

THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, THE MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM,
AND MERCANTILE INTERESTS IN LONDON AND THE PROVINCES
1761 - 68.

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABBREVIATIONS IN FOOTNOTES.

In the footnotes of this work the abbreviation op. cit. is used to refer to a book and the abbreviation loc. cit. to an article in a periodical, or an essay in a collection of essays where the full title of the book, article, or essay has been cited in an earlier footnote. Where more than one book, article, or essay by the same author is referred to during the course of the work a shortened title is used after the first reference, to make clear to which work the particular footnote refers.

INTRODUCTORY.

1

Writing in 1935 Professor R. A. Humphreys observed that the activities of mercantile groups in England during the American Revolutionary period had not been explored and that there was a need to know more about the relations between trade and politics and the formation of policy.¹ Later scholars, notably Dr. Lucy Sutherland who has explored the relationship between mercantile groups and the first Rockingham administration and the part played by the City and East India Company in politics² and Professor Sosin who has assessed the mercantile influence³ on British colonial policy between 1763 and 1775 have begun to supply the need to which Professor Humphreys drew attention.

This thesis attempts a further contribution in this field, investigating the relations between the Duke of Newcastle,⁴ the Marquis of Rockingham and mercantile classes in London and the provinces during the years 1761-1768 with particular reference to American affairs. By doing this it is hoped to

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1. "British Colonial Policy and the American Revolution" by R. A. Humphreys, History, Vol. XIX, London, 1934-35, pp. 46, 48. By 1760 merchants were specialising in different branches of trade and thus it becomes possible to distinguish American merchants.
 2. See particularly "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry" by L. S. Sutherland English Historical Review, Vol. XLVIV, London, 1932, pp. 46-72. "The City of London and the Devonshire-Pitt Administration 1756-1757" by L. S. Sutherland, Raleigh Lecture in History, 1960 Proceedings of the British Academy, Oxford 1961, pp. 147-193; The City of London and the Opposition to Government 1768-1774 by L. S. Sutherland, The Creighton Lecture in History 1958, London 1959; The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics by L. S. Sutherland Oxford 1952.
 3. Agents and Merchants by Jack M. Sosin, Lincoln (Nebraska) 1965.
 4. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (ed. W. Little, H. W. Fowler, J. Coulson, Oxford 1933, Vol. 1, p. 1235) defines a

gain an overall picture for a limited period of the relations between the merchants and one political group both when they were in and out of office. Beginning with the fall of Pitt from office in October 1761 and ending with the death of Newcastle in November 1768 this work attempts to trace the relationship of Pitt's partner, Newcastle, and his political heir Rockingham, with the merchants, particularly those trading to America, and to assess the effect that mercantile opinion and commercial considerations had upon ^{the} party which came to be called the Rockingham Whigs and also upon the American policy of this party. In particular from the point where the 'monied interest' supported the Duke of Newcastle, and the

4. (contd) merchant as :-

- "(a) one who buys and sells commodities for profit; orig(inally) gen(eral) but early restricted to wholesale traders, esp(ecially) those trading with foreign countries.
- (b) a shopkeeper.

In the eighteenth century the term merchant was confined to a wholesale trader and it is in this sense that the term is used in this work. These traders dealt in a wide variety of goods although they could specialise in one or a few varieties.

In his major historical works Sir Lewis Namier defines merchants as widely as possible, comprehending within the classification anyone connected with trade including bankers, and manufacturers but excluding country gentlemen who owned businesses and ran them as a "side-line" or subsidiary interest. Gerritt P. Judd, however, in attempting a detailed classification of the composition of the House of Commons defines merchants as narrowly as possible and places in other categories anybody who was not a businessman "trading within England as well as with Europe and continental America" See The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III by Sir Lewis Namier, 2nd edn. London 1957, p.49 and Members of Parliament 1734-1832 by Gerritt P. Judd, IV, New Haven U.S.A. 1965 p.89 et passim.

By the use of the term mercantile classes I hope to make it quite clear that the definition of the word merchant for the purpose of this thesis is as broad as possible, and

commercial interest William Pitt this thesis endeavours to trace the emergence of the American merchants as a separate group in politics at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, the cementing of the alliance of this group with the Rockingham Whigs, and the gradual loss of the support of the 'monied interest' with the entry of the party into opposition and the death of Newcastle in 1768. In the process it is hoped to do something to dispel the notion that Rockingham himself was a mere nonentity and that Burke was the real driving force behind the Rockingham Whigs, for Rockingham's ability in political affairs and his assiduity and political conscientiousness are often apparent in his dealings with the mercantile classes. In 1766 in A Short Account of a Late Short Administration Burke stated that the first Rockingham administration

"was the first which proposed and encouraged publick meetings and free consultations of merchants from all parts of the kingdom; by which means the truest lights have been received; great benefits have been already derived to manufactures and commerce, and the most extensive prospects are opened for further improvement." 6

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- 4 (contd.) means, as in Namier's definition, a man whose main method of getting his living was by wholesale trade of some kind.
5. Dr. Sutherland has drawn a distinction between the merchants of London who were primarily interested in trade but who were also interested in financing the government, and the 'monied interest' who were chiefly interested in government finance. See "The City of London and the Devonshire-Pitt Administration 1756-1757" Raleigh Lecture in History 1960, loc. cit. pp. 148, 164, 166.
6. The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, London 1815, Vol. II, p. 4.

and in his Speech on His Arrival at Bristol 1774 he said

"I have ever had my house open, and my poor services ready, for traders and manufacturers of every denomination."

and that

"Commerce...has ever been a very particular and a very favourite object of my study, in its principles, and in its details." 7

It is thus interesting to investigate the relations between the merchants and the party which claimed to represent them, especially in the years 1761-1768 for 1763 is generally accepted as the climax of the first British Empire, essentially a mercantile empire, and the years 1763-1768 saw the beginnings of the contest which was to bring this empire crashing in ruins.

Contemporaries and historians of the period have acknowledged that this was a period of rising mercantile representation in the House of Commons. 8 Thus as well as noting the effect of the mercantile alliance on the Rockingham Whigs it is interesting to note the influence and effect of the alliance with the Rockingham Whigs on the careers of the merchants concerned, and to assess what they hoped to gain and did gain through alliance with the Rockingham Whigs.

All the political groups of the era had their following of merchant members of Parliament, but there were other merchants outside Parliament with whom Newcastle and Rockingham discussed political affairs especially when the

7. Ibid. Vol. III, p. 8.

8. See "The Stamp Act in British Politics" by W. T. Laprade, American Historical Review Vol. XXXV, No. 4, New York 1930 p. 735. Members of Parliament 1734-1832 by Gerritt P. Judd, IV, New Haven, U. S. A. 1955, p. 89, et passim.

issue was of a politico-economic nature. At times, if not always intentionally, Newcastle and Rockingham called on expert opinion on matters of trade about which they desired more information. Sometimes, indeed, mercantile experts seem to have formed their advice upon Rockingham and Newcastle. The Stamp Act Crisis is an admirable example of both circumstances.

Contact upon matters of trade with the Rockingham Whigs often seem to have led to a merchant embarking upon a political career, if he had not already done so. In many cases the merchants concerned were drawn under the political wing of the Newcastle-Rockingham group, but in others the merchants concerned stayed outside politics, sometimes they were only consulted once, but sometimes they became advisers to the Rockingham Whigs on one particular aspect of trade.

9. See my Barlow Trecothick and other Associates of Lord Rockingham during the Stamp Act Crisis 1765-66 unpublished M.A. thesis in Sheffield University Library 1957, especially the introduction, conclusion and section on Trecothick. Also my "Barlow Trecothick" in Bulletin of the British Association for American Studies New Series Nos. 1 and 2, Nottingham, 1958-1959, pp. 36-49 (No. 1) 29-39 (No. 2).

THE RISE IN MERCANTILE REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
1761-1768.

After the general election of 1754 contemporaries noted that in the new Parliament there would be a greater number of merchants than ever before.¹⁰ Mr. John B. Owen lists forty-one merchants who were in Parliament in 1741 and states that at least eighteen of these ranged themselves behind the opposition¹¹ leaders. As nearly half of the merchants according to Owen's classification were willing to oppose the government there is some justification for concluding that Rockingham and Newcastle had a mercantile following even when out of office and that merchants were not always prepared to support administration for economic gain.

Sir Lewis Namier states that fifty merchants were elected to Parliament in the 1761 general election and thirty-seven of these had extensive business dealings with the government.¹² Although Namier does not list the names of the fifty men that he classifies as merchants, the names of at least thirty can be discovered from the pages immediately following this statement and from the appropriate pages in his England in the Age of the American Revolution.¹³ It is not clear whether Namier's and Owen's classifications agree and neither appear to agree¹⁴ with Judd, so it is impossible to draw any definite conclusions

10. See Laprade loc. cit. p. 735 quoting Public Advertiser, 8 May 1754.

11. The Rise of the Pelham's by John B. Owen, London, 1957 p. 59.

12. Namier op. cit. pp. 48-49.

13. Ibid. pp. 49-58. See also England in the Age of the American Revolution, by Sir Lewis Namier, 2nd edn., London 1961, p. 241 et seq.

14. op. cit. passim.

on the proportionate rise in the number of merchants in the House of Commons between 1741 and 1761 due to the difficulty in obtaining a common classification. Judd, however, provides the following analysis of M.P's with commercial interests¹⁵

	<u>1754</u>	<u>1761</u>	<u>1768</u>
Bankers	13	13	10
Manufacturers	-	1	2
Nabobs	4	5	15
India Interest	9	10	8
West Indies Merchants	4	4	3
West Indies Interest	16	20	19
Merchants	24	23	29
Total	<u>70</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>86</u>
Names appearing in more than one classification	2	2	1
Net Total	<u>68</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>85</u>

These figures, although they differ substantially from those quoted by Owen and Namier do show a progressive rise in commercial representation during the period covered by this thesis,¹⁶ and if the Nabobs and manufacturers are disregarded an approximation to Namier's figures for 1761 is reached.

Judd assigns as many merchants as possible to other groups thus leaving in his 'merchant' category those engaged in what he describes as "miscellaneous business pursuits".¹⁷ He states that it is difficult to differentiate between merchants and bankers in the early years of the eighteenth century but tentatively concludes that banking was emerging as an entirely separate profession by 1750.¹⁸ A nabob Judd defines as " a British citizen who had lived in the Orient usually but not always in the East India Company's service and mainly for profit...."¹⁹

15. Op. cit. p. 89.

16. For the year 1741 when Owen quotes 41 Judd's total is 68.

17. Judd op. cit. p. 59.

18. Ibid. p. 61.

19. Ibid. p. 64.

His definition of members in the India interest, which includes East India Company Directors, large shareholders and shipowners²⁰ has more of a commercial flavour. Judd also states that his "members in the West India Interest" were mainly absentee owners²¹ of Caribbean estates.

According to the definition of merchant accepted for use it is perhaps not technically correct to include in Judd's classification bankers, manufacturers and nabobs as members of the mercantile classes and it is the rise (300 per cent between 1761 and 1768) in the number of Nabobs sitting that mainly account for the rise in commercial members during these years. However it can be seen that there was a rise in the number of merchants between 1761 and 1768, slighter than it looks at first sight but still significant.

This expansion in mercantile representation corresponds with the growth of trade that was going on at this time. Professor Werner Schlote notes that before 1776 British foreign trade increased slowly and that there was considerable fluctuation due to wars. After the War of American Independence Professor Schlote contends that this rate of increase was much greater. He argues that it is the 'rate of expansion' of trade that is really important, defining this as the growth of overseas trade in relation to the size of the population, for, Professor Schlote contends, there is a genuine growth only if such growth is greater than the population. He prints the statistics in the table overleaf comparing growth in the literal sense with the

20. Ibid. p. 65.

21. Ibid. p. 67.

rate of expansion. Some correlation between this rate of expansion and the slight increase in mercantile representation can be noticed.

Tables of Annual Average Percentage Increase in the 'Rate of Growth' and the 'Rate of expansion' of volume of British

Overseas Trade. 22

(a) Rate of Growth

	Imports.	Exports.	Re-exports.	Turnover.
1700-1770	1.2	1.2	-	1.2
1780-1800	5.5	6.1	-	5.8

(b) Rate of Expansion.

	Imports.	Exports.	Re-exports.	Turnover.
1700-1770	0.7	0.7	-	0.7
1780-1800	2.6	3.2	-	3.0

In an era of heightened interest in scientific and industrial matters which acted as a prelude to the rapid increase of industrialisation which was to take place at the end of the eighteenth century and in an era when the first British Empire, essentially a mercantile empire, was coming to its climax, the rise in mercantile representation is scarcely surprising. But the increase of representation, as will be seen, cannot be disassociated from the increasing contact between the Newcastle

22. See Britain's Overseas Trade from the 1700's to the 1930's by Werner Schlote, transld by W.G. Henderson and W.H. Chaloner, Oxford 1952, pp.41-42.

and Rockingham Whigs and the mercantile classes.

Through entering Parliament merchants often hoped to gain government contracts, and through long service in the House, social advancement for their families, although there were some exceptions to this as some merchants were genuinely interested and more active in the political spheres than was necessary for their own social and economic advancement, for men are often motivated by other principles and ideals than those which concern their own pockets, they were generally far more interested in becoming landed gentry than in a political
23
career.

As a result the association of Newcastle and Rockingham with a merchant was often short-lived and contact with particular merchants lasted for only a certain political period, and when another political crisis emerged and different political and economic factors were involved Newcastle and Rockingham might be found to be associated with an entirely different commercial group. Rockingham and Newcastle came into contact with merchants because they desired help in the political sphere. The merchants for the most part demanded help in the economic sphere. So a politico-economic alliance led to the advantage of both parties, both had something to give and both hoped to gain something. Thus the bulk of the merchants turned to the Rockingham Whigs when in opposition only when they despaired of the administration,

23. See Namier, Structure of Politics pp. 48-51; England in the Age of the American Revolution pp. 5-6; George III and the Politicians by R. Pares, Oxford 1953, pp. 15-16, 193.

because opposition leaders had few rewards to bestow. Some merchants, however, who were motivated by principle, adhered consistently to the alliance with the Rockingham Whigs.

THE MERCANTILE ASSOCIATES OF ROCKINGHAM, NEWCASTLE AND BURKE.

If it is possible to gain some idea of the extent of the increase of mercantile representation from Judd's figures, then it would seem possible to gain some idea of the mercantile contacts of Rockingham, Newcastle and Burke, Rockingham's secretary, by making a comparison between the men who appear in Judd's list as members of the commercial classes and the correspondents of Rockingham, Newcastle and Burke.

Table I. 24

Newcastle's Mercantile Correspondents.
(Members of Parliament only)

	<u>1761-68.</u>
Bankers	14
Manufacturers	-
Nabobs	4
India Interest	5
West India Merchants	3
West India Interest	7
Merchants	<u>18</u>
Total	<u>51</u>

Table II.

Rockingham's Mercantile Correspondents.
(Members of Parliament only)

	<u>1761-68.</u>
Bankers	-
Manufacturers	-
Nabobs	3
India Interest	2
West India Merchants	1
West India Interest	3
Merchants	<u>3</u>
Total	<u>12</u>

Table III.Burke's Mercantile Correspondents.
(Members of Parliament only)

	<u>1761-68.</u>
Bankers	-
Manufacturers	-
Nabobs	1
India Interest	1
West India Merchants	-
West India Interest	-
Merchants	-
Total	<u>2</u>

Although these tables have obvious limitations as some letters are obviously missing and others may not be about commercial matters some worthwhile conclusion still seems to emerge.

Firstly, if the totals in these tables are compared with the total numbers of the mercantile members in Parliament as shown in the tables above it may be seen that Newcastle, Rockingham and Burke must have corresponded with a large proportion of the mercantile members relative to the size of their party. Newcastle obviously corresponded with far more of the mercantile classes than either Rockingham or Burke. This, no doubt, was because he was in power for so long, was closely connected with matters of government finance and with matters of patronage.²⁴

Secondly, a deficiency in manufacturers may be noted in all three tables. This must be correlated with the small

24. These tables are compiled from a comparison of M.P's listed as members of the mercantile classes with in Table I the index of correspondents in Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum 1882-1887 London, 1889, in Table II the index of correspondents in Guide to the Manuscripts Collection in the Sheffield City Libraries, Sheffield, 1956, pp. 87-96, in Table III the alphabetical list of correspondents in A Checklist of the Correspondence of Edmund Burke by T. W. Copeland and M. S. Smith, Cambridge, 1955.

25. See above pp. 6-7.

number of manufacturers in Parliament during this period under
²⁶ consideration. It is not true to say, however, that this proves
 that Newcastle, Rockingham and Burke were not interested in
 industry.

Thirdly, among the correspondents of Newcastle the
 predominance of bankers and merchants is obvious. Newcastle
 was closely connected with bankers and merchants through the
 raising of government loans and contracts.

Rockingham seems to have corresponded with few bankers.
 This is probably due to the fact that he was not really concerned
 with government finance as he was in opposition for a great
 part of his political career. The fact that Burke's correspon-
 dents are fewer than Rockingham's points to the fact that
 Rockingham was leader of the party and it was therefore with him
 that the mercantile classes corresponded rather than with Burke.
 There appears to be little difference either between the type
 of merchant who corresponded with Burke as compared with
 Rockingham or the business with which the correspondence was
 concerned.

Unfortunately Judd has no classification of American
 merchants, so it is impossible to tell how strong they were in
 support of Rockingham and Burke but very few West India merchants
 supported Newcastle, Rockingham or Burke. As the North American
 and West Indian mercantile groups were often opposed this may
 well be due to the fact that these politicians were often in
 alliance with the American merchants.

26. See above p. 7.

At this point it seems fitting to discuss the differences in character between the mercantile following of Newcastle and that of Rockingham. Whereas Newcastle was interested in securing and maintaining the allegiance of the trading and mercantile classes in general, as a statesman who was in office for the greater part of his political career, and as the statesman who was responsible for government finance during the Seven Years War, he was particularly interested in maintaining the support of the greater merchants who in many cases held government contracts and who were the government financiers. On the other hand Rockingham was only in office for two short periods during his political career and neither of these periods was long enough for him to build up systematic contact with a group of government financiers, nor were the measures of Economical Reform, (especially Clerk's Act) during the second Rockingham administration conducive to winning the support of the mercantile classes.²⁷ These measures must have seemed to have struck at the heart of the eighteenth century financial system and been anathema to the government financiers, for in the past the merchant in Parliament, who financed the government, had²⁸ very often held lucrative contracts. Government financiers were

27. For these measures see The Second Rockingham Administration by Derek Wall (unpublished M.A. thesis in Sheffield University Library 1956) p.175 et seq. See also Shelburne and Reform by John Norris, London, 1963, pp.226-228 where it is stated that Clerk's Act demoralised existing contractors and encouraged new competitors and Wilkes Wyvill and Reform by Ian R. Christie, London, 1962 p.152 where it is stated that Clerk's Act affected only about 20 merchants, most of whom preferred to keep their seats and sign their contracts.

28. See Namier Structure of Politics pp.48-58.

mainly interested in seeking rewards for their political services and neither of these measures would encourage them to seek these rewards from the Rockingham Whigs. Moreover, in opposition before 1765, the "Wildmans" group led by Rockingham were interested in using their mercantile supporters as a pressure group to assist opposition tactics. During the first Rockingham administration, Rockingham and his colleagues were again more interested in using the merchants as a pressure group to secure the repeal of the Stamp Act and the passing of related commercial measures. The reward of the merchants was to be in the results of the legislation itself.

The same situation persisted after 1766 when Rockingham went out of office. Again he was pre-occupied in using the merchants as a pressure group to embarrass the government. His use of the petitions of the merchants who traded to America especially in 1770 and 1775 is typical of these tactics. As in 1765 and 1766 the reward of the merchants was to be the removal of the present government, Rockingham's accession to power and what he considered to be a more enlightened commercial policy.

If one accepts the division of the mercantile classes adopted by Mr. David Reid, Newcastle's interest in the merchants embraced all three categories, but he was especially interested

29. See below pp. 210-235.

30. See below p. 323 et seq.

31. See below p. 34

32. For this classification of mercantile opinion see "An Analysis of British Parliamentary Opinion on American Affairs at the Close of the War of Independence" by D. S. Reid, Journal of Modern History, Vol. XIX, No. 3, Chicago 1946, pp. 212-214.

in the first, the greater merchants, who generally sat in Parliament and whose aims were government contracts or social advancement. Rockingham, however, was more concerned with the other two categories, firstly the smaller merchants in Parliament whose interests were mainly local, and secondly the great mass of the merchants, often less wealthy, outside Parliament who often co-operated with each other to petition Parliament for the sake of trade.

PART I.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

AMERICAN TRADE AND MERCANTILE PRESSURE.

The use of mercantile pressure to secure the repeal of the Stamp Act by the first Rockingham administration is generally acknowledged,¹ but most modern authorities make only passing reference to the economic slump in Britain during the period of the Stamp Act Crisis.² Indeed there is still a lingering impression that the Rockingham administration exaggerated mercantile distress for their own political ends.³ Yet this was the only occasion during the Revolutionary period when English merchants were successful in co-operating with and putting pressure on an administration to secure the nullification of legislation considered detrimental to their commerce with the American colonies. Never again were the merchants so vociferous. Never was mercantile agitation so highly organised.

It is interesting to examine Britain's commerce with the American colonies during the Revolutionary period in the light of these circumstances considering whether they can be partly explained by changes in the relative values and importance of the trade or whether it was purely as Burke claimed, that the merchants received more consideration from the Rockingham administration than from any other.⁴ These issues also raise

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1. See for instance The Stamp Act Crisis, Prologue to Revolution by H. G. and H. M. Morgan, Chapel Hill, 1953, pp. 264, 271-272; British Politics and the American Revolution by C. R. Ritcheson, NORMAN, 1954, pp. 46-49, 60; "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry" by L. S. Sutherland, loc. cit. pp. 36-72.
 2. Cf. Morgan op. cit. pp. 264-265; Ritcheson op. cit. p. 47.
 3. Cf. Morgan op. cit. pp. 264, 269, 271, 272, 280-281; Origins of the American Revolution by J. S. Miller, Boston 1943 p. 155

the questions of economic factors as a contributory reason for the ineffective opposition of the Rockingham Whigs after 1766 and the effect economic circumstances had on the relations between the American merchants and the Rockingham Whigs.

Five ports in the eighteenth century were chiefly engaged in trade with the American colonies. These were London, Bristol, Liverpool, Whitehaven and Glasgow. In or near these ports were warehouses where merchandise was collected and later shipped to America.

Textiles, especially woollen goods, were important in this trade and by the time of the War of Independence there was a growing tendency for this export trade in cloth to concentrate on London. By 1777 London shipped out more woollen goods than all the other ports in England combined. Besides this many other English and continental goods passed through London, besides those goods that were made in the neighbourhood of the capital itself. Glasgow specialised in importing rum, sugar and tobacco and in exporting Scottish goods. Whitehaven, the least of the five ports, exported cheaper and inferior quality goods of the same nature that London supplied. Liverpool was the outlet for Lancashire cloths, Staffordshire pottery and metal goods from Sheffield and Birmingham, and Bristol exported pottery, nails, salt, cheese and the products of the west of England woollen industry.

④. "A Short Account of a Late Short Administration" by Edmund Burke in Works Vol. II, p. 4.

5. See "The Import Trade of Colonial Virginia" by C. B. Coulter (Jnr) in William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, Vol. II, No. 3, Williamsburgh Va, 1945, pp. 296-298. For a general account of

Under the old colonial system the value of colonies was measured on a commercial standard. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century the ideal colony was regarded as that which furnished goods that Great Britain could not produce herself. The West Indies and the south continental colonies conformed more closely with this pattern than the middle and New England colonies.⁶ Although the latter were a valuable link in the trade with the former and their production of foodstuffs and carrying trade was valuable to the West Indies and south continental colonies, they exported little to the mother country except mast timber for the navy and they could supply little that Great Britain had to buy from abroad. Thus the West Indies and south continental colonies were considered to be of much greater value than the middle and New England colonies.⁷

By the time of the Peace of Paris 1763, however, circumstances were altering a little. England was ceasing to be a regular exporter of wheat and the industrialist, becoming of greater importance, emphasized the view that the colonies should furnish a market for the mother country's manufactured goods. The West Indies with its slowly increasing population could not offer so large a market for British manufactures as the mainland colonies which were rapidly expanding. Moreover the

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5. (contd) the value of colonial trade see "A Quantitative Approach to the study of the effects of British Imperial Policy upon Colonial Welfare, Some Preliminary Findings" by R.P. Thomas, in The Journal of Economic History Vol. XXV, New York, 1965, p. 615 et seq.
6. For an estimation of the value of the West Indies as colonies and their trade with other colonies see Capitalism and Slavery by E. Williams, London 1964, pp. 51-57, 108.
7. See England and America - Rivals in the American Revolution by C.H. Van Tyne, Cambridge 1927, p. 35.

textile industry was among the first to develop and the North American colonies were especially valuable as a market for this industry, for continental Europe could supply itself with woollen goods and there was only a small market in the tropical West Indies. Finally the landed classes because they owned land and sheep were interested in the woollen industry, and the Peace of Paris, when Britain kept Canada and returned Guadeloupe to the French was a triumph for the industrialist and landed gentleman⁸ rather than the merchant.

The changing attitude of the industrialists and landed interest towards the North American mainland colonies was, however, bound to be reflected by the merchants. They had to sell the goods to the North American market and it was the British export trade that was most affected by British political measures and American resistance. The merchants no doubt hoped to make significant profit from the new development in the American trade, but before the trade really had time to mature it was adversely affected by the measures that led up to the War of American Independence, for less than two years after the definitive peace treaty of 1763 was signed George Grenville's American Stamp Act was passed in 1765.

The trade of Great Britain with the North American mainland

8. See British Colonial Policy 1754-1766 by G. L. Beer, New York, 1907, pp. 134-140 where Beer states that up to 1750 colonies were not really considered important as markets, but it is interesting to note that Joshua Gee in his The Trade and Navigation of Great Britain Considered London 1729, p. 21 was considering the colonies valuable as markets. See also The Mississippi Valley in British Politics by C. W. Alvord, Cleveland U. S. A. 1917, Vol. 1, p. 45 et seq.

colonies during the period of the American Revolution was thus altering in characteristics and importance and because the trade had not been of a constant volume for a number of years it was impossible for the merchants to assess the precise effect of British political measures for they found it difficult to quote figures for a normal year. This became obvious from the evidence the merchants trading to America gave before the Stamp Act Committee.⁹ In trying to assess the precise importance of the trade with the North American colonies the changing nature of the trade if not invalidating all statistics does therefore mean that they should be treated with reservation, and one cannot gain any picture of how great the trade would have been between 1760 and 1780 without the interruption of the War of Independence by comparing trading figures with those of the two previous decades.

During the Seven Years War exports to America were maintained at an artificially high level because of the capture of French possessions and markets especially in the West Indies,¹⁰ and because of shipments to British forces overseas. At the end of the war the American market was the only expanding market for British merchants and the Stamp Act came into operation before trade had time to adjust itself properly to the new

9. Sheffield City Library, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments, Rockingham Papers (hereinafter abbreviated to WWM) R27 'Minutes of the evidence before the Stamp Act Committee' particularly the evidence of Barlow Trecothick pp. 21, 28. I am grateful to the Earl Fitzwilliam and the Trustees of the Wentworth Woodhouse Settled Estates for allowing me to use these documents. The evidence is part-printed in English Historical Documents Vol. IX, American Colonial Documents to 1776 ed. M. Jensen, London 1955, pp. 686-691.

peace-time conditions and during the temporary recession at the end of the war. This made its effect doubly hard. Indeed the reason why the effects of the Stamp Act seem to have been felt by the merchants more than any other American measure taken by the British government appears to have been the peculiar nature of economic forces in operation at the time. There were no alternative markets open for the goods that should have been sent to America, trade had not yet fully adjusted itself to peace, and to find the American market almost completely cut off was a disastrous situation for the merchant. There was no alleviating factor at all whereas in the succeeding crises there were always compensating factors. Moreover, to make things worse, British merchants had taken advantage of the recent peace to increase their sales in America by one-third between 1763 and 1765,¹² and the most uncompromisingly solid opposition that the Americans ever presented to an Act of Parliament was to the Stamp Act.¹³

There is a difference of opinion over the precise effects of the Stamp Act. Professor Ashton has cited figures of exports from Great Britain to America that show that there was a steady but slight decline from 1764 to 1766 and

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10. Economic Fluctuations in England 1700-1800 by T. S. Ashton, London, 1960, p. 60.
 11. Ibid. pp. 61, 165.
 12. An Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origins of Commerce by A. Anderson, London 1787, Vol. I, pp. 55-56, 78-79.
 13. The British Empire before the American Revolution by L. H. Gipson, Vol. X, New York 1961, p. 365.

Schlesinger has put forward the argument that 'the adoption of non-importation agreements added no new difficulty to the situation already existing' for trade with America had steadily been declining since 1764 due to the restrictive commercial measures of the British government, and London merchants were noting a decline in the trade with America as early as July 14 1765. Indeed much the same as in England there seems to have been a temporary recession in the American colonies at the end of the Seven Years War, but none of the witnesses, American or English, before the Stamp Act Committee appear to have noticed this and when looking for specific causes for the decline in trade with the American colonies it was far easier for them to point to restrictions imposed by the British government. It thus seems fair to conclude that the protest of the Americans over the Stamp Act was the culmination of a series of factors, that alarmed British merchants because it caused a decline in trade to America, the origin of which, if it lay in the slump occurring at the end of the Seven Years War, was greatly aggravated by the restrictive commercial legislation of the British government. Morgan supports this conclusion.

Professor Clark gives an illuminating account drawn from contemporary newspapers and periodicals of the effects of the

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14. Ashton op. cit. p. 154; The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution by A. M. Schlesinger, New York, 1957, pp. 50-81.
15. See Jensen op. cit. p. 659. This seems to be borne out by the situation in the iron industry. See Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution by T. S. Ashton, Manchester 1951, p. 132.
16. Morgan op. cit. p. 264.

Stamp Act on British trade. She states that before December 1765 the value of countermanded American orders was £700,000 and existing debts were not being paid. All other orders were conditional upon the repeal of the Stamp Act. In the circumstances very few British merchants ordered goods from the manufacturers and the manufacturers consequently were as hard hit as the merchants. It was not possible to develop alternative markets immediately for each market had its own peculiarities and goods suitable for the colonies were not useful elsewhere. Professor Clark states that unemployment as a result of this was reported from 'every town in England where British labourers had supplied American demands'. This situation was worsened by the high price of bread. Moreover although America continued to send some goods to England while boycotting English goods American goods soon became scarce in England because ships could not afford to sail repeatedly to the colonies in ballast.¹⁷ If the American resolution not to import was not entirely responsible for the decline in trade it at least served to focus discontent upon it.

As far as contemporary evidence goes the fullest source of information is the evidence given before the Stamp Act Committee. It cannot be denied that many of the witnesses appearing before the Committee were chosen by the Ministry and were 'ministerial witnesses' but it is^a significant fact that

17. See British Opinion and the American Revolution by D. M. Clark, New Haven 1930, pp. 36-39; Morgan op. cit. pp. 264-265.

Grenville and his allies had equal opportunity to nominate witnesses and they could not produce one witness who was an American merchant and who could prove that the Stamp Act was not affecting trade.

That they tried is shown by the evidence given by Richard Oswald. Oswald stated that he was a merchant who traded with the American colonies until 1753 and thought that they could pay the Stamp Duties. He had still owing to him considerable amounts of money from the colonies. Under cross-questioning from the ministerial benches Oswald seems to have broken down. He admitted ignorance of the situation in America and made the mistake of saying that he would stand a better chance of recovering his debts if the Act was repealed. When asked 'Do you from your own knowledge know the present state of any one colony and their ability to pay the tax?', he replied 'No'.¹⁸ It seems highly improbable that Rockingham and his colleagues would put forward a witness who gave evidence of this nature and one is led to the conclusion that Oswald was a witness put forward by Grenville, that this was the best he could do in getting mercantile evidence and therefore the evidence given by the merchants who were 'ministerial witnesses' would¹⁹ be reasonably authentic.

18. B.M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff195-8 'Minutes of the Evidence given before the Stamp Act Committee'.

19. For Oswald as a witness of Grenville's see The Committee of the Whole House to Consider the American Papers by B.R. Smith, Unpublished thesis in Sheffield University Library 1956, pp. 2-3. Oswald was later important in the peace negotiations at the end of the War of Independence. See The Second Rockingham Administration by D. Wall, Unpublished thesis in Sheffield University Library, 1956, p. 271 et seq.

