had no intentions of reflecting on Dartmouth's strength of character when he recorded

\(^{16}\) Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial Series), V, 593.

\(^{17}\) Alvard, Mississippi Valley, II, 173, 89.

\(^{18}\) E.g., Trevelyan, op. cit., in which the references to Dartmouth are indexed.

\(^{19}\) Thomas Hutchinson's Diary, I, 285.
that he "often brought him to coincide in opinion." Yet, this would seem to be damnation by faint praise, for it reveals Dartmouth as inclined to vacillation, and as a man who might not be able to make decisions in a moment of crisis.

There were certainly worse men in England at this time, however, and it would seem that Wraxall went a bit too far in writing that Dartmouth can claim "no place in the history of his own time." A more just estimate of his character and ability seem to be that, though he possessed admirable qualities of amiability and piety, he was unsuited for public life. Since, however, he accepted a position of importance at a period of great consequence, a place in history must be found for him, and his liabilities and assets impartially reckoned.

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Politically speaking, Dartmouth was rather inactive before 1765. He took his seat in the House of Lords on 31 May, 1754, shortly after his return from the tour of the continent, but rarely took the floor. In March, 1763, he

20 Grafton's Autobiography, 267.
22 Vide Thomson, op. cit., 58; and Alvord, Miss. Valley, I, 235; for comments on Dartmouth's unsuitability for public office.
attacked the Cider Bill and voted with the minority against its passage. The following year he again addressed the house on the subject of Brecknock's Droit de Roi, which he condemned. One seeks in vain for evidence that he spoke more often, or entered the debates on the more vital issues that were taking place during these years. Like most of the great nobles of his day, Dartmouth was a Whig; to be more specific, he was an adherent of that faction of the Whig party led by the Marquis of Rockingham. To one familiar with the complex political situation of the late Eighteenth Century, the preceding statement will convey more meaning than to the uninitiated.

Basically, England had been committed to the two-party system of government since the Revolution of 1688. Yet, the names Tory and Whig should be used cautiously in discussing politics at the time of George III. The Opposition called themselves Whigs and usually referred to the Court party as Tories; but, writes Namier, "nothing can be more confusing than the application of the same

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name to bodies so widely differing in character and principles as the Tories of 1760 and the so-called Tories of 1780.\textsuperscript{26} One reason for this great difference within the Tory party is their prolonged eclipse during the period of the Whig Supremacy\textsuperscript{27} when the latter silently adopted many of the old principles of toryism. Lord Hervey noted, for example, that the Whigs seemed less inclined to oppose the use of the Royal Prerogative, so long as they were in power and its use benefitted them.\textsuperscript{28}

Like most parties that rule too long, the Whigs eventually suffered from internal difficulties, until the party forfeited its unity and degenerated into several factions and subfractions, each led by one of the great "Houses" of the time.\textsuperscript{29} Thus, although Rockingham led the "regular" body of Whigs, he had to contend with -- besides his avowed political enemies, the Tories -- Grenvillites, Bedforidites, Pittites, and "subgroups led by Lord Shelburne and Conway."\textsuperscript{30} When George III came to the throne in 1760, the Whigs were still in control, but they had seriously weakened themselves


\textsuperscript{27} Nowat, op. cit., 30; citing Trevelyan op. cit.

\textsuperscript{28} Nowat, op. cit., 26 - 8, citing Lord Hervey, Memdr of the Reign of George II.

\textsuperscript{29} Miller, op. cit., 68.

by their internal differences. The King objected to being made a figurehead by noble Whig politicians, and immediately set about weakening them still further. He accomplished this by playing off one faction of the Whig party against another in a series of short ministries, establishing himself as the first politician of the realm, and encouraging the support of the Tories.\(^{31}\) It is worth noting, however, that King George did not attempt this revolution in English politics through use of Royal Prerogative, as the Stuarts had done; but rather, he copied the Tudor plan of ruling with Parliamentary support. As Professor Miller pictures it, the King became "a politician -- a sort of crowned Duke of Newcastle -- who dispensed patronage, managed the voting in Parliament, and made and unmade ministries by means of his [control of] the House of Commons."\(^{32}\) So well did George III apply the methods of Newcastle and Pelham that the Whigs ironically advocated "economical reform" in 1780 in hopes of destroying the immense influence and patronage wielded by the Court.\(^{33}\) To help him utilize this system, the King needed a party of his own. This was readily provided by the group known to historians as the "King's Friends," a group of former Tories and others who joined

\(^{31}\) Namier, op. cit., 62.

\(^{32}\) Miller, op. cit., 66.

\(^{33}\) Namier, op. cit., 219.
the Court faction in the hope of preferment and reward. 34

One further fact should be noticed before leaving this cursive review of Eighteenth Century politics, and that is the coming of a new generation with the accession of George III. The decade 1760 - 70 saw a surprising change in the leadership of British politics. Almost all the heads of parties active in 1760 were gone in 1770. With the exceptions of Chatham and Sandwich, a complete change in political personnel had taken place. 35 Although Lord Dartmouth was not a leader of any party or faction, he does exemplify this change in generations. A Peer of the realm in his twenties, he became a member of the Rockingham government of 1765 in his thirty-fourth year. To this phase of his career let us now turn.

3

King George allowed George Grenville to lecture him until July, 1765, when he could stand it no longer. The Cabinet was dismissed and the Marquis of Rockingham summoned to form a new Ministry. 36 The first problem of the new Prime Minister was to secure the support, or at least

34 Nowat, op. cit., 30.
35 Namier, op. cit., 70.
36 Miller, op. cit., 116 - 7.
the neutrality, of William Pitt, the Elder. Pitt himself would not accept a position in a Ministry of which he was not the leader, however, and Horace Walpole believed Lord Bute further influenced him to remain apart from the government. 37 Rockingham then tried to secure his neutrality by offering positions to several of Pitt's friends. He especially wanted Lord Shelburne to take the presidency of the Board of Trade, but Shelburne refused. 38 His refusal left Rockingham's supporters free to offer the Board to "one of their own number, Lord Dartmouth." 39

Dartmouth apparently refused to accept this position, until urged by the Duke of Newcastle to reconsider. The Duke told him that his presence in the government was essential and that he must get the better of his inclinations, "for the sake of the King, and the public,..." 40 The Earl followed this advice, became President of the Board of Trade and Plantations 19 July, 1765, and was sworn in as a member of the Privy Council one week later. 41 The failure

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39 Alvord, Miss. Valley, I, 234.
41 Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial Series), V, 736. In this connexion, there is a humorous reference to the formation of Rockingham's government in a letter from Rigby to the Duke of Bedford: "Their Board of Trade is
to secured Pitt's active support, however, greatly weakened the government, contributing to its insecurity and eventual fall a year later.

The most important accomplishment of the first Rockingham Ministry was the repeal of the Stamp Act. This act had been passed in the preceding administration, but news of the Americans' resistance to it did not reach England until shortly after Rockingham had become Prime Minister. The important facts concerning its initiation can be briefly summarized. The British government had expended a great deal of money and effort in order to win the Seven Years War (better known in America as the "French and Indian War"). The national debt had been doubled in order to drive the French menace from North America, with only half-hearted support from the colonists. The necessity arose for garrisons in the conquered regions of Canada and the Mississippi Valley, to keep the French from reoccupying their lost territory and to keep the Indians under control. Since the colonies would benefit from this protection, it was only

not yet fixed, except Lord Dartmouth for its head, who I don't hear has yet recommended Whitefield for the bishopric of Quebec." Quoted in Trevelyan, Amer. Rev., 170 - I n.

43 Ibid., II, 153.
natural that they should be asked to share the expense. The British Government had seen how futile it was to ask for voluntary contributions during the war, so taxation by Parliament seemed to be the only logical way of obtaining the necessary revenue. 45

To levy taxes in the colonies for purposes other than the regulation of commerce was something of a departure from past practice, however, for before 1764 Walpole's theory of *quieta non movere* had been applied to colonial policy. 46 Pressed with the necessity of obtaining additional revenue, George Grenville decided that stamp duties would be the most effective and the least objectionable, and introduced a resolution in the House of Commons to that effect -- giving the colonists one year in which to suggest an alternative plan. 47 Since nothing better came from the colonies, the Stamp Act was duly enacted in March of the following year. It was, as Professor Miller has suggested, "one of the most popular taxes ever passed by Parliament -- partly because the members were not taxing themselves or


46 Albemarle, Rockingham's Memoirs, I, 249.

47 Parl. Hist., XV, 1427, #34; 10 March, 1764. The Stamp Tax was computed to bring only one-third of the necessary funds for the support of the army in the colonies.
their constituents.\textsuperscript{48}

There was so little debate over the issue, and the opposition in England was so weak, that no one foresaw the resistance which the Stamp Act aroused on this side of the Atlantic. Even Franklin was taken unawares, for he had recommended several close friends as stamp masters.\textsuperscript{49} No active opposition was possible in the colonies, however, until Patrick Henry persuaded the House of Burgesses to pass the Virginia Resolves, which provided the spark that touched off the violent resistance and rioting.\textsuperscript{50}

The general opposition to the Stamp Act, particularly the riotous activities of the people of Boston, were duly reported to the Board of Trade, of which Dartmouth was by this time First Lord. Some of the communications which he received have been preserved among his papers. Included are letters from private individuals, despatches from colonial governors, and official resolutions of colonial Assemblies and town meetings. They are all very urbane and respectful in tone, but they all protest the existence of the Stamp Act.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{48} Miller, op. cit., 112.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 114.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 122 - 6.

\textsuperscript{51} Dartmouth MSS., II, 18 et seq.
The Board of Trade made the proper representations to the King in Council concerning the agitation in America and recommended that some action be taken in the very near future. Nor was that the only source of information that poured in upon the surprised government. A petition from the Stamp Act Congress, stating very respectfully the grievances of the colonies, was offered to Parliament on 27 January, 1766. Some of the members were loath to receive it, because to do so would be to recognize a "dangerous and federal" union of the colonies. Pitt strongly defended the colonists and urged that their petition be received. British merchants also petitioned for the repeal of the Act, since the non-importation agreements which the Americans had concluded were seriously effecting their trade. The situation appeared to be so serious to the government that Franklin was brought before the House and questioned about the resistance in America and the advisability of repeal.

The Rockingham Whigs had opposed Grenville's tax plan when it had first been proposed. Furthermore, although they were chiefly landed gentry, they relied upon the support of the merchants, and were willing on their account

52 Parl. Hist., XVI, 123; the representations of the Board were later laid before Parliament for their information, and so appear in Cobbett.
54 Ibid., II, 153; Parl. Hist., XVI, 134 - 5.
55 Parl. Hist., XVI, 137 - 60.
to suggest repeal.\textsuperscript{56} That their task was not easy is revealed by the fact that the Prime Minister thought of resigning in February, 1766. At that time Lord Dartmouth wrote to him to encourage him to remain in office "while there is the least shadow of hope of doing good,\ldots The [Stamp] Act once repealed, I shall congratulate your Lordship upon a release from your fatigues."\textsuperscript{57} Dartmouth himself was known to be opposed to the Stamp Act;\textsuperscript{58} when it came to a vote, he was even entrusted with the proxies of other advocates of repeal.\textsuperscript{59}

The opposition to the Ministry's plans was strong, however; Grenville was particularly vehement in his demands that the act be enforced.\textsuperscript{60} The King, too, was personally and unofficially opposed to complete repeal, although Rockingham had tried to convince him that neither rigid enforcement nor slight modification was feasible.\textsuperscript{61} George III tacitly consented to repeal, but he made no effort to force

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\textsuperscript{56} Walpole, \textit{Memoirs of George III}, II, 154; Miller, \textit{op. cit.}, 153.
\textsuperscript{57} Albemarle, \textit{Rockingham's Memoirs}, I, 303, Dartmouth to Rockingham, 12 February, 1766.
\textsuperscript{59} Dartmouth MSS., II, 36, Lord Chesterfield to Dartmouth, 20 February, 1766.
\textsuperscript{60} Walpole, \textit{Memoirs of George III}, II, 166.
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his placemen in Parliament to vote with the Ministry. 62 Consequently, the government carried the repeal of the Stamp Act only after long and bitter debates, and "in spite of the opposition of a whole host of placemen." 63 Only by proposing a Declaratory Act at the same time (March, 1766) did the Ministry succeed. This piece of legislation, which declared Parliament fully competent to pass laws for the colonies, unified the Rockingham party -- many of whom felt that repealing the Stamp Act was too great a concession -- and secured the consent of both the Parliament and the King. Without the Declaratory Act it is doubtful whether the repeal of the Stamp Act would have been possible. 64 The American colonies were not immediately alarmed by this assertion of parliamentary supremacy, however, for they were "too busy celebrating the repeal to pay much heed to the Declaratory

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63 D. A. Winstenley, Personal and Party Government, 1760 - 1766 (Cambridge, 1910), 268; in Appendix III, pp. 305 - 7, will be found a list of more than fifty such placemen who voted against the Government.