As far as ministerial witnesses were concerned the ministry produced five London and ten provincial manufacturers and merchants, together with Benjamin Franklin and seven other witnesses who had recently been in America, and the Journals of the House of Commons suggest that there were many other witnesses ready should they have been required. Barlow Trecothick, the leader of the London merchants, estimated the value of the export trade of Great Britain with the American colonies at £3,000,000 per annum, and the debt owing to London, Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester merchants at the time of his examination at £4,450,000. He pointed specifically to the Stamp Act as a cause of the debt. The provincial manufacturers provided evidence of unemployment and large stocks in hand particularly in the textile industry, including one estimate of thirty per cent employment in the neighbourhood of Leeds.

The Committee found it difficult to obtain evidence from merchants as to what proportion of their trade American business

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19. (contd) It is nowhere stated that the evidence Trecothick and his fellow witnesses presented was not prepared to a certain extent by the Ministry. Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 25-34.
20. See Smith op. cit. pp. 36-37 et passim.
21. Journals of the House of Commons Vol. XXX, 1765-1766, London 1766, pp. 513-602.
22. For Trecothick see my "Barlow Trecothick" loc. cit. No. 1, pp. 36-49, No. 2, pp. 29-39.
23. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 f105. Cf. Jensen op. cit. p. 688. The evidence in the Newcastle Papers (B. M. Add. Mss. 33030) may be checked against that in W. W. M. R27.
24. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff100, 105, 140, 141. Cf. Massachusetts Historical Society Collection VII Series Vol. IX, "The Commerce of Rhode Island 1726-1800" Vol. 1, 1726-1774, Boston 1914, p. 140 Henry Cruger Jr. to Henry Cruger Sr. 14 February 1766.

was or how important American commerce was in a particular area. Only Obadiah Dawson of Leeds and Robert Hamilton of Manchester were able to produce statements of the amount of their trade with America and only Hamilton was able to give an estimate of the amount of a particular area's American trade. Dawson estimated that half his trade was American and Hamilton that one third of his goods were exported to 'America including Africa'. He also stated that one third of Manchester's textile production was for the export market.²⁵ William Reeve of Bristol revealed that the value of exports from Bristol was £500,000 per annum and the value of his personal trade there was £100,000 per annum. William Halliday of Liverpool quoted the value of Liverpool's trade with America at £240,000 per annum,²⁶ but neither produced figures of the proportion of total trade these figures represented.

This evidence suggests that if a town, merchant or manufacturer was engaged in trading with or manufacturing for the American colonies it represented a considerable proportion of that trade. The fact that it was possible to form a committee of 'Merchants trading to America' meant that commerce was specialized.²⁷ Where the slump caused by the Stamp Act was felt it would be felt severely and there is a clear indication that there was a real and serious depression in the American

25. Ibid. ff156-158, 141. This evidence is part printed in Jensen op. cit. pp. 689-690.

26. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff146-7; W. W. M. R27 pp22, 58, 71. part 2 pp1-3 8.

27. See my "Barlow Trecothick" loc. cit No. 1, p. 44.

trade at the time of the Stamp Act for there were merchants and manufacturers from many of the industrial areas in England

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present at the Stamp Act Committee and most of the witnesses were willing to blame the Stamp Act for the slump even if they were not correct in doing so.

With the repeal of the Stamp Act trade to the North American mainland colonies seems to have recovered its normal course until the passing of the Townshend Acts in 1767. The effect of the Townshend Revenue Acts on the trade with America was neither so immediate, nor so severe, as that of the Stamp Act. The pressure on British merchants at the time of the Stamp Act had been unconscious at first. Economies because of Grenville's earlier commercial legislation had diminished the volume of British commerce to America before the trade boycott had become formal: the change at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis was from unconscious pressure on trade to a formal boycott; the Stamp Act had been the culmination of a series of measures that had been detrimental to the commerce of the mother country with the colonies.

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After the passing of the Townshend Acts, however, it took some time for the colonial non-importation schemes to become organised and anything like unanimous. There was, however, a

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28. Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 85, 278.

29. See The Causes of the War of Independence by C. H. Van Tyne, London 1922, p. 164. Cf. The American Correspondence of a Bristol Merchant 1763-1776, Letters of Richard Champion, ed. G. H. Guttridge, Berkeley 1934, pp. 9-10, Richard Champion to Caleb and John Lloyd, 15 February 1766. Cf. Clark op. cit. p. 47.

30. See Van Tyne op. cit. pp. 255-266. Cf. Miller op. cit. pp. 269-281, Schlesinger op. cit. pp. 108-155.

substantial fall in imports from Britain into New England, New York and Pennsylvania between 1768 and 1769. The most outstanding example being in New York where in 1768 imports from England totalled £482,930 but in 1769 only £74,918. In the southern colonies where similar non-importation agreements were entered into by the planters mainly to bring pressure to bear on their creditors it appears that imports from England actually increased from 1769-1770.³¹ Schlesinger confirms this saying that in the commercial provinces imports from England decreased by two thirds but in the plantation provinces they actually increased. In all, exports for the colonies fell from £2,157,218 in 1768 to £1,336,122 in 1769.³²

Due to the time lag in the commencement of the non-importation agreements, and the lack of unanimity about them the effect of the Townshend Duties was not felt so severely by British industrialists and merchants. It was not until the spring of 1768, when debts were not being paid again and orders were again being made conditional on the repeal of the Duties that British merchants again began to feel concern over the American trade. An increase in foreign and domestic markets, however, offset the effect of this on British industry and in 1770 the Russo-Turkish War created an unusual demand for British goods in Russia;

31. Jensen op. cit. pp. 392-393.

32. Schlesinger op. cit. pp. 182; Van Tyne op. cit. pp. 262-266.

"Merchants were more inclined to place orders, regardless of non-importation agreements. Speculators demanded wares for immediate exportation and conservative traders expecting parliament to grant their petitions for repeal wished to have goods on hand to fill the conditional orders. Certainly the weight of business depression fell less heavily upon the manufacturers than the merchants." 33

There was, however, some hardship and goods were left on the merchants hands. It took non-importation to move the British merchants but there was no unanimity about their campaign. Political conditions in 1769 and 1770 were totally different from those in existence at the time of the repeal of the Stamp Act. In the economic field there were alleviating factors in 1769 and 1770 that were absent in the Stamp Act Crisis. Thus the merchants campaign was unsuccessful. By 1770 moreover, some merchants were for the first time beginning to consider whether the resistance of the Americans to taxation on constitutional grounds was justified, and in many cases they were prepared to sacrifice their commerce with the American mainland colonies to the supremacy of Parliament over the colonies for they could see the repeal of the Townshend Duties would not end the trouble in this direction. Mercantile opinion had been split. Moreover in the period 1768-1770 it was the merchants who suffered most, industrialists were affected little, consequently it was a much smaller section of the

33. Clark op. cit. pp. 53, 55. Cf. Schlesinger op. cit. pp. 237-239. Cf. "Boston Merchants and the Non-Importation Movement 1769" by C. M. Andrews in Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts Vol. XIX, Transactions 1916-17 Boston 1918, pp. 241-242.

34. Clark op. cit. pp. 56, 58, 66. Cf. Guttridge op. cit. p. 21. Champion to Caleb and John Lloyd 16 July 1770. Barlow

population, purely the American merchants who were interested
 in securing the removal of the Townshend Duties.³⁵

Thus the relative value of the commerce with the North American mainland colonies was altering once again in the face of new markets abroad and changing political and economic factors.

Following the partial repeal of the Townshend Duties by Lord North in 1770 trade with the American colonies seems to have recovered something like its normal value although the British Credit Crisis of 1772 seems to have had a temporary adverse effect.³⁶ It was not until the formation of the Association in December 1774 that any serious recession was noticed in American trade.

The end of the Russo-Turkish War, however, coincided with the formation of the Association and trade with Europe, especially along routes which the Russo-Turkish War had blocked offset the effects of the Association. Moreover there were now more troops in America to furnish contracts and the merchants who were still mercantilist at heart were questioning even more the motives of the Americans. Thus in 1775 the mercantile pressure that could be brought to bear on the government was again divided, the true value of the American trade was not

34. (contd.) Trecothick when pleading for the repeal of the Townshend Duties before the House of Commons in 1770 had to admit that there was full employment and no slump in trade. See "The Trumbull Papers" Massachusetts Historical Society Collections 6th Series, Vol. IX, Boston 1885, pp. 430-431. W. S. Johnson to J. Trumbull 14 April 1770.

35. Clark op. cit. p. 64.

36. Ibid. pp. 65-72. Cf. "The British Credit Crisis of 1772 and the American Colonies" by R. L. Sheridan in Journal of Economic History Vol. XX, 1960, pp. 161-172.

apparent, the effects of non-importation were again being offset.³⁷

Burke, in his speech on American conciliation stated that the value of the export trade from England to North America and the West Indies was £4,791,734 in 1772. He observed that the trade had multiplied twelve times since 1704 and went on to say that the 'colony trade' had now grown from a twelfth part of the whole trade of the country to a third and this trade 'was the fount that had nourished every part into its present magnitude.'³⁸ In an effort to refute Burke's contentions Josiah Tucker stated that from 1763-1772 the total value of the trade to Holland and Germany was £30,294,126, 11, 3³⁹ while that to the thirteen colonies was £20,061,023, 3, 8. The point that Tucker makes is very valid. In an era of rapid trade expansion the interruption of one outlet was not so noticeable when other export markets were developed. By 1774 the peculiar circumstances that had applied to America at the end of the Seven Years War had ceased to exist and the reduction of the American market no longer appeared as a substantial threat to the bulk of manufacturers and merchants.

The changing value and importance of the American market immediately before the outbreak of the War of Independence is admirably exemplified in letters that Richard Champion wrote to his American correspondents. On 13 March 1775 he wrote

37. Clark op. cit. pp. 76-80.

38. Burke Works Vol. III, pp. 39-40.

39. See A Letter to Edmund Burke Esq. Member of Parliament for the City of Bristol and Agent for the Colony of New York by Josiah Tucker, Gloucester 1775, p. 27.

from Bristol

"The resolution of the Congress to shut up the ports of America was indisputedly entered into, with a view to bring the Mother Country into terms, by throwing such a damp upon its trade, as to raise a clamour in the people against the Governors. It has not had the effect nor will it to the degree that might have been expected. Several causes occur to prevent it. A principal one I have mentioned → the prejudices of the people have not been removed by the payment for the tea destroyed at Boston. The manufactories of the Kingdom have not been affected in any degree to excite a clamour by the non-importation agreement. The trade of Yorkshire, Manchester, Norwich and the clothing counties near this continues very brisk, even Birmingham is not greatly affected. The coarse woollen and heavy iron manufactories indeed severely feel, but not sufficiently, to throw a great weight into the opposite scale. This is evident from the Petitions to Parliament which were in general languid and without spirit, and with some difficulty procured, nay in Yorkshire Birmingham and Nottingham counter-petitions were procured. It is true that of the two latter places were insignificant, but the Yorkshire one had many respectable names. It is still more evident from the behaviour of the merchants and traders who though treated in the most contemptuous manner by the Ministers, have never resented it with any degree of warmth." 40

In the August of the same year Champion wrote again confirming that the situation was the same but in 1775 the greatly increased trade to Russia, Poland and Spain (where the Spanish flota was fitting out) had also compensated for the decline in trade with the American colonies. In the same year there was also a notable recovery of trade with the East Indies and there was an increase in shipment of goods to places from which smuggling to the American mainland colonies was possible.

40. Guttridge op. cit. p. 51. Champion to Messrs Willing and Morris at Philadelphia, 13 March 1775.

41. For the flota fitting out see below p. 36

42. Guttridge op. cit. p. 60. Champion to Messrs Willing and Morris 26 August 1775.

Thus in spite of a decline of over 90% in exports from England to America between 1774⁴³ and 1775 the effect was not so severe as at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, although agitation for repeal of the Coercive Acts was stronger than any agitation had been since 1766. Lexington, and the American drift towards independence tended to lead towards a hardening of opinion. It seems that the merchants feared American independence more than temporary economic loss.

During the war British merchants found it very difficult to collect debts in America and some went bankrupt. Others were forced to diversify their business and adjust themselves to new situations and to seek compensation for American losses in various ways. Some merchants turned to foreign markets (especially in Russia, Germany and the Baltic) with considerable success. Others made fortunes in war contracts and speculations. There was increased trade to such places as Canada and Florida⁴⁴ and the needs of the British Army had to be supplied. The argument that the loss of trade caused nothing but bitterness in England and a desire to prosecute the war, appears to have a certain amount of validity and may partly account for the lack⁴⁵ of mercantile agitation after 1766 in spite of severe losses.

43. This figure can be calculated from Jensen op. cit. pp. 392-393. In 1774 the total exports to the thirteen colonies were £2,590,337 and in 1775 they were £196,112.

44. Ashton op. cit. p. 161 quoting The Rise of the Port of Liverpool by C. N. Parkinson, Liverpool 1952, pp. 124-125. Obadiah Dawson who had given evidence before the Stamp Act Committee appears to have been one merchant who had diversified his markets. See Smith op. cit. p. 209.

45. Clark op. cit. pp. 93-119 passim.

In The Wealth of Nations Adam Smith stated that

"Five different events, unforeseen and unthought of have very fortunately occurred to hinder Great Britain from feeling, so sensibly as it was generally expected she would, the total exclusion which has now taken place for more than a year (from the first of December 1774) from a very important branch of the colony trade, that of the twelve associated provinces of North America."

Smith enumerated these five events as follows. Firstly, that the American colonies, in preparation for the non-importation agreement, had drained the British market of all commodities of use to them. Secondly, he contended that

"The extraordinary demand of the Spanish flota (coming to the West Indies) has, this year, drained Germany and the north of many commodities, linen in particular, which used to come into competition, even in the British market with the manufactures of Great Britain."

Thirdly, Smith stated that the end of hostilities between Russia and Turkey had led to a sudden increased demand from Turkey and that fourthly and fifthly there were increased demands from the north of Europe and Poland. He concluded

"These events are all, except the fourth, in their nature transitory and accidental, and the exclusion from so important a branch of the colony trade, if unfortunately it should continue much longer, may still occasion some degree of distress. This distress, however, as it will come on gradually, will be felt much less severely than if it had come on all at once, and in the meantime the industry and capital may find a new employment and direction, so as to prevent this distress, from ever rising to any considerable height." 46

The year 1778 appears to have been the worst year for the American trade. By this year it was stated 733 vessels had

46. An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations by Adam Smith ed. Edwin Cannan. London 1904, Vol. II, pp. 107-8.

been taken by the Americans of which forty-seven had been released and 127 re-taken. The merchants valued the remaining 559 at £2,600,000 and Macpherson notes that losses in salvage, interest on value of cargoes, and losses of markets on the retaken ships must have been considerable. Moreover, insurance had risen from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent for ships travelling with convoy and 15 per cent without convoy, if insurance could be secured at all in such circumstances.⁴⁷ Moreover there were 675 bankruptcies in 1778, eighty three occurring in November alone. In comparison, in 1774 there were only 360 bankruptcies.⁴⁸

By this time it would seem that the palliative effect of compensating and alleviating factors had been offset and the war was having its effect on American commerce. However, the size of the commerce with America was not sufficient for a major crisis to occur, and again it was the merchants who suffered more than the manufacturers. It was more difficult for a merchant having concentrated his energies almost entirely upon one market to make new contacts and to find a new market for the sale of his goods than for an industrialist who had merely to divert his goods from one channel to another. Indeed, if a merchant concentrated on the American market he seems to have concentrated solely on that market and he was bound to go bankrupt unless he could find new openings for his trade.

It may be concluded that trade with the North American

47. Annals of Commerce, Manufacturers, Fisheries and Navigation by D. Macpherson, London 1805, Vol. III, p. 617. Cf. Anderson op. cit. Vol. IV, p. 223.

48. Macpherson op. cit. Vol. IV, pp. 720-721.

mainland colonies was an important but specialised branch of British commerce. A slump could have serious effects particularly on merchants who specialised in the trade and who could find no other market for their goods. The only time, however, that a slump was felt in its true magnitude was during the Stamp Act Crisis because at this time there was no compensating factor to offset the decline in the American trade, and the slump was more apparent because the trade had been growing very rapidly before it.

At the end of the Seven Years War, moreover, in a period of general recession the effect of a slump in a branch of trade which had been expanding rapidly would be particularly noticeable, and the restrictive legislation of the British government enabled the merchants to point to this as they considered it to be the cause of the recession. This was particularly the case with the Stamp Act.

After 1766 merchants and industrialists who were connected with the American trade were more prepared for a slump and in future crises the cries of individual merchants were unavailing. Moreover, if the Stamp Act was passed for economic reasons, later legislation concerned with an American revenue was passed for political and constitutional reasons or at least conditioned by political and economic circumstances. It was thus not so likely to provoke response in the economic field.

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49. See The Commercial Policy of England towards the American Colonies by G. L. Beer, Columbia College Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. III, New York, 1893, p. 144.

Economic factors were therefore partly responsible for the success of mercantile pressure in 1766 and its failure afterwards. Moreover the clamorous protests during the Stamp Act Crisis were consistent with the severity of the trade depression at that time, and later protests were less forceful because the trade to the colonies was becoming of secondary importance. The recovery of the trade after the repeal of the Stamp Act and the pattern of American trade after 1766 points to the effectiveness of repeal and shows that neither Chatham, Grafton nor North had to deal with a crisis in American trade as great as that which the first Rockingham administration faced. Statistics show that in later crises the decline in trade by value was far more severe but the crises did not occur at a time of general slump and mercantile protest was not so vociferous.

The decline in mercantile discontent can be regarded as a reason for the powerlessness of the Rockingham Whigs. With stronger mercantile support the party might have remained more coherent and able to secure conciliatory measures for the American colonies.

In view of the information presented in this section it

50. See English Overseas Trade Statistics 1697-1808 by E. B. Schumpeter, Oxford 1960, pp. 17-18. The picture of British trade as a whole that has been drawn seems to have been faithfully reflected in the trade of Glasgow alone. See "Scottish Opinion and the American Revolution" by Delphy I. Fagerstrom in William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, Vol. XI, No. 2, Williamsburg Va, April 1954, especially pp. 263-264.

is thus possible to look at the commercial measures of the Rockingham administration from a new standpoint. The facts here presented throw much light on both the relations of the Rockinghamites with the merchants and the relations between the American merchants and the ministries in power after 1766.

APPENDIX - PARTICULAR INDUSTRIES.

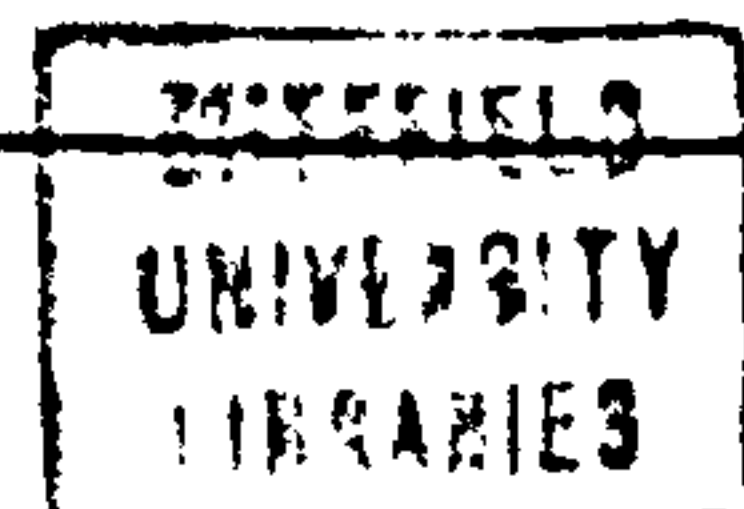
The evidence presented in the foregoing chapter as to the general pattern of the development of trade is supported by evidence presented in specialised studies of particular industries.

Professor Ashton has noticed that the iron industry was very prosperous during the Seven Years War, that there was a slump coming in July 1763 and bad trade for a long period afterwards. He states that the chief single factor contributing to this was the bad relations with the American colonies. Although, Professor Ashton notes, little iron in its unfinished state was exported to the American colonies large quantities of ironwear, especially nails, were. With the onset of political troubles this trade was cut off but he contends there was a compensating demand for ordnance after 1775.¹

Mr. G.W. Daniels has noted that the cotton industry's recovery from the European slump, particularly serious in that industry at the close of the Seven Years War was delayed more than anything else by the trouble with the American colonies. Mr. Daniels contends that the cotton trade was so important that over the American Revolutionary period it was carried on regardless of prohibitions, the effect of this being rather to check expansion and increase uncertainty rather than to decrease the volume of trade.

He also points out that in times of crisis as in 1765-1766

1. Ashton op. cit. pp. 131-132.



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Parliament was bombarded with petitions. This evidence is supported in a further work on Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade³ edited by Professor Arthur Redford and can be illustrated by reference to the statistics for the export of cotton checks and⁴ linen checks 1753-80, published by A.P. Wadsworth and J. de la Mann.

There is unfortunately no modern study of the woollen industry which deals in detail with the fluctuations in trade during the American Revolutionary period but Heaton suggests that after 1770 the controversy with the colonies had a deleterious⁵ effect on the Yorkshire woollen industry and Lipson states that the American War ruined⁶ the Norwich Woollen industry. The evidence presented before the Stamp Act Committee and additional⁷ information contained in Bischoffs' Comprehensive History of the Woollen and Worsted Manufactures⁸ and in Sir John Clapham's The Woollen and Worsted Industries⁹ shows that the pattern found in other industries was repeated in the woollen industry.

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2. The Early English Cotton Industry with Some Unpublished Letters of Samuel Crompton by G.W. Daniels, Manchester, 1920, pp. 86-87.
 3. Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade 1794-1858 by Students in the Honours School of History in the University of Manchester ed. Arthur Redford, Manchester 1934, pp. 3-4.
 4. The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire 1600-1780 by A.P. Wadsworth and J. de la Mann, Manchester 1931, p. 167.
 5. The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries from the Earliest Times up to the Industrial Revolution by H. Heaton, Oxford 1965, pp. 276-277.
 6. The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries by E. Lipson, London 1921, p. 249.
 7. See above pp. 27-28 and below pp. 380 - 384.
 8. London 1842, pp. 172-273.
 9. London 1920, pp. 212-217.

CHAPTER II.

NEWCASTLE, ROCKINGHAM AND THE DISSENTERS.¹

During the course of this work as the relations between Newcastle and Rockingham and the mercantile classes are examined recurrent reference will be made to the dissenters,² partly because a considerable number of the merchants to be considered were dissenters, and partly because Newcastle at least was at times concerned with conciliating the dissenting interest which he considered something separate from the trading interest³ though closely associated with it.

From its earliest days, because they were prepared to⁴ advocate a degree of religious toleration, the Whigs had become the party of religious dissent. The Old Whigs under Newcastle in the middle of the eighteenth century, descended from

1. In the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary a "Dissenter" is defined as "one who separates himself from any specified church especially from the communion of the Established Church of England" and a "Nonconformist" as "originally one who, while adhering to the doctrine of the Church of England refused to conform to its discipline and practice - later a member of a religious body which is separated from the Church of England; in modern use usually a Protestant Dissenter". This classification is used in modified form in Protestant Nonconformity and some Social and Economic Questions by F.D. Bebb (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis in Sheffield University Library, 1933, introductory page) where the term "Dissenter" is used to embrace Presbyterians, Baptists of various sorts, Independents and Congregationalists, and "Nonconformists" is used to include all sorts of Protestant dissenters, Methodists amongst them. For the purpose of this chapter the latter definition is used as being the most convenient.

2. For instance see below p. 85, ^{293 et passim.} n. 3. See below p. 48-49 et passim.
 4. See The Later Stuarts by G.N. Clark, Oxford 1934, p. 97.

Walpole's Whig party, were perhaps the true heirs of this original Whig party more than any of the other splinter groups in existence at the end of the reign of George II. Thus they believed they were the true inheritors of dissenting support and real guardians of the dissenters' interests.⁵

At this point it seems appropriate to turn aside for a moment to consider the position of dissenters in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. During this period the position of the dissenters remained practically static. The Toleration Act of 1689 was never seriously challenged after the repeal of the Schism and Occasional Conformity Acts in 1718. Thus Trinitarians who were willing to assent to thirty-five of the Thirty-nine Articles were allowed to preach and teach freely. The condition that a licence was to be obtained was seldom enforced and finally abolished in 1779. This made possible the formation of Unitarian churches in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. These were definite but modest advances for the dissenters. The decision that fines could not be exacted from conscientious dissenters who refused office rather than take the necessary oaths, was another advance, but on the other hand Hardwicke's Act of 1753 obliged all nonconformists except Quakers to marry in the parish church. Dissenters were thus more comfortable during the period but this ease depended upon the continuance of mild administration of the law.

5. See English Dissent under the Early Hanoverians by D. Coomer, London 1946, p. 92. See also English Whiggism and the American Revolution by G. H. Guttridge, Berkeley California, 1942, pp. 3 and 5.

The Episcopal Bench remained firm against the dissenters and legal, political and economic privilege remained the prerogative of the Establishment, and the Church's privilege on the whole was supported by public opinion. There was very little popular pressure in Parliament on behalf of the dissenters.⁶

Professor Ashton has noticed the close association between trade and industry and dissent and has stated concisely the various explanations that have been offered for this connection. Firstly, Ashton states that

"It has been suggested that those who sought out new forms of worship would also naturally strike out new paths in secular fields"

and

"that there was an intimate connection between the tenets peculiar to Nonconformity and the rules of conduct that lead to success in business."

Ashton also notes that it has been argued that the exclusion of the dissenters from university education and public office

"forced many to seek an outlet for their abilities in industry and trade."

He believes that each of these factors was influential, but he places more weight on the argument that the close alliance between dissent and trade and industry was due to the fact that the dissenters for the most part were the better educated section of the middle classes.⁷ This would appear to have been

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6. See The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman by Caroline Robbins, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1959, pp. 223-224. and The Protestant Dissenting Deputies by B. L. Manning, Cambridge 1952, pp. 1-7. For a general survey see "Dissent and Toleration" by J. Steven Watson in Silver Renaissance ed. by Alex Natam, London 1961, pp. 1-18.
7. See The Industrial Revolution 1760-1830 by T. S. Ashton, London 1948, pp. 18-19. See also "The Industrialists" by Michael Flinn in Silver Renaissance p. 75.

particularly true in the scientific, technological, commercial and practical spheres.

This theme has been developed by Professor Armytage who states

"It was the superior education, rather than their exclusion from Oxford and Cambridge (though the two were of course interconnected) which animated them to become the architects of the industrial state." 8

It should, however, be noticed that the Dissenting Academies at which the nonconformists received this "superior education" was especially adapted to educate men in subjects that were useful for a commercial, industrial or scientific career, probably because there was little use in training nonconformists in the more conventional eighteenth century studies when the normal road to advancement was barred to them.

Because of the close association between trade, industry and dissent it was thus natural enough that the politicians who were the particular representatives of the dissenters should have a particular concern with commerce. Even if from 1756 and 1757 Pitt had succeeded in securing the loyalty of the commercial classes especially in the City of London and to some extent in maintaining this loyalty, this should not be confused with the loyalty of the dissenters in general, and

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8. See Civic Universities, Aspects of a British Tradition by W.H.G. Armytage, London 1955, p. 153.
9. Ibid. p. 128 et seq p. 153 et seq. See also English Education under the Test Acts, being the History of the Nonconformists Academies 1662-1820 by H. McLachlan, Manchester, 1931, pp. 16 et seq. See also Steven Watson loc. cit. p. 11.
10. See below p. 80 and also "The City of London and the Devonshire-Pitt Administration 1756-7" by L. S. Sutherland, pp. 150, 158-159 et passim.

there must have been many merchants among the dissenters who still paid allegiance to Newcastle and the Old Whigs.

Yet in 1756 Newcastle promoted Thomas Secker to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. Secker was known to be less tolerant than his immediate predecessors and on this occasion Newcastle found it necessary to gain reassurance for the
11
Dissenters. On 1 April 1756 Newcastle wrote to John White

"I sent early to him (Secker) with relation to his conduct towards the Dissenters. He has explained himself wholly to my satisfaction and what I am persuaded will be theirs. He has assured me that he is well with Dr. Avery and Dr. Chandler. I shall speak to both of them upon the new archbishop's subject and I shall talk to Dr. Lawrence and to some who are of a different party among the Dissenters; and you may assure them all that I will answer for the new archbishop as relates to them." 12

Part of Secker's unpopularity was due to his advocacy of the establishment of a colonial episcopate. It was his opinion on this matter that had partly served to prejudice the English Dissenters against him, for there was a close bond between the colonial and the English dissenters and Newcastle
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reassured the English dissenters on this matter especially.

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11. See Mitre and Sceptre 1689-1775 by Carl Bridenbaugh, New York, 1962, p. 109. Professor Norman Sykes makes it quite clear that Newcastle was chiefly responsible for this promotion. See "The Duke of Newcastle as Ecclesiastical Minister" in English Historical Review, Vol. LVII, 1942, p. 68. For Secker's activities in the American Colonies see Origins of the American Revolution 1759-1766 by Bernhard Knollenberg, New York 1961, pp. 76-78.
12. B. M. Add. Mss. 32879 f5 Newcastle to John White 1 April 1758 quoted Sykes loc. cit. p. 68. Avery, Chandler and Lawrence were leading dissenting ministers, Avery and Chandler being prominent members of the Dissenting Deputies. See Manning op. cit. pp. 29-30 see also below p. 49
13. See Bridenbaugh op. cit. p. 109; also B. M. Add. Mss. 32879 f74 John White to Newcastle 3 April 1758; ibid. f75 Newcastle to White 1 April 1758 quoted Sykes loc. cit. p. 69.

Secker, however, seems to have learned political wisdom by 1758.

After his appointment he seems to have worked to preserve good relations with the English dissenters without abandoning his personal opinions. As Archbishop of Canterbury he endeavoured to prosecute the scheme for establishing an episcopate in the colonies which led him to being misunderstood there, while at the same time working to conciliate the dissenters in England.¹⁴

This episode shows that at times Newcastle considered maintaining the allegiance of the dissenters as something quite separate from maintaining the allegiance of the mercantile classes. Another example of this fact is in a paper of Newcastle's in the Rockingham Papers, headed "Measures" and dated 2 July 1765 in which after stating how it is essential for the new administration to secure the loyalty of the bench of bishops he writes

"I would also propose that the King's ministers should send for Dr. Erle, Dr. Langford, Dr. Gibbon, Dr Stennet and Mr. Toller, the most eminent dissenting Ministers, in and about London; and acquaint them that it is His Majesty's Intention to give the Royal Protection to the Protestant Dissenters, His Loyal Subjects, and particularly to continue His Royal Bounty to the

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13. (contd) See also The Anglian Episcopate and the American Colonies by A. L. Cross, New York 1902, pp. 187-189 et passim. See also The Church of England and the American Episcopal Church by H. G. G. Herklots, London 1966, p. 85 et seq.
14. Sykes loc. cit. p. 69. See also From Sheldon to Secker, Aspects of English Church History 1660-1768. by N. Sykes, Cambridge 1939, p. 216; Cross op. cit. pp. 248-249. See also A Review of the Life and Character of Archbishop Secker by Beilby Porteus, New York 1773, esp. pp. XXXV et seq. and p. XLI.

Dissenting Ministers in and about London, and that they should for the future, have the disposition of it. This would greatly secure the Dissenters in the Country who take their part from the behaviour of the Dissenters in and about London, their correspondents." 15

Newcastle's particular courtesy to the dissenters especially the dissenting ministers at other times is also to be noted. ¹⁶ It is probable that believing that the dissenters throughout the country took their cue from the London Dissenters Newcastle always showed particular civility to the London dissenting ministers.

The reason for Newcastle's attitude towards the dissenters was probably the fact that if all merchants were not dissenters and not all dissenters were merchants, and although many important dissenters could be conciliated by a favourable commercial policy and by professing an interest in trade there was a large number outside this circle who had to be considered. Many dissenters could vote even if they were proscribed from public office by the conscientious tenacity by which they clung to the tenets of their religion. Thus there could be no better way of conciliating them than by showing respect for their particular privileges that this penalised minority zealously guarded. Amongst these privileges was the Royal Bounty. The normal reward for political services was contracts for merchants, public office and social advancement for others.

15. W.W.M. R1-456 "Measures" 6 July 1765. B.M. Add. Mss. 32967 f180 "Measures" 1 July 1765 and below p.298. For the dissenting ministers mentioned see A History of the Dissenters from the Revolution in 1688 to the year 1808 by D. Bogue and J. Bennett, Vol. IV, London 1812, passim. The bounty referred to is the grant secured by Walpole in

Contracts were open to dissenting merchants¹⁷ but public office and social advancement were barred to their non-mercantile co-religionists. Respect for their religious privileges was an alternative method of conciliation. It can also be concluded that the less conscientious dissenters who sacrificed their religion and found the way into Parliament and into a political career would look with favour when consideration was shown to their more conscientious brethren.

Newcastle, during the period with which this thesis is concerned, was more concerned with "government finance" than "trade" in general.¹⁸ It was not until the onset of the Stamp Act Crisis in 1765 that trade really became a primary concern and then Rockingham was at the head of the party. Thus it can be said that Newcastle's attitude to the dissenters was a reflection of his attitude to the mercantile classes. He was concerned with the dissenters in general in much the same way as he was concerned with "trade". Because his particular concern was with the greater merchants who were useful as government financiers, he was most interested in the most wealthy dissenters many of whom had sacrificed their religious beliefs for political office. His attempts to maintain the allegiance of the general mass of the dissenters after his

15. (contd.) 1723 of £1000 per annum for the widows of dissenting ministers. See The Whig Supremacy by Basil Williams, Oxford 1939, p. 68.

16. See below p. 65 also Steven Watson loc. cit. p. 7.

17. Perhaps the best example of a dissenting family who held Government contracts is the Hanbury Family. For this see Namier's Structure of Politics p. 52. See also B.R. Smith op. cit. pp. 130-137, 288-290.

18. See below p. 86 et passim.

fall from power in 1762 as well as his attempt to maintain the loyalty of his financiers are to be noted, but he still to some extent believed that the position of the dissenters was the same as at the beginning of his political career when the laws discriminating against them were enforced far more rigidly.

Mr. Anthony Lincoln has pointed out that it is possible to divide English society in the eighteenth century into a number of interests. These he defines as landed, commercial, monied, dissenting and labouring. Each of these interests, Mr. Lincoln claims were distinguishable as a social and political entity and he states it was one of the aims of political parties to conciliate these interests in order to increase their own political power.²⁰ Newcastle seems to have accepted a division of society on these lines and this makes it clearer why he was concerned to conciliate the dissenting interest as something separate from the trading interest yet connected with it. In this way the various interests became "a cross-section of public opinion influencing party politics²¹ obliquely and indirectly".

Perhaps the best example of this attitude of Newcastle is shown at the meeting of the Bankers that followed the resignation of Pitt in October 1761. At this meeting the opposition to the resignation of Pitt was led by either Joseph or John Freame, Quaker banking partners of James

19. See below pp. 176, 184 et passim.

20. Some Political and Social Ideas of English Dissent 1763-1880 by Anthony Lincoln, Cambridge 1938, pp. 12-13.

21. Ibid. p. 12.

Barclay. Newcastle appears to have been less alarmed by the fact that there was opposition on this occasion than by the fact that this opposition was led by a Quaker, and the Quakers were one of the most powerful sections of the dissent-
 22
 ing interest connected with trade.

As noticed in the introduction Rockingham's relations with the financial and commercial classes were somewhat different to those of Newcastle, his predecessor, because of a combination of factors. This change in relationship is paralleled by a change in relationship between the party and the dissenters. As this was considerably affected by a change in the characteristics of dissent which was beginning to occur it is not inappropriate here to turn aside to notice the chief characteristics of dissent in the third quarter of the eighteenth century.

During this time there was a slight decrease in the number of congregations of dissenters but the relative decline in dissent was greater, due to the total increase in the population and the fact that the average size of the congregation was smaller.

Geographically, dissent was increasing west of a line drawn from Wiltshire due north to Northumberland with a noticeable increase in Lancashire, while south of a line drawn between London and Bristol but excluding Wiltshire

22. For this incident and the Freames see below p.85 . See also B.M.Add.Mss.32929 f113 Memorandum 8 October 1761.

there was almost uninterrupted decrease. It should be noted how the areas of increase corresponded with the new industrial areas. This can be particularly easily observed in the case of Wiltshire where the woollen industry was expanding at the time.

As well as a decrease in the number of dissenters a decline is also apparent in the social and economic influence of dissent. Artisans, tradesmen and labourers were increasing their majority among the number of dissenters, and this fact corresponds to the geographical areas where dissent was increasing. Moreover, dissent had lost much of its fervour and uncompromising character, although it had gained somewhat in "respectability". As it lost its fervour those merchants who aspired to rise in the social scale became less reluctant

23. See Bebb op. cit. p. 18. See also Robbins op. cit. pp. 230-231. In accordance with the definitions stated in note 1 to this section these figures do not include the Methodists. The existence of the Methodists as a separate nonconformist body can be dated from 1784 when Wesley set up the Legal Hundred by a Deed of Declaration lodged in the Court of Chancery. This document which was to provide for the continuance of Methodism after Wesley's death gave Methodism a legal existence and constitution. See Methodism by R. E. Davies, London 1963, p. 100; Cf. Manning op. cit. p. 21.

24. For the expansion of the woollen industry in Wiltshire at this time see The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries by E. Lipson, London 1921, pp. 233-234, 252-254 where it is made clear that about 1750 the woollen industry in Wiltshire, which was part of the West Country woollen industry was flourishing and expanding and it was only after 1770 with the stern resistance to machinery and the relatively greater advantages of the West Riding that the industry began to decline in importance relatively. See also Bischoff, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 150.

to cast their religious beliefs aside when they became an
 obstacle in such matters as entering Parliament.²⁵

Thus at a time when trade and industry were rapidly to become more important, dissent, the force that had previously connected the merchants and manufacturers with the Whig party was becoming weaker among those manufacturers and merchants who were of the most political importance. It is true that Methodism, which was to become a form of nonconformity, was rapidly growing in importance during this period but the vast majority of Methodists were always drawn more from the labour-
 ing classes rather than from the more wealthy merchants and

²⁶ manufacturers. Moreover a change in the ideas of dissent accompanied its changed circumstances. Until the death of George II, partly because of their close association with the Whig party, the dissenters had usually found it possible to support the government in power rather than the opposition group, for it had usually been a section of the Whig party that was sympathetic to their ideals. After 1760, however, the sections of the Whig party that were sympathetic towards them were for the most part out of power. Thus the dissenters fell back into opposition and by 1770 Mr. Lincoln contends
²⁷ they were in the van of opposition. In the 1760's and early 1770's the dissenters were ready to accept doctrines of the

25. See Bebb op. cit. p. 38. Cf. Namier Structure of Politics p. 47. Robbins op. cit. p. 223. Steven Watson loc. cit. p. 6.

26. See Lincoln op. cit. p. 13. See also England in 1815 by Elie Halévy, Vol. 1, of A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century 2nd Edn. London 1960, p. 419.

27. Lincoln op. cit. pp. 19-26.

"rights of man" and the "sovereignty of the people". It should be remembered that Paine's "Rights of Man" was originally written as a refutation of Burke's Reflections on the

Revolution in France. That the dissenters were ready to accept the doctrines therein propounded is indicative of the extent to which they were moving out of sympathy with that section of the Whig party to which Burke belonged. Even if this movement was accelerated in the years after Rockingham's death there can be no doubt that it was going on during his lifetime. Gradually in the years after 1765 the dissenters

entered the forefront of that section of the population who demanded radical reform, and slowly their demands became too radical for the Rockingham Whigs and gradually the essentially conservative nature of those reforms which the Rockingham

Whigs were prepared to accept ceased to satisfy the dissenters.

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28. Ibid. p26. It must be remembered that in accordance with the definition given in note 1 to this chapter the term dissenters does not here include Wesleyan.
29. Paine's work was first published in London 1791 and Burke's in London in 1790.
30. Lincoln op. cit. pp. 28-40.
31. There were for example many dissenters who supported the Reform Movement in 1779-1780 and an interesting commentary on their views as against the views of the Rockingham Whigs can be gained by studying the relationship of the Rockingham Whigs with the Wyvill's Yorkshire Reform Movement at this time. See George III, Lord North and the People 1779-1780 by Herbert Butterfield, Cambridge 1950, pp. 198 et passim Christie op. cit. pp. 75-103. See also The Association, British Extraparliamentary Political Organisation 1769-1793 by E. C. Black, Cambridge Mass. 1963, pp. 31-131; "The Political Reform Movement in Sheffield" by G. P. Jones in Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society Vol. IV, Sheffield, 1929-30, pp. 57-68 and "The Yorkshire Association 1780-84, a Study in Political Organisation" by I. R. Christie in The Historical Journal Vol. III, Cambridge 1960, pp. 147-153.

Nonconformist opinion on the American Revolution was divided. The dissenters had strong political and social ties with the American colonies and they were for the most part sympathetic towards the American Revolution. There was a difference, however, in being sympathetic towards the American colonies and supporting the American Revolution. When the Revolutionary war broke out two schools of thought among the nonconformists were apparent, firstly the school at the head of which was Dr. Richard Price who thought the Americans were fighting a just war and secondly the other school of thought led by John Wesley, who were strongly anti-American. Moreover Wesley's publications and preaching appears to have influenced a large number of nonconformists besides the Methodists against the American cause. ³² Yet as far as the nonconformists were concerned the American policy of the Rockingham Whigs fell between two stools. Any sympathy towards the American colonists would fail to satisfy those who followed Wesley's point of view, and as Rockingham's ideas on American were essentially conservative they could secure no support from the more radical dissenters until the leaders of the Rockingham party became ready to accept American independence.

Their opinions, however, did find favour with that section of nonconformist community that desired the connection with the American colonies restored to the state that it was

32. See Nonconformity and Social and Economic Life 1660-1860 by E. D. Bebb, London 1933, pp. 84-85 and his Protestant Nonconformity (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis) pp. 139-145.

before Grenville's American Stamp Act. This section was essentially the mercantile section. Thus what was really happening was that there had been a change in the accent of the policy of the Rockingham Whigs. Until 1765, when Newcastle was at the head of the party, the professed sympathy of the party for trade was more a result of the connection with dissent than a cause of this connection. After 1765, under the influence of Rockingham and Burke, the connection with the dissenters was much more because the party set out to represent trade. The situation had been reversed, and these circumstances cannot be considered in isolation from the growth in importance of trade and industry, and the change and decline of dissent as a force in politics. Thus, in the period from the beginning of the first Rockingham administration up to the death of Rockingham in 1782 one finds that the tendency to treat the "dissenting interest" as something which was worthy of separate consideration is far less marked. Burke, for instance, always took great pains to represent the Rockingham Whigs as the party which stood for trade, and he very seldom speaks directly of the dissenting interest and the need for dissenting support, but much more generally about religious toleration as a principle of the party. Burke made it clear that this toleration was to be extended to Catholics as well as dissenters and this was hardly likely to endear him to the dissenters. Indeed, as Burke became

33. See above pp. 3-4.

34. See for instance Burke's Speech on Relief of Protestant Dissenters (1773) printed in Works Vol. X, p. 22 et seq.

the political prophet of the Rockingham Whigs the whole accent of the policy of the Rockingham party changed.

Newcastle had always been a practical politician; he had always been concerned with conciliating men and with the realities of everyday politics. Perhaps his particular attention to the dissenters was a legacy from Sir Robert Walpole under whom he had served his political apprenticeship.

The changing attitude of the Rockingham Whigs to the dissenters is again exemplified by Sir George Savile's support of the dissenters in 1772 when they endeavoured to gain greater social liberty and a relaxation of the terms by which university graduates had to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. Savile took up the dissenters' cause with enthusiasm possibly because of his unitarian leanings, but Rockingham and Burke seem to have made no attempt to use what might have been a first class opportunity to rally the dissenters to their banner. The leaders of the Rockingham Whigs were far more concerned with the abstract principle of "toleration" than maintaining the loyalty of the dissenters. The years

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35. The Rockingham Whigs maintained contact with the extreme dissenters through John Lee who was to be Solicitor-General in the second Rockingham administration. Lee was a friend of Priestley who introduced him to Burke and who worshipped at the Unitarian Chapel in London. It was possibly through him that Savile came in contact with the Unitarians. See Robbins op. cit. pp. 329-330.
36. For this incident see The Reign of George III by J. Steven Watson, Oxford 1960, p. 156. See also The History of England from the Accession of King George III to the Conclusion of the Peace of Paris in 1783 by J. Adolphus, London 1802, Vol. II, p. 43. See also Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham and his Contemporaries by the Earl of Albemarle, London 1852, Vol. II, pp. 223-4.
37. See for instance The Correspondence of Edmund Burke Vol. IV,

in opposition and the death of Newcastle was altering the characteristics of the Rockingham Whigs. Moreover, there was now little point in conciliating interests and in opposition it was more difficult because they could give no rewards to interests that were loyal to them.

This statement is not, however, valid for all the leaders of the party. One, at least, was alive to the value of dissenting support for on 26 April 1772 the duke of Richmond wrote to Rockingham

"The subject of this letter is to inform your Lordship that I have had many applications from the Dissenters in Sussex and in London desiring my assistance in the support of their Bill to release their ministers from subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles. As I think the Bill a just one, founded on reason, good policy and the true principles of Whiggism and toleration I have promised to support it. I conclude you have had like applications, and am persuaded that your giving it a warm support will greatly recommend you to that weighty body of men, the Dissenters, who all over England are very powerful, and who stick pretty much together. I confirm I wish you the more to be well with them, as their religious principles and our political ones are so very similar, and most probably will make us generally act together.

I wish, therefore, you would see some of their leading men, and write to as many Lords as you possibly can to attend for I understand the scheme of the Ministry is to throw it (the Bill) out in the House of Lords by the Bishops. Now the more of your friends appear in the List of the minority the better." 38

If this letter shows that Richmond at least was in favour

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37. (contd.) July 1778- June 1782 ed. John A. Woods, Cambridge 1963, p. 83, et seq Edmund Burke to John Erskine 12 June 1779.
38. W.W.M. R1-1403, Richmond to Rockingham 26 April 1772 part printed Albemarle op. cit. Vol. II, pp. 224-225. Cf. Sir Francis Dashwood, an Eighteenth Century Independent by Betty Kemp London 1967, p. 143.

of conciliating the "dissenting interest" it also shows to what extent the Rockingham Whigs' connection with the dissenters had been weakened. They no longer considered it their natural duty to support the interest of the dissenters. Rockingham's correspondence shows no effort to rally his colleagues and Richmond's plea for regaining the support of the dissenters seems to have gone unheard.

Perhaps this was partly due to Burke who was far more a philosopher than a practical politician and thus was concerned more with abstract ideas and principles. Toleration to him was the important thing and as he came to the fore this same tendency became marked among Rockingham and his friends. Rockingham and Burke thus became more concerned in the ~~statement~~ of, and adherence to, abstract principles.

It can safely be said that had Newcastle been living he would not have failed to capitalise on such principles, for he would have seen that far more benefit accrued to a party in opposition, in using the enunciation of such a principle as toleration to conciliate a group like the dissenting interest, than in merely declaiming and defending the principle in Parliament. Indeed, with the death of Newcastle, the Rockingham Whigs were deprived of their great organiser, for it was his persistence in holding the party together and his attention to detail that above all things could have brought the party back to office in a short space of time if anything could.³⁹

39. See below p. 560-561.

In spite of these factors the former connection of the party with dissent and the connection with individual dissenters was still influential particularly in the last years of Newcastle's life. Shortly after Burke became Rockingham's secretary in 1765, Rockingham appointed Joseph Harrison as his assistant. He must have known that Harrison was a former Quaker and that it was Harrison who endorsed the letter signed "Amor Patriae" that Rockingham received during the Stamp Act Crisis with the words "N. B. The author is a Quaker; Mr. Thomas Crowley in Gracechurch Street". In this letter Crowley suggested an imperial Parliament as a solution to Britain's difficulties with the colonies. This view does not seem to owe anything in particular to Crowley's religious beliefs although other Quakers were adopting a similar point of view. Harrison is more likely to have endorsed the latter to the effect that Crowley was a Quaker because Rockingham was in contact with other Quakers at this time.

One cannot point to the importance of dissent as a significant force from the political point of view among the Rockingham mercantile associates at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, but as is to be expected, a number of them were

40. For Harrison see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 100-128.

41. For this document see W.W.M. R65. For Crowley see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 193-212.

42. Ibid. p. 205.

43. Ibid. passim.

dissenters because of the connection between trade and dissent. The closely knit nature of the dissenting community especially the Quakers, must however have been helpful to Rockingham. The best example of this is the way in which Benjamin Franklin and Dr. John Fothergill worked together with a number of Quaker merchants (especially Daniel Mildred, Capel Hanbury and Richard Barclay) whom they knew well, probably through their common religious beliefs.⁴⁴ Had it not been for closely-knit religious communities such as this Rockingham must have found the organisation of the campaign for the repeal of the Stamp Act considerably more difficult and because his party had engaged in dealings with the dissenting^{ing} interest prior to this time, Rockingham and his colleagues must have gained a certain amount of "know-how" which enabled them to deal with the dissenting merchants far more easily than they would have done.

Another point worth noting here is that during the early months of the first Rockingham ministry, the Archbishop of York sent Rockingham two documents concerned with the establishment of an episcopacy in North America, both in Canada and the thirteen colonies. These documents, now among the Rockingham Papers,⁴⁵ discussed the arguments for and against

44. For this see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 171-192 et passim where ~~it~~ is made quite clear that Franklin still had close contact with the Quakers at this time.

45. The Papers are at W.W.N.R65 entitled "Thoughts upon the Ecclesiastical Establishment in Canada, 11 April 1765" and "Thoughts on the present state of the Church of England in America June 1764". The covering letter is W.W.M.R1-497 Archbishop of York to Rockingham 30 September 1765. For this issue see also Bridenbaugh op.cit. p.254 et seq.

the setting up of an episcopacy, and although noting that there were weighty arguments against an episcopacy in both areas, generally concluded that in both cases bishops were more desirable than no bishops, but the documents presented a much stronger case for an episcopacy for the thirteen colonies than for Canada. There can be little doubt that establishment of a scheme of episcopacy in either of the two areas would have won favour with the Bench of Bishops and Newcastle advised Rockingham to secure the support of the Bishops as well as the dissenters.⁴⁶ It is true that in his covering letter of 30 September 1765 the Archbishop of York had stated that

"It seems too disturbed a season in our colonies to enter into such a plan at present."⁴⁷

but in the period after March 1766 when further and more extensive reforms for the American colonies were contemplated, the introduction of such a plan might not have been considered inappropriate.

There were, however, more subtle pressures at work. During the campaign for the repeal of the Stamp Act, Rockingham was in close contact with Dennys de Berdt. He was not only a colonial agent but also the leading colonial dissenter in London. Shortly after the formation of the Rockingham ministry De Berdt had explained the religious origins of the American colonies to Lord Dartmouth, the new President of the Board of

46. See above p. 48.

47. W.W.M. R1-497 Archbishop of York to Rockingham 30 September 1765.

Trade. Prior to this in 1750 Denny de Berdt had been appointed a member of the special committee of six set up by the Dissenting Deputies to

"keep a watchful Eye....over the design to introduce Bishops to America, to endeavour to prevent all encroachments on the religious rights of the people there." 48

During the Rockingham administration Dr. William Samuel Johnson who was working with Archbishop Secker to secure the appointment of a colonial bishop wrote to a correspondent

"I do know the dissenters plume themselves upon their weight they have with the ministry and their zeal and venom against episcopacy."

Secker reported to Johnson that he sought to send out a colonial bishop but this

"could not be done when you and we were on fire with the Stamp Act." 49

Thus the most likely reason why Rockingham took no measures to set up an episcopacy in America after the repeal of the Stamp Act was the fear of annoying the dissenters both at home and in the colonies. There can be little doubt that he realised the importance of dissenting opinion both at home and in America.

In the campaign for the passing of the Free Ports Act and the commercial legislation related to it, the part played by the dissenters was precisely the same as the part they played during the campaign for the repeal of the Stamp

48. Bridenbaugh op. cit. pp. 97, 245. For De Berdt's part during the Stamp Act Crisis see below pp. 304. Bridenbaugh quotes here the 'Minutes of the Dissenting Deputies'.

49. Bridenbaugh op. cit. pp. 268-269 quoting unpublished William Samuel Johnson Papers.

Act. Individual dissenters were important but they were not treated as a separate "interest" which had to be conciliated. One of the leading figures in the campaign was the Quaker merchant Abraham Rawlinson and his contacts with other Quakers again seem to have been valuable.⁵⁰

The next time that the dissenters became prominent in the affairs of the Rockingham Whigs was during the election campaign of 1768. Here the connection was mainly with the Duke of Newcastle and thus it is hardly surprising that something of the old tendency to treat them as a separate interest becomes apparent again. Abraham Rawlinson, the Quaker merchant who had led the agitation for the Free Ports Act in 1766⁵¹ had in May 1767 pressed Burke to stand as Parliamentary candidate for Lancaster.⁵² Prior to this Rawlinson had written to Burke in March 1767 and Burke had endorsed his letter "The narrow notions of a merchant!"⁵³ This suggests that to Burke, Rawlinson was important as a merchant and not as a member of the dissenting community. When in May 1767 Rawlinson approached Burke to stand for Lancaster, it was as a commercial representative that he sought Burke and Rawlinson's particular religious connections were again insignificant.⁵⁴

50. For Rawlinson see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 252-255. See below pp. 443-447.

51. For Rawlinson and the Free Ports Act see below pp. 427-447

52. For this see below pp. 528-530.

53. W.W.M. Bk 1-69 Rawlinson to Burke 23 March 1767. See below pp. 445-447.

54. See below pp. 528-530.

Newcastle might have regarded this situation in a different light, however, for during the 1768 election campaign when Lord John Cavendish stood for Lancaster as Parliamentary candidate, the existence of the dissenters as a separate interest became more apparent. It does not seem to be any coincidence that it was the Duke of Newcastle, the old leader of the party, who rallied the interest rather than the new leader, the Marquis of Rockingham. In September 1767 the Duke of Portland was pressing Newcastle to use his influence with John Cookson, a dissenting London lined⁵⁵ draper, who possessed considerable interest with the dissenters of Lancashire and Westmoreland. In November 1767, John West reported to Newcastle that the Quakers (most likely because of Rawlinson's⁵⁶ influence) were solidly behind Cavendish.

In this election Newcastle treated the dissenters (in places as diverse as Sussex, Gloucestershire and London) as a separate interest who had to be conciliated.⁵⁷ After an election meeting in Sussex he wrote to his old ally John White expressing his pleasure at having met the approbation of the dissenting⁵⁸ Ministers in Sussex.

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55. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32985 ff3-4 Portland to Newcastle 2 September 1767. For Cookson and his influence among the dissenters see below p. 535.
56. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f1 West to Newcastle 16 November 1767 and above p. 65.
57. See below pp. 534-536.
58. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32984 f330 Newcastle to John White 25 August 1767; see below pp. 534-535.

Thus right up to the last months of his life Newcastle was intent upon preserving the support of the dissenters as a separate interest. After his death the fact that this policy became less influential cannot be entirely accounted for by a change in the character of dissent and a change in the relations between the Rockingham Whigs and the mercantile classes.

Another factor is also important. In the years after the Stamp Act Crisis the Rockingham Whigs ceased to be able to make trade the main ground of their American policy. Although this was always supremely important to them in their dealings with the revolting colonists because of the Party's contact with commerce, as the conflict with the colonists expanded, they ceased to be able to make trade the only ground of their plea for a policy of conciliation. During the Stamp Act Crisis they were able to do this but the controversy over the Townshend Duties forced them to realise that there were for Britain other causes at stake in the controversy with the colonies, besides the commercial prosperity of British merchants. As other issues came to the fore they found it more and more difficult to evolve a policy based on commercial considerations, and as these other issues became more important the usefulness of the merchants as a pressure group declined. Because this association with the merchants was closely linked with dissent the connections of the party with dissent also became proportionately weaker.

Rockingham and Burke, however, maintained correspondence with individual dissenters as they had done in the past. In the 1770's both had extensive correspondence with Richard Champion, a Quaker American merchant and Bristol pottery maker and politician. Yet reading the correspondence one is struck by the small extent to which it was influenced by the fact that Champion was a Quaker. Another example is the contact that was maintained with Abraham Rawlinson. This again does not seem to have been influenced by the fact that Rawlinson was a dissenter. On the other hand when Champion pressed Burke to stand as parliamentary candidate for Bristol in 1774 he added as an after-thought, having described how Burke would receive the support of the trading classes

"The graver sort among the Dissenters will indisputably declare for you. They mention your name with the warmest approbation..."

and Richard Burke later acknowledged the value of the Quaker support to Edmund, but there does not seem to have been any real realisation by Rockingham of the value of the support

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59. For Rockingham's correspondence with Champion see W.W.M. Rockingham Papers R1 et passim. The Guide to the Manuscript Collections in the Sheffield City Libraries p. 88 records that 26 letters were written by Rockingham to Champion in the years 1775-1782. Copeland and Smith op. cit. pp. 138-147 records at least 156 letters between Champion and Edmund Burke during the years 1774-1788.
60. See my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 252-255.
61. See The Correspondence of Edmund Burke Vol. III, 1774-1778 ed. by G.H. Guttridge, Cambridge 1961, pp. 42-48 Richard Champion to Burke 1 October 1774.
62. See ibid. p. 64 Richard Burke (senior) to R. Shackleton 11 October 1764. For the strength of the dissenters among the Bristol mercantile classes see The West Country and the American Mainland Colonies 1763-1783 with Special Reference to the Merchants of Bristol by W. Savidge, (Unpublished Oxford B. Litt. Thesis) 1951, p. 93.

of the dissenters or any real effort to cultivate it after
 Newcastle's death.⁶³

Less than a year later when Burke wrote to Rockingham concerning the Bristol dissenters and the great trading towns lack of response to the Rockingham Whigs' attempt to secure petitions for the revival of the American trade he stated

"The Dissenters are in general perfectly well disposed. The most leading ministers will do as they ought. Nine tenths of the Quakers will act in the same manner as I have been assured by one of the most in influence amongst them. The London Quakers have been hurt by the contact with the Court and particularly by the managements of Your Lordships friend Dr. Fothergill. But the rest are of disposition and opinions very different."⁶⁴

It can be seen by this that although Burke still recognised the existence of the dissenters as a separate body this body had been divided by now, and some had gone over to support the ministry. This split in dissenting opinion may be related both to the change in the character of dissent, which has already been referred to, and also to the general lack of effort of the Rockingham Whigs to maintain the loyalty of the dissenters as a separate "interest".

63. For Burke and this election in Bristol and the dissenters see Edmund Burke's Connection with Bristol by G.E. Weare Bristol 1894, p. 66. Bristol and Burke by P.T. Underdown, (Bristol Branch of the Historical Association) Bristol 1961, pp. 4-10. "Henry Cruger and Edmund Burke; Colleagues and Rivals at the Bristol Election of 1774" by P.T. Underdown, in William and Mary Quarterly Vol. XV, Williamsburg Va, 1958 pp. 14-34.

64. Guttridge op. cit. p. 208 Burke to Rockingham 14 September 1775. It is not clear what activities of Fothergill's met with Burke's disapprobation, but it was possibly his efforts at conciliation with the Americans the pattern of which would definitely have not met with Rockingham's approval and also involved Fothergill in contact with the

Thus it may be seen that Newcastle, partly because he was much older, was far more aware of the traditional alliance between the Whig party and the dissenters, endeavoured to conciliate them to a great extent, and was to a greater degree more inclined to be sympathetic to their interests. This was not due solely to the fact that Newcastle received his political training in a different era. In Newcastle's time the dissenting interest was different to that in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and Newcastle was in office for much longer than his successor and during the later years of his career he became responsible for, and preoccupied with, maintaining the strength of the administration. Also because of his responsibility for government finance Newcastle forged strong links with the trading and mercantile elements.

When Rockingham became leader of the party, however, the the situation altered radically. The Rockingham Whigs were seldom in power and the conciliation of an interest became more difficult because there were few rewards to give. As it became increasingly obvious that opposition was not a short temporary phenomena it became less necessary to conciliate a group that were peripheral to politics anyway, and if the support of the dissenters was useful it could by no means

64. (contd) the ministry. For this incident see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp.187-189. See also "Dr. John Fothergill, Peacemaker" by D. C. Corner and D. W. Singer in Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society Vol. 98, Philadelphia, 1954, p. 11 et seq.

be classed as essential. Moreover the character of dissent was changing in such a way that it was becoming less necessary to conciliate it. As Methodism became important, nonconformity grew less political, more wide-spread, and less clearly defined. The nonconformists ceased to be a separate interest whose support it was possible to enlist.

Finally it should be noted that another factor was the change in character of the leadership of the Rockingham Whigs. Newcastle was essentially a practical politician. His treatment of the dissenters was in general conformity with his political principles. He believed in conciliating everybody and securing the support of everybody possible. Rockingham on the other hand, was mainly as "opposition" leader. He was concerned with justifying measures which had been taken by his party in the past and in which he believed (his constant adherence to the Declaratory Act exemplifies this admirably) and with maintaining what he considered to be the principles of Whig conduct. This tendency was increased because Burke, as a political philosopher, was far more concerned with the abstract principles of Whig politics rather than the practical application of these principles. Rockingham's treatment of the dissenters conforms to this pattern. Thus during the 1780 election at Bristol, Burke wrote to Portland about the dissenters

"The presbyterians are in general Sound, and in our Interest. So are the Quakers to about two or three; but the Quakers are not very active, and where interests are nearly balanced they are much inclined to caution. The Baptists and Ana-baptists were originally disposed to Cruger and continue, through the means of one of their Ministers....much his friends, and ill enough affected to me. I had most of them the last election rather upon the principle of Junction with Cruger than for any good liking to our politics." 65

No longer did the Rockingham Whigs attempt to conciliate an interest closely allied to trade. The dissenters were no longer the natural allies of the party, and Burke ceased to consider them an entity but was able to break the interest down into its component parts and analyse their opinions.

65. Burke Correspondence Vol. IV, ed. J. Woods, p. 270 Burke to Portland 3 September 1780.

PART II.

NEWCASTLE, ROCKINGHAM AND THE MERCHANTS.

1761 - 1768.

CHAPTER 1.THE FALL OF PITT.

At a cabinet meeting on 2 October 1761 William Pitt, finding that only his brother-in-law, Earl Temple, would support his policy of an immediate declaration of war against Spain, declared that he would not be held responsible for anything that he did not direct and expressed his intention of resigning. He formally resigned on 5 October 1761. In this way the uneasy partnership, the basis of England's success in the Seven Years War, broke up. Pitt, as Secretary of State for the Southern Department, had been the architect of victory, the inspiring genius and the great orator of the administration but Newcastle who was the "greatest electioneer and manipulator of personal allegiances" of the eighteenth century had been an essential and complimentary partner.

The resignation of Pitt was the culmination of a series of events to which the resignation of Newcastle in May 1762 formed only an anti-climax. These events had begun with the accession of George III to the throne in October 1760 and continued with the promotion of the Earl of Bute to the post of Secretary of

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1. See Personal and Party Government by D. A. Winstanley, Cambridge 1910, pp. 75-77. Cf. Steven Watson op. cit. p. 74. For a more detailed account of this meeting see "Pitt's Retirement from Office 5 October 1761" by W. Hunt and H. W. Temperley (Documents) English Historical Review Vol. XXI, London 1906, pp. 119, 327, and "George III and his First Cabinet" by D. A. Winstanley ibid Vol. XVII, London 1902, pp. 678-691. See also B. M. Add. Mss. 32929 ff18-24 et seq "Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting 2 October 1761." At this meeting Pitt, Newcastle, Granville, Temple, Devonshire, Bute, Hardwicke, Legonier and Mansfield were present.
 2. Steven Watson op. cit. pp. 67-68.

State in March 1761. Newcastle had been instrumental in Bute's promotion, hoping to find in him an ally against Pitt with whom he constantly disagreed.³

In the same month as Bute took office as Secretary of State abortive negotiations for peace with France were commenced. With some, especially the commercial classes who had suffered at the hands of French privateers, peace was popular but most Englishmen wanted a peace that would secure the unchallenged supremacy of England.⁴ George III, although very anxious for peace, seems to have accepted this point of view.⁵ Pitt, however, made no secret of the terms on which he would make peace. Canada, the Islands, harbours and fisheries off that country were to be surrendered to England and the fishing privileges off the island of Newfoundland which had been allowed to France by the Treaty of Utrecht 1713 were to be given up. England would therefore be completely supreme in North America.⁶ Newcastle was in favour of the peace terms that

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3. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 35-37. On George III's accession, Hardwicke had advised Newcastle to resign but he had been persuaded to continue in office by the King, other Old Whig ministers and City financiers. See The Life and Correspondence of Phillip Yorke, Earl of Hardwicke, Lord High Chancellor of Britain by Phillip C. Yorke, Vol. III, Cambridge 1913, pp. 261-309.
 4. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 42-43. For the merchants desire for peace see "Lord Holland's Memoirs" in Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox 1745-1826 ed. Countess of Ilchester and Lord Staverdale, London 1901, Vol. I, p. 41. For the loss of the British merchants see The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783, by Captain A. T. Mahan, London 1890, p. 318. For the different peace policies see The Peace of Paris 1763 by Z. E. Rashed, Liverpool 1951, pp. 67-69.
 5. Steven Watson op. cit. p. 71.
 6. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 44-45. Cf. Yorke op. cit. p. 269. For Pitt's views on the peace see especially Rashed op. cit. pp. 7, 10-11, 67-69.

had been offered by Choiseul on 31 March 1761 by which England and France were to remain in possession of the territory that they occupied in various parts of the world on certain fixed dates whereas Pitt had been more suspicious of Choiseul. Bute⁷ appears to have been the most anxious of the three to make peace.