64 Albemarle, Rockingham's Memoirs, I, 284; Walpole, Memoirs of George III, II, 211 - 12. Lord Dartmouth's activity in the repeal of the Stamp Act has long been in doubt, since no speech of his on the occasion was preserved in Cobbett's Parl. Hist. Some idea of what he had to say will be gained by reading the document section of the American Historical Review, XVII (April, 1912), 377 -- "Debates on the Declaratory Act and the Repeal of the Stamp Act."
Act. The House of Representatives of Massachusetts Bay even expressed gratitude in the form of a vote of thanks to Lord Dartmouth.  

The Marquis of Rockingham signed the death warrant of his Ministry, however, by securing the repeal of the Stamp Act. The King's dislike for him increased and he dismissed him after having been in office about a year. Dartmouth resigned from the Board of Trade at the same time (30 July, 1766).  

In a preceding chapter it was mentioned that Dartmouth's term as First Lord of Trade was significant in the story of the development of the secretaryship. Before allowing his Lordship to resign from the Board and retire to the Opposition, it might be well to examine this aspect of his early career.  

It will be remembered that Dartmouth succeeded to a Board of Trade greatly weakened by Pitt since the close of Halifax's term of office. Shortly after his assumption of

65 Miller, op. cit., 160.  
66 Dartmouth MSS., II, 45; 21 June, 1766.  
the presidency, Dartmouth received a letter from his prede-
scessor, the earl of Hillsborough,\textsuperscript{69} in which he was strongly
advised to agitate for an increase in power. It was,
Lord Hillsborough wrote, "absolutely necessary that the same
powers in every respect with regard to Trade and the Coloni-
ies should be delegated to Lord Dartmouth, as are vested in
the First Lords of the Treasury and Admiralty with regard
to their respective departments. Without this Lord Dart-
mouth will suffer continual disappointments and too prob-
abley undergo undeserved disgrace."\textsuperscript{70} That Lord Dartmouth
was unable to carry out Hillsborough's advice has already
been mentioned, but an explanation of the extenuating cir-
cumstances of this failure has been postponed until this
point.

It was a well recognized fact that the duties of the
Secretary of State for the Southern Department, which in-
cluded colonial affairs, were too complex to be handled
efficiently. The Duke of Newcastle wrote: "No one man can
have the time to do the duty of Secretary of State and at-
tend the King every day and give that attention to the colo-
nies, which in their present situation they will require."\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{69} Lord Hillsborough had married Dartmouth's aunt,
the Baronesst Stawell.

\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Dartmouth MSS.}, III, 179.

\textsuperscript{71} Newcastle to Conway, 7 May, 1766, quoted in Spector,
op. cit., 23 n. 31.
For reasons of efficiency, then, as well as in an effort to strengthen the Ministry, Rockingham seriously considered erecting a colonial secretaryship in the spring of 1766. Charles Townshend and Lord Dartmouth were each considered for the projected position of "Third Secretary of State for America," but when Townshend refused to enter the tottering government, the choice fell to Dartmouth.\textsuperscript{72} Since the latter was already a member of the Ministry, however, it was thought that, rather than by raising him to a secretaryship, similar results might be attained by simply increasing his powers at the Board of Trade to a point comparable to those exercised by Halifax at the height of his influence.\textsuperscript{73}

At this point Lord Chesterfield wrote to advise Dartmouth that such a plan was not sufficient. He urged him to "lay aside upon this occasion your natural timidity and diffidence \textsuperscript{[and be] Secretary of State in all the forms and privileges of the office ....}" Dartmouth must not be content to remain a mere First Lord of Trade, but must assert himself, said Chesterfield, and "push for dignity as well as power." The letter ended on this Cassandra-like note: "If we have no Secretary of State with full and undisputed powers for America, in a few years we may have no

\textsuperscript{72} Spector, \textit{op. cit.}, 17.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 18.
Encouraged by such advice, Dartmouth took advantage of the Stamp Act agitation to claim a full-fledged secretaryship.

Meanwhile, other events seemed to increase the likelihood that his wish would be granted. The desertion of the Duke of Grafton at this time left a vacancy in the secretariat, and the Duke of Richmond, who was appointed to the Southern Department, was willing to share his office with Dartmouth. On 19 May, 1766, he wrote to Rockingham:

Lord Dartmouth's being either Secretary of State for the Plantations, or First Lord of Trade, with fuller powers, is, I imagine, very proper, having often heard that the American affairs load the Southern Department with so much business, as to make it almost impossible to go through with it. For my part, I shall be happy to leave that branch in so much abler hands.

Just as plans for the new secretaryship seemed about to succeed, the opposition of the King and the fall of the Ministry put an end to Dartmouth's hopes. William Pitt succeeded Rockingham in the summer of 1766; and, although he may have once contemplated making himself Colonial

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74 Dartmouth MSS., III, 182, Chesterfield to Dartmouth, 24 May, 1766.
75 Basye, Board of Trade, 148 - 51.
76 Quoted in Albemarle, Rockingham's Memoirs, I, 342.
77 Dartmouth MSS., III, 182, Rockingham to Dartmouth, 25 July, 1766, informing him of the King's refusal to permit the creation of a separate "Secretary of State for the Colonies and Plantations annexed to the First Lord of the Board of Trade."
Secretary, he opposed Dartmouth's increase in powers, because Lord Shelburne, a personal adherent of his, was to receive the Southern Department in the new Ministry. Pitt had no desire to diminish his friend's authority, because he knew his own policies in regard to colonial administration would be in safe hands. Therefore, when Walpole reported the arrangements for the new Ministry to a friend, he could write: "Lord Dartmouth has resigned the Board of Trade, having been on the point of becoming Secretary of State for America, which now will not be disjoined from the Southern Province;..."  

The incoming Ministry contained -- among others -- a young politician destined to play an important part in the history of this period and in the life of Dartmouth. The thirty-four year old Lord North became a Paymaster in 1766, but his joy at finding himself in a position of some importance was considerably dampened when he learned that Dartmouth would not continue at the Board of Trade. He wrote his father that he was upset to find himself continually in opposition to "one of the men in the world that

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79 Basye, Board of Trade, 154 - 7.
80 Walpole's Letters (Toynbee, ed.), VII, #1131, to Horace Mann, 1 August, 1766.
I honour, love, and esteem the most."\textsuperscript{81} In spite of this love and esteem, which Dartmouth doubtlessly returned, the two stepbrothers remained in opposition -- politically -- for approximately five more years. Dartmouth supported Rockingham for at least this long after the fall from office. In November, 1767, he dined with the Marquis, and the Dukes of Newcastle and Portland, after which he received a letter from Rockingham, saying, "...the appearance of all our acting unitedly may have some effect; at least, it shews [sic] (what I am proud of) the friendship which exists amongst us."\textsuperscript{82}

By way of summary, then, it would appear that Lord Dartmouth's political career before 1772 included a brief, unspectacular -- though none the less significant -- term as President of the Board of Trade. That the Stamp Act would have been repealed even if he hadn't been a member of the government seems more than likely.\textsuperscript{83} Yet, the very fact that he was in the Ministry that effected the repeal increased his reputation as a friend of the colonies and as a man of a conciliatory nature. This, together with his close friendship for Lord North, played an important part.

\textsuperscript{81} Lucas, op. cit., I, 40; Lord North, "Lord North, the Prime Minister: A Personal Memoir," North American Review, May, 1903, p. 784, North to his father, 31 July, 1766.

\textsuperscript{82} Dartmouth MSS., III, 185, Rockingham to Dartmouth, 27 November, 1767.

\textsuperscript{83} Basye, Board of Trade, 153 - 4.
in his actually becoming Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1772. It is to be lamented, however, that a separate secretaryship was not created at least as early as 1766, at a time when increasing business and trouble with the colonies would have more than warranted the erection of such an office. As it eventuated, the colonists had to wait until 1768 for a distinct department, and then they had to wait four more years, before this new office was filled by a friend -- by that time it was too late.
CHAPTER V

LORD DARTMOUTH, AN ADVOCATE OF CONCILIATION,

AS SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES, 1772 - 1775

Lord Hillsborough's resignation from the North Ministry in 1772 created a vacancy in the secretariat. The close ties between Lord North and Lord Dartmouth have already been noted, as have the regrets expressed by the former at continually finding himself in opposition to the latter. It was not too unnatural a gesture on North's part, then, to offer the colonial secretaryship to his friend, especially after the seals had been "haughtily" declined by Viscount Weymouth. On 3 August, 1772, therefore, the Prime Minister wrote to Dartmouth, asking his permission to recommend him to the King for the vacant post.¹

As noted before, Dartmouth had been member of one of the opposition factions. The exact date and circumstances of his leaving the Rockingham faction are a mystery. Horace Walpole records that the Earl hesitated to accept the secretaryship, because he "was extremely conscientious

¹ Dartmouth MSS., II, 86; for an account of the negotiations with Lord Weymouth, see Walpole, Last Journals (Steuart, ed.), I, 127.
and delicate of his honour." He refused to take the seals until after "he had explained himself to the Marquis of Rockingham", and, it is said, obtained his consent.  

This last assertion, that Dartmouth obtained Rockingham's permission to enter the government, is to be doubted. A letter to the Earl of Guilford appears among Dartmouth's papers, in which he speaks of "Having taken a step contrary to Lord Rockingham's opinion...." Since the amiable Lord Dartmouth would not have been likely to quarrel with his party chieftain over minor points, it is more than possible that these few words refer to the shift in allegiance which must necessarily have preceded Dartmouth's becoming a member of the government, 14 August, 1772.

Dartmouth's acceptance of the secretaryship appeared to many of his contemporaries to indicate a step toward a policy of conciliation on the part of the government.

Trevelyan terms Dartmouth's appointment "an act of wisdom," which may be questioned, and "a marked and acceptable

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2 Walpole, Last Journals (Stuart, ed.), I, 128.

3 Dartmouth KSS., II, 77, Guilford to Dartmouth, reply, 29 January, [1771]. Lord Guilford was of course Lord North's father and Lord Dartmouth's stepfather. It is not unnatural that Dartmouth should confide such information in him; but the editor's uncertainty as to the date of this communication leads me to wonder if 1772, the year Dartmouth actually entered the Ministry, might not have been a better conjecture.

4 Dartmouth KSS., II, 88; Spector, op. cit., 45 n. 16.

5 Grafton's Autobiography, 266, 267 n.; Annual Register, XVI (1773), 65.
compliment" to America, which was undoubtedly true. The Assembly of Massachusetts Bay congratulated the new Colonial Minister in words of sincere respect:

Your lordship's appointment to be principal secretary of state for the American department has given the colonies the highest satisfaction: they think it a happy omen, and that it will be productive of American tranquility, consistent with their rights as British subjects."7

Nor were the colonists the only ones to be pleased with the new arrangements in the Cabinet. The King himself thought very highly of the "good sense and candour of Lord Dartmouth," and believed that the colonial department could not have been placed "in more proper hands than those of Lord Dartmouth."8 To Benjamin Franklin also the appointment of one so noted for his friendly attitude toward the colonies indicated a change in ministerial policy. He believed that at last "all are now sensible, that nothing is to be got by contesting with or oppressing us."9

The extent of Franklin's influence in bringing about Hillsborough's fall and Dartmouth's appointment is another

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6 Trevelyan, op. cit., 144.
7 Letter of 29 June, 1773, given in full in Annual Register, XVII (1774), 202.
8 W. Bodham Donne, ed., The Correspondence of King George the Third with Lord North, 1768 - 1783 (London, 1867), I, 107, King to North, 9 August, 1772.
9 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), V, 459, Franklin to Joseph Galloway, 2 December, 1772.
of the mysteries of this period. It is known that Franklin did not get along at all well with Hillsborough, and that he was consulted informally on a possible successor. On the latter occasion he had been casually asked, whether there was another person more acceptable to Americans, should Hillsborough be forced to resign. He had replied with equal casualness: "Yes, there is Lord Dartmouth; we liked him very well when he was at the head of the Board of Trade formerly, and probably should like him again." Franklin had reason to believe that these sentiments were repeated in higher circles, where they carried more weight than the apparent indifference of the person with whom he conversed would indicate.