Pitt did not want France to have any share in the North American fisheries, principally because he believed he could thus deprive the French navy of its nursery and break French maritime power but also because of the economic value of the fisheries. By depriving France of the fisheries he hoped thus to permanently remove any probability of France endangering⁸ British power in the colonies or at sea.

By July 1761, Choiseul, increasingly hopeful of an alliance with Spain, was raising his terms. Newcastle was still ready to make concessions but Bute was throwing in his lot with Pitt⁹ who was obviously enjoying the most popularity. In the middle of August, however, Bute was coming back to the policy of peace and was now ready with Newcastle to recognise French fishing rights off Newfoundland. This was the critical issue and Pitt was unwilling to recognise these rights believing that fishing rights off Newfoundland necessitated giving the French a naval base there which could easily be a dagger pointed at the heart of British North America. Newcastle had been pressing

7. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 43-50. Rashed op. cit. pp. 11-12. For Newcastle's views see B.M. Add. Mss. 32921 f272, Newcastle to Devonshire 2 April 1761. See also Rashed op. cit. pp. 71 et seq and below pp. 76-77.

8. Rashed op. cit. pp. 102-104.

9. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 59-66. See also Rashed op. cit. p. 75 et seq.

for peace since early in 1760 and every year he had asserted that the funds could not be raised for the forthcoming campaign. He believed that peace was absolutely essential for Britain because the country could not withstand the increasing cost of the war. Moreover he hoped that peace might restore his old power and ruin Pitt.¹⁰

When Bute agreed with Newcastle in August 1761 the balance of power in the government had shifted and Newcastle was in his strongest position since the negotiations started. At the end of August the English negotiators adopted a more conciliatory attitude and Pitt suffered a serious rebuff. He was outvoted in the cabinet and compelled¹¹ to consent to a policy of which he did not approve.

It was now, however, too late to make peace with France for the Family Compact, the existence of which but not the precise terms being known to English statesmen,¹² had been signed on 13 August 1761. France rejected the more moderate peace terms offered by England and in September 1761 the peace negotiations broke down. As early as July 1761 Pitt had judged that Spain was going to join in the war on behalf of France, and believing that war with Spain was inevitable he abandoned all attempts of conciliating France in the negotiations and favoured an immediate declaration of war¹³ against Spain.

Newcastle believed that England could not support a war

10. Ibid. pp. 28-30

11. Ibid. pp. 95-96. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 67-68.

12. Rashed op. cit. pp. 90, 96.

13. Ibid. pp. 90, 92.

against Spain and Bute joined him in this view. Pitt thus stood alone. When he refused to give way Bute and Newcastle were faced with the alternative of Pitt's support and a war with Spain or Pitt's resignation and the hoped for peace with Spain. They chose Pitt's resignation yet Newcastle appears to have been the real loser. To a large extent he was now left at the mercy of George III and Bute. Apart from the fact that he believed that Great Britain could not afford the war with Spain three other considerations appear to have influenced him. Firstly Newcastle had long worked uneasily with Pitt and had often smarted under his tyranny. Secondly he desired to retain power in the new reign and thirdly he was siding with those members of the commercial classes who believed that this was the most profitable time to call a halt to the war.

The "Great Commoner" had long been recognised as the leader to whom the commercial classes gave their allegiance and it is advisable to attempt to analyse and explain his mercantile following and to distinguish it from those members of the commercial classes who paid allegiance to Newcastle.

Mr. David Reid has pointed out the divisions in opinion among the mercantile classes towards the end of the War of American Independence. In Parliament he divides the merchants into two broad groups. Firstly there was a group of "larger merchants, financiers and shipowners" who aimed to obtain government contracts or social advancement from their wealth

14. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 68-74. Rashed op. cit. pp. 100-101.
Hunt and Temperley loc. cit. p. 119 et seq.

15. Winstanley op. cit. p. 77.

and connections. Secondly there were a number of smaller merchants returned by their locality, who did not seek personal advancement and whose interests were mainly local. Mr. Reid contrasts these two groups, particularly the first, with the merchants outside Parliament who very often worked together, as for example when they petitioned Parliament and he states

"In fact the larger merchants in Parliament were not there as a body representing the commercial interests in the nation. They were endeavouring in the main to secure contracts and political advancement which was the reward of assured support to the administration." 16

The division that Mr. Reid is able to distinguish towards the close of the War of American Independence seem also to have existed on Pitt's resignation in 1761. The development and solidification of these divisions can be traced during the Seven Years War and the period immediately preceding it. Dr. Sutherland in a recent lecture showed how Henry Pelham endeavoured to remove the hostility of the ordinary merchants, particularly in the City of London, to "the small group of men and institutions known to contemporaries as the monied interest" (many of whom sat in Parliament) and in so doing how he managed to win the allegiance of the leading City merchant Sir John Barnard. On Pelham's death, however, Newcastle was not able to

16. Reid loc. cit. pp. 212-214.

17. "The City of London and the Devonshire-Pitt Administration 1756-57" by L. S. Sutherland loc. cit.

18. In The Structure of Politics pp. 55-56 Professor Namier distinguishes twenty-two "leading City men in close touch with the Treasury and deeply engaged in Government finance" Fifteen of these twenty-two had at one time sat in Parliament and thirteen were in Parliament in 1761.

19. Sutherland loc. cit. pp. 148-149. See also "The City of London and Eighteenth Century Politics" by L. S. Sutherland in Essays Presented to Sir Lewis Namier ed. R. Pares and A. J. P. Taylor, London 1956, pp. 62-66.

maintain the position secured by his brother, and the approach of the Seven Years War brought the Devonshire-Pitt administration into being and gave Pitt his mercantile following. Newcastle was discredited through the loss of Minorca and the failure of Admiral Byng to relieve it.

During the public outcry that followed and drove Newcastle to resign, the commercial classes began to look to Pitt as their saviour. Because of his opposition to the previous administration Pitt was their obvious champion and his ideas now gained credit. It was popular indignation that forced Newcastle to resign, forced Pitt upon the crown and also determined the character of the administration that was to follow. During this administration Pitt gained popularity with the commercial classes for three reasons. Firstly, dogged by ill-health he was peremptorily dismissed before he had done anything for which he could be criticized, and the dismissal itself was enough to gain him popularity. Secondly, Fox's attempt to organise a counter-propaganda campaign in favour of Newcastle badly misfired and this was particularly the case in the City. The virulence of the attack on Pitt rallied sympathy to him and caused Fox to become disliked there while Pitt's supporters closed their ranks and consolidated the popular picture of Pitt they were seeking to advance. Thirdly, the attempt of the administration to raise supplies outside the 'monied interest' gave Pitt the support of the commercial classes led by Sir John Barnard as

20. Sutherland "City of London and the Devonshire-Pitt Administration" loc. cit. pp. 149-150.

21. Ibid. p. 151.

22. Ibid. pp. 152-9.

distinct from the support of the 'monied interest'. Dr. Sutherland sums this up in these words

"The financial projects of 1757, unsuccessful though they were, played a considerable part in consolidating Pitt's popularity in the City, a popularity which was to grow steadily through the great coalition ministry and which he was never altogether to lose. As time went on this popularity was to be enhanced by Pitt's great services as a war minister and by the pre-eminence which his personality won him. During the few uneasy months of the Devonshire-Pitt administration, it was not his exploits which won the favour of the rank and file of the citizens of London... Their support of him depended on a feeling which they were never altogether to lose and which had in it elements of truth - that he was in some manner akin to them since he stood with them against the big battalions of the political and financial world."

24

If during the period of the Devonshire-Pitt administration the 'monied interest' did not look to the Duke of Newcastle for leadership (and there is no evidence of co-operation between them and Newcastle) the stage was still being set for the future, for when the great coalition was formed Pitt led the commercial classes and Newcastle looked for support from the financiers or 'monied interest'.

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During the Seven Years War each of the partners consolidated their relative positions. The mercantile classes soon realised that Pitt was going to carry on a war for and upon trade, and supported him and his war. In his broader conception of the war they could see a far greater prospect of lasting commercial gain than they could in the narrower 'continental view' of the war envisaged by Newcastle and his supporters.

23. Ibid. pp. 162-170

24. Ibid. p. 170.

25. Ibid. p. 171.

Many of Pitt's expeditions were planned with advice of the merchants and he treated the merchants courteously and valued their advice. The fact that Pitt's chief ally was William Beckford, a rich West Indian sugar planter, is significant. Even more significant is the fact that Pitt managed to maintain Beckford's allegiance while believing that England should conquer and keep the foreign West Indian sugar islands because the existing islands were becoming exhausted and would soon be unable to meet the needs of an expanding North American market. Most of the West Indian planters believed this would mean economic ruin for them because of the fall in the price of sugar on the British market with increased supply.

Newcastle in a similar manner consolidated his position with the 'monied interest' and this is scarcely surprising. As First Lord of the Treasury he was responsible for financing the war and until the time of his resignation he maintained close contact with the financiers. This contact was not limited to financial matters for Newcastle was quite willing to consult them on other political issues. Sir William Baker, for instance, was repeatedly consulted by Newcastle, especially during the years 1760-1762 on the peace terms to be made with France. Sir George Colebrooke was used to find out the re-²⁷action in the City on Pitt's resignation.

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26. See Chatham's Colonial Policy, a Study in the Fiscal and Economic Implications of the Colonial Policy of the Elder Pitt by K. Hotblack, London 1917, pp. 13-19 Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 303-304.
27. Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 241-242, 273-282. B.M. Add. Mss. 32929 f113 memorandum 8 October 1761. See also Namier, Structure of Politics pp. 53-58.

Thus when Pitt resigned, it is true to say, according to Mr. Reid's analysis that he possessed the loyalty of the smaller merchants and the merchants outside Parliament but not that of the government financiers. This was because he was not interested in government patronage. Newcastle, on the other hand, possessed the loyalty of the greater merchants who aimed at government contracts or social advancement because he took a great deal of care in the skilful manipulation of government patronage. It is important to understand this situation because Newcastle's relations with the merchants in the future were greatly influenced by the nature of his mercantile supporters and it was an important influence on the evolution of Rockingham as a political leader.

28. See above pp. 80-81.

CHAPTER II.THE REACTION TO PITT'S RESIGNATION.(a) THE IMMEDIATE REACTION.

When Bute and Newcastle chose Pitt's resignation rather than a war with Spain they well knew Pitt's popularity among the commercial classes and in the period immediately following his resignation they anxiously watched for a hostile reaction.

On 4 October 1761 the Duke of Bedford wrote to Newcastle imploring him to stand firm in spite of the popularity of Pitt¹ and two days later on 6 October 1761 Bute wrote to Newcastle

" I see no system whatsoever proper for this dangerous minute; or that I can in my poor judgement recommend to the King. The storm runs high in the City. I hear some of them are rash enough to say, they will have their minister again. This may subside but a weak administration or rather none in the House of Commons will not tend to silence it; but of this your Grace is the best judge."²

Newcastle was particularly perturbed because he was responsible for raising government money and if Pitt's resignation caused a hostile reaction in London he might have difficulty in raising the customary loan in the City. On the same day that Bute wrote to him Newcastle had a conference with his old friend Bartholomew Burton, the Governor of the Bank of England. Burton told Newcastle that he would call a meeting of the Directors of the Bank and that he did not doubt that they would support Newcastle as in the past. Burton also assured Newcastle that the situation as far as the City was

1. B.M. Add. Mss. 32929 f54 Bedford to Newcastle 4 October 1761.
2. Ibid., f74 Bute to Newcastle 6 October 1761. Bute was perturbed at the weakness of the administration in the House of Commons.

concerned would improve if anything, with the resignation of Pitt, for the 'principal people' would think that the country was a good deal nearer peace, and it was only the 'mob' who thought or talked otherwise. Burton was supported in his opinion by Robert Marsh, the Deputy Governor of the Bank, who also said that the resignation of Pitt would help in raising money if anything, and the only thing that it could adversely affect was the attitude of the 'mob' ³ at the Lord Mayor's show. This is presumably because the Lord Mayor's Day was an occasion for the display of political feeling. Pitt's hold over the less wealthy citizens was demonstrated clearly on this ⁴ occasion.

Newcastle, however, was still worried about the reception of Pitt's resignation in the City. On 8 October he wrote of "The different reports of the Disposition of the City upon Mr. Pitt's resignation" ⁵ and reported the conversation of several more bankers about loans for the forthcoming year. The fact that one of these, Sir George Amyand, assured him that there would be very great difficulty in raising the money if war broke out with Spain seems to have done little to reassure ⁶ him that Pitt's resignation was for the best.

3. Ibid., ff83-84 Memorandum 6 October 1761. See The Court and City Registry edns, for 1761 and 1762, London, p.237 in both volumes for Burton as Governor and Marsh as Deputy Governor of the Bank of England.

4. See below pp.103-104.

5. B.M.Add.Mss.32929 f111 Memorandum 8 October 1761.

6. Ibid., f111 Memorandum 8 October 1761. The bankers that Newcastle conversed with were Nicholas Magens, Henry Muilman, Peter Burrell, Sir George Amyand and Adam Drummond. For most of these see Namier Structure of Politics pp.54-56. For Burrell see also Charles Townshend by Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke, London, 1964, p.105. Sir George Amyand (1720-1766) was a London merchant trading principally to Hamburg

On the same day Sir George Colebrook reported to Newcastle on a meeting of the Bankers, presumably that called by the Governor of the Bank of England mentioned to Newcastle on 6 October. Colebrook told Newcastle that

"Mr. Frame, a Quaker and some others were very violent upon the subject of Mr. Pitt; (said) that there would be a bad peace. No vigorous measures - and that if Mr. Pitt did not oppose and act with vigour out (of office) but accepted anything from the King he would be resigned, and treated like my Lord Bath."

Later in the same memorandum Newcastle noted that Frame had "always been a noisy opponent" but he also noted

6. (contd) and leading partner of the London banking firm of Sir George Amyard, Staples and Mercer. See The Complete Baronetage ed. G.E.C. Vol.V, 1707-1800, Exeter 1906 p.130.
7. B.M.Add.Mss.32929 ff113-4 Memorandum, 8 October 1761. The reference to William Pulteney, Earl of Bath, is to his taking a peerage in 1742 and thus losing all influence. See Williams op.cit. p.226. There is no merchant or banker by the name of 'Frame' in the London Directories of this period but in The Universal Director, or the Nobleman and Gentlemen's True Guide by Mr. Mortimer, London 1761, Part III, p.80 "Freame, Barclay and Freame" are recorded as bankers at "Corner of George Yard, Lombard Street" and in A Complete Guide to all Persons who have any Trade or Commerce with the City of London and Parts Adjacent London 1763 "Freame, Barclay and Freame" are recorded as Bankers in Lombard Street. These Freames were Quakers. There were Joseph Freame 1701-1766 and John Freame 1729-1770 of Lombard Street. These two were not father and son as stated in History of Barclays Bank by P.W. Matthews, London 1926, p.34. They appear to have been cousins. For this information I am indebted to the Librarian of the Society of Friends for consulting Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths of the Quarterly Meeting of London and Middlesex. The Freames were in partnership with their relative James Barclay (Joseph Freames sister Sarah appears to have married James Barclay). See Matthews op.cit. p.34. The firm later developed and amalgamated with other banks to form the present Barclays Bank. See Matthews op.cit. passim See also A Handbook of London Bankers by F.G.Hilton Price, London 1890-91, pp.10-12 under Barclay, Bean and Co. This work again appears to be inaccurate on the precise relationship of the Freames. In the absence of any banker by the name of Frame and as the Freames were Quakers it is logical to conclude that Newcastle's 'Frame' was one of the Freame partners.

"Sir William Baker is of a different opinion. He finds nobody uneasy about Mr. Pitt's resigning except the noise of the Common Council etc. He is much for publishing our affairs to France, as that will prove, that Mr. Pitt not only joined in, but recommended and offered those terms. He thinks spirit and Vigour will carry everything through with success; and that peace will be obtained now which could not be procured by Mr. Pitt.

Sir William Baker's opinion is, to drop the King of Prussia, who he says has given us no assistance. In that case, we might keep up our army for the defence of Hanover etc. But this he thinks would remove a difficulty into which Mr. Pitt had led us, and therefore it is not advisable at present." 8

The contrast between the attitude of the 'monied interest' who supported Newcastle and the administration in power and the less wealthy merchants without political power is thus clearly exemplified in October 1761 in the differing attitudes of Frame and Baker.

Until news was received that Pitt had accepted a pension and a peerage for his wife the established pattern was thus repeating itself, Newcastle receiving support and assurance from the 'monied interest' and Pitt from the other mercantile classes. Newcastle himself seems to have realised this, eventually concluding that nobody was perturbed about Pitt's resignation except the "noise of the Common Council" and hoping that the negotiations for peace could be successfully completed.

On 13 October he wrote to General Yorke

"You will hear from common report, the effect which this whole affair has had in the City. I don't apprehend it will have much in Parliament provided the persons who remain in the administration can have sense enough to agree thoroughly and cordially." 9

By this time news was spreading that Pitt had accepted
10
a pension for himself and a peerage for his wife. On the same day as Newcastle wrote the above, two reports were written to

9. Ibid. f219 Newcastle to General Yorke 13 October 1761. Cf. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 86-89.
10. Laprade loc. cit. p. 738 states that Pitt's resignation was announced in the morning papers of October 7 (e.g. Public Advertiser) and reports were immediately circulated concerning rewards to him. He cites London Evening Post 8-10 October which gives evidence of public indignation, London Chronicle of even date and Public Ledger of 10 October 1761. For reaction to Pitt accepting a pension see The Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham by B. Williams, London 1915, Vol. II, pp. 118-9. In William Pitt, Earl of Chatham by Albert Von Ruville, translated by H. J. Chaytor, London 1907 Vol. III, p. 14 et seq the author notes the complete revulsion of public feeling on the news of Pitt accepting a pension and a peerage for his wife. His friends were indignant that he had humiliated himself to such an extent. Delavel said "The man is a fool. If he had gone into the City; told them he had a poor wife and children unprovided for, and opened a subscription, he would have got £500,000 instead of £3000 a year." See Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham ed. W. S. Taylor and J. Pringle, London 1838, Vol. II, p. 159. Ruville op. cit. Vol. III, p. 15 blames Fox for stirring opposition to Pitt. See also Hotblack op. cit. p. 21 who points out the reaction on this occasion is a testimony to Chatham's reputation and states "Another statesman might have accepted such favours without remark; but the Great Commoner had been thought above suspicion." See also The English Press in Politics 1760-1776 by R. R. Rea, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1963, p. 20.

him of hostile reaction to Pitt. The London merchant and banker, Samuel Touchet, reported to Newcastle that the London Court of Common Council broke up "without any motion being made relative to Mr. Pitt or the instruction of their representatives."¹¹ Also on 13 October one of Newcastle's Sussex supporters, John Page, wrote to Newcastle that on the previous evening he had attended the annual dinner of a club of tradesmen in Chichester and that a toast to Pitt had not been well received and that considerable disappointment had been expressed at his acceptance of honours.¹² Newcastle now believed that he had successfully settled financial affairs and prepared to retire temporarily to Claremont. As usual he was relying on the 'monied interest' to raise supplies for the forthcoming year and wanted to see them on the first day¹³ of the Parliamentary session.

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11. B. M. Add. Mss. 32929 f235 Samuel Touchet to Newcastle 13 October 1761. When Pitt first resigned the London Common Council had proposed to address him but learning of his voluntary resignation and not of a dismissal they did not do so. Pitt's attitude towards the Court also dampened enthusiasm for him. See Ruville op. cit. Vol. VII, p. 11. Touchet was one of the 'monied interest'. See Namier, Structure of Politics p. 56.
12. B. M. Add. Mss. 32929 f238 John Page to Newcastle 13 October 1761.
13. Ibid. f263 Newcastle to Hardwicke 14 October 1761; f273 memorandum 13 October 1761; ibid f303 "Members to be wrote to to attend the first day of the session and by whom" 16 October 1761.

Just when Newcastle felt secure, however, the tide turned against him. On 13 October 1761 Pitt wrote his famous letter to Beckford which by 17 October 1761 had appeared in The Gazetteer and Public Ledger and was reprinted widely elsewhere.¹⁴ In the letter Pitt stated that as the cause and manner of his resignation and his acceptance of honours from the King had been misrepresented he was obliged to explain his actions. He declared that over-ruled in council on the immediate declaration of a war against Spain, and not wishing to be held responsible for measures that he did not direct he had voluntarily resigned and had accepted, unsolicited, certain marks of favour from the King.

Concerning this incident Burke commented in the Annual Register for 1761 that at first the ministerial cause had been better managed than that of Pitt. By printing the news of Pitt's resignation, his acceptance of honours, and pacificatory news from Spain near each other in the Gazette public fear had been allayed and when "the torrent of popular rage" was again released in its true direction

"it was no longer that impetuous and irresistible tide which in the year 1757 had born down every thing before it, it was weakened, divided and ineffective." 15

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14. For this letter see Taylor and Pringle op.cit., Vol.II, pp. 158-9 Pitt to Beckford 15 October 1761. For its printing see B.M. Add. Mss. 32929 f333 Hardwicke to Newcastle 17 October 1761. See also Ruville op.cit. Vol. III, p. 16; Hotblack op.cit. p. 21. See also London and the Kingdom by R. R. Sharpe, London 1895, Vol. III, p. 68 and Albe/marle op.cit. Vol. I, pp. 49-50.
15. The Annual Register Vol. IV, 1761, London 1800, pp. 44-45.

In spite of this, Pitt's letter of 15 October and his restoration as the popular idol caused Newcastle a great deal of concern. He seems to have received his first news of it in a letter from Hardwicke on 17 October,¹⁶ but possibly he had seen the public papers himself before he received this letter.¹⁷ Hardwicke was most indignant about the letter and Newcastle noted that Pitt was "still to be hero".¹⁸ On the following day Newcastle wrote to Hardwicke in more detail about Pitt's letter commenting on its insolence and stating that Pitt was endeavouring to regain his former popularity. He added somewhat desparingly

"I think with my Lord Bute that Mr. Pitt's letter gives us great advantage if we know how to make use of it."

¹⁹

In a memorandum on 20 October Newcastle noted the effect of Pitt's letter in the City reporting that there had been an inflammatory meeting of the Common Council and that it was necessary to put a stop to a rumour that Pitt's ideas were well-founded and that a war with Spain was inevitable. Later on the same day or on the following day, however, he commented that the meeting of the Common Council had been postponed and "Things in the City were ²⁰hot so bad".

16. B. M. Add. Mss. 32929 ff332-33 Hardwicke to Newcastle 17 October 1761. For the publication in the Gazette of Pitt's resignation, the news of his pension, and peaceable news from Spain at the same time see also Williams op. cit. Vol. II, pp. 116-118.

17. This seems more likely. See ibid. f336 Newcastle to Hardwicke 17 October 1761.

18. Ibid. f333 Hardwicke to Newcastle 17 October 1761; f336 Newcastle to Hardwicke 17 October 1761.

19. Ibid. ff358-359 Newcastle to Hardwicke 18 October 1761.

20. Ibid. ff401-402 Memoranda 20-21 October 1761. Bute thought that Pitt's letter to Beckford had been provoked originally by a meeting of the Common Council on 14 October 1761 in

Newcastle was also perturbed at this time because of the state of the stock market and the bankruptcy of the London merchant, Henry Shiffner, which had just occurred. On the same day Newcastle wrote to the Duke of Bedford

"Mr. Pitt's most extraordinary and unaccountable letter has had a most extraordinary and unaccountable effect and has brought back to him his mad noisy City friends, who were for a time displeased with him. I hear the Common Council intend to address, instruct their members, compliment Mr. Pitt, or something to show they continue their old factious spirit; But I hope we shall now despise, and not endeavour to gain them by complaisance in our measures." 22

and within the next forty-eight hours he wrote three other letters in similar vein.

On 22 October 1761 The Common Council of the City of London resolved to present an address of thanks to Pitt for his services and to lament his resignation through their parliamentary representatives. When the motion was put to the vote in the Common Council there were 109 in favour of the motion and fifteen against.

On the same day as the Common Council passed its resolution Newcastle wrote to Rockingham sending him an account of the

20 (contd) which there was a majority of 48 to 12 "against a message in return of an address to him" See Ibid. f333 Hardwicke to Newcastle 17 October 1761.

21. Ibid. f354 Henry Shiffner to Newcastle 17 October 1761; Ibid. f401 memorandum 20 October 1761. For Shiffner see Namier Structure of Politics pp. 171, 419-421, 425. England in the Age etc p. 254, note 4.

22. B. M. Add. Mss. 32929 ff403-4 Newcastle to Bedford 20 October 1761.

23. Ibid. ff406-7 Newcastle to Hardwicke 20 October 1761; Ibid. f409 Newcastle to White 20 October 1761; Ibid. f427 Newcastle to Devonshire 21 October 1761.

24. Ibid. f442 Docketed "Common Council 22 October 1761" Of the majority there were nine aldermen (Beckford, Glynn, Stephenson, Bridger, Masters, Cartwright, Gascoyne, Chaloner, and Rawlinson) ninety-nine commoners and one teller. Of the

proceedings and asked him to see York or any other town did not follow the example of London. Newcastle especially suspected York. He concluded

"I beg your Lordship would be watchful to take measures immediately to prevent it; If there should be any such design the same as to Hull, or any of the great trading towns; but there I don't suspect it." 25

Rockingham, who was at Wentworth, replied on 20 October reassuring Newcastle and saying

"by a friend who I have seen, who comes from Wakefield I find that the general cry among the merchants and considerable persons - is - that a certain great man has deserted the service of his country and has given a reason for it which only shows the violence of his temper and no true patriotic spirit."

He concluded

"The Corporation of York are composed of persons who were formerly Tories - and tho' they may now be no longer so, yet I fancy they would retain enough of that disposition to make it a reason to incite them to follow the example of the Common Council of London if they found that my friends in York were desirous that they should not address. It may accidentally happen that the City of York will not address Mr. Pitt. If it does your Grace will explain it but surely it can not be material what they or such a set as the Common Council of London can do." 26

24 (contd) minority there were two aldermen (Ladbroke and Gdshry) twelve Commoners and one teller. For these proceedings see Sharpe op. cit. Vol. III, p. 68 and Annual Register for 1761, p. 301.

25. B. M. Add. Mss. 32929 ff444-5 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 October 1761.

26. B. M. Add. Mss. 32930 ff158-9 Rockingham to Newcastle 29 October 1761. The "gentleman from Wakefield" was possibly a member of the Milnes family, whom Rockingham knew well and was in close contact with at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis. See my "Barlow Trecothick etc" pp. 223-233.

On 14 November Rockingham was forced to inform Newcastle that York had followed the example of London and decided to address Pitt.²⁷ Newcastle had kept Rockingham informed about action in October and early November 1761²⁸ but the occasion of these letters was the first real contact between Rockingham and Newcastle since the fall of Pitt, and it thus seems advisable to assess the precise position of Rockingham at this time.

The young Marquis of Rockingham was of high birth, and perhaps possessed some claim to distinction as the only Marquis in the English peerage in 1761. His father, the first Marquis of Rockingham, had begun an association with the Duke of Newcastle that was to be continued through his son until Newcastle's death. The first Marquis, because of his great landed property, his connections, and his position as the leading ministerial figure in Yorkshire was able to exercise a sort of pre-eminence over the other territorial magnates in the county.³⁰

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27. B. M. Add. Mss. 32931 f51 Rockingham to Newcastle 14 November 1761.
28. See for instance W. W. M. R1-199 n. d. but dated in Rockingham handlist as 2 October 1761 and ibid R1-206 Newcastle to Rockingham n. d. (but dated in handlist as 2 November 1761 but it cannot be this date as the letter speaks of Newcastle meeting Rockingham in London and Rockingham was at Wentworth at this time)
29. "The Rockinghams and Yorkshire Politics 1742-1761" by C. Collyer, Publications of the Thoresby Society Vol. XLI, Leeds 1954, pp. 352-361. See also "The Yorkshire Election of 1734" by C. Collyer Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical Society (Literary and Historical Section) Vol. VII, Part 1, pp. 53-82, Leeds 1952, "The Yorkshire Election of 1741" by Collyer, ibid. Vol. VII, Part II, pp. 137-152, Leeds October 1953.
30. "The Rockinghams and Yorkshire Politics" lpc. cit. p. 352.

Rockingham succeeded his father on the latter's death in 1750 as the head of Yorkshire's greatest political dynasty. He had first met Newcastle in Hanover in 1750 while on the Grand Tour. The Duke seems to have been impressed and the two seem ³¹ to have struck up a fairly close friendship.

On 15 September the young Lord Malton wrote to his father

"The Duke of Newcastle is here, (Hanover) while he stays, insists upon my dining and supping every day with him after tomorrow he returns."

and again on 30 October

"I must not forget to acquaint your Lordship how extremely kind the Duke of Newcastle has been to me and how much he expresses love and esteem for Your Lordship and I should imagine if you approved of it, it would not be amiss that you should let him know of my having acquainted you of how grateful I was." ³²

In May 1751 Rockingham took his seat in the House of Lords and became assiduous in his attendance especially when matters of interest to Yorkshire were being discussed, in particular commercial matters. ³³ Rockingham set about regaining his family's power in Yorkshire, for in the last years of the first Marquis's life the initiative in that county seems to have gone over to the Duke of Newcastle. In 1752 Rockingham secured the nomination of Sir George Savile as one of the county members against the Newcastle interest. Savile was eventually forced to withdraw and Rockingham on this occasion listened to the

31. Ibid. p. 361.

32. W.W.M. First Marquis's Papers, Letterbook M2 p. 548 Lord Malton to Rockingham 15 October 1750. P. 550 Lord Malton to Rockingham 30 October 1750.

33. See The Early Career of Lord Rockingham 1730-1765 by G.H. Guttridge, University of California Publications in History, Vol. 44, Berkeley California, 1952, p. 11.

advice of his uncle William Murray, Solicitor General, later
 34 Earl of Mansfield. Savile's withdrawal conciliated Newcastle
 and Newcastle was pleased when at the end of the year Rockingham
 35 secured the election of Sir George Armytage as member for York.

In trying to re-establish the power of the Rockinghams
 over Yorkshire the young Marquis had taken on a formidable
 task, for this was a county of great proprietors where more
 than one man was strong enough to aspire to leadership in the
 county. The county itself was a constituency almost unique
 in the unreformed Parliament, having an electorate of 15,000
 which included a strong class of gentry, many freeholders
 unattached to great interests and other independent elements
 36 of rising importance in the towns and manufacturing districts.
 Thus influence on the aristocracy had to be matched with
 popularity among the other classes and it was this dual
 influence that was to forge Rockingham's position as a national
 leader. In his struggle to regain supremacy in the county
 he learned to deal with the multifarious interests in the
 towns and manufacturing districts, such as the representatives
 of the commercial interests in Sheffield and Halifax, as well
 37 as with the gentry and aristocrats, and the popularity of
 Rockingham's friend Savile was particularly important in the

34. "The Rockinghams and Yorkshire Politics" loc. cit. pp. 361-368.
 Rockingham's father was married to a daughter of Daniel, 6th
 Earl of Winchelsea and William Murray married another daughter.

35. Ibid. p. 361.

36. Ibid. pp. 352-353. Lord Holderness was Rockingham's greatest
 rival in Yorkshire at first. Rockingham was fortunate that
 he was an ally of Savile who also aspired to the highest
 honours in the county. See The House of Commons 1754-1790
 by Sir Lewis Namier and J. Brooke, London, 1964, Vol. 1, pp. 2-10.

37. Ibid. pp. 368-369.

growth of his support. The experience that Rockingham was gaining was to be of infinite service to him, for just as he was now in local politics endeavouring to reconcile the claims of commerce and aristocracy, so later during the Stamp Act Crisis was he compelled to do the same thing on a national basis.

Rockingham's influence in politics was notably increased by the quietening influence he exercised on the popular discontents in Yorkshire that heralded the opening of the
³⁹Seven Years War. His position in the county was assured by the election of Sir George Savile as County member in January 1759 and finally clinched in January 1761 when Edwin Lascelles who had established great influence among the merchants of Leeds and other towns in the manufacturing districts was elected
⁴⁰as the other county member. Not only was Rockingham's influence extending in the county seats but he had always had the disposal of the seat in his borough of Malton, and, as well as York where Sir George Armytage had been elected in 1760. Rockingham's
⁴¹interest extended to Hull, Scarborough and Beverley. Moreover, Rockingham's name as an improving landlord and as a patron of
⁴²the turf was making him famous both in the county and beyond.