Whatever the truth of the matter might be, Franklin was delighted at the fulfillment of his wishes. For more than a year after Dartmouth’s appointment he was able to sustain his optimism, although he was eventually completely disillusioned and came to see that there were forces within

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10 Carl Van Doren, Benjamin Franklin (New York, 1938), 437, 441.
12 Franklin’s Writings (Smyth, ed.), V, 414, Franklin to his son, 19 August, 1772.
13 Loc. cit.
the government much stronger than Dartmouth.\textsuperscript{14}

If it could figuratively be said that the Marquis of Rockingham had accepted a "poisoned chalice"\textsuperscript{15} from George Grenville, when he succeeded him in the midst of the Stamp Act crisis, then a similar figure of speech might be applied with equal accuracy to the situation in which Lord Dartmouth found himself in 1772. In the latter case the newly appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies had inherited from his predecessor the difficulty known as the Gaspee incident. In order to grasp the circumstances surrounding this knotty problem in colonial relationships, a brief résumé of the events that had transpired while Dartmouth was out of office is necessary.

The conciliatory policy of the Rockingham Ministry (1765 - 1766) suffered a reversal in the succeeding government, headed by the Duke of Grafton.\textsuperscript{16} The agitation that had subsided after the repeal of the Stamp Act was revived in 1767, when Charles Townshend, the Chancellor of the

\textsuperscript{14} Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 151, Franklin to Joseph Galloway, 3 November, 1773; Ibid., V, 446, Franklin to his son, 3 November, 1774.

\textsuperscript{15} Miller, op. cit., 117.

\textsuperscript{16} Albemarle, Rockingham's Memoirs, II, 74 - 75.
Exchequer, "in an ill-fate hour,...chose to boast in Parliament that he knew the mode by which a revenue might be drawn from America, without offense."\textsuperscript{17} The plan which Townshend then introduced included duties on lead, paper, glass, and tea -- in short, a system of external taxation levied for revenue purposes, guaranteed to produce a turmoil in the colonies. He further proposed to reorganize the customs service to insure efficient collection of his duties. The salaries of Crown officers in America were to be paid from the revenue thus provided, and any surplus revenue was to help support the defense of the colonies.\textsuperscript{18}

America's answer to the Townshend Acts was a renewal of the non-importation agreements. Merchants and others remembered how effective this course of action had been in obtaining the repeal of the Stamp Act, so the same tactics were again adopted -- with some difficulty and disagreement -- in 1768 and 1769.\textsuperscript{19} Even though the non-importation agreements of this period were not wholeheartedly entered into, nor strictly and uniformly enforced, they were successful in reducing imports from England by approximately 50\%.\textsuperscript{20} Such a drastic reduction of business for the British

\textsuperscript{17} Grafton's Autobiography, 126; Grafton's italics.
\textsuperscript{18} C. H. Van Tyne, The Causes of the War of Independence (Boston, 1922), 247.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 253 et seq.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 263.
merchants naturally had reactions in governmental circles. Enforcement was vainly attempted at first; troops were sent to Boston, but colonial opposition was so violent and prolonged that within two years the Cabinet was forced to consider repeal.  

In the meantime Charles Townshend had died, passing on his cup of hemlock to Lord North, who was advanced from his paymastership to the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. The situation which he then encountered was so complex that it is small wonder that he took a leaf from Rockingham's book and tried conciliation. Grafton had wanted to repeal all of the Townshend Acts, but North decided to retain the tax on tea, in order that the colonists would not think that Parliament had been "terrified into any concession." North was willing to grant the Americans a measure of conciliation, owing to their violent protests and especially because of the injury which they had inflicted on British commerce. He refused to make further concessions, however, while lawlessness reigned in Boston, and he stanchly

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23 Grafton's *Autobiography*, 229.


defended the right of Parliament to tax the colonies.\textsuperscript{26}

This first gesture of conciliation on North's part, incomplete though it was from the colonial viewpoint, was accepted by most of the American merchants. More radical Boston, of course, would have preferred to continue the nonimportation agreements until all the Townshend duties had been repealed, but New York and then Philadelphia agreed to meet North halfway.\textsuperscript{27} It would seem that reconciliation might have had some chance of success at this time, if it had not been for two facts: Townshend's plans for strict enforcement of customs regulations were continued (which especially irritated the people of Rhode Island),\textsuperscript{28} and the tea duty retained by North made smuggling very profitable.\textsuperscript{29}

A certain Lieutenant Dudingston, in command of the schooner Gaspee (one of the navy ships assigned to assist in the collection of customs), was so zealous in the execution of his duties that he aroused the deepest hatred of the people of Rhode Island. When his ship ran aground on 9 June, 1772, a group of enraged colonists boarded her, set the crew on shore, and burned the revenue schooner to the

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{26}] Parl. Hist., XVI, 854.
\item[\textsuperscript{27}] Van Tyne, op. cit., 269 - 71.
\item[\textsuperscript{28}] Wilbur C. Abbott, New York in the American Revolution (New York, 1929), 98.
\item[\textsuperscript{29}] Van Tyne, op. cit., 371.
\end{itemize}
water line.\textsuperscript{30} When Lord Dartmouth assumed his position of Secretary of State for the Colonies (which by this time, it will be remembered, also included the presidency of the Board of Trade), reports of this incident had already arrived in England and the Cabinet was greatly disturbed as to what action to take. The Attorney General, Thurlow, described the incident as of "five times the magnitude of the Stamp Act."\textsuperscript{31} He and the Earl of Sandwich demanded that accusations be made and that the culprits be tried in London. Against these violent demands Dartmouth did his best to counter with words of moderation. Although he "contrived to hush up" the difficulty,\textsuperscript{32} a royal commission was appointed to go to America and investigate the incident. The results of this step were surprising, for the commission could accomplish nothing; they obtained absolutely no information of any value, because "the people were determined not to suffer any of the persons to be taken, nor would the Civil Magistrate do his duty."\textsuperscript{33} Thus, retributions were impossible, owing to the stout refusal of the Rhode

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 371; Edward Channing, A History of the United States (New York, 1918), III, 125.

\textsuperscript{31} Dartmouth MSS., II, 91, John Pownall to Dartmouth, 29 August, 1772.

\textsuperscript{32} Trevelyan, op. cit., 133 - 4.

\textsuperscript{33} Calendar of Home Office Papers of the Reign of George III, vol. IV (1773 - 1776), #80.
Islanders to denounce those who participated in the burning of the Gaspee — although literally scores of people must have known the names of the guilty parties. 34

Dartmouth's papers include a letter of congratulation for "having escaped the difficulties" which must have ensued, had the royal commission been successful. The discovery of the guilty ones, and their being sent to England for trial would, declares the congratulatory correspondent, have "set the continent into a fresh flame,..." 35 The truth of this statement can hardly be doubted, but the question which should concern us at this point is whether or not Dartmouth was deserving of the congratulations extended to him on this occasion. Here was an instance in which a dispute arose between Great Britain and one of her colonies in North America; a man who was known to favor conciliation occupied a responsible position in the government at the time. What was the result?

While the dramatic incident of the Gaspee lacks much of the significance of later disputes, the details of the situation have been dealt with at length here, because the solution to the problem seems to indicate — fully as clearly as later situations — the ineptitude of the Earl of Dartmouth. Nowat has written that the "destruction of the Gaspee

34 Van Tyne, op. cit., 372.
was a sporadic outrage against the ship of an unpopular revenue officer." Yet, the importance of the situation is revealed by the above-quoted letter of the Rev. Mr. Gordon. If the commission had been successful, the Revolution might possibly have begun in 1773. Considering the seriousness of the incident, then, it is startling to realize that Lord Dartmouth contributed virtually nothing toward its amicable settlement. A pacific solution eventuated only because of factors completely beyond his control -- the Rhode Islanders' obstinacy.

Unimportant though this observation may be at this point, it will be noted that a similar pattern of events is traceable in future situations. Dartmouth's intentions were indubitably of the best, but it has been tritely observed before that good intentions do not make good ministers. It will never be possible to estimate the weight of Dartmouth's influence at governmental conferences. It can be assumed that, when he spoke, he urged moderation and patience, but to what extent was his advice followed? In the incident of the Gaspee, Sandwich and Thurlow had their way, and would have been completely successful, if the commission had been able to produce a single witness. Yet, Dartmouth was congratulated on the outcome of the inquiry!

It may be argued that this affair came too early in

36 Howat, op. cit., 216.
his term of office for him to be fully competent to arrive at a successful solution alone. On the other hand, it will be seen in later pages that the same lack of aggressiveness and inability to formulate and execute a policy characterize Lord Dartmouth's actions throughout his secretaryship.

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One of the best sources of information about the happenings of this period are of the writings of Benjamin Franklin. As Agent for the colony of Pennsylvania and for the Assembly of Massachusetts Bay, Franklin had numerous dealings with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The details of these relations were duly reported to his superiors in America; consequently, his letters are a veritable mine of information.

From the first moment they met, Dartmouth and Franklin seem to have been friendly toward one another. Franklin's pleasure at having Dartmouth in the colonial office has already been noted. This pleasure was increased by the polite and respectful treatment with which the Agent was received there. In marked contrast to Hillsborough's attitude toward him, Dartmouth made no objections to Franklin's acting as Agent of the Massachusetts Assembly without the Governor's approval. 37

37 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), V, 445 - 6, Franklin to his son, 3 November, 1772.
Although Dartmouth was appointed Secretary in August, he did not come to London until the following October.

Shortly after he assume his new office, Franklin delivered to him a petition to be presented to the King. This first petition was from the Assembly of Massachusetts Bay, protesting an innovation in colonial policy. The salary of their Governor was being paid by the Crown, which removed him from their control, so they petitioned the King to restore a former right and allow the Assembly to determine the Governor's salary.38

The Secretary accepted the petition, but before delivering it to the King, called Franklin to his office to suggest that the Assembly reconsider the issue, since to present the petition at this time would only anger the King and probably draw down some reprimand or restriction upon the colony. This advice reveals not only Dartmouth's concern for the welfare of the American colonies and a desire to protect them as much as possible from his more vindictive colleagues, but also the radical difference between the Eighteenth Century secretariat and that of more recent times. The Secretary of State asked to have a petition withdrawn on the grounds that it would displease his Sovereign, rather than accepting it and "advising" the King what action to take.

38 Van Doren, op. cit., 442.
Franklin agreed to this suggested procrastination, because he felt that it would do no harm for the Assembly to reconsider their action; and also because he did not wish to embarrass Dartmouth so early in his administration. He returned the petition to Thomas Cushing of the Massachusetts Assembly with a report of all that had passed in regard to its attempted presentation. 39

At the same time he returned the petition, Franklin sent some letters written by Governor Hutchinson and others which eventually stirred up a scandal in England that had the effect of discrediting Franklin in Government circles. From then on Franklin was regarded as a "ringleader" of resistance and violence in America and another tie between the Mother Country and her colonies was broken. Conciliation was made much less easy by this affair. 40

After the Hutchinson letters had been sent, but before word of their effect had reached England, Dartmouth was worried by nothing more serious than the debates between the Massachusetts Assembly on one hand and Governor Hutchinson on the other. Owing to Hutchinson's "skill" in this matter, the Assembly had been forced to declare their complete independence from the control of the English Parliament. The

39 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), V, 449, Franklin to Cushing, 2 December, 1772; Franklin's Works (Bigelow, ed.), IV, 539 - 42, Franklin to Cushing, 4 November, 1772.

40 Van Doren, op. cit., 465, 479.
Secretary of State had received the Governor's reports in this matter, and in an interview with Franklin sought his advice on whether to lay the papers before Parliament or not. He wanted to help the colonies by hushing up the affair as much as possible, but he did not wished to be accused of dereliction of duty by the opposition. Franklin's only advice was that, whatever the Earl decided to do about the papers, the English government should let well enough alone, so long as laws of Parliament were still enforced in Massachusetts, as they were at the time. Dartmouth's conversation at this time indicates that he was distressed and anxious, but not very constructive. The only solution he could think of was that the Assembly should rescind the remarks which they had been driven to make. This course, Franklin pointed out, was impossible. 41

In the meantime the Hutchinson correspondence was adding fuel to the fire in America. The immediate result there was the framing of another petition to the King, requesting the removal of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor Oliver. This second petition was delivered by Franklin in August, 1773, and led to the famous scene in the Privy Council the following January, in which Franklin was attacked

41 Franklin's Works (Migelow, ed.), V, 137 - 42, Franklin to Thomas Cushing, 6 May, 1773.
so viciously by Wedderburn. This affair is too well known to require detailed explanation here. Two facts in this connexion deserve mention, however: one is the effect on the Government of Franklin's humiliation, and the other is its effect on Franklin himself. In the first instance, reference has already been made to the fact that Franklin was so thoroughly discredited that the Ministry would have no direct dealings with him from that time forward. In the second instance, many of Franklin's biographers have attempted to show that this was a turning point in Franklin's life and that he became an opponent of the Ministry and conciliation as a result of Wedderburn's attack. Carl Van Doren believes, however, that the change in Franklin's attitude toward accommodation was not dictated by resentment over this attack, but rather by his loss of hope and faith in the wisdom of the North government. Conciliation seemed so futile when the Ministry betrayed such ignorance and lack of sympathy with the colonial cause.

At this same time Franklin began to lose his optimism

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42 Van Doren, op. cit., 461; Annual Register, XVII (1774), 201 - 2; Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial Series), V, 365.
43 E. E., Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), X, 271, biographical sketch.
44 Van Doren, op. cit., 477 - 8.
about Dartmouth's ability to aid the colonies. He had been encouraged to think that conciliation might be possible when Dartmouth was first appointed, but on 5 January, 1774, he wrote that the Earl "expressed, as usual, much concern at the difference subsisting, and wished they would be accommodated. Perhaps his good wishes are all that is in his power." 45 Up to this point Dartmouth had not undertaken a single constructive measure that might have advanced the cause of reconciliation. Franklin even began to doubt the weight of the Secretary's word in governmental councils.

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The affair of the Hutchinson letters was not, however, an isolated event in British affairs. Bitter though it was, it must be remembered that tempers had been shortened and patience diminished by the Boston Tea Party of December, 1773. Before discussing this event, a few remarks concerning its causes are necessary.

Although Professor Abbott's book, previously referred to, is primarily concerned with New York, the attitude of the inhabitants of that colony can be taken as rather typical on certain issues. There, as in other colonies, the people were seriously divided between "conservatives" and "radicals."

45 Franklin's Works (Bigelow, ed.), V, 282, Franklin to Cushing, 5 January, 1774.
The former term includes the more considerable merchants and property owners who realized that their business would be affected by disorder and agitation and who were in favor of meeting Lord North halfway in his early attempts at conciliation. The second group included laboring elements who had nothing to lose and much to gain by rioting and demanding complete recognition of their rights "as British subjects." They belonged for the most part to patriotic organizations like the Sons of Liberty and shocked the wealthier elements of the population with their excesses and their Liberty Trees.46

North's repeal of the Townshend Duties, except that on tea, brought about the collapse of the non-importation agreements. A comparatively quiet period of about two years followed this action, during which the willingness of the New York merchants to cooperate with the British government should have been utilized to further reconciliation, but the fundamental grievances of the colonists were not removed.47 Not all the colonies were as friendly as New York, of course, and whatever chance there might have been for accommodation was lost, even in that colony, through North's attitude on the tea question.48

46 Abbott, op. cit., 91, 94.
47 Ibid., 97.
48 Ibid., 101.
The facts relating to the tea question -- so far as we need be concerned with it here -- are rather simple. The East India Company found itself in a serious financial situation in the 1770's and petitioned Parliament for permission to export tea to America free of all duty. The petition was granted, but the principle of the single remaining Townshend duty was maintained by placing a greatly reduced tax on all shipments. This policy was adopted primarily to aid the East India Company recover some lost income, and to erase the profits of smugglers; but the "radical" elements loudly denounced North's efforts to enslave them with arbitrary taxation. They began a program of propaganda and terrorization that frightened the American consignees into refusing to accept the tea.

Since Governor Hutchinson would not allow the ships to leave Boston Harbor without unloading their cargoes, the "Tea Party" of great renown took place. Although this event has always been regarded by Americans as an expression of commendable patriotism, the British government was shocked by what it regarded as an exhibition of destructive and unwarranted violence. It was much more than a private matter between the Americans and the East India Company, it was an

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49 Grafton's *Autobiography*, 266.

50 Abbott, *op. cit.*, 98 - 100.
insult to the "Authority of this Kingdom." 51

Lord North had been hoping that the turbulence would
die down, so that further concessions could be made the col-
onies in 1770; but New England continued to be so factious
that official reports led the government to believe that
virtual rebellion raged there. Nothing further could be
done under those circumstances, and the Tea Party proved to
be the last straw. All plans for conciliation were replaced
by coercive measures. 52 Lord Dartmouth wrote to the Gover-
nor of New York at this time that the King was firmly re-
solved "to pursue such measures as shall be effective for
securing the Dependence of the Colonies upon this Kingdom." 53
North announced that the opposition to imperial legislation
had always been strongest and most violent in Massachusetts
Bay, and therefore, "severe and exemplary punishment" must
be given immediately. 54

Four coercive acts followed in quick succession the
laying of papers before Parliament in March, 1774. The Tea
Party had upset the average Englishman so much that the first

51 Documents relative to the Colonial History of the
State of New York (E. B. O'Callaghan, ed.), Albany, 1857,
VIII, 409, Dartmouth to Governor Tryon, 5 February, 1774.

52 Lord North, "Lord North, etc.," N. Amer. Rev.,
July, 1903, 267.

53 N. Y. Docs., VIII, 409, Dartmouth to Tryon, 5
February, 1774.

54 Annual Register, XVII (1774), 62 - 3.
punitive measure, the Boston Port Bill, passed nemine dissentiente. Although the Marquis of Rockingham subsequently opposed the other coercive acts, many of his followers in opposition agreed with the Administration in the punishment of Bostonian violence. Yet, even with the spirit of retaliation moving the opposition, Dartmouth still favored a more moderate policy. Walpole wrote that when the Boston Port Bill was being debated in the House of Lords (23 March, 1774), Dartmouth "palliated a little the case of the Bostonians, would not believe they were in actual rebellion, and showed that he was the real cause of any lenity, any temporizing being admitted."

In practice, however, Dartmouth approved of the coercive measures. Like other Englishmen of his day, he regarded them as aimed at a factious minority who might lead other colonists astray if unpunished. His views on the situation are best expressed in a letter to General Gage (who was sent to Massachusetts as Governor to enforce the coercive acts):

...whatever violences are committed must be resisted with firmness: the constitutional authority of this kingdom over its colonies must be vindicated, and its laws obeyed throughout the whole empire.

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56 Walpole, Last Journals (Steuart, ed.), I, 322.
It is not the mere claim of exemption from the authority of parliament in a particular case that has brought on the present crisis; it is actual disobedience and open resistance that have compelled coercive measures, and I have no longer any other confidence in the hopes I had entertained that the public peace and tranquility would be restored..., except by the enforcement of those measures. 57

The colonists were far from united in opinion at this time; but Governor Hutchinson had underestimated the strength of the discontented faction, when he advised that only a noisy minority was concerned in the Tea Party. It was certainly true that many of the more conservative colonists themselves believed that some measure of punishment was justifiable; but the Boston Port Bill went too far. Much to Hutchinson's and the Government's surprise, the colonies did unite behind Massachusetts and accept her grievances as their own. This union was not accomplished immediately, nor completely, but the coercive acts played a large part in bringing it about. 58 The net result of all this disturbance was the summoning of a Continental Congress to meet in September, 1774, and to discuss the measures to be adopted by the colonies. Representatives of the Crown were still advising the government of the lack of unity in the colonies

57 Parl. Hist., XVIII, 84, Dartmouth to Gage, 5 June, 1774. This letter is to be found among other papers relating to the disturbances in America that were laid before the House of Commons, 19 January, 1775.

58 Van Doren, op. cit., 482 - 4, 493.
as late as October, 1774, however, at which time Gage expressed surprise that the other colonies had agreed to support Massachusetts at the First Continental Congress.\(^{59}\)

Whether the Ministry would have attempted a policy of coercion, if the colonies had shown themselves to be united in the beginning of the struggle, is difficult to say. But, now that coercion was begun, the Ministry could not back down and still save face. They had made a grave mistake when they assumed that the other colonies would meekly submit to British authority, when the resistance in Boston had been punished.\(^{60}\)

The English historian Lecky believed that the war for American independence actually began a year before the first blood was shed at Lexington and Concord.\(^{61}\) Certainly it would seem that the actions of the colonists in 1774, and the retaliation of the British Ministry that followed, were propelling them rapidly along the road to open rebellion. Every act of violence in America, every piece of coercive

\(^{59}\) *Parl. Hist.* XVIII, 101, Gage to Dartmouth, 3 October, 1774.

\(^{60}\) Van Tyne, *op. cit.*, 409.

legislation in England, drove another nail in the coffin of reconciliation, making the possibility of pacific settlement more and more remote.

Still, America had many friends in England in 1774 and 1775. Most of them continued to hope for an eleventh hour solution that would settle the colonists' outstanding grievances in such a way as to keep them within the Empire. Franklin was greatly concerned with one particular set of negotiations at this time and has left us an account of much of what transpired. 62 This fascinating story of intrigue shows that not all Englishmen of the day wanted to oppress the colonies, but rather, that there were many both within the government and in the opposition who were genuinely interested in reaching an accommodation -- futile though the prospects must have seemed.

As has been noted before, Franklin's part in the affair of the Hutchinson letters completely discredited him with the members of the government, and consequently he had no direct dealings with them thereafter. He learned from Governor Pownall at this time that the Ministry looked upon him as "the great Fomenter of the Opposition in America, and as great an Adversary of Accommodation;...." 63


63 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 349.
Still the Cabinet was not in complete agreement with the policy of coercion, a few members like Dartmouth, North, Hyde and Barrington were really "dispos'd to promote a Reconciliation..." In order to maintain the dignity of the government, however, these individuals could not take the first step, although they were perfectly willing to deal with Franklin through intermediaries. It was owing to these circumstances that Doctor John Fothergill, David Barclay, and Lord Howe appeared on the scene just before the year 1774 drew to a close.

Fothergill and Barclay were both members of the Society of Friends, so were naturally inclined to pacifism, and were consequently unable to hold any public office: two factors which made them well suited to act as mediators in this instance. They were both acquainted with one or more members of the Ministry, Dr. Fothergill being Dartmouth's Physician, and Barclay a close friend of Lord Hyde. Whether they were actually commissioned by their ministerial acquaintances, or merely given permission, to negotiate with Franklin over terms of settlement is not known. The fact remains, however, that they did visit him in December, 1774, and request him to set down in written form his opinion of

64 Ibid., VI, 348; Trevelyan, op. cit., 142 - 3.
the terms upon which the basis of reconciliation might be laid. 66

At first Franklin was reluctant to take any action until the petition of the First Continental Congress should have been received. Fothergill and Barclay urged him to lose no time, however, so he drew up the "Hints for Conversation upon the Subject of Terms that might probably produce a durable Union between Great Britain and the Colonies." 67 The seventeen specific points which are contained in the "Hints" do not represent a "mollifying scheme of compromise." 68 Franklin was aware that the situation had progressed to such a state that only fundamental action could preserve the union. Therefore, all the basic grievances of the colonists were mentioned and some remedy suggested. For example: the tea would be paid for, if the coercive acts were repealed; the colonies were to be allowed to regulate their own commerce; colonial officers were to collect the customs and the proceeds were to be paid into colonial treasuries; no troops were to enter the colonies without the consent of colonial legislatures; governors and judges were to serve for good behavior and were to be paid by colonial legislatures; Parliament was

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66 Van Doren, op. cit., 495 - 6.
67 Ibid., 502; Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 328 - 330.
68 Van Doren, op. cit., 498.
was to claim no power over internal legislation; etc.\textsuperscript{69}

Apparently these terms, which go right to the core of the differences, were too strong for the Ministers who saw them -- presumably Lords Hyde, Dartmouth and North. They would not accept them as they stood, but continued the negotiations in the hope that Franklin would suggest more liberal concessions. Fothergill and Barclay continued in their mediating capacity, but they were aided (seemingly independently) by Lord Howe.\textsuperscript{70}

Howe said that he was anxious to bring about a reconciliation and assured Franklin that any proposals he might care to make would reach the ears of Hyde, and Dartmouth and North. He was inwardly hoping that the terms which Franklin would relay to him would be easier than those contained in the "Hints," although no mention was made of the previous (and supposedly secret) negotiations at this time. Howe's only innovation was the suggestion that special commissioners be sent to America to hear the colonists' grievances at first hand. Franklin raised no objections to this idea, although Lord Hyde eventually opposed the idea on the grounds that all hope of treating had passed (March, 1775).\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{69} Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 328 - 330; Jared Sparks, The Life of Benjamin Franklin (Boston, 1850), 382.

\textsuperscript{70} Van Buren, op. cit., 505.