Thus by 1760 Rockingham had secured his position in Yorkshire and this was achieved partly by association with independent elements in politics. This gave the Rockingham

38. Ibid. p. 369

40. Ibid. pp. 375-376.

42. Ibid. p. 370

39. Ibid. pp. 370-375.

41. Ibid. p. 369.

interest a different flavour from that of the Whigs in his father's day and the days of Newcastle's prime, a difference that can be seen in a wider sphere in a few years time when Rockingham's allies in parliamentary politics were to be men like Dowdeswell, a Tory county gentleman, and Trecothick the merchant with whom he co-operated during the Stamp Act Crisis. Yet, as is well known in spite of all this Rockingham's politics were always to remain the politics of aristocratic Whiggism.

It was natural that Newcastle should turn to Rockingham to allay the panic on Pitt's fall because Rockingham was supreme in Yorkshire politics and because Rockingham had inherited co-operation with Newcastle from his father. The event showed the limits of Rockingham's power for he was unable to prevent the Corporation of York presenting an address of thanks to Pitt.⁴³ It also showed that at this time Newcastle regarded Rockingham primarily as a local magnate whose support it was useful to have. This attitude was natural enough. The young Marquis had shown little desire to enter the field of national politics and as late as 1760 he had written to Newcastle that

"in the West Riding of Yorkshire we look upon the war in North America as merely carried on for the benefit of our cloth trade."⁴⁴

From the immediate reaction to Pitt's resignation it is thus possible to draw two conclusions. Firstly it can be seen that when Pitt fell the traditional pattern of mercantile

43. See above p. 93.

44. B. M. Add. Mss. 32913 ff85-86 Rockingham to Newcastle 16 October 1760.

allegiance repeated itself. Newcastle was supported by the 'monied interest' and the great merchants who looked to the government for their living and advancement. The other merchants looked towards their traditional leader Pitt after their fears that even the "Great Commoner" was open to corruption had been allayed. Secondly the event showed the precise position of Rockingham. In October 1761 he was regarded as an important local magnate not as a national politician.

(b) THE ATTEMPTED ENQUIRY INTO ACCOUNTS; GOVERNMENT FINANCE AND THE WAR WITH SPAIN.

When on 22 October 1761 the Common Council of the City of London had resolved to present an address of thanks to William Pitt it also resolved

"to enquire into the application of the supplies for some years past, and likewise into the accounts of Forage in Germany." 45

Newcastle was genuinely alarmed at the idea of an enquiry into Treasury Accounts. On 22 October he wrote to Rockingham, Devonshire, Bedford, Barrington and Lord Kinnoull about the matter and the following day he notified Joseph Yorke of the proceedings of the Common Council, stating that he considered them to be a personal attack upon himself. 46

By the time that he wrote to Barrington, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Newcastle was organising his defence for he stated

"Mr. West dined with our brethren (of the Treasury) this day at Martins. I desired my compliments to them, and that I hoped that the Four Lords of the Treasury would second the Four City Members in their motion for the enquiry. But I think that it does us honour that the first City member and father of the City, Sir Robert Ladbroke, was against this impudent measure." 47

By demonstrating his willingness to allow an enquiry Newcastle hoped to free himself from any suspicion of misuse of public funds. He believed that the King was going to

45. B.M. Add. Mss. 32929 f442 docketed "Common Council" 22 October 1761. See above p.91.

46. B.M. Add. Mss. 32929 f444 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 October 1761; ibid. f437 Newcastle to Devonshire 22 October 1761; ibid. f440 Newcastle to Bedford 22 October 1761; ibid. f446 Newcastle to Barrington 22 October 1761; ibid. f448 Newcastle to Joseph Yorke Lord Kinnoull 22 October 1761 and ibid. f460 Newcastle to Joseph Yorke 23 October 1761.

47. Ibid. f446 Newcastle to Barrington 22 October 1761. James West and Samuel Martin were Joint Secretaries to the

support him and that the supporters of the motion "would not
 48
 have fifteen votes in the House of Commons". Nevertheless,
 Newcastle was still alarmed, for Thomas Walpole, whom he was
 using as a contact with the City financiers, told him that the
 Common Council's enquiry

"will create disturbances and difficulty in our money
 affairs, especially if a rupture with Spain ensues." 49

In view of this and because he was alarmed at the support that
 Pitt was regaining among the commercial classes Newcastle
 wrote in the next few days to most of his financial and mercan-
 tile associates to rally their support for his cause and asked
 50
 them to attend the opening of Parliament. From many of these
 51
 men he received a reassuring reply. One merchant, obviously
 bearing the bankruptcy of Henry Shiffner in mind, wrote
 significantly

" "If I have not appeared at your Levée it has not been
 for want of respect, but it is my opinion that the
 publick and Your Grace may be better served by a closer
 attention to commercial affairs and a regular conduct
 of them, and I wish some of my brethren had followed
 this." 52

47. (contd.) Treasury. See England in the Age etc Namier, p.
 313, n. 2, p. 398 n. 11.

48. B. M. Add. Mss. 32929 f460 Newcastle to Joseph Yorke 23
 October 1761.

49. Ibid. f468 Memorandum 23 October 1761.

50. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32930 f3 Memorandum 24 October 1761. "Letters
 sent by Mr. Parker to go by post" in which Newcastle states
 he has written to Rose Fuller, Pierce Acourt, Thomas
 Fonnereau, Francis Gashry, and Nicholas Linwood." Ibid.
 f36 Memorandum 26 October 1761 "Letters to be wrote" in
 which the names of George Amyand, Sir William Baker, Thomas
 Calcraft, Charles Boon, Frazer Honeywood, John Thomlinson,
 Sir Samuel Fludyer and Thomas Gore are mentioned. All
 these men were merchants and government financiers. See
 Namier, England in the Age etc, passim. See also Namier,
Structure of Politics pp. 53-58.

51. B. M. Add. Mss. 32930 f31 Sampson Gideon to Newcastle 25 October

After 26 October the agitation caused by the Common Councils motion to seek an enquiry into government finance became of less importance. The ministers resisted the demand for an enquiry but had to allow a Commission of Accounts. Ministerial policy was decided at a meeting at Newcastle House⁵³ on 27 October and on the same day Newcastle saw Fox, who had just been brought into the ministry by Bute to strengthen it. Fox supported the strongest measures possible against the Common Council and wanted, if possible, to secure the reversal⁵⁴ of their motion in the Court of Aldermen.

The Commission of Accounts was not of great importance⁵⁵ but it continued to worry Newcastle for some time for he was in a peculiar position with regard to this enquiry. The typical country gentleman was always opposed to wars and Continental entanglements because they meant high taxation and he would be only too pleased to discover misappropriation of public funds. Moreover the merchants and City financiers⁵⁶ preferred naval and colonial wars to continental wars. This general feeling against the continental war probably added to the alarm caused by the demand for an enquiry into Accounts. It is also related to the fact that on 23 October 1761

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51. (contd) 1761; ibid. f266 John Thomlinson to Newcastle 1 November 1761.
52. Ibid. f118 George Prescott to Newcastle 27 October 1761. Prescott was a London merchant and M.P. For Shiffner's bankruptcy see above p.91.
53. B.M.Add.Mss. 32930 f62 Newcastle to Hardwicke 26 October 1761.
54. Ibid. f90 Memorandum 27 October 1761; ibid. f104 Newcastle to Hardwicke 'Wednesday night' (26 October 1761). For the entry of Fox into the ministry see B.M.Add.Mss. 32929 ff252-8 Newcastle to Devonshire 16 October 1761.
55. B.M.Add.Mss. 32930 ff220-230 Newcastle to Devonshire 31 October 1761; See below p.177-8 et passim See also Nagier,

Hardwicke's draft of the speech for the opening of Parliament was rejected by Bute and Grenville as being too pacific. As a result Hardwicke thought that Bute and Grenville had changed their plans since he had drafted the speech because they were aiming to gain the support that was now rallying to Pitt and because of the action of the Common Council. Hardwicke feared that the ministry, if they pursued this policy would lose the support of the bulk of the nation who desired peace and both he and Newcastle feared that the ministry would never succeed in gaining popular support from Pitt. At this time, as was generally the case, Newcastle, while being interested in gaining the support of the mercantile classes in general, was far more interested in the support of the richer merchants and government financiers from whom he borrowed money to finance the Treasury, especially as he was about to negotiate the loan for the forthcoming year.

By the end of October 1761 Newcastle had become pre-occupied with this problem, which had become more difficult because it had become obvious that peace was not near, that there was a strong likelihood of war with Spain breaking out, and the policy of the ministry had grown less pacific. Thus on 27 October 1761 Newcastle noted in memoranda that Sir Joshua Vanneck was asking for the arrangement for the following year's loan to be deferred until after the opening of

55. (contd.) England in the Age etc p. 334 n. 2.

56. Namier, England in the Age etc p. 304.

57. B.M. Add. Mss. 32929 f470 Hardwicke to Newcastle 23 October 1761; ibid. f472 Newcastle to Hardwicke 23 October 1761.

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Parliament. He was also disturbed by the number of bankruptcies that had recently occurred. On 31 October he wrote to Devonshire

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"My friends in the City, and particularly our Friend Sir Joshua (Vanneck) inform me, that the language, viz, 'That I was the Minister for Peace etc. that I was now the chief person (and consequently the responsible one)' was the chief discourse, or opinion of the City. That the notion was, that there was no settled administration; That Mr. Grenville doubted much, about accepting the lead of the House of Commons; and in short People were in such an uncertainty about the union in the administration, that he begg'd I would defer the conclusion of our subscription to the King's speech, and the addresses were made, that they might see a weight, and consistency in the administration. I made sure of this, first, to declare to my friends in the City and particularly to Sir Joshua, that I was not by any means, to be looked upon as the directing minister." 60

Newcastle, did however, realise by this time that the warlike attitude of the ministry was not entirely caused by the desire of Bute and Grenville to gain that popular support which was influenced by Pitt's new policy, but was also due to the fact that as France had broken off the peace negotiations, it was necessary to prosecute the war with vigour in order to bring her to terms again as soon as possible. His desire to conciliate and gain the support of both financial and mercantile interests was shown by his visit to the City banquet on the

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58. B.M. Add. Mss. 32930 f91 Memorandum 27 October 1761.
 59. Ibid. f91 Memorandum 27 October 1761. Henry Shiffner's would seem to be the chief of these bankruptcies. See above p.91. Shiffner wrote to Newcastle asking if in his circumstances it was proper for him to attend Parliament on 31 October. See ibid. f246 Henry Shiffner to Newcastle 31 October 1761.
 60. Ibid. f222 Newcastle to Devonshire 31 October 1761. There is a draft of this letter in ibid. f203 et seq.
 61. Ibid. f290 Newcastle to Lord Granby 3 November 1761.

Lord Mayor's Day 9 October 1761. Although not the chief object of popular resentment on this day he did not manage to escape unscathed, and it must be concluded that the traditional pattern, whereby Newcastle could secure the loyalty of only the government financiers was repeating itself.

When Newcastle was endeavouring to raise his loan for the forthcoming year there was a considerable difference of opinion on how the war should be conducted. Newcastle wanted to prosecute the continental war with the utmost vigour, thus forcing France to terms. He was aware that war with Spain was becoming inevitable but thought abandoning the war in Germany was fatal as he felt this war enabled Great Britain to preserve her American conquests. In this he differed from a powerful section of his supporters including the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Legge, who were in favour of abandoning the German War. Some merchants and financiers also were adherents of this point of view. Newcastle on the other hand not only wanted a vigorous prosecution of the continental war but also called for additional military operations in America or the West Indies (such as an attempted conquest of the Mississippi Valley) as these would be damaging to both France

62. Ibid. f321 Memorandum 5 November 1761; ibid. f333 Memorandum 6 November 1761; ibid. f378 Newcastle to Sir James Hodges 9 November 1761. For the occurrence on the Lord Mayor's Day see Sharpe op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 62-70. See also Albermarle op.cit. Vol. I, p. 70; Annual Register Vol. for 1761, London 1800, p. 237.

63. For Newcastle's ideas on the war policy see B. M. Add. Mss. 32931 f23 Newcastle to Barrington 14 November 1761; ibid. f45 Newcastle to unknown 15 November 1761. For the difference of opinion among his supporters see Barrington's report to Newcastle of the debate in the Commons on 13 November 1761; ibid. f19 for Legge's opinion see ibid. f45 Newcastle to unknown 15 November 1761.

and Spain and they would have to divert troops from Europe to deal with the attack.⁶⁴ He was well aware that the more vigorously the war was prosecuted the more justified Pitt's resignation would appear, and the greater would be the popular demand for his restoration to power, but Newcastle felt certain, presumably because of the hostility of the King and Bute,⁶⁵ that Pitt would not be able to return to power. Yet in spite of the fact that he was adopting a policy not calculated to win the support of the government financiers, and the more personal difficulties that he was having with merchants like Sir George Colebrooke and Merrick Burrell, by 19 November 1761 Newcastle was able to report to Rockingham, that he had successfully completed the preliminary negotiations for the loan for the forthcoming year.⁶⁶ Colebrooke who was annoyed over the delay in granting a pension promised to his brother subscribed to the loan but Burrell, who was enraged because Newcastle had not supported his candidature in the 1761 election at Haslemere did not,⁶⁷ and Newcastle added in his letter to Rockingham that he doubted whether he would be able to negotiate a loan for next year, particularly if the war with Spain broke out.⁶⁸

During the whole period that Newcastle was negotiating the loan war with Spain was imminent and was influencing the situation. On 27 November Hardwicke wrote to Newcastle

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64. Ibid. f48 Newcastle to unknown 15 November 1761.
 65. Ibid. f49 Newcastle to unknown 15 November 1761.
 66. Ibid. f147 Newcastle to Rockingham 19 November 1761.
 67. Ibid. f11 Memoranda 18 November 1761; ibid f195 Newcastle to Hardwicke 21 November 1761. See also B.M. Add. Mss 32934 f291

"I am heartily sorry that appearances from Spain are not so favourable, as I think it will give in the world some fresh object of nonsense in favour of Mr. Pitt - but surely if a Spanish war is Necessary it may be easily shown how right it may be now tho' not so when Mr.P. would have had it and I hope that some pains will be taken to set that matter in its proper sight if the war must happen." 69

On 1 December Newcastle noted that in negotiating the loan he would be required to give "some assurances with regard to a war with Spain" otherwise the subscribers would only

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subscribe conditionally. This does not appear to have been the case, however, for on 3 December Newcastle was able to announce that he had concluded the negotiations for the loan and successfully raised the £12,000,000 he needed, although, as he complained to Devonshire, the rate of interest, which taking into account an annual bonus, worked out at four and a half per cent for nineteen years, was very high, because the financiers were afraid of the stocks tumbling if a war with

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Spain broke out. This, no doubt, had prompted their idea of a conditional offer for they suspected that their resources of ready money would be limited if the stock prices fell.

Newcastle's eventual success in negotiating the loan does show that the City financiers were remaining loyal to him. Ten of the fifteen subscribers to the loan had subscribed to the loan

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for the previous year, yet the fear of the Spanish war prompted
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some withdrawals.

67. (contd.) Newcastle to Hardwicke 'Friday morning' (12 February 1762). For the subscribers to the loan see B.M. Add. Mss. 32931 f383 Memoranda 3 December 1761.

68. Ibid. f147 Newcastle to Rockingham 19 November 1761.

69. Ibid. f319-320 Hardwicke to Newcastle 27 November 1761,

70. Ibid. f366 Memorandum 1 December 1761.

71. Ibid. f383 Memorandum 3 December 1761; ibid. f388 Newcastle

In the midst of his negotiations for the loan for 1762 Newcastle still found time to look after the interests of the dissenters. On 20 November 1761 he went with the leading dissenting ministers to present an address to the King and in the middle of December he was helping the dissenters with regard to a royal grant to their schools in Pennsylvania. At the end of December 1761 Newcastle was endeavouring to fill a vacancy on the governing board of Guy's Hospital with a candidate acceptable to the dissenters.

By 10 December Newcastle seems to have managed to heal the breach that existed in the ranks of his supporters over the war policy that was to be adopted, for on that day when the policy was debated in Parliament he was able to report to the Duke of Devonshire that both Legge and Rose Fuller (one of the merchants who had apparently disagreed) had spoke for the German War. Sir William Baker was proving invaluable to Newcastle at this time, for he continued

"My Friend Sir William Baker (who is a very good judge) has been with me. He thinks Mr. Pitt acted a most abominable part. That the sum and substance of his speech was this; that all, that was done, before he came in, and shall be done now, that he is out, Tho' they are the very same measures, are wrong; and that he flung out the most impudent assertion; that he had

71. (contd) to Devonshire 3 December 1761.

72. Cf. Ibid. f383 Memorandum 3 December 1761 with Namier, Structure of Politics p. 55.

73. Ibid. f427 Memorandum 7 December 1761.

74. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32930 F402 Samuel Chandler to Newcastle 11 November 1761; B. M. Add. Mss. 32931 f11 Memorandum 13 November 1761; ibid. f62 Memorandum 16 November 1761; ibid. f83 Memorandum 17 November 1761; ibid. f183 Newcastle to Bedford 20 November 1761; B. M. Add. Mss. 32932 f66 James Chandler to Newcastle 8 December 1761; ibid. f72 Memorandum 9 December 1761; ibid. f310 Dr. Avery to Newcastle 22 December 1761. Avery and Chandler were leading dissenting ministers. See

never been against continental measures; But that Hanover should not be the original cause of them, as it had been, before his time, and that he would make the heart ache of that man who should do so again." 75

Newcastle was not only using Baker to get reports from the House of Commons, but ~~he~~ was also using him as a liaison with City officials and he was seeking, through the merchants, news of the likelihood of war with Spain. On 10 December he had been assured by the merchants that their correspondents said that Spain had no inclination to go to war with England. 76

In spite of these reassuring factors Newcastle was not fully satisfied. He did not feel that he had Bute and Bute's supporters behind him in his war policy, and he feared that the high interest rate that he had given for the new loan would make far too many merchants turn into stock-jobbers. As proof of this he noted the rapid fall in the prices of raw materials such as wool and cotton. He was also alarmed at the financial situation that would result if a war with Spain did break out. 77

Some of Newcastle's fears were justified. By 25 December 1761 it was obvious that there was going to be a war with Spain and on 2 January 1762 the Cabinet decided to declare war. 78

Newcastle was deeply distressed but he could see no alternative but fighting Spain. He was also alarmed at Bute and Grenville's 79

74. (contd) Bogue and Bennett op.cit. Vol. Iv, p.404. For Guy's Hospital see English Philanthropy 1660-1960 by David Owen London 1965, p.45.

75. B.M. Add. Mss. 32932 ff78-84 Newcastle to Duke of Devonshire 9-10 December 1761.

76. Ibid. f101 Memorandum 10 December 1761; ibid. f220 Memorandum 18 December 1761; ibid. f312 Memorandum 23 December 1761; B.M. Add. Mss. 39936 f314 Newcastle to Bute 2 April 1762.

plan to cut down the subsidy to Frederick the Great and abandon the war in Germany, and he feared this was a mistaken policy. One of the reasons for the rupture between Newcastle and Bute and one of the causes of Newcastle's eventual resignation in May 1762 was the victory of Bute and Grenville's policy.

After the outbreak of war Newcastle became preoccupied with the state of finances and the attitude of the government financiers. He was relieved that the new loan had been negotiated and settled before the war broke out but it was affected adversely by the new war. By 26 December the loan was running at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent discount and there was a sharp slump in the stocks. To offset this Newcastle was anxious to encourage the merchants to engage in privateering. On 29 December James West wrote to Newcastle assessing the situation and offered a suggestion that he thought might help the financial situation. West thought that because of the unfavourable circumstances there must be no further attempt to raise money. As a means of alleviating the financial crisis he suggested arming 30,000 Moors and shipping them

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77. B. M. Add. Mss. 32932 f88 Newcastle to Devonshire 9-10 December 1761; ibid. f142 West to Newcastle 11 December 1761.
78. Ibid. f149 Newcastle to Devonshire 12 December 1761; ibid. f302 Memorandum 22 December 1761; ibid. f312 Memorandum 23 December 1761.
79. Ibid. f345 Newcastle to Hardwicke 25 December 1761. Cf. Winstanley op. cit. p. 100.
80. B. M. Add. Mss. 32932 f345 Newcastle to Hardwicke 25 December 1761. Cf. ibid. f351 Newcastle to Hardwicke 25 December 1761. Cf. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 100-108.
81. B. M. Add. Mss. 32932 f365 Newcastle to Devonshire 26 December 1761; ibid. f371 Newcastle to Bute 27 December 1761; ibid. f377 Newcastle to Barrington 27 December 1761; ibid. f371 Newcastle to Bute 27 December 1761; ibid. f375 Newcastle to Hardwicke 27 December 1761.

over to attack Granada thus preoccupying Spain and turning her attacks away from Portugal and the main stream of the war,
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 thus reassuring the financiers.

Barrington, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was also perturbed by the situation. On 3 January 1762 he wrote gloomily to Newcastle

"Tho' the deposit has been fortunately and successfully made the future payments must depend on the cash which shall be forthcoming at the respective times fixed for that purpose. The subscribers, most of whom are in or connected with trade, expect returns to enable them to be punctual in these payments. The War with Spain must occasion disappointment. We must expect bankruptcies from the same cause each of which is a diminution of general wealth and credit.

Commerce may eventually find its way into enemy lands but is always interrupted at the beginning of hostilities. Benefit from prizes will be at least a year before it takes effect. All assurance will be later from the loan... If the Dutch join in our difficulties will increase." 83

In these circumstances Newcastle now began to doubt whether it was possible to carry on the War in Germany at such an immense cost, particularly with Prussia in such a weak state.

He realised that "both within and without doors" there would be a demand for the cessation of the German War, yet he thought
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 that to end the war in Germany would be disastrous. He was also alarmed at rumours that were spreading among his mercantile associates. On 10 January 1762 he wrote to Hardwicke

"I must conjure Your Lordship to be with us tomorrow, not only because the points of the highest consequences

82. Ibid. f406 West to Newcastle 29 December 1761.

83. B.M. Add. Mss. 32933 f50 Barrington to Newcastle 3 January 1762.

84. Ibid. f112 Newcastle to Sir Joseph Yorke 8 January 1762;
ibid. f364 Newcastle to Hardwicke 18 January 1762.

by which the future conduct of the nation will be determined will come before us, but because it is already reported in the City, and I had it from good authority that My Lord Hardwicke had left the Council." 85

On 25 January 1762 Newcastle's supporters had to defend his position when he was attacked by Beckford in the House of Commons. Beckford said that a Spanish War did not involve much additional expense but that the stocks were falling because of the assurances that were given to the City financiers that there was no likelihood of a war with Spain when the new loan was floated. Newcastle was defended by Grenville and the financier Thomas Walpole who stated that Newcastle had given no assurances that there was not going to be a war with Spain when negotiations for the loan were going on.

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On the following day Joseph Watkins wrote a report of the financial situation to Newcastle with suggestions for its remedy. This letter is important and worth quoting in detail as Newcastle used Watkins's solution to solve his financial difficulties.

Watkins stated that he had been in the City on 26 January 1762 when he found that the public credit was in a "bad way" and that unless something was done payment of the loan that had recently been negotiated might be endangered. To remedy this situation Watkins first suggested an end to the war in Germany. He continued

"But if we cannot put an immediate end to this war a hint may be dropped that it is intended and that we

85. Ibid. f179 Newcastle to Hardwicke 10 January 1762.

86. Ibid. ff477-478 West to Newcastle 25 January 1762 "Account of what passed in the House of Commons."

87. Joseph Watkins was a London merchant. See A Complete Guide etc 1757 edn. p. 153. 1763 edn. p. 173.

shall raise no more money this year, for as it is out of doubt we cannot, we may as well declare it. My Lord Duke, things are very serious and something must be done to prevent a total pannick, part with no money that you can avoid, leave the navy and vidualling Bills for other times, don't think of giving a douceur for it will make bad worse, a word or two from the Chancellor of the Exchequer will do more than anything. The sooner this is done the better."

Newcastle seems to have taken Watkins advice to heart for on 29 January he wrote a memorandum

Fall of Stocks.

Declaration - no more money to be raised.

To raise money the next year within the year and not by funding which increases the so much the National Debt.

Of opinion that declaration of the Treasury that we should borrow above 1,200,000 would have good effect and that 1,200,000 of Lottery should be given to the present holders of the subscription receipts. 88

On the same day Newcastle's ideas were confirmed by a letter from Legge who stated that he was alarmed at the fall in the stocks, and that public confidence was made worse by the declaration that the government were going to raise another £4,000,000. Legge stated that if this rumour was stopped it would go a long way to restore public confidence. 89

Legge and Barrington, the Chancellor of the Exchequer discussed Newcastle's ideas which were based on Watkins' letter and on 1 February Barrington wrote to Newcastle

87. (contd) B. M. Add. Mss. 32934 f26 Joseph Watkins to Newcastle 26 January 1762.

88. Ibid. f72 Memorandum 29 January 1762.

89. Ibid. f74 Legge to Newcastle 29 January 1762.

" I have seen Mr. Legge and have talked over fully our money affairs with him. He is clearly of opinion that no inconvenience arising from tying up your hands by declaring that no more money will be borrowed, is equal in any degree to the dangers to which your silence will expose the whole, and therefore he strongly advises Your Grace to make your declaration without delay." 90

On 12 February Newcastle reported to Hardwicke that the situation in the City had improved, but he seemed to consider the improvement as only temporary. This appears to have been due to his adoption of the plan suggested by Watkins. On the same day Watkins wrote to Newcastle congratulating him on the restoration of public credit, but by 15 February Legge was alarmed again. He described the idea of raising all future loans within the year as impracticable and implored Newcastle not to let the financiers put their trust in it as it would create nothing but confusion. The following day Newcastle was again complaining to Hardwicke about the bad financial situation. He was by now finding his position very difficult and feeling that Bute was not trusting him was beginning to have thoughts of resignation. 91
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The worst of the financial crisis was over, however, had Newcastle realised it. On 26 February he wrote in a memorandum that he intended discussing with Bute the state of the Bank, and that there was great reason to hope that the

90. Ibid. f131 Barrington to Newcastle 1 February 1762.

91. Ibid. f291 Newcastle to Hardwicke 'Friday Morning' (12 February 1762).

92. Ibid. f309 Joseph Watkins to Newcastle 12 February 1762.

93. Ibid. f351 Legge to Newcastle 15 February 1762.

94. Ibid. f379 Newcastle to Hardwicke 16 February 1762.

95. Ibid. f393 Newcastle to Devonshire 17 February 1762.

Bank would advance the money the government needed in the summer of 1762 because much money was coming in from Holland.⁹⁶ He was also bearing the interests of the merchants in mind, for he wrote in the same memorandum that he intended to discuss with Lord Mansfield how

"To reserve a certain proportion out of the Galleons and Register ships only, not general captures, to be paid into the Bank and laid out in government securities to be disposed of after the peace, to make good the losses which the British merchants will have sustained by captures on board such ships, during the war. The manner of adjusting such losses, to be provided for in a summary way."⁹⁷

On 2 March Newcastle wrote confidently to Joseph Yorke here

"We think of nothing/but peace; our stocks rise every day; and if it had not been for our cursed war with Spain, we must now have had peace; and yet I hope we shall bring it about."⁹⁸

and on 1 April 1762 the Duke of Cumberland congratulated Newcastle, informing him that the stock market was healthier than it had been during the past two years.⁹⁹

In the midst of the financial crisis at the end of 1761 and in early 1762 Newcastle had still found time to look after the private interests of his mercantile adherents and consult them when necessary. He had been consulted by George Amyand about the government contract he held and he had used his influence with Rose Fuller about a military matter in the West Indies.¹⁰¹ He was asked to secure the excusal of Capel Hanbury's

96. B. M. Add. Mss. 32935 f112 Memorandum 28 February 1762, "Business tomorrow with My Lord Bute."

97. Ibid. f112 Memorandum 28 February 1762 "Business tomorrow with My Lord Bute." (under sub-heading Lord Mansfield)

98. Ibid. f145 Newcastle to Joseph Yorke 2 March 1762.

99. B. M. Add. Mss. 32936 f258 Duke of Cumberland to Newcastle 1 April 1762.

100. B. M. Add. Mss 32934 f37 George Amyand to Newcastle 27 January 1762

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brother from serving as sheriff of Monmouthshire, Joseph Salvador one of the government financiers, offered any assistance he could give if there was a military expedition to Portugal and he was attending to a matter of patronage for the Liverpool merchant Sir Ellis Cunliffe. Finally, his contact with the dissenters was being continued.

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In the months following the fall of Pitt the established pattern was thus repeating itself. Newcastle, as First Lord of the Treasury, cultivated the friendship and took care of the interest of the City financiers rather than the merchant class in general. The latter were profoundly shocked by Pitt's resignation, his acceptance of a peerage for his wife and a pension for his son, but when they understood the true reason for his actions, they eventually returned to their old allegiance to him. Newcastle realised that this was happening and he seemed to understand the importance of mercantile support but he also realised that, as First Lord of the Treasury, the support of the City financiers was more important. He thus strove to maintain their adherence and if to do this it was necessary to sacrifice the support of the merchants in general he was willing to do so, if somewhat reluctantly. At the same time he strove to maintain the allegiance of those merchants like Rose Fuller who were

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101. Ibid. f60 Albe~~m~~arle to Newcastle 'Thursday Morn!' (28 January 1762)
102. B. M. Add. Mss. 32933 f265 Memorandum 12 January 1762.
103. Ibid. f254 Joseph Salvador to Newcastle 12 January 1762.
104. B. M. Add. Mss. 32934 f76 Ellis Cunliffe to Newcastle 29 January 1762.
105. Ibid. f281. Samuel Chandler to Newcastle 11 February 1762.

consistently loyal to him. He looked after their interests as he was accustomed to do when they consulted him and in return expected their help when he called upon them for advice and assistance, and he also expected their help in electoral matters.

Thus in these months there was little change in the relations between the Old Whigs and the mercantile classes. The situation remained static as it had done for most of the period of the Seven Years War. There was in fact no profound alteration in these relations until after the fall of Newcastle in May 1762 and the entry of the party into opposition in 1763 and 1764. The City financiers naturally supported the government in power and when Newcastle fell the loyalty of these financiers was tested. They had to choose between their allegiance to a political party and their allegiance to government finance on which to some extent they depended for their livelihood.

The period immediately after the fall of Pitt is of great interest, showing Newcastle's preoccupation with the 'monied interest' and at the same time his knowledge of the importance of mercantile support and his effort to preserve it, if possible. Unfortunately, in many cases the interest of the merchants and the financiers were directly opposed. Rockingham, who was mainly in opposition, was fortunate in that he did not have to preserve the support of the financiers, but he inherited from Newcastle an appreciation of the value of the support of both the 'monied interest' and the merchants.

CHAPTER III.THE FALL OF NEWCASTLE.

It has become clear in the previous chapter that the resignation of Pitt had never strengthened Newcastle's power in the government as he hoped it would. Indeed it had soon become apparent that it was Bute and Grenville who had really been strengthened. As early as 23 October 1761 Newcastle and Hardwicke had been overruled at a Cabinet meeting on the question of the pacific nature of the Address and Newcastle in December 1761 was in constant fear that Bute intended to abandon the war in Germany. The fact that Newcastle knew that Bute would abandon the war in Germany if he possibly could must have been doubly embarrassing as his own supporters were divided on the matter.

There were two distinct factors at issue with regard to the question of the German war. Firstly there was the question of maintaining the subsidy to Britain's ally Frederick the Great, and secondly there was the question of the actual maintenance of the British army in Germany. With the death of the Czarina Elisabeth in January 1762 and the accession of Peter III, the fanatical admirer of Frederick the Great, Frederick could now hope for strong support from Russia, and Bute seems to have been willing to continue the subsidy to Frederick only on the understanding that he was going to attempt a general pacification. When it was obvious by April 1762 that Frederick was not going to attempt this, Bute decided

1. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32929 f470 Hardwicke to Newcastle 23 October 1761; ibid. f472 Newcastle to Hardwicke 23 October 1761. See also Namier England in the Age etc pp. 302 et seq Winstanley op. cit. p. 94. See above p. 101

not to pay the subsidy. This was finally decided at a Cabinet meeting on 30 April 1762 at which Newcastle, Hardwicke and Devonshire found themselves outvoted again.⁴

The settlement of the subsidy question left Bute free to deal with the British army in Germany. Early in April, Bute informed Newcastle that he had determined to withdraw the British army in Germany. For that reason Newcastle was instructed to apply for a vote of one million pounds instead of two and superficially it was over this that he resigned.⁵ The situation was complicated by the fact that Bute carried on a series of what Newcastle considered were underhand dealings over this matter. Bute ordered Samuel Martin the Secretary of the Treasury to prepare, without consulting Newcastle, an account of how much money would be saved by withdrawing the army from Germany and not paying the subsidy. This affair added to Newcastle's growing suspicions that he was not being consulted on matters of the greatest importance and on 26 May 1762 Newcastle resigned.⁶

It is thus not clear whether the resignation of Newcastle was primarily due to differences with his colleagues on policy as it was publicly made out to be, or because of the fact that

2. Ibid. pp. 96-99. See above p. 109.
3. See above p. 104.
4. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 101-103. Cf. Rashed op. cit. p. 135.
5. Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 315-319.
6. Ibid. pp. 316-326. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 108-109. See also "American versus Continental Warfare 1739-1763" by Richard Pares in English Historical Review, Vol. LI, London, 1936 pp. 464-465.

he was no longer treated with the trust that he was accustomed to and^{so} found himself comparatively powerless as he made out⁷ to his friends.