\textsuperscript{71} Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 352, 394 - 5.
Although he had been urged by Howe to modify his original proposals, Franklin presented him with virtually the same terms as before -- changing them only enough to conform more closely with the points contained in the petition of the Continental Congress, which had in the meantime been received. The Ministry was heartened, however, by Franklin's offer to pay for the tea which had been destroyed in Boston Harbor. This was an important point, because Englishmen had been universally shocked by that act of violence -- a fact difficult for the average American to grasp, since he has been taught that it was a great demonstration of patriotism. Even the members of the Whig opposition in Parliament and the great merchants, who were usually friendly toward America, looked upon the Tea Party as a scandalous and destructive affair which should be atoned for in some form or other. When Lord Hyde was informed by Barclay that Franklin had consented to pay for the tea, he said that the news gave him "new life." But when the Ministry

72 Ibid., VI, 354 – 5.


74 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 389. Franklin's italics.
learned that the generosity of the American Agent was dependent upon the prior repeal of the coercive acts, all negotiations collapsed. 75

Both the proposals embodied in the "Hints" and those conveyed to the Ministry by Lord Howe were rejected, largely because the government felt that they could not accept them and retain their honor and dignity. 76 On 4 February, 1775, Barclay and Fothergill brought Franklin the copy of the "Hints" which the Ministers had seen. Five of the seventeen points were marked "acceptable," two were "inadmissible," and ten were accepted with such serious reservations or conditions that they had been rejected in spirit if not in word. 77

Franklin had realized that it was virtually futile to propose terms of reconciliation to the North Ministry and had hesitated to comply with Fothergill's and Barclay's request at the very beginning of the negotiations. They had been

75 Van Doren, op. cit., 516.
76 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 393.
77 Ibid., VI, 372 – 3. There can be no doubt that Dartmouth was one of the Ministers who saw the "Hints," for copies of them appear among his papers; Dartmouth ESS., II, 236, 264. The editor notes that one copy contains "corrections and interlinings by Lords Hyde and Dartmouth." It is impossible, of course, for the present writer to know which points were criticized by the latter, or to what extent he agreed with the "Hints."
successful in persuading him to make one last attempt in December, 1774, and he had done what he could. By mid-March, 1775, however, he had given up all hope and sailed home. Nor was he the only one to be discouraged by the failure of these lengthy and involved dealings. Just before he departed Dr. Fothergill informed him that "whatever specious Pretences are offered, they are all hollow;..." All possibility of a reconciliation was now dead, although Franklin thought he might return and try again, if the North Ministry should be overthrown -- that was his only hope. Even that dim hope was extinguished when he arrived in America and learned that the battles of Lexington and Concord had already occurred while he was at sea.

Lord Dartmouth's participation in the negotiations with Franklin were, to say the least, shadowy. It may be assumed that he listened to the terms proposed by Franklin through the mediators; that he was sincerely interested in finding grounds for accommodation; that he urged his colleagues to consider every possibility for pacific settlement; but that he had no constructive suggestions of his own, nor was he able to sway the opinion of the council from coercion toward conciliation. Though he undoubtedly did not realize it,

78 Ibid., X, 281.
79 Ibid., VI, 399.
80 Van Doren, op. cit., 520 - 3.
this was the last opportunity for compromise; the Revolution was coming continually closer with each failure to find a modus vivendi with the colonies.

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In order to unravel the tangled skein of events of the years 1774 and 1775, and to trace the course of several important threads to their ultimate conclusions, it is impossible to maintain a strictly chronological order. While the preceding section ended with Franklin's arrival in America, this one must begin several months before his departure from England. Lord Dartmouth was concerned with another plan for reconciliation, and no discussion of this subject or of Dartmouth's personality would be complete without making some reference to it. The plan meant is, of course, that proposed by William Pitt, first Earl of Chatham.

Parliament had been suddenly dissolved in 1774 and a new election held. The Ministry had been more than a little disturbed by the display of unity in the colonies and wished to secure new members of Parliament before the proposed boycott could influence the voting in the manufacturing towns. No new measures were taken against the colonies, however, before the end of the year. After the long Christmas recess

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81 Lackey, op. cit. (Woodburn, ed.), 195; Van Doren, op. cit., 490.
(Parliament reconvened 19 January, 1775), events in America had actually increased the huge majority upon which the government could count. Feeling against colonial resistance was running high, when the ministerial forces laid before the two houses papers relating to the disturbances in America: the Commons received their copies from the hands of Lord North, while Lord Dartmouth presented duplicates to the upper house on the next day, 20 January, 1775. The most important of these papers have been printed in Cobbett’s Parliamentary History. They consist largely of official communications between Dartmouth and the several colonial governors, each of whom related a similar tale of woe regarding the rebellious activities of the Americans.

Immediately after the presentation of the papers, the Earl of Chatham arose to move that the troops be withdrawn from Boston, as a preliminary measure toward reconciliation. No member of the opposition could hope to be heard fairly in that particular session, however, and even a motion from the great Chatham was rejected. Lord Chatham took unkindly the remarks made in debate, that the members of the

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82 Lecky, op. cit., (Woodburn, ed), 195.
83 Vol. XVIII, 74 et seq.
84 "Lord Chatham’s Speeches on the American Revolution," Old South Leaflet, #199 (Boston, n. d.), p. 15.
85 Parl. Hist., XVIII, 149, 160, 168; the vote was 68 to 18.
opposition frequently criticized the policy of the administra-
tion without offering constructive substitutes. Therefore, he consulted at length with Franklin and, on 1 Feb-
uary, 1775, offered his "Provisional Act for settling the
troubles in America" for their Lordships' consideration. 36

The precise extent of Franklin's influence on the fram-
ing of this measure is difficult to estimate. The first
meeting between the two men took place in August, 1774, at
which time Franklin assured the Earl that Americans did not
desire independence from Great Britain, and that the "main
material part" of the Navigation Acts were "acceptable" to
them. 37 This assurance seemed to hearten him and he deter-
mined to do what his physical condition would permit him to
do in behalf of the American cause. They met again in Decem-
ber and also in January, 1775, when Chatham consulted Frank-
lin about the provisions of his projected bill. It was at
this same time, of course, that Franklin was engaged in the
negotiations with Barclay and Fothergill. He did not actual-
ly show Chatham the "Hints" which he had drawn up for the
Ministers, but he must have had their points well in mind,
so it is just possible that he may have based his share of
the conversations on them. 38

36 Ibid., XVIII, 198 - 204.
37 Van Doren, op. cit., 490.
38 Sparks, Franklin, 360 et seq.
The later insinuation that Franklin actually wrote
Chatham's bill is absurd, however. When Chatham had satis-
"fied himself with the information which he drew from Frank-
ilin in conversation, he wrote a rough draft of the bill,
which he showed to the other; but the Earl was so anxious
to present the bill to the house, that he allowed Franklin
only time enough to discuss a few of its measures and to
change one or two words. 89 Chatham's bill was the first
specific plan for conciliation to be presented to Parlia-
ment. Its reception and fate could scarcely have been en-
couraging to other friends of America. He had allowed it
to be read in its incomplete and uncorrected form, because
he assumed that amendments and alterations would be suggest-
ed in debate. It was largely his own fault in not taking
others in the opposition into his confidence that the bill
never lived long enough to be debated. 90

Briefly, the bill called for: American control of colo-
nial taxation and defense; a permanent Continental Congress;
the repeal of the coercive acts; and the recognition by Par-
liament of the inviolability of the colonial charters. 91
Chatham would never have consented to independence for

89 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 368.
90 Lecky, op. cit., (Woodburn, ed.), 196; see also
Williams, Life of Pitt.
91 Parl. Hist., XVIII, 199 - 203; Lecky, op. cit.,
196 - 7; Guttridge, Hartley, 268 - 9.
America and made a definite statement of Parliament's general authority over the colonies. This clause might have won support for the proposal, if he had organized his adherents with more care. Lord Dartmouth expressed himself as favoring the bill in general, but added that it contained such a variety of material that he hoped that it might lie on the table for a while.  

The Earl of Sandwich rose to speak after Dartmouth had finished. He was a member of the extreme, fighting faction of the government and intensely opposed to any form of conciliation, because it might prevent him, as First Lord of the Admiralty, from giving the raw, undisciplined cowards in America the beating which he felt they so richly deserved.  

He attacked both Chatham and his bill with vehemence. While he objected to many parts of the bill, the most effective of his attacks was the broad hint that Franklin had written it. This Chatham strongly denied, but enough others believed it to vote for his motion to reject the bill immediately by an overwhelming majority.  

The unfortunate Lord Dartmouth was forced to reverse

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93 Lucas, op. cit., II, 30.

94 *Parl. Hist.*, XVIII, 215; *Trevelyan*, op. cit., 277. Sandwich's motion was sustained by 61 to 32.
his attitude by Sandwich's attack. Given his character and his position in the government, he could not have been expected to live up to the strength of his original convictions. At the conclusion of the debate he is quoted as saying that, "having since heard the Opinions of so many Lords against receiving it [Chatham's bill] to lie upon the Table for Consideration, he had alter'd his mind,...and should therefore give his voice for rejecting the Plan immediately." Thus, he became a victim to his own weakness which, according to Bancroft, "made him adopt the worst measures even when he inclined to the best."  

Although Chatham's provisional bill contained many strong features to recommend it -- the suggested recognition of the American Congress is a case in point -- the feasibility of the plan as a whole is open to serious doubt. The votes against his motions at the time indicated that the Ministry was vastly superior to the divided and factious Whig opposition. Even if Chatham could have forced his bill through the Parliament, it is difficult to imagine King George's accepting any proposal that contained a recognition of the Continental Congress. Lastly, it is highly

95 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 396.
96 Bancroft, op. cit., IV, 116. These words are strangely similar to those used by Franklin to describe Dartmouth's lack of will and good judgment; cf. Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 369.
97 Vide, N. Y. Docs., VIII, 527 - 8, Dartmouth to the
improbable that the plan would have been acceptable to the colonists themselves. Although they were fond of Chatham, and although he had conceded them a great deal of what they demanded in his bill, he still had failed to recognize the fact that by this time the "radical" leaders had convinced them that they were fighting for a principle. Chatham's inclusion of the clause requiring that the colonies admit the omnipotence of Parliament reveals that he -- like virtually all Englishmen of his day -- completely misunderstood the significance of the Boston Tea Party. The tea would certainly have been cheap enough with the threepenny tax; but it was heaved into the harbor anyway, because the Americans refused even then to compromise on this particular issue. 98 By the end of 1774 they were even less willing to take half a loaf, when they might grab a whole one. They had been drilling in New England and gathering stores of arms throughout the colonies. 99 This hardly indicates a willingness to make concessions, especially important ones like the recognition of the legislative supremacy of Parliament over America.

As for Dartmouth's participation in this affair, it

98 Abbott, op. cit., 98 - 100.

99 Parl. Hist., XVIII, 99, Gage to Dartmouth, 20 September, 1774; N. Y. Docs., VIII, 511 - 12, Colden to Dartmouth, 2 November, 1774.
was at least more concrete than in the sub rosa negotiations with Franklin, though scarcely more satisfactory. His actions were consistent with what we know his character to be: well-intentioned, but unassertive and vacillating. Lest we judge him too harshly, however, it should be remembered that very few men of the Eighteenth Century ever gave up a comfortable income from the royal treasury in order to support a proposal of the Opposition. Then too it should be noted that Dartmouth did not abandon all hope of conciliation when Chatham's bill was rejected; he still believed that an accommodation could be effected by the Ministry itself, as will be revealed in the following section.

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On the day following the introduction and rejection of Chatham's provisional bill, Massachusetts was declared in a state of rebellion and steps were taken soon afterwards to reduce her to obedience. One of the main reasons for this renewal of coercive measures by the Ministry was that they had been advised by Hutchinson and others that a show of force would bring the rebels to their senses.\textsuperscript{100} Englishmen frequently underestimated not only the unity, but also the strength and determination of the colonists.

\textsuperscript{100} Lucas, op. cit., II, 7; Lord North, "Lord North, etc.," N. Amer. Rev., July, 1903, 269; Van Doren, op. cit., 493.
at this time.\textsuperscript{101} Not only did they lack a great deal of
information about the inhabitants of America, but much of
the information which they received was biased. The colo-
nial officials who sent reports back to England often dis-
torted the situation.\textsuperscript{102} Some of them, like Lieutenant
Governor Colden of New York made the mistake of overesti-
mating the number and influence of the group generally
loyal to the Crown.\textsuperscript{103}

Counting on this loyal group to overbalance the rad-
icals, North sought to frighten Massachusetts into submis-
sion. He called for increases in the Army and Navy; trade
and commerce with New England were prohibited; and New
Englanders were denied the use of the Newfoundland fishing
banks.\textsuperscript{104} That the sentiment of a majority in Parliament
was behind the Prime Minister is shown by an Address to the
King passed at this time. The Commons pledged their entire
support to the suppression of the "part" of the colonists
of Massachusetts who had resisted the authority of

\textsuperscript{101} Knox MSS.; Henry Ellis to William Knox, 27 June,
1774.

\textsuperscript{102} Van Tyne, op. cit., 450 - 1.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{N. Y. Docs.}, VIII, especially pp. 433, 486, and
532, for typical letters of Colden to Dartmouth.

\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Parl. Hist.}, XVIII, 298 - 9; Walpole, Last Jour-
nals (Steuart, ed.), I, 426 - 7; \textit{Annual Register}, 1773, 251.
Parliament. King George expressed his thanks to the Parliament for their pledge of support and assured them that he would do all in his power to enforce obedience to the law. He stated further that, "Whenever any of My Colonies shall make a proper and dutiful Application, I shall be ready to [offer] them every just and reasonable Indulgence,..."

Lord North acted on this offer of indulgence just ten days later when he introduced his own plan for conciliating the differences between the colonies and the mother country. In part, he proposed:

that when...any of his Majesty's provinces or colonies in America, shall propose to make provision...for contributing their proportion to the common defence...and shall engage to make provision also for the support of the civil government, and the administration of justice,...

then all revenue legislation shall be cancelled in so far as it effected that colony. In spite of the fact that the King had approved this plan, and in spite of the fact that North based his proposals on a principle set forth in

105 Journals of the House of Commons, XXXV, 99; 6 February, 1775; Annual Register, 1775, 247.
106 Journals of the House of Commons, XXXV, 110; 10 February, 1775.
107 Parl. Hist., XVIII, 320; 20 February, 1775.
108 Donne, op. cit., I, 231, King to North, 19 February, 1775.
a royal message, his suggestions were attacked by members of the Ministry and of the opposition alike. It was apparent that the Prime Minister had not secured the previous consent of many of his colleagues, before presenting his plan to the house. It even seemed for a while as though the ranks of the government would be split, by the desertion of the more militant factions. In order to win back these members, especially the Bedfords, the Ministry was forced to "change the ground of the argument." It was pointed out that the motion, if accepted, would tend to divide the colonies -- by making it easy for some to become reconciled -- while at the same time making it easy to subdue the remainder.

Franklin's own proposals (those contained in the "Hints") had been in the air for about two months when North's motion was put forward. The colonial Agent was of the opinion that the original draft of the motion may have contained more of his own ideas, but had to be changed at the last minute to appease the hostility of the Bedfords. Even with this deletion, if it ever was made, North had more than a little

109 Annual Register, 1775, 95 - 6.
110 Ibid., 97.
111 Loc. cit.
112 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 388.
difficulty carrying his motion, for many of the govern­
mental party still considered it too great a concession
in the form in which it was presented. 113

Rallying the ministerial ranks was made more diffi­
cult by the bitter attack launched by the opposition. Ed­
mund Burke criticized it on the grounds that no specific
sum was mentioned; consequently, the colonies would be
forced to bargain and haggle with the mother country over
the amount to be paid. 114 Other Whigs, both in and out of
Parliament, denounced the plan as insincere, and as design­
ed primarily to divide the colonies, rather than remedy
their grievances. 115 Nor could Benjamin Franklin see any
wisdom in this measure, sponsored as it was by a Ministry
he had come to distrust. He compared the plan with the
technique of a highwayman, since the colonies were expect­
ed to pay until Parliament said that they had paid enough. 116

Yet, the English historian Lecky has pointed out that
the malicious intentions and delusive purposes of North's

113 Sir J. Fortescue, The Correspondence of King George
the Third (London, 1928), III, 178, Lord North to the King,
20 February, 1775.

114 Lecky, op. cit. (Woodburn, ed.), 199.

115 Guttridge, Letters of Richard Champion, 43 - 4, 51,
Champion to Willing and Morris, 24 February, 1775, and same
to same, 13 March, 1775.

116 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 392.
motion might have been overemphasized.\textsuperscript{117} It was defended in debate by Governor Pownall, an ardent supporter of the colonies.\textsuperscript{118} The plan was also recommended to the American governors by Lord Dartmouth in letters of 3 March, 1775.\textsuperscript{119} The language of these letters is forthright and the arguments which Dartmouth employs convincing; but it would appear from other sources that he was not entirely pleased with the resolution which embodied the essence of North's plan. Hutchinson relates that the Earl seemed "apprehensive of the ill effect it [the resolution] might have [on the colonies] as it now stands." He requested Hutchinson to see North to urge him to couch his motion in more precise terms; especially did he wish the meaning of "contributing their proportion" clarified.\textsuperscript{120}

It is to Dartmouth's credit that he perceived the weakness in North's conciliatory plan; but once again we find ourselves wondering why he did not do something more tangible to remedy the situation. In this particular instance, however, his inactivity had less serious consequences. The fighting at Lexington and Concord had already broken out

\textsuperscript{117} Lecky, op. cit., (Woodburn, ed.), 199.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Parl. Hist.}, XVIII, 322 et seq.
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{N. Y. Docs.}, VIII, 545 - 7; Peter Force, comp., \textit{American Archives}, 4th. Series, II, 28 - 9.
\textsuperscript{120} Hutchinson's \textit{Diary}, I, 387; 22 February, 1775.
before North's plan reached America. The City Council of New York voiced the sentiments of other colonies as well, when it reported that there was no hope of reconciliation along the lines proposed in Dartmouth's letter to the Governor.121 Even if Dartmouth had succeeded in changing the language of the resolution, he could not have made it more acceptable to the colonists at this late date. Coming as it did in the midst of a program of coercion, it succeeded only in making the Americans more suspicious of the Ministry's motives, and was repudiated by them as an interference with their property rights.122

In spite of the abuse it received at the hands of the opposition, North's plan for conciliation actually did make some important concessions. The control of the governors' salaries, and of their own taxation were two of the things which the colonies had been desiring. It is unfortunate that these concessions could not have been made more than two years earlier, when Massachusetts humbly petitioned to regain the control of Governor Hutchinson's salary. At that time it might have prepared the ground for further compromise; by 1775, however, the colonists were disturbed by more things than this -- the inviolability of their charters was not recognized by North, so of what advantage

121 Abbott, op. cit., 134.
would the control of salaries and taxes be, if the British government could alter at will the colonial constitutions?"123

If North miscalculated the conciliating effects of his motion, he also misjudged the degree of unity in the colonies at this time. Rather than allowing themselves to be tempted to accept his terms individually, each of the colonial legislatures referred the proposals to the second Continental Congress for further consideration. "If it were the wish it is not in the Power of any one Province to accommodate with Great Britain being overawe'd and controled by the General confederacy...."124

Therefore, to all intents and purposes, the hope of conciliation failed with the shots at Lexington and Concord.125 The news of the British defeat there reached London late in May, 1775.126 On hearing it, Dartmouth is reported to have exclaimed, "The effects of General Gage's attempt at Concord are fatal,...the happy moment of advantage is lost."127 Although students of history must agree

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123 Van Doren, op. cit., 318; Abbott, op. cit., 90 - 1.
124 N. Y. Doc., VIII, 589, Governor Tryon to Dartmouth, 4 July, 1775.
125 Van Tyne, op. cit., 455.
126 Walpole, Last Journals (Steuart, ed.), I, 463.
127 Bancroft, op. cit., IV, 185; source not given.
with Dartmouth that the die had been cast, there were many in the England of his time who continued to hope that some modus of accommodation might be reached that would end the armed conflict, settle colonial differences, and yet preserve the Empire. Other plans for conciliation were presented to Parliament by Edmund Burke, David Hartley, Lord Camden, and John Wilkes. Since, however, none of these plans prevented the breach that became irrevocable in 1776, and since a discussion of them could contribute nothing new to the development of Lord Dartmouth's personality, there is no need to examine them in detail.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, it will be necessary to glance briefly at the remainder of Dartmouth's secretaryship, which he resigned in November, 1775. Although the thought of war was distasteful to Lord Dartmouth, he did what he believed his duty as a Secretary of

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State required him to do. He issued all the necessary orders for the defense of the Empire, even negotiating with Col. Guy Johnson about bringing the Indians into the conflict on the British side.\footnote{N. Y. Docs., VIII, 596; Parl. Hist., XVIII, 994; Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial Series), V, 416 - 17; Lecky, op. cit. (Woodburn, ed.), 221; Pancroft, op. cit., IV, 150; Fortescue, British Statesmen of the Great War, 30.}

Since the struggle seemed likely to be prolonged, the King felt the necessity of making certain changes in the composition of the Ministry. Dartmouth was replaced in November, 1775, by Lord George Germain, whom the King believed more capable of bringing the colonists to obedience. Neither George III nor Lord North had any desire to dismiss Dartmouth completely, however, and he was given the sinecure position of Lord Privy Seal, which he continued to occupy until the fall of the whole Ministry in 1782.\footnote{Knox MSS., 256; Walpole's Letters (Toynbee, ed.), IX, #1653, Walpole to Mann, 14 November, 1775; Grafton's Autobiography, 274 - 5; "Trevilian, op. cit., 25 - 5; Pasve, Board of Trade, 195; Thomson, op. cit., 59 - 60; Lucas, op. cit., 32, 130.} It is interesting to note that one of Dartmouth's last official acts (as Secretary of State) was to receive the "Olive Branch" petition of the second Continental Congress. This document represented the last attempt of the Americans to reach a settlement. When Dartmouth was forced to tell
the delegates that "no answer would be given to it," the course of the future was fairly determined and military might replaced pacific compromise as the method by which the colonies were to be kept within the Empire.\textsuperscript{131}

Ineffectual as his efforts at conciliation had been, the resignation of Dartmouth from the colonial office is somewhat tragic to contemplate. Militant forces within the Ministry had decided that blood must be shed and money wasted in the futile attempt to subdue the revolutionists on this side of the Atlantic. Had Dartmouth been able to prevent this catastrophe, he would have been a truly great man; the fact that he failed does not in itself make him an insignificant man. It is true that he was incapable to a considerable degree, but before final judgment can be rendered, one must consider the forces over which he had no control, and which contributed so heavily to the final outcome.

\textsuperscript{131} Annual register, 1775, 264; Guttridge, Letters of Champion, 58 - 9, Champion to Willing and Morris, 26 August, 1775; Lecky, op. cit. (Woodburn, ed.), 236 - 7; Channing, op. cit., III, 187 - 8.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: SOME REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF CONCILIATION

The search for a basis of reconciliation in the late Eighteenth Century concerned others besides members of the British Government. The economist Adam Smith was sufficiently interested in the problem to include some suggestions in his Wealth of Nations. Smith realized that the income of the British nation must be increased and believed that taxation of the colonies was the best way to do so. He also recognized the conflict between this necessity and the tenets of the British Constitution; so he proposed changes which he admitted were Utopian and impractical at the time. His ideas are extremely interesting, however, for they reveal that one very shrewd contemporary believed that the differences then existing could have been accommodated, had it not been for certain human failings and prejudices. Smith also recognized the benefits to both sides of continued co-operation within a political unity, and sought to suggest means for preserving that unity on lines consonant with the rational objectives of both parties. His proposals included the admission of colonial representatives into the
British Parliament, or the establishment of an imperial "states-general." The various members would be represented proportionately to the amount each contributed to the general revenue; thus, doing away with the conflict over virtual representation, and at the same time obtaining a legislative body with indisputable taxing powers.¹

On the other extreme of realistic suggestions, made by those who believed the colonial difficulties unsolvable, appear the ideas of Tucker, Dean of Gloucester. This sage clergyman advocated a complete and voluntary separation from the colonies before the war broke out, on the grounds that they were not worth the effort or danger involved in trying to retain their involuntary allegiance.² Although this idea was prophetic of British imperial policy for roughly one hundred years after the American War, it was not the policy which the Ministry adopted in the 1770's. A basis for conciliation was not found, either on the grounds of an imperial Estates-General or immediate independence for the colonies. The unsuccessful attempts that were made on other grounds, and with which the Earl of Dartmouth was concerned, have been discussed previously. The main purpose of this chapter is to propose some reasons for the tragic failure


of all attempts to compromise colonial differences at this period.

The American historian Van Tyne has written that:

One great reason for the failure of the British Government to solve successfully the problem of keeping its colonies loyal to itself, was the fact that in its governmental system there was no organ with independent power to act and evolve colonial policies.3

A realization of the significance of this statement will go a long way toward palliating the charge of incompetence that history has leveled at Lord Dartmouth. That his personality and character generally rendered him unsuited for public office, no one will deny; but the circumstances which surrounded his particular office must be examined, before final judgment can be made. It is entirely possible that another, stronger individual in the same situation could have done little more than Dartmouth was able to accomplish for the cause of conciliation.

It must be remembered that the colonial secretaryship was a comparatively weak and unstable department in 1772. It had been in existence for only four years, and might well have ceased to function altogether, if North had not been able to prevail upon Dartmouth to accept the position.4 The factional disputes within the Ministry were unusually bitter at this period. Lords Gower and Suffolk had plotted

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3 Van Tyne, op. cit., 68.