It should also be borne in mind that there was beneath all this a far more basic division between Newcastle, and Bute and his supporters, for Newcastle still believed that the war must be ended as soon as possible, and it is interesting to note how his affiliation with financiers and merchants on the questions at issue affected his decision to resign.

It must be remembered that Viry was negotiating with the English Ministers for peace at this time and Newcastle was in close contact with him.⁸ On 8 March 1762 Newcastle reported to Hardwicke an interview which he had with Viry in which Viry reported his conversation with Bute on the previous day. From this it appears that it was mainly the settlement of Britain's differences with Spain that were preventing the conclusion of a successful peace treaty and Newcastle concluded his letter by saying

"For God's sake, My Dear Lord, when things were brought so near don't let us lose this great object for a mere formality. If my Friend (Viry) is not mistaken Lord B.(ute) acts like a man and is determined to conclude forthwith."⁹

Soon after he had written this, probably the next day, Newcastle received the news of Rodney's attack and the capture

7. See for example B. M. Add. Mss. 32938 f248 Newcastle to Sir Joseph Yorke 14 May 1762; ibid. f50 Newcastle to Rockingham 4 May 1762.

8. For the negotiations at this time see Rashed op. cit. pp. 126-131.

9. B. M. Add. Mss. 32936 f251 Newcastle to Hardwicke 8 March 1762

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of Martinique. This conquest again raised the question of what conquests Britain should retain in the West Indies and on the American mainland. This had previously been debated on the conquest of Guadaloupe. ¹¹ On 2 April 1762 Hardwicke wrote to Newcastle with reference to this

"Your Grace knows what has been debated in pamphlets whether we should keep Canada or Guadaloupe. It will now come to be a more grave question whether you should return to France all her sugar colonies or great part of Canada. The most material argument for Retaining Canada has been the delivery of your northern colonies from such bad neighbours and from the danger of French encroachments for the future, but some persons have thought that could never be securely attain'd without conquering Louisiana also, and that for this purpose, four parts of Canada might serve as well as the whole. The question now may come between Canada, or a great part of Canada, and the French sugar colonies except St. Domingo." ¹²

Hardwicke continued by stating his opinion on the value of both the sugar islands and West Indies, wishing to retain the sugar islands because of the valuable trade, and he pointed out the arguments were now doubly valid as Martinique was conquered. He suggested that Newcastle should consult ¹³ Sir William Baker on the matter.

Newcastle, startled at what Hardwicke wrote, arranged to meet Baker on 3 April 1762. Baker had been Newcastle's adviser previously during the Canada and Guadaloupe controversy and came down strongly for keeping Canada for strategic

10. Ibid. f270 Newcastle to Cumberland 9 March 1762.

11. See "Canada v. Guadaloupe, an episode of the Seven Years War" by W. L. Grant, American Historical Review, Vol. XVI, New York, 1912, p. 735.

12. B. M. Add. Mss. 32936 ff310-311 Hardwicke to Newcastle 2 April 1762, quoted Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 279-280. The term Santa Domingo is variously applied to either the whole or the west half or the east half of (contd)

reasons. In 1761 Baker had believed that it was better to keep ^{Canada} Guadeloupe because the power of the French would then be much reduced on the North American continent and it would be much easier to preserve peace with France and maintain the security of our continental North American possessions. Baker hoped that in returning Guadeloupe the British government might also gain Louisiana in the negotiations, thus completing the exclusion of the French from the North American continental mainland. He was also impressed by Canada as a potential source of power and wealth for Great Britain and desired for similar strategic and commercial reasons that the French should be excluded from the Newfoundland fisheries. Although he had admitted in 1761 that Guadeloupe was valuable, that England needed more sugar plantations both for home and for foreign consumption he hoped that these could be found in the Neutral Islands which he regarded as British "by right".¹⁴

Unfortunately there is no written record whether Baker's opinions had been modified by the new situation created by the conquest of Martinique in 1762, nor do Baker's opinions seem to be reported in Newcastle's correspondence at this time. In view, however, of the fact that a year previously

12. (contd) the island of Hispaniola. Here the reference is to the west half (the present Haiti) which was the only important French sugar colony remaining unconquered in the West Indies in April 1762.

13. B.M. Add. Mss. 32936 ff310-311 Hardwicke to Newcastle 2 April 1762.

14. Ibid. f312 Newcastle to Hardwicke 2 April 1762; B.M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff1-2 Memorandum in Baker's hand 13 April 1761 quoted Namier England in the Age etc pp. 274-5; See also ibid., pp. 242, 256, 273-4.

Baker had come down strongly in favour of the North American rather than the West Indian mercantile view-point there is little reason to suppose that he would have changed his stand in 1762. Indeed it is logical to believe that the new conquest would only re-inforce his desire to make the whole of continental North America British, and Baker's ideas were probably influential in forming Newcastle's opinion as they had been in the past.

On 1 April 1762 the day before he wrote about the Canada v. West Indies problem Hardwicke had pressed Newcastle to accept the 'interpretation' of the continental war favoured by the 'monied interest' when he wrote

"Nothing will do more hurt than have it supposed in the nation that the protection and defence of that country (Portugal) have been neglected for the sake of carrying on the German War. You know very well that I have always been for supporting that war as far as it can reasonably be done. But the people will, or will be taught to, look upon that war as a war that drains us of our money, whereas the trade and gold of Portugal does in great measure supply us with it. If the war should go on and the door continue shut against all commerce with Spain, and the Portugal trade be cut off, either by Spain possessing herself of that country or the King of Portugal being forced to accept of such an offensive neutrality as has been talked of, where will this nation be able to get any supplies of Treasure at all? 15

This idea did not necessarily conflict with the desire to keep all of Canada but it may be seen that Newcastle was under a variety of pressures at this time. He continued to be anxious for peace and his connections with the monied and mercantile classes made him feel that it was urgent. On 9 April 1762 he wrote to Sir Joseph Yorke

15. Ibid. ff260-262 Hardwicke to Newcastle 1 April 1762.

" I must repeat to you that the load of war is so heavy upon us, that I don't pass a day without meeting with something very disagreeable to myself upon that subject from all quarters....After an increase of nearly seventy millions national debt, by this great, glorious and successful war, to continue to carry it on at the rate of twenty millions more every year, is more than this country can do; I dare say, we shall be repaid in full by our Peace, but that is more than I know." 16

Newcastle was becoming increasingly aware that as a minister he was holding less and less power and was thus less and less able to carry out the policy he wanted to adopt. He was anxious to end the war as soon as possible for he believed that the government financiers would not support the Treasury much longer. He also seems to have realised the deleterious effect that high taxation and the expense of war was having upon trade. If, however, it was not possible to end the war Newcastle did not believe that the continental war should be curtailed. There is no evidence that his belief in a continental war was affected by commercial considerations, there does not seem to be any correspondence from merchants discussing whether or not it was advisable to end the German war, and Newcastle's desire to continue it would seem to rely mainly on the strategic ground that as it was desired to bring France and Spain to terms it was necessary to harrass them in every possible sphere. On the other hand Newcastle never seems to have had second thoughts on this policy and it is then logical to think that his mercantile friends supported

16. Ibid. ff449-450 Newcastle to Sir Joseph Yorke 1 April 1762.
 17. See for instance B. M. Add. Mss. 32937 f92 Newcastle to Devonshire 13 April 1762.

him in it. Indeed there is no reason why they should not, for the war in Germany was leading to profitable contracts which would only end without being replaced by peaceful trade if the British army was withdrawn and the subsidy to Frederick the Great terminated. These facts are borne out by the loan that was negotiated for Portugal in April 1762. When news leaked out that a loan was to be negotiated stocks in the City rose,¹⁸ and Newcastle was soon appointing merchants to remit the loan.

Meanwhile the peace negotiations were developing. Viry communicated a new dispatch to Bute about 21 April 1762. On 23 April the Cabinet agreed to return Martinique as the French demanded and by 30 April it was also agreed not to insist on ¹⁹Guadeloupe or Louisiana. While this policy was being evolved Newcastle wrote to Hardwicke

" I own I had, and have my doubts as to our demanding Guadeloupe or Louisiana; We shall have neither; and, I hope shall not finally insist upon them. We have once lost the Peace, by asking too much and not departing from it, soon enough; I hope, that will not be our course a second time: If it is, nothing but destruction can follow.... Lord Bute....said little till he insisted upon some considerable equivalent for Martinico. My own private opinion is to ask the four Neutral Islands; and finally to take St. Lucia and one of the other three.

Consider, My Dear Lord, what confusion we shall be in if this negotiation breaks off. You see the King of Prussia already treated by My Lord President, the Duke of Bedford and My Lord Bute, rather as an enemy than an ally; and I am afraid, there is scarce any exchanges that they will not go into, to avoid what they call a continental war. To avoid that we should make up with France, if we can, and to avoid other inconveniences and even attacks either at home, or in Ireland, for I

18. Ibid. f192 West to Newcastle 17 April 1762; ibid. f194 Barrington to Newcastle 17 April 1762.

19. See Rashed op. cit. pp. 141-142.

beg your Lordship to observe, that the D. de Choiseul owns that Spain has already squinted at Ireland, and that will undoubtedly go on, if our negotiations break off with France. I hope the reciprocal Flattery between those who govern the two countries will prevent it. I own this is my greatest dependence." 20

Newcastle was thus coming to believe increasingly in "peace at any price" and was influenced mainly by strategic considerations, although mercantile considerations must have influenced him to some extent for the two were inextricably entwined. It is also interesting to note that in the reply Viry sent on 1 May 1762 England claimed the Neutral Islands.²¹ Perhaps Newcastle had more weight in the Cabinet than he believed he had.

Unfortunately there is not a lot more to be learned about Newcastle's ideas on the war and the negotiations of peace for by 30 April he had become preoccupied with the controversy with Grenville whether £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 should be voted, over which he resigned. By 30 April he had guessed how Grenville was going to economise to save £1,000,000 for on that day he wrote to Devonshire

"Besides every clerk, who knows anything of the state of our finances must know, that if we have not a second million we must shut up the exchequer by the end of the summer; and Mr. Grenville means this only, to force you to put an immediate end to the German War." 22

It is interesting to note that in the crisis at the

20. B. M. Add. Mss. 32937 f349 Newcastle to Hardwicke 25 April 1762. Cf. ibid. f324 Newcastle to Devonshire 23 April 1762. On the 23 April the Cabinet had agreed to demand Guadeloupe or Louisiana as compensation for Martinique. See Winstanley op. cit. p. 117.
21. Cf. Rashed op. cit. p. 142.
22. B. M. Add. Mss. 32937 f453 Newcastle to Devonshire 30 April 1762.

beginning of May over this matter during which Newcastle decided to resign he kept closely in contact with Rockingham informing him of events, primarily one must conclude because he wished to be sure of the loyalty of Rockingham and the group he led especially in Yorkshire, but it is also a mark of the regard in which he held the young Marquis. Since Pitt's fall in October 1761 contact with Rockingham had only been spasmodic but in May 1762 there was fairly constant correspondence between the two and among the last of Newcastle's acts at the Treasury was securing the appointment of certain individuals for Rockingham. Among these was "Mr. Farrar's brother". This could well have been significant for Benjamin Farrar was to be important during the Stamp Act Crisis.

During his last weeks in office Newcastle as usual maintained contact with representatives of the mercantile classes on local and minor matters. From these also he received advice and information upon the war and this contact was valuable. William Woods, a Customs official, sent Newcastle statistics showing the increase of raw sugar imports

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23. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32938 f50 Newcastle to Rockingham 4 May 1762. Ibid. f123 Rockingham to Newcastle 9 May 1762; ibid. f260 Rockingham to Newcastle 14 May 1762; ibid. f281 Rockingham to Newcastle 15 May 1762; ibid. f425 Newcastle to Rockingham 24 May 1762.
24. Ibid. f291 Rockingham to Newcastle 15 May 1762; ibid. f427 Newcastle to Rockingham 24 May 1762. For Farrar see Smith op. cit. pp. 221-222. See also below p. 382.
25. B.M. Add. Mss. 32936 f116 Ellis Cunliffe to Newcastle 25 March 1762. B.M. Add. Mss. 32938 f16 James Marriott to Newcastle 1 May 1762; ibid. f93 John Bullock to Newcastle 20 May 1762.

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 since 1710, Joseph Watkins sent Newcastle his opinion on the
 present state of the war,²⁷ Sampson Gideon commented on the
 financial situation and Garfield Charles Penfold,²⁸ a West Indian
 planter, sent a pamphlet to Newcastle reflecting the view-
 point of the planters in the Canada v Guadeloupe controversy.²⁹

Newcastle was also maintaining his contact with the
 dissenters and they very soon expressed their regret at his
 resignation as did Sir George Colebrooke.³⁰³¹

Thus during Newcastle's last months in office in 1762
 the established pattern repeated itself. He maintained his
 traditional alliance with the 'monied interest' and his policy
 seems to have been far more affected by deference to their
 opinion than an attempt to curry favour with the merchants
 in general. His desire for peace and his attitude to the
 German war showed this admirably.

The coming period in opposition was to test the loyalty
 of Newcastle's followers. Newcastle was to see who were his

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26. B. M. Add. Mss. 32937 f198 William Woods to Newcastle 17 April 1762.
27. Ibid. f412 Joseph Watkins to Newcastle 28 April 1762. For Watkins see above pp.111-112.
28. B. M. Add. Mss. 32938 f300 Sampson Gideon to Newcastle 16 May 1762.
29. Ibid. f354 Garfield Charles Penfold to Newcastle 20 May 1762 (docketed received 21 July 1762 and thus not received until Newcastle had fallen from power) together with pamphlet ibid. ff354-364 Reflections on the true interest of Great Britain with respect of the Caribee Islands and the Conquests considered by a Planter at Barbados 1762.
30. B. M. Add. Mss. 32937 f314 Samuel Chandler to Newcastle n.d. (but dated 22 April 1762) B. M. Add. Mss. 32939 f171 Samuel Chandler to Newcastle 3 June 1762.
31. B. M. Add. Mss. 32938 f390 Sir George Colebrooke to Newcastle 21 May 1762.

true allies and discover those who had merely clung to him as First Lord of the Treasury. This period was also to forge new and different links with the mercantile classes.

CHAPTER IV.

NEWCASTLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

A. THE ATTEMPT TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT FINANCIALLY.

As soon as he had resigned Newcastle began carefully to watch the actions of those members of the mercantile and monied classes who had been loyal to him while in power. From the first he seems to have had some idea that he could embarrass the administration by maintaining the loyalty of the 'monied classes' to himself personally. On 9 June Hugh Valence Jones, Newcastle's secretary while at the Treasury, reported to him

"Lord B(ute) is to have another Levée at Whitehall today, at which, it is said, pains have been taken to engage some of the principal merchants to shew themselves. The Boards which were not at the Former will attend this Levee." 1

After the meeting mentioned above took place Newcastle reported to Hardwicke

"I hear, this day from London that my Lord Bute's Levee on Wednesday, was very full; but I don't know of what sort of people it was composed. I hear great industry was used, to get the considerable people of the City to go there, of whom there was scarce any the first day" 2

He may have been somewhat perturbed and especially anxious to find out which merchants attended the second levée, for his old friend and ally Rose Fuller had attended Bute's first levée. 3

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1. B.M. Add. Mss. 32939 f246 Hugh Valence Jones to Newcastle 9 June 1762.
 2. Ibid. f288 Newcastle to Hardwicke 11 June 1762.
 3. See ibid. f307 Hugh Valence Jones to Newcastle 12 June 1762 sending a list of Bute's first levée.

It is however, to be noted that Fuller was not a government financier.

The problem of making peace was the chief problem at this time and Newcastle was thus anxious to secure any news that he could concerning the progress of negotiations. Thus when on 15 June Rockingham sent Newcastle news that hopes for peace were reviving, Newcastle wrote eagerly to Rockingham requesting information; but Rockingham was forced to write again on the same day and deny the information that he had sent earlier.⁴

Newcastle was now coming to the point at which he had to decide exactly what attitude he was going to adopt to the new administration. At first, no doubt partly because this was the best way to maintain the allegiance of his supporters he adopted an attitude of neutrality and on 19 June wrote to Hardwicke

" I am told, and with too much truth that mankind are so made, that if they don't see something is to be done on one side, they will engage on the other and that I shall lose all my friends by not declaring. That, to a degree, may be true: But these are friends of Interest only, and therefore, that shall never force me to a measure improper, and perhaps dangerous in itself. Make a declaration of what ? Of opposition to what, to right measures, to the necessary support of the government, I am sure; nothing shall ever induce me to that, as, I know it would not, the best part of my friends, and those whose advice I would take. But on the other hand I will enter into no engagements, I don't owe it to my Lord Bute, to remove his fears and apprehensions, and to make him easy in his offensive Administration; but I owe it to

4. Ibid. ff345-6 Rockingham to Newcastle 15 June 1762; ibid. f347 Newcastle to Rockingham 15 June 1762; ibid. f349 Rockingham to Newcastle 15 June 1762.

myself, and my country, to do nothing that should give Dishonour to me, or prejudice the other. I will not give the lye to all, which I have hitherto done, or to any one part of it. This is my full determination and I am sure you will approve it."

Newcastle also pointed out that once he declared either opposition or support for the government that he was bound to lose some support.⁵ Yet while he adopted this policy of "superficial neutrality" Newcastle was willing to embarrass Bute, if he could, by maintaining the loyalty of the financiers to himself. This policy was not self contradictory. In an era when opposition was still tainted with disloyalty the best method of returning to power was to prove oneself indispensable. No doubt Newcastle hoped to prove that his financial experience and contacts were essential to the government.

Thus when on 17 and 19 June Hugh Valence Jones sent Newcastle details of a further levee of Bute's, held on 16 June 1762, Newcastle was not concerned when he was informed that " a considerable number of merchants attended to sol^licet some points relating to wharfage", but was much more concerned when Jones informed him that three government financiers Sampson Gideon, Joseph Salvadore and Samuel Touchet had attended, although the latter was supposed to have come "with the merchants".⁶

Following this distressing news of the apparent defection

5. Ibid. f407 Newcastle to Hardwicke 19 June 1762.

6. Ibid. f387 Hugh Valence Jones to Newcastle 17 June 1762.

ibid. f415 Hugh Valence Jones to Newcastle 19 June 1762.

For Gideon Salvadore and Touchet as government financiers see Namier, Structure of Politics pp. 55, 56. see also Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 107.

of two or possibly three of his City friends, Newcastle wrote to Hardwicke on 20 June, a letter the intention of which ^{it}would seem was to re-assure himself, and which contains a good analysis of his ideas at this time. He wrote

" I think upon the whole, His Lordship, (Bute) sees the difficulties He is engaged in, which will increase upon him; and he is too proud, either to own it or to ask any assistance upon it. But, if what I hear, is true, he must soon be obliged to do both, For I am told the run is greater than ever: and that is the general opinion, that it is impossible for him to hold it. That seem'd particularly to be the notion of my two City friends, Mr. Walpole and Sir G. Colebrooke, for both whom I answer, tho' the latter was at my Lord Bute's Levée, as a Contractor with the Treasury, but had not the honor to be spoken to.

They are nibbling already at borrowing money in the City; and give out that they shall want but six millions next year. Poor silly men, they don't know, what they want, nor, if they did, how to procure it. The only persons they have in the City, are Mr. Glover and Mr. Salvadore and Mr. Fox's particular friends, proper persons to procure money loans for the publick.

I think it is plain, that the Peace meets with some obstruction. My Lord Bute has now found out, that the divisions here affect it, and if his want of credit at home, should be known, and believed abroad, this will affect it more." 7

About 21 June Newcastle may have become a little more alarmed when he received news that Lord Halifax was to be placed at the Head of the Admiralty , and that this was a popular appointment with the merchants.

He received more alarming news a few days later, for he learned that two of the greatest of the government financiers, Sir Joshua Vanneck and Sir George Colebrooke, had made heavy

7. B. M. Add. Mss. 32939 ff421-422 Newcastle to Hardwicke 20 June 1762

8. B. M. Add. Mss. 32940 Barrington to Newcastle 21 June 1762.

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purchases of government stock. Newcastle also seemed to have been annoyed when John Milbanke, a Yorkshire friend of Rockingham's, also began to dabble in government stock at this time. Newcastle therefore did something to rally his forces.

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He made approaches to Rose Fuller, no doubt testing his allegiance, and on 9 July he wrote to John West, his former Secretary to the Treasury, asking him to send him information as to the financial arrangements of the new ministry, making an excuse of the fact that he wanted to know if his calculations had been grossly inaccurate. He continued

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"I shall be glad to see you as soon as it is convenient to you. In the meantime I wish, you would inform yourself of the real sense and inclination of the City and particularly whether my old Friends the Bank, the the South Sea, Sir G. (eorge) Colebrooke, Sir Joshua (Vanneck) and the Walpoles, the Gores and Mellishes, Martin, Muilman etc, continues the same as they were. I have not the least reason to suspect any change in any of them. I wish you would continue to see Sir W(illiam) Baker; and tell him how glad I should be to see him here in my retirement."

12

At the same time, however, or even possibly slightly before, Newcastle must have been receiving some reassuring news; for on 4 July Rockingham wrote to Newcastle from Wentworth that

9. Ibid. f40 "Intelligence" 23 June 1762.

10. W.W.M. R1-258 Milbanke to Rockingham 23 June 1762. Milbanke seems to have acted as a financial agent for Rockingham in London. See ibid. R1-257 draft Rockingham to Milbanke n.d.

11. B.M. Add. Mss. 32940 f184 Newcastle to Lord Ashburham 1 July 1762

12. Ibid. ff302-303 Newcastle to West 9 July 1762. Bartholomew Burton Governor of the Bank of England, John Bristol Governor of the South Sea Company, Sir George Colebrooke, Sir Joshua Vanneck, Thomas Walpole, John Gore, William Mellish, John Martin and Henry Muilman were government financiers who had been closely connected with Newcastle during his administration. Cf. Namier Structure of Politics etc p. 55.

"By all that I can learn here I find a very general discontent and a sensible and considerable merchant of this country surprised me by assuring me that he was just come from Scotland and even there the Great Man was not popular and no joy." 13

and on 10 July Thomas Walpole saw Newcastle and informed him that Vanneck's large purchase of government stock was the result of instructions received from a servant of Choiseul and was not made on his own initiative. Newcastle probably concluded, fairly justly, that it was the same sort of instruction that had prompted Colebrooke's similar action. He was however, forced to conclude from this, that peace had nearly been concluded and on the 15 July 1762 was able to write reassuringly to the Duke of Devonshire

" I have very good account from the City; Everything there is as Your Grace left it....I have my home full every day, this day I expect my Friend Sir W(illia)m Baker." 16

Newcastle was further reassured on 15 July when he saw Sir William Baker who thought that everything was in confusion, and that the City financiers did not think there was any administration at all. West, whom he saw on the same day, reiterated the loyalty of the City to Newcastle and stated

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13. B.M. Add. Mss. 32940 ff241-242 Rockingham to Newcastle 4 July 1762. It is not clear who the "Sensible and considerable merchant" was but it was possibly Benjamin Farrar for Rockingham had been in contact with him in May 1762 (see above p. 126) and Rockingham was again in contact with Farrar in August 1762. See W.W.M. Rockingham Papers R1-27 John Whiteacre to Mr. Thesiger 6 August 1762 and receipt enclosed of 10 August 1762. The wording of this letter is peculiar but perhaps Rockingham expected the fact that Bute was now in control to receive a popular reception in Scotland.
14. B.M. Add. Mss. 32940 f326 Newcastle to Duke of Cumberland 11 July 1762.
15. Ibid. f326 Newcastle to Duke of Cumberland 11 July 1762.
16. Ibid. f342 Newcastle to Devonshire 15 July 1762.
17. Ibid. f372 Newcastle to Hardwicke 16 July 1762.

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that Samuel Marsh, the governor of the Bank of England, was so perturbed with the situation that he was intent on resigning. Marsh was apparently connected with Newcastle and Bartholomew Burton. Newcastle regarded ~~this~~ as a measure that would distress the administration, but thought it was his duty to restrain Marsh, partly because he thought that it would create too much panic, and partly because he feared that Marsh would be replaced by a man far less friendly to himself.

19

Thus on 18 July Newcastle was able to write in exultation to Hugh Valence Jones

"Where will these gentlemen get money? I wish I knew, whether any of the considerable men in the City were at Lord Bute's." 20

and at the same time was making quite sure of the loyalty of Sir George Colebrooke and Rose Fuller. On the 23 July he was able to report to the Duke of Devonshire

21

"The violence and run against My Lord Bute within City and....Country is very strong." 22

By the end of July 1762 Newcastle thus felt his policy of embarrassing the government by maintaining the allegiance of the City financiers was reaping dividends. This was particularly so after the Duke of Bedford made a conciliatory approach to him to stop him going into opposition. Concerning this he

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18. Samuel Marsh had replaced Bartholomew Burton as the Governor of the Bank of England for 1761-1762, See above p. 84. This does not conflict with the statement made on p. 33 where Newcastle referred to Bartholomew Burton as the Bank, Newcastle was in the habit of thus referring to Burton.
19. Ibid. ff372-373 Newcastle to Hardwicke 16 July 1762.
20. Ibid. f399 Newcastle to Hugh Valence Jones 18 July 1762.
21. Ibid. f385 Newcastle to Thomas Hotham 17 July 1762; ibid. f389 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 17 July 1762; B.M. Add. Mss. 32941 f44 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 23 July 1762.

wrote to Hardwicke

" But I am solicited every day to know what part⁴ my Friends should take and we must come soon to some determination, with regard to our Publick Conduct. I hinted to Your Lordship in one of my letters, that the run against a certain person is so great and so universal, that I doubt much, whether any additional strength could enable him to carry on the affairs of the Government. It would hurt those who might join with him without doing any real service." 24

Cautioned by Hardwicke against over-optimism on the
25
state of opinion in the City Newcastle replied

" As to what Your Lordship very kindly observes, that People, who may come to me may aggravate the report of the Run against a certain great Man; I always make allowances for that. As to my enquiring about it; I don't know any way of doing it, but hearing what people say upon it, and making my own observations upon the truth, or probability of the accounts I hear. The universal reports from the country are to that purpose; and particularly most strongly in Yorkshire. (26) My Friends in the City upon whom I can most depend, viz, Mr. Burton, Mr. Tho(mas) Walpole and Sir G(eorge) Colebrooke say, that these reports from the country are even stronger than in the City; and I have reason to think, the run in the City is great.

" One instance of it, is remarkable, those who think or have thought the Peace sure, whose Fortunes are greatly engaged from that Belief, are not only as strong themselves, but think it is impossible for a certain person to go on with success as the most interested or disappointed person can do, either for his own resentment or to please and make Court to other people." 27

Hardwicke's caution was wise and Newcastle was over-optimistic. The only evidence in the Newcastle Papers that

22. Ibid. f37 Newcastle to Devonshire 23 July 1762.

23. Ibid. f108 et. seq Newcastle to Hardwicke 29 July 1762.

24. Ibid. f108 Newcastle to Hardwicke 29 July 1762.

25. Ibid. f94 Hardwicke to Newcastle 29 July 1762.

26. Perhaps Newcastle was thinking of Rockingham's letter of 4 July 1762. See above p. 134 and n. 13.

27. Ibid. ff128-129 Newcastle to Hardwicke 31 July 1762.

may be taken as a basis for the foundation of his opinion on sentiment in the country in general is the isolated letter from Rockingham.²⁸ The rest of his opinion would seem to be based on what his City associates told him, and it must be realised that Newcastle was at Claremont at this time, well away from the centre of the political stage. Perhaps his allies liked to reassure him and keep him optimistic; he had been in power so long that they must have felt fairly certain his period without office was to be very brief. They may well have believed that their future depended on encouraging him to attempt to return to power.

In spite of Newcastle's false optimism it would seem, however, from the evidence presented above, that his policy was earning some rewards. The government had been sufficiently embarrassed for the Duke of Bedford to approach Newcastle in order to secure his neutrality.²⁹ The end of July was, however, the high-water mark of success for this policy, for Newcastle was always restrained for fear of being accused of factious behaviour. Consistency of behaviour both in and out of power was necessary when opposition was still tainted with disloyalty. Only by consistency could charges of faction be avoided.

28. For this see above note 26.

29. See above p. 135.

B. FAILURE TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT FINANCIALLY AND THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

In August 1762 disturbing symptoms began to appear for Newcastle which were to lead by the end of the year to the "Massacre of the Pelhamite Innocents" and the abandonment of his policy of "superficial neutrality".

These symptoms were twofold. Firstly, Newcastle's attempt to embarrass the government through the financiers failed because of their natural proclivity to support administration, and secondly the ministry was becoming able to negotiate a successful peace. The factors were inter-connected. It was partly because of the fact that they were expecting to conclude peace that Bute and his colleagues were able to escape from their financial problems.

30

On 5 August Newcastle wrote to Barrington that "all the world" was astonished that the Treasury had been able to settle all their debts before the adjournment, particularly as debts had been paid in cash no additional money had been borrowed, and Parliament was not to meet until the usual time after the summer adjournment. Newcastle desired Barrington to find out how this had been arranged for he said

"If this is so Your Lordship, and in consequence, myself, have been grossly imposed upon; and shall make a very poor figure, when this point is known; and comes to be debated in Parliament (for that it will be). We shall be reckoned (with reason) very ignorant in our office, and very weak Ministers, to have laid so much stress upon a point; which now comes out so strongly against us, and to have carried it so far, as to leave our offices upon it." 31

30. Barrington had been promoted to Chancellor of the Exchequer in March 1761 and had resigned with Newcastle in May 1762.

At the same time as Newcastle received this disturbing news the rumours that peace was near which had been current for some time, became much stronger.³² On 7 August Newcastle wrote to Hardwicke " The talk of immediate Peace is stronger than ever and it is expected by everybody"³³ and on the same day he wrote to the Duke of Devonshire " All I hear, is, the triumphs of peace...."³⁴ To Newcastle the issue of peace was vital, for if Bute managed to conclude a successful peace his popularity would be increased and the ministry strengthened; moreover the conclusion of any peace would lessen the financial burdens on the administration and so render Newcastle's plans to embarrass the ministry, through the loyalty of the 'monied interest' to himself, of no avail.

Thus on 11 August 1762 when Newcastle was able to write to Hardwicke

" It is certain, Lord Bute gives out everywhere that the Peace is sure, or made, tho' the people in the City, who have immediate correspondence with France, and were the most positive that the peace was sure begin now to doubt of it and, I believe have acted accordingly."³⁵

he must have felt relieved. He continued

" I should almost be tempted to think that my Lord Bute has taken a resolution to conclude the peace at any rate, whether France will give proper security or satisfaction, about Spain, or not, and that the people in the City imagine, the Council will give into:

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31. B. M. Add. Mss. 32941 f160 Newcastle to Barrington 5 August 1762 quoted Namier England in the Age etc pp.414-415.
 32. See for instance B. M. Add. Mss. 32940 f403 Newcastle to Sir Joseph Yorke 19 July 1762.
 33. B. M. Add. Mss. 32941 f177 Newcastle to Hardwicke 7 August 1762.
 34. Ibid. f179 Newcastle to Devonshire 7 August 1762.
 35. Ibid. f203 Newcastle to Hardwicke 11 August 1762.