4 Knox LSS., 107, Pownall to Knox, 1 August, 1772.
the forcing of Hillsborough's resignation with the hope that North would be weakened and forced to leave the Ministry also. They were aided in this plot by Lord Rochford, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, because he was looking forward to the discontinuance of the American department and the reunion of colonial affairs with his province. Dartmouth's reluctant acceptance of the seals, however, foiled all this plotting. Since Rochford, Gower, and Suffolk could not gain complete control of colonial business, they "turned their intrigues into another channel, namely, the stifling of the American department and the filching of business away from it."[5]

It has already been noted in a previous connexion that Dartmouth lost the right of directing troop movements to the colonies, as one result of the encroachments on his domain by the other Secretaries. Other usurpations were successfully attempted, owing to his lack of force and aggressiveness. Some picture of the enfeebled condition of the colonial secretarship may be glimpsed from the letters of Under-secretary John Fownall to William Knox. For example, in 1773 he wrote that the business of the office was very light, because Gascoyne of the Board of Trade and Lord Suffolk had taken most of it out of Dartmouth's hands. He concluded the same letter with an indictment of Lord North, whose

"blindness, or rather indolence, in respect to the arts that are practised to ruin and disgrace our department, and ultimately himself, is astonishing and unpardonable."6 Two years later, apparently, no improvement had taken place, for Pownall then wrote: "As to measures for America, I know nothing...." Lord Suffolk and his Under-secretary, Eden, knew more about these matters than the Under-secretary of State for the Colonies.7 Dartmouth was unable to cope with his rivals in the other divisions of the secretariat; as Mr. Basye wrote, he never "possessed the full and extensive powers of the secretarial seals."8

Dartmouth's contemporaries noted this failure of the Earl to gain sufficient power to be able to affect policy. Whereas his original appointment had led many to believe that the ministry was contemplating a change in colonial policy, the Annual Register was forced to conclude that "the general system of administration has overborne any particular dissent, and that the plan of American government continues without alteration from the changes in office."9

A word of caution deserves to be said at this point, concerning the use of the term "policy." Not all of our

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6 Knox ISS., 110, Pownall to Knox, 23 July, 1773.
7 Ibid., 122, same to same, 10 October, 1775.
8 Basye, A. H. R., XXVIII, 21.
Twentieth Century conceptions of the significance of this word can be applied to the Eighteenth Century. It is more than likely that Lord Dartmouth had no colonial policy at all.\textsuperscript{10} This would be a serious charge to make in the modern period, when every responsible officer of state is supposed to have a theory or plan by which to run his department. The situation in Dartmouth's day was somewhat different, however. The efforts of King George III to establish himself as something more than a figurehead had great repercussions on ministerial policy. With a view of permanently crippling the Whigs, the King promoted the leaders of rival factions to high office in rapid succession. Such a procedure inevitably caused serious breaches in the continuity of all policies, though we are chiefly concerned here with its effect on colonial policy. The result was, of course, that acts were passed in Parliament by one Ministry, only to be repealed by the next; while a third might reinstate similar legislation within a short period.

When Lord North's Ministry assumed control in 1770, colonial "policy" was reduced largely to meeting each situation as it occurred, and attempting to solve it according to the merits of the individual occasion. Almost all broad considerations of a colonial policy had been annihilated by the constant changing of ministries during the preceding

\textsuperscript{10} Alvord, \textit{Miss. Valley}, I, 238; Thomson, \textit{op. cit.}, 58.
decade, leaving North and his colleagues with only the purpose of upholding of the dignity of the government to guide them.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the formulation of colonial policy was not necessarily in the hands of the Colonial Secretary. The revenue measures of the period, which produced such violent reactions in the colonies, were proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Decisions in the Cabinet were made usually by a simple majority vote of those present, the vote of the Prime Minister, or the proposer of the measure under consideration, counting no more than the others.\textsuperscript{11}

From the constitutional and institutional points of view, then, it will be seen that Dartmouth's position was anything but strong. His influence on policy was also slight. His desire for conciliation was indubitably sincere, but his opportunities for furthering that cause must have been limited to a more tactful handling of measures of which he did not entirely approve, but which might have been even more unacceptable to the colonists, had they been presented by the tactless Hillsborough. Numerous examples of this strategy of hushing things up, or procrastinating with disagreeable subjects, will be found in the preceding chapters.

\textsuperscript{11} Grafton's \textit{Autobiography}, 229 et seq.; Lewis, op. cit., 10.
resigned from the ministry long before he did. There are two possible reasons for his remaining until 1782. First of all, his personal relationship to Lord North must be considered. Dartmouth was North's stepbrother, of course, and had been given a Cabinet post, largely because the Prime Minister felt that he could rely on him for support. With so many members of his ministry anxious to force North's resignation, this personal support by Dartmouth would be very valuable. Even after a specific measure of conciliation, like Chatham's, had been rejected, contrary to Dartmouth's wishes, the Colonial Secretary could not have felt free to resign, because he must have known that North needed him in the government. Dartmouth's remaining in the Cabinet cannot have strained his conscience very greatly, because he might have believed that (although the Government had brought about the rejection of some measures of conciliation) a basis of compromise would be found by North himself.

After the failure of North's proposal for conciliation and the outbreak of hostilities in America, there is still some justification for Dartmouth's retaining the secretaryship. He had every reason to believe that the resistance in the colonies was confined to a noisy minority that would submit eventually to a show of force. The dispatches of all the colonial governors had been thus misrepresenting the American situation for many months. Later, when the
colonists showed every sign of being united, and it seemed that the Revolution would be prolonged, Dartmouth saw the incongruity of his position and retired to the sinecure of the Privy Seal.

George III must also bear part of the responsibility for the failure of conciliation. The King was very fond of Lord Dartmouth, which affection was returned by the latter. Therefore, although Dartmouth wished to prevent bloodshed, "in the last resort he could not induce himself to thwart, or even to contradict, a master towards whom he entertained a true attachment, and who esteemed him as he deserved."12 Dartmouth's own weaknesses, of course, prevented him from asserting himself with the King, but this mutual affection also must have played a large part in his submissiveness.

It is important to know, however, just what the royal attitude on the matter of colonial conciliation was, before the King's influence on Dartmouth can be properly evaluated. The political situation at this time was such that the Sovereign was in control of policy. He not only ruled, as well as reigned, but he led Parliament, and both made and unmade Ministers; so, no policy to which he was opposed could hope to win out in the long run. It is unfortunate that he chose to oppose the policy of conciliation, in preference for coercion, when the violence in the colonies

12 Trevelyan, op. cit., 275.
increased. His personality and character were such that he could not understand American demands for liberty. Their opposition appeared to him as "disorder, if not disobedience."\(^{13}\)

King George has often been criticized for looking upon the colonies as a personal possession. Fortescue has attempted, not without success, to show that this was not an unusual attitude at this time. Other monarchs who ruled colonial empires took a similar view, and other Englishmen, besides the King, took pride in the colonial possessions and wished to retain them. Even the great Chatham would have done all in his power to prevent independence.\(^{14}\) There is, then, some justification for this feeling on the part of the ruler of England that it was his duty to bring the Americans back to submission.\(^{15}\) As he later told the first United States Minister to the Court of St. James's, John Adams, "I have done nothing in the late contest but what I thought myself indispensably bound to do by my duty to my people."\(^{16}\)

It must be acknowledged that by "duty to my people" the King was referring to Americans as well as to Englishmen.

\(^{13}\) Van Doren, op. cit., 437.

\(^{14}\) Fortescue, British Statesmen, 28 - 9.

\(^{15}\) Trevelyan, op. cit., 23.

\(^{16}\) Vide, John Adams, \textit{Works} (C. F. Adams, ed.), Boston, 1860, VIII, 257, for the complete account of this conversation, as Adams remembered it; cf., Fortescue, \textit{British Statesmen}, 32, for an interpretive discussion.
George III was unwilling to fight his own people in the colonies, until many partisans or Loyalists -- "the cream of the population" -- appealed to him for protection from the radical agitators. The defense of these Loyalists was as great a motive as the suppression of rebels. Without them only a naval blockade would probably have been attempted, but when the royalists demanded the protection of troops, bloodshed was inevitable.\footnote{17} Once the war had begun, the King was perhaps justified in his obstinate persistence in continuing it, because even as late as the 1780's there was a fair chance that the Loyalists in the southern colonies would be strong enough to retain that portion of America for the Crown.\footnote{18} To sum up the problem of the King's share of the responsibility, Fortescue has written that, given the complicated situation in America and the intransigence of the colonists, "British statesmen may be thankful that the King took the awful load of this American question on his own shoulders; but they must not suppose that, because he fell beneath it, it could have been carried by any one else."\footnote{19}

\footnote{17} Fortescue, \textit{British Statesmen}, 28 - 9. For further information on the lack of unity in the colonies and the importance of the Loyalist element, see: \textit{N.Y. Docs.}, VIII, 543; Colder to Dartmouth, 1 March, 1775; C. F. Adams, \textit{ed.}, \textit{The Works of John Adams}, II, 350; Van Tyne, \textit{op. cit.}, Chapter XVI; Guttridge, \textit{Letters of Champion}, 48, Champion to Willing and Morris, 13 March, 1775; Abbott, \textit{op. cit.}, passim.

\footnote{18} Fortescue, \textit{British Statesmen}, 31.

\footnote{19} Ibid., 35.
Another important reason for the failure of conciliation was the weakness of, and lack of co-operation in, the opposition.20 It was, as Williams has said, "a grievous calamity that all those who were for tender dealing with the colonists could not sink their differences and fight as one man."21 The Whigs of England felt that they had much in common with the colonists who were demanding liberty of action (as distinct from independence). They believed that colonial opposition to ministerial measures was only a little different from their own opposition in Parliament. Richard Champion once wrote to some American friends that, "...if a Revenue is formed in America, [it] will only be used to strengthen the enormous power of the Crown by adding to the list of placemen and pensioners."22

Even after the outbreak of hostilities, the Whigs continued to give moral and material support to the Americans, on the grounds that it was a civil war and, therefore, Englishmen had the right to choose whichever side they believed right. Ardent nationalists, of course, looked upon this idea as nothing short of treason, but the Whigs continued to term

20 Guttridge, Letters of Champion, 43, Champion to Willing and Morris, 13 March, 1775.
21 Williams, Pitt, II, 303.
22 Guttridge, Letters of Champion, 46, Champion to Willing and Morris, 6 March, 1775.
it an "unnatural war," and a "civil war." 23

Whigs generally agreed with the Americans in their refusal to pay taxes levied by a body in which they were unrepresented. Champion ascribed the theory of virtual representation to the "Enemies" of America. 24 He also noted, however, that many people were prevented from agreeing with the American contention by their personal interest. It seemed so much more attractive to tax someone else, than to levy taxes on themselves. 25

Yet, it would appear, that the colonists were not fully appreciative of this sympathy for their cause among the English Whigs. Champion and Hartley, for example continually decried the tendency of Americans to oppose all England, and their failure to distinguish between their friends in the opposition and their enemies in the administration. 26 Whig affections cooled notably also as a result of the excesses of the colonists. Non-importation agreements and the defaulting in payments of debts to British merchants alienated

23 Ibid., 66, same to same, 5 December, 1776; Idem, Hartley, 252.
24 Ibid., 18, Champion to the Lloyds, 12 May, 1770.
25 Ibid., 50, Champion to Willing and Morris, 13 March, 1775.
26 E. g., Ibid., 65, same to same, November, 1775; Idem, Hartley, 254.
many friends, according to Champion. Increasing sentiment for independence further weakened the efforts of the Whigs to espouse the colonial cause.

Thus, the effect of the Whig opposition to the war is difficult to judge. After the opening of hostilities they "could only seek to end a war which they had been powerless to prevent." It is possible, however, that many of the Whig military and naval leaders would have executed their orders more diligently, if they had been able to believe wholeheartedly in the justice of the cause for which they were fighting. Some, like Lord Howe, thought that conciliation might be attempted at any time, to put an end to the fighting. This attitude, of course, affected the course of the fighting, but not the policy of conciliation during Dartmouth's term of office. Other Whigs, like Champion, continued to communicate with American friends during the war, even supplying military information when possible.

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28 Ibid., 63, Champion to Willing and Morris, November, 1775.

29 Ibid., Hartley, 269.

30 Ibid., 252.

31 Idem, Letters of Champion, 51, Champion to Willing and Morris, 13 March, 1775, et seq.
On the whole, however, the King and his friends were in control of the situation until the fiasco at Yorktown and the Whigs, whatever their sentiments regarding America, were too divided and weak to influence the government's policies.

The reasons for the failure to find a means of reconciliation, which have been discussed thus far, have all had their basis in the English environment. There were other, equally important reasons to be found in the American situation. An examination of some of them is essential in making a final evaluation of Lord Dartmouth's ineptitude, because they reveal something of the "inevitableness" of the Revolution. Whether predestined, or otherwise, the course of events in the colonies led more and more directly and precipitously toward the open break that meant war. Most of these events were totally beyond the Colonial Secretary's control; thus, they tend to palliate somewhat his responsibility in the failure to accommodate the conflicts which they produced.

The lack of unity among the colonists has already been noted. The Ministry counted heavily upon the large group of conservative and moderate Americans who were anxious to resolve their difficulties peacefully and in an orderly manner. This moderate viewpoint began to lose ground after
the convening of the First Continental Congress in 1774. 32 The Association, which was formed by the Congress to see that non-importation and non-exportation agreements were adhered to, forced the issue by compelling members of the middle group to take sides. Conciliation was greatly impeded by this, because men became either "patriots" who supported the Association, or loyalist "Tories" who opposed the ideas for which it stood.33

The very existence of the Continental Congress itself was a challenge to the established authority. It was an extralegal body for which there was no provision in either the colonial, or the English, constitutions. While it was composed largely of moderate men, it was forced by the train of circumstances to become more and more radical, as the possibilities for compromise rapidly diminished. Once assembled, the delegates could not afford to repudiate Boston; but the determination of the British government to enforce submission and dependence there left the colonists no choice, but to drift closer to rebellion and independence. Though the leaders of the opposition in America claimed that they were demanding only liberty and their rights as British subjects, they were following "a path which makes armed

32 Abbott, op. cit., 123.
33 Ibid., 123 - 9; Van Tyne, op. cit., 441 - 2; the agreement for the Association is given in full in Force, American Archives, Fourth Series, I, 913 - 16.
collision inevitable unless the authorities give way;..."  

That the authorities had no intention of giving way must be quite clear by now. Even their early offers of partial compromise were futile. Dr. Guttridge goes so far as to say that all attempts at conciliation were doomed to failure, because they were only halfway measures. By 1774, opposition in the colonies had reached such a height that only "an unconditional repeal of all offending legislation" would have averted the disaster.  

In the year 1774, however, the government -- far from unconditionally repealing offending legislation -- passed the coercive measures against Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Act which altered the colony's charter reveals a most unfortunate lack of understanding on the part of the administration, and proved to be the very step which alarmed other colonies the greatest. To them this act was as tyrannous and unjustifiable as a breach of contract.  

This difference in views concerning the sanctity of colonial charters must be credited to something which, for want of a better term, might be called "institutional divergence." The ideological conflict, which preceded the physical struggle, has been dealt with at length by Professors

34 Abbott, op. cit., 127 - 8, 122, 103, 126.
35 Guttridge, Hartley, 269.
36 Van Doren, op. cit., 483 - 4.
Van Tyne and Miller, but can only be mentioned here. Owing to the differences in their environment and the lack of centralized control in their early history, the colonies had slowly developed certain theories that varied greatly from the British norm in thinking. Many of the fundamental political ideas of the New England leaders represent a transfer to America of the theories advanced by the English Puritans of the Seventeenth Century. After the Restoration of 1660, Englishmen had been inclined to compromise and revert to the older, pre-Commonwealth line of constitutional development. In the colonies, however, the Puritan immigrants continued to evolve their political theories, which diverged sharply from those entertained in the Mother Country. The result was that when Great Britain attempted to establish stricter control and to extract revenue from the colonies, the inhabitants were quite unwilling to allow her to do it.

In the arguments that ensued, each side used terms that were incomprehensible, or carried totally different meanings, to the other. The dispute over virtual representation, for example, is too well known to require detail explanation at this point, but reference to it will serve to reveal the consequences of this evolution of thought. The Americans regarded Parliament as merely a local legislature for Great Britain, while the English chose to think of it as supreme.  

37 Adams, Constitutional History, 304.
within the Empire. Neither side would give way, for to do so meant abandoning its whole case. Similarly, most Americans believed in a fixed constitution, while only a steadily diminishing minority of the English had been able to accept this interpretation, since the days of the Commonwealth. These and other examples of divergence in thought and institutions left the colonists with this choice: "to accept subordination to an absolute government, or to deny the authority of Parliament altogether." 

That the Ministers failed to appreciate the political thinking and language of the colonists is amply demonstrated by the manner in which they treated American petitions. It is unfortunate that at a time of undeveloped means of communication one of the few methods of transmitting public opinion, the petition, should have been treated with such contempt. Franklin mentioned this deplorable habit of the government in these words: "Grievances cannot be redressed unless they are known; and they cannot be known but through complaints and petitions. If these are deemed affronts, and the messengers punished as offenders, who will henceforth send petitions?" 

40 Franklin's Writings (Smyth, ed.), VI, 190 - 1, Franklin to Cushing, 15 February, 1774.
The petition of the First Continental Congress met a typical fate. Although respectfully worded, it contained a list of the principal grievances of the colonists, which they wished to bring to the attention of the King. Lord Dartmouth received the petition and, after reading it, said that "it was a decent and proper Petition."\(^{41}\) He later reported that the King had received it "graciously," but George III only sent it on to Parliament among numerous other papers and without special recommendation. There it lay on the table quite unnoticed, and when it was finally read, it was treated with contempt.\(^{42}\) This contemptuous treatment only frustrated the colonists' desire for remedial attention, and certainly did not further the cause of reconciliation.

Perhaps the most fundamental, if not the most important, cause for the existing differences between the colonies and Great Britain had its roots in the distant past, in a period long before Dartmouth's arrival on the scene. The mercantilistic philosophy of the Eighteenth Century is believed by many to have been the basic reason for the final

\(^{41}\) Ibid., VI, 344.

\(^{42}\) Ibid., VI, 303 - 5, Franklin to Charles Thomson, 5 February, 1775. See also: Annual Register, 1774, 203 - 4; and Walpole's Letters (Toynbee, ed.), IX, #1584, Walpole to Conway, 26 December, 1774.
rupture. Although the Acts of Trade (which had their beginnings in the reign of Charles II) had been almost impossible to enforce, they had provided a never ending source of friction. The restrictions upon shipping, the arbitrary enumeration of colonial products, the constant drain on American specie, and the prohibition of the manufacture of several items, e.g., slit iron and hats, all played important parts in arousing the colonists to resist unsympathetic government from across the water. Even if the Americans and the British had been able to agree on a means of accommodating their political differences, the economic struggle would have continued. Not even the great Whig leaders, Rockingham, Burke and Chatham, were farsighted enough to have realized that these restrictive measures must be repealed.

The economic background is closely connected with the political. Owing to the dominance of the theory of mercantilism in this period, England's chief concern was with the commerce of the colonies. The entire administrative machine had been constructed on this basis. The significance of the

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43 Fortescue, British Statesmen, 24; Channing, op. cit. III, 1.
44 Fortescue, British Statesmen, 23 - 4, 33.
45 Miller, op. cit., Chapter I.
46 Fortescue, loc. cit.
evolution of the Board of Trade, for example, has been discussed in a previous chapter. For nearly two hundred years the colonies were left to govern themselves, with a minimum of interference from political officers in England. The Board reviewed all laws enacted by the colonial legislatures, of course, but when they recommended that the King suspend one of these, it was generally on economic grounds. Colonial governors were usually kept within bounds by the Assemblies, which had the control of their salaries and the control of supplies.

It was not until the need for revenue arose in the middle of the eighteenth Century that England took any serious steps to interfere with the political machinery of the colonies, then, the governors' salaries were taken out of the control of colonial legislatures, charters were changed or revoked, and the general supremacy of Parliament over all local assemblies was asserted, in an effort to enforce obedience to the new tax laws. Not until the agitation resulting from this conflict had already been aroused, was it thought necessary to erect a secretaryship to deal with the political aspect of colonial affairs.

It should be noted that the colonists who protested these arbitrary measures were most insistent in their petitions to Parliament and to the King that they were not asking for any innovations; but rather they wished to return to "the good old days" before 1763, when the control of
their political destinies was in their own hands. In this demand they were justified, even if they were not being strictly practical. Professor Van Tyne has pointed out that by 1760 the British Empire had evolved of itself a working arrangement for imperial organization. It was still too embryonic to be called a "plan," and certainly no one had yet written down its details, but the fact remains. The organization, largely unrecognized though it was, assumed a federal formation. Separate and distinct powers of government in America and Britain "were distributed between governments accustomed to keep within their own spheres and to exercise only their proper quotas of authority."47

This imperial federation had resulted from practice, and it might have developed into the full fruition of an accepted constitutional arrangement, if the British had been able to evolve a workable legal theory to correspond with the existing facts of the situation, and if they had been able to establish a permanent constitutional organ which could have compromised divergent interpretations. If the colonies had been allowed to continue along a line of growth that led naturally and easily to dominion status in the Eighteenth Century, they might have remained within the Empire to the present day. Instead, the British attempted to reverse the direction of this natural development, with

47 Van Tyne, op. cit., 221.
their insistence upon centralization of control and the supremacy of Parliament. These theories did not correspond with the actual situation, and succeeded only in bringing about the collapse of a large part of the imperial structure, since they made compromise impossible.48

In summation, the reasons for the failure of the attempts at reconciliation may be reduced to three main factors: Dartmouth's personality, the inadequacies of his office, and the relentless course of events in America and Great Britain which drove all before it toward an open conflict. There are doubtlessly other causes for the American Revolution, but they cannot be considered here, since they bear only an indirect relationship to the attempts to find a basis of amicable settlement.

The ineptitude of the Earl of Dartmouth as a colonial conciliator was marked. His qualities of honesty, piety, and sympathy for the colonists should have enabled him to accomplish much; but his negative characteristics, including his lack of aggressiveness, force and decision, caused him to fail completely. He had identified himself with the colonial cause by his opposition to the Stamp Act and all subsequent colonial taxation before 1772. When Dartmouth

48 Ibid., 222.
found himself in a position of responsibility, however, he appeared without a constructive policy of his own, and even permitted himself to be used to further other men's policies that were detrimental to American interest. His tactful reception of colonial agents certainly proved his desire to aid the Colonies, but he apparently was unable to extend them more concrete assistance than his good wishes.

Theoretically, Lord Dartmouth should have been in a position to render great service to the cause of reconciliation. Throughout its long course of development, the office of Secretary of State had gained great powers. From a mere clerk's position in the Fifteenth Century, the Secretaryship had grown to such a point that an eighteenth Century Secretary of State was an extremely powerful figure, able to deal with many matters, both foreign and domestic, and to affect policy in innumerable phases of government. As a "channel of communications" between the Sovereign and his subjects, the Secretary had charge of all manner of petitions, dispatches, and letters to and from the King. Through his privilege of rendering the King advice and through his ability to execute many items of royal business, he could make his influence felt and respected.

Furthermore, it had become generally acknowledged that the secretariat was a unity, regardless of how many individuals shared the office. The division into Northern and Southern Province in the Seventeenth Century had been
merely a matter of administrative convenience. Each Secretary of State was considered, in theory, to have fully as much authority as another. Unfortunately, the theory did not conform to practice in Lord Dartmouth's case.

Because of the political compromise that had been necessary in order to bring into being the colonial secretaryship in 1763, the opposition always looked upon the office as a sinecure position. This lack of respect was shared by Dartmouth's colleagues in the secretariat, who were jealous of the powers they were supposed to share with him and who preferred not to regard him as a real Secretary of State. They attacked his domain at every possible opportunity, usurped powers belonging to him, and hindered in many ways the effective execution of what little authority he retained. Such interdepartmental strife inevitably had its effects on the conduct of governmental business in that critical period, 1772 - 1775.

The coincidence of an amiable, but weak, individual like Dartmouth and an important, but rapidly declining, office, would have had serious effects on the execution of government policy at any period. In addition to these two fatally weak links in the chain, which was supposed to preserve the union between England and the colonies, one need only recall the seriousness of the situation at this time, in order to realize that a policy of conciliation could scarcely have succeeded.
The British Government, actively led then by a King for the first time in seventy years, was growing more and more impatient with the rebellious and unreasonable Americans. The colonists, on the other hand, were moving step by step away from a possible compromise, and closer to open warfare, for the protection of what they regarded as sacred principles. Such a situation required not only sympathetic and patient understanding, but also rapid and well-advised decisions -- neither of which was forthcoming from the British Ministry. As a result, the situation rapidly grew worse, passed beyond the control of the individuals, and eventuated in bloodshed and destruction.

Whether or not the War for American Independence was inevitable, is for others to decide. Suffice it to say here that it is too much to expect that such a serious situation, as existed in the 1770's, could have been accommodated by a weak and vacillating Lord Dartmouth in an undermined and powerless secretaryship for the colonies.

FINIS
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APPENDIX:

a Table of the Names of
the Secretaries of State in the Eighteenth Century

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Newcastle

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**Note:** This table is designed to show the time relationship of the Secretaries of State in the Eighteenth Century. The name "Dartmouth" after the date "1772," for example, indicates that Lord Dartmouth assumed office in that year, and retained the colonial seals until 1775, when Lord George Germain succeeded him. For more precise information, regarding months, days, full names and titles, reference is made to Mark Thomson's *Secretaries of State*, Appendix XII, pp. 180 - 185.