But I should much doubt whether this Council will finally object to any thing which my Lord Bute shall insist upon." ⁻³⁶

Newcastle was keeping in close contact with the leading merchants and his friends among the financial classes over the issue of the peace. In the same letter he reported to Hardwicke that on Sunday 8 August ³⁷ "Many dined here....both of the City and St. James end of town." One individual of ³⁸ this party who is identifiable is Sir George Colebrooke. Twice in the next few days Newcastle admitted that he was getting most of his information about the peace negotiations from his City friends. ³⁹ These seemed by the middle of August quite willing to allow Newcastle to believe that peace was not near and he was unwilling to accept the fact that the Ministry was able to make a satisfactory peace. Indeed he must have been unaware what Concessions Bute was willing to make, and his opinion that it would be difficult to make peace was probably based on a false assessment of the extent to which Bute was willing to go in order to secure it. Newcastle seemed also to be unwilling to read the signs that indicated that the conclusion of peace was near that were apparent in the high level of the stocks, and the attitude of those in the confidence of the Ministry. He explained these things as a ministerial device to deceive people and a proclivity ⁴⁰ to engage in stock buying, or jobbing.

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36. Ibid. f205 Newcastle to Hardwicke 11 August 1762.
 37. Ibid. f207 Newcastle to Hardwicke 11 August 1762.
 38. Ibid. f173 Halifax to Newcastle 6 August 1762.
 39. Ibid. f245 Newcastle to Barrington 15 August 1762. ibid. f264 Newcastle to Devonshire 17 August 1762.
 40. See Ibid. f243 Newcastle to Devonshire 15 August 1762. ibid f245 Newcastle to Barrington 15 August 1762.

Gradually however, Newcastle had to accept the fact that
⁴¹ peace was going to be made. As soon as he realised this he
 must have also realised that his attempts to embarrass the
 ministry financially through maintaining the loyalty of the
 City financiers to himself had failed; and by 24 August he
 was trying to reorientate his policy towards the City
⁴² financiers. On that day he saw them and on the following day
 he wrote to Hugh Valence Jones

" I find the City...begins...to demand, or expect, some
 compensation for restoring the Havannah to Spain
 (which they look upon now as certainly taken). But
 I don't believe any such thing is intended by our
 ministers." ⁴³

In his Memoirs Horace Walpole recorded that the City financiers
 and mercantile classes were irritated by the alacrity with
⁴⁴ which Bute sought peace after the conquest of Havannah and
 Newcastle was trying to capitalise on this incipient feeling
 to rally his former adherents.

Newcastle's position was growing more difficult. The
 negotiation of a successful peace was likely to be popular
 with the financial and mercantile classes, because they felt,
 as they had done in 1761, that it would mean the revival of
⁴⁵ commerce. Moreover, with the failure of Newcastle's efforts
 to embarrass the administration financially the loyalty of

41. See for instance Ibid. f264 Newcastle to Devonshire 17
 August 1762; ibid. f302 Newcastle to Hardwicke 19 August 1762.

42. Ibid. f346 Newcastle to Right Honourable Lady Isabella
 Finch 22 August 1762.

43. Ibid. f353 Newcastle to H.V. Jones 23 August 1762.

44. See Horace Walpoles Memoirs of the Reign of King George
 the Third first published by Sir Dennis Le Marchant re-ed
 by C.F. Russell Barker, London 1894, Vol. I, p. 151.

45. See above p. 74.

the financiers and merchants would be more difficult to hold. Indeed, it must have come as a shock to Newcastle at this time even if he did not regard it as an omen of the future, to find that Thomas Walpole and Joseph Mellish, two of his most loyal adherents among the mercantile classes, had been deprived of their contracts.⁴⁶ This sort of event was very likely to shake the loyalty of Newcastle's mercantile followers.

In turning to the peace terms as he was now doing, to find a suitable subject to rally his supporters, especially that of his mercantile friends, Newcastle was tackling a very difficult issue. He could only criticize those concessions Bute made which he himself had not agreed to when in power; otherwise he was likely to lay himself open to the charges of faction and inconsistency. Pitt was in a much better position for his hands were not tied;⁴⁷ Newcastle was clutching at straws. Both he and Hardwicke, and for that matter most of the other leaders of his party, were inexperienced in the art of opposition, and opposition was the position that Newcastle was now approaching. Hardwicke thought opposition beneath his dignity and contrary to his duty. Moreover he believed all opposition futile that did not have the support of Pitt in the House of Commons. He had made this clear to Newcastle as early as 28 May 1762.⁴⁸ The situation was made more difficult because Pitt had no intention of co-operating

46. B. M. Add. Mss. 32941 f341 Newcastle to John Gore 21 August 1762; *ibid.* f366 John Gore to Newcastle 23 August 1762.

47. Winstanley 66. 656. p. 138.

48. Yorke op. cit. Vol. III, pp. 361-363; B. M. ADD. MSS. 32939 ff53-55 Hardwicke to Newcastle 28 May 1762.

with anybody in opposition, especially not Newcastle. Moreover there were differences between the Old Whig lawyers, Hardwicke and Charles Yorke, and Lord Chief Justice Pratt, Pitt's chief legal adherent. At the root of this controversy was the rivalry between Pratt and Charles Yorke for the Woolsack further complicating the situation.

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Hardwicke was by no means the only important member of Newcastle's party who seemed to be trying to thwart his plans for opposition. On the 26 August the Duke of Devonshire wrote to him

"I think the Peace if made on the terms we have heard is a good one and therefore in justice to our characters we ought to support it, besides it is so very near what we ourselves approved of, that we could not well do otherwise; as to the giving up St. Lucia, it certainly is not an object to continue the War upon, viz, France had an account of the situation of her affairs and out of necessity yielded that Island, it is by all accounts so necessary for her and would have been such a thorn in her side, as might have induced her to have endeavoured to regain it the very first opportunity. I own freely to your Grace I am for a lasting Peace in order that this Country may take breath, and the way to obtain that desirable end, is not to force such upon our Enemies as they shall sit uneasy under, for in that case they will be tempted to break it the first moment they see a chance of doing it with success. You ask me what is to be done, which is a question very difficult to answer, in my poor opinion we must wait a little for events, things will probably clear up something more between this and the meeting of Parliament, then will be the time to come to some resolution, for my part I shall be very ready upon every occasion to show my friendship to Yr. Grace and to do what...is most for the good of the whole." 50

Newcastle persisted in his policy, however. A week later

49. Yorke op. cit. pp. 363-367.

50. B. M. Add. Mss. 32942 ff9-10 Devonshire to Newcastle 25 August 1762 part quoted England in the Age etc, Namier, pp. 339-340

he reported to Hardwicke that "there seems to be a great spirit, rising against, what are supposed to be the conditions of the peace"⁵¹. When he replied Hardwicke gave Newcastle some ground for hope for he acknowledged that this discontent would increase as soon as news was received that Havannah was taken,⁵² and a conversation that Newcastle had with his friend the Comte de Viry, the Sardinian ambassador, on 3 September seems to have increased his hopes that he would find something in the peace terms by which he could rally his supporters and embarrass the government.⁵³

When on the following day Newcastle saw the King and George III made some remarks which seemed intended to pacify Newcastle he concluded" that it had some relation to the violent spirit which there is now in the City against the supposed terms of the Peace."⁵⁴ which John Cleveland had reported to him on the previous day.⁵⁵

The colleague who seemed to be giving Newcastle the most encouragement at this time in his policy was Rockingham. On 6 September he wrote to Newcastle

" The expectation of Peace seems to me to have given rise to more diffidence and jealousy and few are shy in expressing it.... A strong administration backed with national confidence would have found it a very difficult task after the great successes we have had to make a Peace in any degree adequate to the expectations...."

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51. Ibid. f86 Newcastle to Hardwicke 30 August 1762.
 52. Ibid. f120 Hardwicke to Newcastle 1 September 1762.
 53. Ibid. f142 Memorandum September 1762. For Viry see Namier England in the Age etc pp. 81-82.
 54. B.M. Add. Mss 32942 f148 Memorandum 4 September 1762,
 55. Ibid. f171 Newcastle to Devonshire 4 September 1762. John Cleveland 1707-1763 Secretary to the Admiralty.

and Newcastle replied enthusiastically

" I agree with Your Lordship, that, if the Peace is not both with France and at the same time with Spain, it will be liable to great objection and that seems to be the universal opinion...Should we miscarry there (Havannah) it would be and especially upon the conclusion of a Peace, a most fatal thing, and the enemy would not fail to avail themselves of it." 57

About this time Newcastle had a long conversation with Hardwicke who forced him to agree that any opposition without Pitt was hopeless and that the unpopularity of Bute was not a suitable subject for opposition, the only possible one being the terms of peace. Hardwicke also pointed out that to rally his supporters Newcastle would have to oppose the peace on terms that he and Hardwicke had previously agreed to while members of the administration, because the minor points such as the issue of the possession of St. Lucia and Cleves and Wesel would be insufficient to rally popular opposition. 58

Newcastle was in a difficult position and he acknowledged as much to Lord Kinnoull on 12 September. 59 While he wished to rally the opposition that appeared to be crystallising in the City, and while to some extent Rockingham appeared to be urging him on, the rest of the Old Whig leaders especially Hardwicke and Devonshire appeared to be endeavouring to restrain him, and he had no desire to affront them. On 20 September he wrote to Rockingham sending him papers which explained both

56. Ibid. f182 Rockingham to Newcastle 5 September 1762.

57. Ibid. f223 Newcastle to Rockingham 11 September 1762.

58. B. M. Add. Mss. 35353 f292 Hardwicke to Yorke 9 September 1762 quote Yorke op. cit. Vol. III, p. 415. See Namier England in the Age etc pp. 340-341.

59. B. M. Add. Mss. 32942 f233 Newcastle to Lord Kinnoull 12 September 1762.

his attitude and that of Devonshire and Hardwicke.

In these circumstances Newcastle could do nothing definite until the exact terms of the peace were made known. During these weeks he tried to convert Hardwicke to his way of thinking,^{61 and} held a dinner party for some of his City adherents,⁶² He refused to believe rumours that the Duke of Devonshire and the rest of his own followers were about to be turned out of office and a report from two government contractors Samuel Touchet and Nicholas Linwood that the government had received sufficient money to carry them through the following year. Instead Newcastle obtained for himself a report from Sir Joshua Vanneck that the City financiers had no confidence in Bute's administration.⁶³ On 3 October 1762 he concluded

" The only thing, which can be at present resolved upon, is to wait and see the great result of the negotiations of peace; and the method in case of its failure, that the Ministers will propose for carrying on the War, and whether as is suggested my Lord Bute himself finding the difficulty or impracticability of going on, may not desire to retire to some other employment, or absolutely, to retire altogether from business. But in all events, a true zeal for the interest of this country in the terrible situation it is now in; and that regard, which many profess for those who have been driven by my Lord Bute, out of the administration, should be sufficient to engage every single man, in either House of Parliament, who pretends or desires, to be thought a Friend, to be present the first day of the session." 65

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60. Ibid. f307 Newcastle to Rockingham 20 September 1762.
 61. Ibid. f289 Newcastle to Hardwicke 18 September 1762, ibid ff427-430 Newcastle to Hardwicke 30 September 1762.
 62. Ibid. f326 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 23 September 1762; ibid. f347 Newcastle to Hardwicke 25 September 1762.
 63. Ibid. f308 Newcastle to Rockingham 20 September 1762.
 64. B. M. Add. Mss. 32943 ff33-43 "Substance of a very material Conversation which I had the Honour to have with H. R. H. the Duke of Cumberland at Windsor Great Lodge on Friday last, the 1st inst. and some few observations of my own upon it" 3 October 1762.
 65. Ibid. ff44-46 "Substance of a very Material Conversation etc." 3 October 1762.

When the news that Havannah had been taken arrived in the early days of October 1762 Newcastle felt that his hand had been strengthened, for now the ministry would find it far more difficult to get a lenient peace approved, and Newcastle felt that the task of marshalling opposition over the peace preliminaries would be proportionately easier.

To Rose Fuller Newcastle wrote:

"I must begin with congratulating you upon a great Success at the Havannah; by which we have not only got the possession of the Key of the West Indies but taken in effect thirteen large good ships of the line, and one million and half sterling in money. The Spanish Navy will not recover this in many years; and such a conquest and acquisition at this time, if made proper use of, must be of infinite service to the publick." 66

Fuller replied congratulating Newcastle that Havannah had been taken and continued

"I think with your Grace if a proper use be made of this conquest, it must be of infinite benefit to the publick.!"

He wished that

"those gentlemen who are honoured with His Majestys' Councils may make such an use of it as may bring us to a safe, honourable and advantageous Peace." 67

This seems to have been the only mercantile opinion on the significance of the capture of Havannah that Newcastle obtained. It seems, however, to have been influential for when Newcastle wrote to Devonshire on 6 October he echoed Fuller's sentiments when he wrote

66. Ibid. f23 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 2 October 1762.

67. Ibid. f68 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 5 October 1762.

"The conquest of the Havannah and the Consequences of it put this country in a high situation, and should enable our Ministers to make a solid and lasting Peace, with both France and Spain, and that they may do, if they are not hampered with previous promises and engagements. Some valuable consideration and compensation must be given for the Havannah, if it is to be restored or the nation will be in a flame; which must produce bad consequences." 68

In the next week Newcastle's opinion on the importance of Havannah seems to have developed further and on 14 October he wrote to Hardwicke

"When People think lightly at first of the taking of the Havannah, they look upon it as an ordinary conquest in War; and like other Conquests, Martinico, Guadeloupe &c. may be given up for small considerations in order to restrain the rest, and make a good and reasonable peace; but in my humble opinion, the conquest of the Havannah and the acquisition of naval forces and treasure which has attended it, is quite a different thing, and requires different considerations and more explicit and real satisfaction.

In the first place, Spain can never, at least in many years, take it again by force, even with the united force of France; and that in all restitutions is a great point. In the next place it shows Spain how little their offensive Family Compact avails them, Whilst we have the Havannah; and therefore it should and must be one of the sine qua nons for the restitution of it, that the Family Compact should be annulled in the clearest and most explicit manner, and without that in my humble opinion, nothing will do. If Spain can't retake the Havannah by Force, as long as we are in possession of it, they cannot bring Home any of their Treasure; and consequently the West Indies themselves are of no use to them. And, if that is the Case, what can Spain do, or how long can they support any war in Europe? This is not the case of any acquisition we have made from France." 69

Interpreting the conquest of Havannah in this fashion Newcastle was hoping to challenge more strongly the administration, questioning whether the peace it was making was the

68. Ibid. f71 Newcastle to Devonshire 6 October 1762.

69. Ibid. ff202-203 Newcastle to Hardwicke 14 October 1762.

best possible when Britain had fought a victorious war. The capture of Havannah might seem to be the excuse for stronger opposition which Newcastle desired but it cannot be doubted that he genuinely felt that Bute was going to throw away the advantages which had been gained.⁷⁰

Hardwicke agreed with Newcastle over the importance of Havannah but felt that it would be very difficult for England "to keep and maintain" Havannah and pointed out that it was not possible for England to conquer Peru and Mexico but that she could only stop the Spanish treasure fleet.⁷¹ He continued to advise Newcastle that it was impossible to form any specific plan of opposition and that he must wait till something definite was known about the peace.⁷² Thus without any specific plan in view Newcastle began to rally his friends, among them his mercantile followers, for the opening of the new session of Parliament.⁷³ Rockingham, on Newcastle's instructions, faithfully tried to rally his Yorkshire friends.⁷⁴ Newcastle, as he had done in the past began to seek out financial information which he no doubt hoped to use against the administration.⁷⁵ This was to be of little avail, however, for the lenient attitude that the King and Bute had adopted towards Newcastle and his supporters was changing. They had now secured the support of Fox to lead the administration in the Commons.⁷⁶ Devonshire,

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70. See for instance B.M. Add. Mss. 32942 ff427-430 Newcastle to Hardwicke 30 September 1762; B.M. Add. Mss. 32943 ff21-22 Newcastle to H^{ans} Stanley 2 October 1762.
71. Ibid. ff258-259 Hardwicke to Newcastle 17 October 1762.
72. Ibid. f372 Hardwicke to Newcastle 23 October 1762, quoted Namier England in the Age etc p.361.

who had been summoned to the Cabinet Council had refused to attend and on 28 October he resigned his office of Lord Chamberlain.⁷⁷

From this time dates the beginning of the Massacre of the Pelhamite Innocents and an abrupt change in the fortunes of Newcastle and his followers.

During the period since he had resigned office Newcastle had endeavoured by a number of expedients to embarrass the administration in order to force himself back into power on more favourable terms. For most of these expedients the support of his mercantile adherents had been essential, especially the support of the financiers who had formerly been associated with Newcastle while he was at the Treasury; and when he turned to the peace terms as a suitable subject for opposition he was relying on the support of the mercantile classes because they would be more likely to be interested in the precise nature of the peace terms than the financiers. Newcastle was in a difficult position, however. He could not make an all-out bid for mercantile support because of the terms on which he had agreed to make peace when in office.

The mercantile and financial classes, when Newcastle was

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73. Ibid. f402 Newcastle to Thomas Pelham 23 October 1762.
 74. Ibid. f395 Newcastle to Rockingham 23 October 1762; B.M. Add. Mss. 32964 f10 Rockingham to Newcastle 25 October 1762.
 75. B. M. Add. Mss. 32943 f138 Newcastle to West 9 October 1762.
 76. Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 350-357.
 77. Ibid. pp. 369-372.

in opposition, were in exactly the same position as they had been when he was in office. They were a group whose support it was useful to have, but for whom Newcastle was unwilling to make any sacrifice to principle. He did not adapt his policy to gain the support of this class.

It should also be pointed out that Newcastle's opposition tactics were not purely "tricks" to make himself indispensable and eventually to force himself back into power. In most cases, but especially as far as the peace was concerned, his behaviour was consistent and he did oppose on matters of principle.

Thus during the period immediately after Newcastle's resignation the weakening of his links with the 'monied interest' who traditionally supported administration can be observed. The persistent attempts of Newcastle to test and maintain this loyalty were not unnecessary. The 'monied interest' given the chance, would naturally support administration, for it was on administration that the government financiers depended for their livelihood. Moreover, when Newcastle showed that he respected the wishes of members of the Whig hierarchy like Hardwicke and Devonshire before the wishes of the 'monied interest' the members of this interest would naturally tend to desert Newcastle.

C. THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE MASSACRE OF THE PELHAMITE INNOCENTS.

The dismissal of Devonshire on 28 October 1762 seemed at first to Newcastle to be a heaven-sent opportunity to rally his friends and firmly unify the party. On 31 October Newcastle wrote to Lord George Cavendish noting that the dismissal was having the effect of drawing his supporters together, and suggesting, for the Duke of Devonshire to consider, a policy of resignation among Newcastle's supporters.⁷⁸

On 2 November Newcastle talked over the matter of resignation with the Duke of Cumberland and it was agreed that only persons of the highest rank or those holding the higher offices should resign.⁷⁹ Prior to this Lord George Cavendish had resigned, and on 3 November Rockingham resigned his office of Lord of the Bedchamber. This seems to have been a spontaneous action by Rockingham's on Devonshire's dismissal without the prompting of Newcastle.⁸⁰ Newcastle was elated at this time at the success of his policy and seemed to think it was having the best effect even among his mercantile followers for on 5 November 1762 he wrote to the Duke of Devonshire

" All the City are provoked to the highest degree (by Devonshire's dismissal) and amongst the foremost and loudest is my old Friend Alderman Baker. I had him Sir Joshua Vanneck, Tommy Walpole and Fonnereau with

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78. B.M. Add. Mss 32944 ff167-168 Newcastle to Lord George Cavendish 31 October 1762 quoted Namier England in the Age etc pp. 372-373.
79. B.M. Add. Mss. 32944 f206 et seq "An account of what passed this day at Windsor Lodge, 2 November 1762" see Namier, England in the Age etc p. 372.
80. Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 373-374. See also B.M. Add. Mss. 32944 ff266-269 Newcastle to Granby 5 November 1762 W.W.M. R1-321v Rockingham to Granby 4 November 1762.

me on Thursday last, in the highest rage; and I can tell the Gentlemen in power, this treatment of one of their best Friends will not help their money affairs." 81

Newcastle was thus hoping that the treatment of Devonshire would so incense his friends that he would be able to strengthen their alliance and that he would again be able to follow the policy of financially embarrassing the ministry through the government financiers loyal to himself.⁸² He was also heartened by reports of the signing of the peace preliminaries that were beginning to come in, for controversy over the terms of the peace was an additional subject which could be used to rally his supporters.

Two correspondents in contact with City merchants wrote to Newcastle on 5 November informing him that they had news that the peace had been signed.⁸³ Devonshire, however, advised caution in the way that Newcastle and his supporters acted. On 7 November he wrote to Newcastle

"You cannot in my opinion be too cautious how you proceed, and take care that the first time we attempt to shew our strength, it should be upon some point where we are well founded, and that we shall be strong upon. If the Parliament was to be judged by the disposition of

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81. B. M. Add. Mss. 32944 ff279-280 Newcastle to Devonshire 5 November 1762. The Fonnereau mentioned is one of the Fonnereau brothers either Thomas (1699-1779) or Zachary Philip (1706-1778) They were both government contractors in partnership with Walpole. See Namier, Structure of Politics pp.49-50. See also Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp.447-448.
82. See for instance B. M. Add. Mss 32944 f364 Newcastle to West 13 November 1762; B. M. Add. Mss 32945 f19 Barrington to Newcastle 15 November 1762.
83. Ibid. f287 Barrington to Newcastle 5 November 1762; ibid. f289 H. V. Jones to Newcastle 5 November 1762.

the Nation the run would be very strong against Lord Bute but I doubt that is not the case, as yet there are no overt acts; if the Preliminaries are signed before the Parliament meets there will then be some foundation to go upon, but in that case, My Dear Lord, let us weigh the terms well, and act consistently with ourselves, the great danger will be (in avoiding peevish and ill-judged opposition) that we shall give stability to the minister." 84

Newcastle, however, was probably more interested in news that he received from Thomas Walpole that Pitt was dissatisfied with the peace. He immediately began to make efforts through this member of his mercantile supporters to form an alliance with Pitt to oppose the peace preliminaries. 85

Newcastle's hopes, however, were doomed to disappointment. He secured the resignation of Lord Kinnoull, but Kinnoull refused to go into opposition, and no amount of pressure on Lord Granby from both himself and Rockingham could secure for Newcastle the loyalty of Granby and the Duke of Rutland to his side. Neither could he secure the resignation of Barrington and others although they professed their allegiance to him, for they regarded Devonshire's dismissal as "a single act and a private act". Thus for the most part the idea of rallying the party by beating up resignations on Devonshire's dismissal proved to be a damp squib. 86 87 88 89

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84. Ibid. f317 Devonshire to Newcastle 7 November 1762.
 85. Ibid. f307 Thos. Nuthall to unknown (but probably Thomas Walpole) 6 November 1762; ibid. f333 Newcastle to Hardwicke 9 November 1762. See also Namier England in the Age etc p. 388.
 86. Ibid. ff352-353 Newcastle to Hardwicke 13 November 1762. Cf. Namier England in the Age etc p. 379.
 87. Ibid. ff375-377. See also B. M. Add. Mss. 32944⁸²⁶ et seq Newcastle to Granby 5 November 1762; W. W. M. R1-321b Rockingham to Granby 4 November 1762; ibid. R1-330 Duke of Devonshire to Granby 17 November 1762. Cf. Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-90 Vol. III, pp. 102-3.
 88. See Namier, England in the Age etc p. 378 et seq.

Hopes of forming a strong opposition on the terms of the peace proved illusory also. Approaches made to Pitt through the Duke of Cumberland did not prove very successful and Newcastle began to find that for himself there were difficulties in opposing the peace for on 15 November 1762 Hardwicke wrote to him

"I find people in general, even our most particular Friends, much inclined to Peace, and determined not to oppose upon that head, providing it comes out to be admissable. They alledge that in this point, they followed Your Grace when in: that you instructed and convinced them that it was absolutely necessary, and they cannot contradict themselves. Here I beg leave to make an observation, that this will create the greatest difficulty to forming an opposition in conjunction with Mr. Pitt. Unless some great faults should appear, he will attack the Peace upon points, which we, whilst of the Council, agreed to viz, The Fishery, restoring both Martinique and Guadaloupe, and Gorée etc. and probably will insist that Your Grace and your Friends should join with him in it. You have always said that you would not contradict yourself and this will create a difficulty." 91

Later in the same letter Hardwicke continues

"The greatest part of this reasoning is applied to the Point of forming an opposition upon the ill usage of the Duke of Devonshire and the indications arising from it as to the Court.... If the Peace when produced, should come out, not to be admissable, that will make another cause." 92

By the end of the month Newcastle had himself become convinced that Hardwicke's reasonings were valid and that

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89. B. M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff15-18 Hardwicke to Newcastle 15 November 1762. Cf. Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 378-382, 384-386.
90. See Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 388-389; B. M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff83-87 Newcastle to Devonshire 20 November 1762
91. B. M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff15-16 Hardwicke to Newcastle 15 November 1762.
92. Ibid. f18 Hardwicke to Newcastle 15 November 1762.

opposition on the peace was not possible. He also found a further 'insurmountable' objection in that only a few 'zealous friends' in the House of Commons desired opposition.⁹³

Thus after having his hopes raised by the prospect of rallying the party through the Duke of Devonshire's dismissal and opposition on the peace preliminaries Newcastle's hopes were dashed to the ground. When on 23 November 1762 Newcastle summoned together Devonshire, Hardwicke and Rockingham, the leaders of his party he knew 'nothing will be done' but believed "we must... settle our matters, that our Friends may know our intentions."⁹⁴

Rockingham at this time seems to have been keeping himself well-informed on the state of the war. About 20 October he wrote a series of comments on this subject between the lines of a letter that he received from Lady Charlotte Wentworth.

The Peace goes backwards, the war is to be transferred most fit it should to Portugal, the Spaniards gain ground impossible there very fast, and the opinion is that Lisbon will I am afraid so soon be beseiged. 95

This is important evidence that Rockingham was both informed and interested in the state of affairs and there is a further letter from Lady Charlotte Wentworth in which she discusses the peace terms with her brother,⁹⁶ and Devonshire was also in correspondence with Rockingham at this time.⁹⁷

93. *Ibid.*, ff196-198 Newcastle to Hardwicke 29 November 1762.

94. *Ibid.* f106 Newcastle to Rockingham 21 November 1762.

95. W.W.M.R1-312 Charlotte Wentworth to Rockingham (dated Wednesday night probably 20 October 1762) Rockingham's comments are printed in their correct place in italics.

Newcastle must thus have found that his desire for opposition on the peace preliminaries was restrained by the caution of Hardwicke and Devonshire at his meeting with them on 23 November, and shortly after this meeting he considered it necessary to employ Legge to re-assure the country gentlemen, partly because he knew that his party was not going to make a forthright opposition on the peace preliminaries and partly because a political broadside just published seemed to point to the fact that ~~their~~ loyalty to the Newcastle group was wavering.

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At the same time he hunted out his papers on the peace negotiations when he was still in power, so that he and his colleagues should know precisely to what they were committed, and in a long letter to Hardwicke on 27 November 1762 he discussed the matter in detail and discovered at least some points on which it was clearly still possible for them to oppose the Peace Preliminaries. He concluded his letter

" The Duke of Grafton and our warm Friends: press extremely to bringing on some point immediately: or we shall lose all our Friends. The question only is what that point shall be. Can anything arise out of the Preliminaries, or the negotiations relative to them, which we can properly come into ? I should think there might. Or, is there any other point, which can be thought of ? I should like that best. I don't know what Mr. Pitt will say or do." 99

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96. Ibid.R1)327 Lady Charlotte Wentworth to Rockingham (post 9 November 1762)
97. Ibid.R1-331 Devonshire to Rockingham n.d. (but dated from internal evidence as 18 November 1762)
98. See N.M.Add.Mss 32945 f155 Newcastle to Hardwicke 26 November 1762; ibid.f160 Newcastle to Hardwicke 27 November.
99. Ibid.ff159-161 Newcastle to Hardwicke 27 November 1762.

Thus Newcastle was still pressing for opposition on the Peace Preliminaries and trying to point out the necessity for it to hold the party together. Yet, as he knew Devonshire and Hardwicke's reluctance to oppose on this point, he endeavoured to palliate them until they were convinced that opposition was necessary and that the Peace Preliminaries were the only point on which it was possible and practical to oppose. Newcastle had to convince Hardwicke and Devonshire that opposition was consistent with their former behaviour and they were thus not liable to be charged with creating a factious opposition.

Hardwicke was, however, extremely reluctant to be drawn into opposition. On the same day that Newcastle wrote to him he wrote to Newcastle

"I find it from all quarters that the burden and tedium of the war, and the desire of peace, are so strong in the generality of Parliament, and of the nation (abstracted from the interest or wild part of the City of London,) that the very name of peace is agreeable to them, and they would have been content with terms rather lower than we have yet been told of these Preliminaries.... I make no doubt but Mr. Pitt, if present, will declaim and flame in his way against this Treaty in general and so will my Lord Temple; but they will take in, and perhaps lay the chief stress upon, topics wherein we cannot agree with them: and I find many of our Friends so tired of the leading of Mr. Pitt and the violence of his friend Beckford, during the former administration, that they express great aversion to follow him." 100

On the 28 November having considered Newcastle's letter concerning the peace terms Hardwicke could find no grounds for
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opposition. Thus by 29 November Newcastle was writing to

100. Ibid. ffl66-8 Hardwicke to Newcastle 27 November 1762.

101. Ibid. fl76 Hardwicke to Newcastle 28 November 1762.

Hardwicke agreeing with him that he thought it was inadvisable to oppose the peace, and stating that only a few of his 'zealous friends' in the House of Commons were anxious for opposition.¹⁰²

Newcastle did, however, point out to Hardwicke that he did not consider the peace terms satisfactory considering the position in which Britain had finished the war and he concluded his letter to Hardwicke.¹⁰³

"Mr. Onslow also acquaints me that there appear'd the first day the greatest disposition in the House to shew spirit; that Beckford was never so heard in his life; that our Friends are most pressing for some point to shew themselves upon; and that they will not be easy without it; and that if nothing else can be found out, they will attack the Peace, which they think the most popular point they can go upon.... My Nephew Onslow tells me, that our Friends in the House of Commons are desirous of collecting themselves together, that they may know one another; for that purpose they wish to have a meeting - they are sure, they shall be 180 at least. This deserves consideration, as I told Mr. Onslow.... Mr. Onslow says that if nothing is done and that soon, we shall not only lose all our Friends; that they will think themselves sacrificed; that they have belonged to us, and will belong to us: But if after all they have done, it is to end in nothing, they must and will go Elsewhere and that the Duke of Grafton is the strongest in this way of talking."¹⁰⁴

Newcastle was in a difficult position. He did not wish to disagree with the restrained councils of Hardwicke and Devonshire, yet he seems to have seen in the peace a good opportunity for opposition and the means by which he could draw the party together. As his letter to Hardwicke shows he was greatly worried about the unity of the party, and his sincerity in agreeing that opposition to the peace was inadvisable

102. Ibid. ff196-199 Newcastle to Hardwicke 29 November 1762.

See above p. 154 Cf. Namier England in the Age etc pp. 390-391.

103. B. M. Add. Mss. 32945 f198 Newcastle to Hardwicke 29 November 1762.

104. Ibid. ff200-201 Newcastle to Hardwicke 29 November 1762.

For the Onslows see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons

may be questioned, for the day before he wrote to Hardwicke, he received a letter from Sir George Colebrooke, saying that he had not been present at the opening of Parliament but that he would come to town as soon as Newcastle thought it necessary. In his reply Newcastle urged Colebrooke to be in Parliament the following week when the peace preliminaries were to be considered.¹⁰⁵

Sir Lewis Namier points out that a group of Newcastle's friends who were zealous for opposition dined together on 30 November 1762. This group consisted of the Duke of Grafton, Lords George and John Cavendish, Lord Middleton, Thomas Townshend Junior, Charles Townshend 'the Spaniard', Lord Villiers,¹⁰⁶ George Onslow and Richard Hopkins. Although there were no mercantile members present at this meeting Newcastle in a letter to Thomas Walpole on 12 December 1762 makes it quite obvious that his mercantile supporters were members of this group that was anxious for opposition, and in the debate on the peace preliminaries during the first week in December they voted with this group.¹⁰⁷ Thus the group that was to crystallise itself as the vanguard of the opposition in 1763 and 1764 was already beginning to form by the end of November 1762. It was this group that was to find a meeting place at Wildman's Tavern and

104. (contd.) 1754-1790 Vol. III, pp. 227-8. The two Onslows mentioned here are George Onslow (1731-1792) and his cousin George Onslow (1731-1814) who married Henrietta Shelley, a niece of Newcastle.

105. B.M. Add. Mss. 32955 f186 Sir George Colebrooke to Newcastle 28 November 1762; ibid. f186 Newcastle to Sir George Colebrooke 28 November 1762.

106. Namier, England in the Age etc p, 392.

107. Ibid. f285 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 12 December 1762.

108. Ibid. ff239-241 Division List from Lord John Cavendish 2 December 1762.

through the club formed there Rockingham was able to secure his hold over the party as its next leader.

The situation which had now developed was to continue for some time. The younger zealots of the Newcastle Whigs were anxious for opposition and demanded leadership. Newcastle was anxious to give it to them and to direct the opposition but was restrained because of the disinclination of Hardwicke and Devonshire to appear at the head of what might be called a factious opposition. Newcastle was also finding it difficult to select a leader for this opposition in the House of Commons and it was in the House of Commons that most of these zealots sat. Legge, Newcastle's most trusted and experienced follower in the House of Commons, was as reluctant to lead an opposition as his colleagues in the Newcastle Whig hierarchy who sat in the House of Lords.¹⁰⁹ Moreover the failure to secure an opposition alliance with Pitt weakened opposition to the peace preliminaries.¹¹⁰

For the time being Newcastle was thus powerless to do anything effective to rally his party and was forced to confine himself to writing letters to try and maintain their allegiance. On 12 December he wrote to Thomas Walpole who he often used as a contact with his mercantile adherents

"We must go on with spirit; but at the same time, with prudence and moderation...At present we act like children and expose ourselves and our Friends too. Many of our friends are still angry; I hope you will endeavour to quiet our City Friends, if there are any of them uneasy, at what has passed.

I am sure you will execute your commission to

109. Ibid. ff280-281 Newcastle to Devonshire 12 December 1762.

110. See Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 395-396.

Sir George Colebrooke and Nesbit with all marks of affection on my part possible. The Peace is now over, and I dare say, we may depend upon both of them in every thing else. 111 Pray talk to them of the supposed intention of the Court, to attack me, by a motion for a Commission of Accounts, or a Secret committee of enquiry. The First possibly can't be opposed; But I hope a Secret Committee will be fought to the last. 112

Upon these questions, I should flatter myself, that my former Friends who have left me, will think their honours so far concerned as not to suffer any attack upon me personally - See, how our Friends in the City are disposed at present." 113

Newcastle was thus coming to the conclusion that the only thing to do for the time being was to wait until a suitable opportunity occurred for him to rally his friends and confirm their loyalty. 114 By 12 December however, he was becoming alarmed because he found that some of his former City friends had now thrown in their lot with Lord Bute. On 16 December he had a meeting with the government contractor Zachary Fonnereau, who admitted as much to him and stated that he had changed sides because of economic necessity. 115 Newcastle was alarmed at this. He wrote to Thomas Walpole

"I am afraid, this will have a very bad effect, and his example will encourage others to do the same, so that I expect to be left with only yourself, Mr. Burton, Mr. Mellish and Sir William Baker, good substantial ones however....

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111. Colebrooke and Nesbit had not voted with Newcastle's 'zealous friends' in the debate on the Peace Preliminaries in the first week of December. See B.M. Add. Mss 32945 ff239-241 Division List from Lord John Cavendish 2 December 1762.
112. Newcastle was still alarmed at the possibility of an enquiry into Treasury Accounts while he had been First Lord of the Treasury. See above p. 99 et seq.
113. B.M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff285-286 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 12 December 1762.
114. Ibid. f290 Newcastle to Hardwicke 16 December 1762.
115. Ibid. f301 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 17 December 1762.

Tell Nesbit, that I beg to see him, on Wensday morning at Newcastle House. I will do all I can to fix him and Sir G. Colebrooke. I believe, it is Tom Fonnereau who had done this, with his Brother; and he has contributed also, to the getting off Henniker and Major." 116

Newcastle must have now felt that his worst fears were being justified. Failure to unify the party and provide a lead for opposition was resulting in the defection of his friends, particularly the government financiers and the merchants who the government could hope to win over by dangling contracts before their eyes. Yet it was precisely at this time that the "Massacre of the Pelhamite Innocents" was at its height. On 23 December 1762 Halifax wrote to Rockingham dismissing him from his Lord Lieutenancy and Newcastle had known of this and many other dismissals as early as 19 December.

The "persecution" at this time was far more widespread than that on the occasion of Devonshire's dismissal and made a better opportunity for rallying the party. It is difficult, however, to see what effective action even a united group could have taken in protest. Yet Newcastle failed to use this, the best opportunity so far presented, to draw the party together. The main reason for this would seem again to have been the cautious policy advocated by Hardwicke and Devonshire.

116. Ibid. f302 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 17 December 1762. For the Fonnereaus see Namier, op. cit. pp. 398-399 for their desertion to Bute see Namier, Structure of Politics p. 50 For Major see Namier, England in the Age etc p. 399 n. 1.
117. For the "Massacre of the Pelhamite Innocents" see Namier, op. cit. p. 403 et seq.
118. W.W.M. R1-336 Halifax to Rockingham 23 December 1762.
119. B.M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff312-313 Newcastle to Hardwicke 19 December 1762.
120. Hardwicke had written to Newcastle on 20 December counselling caution. See ibid. f323 Hardwicke to Newcastle 20 December 1762

In a letter to Rockingham on 26 December Devonshire explained the reasons for his actions. He wrote

"I have wrote my mind fully to the Duke of Newcastle that we should if possible keep our people quiet for some time, wait for events, and see what steps the ministers take, if they propose any thing that is wrong, oppose it, if not let them alone, by which means we shall gain time to collect our strength and see who we can depend upon, if we can get leaders and a tolerable corps of Troops I am for Battel, but I am against appearing in a weak opposition as we shall make an insignificant figure, prejudice our friends and do no good." 121

while on 29 December he wrote to Newcastle

" I am against factious opposition but the time has come for us to be very watchful that these people to secure their point should not endanger that excellent constitution and that we should transmit that invaluable blessing whole and entire to our posterity which our ancestors risked their lives and fortunes to secure." 122

In this appeal to Whig principles lies the explanation of Devonshire's attitude. He wished to act a dignified part in accordance with the principles of his party.

While the old Whig hierarchy resolved to bide their time and endeavoured to restrain the fretful Duke of Newcastle the younger zealots of the party were less patient. On Tuesday the 21 December there was a meeting at George Onslow's at which the Whig hierarchy were represented by Rockingham and Newcastle and the "younger zealots" many of whom had been

121. W.W.M.R1-339 Devonshire to Rockingham 26 December 1762.
122. Ibid. R1-341 Devonshire to Newcastle 29 December 1762.

present at the meeting on 30 November¹²³ were represented. Among their representatives were Lord Bessborough, Lord Frederick Cavendish, Lord Middleton, Lord Villiers, Thomas Pelham and Thomas Townshend. Newcastle stated that

" They were all, except Offley, violent for a club, Lord Bessborough as much as any of them; and I think, at Last the Marquess gave into them. They said there was nothing to be done without it; that they must collect their friends; and they seemed much elated with the effect, whihh the violences and persecutions have had everywhere. I opposed, to the utmost, these clubs or meetings, that they carried much the air of faction. One of them (I think it was My Lord Villiers or Onslow) said they liked it the better; they were glad the Ministers should see, there was a faction against them. I then said, it would expose their weaknesses, for no one doubtful Friend would come near them. I have done my part, what they will do I know not." 124

It seems strange that Newcastle who from October 1762 had been trying to rally the opposition should disapprove when it seemed that some form of opposition was at last beginning to present itself. But there were two obstacles in Newcastle's eyes to the formation of a "club" which idea was now coming to the forefront. Firstly it was the idea of the younger members of the party, not of the great nobles and as such Newcastle looked down on it as factious, and secondly Newcastle, knowing Hardwicke's and Devonshire's opinions on opposition could hardly favour such a plan. Yet it would seem he had a hankering to. For after his report of the meeting of 21 December to Devonshire he continued

123. See above p. 160.

124. B.M. Add. Mss. 32945 f341 Newcastle to Devonshire 23 December 1762, quoted Namier, England in the Age etc p.417.

"If the Duke (of Cumberland) Your Grace, the Duke of Grafton, the Marquess of Rockingham, My Lord Hardwicke and My Lord Kinnoull shall be of the opinion that any opposition, at present is impracticable, or inadvisable, let them say so, and I assure Your Grace, I shall acquiesce, with great pleasure and satisfaction. I have shewed my inclination to support the Whigs. If they and the chief amongst us think it should be pushed now - I have done my duty and shall be very easy." 125

Devonshire, however, continued to advise that the party should be quiet and collect their strength. He wrote

"I am strongly against a club, when once an opposition is formed, it may be very proper, but till that is settled it would only have the appearance of Faction, and I am afraid would be of no service, as the Jolly Fellows are more numerous on the other side of the question." 126

Lord Kinnoull on whose advice Newcastle placed much reliance also came out strongly against the idea of a political club
127
for the same reason.

Thus at the end of 1762 Newcastle had failed to unify the party and although at times his followers had succeeded to some extent in embarrassing the government this had secured no permanent effect. During the last months of the year he had failed to find a suitable subject for opposition to which the party could agree and which was the only thing that could unify the party. Newcastle's hesitation, mainly it seems because of the restraint exercised by Devonshire and Hardwicke had hastened the desertion of some of the mercantile members,

125. B. M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff346-347 Newcastle to Devonshire 23 December 1762.

126. Ibid. f373 Devonshire to Newcastle 26 December 1762. I have been unable to trace any particular connotation of the term "Jolly Fellows".

127. Ibid. ff376-377 Kinnoull to Newcastle 26 December 1762 quote Namier, England in the Age etc p.417.

for these were the men who had most to gain from administration and most to lose by wandering in a political wilderness. This equivocal policy was also beginning to result in the fragmentation of the party as shown by the meeting of 30 November and the agitation for a 'club' which came to the forefront when the "younger zealots" met the representatives of the "Old Whig" hierarchy on 21 December.¹²⁸

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what Rockingham's opinion was at this time. His correspondence with Lady Charlotte Wentworth shows that he was keeping in close touch with political events and Devonshire's letters to him seem to show that the elder members of the hierarchy believed that he too needed restraining from going into violent opposition.¹²⁹ There is also the fact that Newcastle mentions him specifically as giving permission for the formation of a club. If this is the case he was more far-sighted than Devonshire, Hardwicke and Newcastle. For it was basically this desire for a club which was to develop into the club at "Wildman's Tavern" that was to form the nucleus for the opposition in 1764. This was partly responsible for bringing Rockingham to power and was to do much to ensure his ascendancy in the party.¹³⁰

128. See above p. 160.
 129. See above p. 156.
 130. See above p. 164.
 131. See below p. 234-235.

The year 1763 was one of frustration and stagnation for Newcastle. Tendencies that had appeared since the dismissal of the Duke of Devonshire grew more marked and he was increasingly unable to hold his supporters together. He searched in vain for a satisfactory opposition policy and a satisfactory opposition alliance. Thus at the end of the year he was no nearer returning to power than at the beginning.

Mainly due to Newcastle's failure in these matters, the dissatisfaction with his policy, which by the end of 1762 had already resulted in the demand for a club,¹ continued to grow and in January 1764 crystallised with the formation of the Cotery at Wildman's. These trends caused both a decline in the importance of the 'monied interest' in the Old Whig party because Newcastle's policy had failed, and a growth in the importance of the representatives of the rest of the commercial classes in the formation of the Cotery. It is these developments which must now be traced.

At a conference with Rockingham which Newcastle reported to Hardwicke on 1 January 1763 he stated that both he and Rockingham agreed that people were so intimidated by the dismissals that were taking place, that all open opposition, even in the Coffee Houses, was silenced and that there was a real threat to freedom of speech. Newcastle also felt that because the City of London had decided to present an address

1. See above pp. 160-1613.

of thanks for the Peace of Paris that the City had been intim-
²
 idated as well. When Thomas Walpole wrote to Newcastle informing
³
 him that he had been dismissed from his contracts, Newcastle
 wrote in reply, after condoling with Walpole on the loss of
 his contracts

"I can't say, I am quite pleased with the Account I have from the City, where I hoped, these violences would have made a greater impression, than, it is said they do.

I hear, People, are afraid to say anything in Coffee Houses, against what is doing. If Liberty of Speech is taken away without Doors, and corrupted majorities will do anything, within, what are we to expect ?

I am told also, that the Clamorous City begin to change their minds; and will soon have a strong address in favour of the Terms of the Preliminaries. Pray let me know...how our Friends in the City stand at present, and what effect these late violences have upon them; and particularly what they have done to you. I dare say Burton continues right; and by what I hear, I should hope Sir George Colebrooke and Nesbits - The Fonnereaus I give over; and Major, and Henniker, I suppose some of them are to have your contract.

If things droop a little in the City, they gain strength and spirit in other places. My old friend My Lord Hardwicke is everything I could wish..." 4

When Walpole replied he reported that the Ministry had been negotiating the loan for the forthcoming year and on the same day, 14 January, Bute had announced that the definitive peace treaty would be signed. Walpole endeavoured to

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2. B. M. Add. Mss. 32946 ff10-12 Newcastle to Hardwicke 1 January 1763. It should be noted that the address came from the Court of Aldermen and not the Common Council of the City to whom the peace was distasteful. See Sharpe op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 72-73.
 3. B. M. Add. Mss. 32946 f17 Thomas Walpole to Newcastle 1 January 1763; ibid. f19 Thomas Walpole to Samuel Martin (copy) 27 December 1762.
 4. Ibid. ff49-50 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 4 January 1763. For the Fonnereaus, Major and Henniker see above p. 163 n. 116.

reassure Newcastle that his friends were loyal and that many people were discontented with the present administration but were incapable of doing anything about it. He also pointed out that the ministers had not consulted the 'monied interest' about the new loan, only some officers of the great chartered⁵ companies.

At the beginning of February 1763 Newcastle found a bye-election at Lewes a valuable means of rallying his mercantile supporters, for Sir Joshua Vanneck, Thomas Walpole and Rose Fuller were all involved,⁶ but the chief subject in his mind which he found useful for rallying his party at this time was the peace terms. Although the Peace Preliminaries had been approved in the House of Commons in December 1762 by a majority of 319 to ⁷65, the full terms of the definitive Treaty were (towards the end of January 1763) only just becoming known. When Newcastle began to get precise news of the exact terms, especially that France was to retain the right to fish off the coast of Newfoundland, he wrote to Hardwicke regarding the policy they had adopted in December 1762

"In all events the very negotiations upon any explanation of the Preliminaries shews the absurdity

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5. Ibid. ff125-127 Thomas Walpole to the Duchess of Newcastle 15 January 1763. Walpole's letter was written to the Duchess because the Duke was ill from 4 to about 18 January. See ibid. ff49-145.
 6. Ibid. f285 Thomas Walpole to Newcastle 1 February 1763; ~~686d~~ f299 same to same 2 February 1763; ibid. f315 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 4 February 1763; ibid. f327 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 5 February 1763; ibid. f337 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 6 February 1763; ibid. f355 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 7 February 1763; B.M. Add. Mss. 32947 f7 Newcastle to John Pelham 15 February 1763.
 7. See "The Peace of Paris 1763" by Kate Hotblack in Royal Historical Society Transactions 3rd Series, Vol. II, London, 1908, p. 235

in giving such a general approbation to them as the two Houses did, and not only proves the propriety, but even the necessity there was of coming to no Resolution, till they were settled finally; which was all, that we proposed The more difficulty these Gentlemen found in settling the Peace, the more shameful was it for them, to propose to press such an absolute, hasty and precipitate approbation; and the more significant was it, that our Friends could not see that, at the time." 8

With these words Newcastle endeavoured to arouse Hardwicke and remind him of their actions and policy in the previous December. He wrote a similar letter to Rockingham but was far more outspoken and specific about the French fishing rights off Newfoundland as a cause for discontent, probably because Rockingham was far more ready for opposition and more closely associated with the group of "extremists" than Hardwicke. 10 Mercantile opinion on the question of the fisheries is not recorded in either Newcastle's or Rockingham's correspondence but the west country merchants were sufficiently against the restoration of French fishing rights to petition the government, for Newcastle was alarmed when he thought that the administration had suppressed the document. 11 Feeling that the opposition would be much stronger with the support of Pitt, 12 however, and judging that he would be hostile to the Peace terms Newcastle endeavoured to persuade Devonshire and Rockingham to go and see Pitt. 13 This approach was to be made properly through the hierarchy of the Newcastle

8. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32946 ff145-7 Newcastle to Hardwicke 19 January 1763.

9. Ibid. f151 Newcastle to Rockingham 19 January 1763.

10. See above p. 165.

11. Ibid. f194 Newcastle to Hardwicke 24 January 1763.

12. For Pitt's ideas on the peace terms see Hotblack loc. cit. p. 326 et seq.

13. B. M. Add. Mss. 32946 f259 Newcastle to Rockingham 31 January

Whigs, not by the younger zealots who were demanding opposition¹⁴ and Newcastle resisted their proposal to go in a body to Pitt. Thus even as early as the end of January 1763 the increasing stagnation of Newcastle's policy was evident as was the growing coherence of the youthful and more powerful "extreme" members of the party.

Newcastle felt that there were two points on which it was most easy to oppose the Peace Treaty. These were the restoration to France of territory on the Coromandel coast in the East Indies and the right of the French to fish off Newfoundland. He felt that to secure a peace treaty the negotiators in Paris would have to give up both these points and these were the two points over which it would be most¹⁵ convenient to oppose the administration.

Efforts to get into contact with Pitt in order to concert measures for opposition were at first delayed because Pitt was ill and when on 17 February, Devonshire had seen Pitt there was very little hope of a systematic opposition because the latter pleaded that his health was too bad to allow him to attend Parliament regularly. He refused to enter into any direct opposition but would only come to Parliament

13. (contd) 1763; ibid. f236 Newcastle to Devonshire 31 January 1763

14. Ibid. f264 Newcastle to Hardwicke 31 January 1763.

15. Ibid. f261 Newcastle to Hardwicke 31 January 1763. The appearance of the definitive Treaty raised the East India issue for Newcastle because of the greater precision of its definition and elaboration of detail of the East Indian Articles. For this see "The East India Company and the Peace of Paris" by L. S. Sutherland, The English Historical Review Vol. LXII, London 1947, pp. 179-190.

16. B. M. Add. Mss. 32946 f329 Devonshire to Newcastle 6 February 1763.

"upon any national or constitutional points."¹⁷ When Rockingham was sent on the same mission to Pitt at the beginning of March he seems to have been more successful because on 8 March there was a great opposition dinner at Devonshire House at which Hardwicke, Rockingham, Rempel, Devonshire, Newcastle and Pitt¹⁸ were all present.

The alliance which emerged from this dinner was much more for a concerted opposition against the proposed Cider Duty rather than a whole-hearted agreement for opposition to the Peace Treaty because on 18 March 1763, when the definitive treaty was about to be laid before the House of Commons, Newcastle advised that the opposition should merely allow the treaty to be on the table.¹⁹ He did not urge for any opposition motion on the matter. Newcastle was, however, being urged on to oppose by the younger zealots and the mercantile section of his party. On 25 March Thomas Walpole wrote to Newcastle reporting a conversation of his with a "very sensible man" on the sixth and twenty-fifth articles of the definitive²⁰ treaty and pointing out the injustices of these articles. Walpole concluded his letter with a call for opposition, mentioning that Sir William Baker with whom he had discussed

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17. B. M. Add. Mss. 32947 f21 Devonshire to Newcastle 17 February 1763.
18. Ibid. f180 Rockingham to Newcastle 4 March 1763; See Yorke op. cit. Vol. III, p. 381. The meeting between Rockingham and Pitt seems to have been chiefly on Newcastle's prompting see W. W. M. R1-367 Newcastle to Rockingham (Friday morning) but dated in Rockingham's hand-writing as 4 March 1763.
19. B. M. Add. Mss. 32947 f246 Newcastle to Hardwicke 18 March 1763. For the Cider Tax see below p. 179-181.

the matter agreed with him. There is little doubt that opposition would have received the blessing of Pitt. In a letter to Newcastle on 9 April 1763 he described the Peace of Paris as "ruinous²¹ and "fatal"²¹ and it was Hardwicke's luke-warm support and difficulty in adapting himself to opposition that seems to have been the chief obstacles.²² In these circumstances all Newcastle could do was to endeavour to maintain the loyalty of his mercantile adherents. Stephen and Rose Fuller had been invited to Claremont.²³ George Onslow was watching the City merchants and Sir Joshua Vanneck had invited the Newcastle Whig leaders to dinner and Newcastle had returned the invitation.²⁴²⁵

When Newcastle at last decided to move on the question of the Peace of Paris it was on the question of the addresses of thanks that were being drawn up and this seems to have been rather too late to do anything really effective in the way of opposition. These addresses also tended to become confused with the issue of Wilkes and the "North Briton" No. 45 case which was coming to the forefront at this time and this complication rendered the action that Newcastle and his

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20. Ibid. ff309-310 Thomas Walpole to Newcastle 25 March 1763. The sixth article of the Treaty ceded the colonies of St. Pierre and Miquelon to France and the twenty-fifth article guaranteed Hanover.
21. B. M. Add. Mss. 32948 f84 Pitt to Newcastle 9 April 1763.
22. Ibid. f1 Hardwicke to Newcastle 1 April 1763.
23. Ibid. f79 Stephen Fuller to Newcastle 8 April 1763.
24. Ibid. f5 G. Onslow to Newcastle 2 April 1763.
25. Ibid. f223 T. Walpole to Newcastle 4 May 1763; ibid. f242 Bessborough to Newcastle 6 May 1763; ibid. f269 Thomas Walpole to Newcastle 12 May 1763.

friends were trying to take to stop the addresses less effective.

The "North Briton" No. 45 had appeared on 23 April 1763 and as is well known Wilkes was subsequently arrested under a "general warrant".²⁶ On 1 and 2 May 1763 Newcastle reported the widespread alarm in the City at the arrest and imprisonment of Wilkes.²⁷ In the days following Wilkes's arrest the 'traditional split' among the Newcastle Whigs began immediately to appear. The 'zealous young gentlemen' of the party agitated for a public gesture on behalf of Wilkes while Hardwicke advised caution. Newcastle as usual took the advice of his older but more influential friends.²⁸

On 12 May Thomas Walpole reported to Newcastle that the Court of Aldermen of the City of London had drawn up an address of thanks for the Peace of Paris without calling a Common Council, in much the same way as the East India Company had not called a General Court. Walpole assumed that this failure to summon a full assembly was because of the weight of popular opinion against the Peace of Paris. He also believed that any attempt to procure an address from the merchants would meet with little success and criticized^{zed} addresses that were not obtained with the "free and open voluntary concurrence of the people".²⁹ In addition to this George Onslow on 14 May, although he described an address from the merchants as "serious"

26. See Wilkes and Liberty by George Rude, Oxford, 1962 p. 23.

27. B. M. Add. Mss. 32948 ff201-202 Newcastle to Hardwicke 1 May 1763; ibid. f211 Newcastle to Lord Lincoln 2 May 1763.

28. Rude op. cit. p. 25.

29. B. M. Add. Mss. 32948 ff269-270 Thomas Walpole to Newcastle 12 May 1763.

because it had above 300 signatures, could dismiss it as being "generally looked on as a mere forc'd thing" and chiefly promoted by merchants who were supported by Bute.³⁰

Newcastle by this time saw danger in both the addresses and in the Wilkes issue. On 15 May he wrote to John White urging him to stop any address from Nottinghamshire. He concluded his letter

" I am sorry to see the stile of the address of the Few Aldermen. That with it, I hear, that of the merchants will be the same, viz, to avoid saying much of the Peace, and to enlarge against the spirit of Faction which, they suppose is now arising. I conclude they mean Wilkes's affair, but that still will do hurt, and I suppose, all the addresses will follow it which makes it incumbent upon our Friends to stop addresses where they can." 31

On 18 May George Onslow again reported to Newcastle on the state of the address of the London merchants. He was forced to admit an increase in the number of the signatures from 300 to 900 but as before stressed the fact that very few were the wealthier and more influential merchants. He continued by reporting that the dissenters had decided not to address. Newcastle's old friend Dr. Chandler appeared to be the leader of the anti-petitioning movement amongst them.³² There is no evidence that pressure was brought to bear upon the dissenters but it would have been easy for Newcastle's views on the matter to have been passed on orally to Chandler.

30. Ibid. ff281-283 George Onslow to Newcastle 14 May 1763.

31. Ibid. ff291-293 Newcastle to John White 15 May 1763. The addresses referred to are those mentioned above p. 175.

32. Ibid. ff316-317 George Onslow to Newcastle 18 May 1763. For Chandler see above pp. 51-52.

Newcastle was in a most equivocal position at this time. Pressed by the younger zealots of the party to throw his lot in with the popular stand and support "Wilkes and Liberty" he knew only that Hardwicke did not want the younger members of the party to have their heads and was unaware that he had advised the arrest of Wilkes.³³ Thus because Newcastle was unable to take a stand on the issue he gained nobodys sympathy. On 24 May he wrote to Rockingham

"I am still uneasy at these addresses, which are founded upon a most absurd and injurious insinuation that we (whom they call the opposition) are putting personal affronts and indignities upon the King which God knows, is the furthest from our thoughts how much as ever we may dislike and oppose His Majesty's weak, or arbitrary Ministers."³⁴

and to Devonshire on 21 May

"We hear little of the Peace now, all turns upon Faction and the personal affront to the King; and this new ground has certainly produced the address of the Court of Aldermen and of the numerous company of merchants in the City, and I am affaid, will produce a great many addresses in counties and towns which otherwise would not have thought of it...."³⁵

Devonshire agreed with Newcastle's analysis of the situation³⁶ and could offer little consolation.

Other issues were also influential during these months. In February 1763 Newcastle had rallied his mercantile supporters to crush a further attempt to enquire into government finance

33. Cf. Rude op. cit. pp. 23, 25.

34. B. M. Add. Mss. 32948 f371 Newcastle to Rockingham 24 May 1763.

35. Ibid. f345 Newcastle to Devonshire 21 May 1763.

36. Ibid. f393 Devonshire to Newcastle 27 May 1763.

when he was at the Treasury, but this no doubt made him cautious when Sir William Baker began to lead a movement for enquiring into profiteering for the loan for 1763. On the 18 March in the House of Commons

" Sir William Baker expatiated on the monstrous proportion of the present loan and the confusion it made among the subscribers and stated the price of the 4% cents (sic) at the time of making the loan." 38

This issue was apparently first brought to the fore-front by John Wilkes and Newcastle unsuccessfully endeavoured to consult Hardwicke and Devonshire on the issue. Wilkes desired that the names of subscribers to the loan might be laid before the House of Commons " in order to observe upon the immense profit of it." Newcastle wrote reservedly to Hardwicke that

" My opinion was and is, that it might be a proper motion to make; but that it ought not to be made without being maturely considered and well supported." 41

Newcastle continued by saying that Legge and Temple agreed

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37. B. M. Add. Mss. 32946 f351 Barrington to Newcastle 7 February 1763; ibid. f365 Barrington to Sir John Phillips (copy) 9 February 1763; ibid. f369 Sir John Phillips to Barrington 10 February 1763; ibid. f379 Newcastle to Barrington 11 February 1763; ibid. f381 West to Newcastle 11 February 1763; B. M. Add. Mss. 32947 f23 Mansfield to Newcastle 17 February 1763; ibid. f27 Onslow to Newcastle 17 February 1763; ibid. f57 C. Yorke to Newcastle 22 February 1763; ibid. f61 West to Newcastle 22 February 1763; ibid. f265 West to Newcastle 23 March 1763. The idea of an enquiry into Government finance was very distasteful to Fox as well as Newcastle, Fox had been Paymaster-General during the war. See Namiér and Brooke Charles Townshend, p. 86.
38. B. M. Add. Mss. 32947 f242 West to Newcastle 18 March 1763.
39. Ibid. f246 Newcastle to Hardwicke 18 March 1763. There was at this time general indignation at the particularly favourable terms for the 1763 loan. See The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics by L. S. Sutherland, Oxford, 1962, p. 104.
40. Ibid. f246 Newcastle to Hardwicke 18 March 1763.
41. Ibid. f246 Newcastle to Hardwicke 18 March 1763.

with him on this issue and concluded

"Wilkes I hear will make the motion himself; Sir William Baker, and our warm friends are much for it....To be sure a formal motion which is a formal attack upon the Treasury should not be made except we are sure of its being well supported by Mr. Pitt and others." 42

Thus this project for opposition eagerly seized upon by the younger zealots was not carried further partly because of Newcastle's personal fears of this sort of motion and partly because it was only receiving the support of the younger members of the party and not the established hierarchy.

A further issue was the question of opposition to the Cider Bill which was passing through Parliament in March 1763. On the 23 March 1763 the Common Council of the City of London petitioned against the bill, not because it affected them so much but because it was a matter of principle; the bill was an extension of excise duty and as such was anathema to them. The Newcastle Whigs seem to a large extent to have missed this opportunity for opposition. The London petition was the last episode in an opposition which had for the most part come from the independent country gentlemen, and on this occasion Lord Strange for the administration pointed out that

"He had a great regard for the Merchants of the City but none for the Incorporated Body who were chiefly shopkeepers who arrogantly look upon themselves to prescribe to the Legislature and to take the lead in

42. Ibid. f246 Newcastle to Hardwicke 18 March 1763.

43. See Sharpe op. cit. Vol. III, p. 73. See also the petition of the City printed in History Debates and Proceedings of Both Houses of Parliament 1743-1767 (Debrett) London 1792 Vol. III p. 148. and Sir Francis Dashwood, an Eighteenth Century Independent by Betty Kemp. London 1967, p. 54 et seq.

setting an example to the other Boroughs for clamour that would look down upon them and keep them under and rather than increase their corporate influence was for lessening it."

William Dowdeswell, not yet connected with the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs, and Bamber Gascoyne whose father had⁴⁴ been Lord Mayor of London supported the petition. Prior to this⁴⁵ on 7 March 1763 Pitt had spoken against the Cider Tax. This was followed by the dinner at Devonshire House on 8 March where Pitt and the Newcastle Whigs apparently agreed to concert⁴⁶ measures against the Cider Tax. This opposition was, however,⁴⁷ unsuccessful. Rockingham reported to Newcastle that Pitt thought the Cider Tax should be opposed on 28 March in the House of Lords when the City of London were to present a further petition⁴⁸ against the Act in that House. There was little attempt to organise opposition, however, and although on this occasion⁴⁹ Hardwicke spoke against the tax the opposition was unsuccessful. Thus the opposition to the Cider Tax had again been used as an opportunity to secure the allegiance of Pitt and had been carried on by the leading members of the Newcastle Whig hierarchy.

44. B. M. Add. Mss. 32947 f267 West to Newcastle 23 March 1763. For Gascoyne see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons Vol. II, pp. 486-491. For Gascoyne's connection with London see Namier Structure of Politics pp. 108-111.
45. See The Parliamentary History ed. W. Cobbett, London 1813, Vol. XV, p. 1307. It was during this debate that Pitt christened Grenville the "gentle shepherd". Cf. Steven Watson op. cit. p. 93.
46. Yorke op. cit. Vol. III, p. 381. See above p. 173.
47. See Commons Journal Vol. XLIX, p. 60.
48. B. M. Add. Mss. 32947 f317 Rockingham to Newcastle 26 March 1763 See also House of Lords Journal Vol. XXX, 1763 pp. 380-381, Parliamentary History Vol. XV, p. 1311 and 1316 where it is stated that this was the first time that the Lords had been known to divide against a money bill.
49. Yorke op. cit. Vol. III, p. 381. See also W. W. M. R1-369 Newcastle to Rockingham 25 March 1763, ibid. R1-320 Newcastle to Rockingham 27 March 1763.

This was an issue that was scarcely likely to interest the merchants especially as the City of London petition had made the point that the excise would have to be paid by private persons and not by traders, unlike the excise tax on beer.⁵⁰ Moreover the Cider Act was a measure of local importance, particularly for the west country. London merchants would not be particularly concerned with cider, neither would they, used as they were to paying excise, be particularly concerned at the extension of the excise into private houses. It is thus not surprising that Newcastle made no real effort to arouse his mercantile followers.

The fourth issue was the question of the East India Company. By February 1763 Clive and Sul~~l~~ivan were in total disagreement and Clive decided to throw in his lot with the Parliamentary opposition.⁵¹ Clive's rival, Sul~~l~~ivan, was a close friend of Lord Shelburne the protégé of Fox and Bute, and Sul~~l~~ivan had supported the administration over the East Indian terms of the Treaty of Paris.⁵² In February 1763 the rivalry came to a head in the contest for the Direction of the Company between Clive and Sul~~l~~ivan.⁵³ For the first time the great Whig leaders now in opposition took up voting qualification in the East India Company and decided to use this election as a ground to challenge the government in a traditional stronghold.⁵⁴

50. Lords Journal Vol. XXX, pp. 380-381.

51. See Sutherland op. cit. p. 9.

52. Ibid. pp. 92-99.

54. Ibid. p. 104.

53. Ibid. p. 100.

By the middle of March Newcastle was using all his influence to persuade his mercantile supporters who had any power in the East India Company to support Clive against Sullivan.⁵⁵ Clive and the Newcastle Whigs won the first round of the contest in the General Court on 15 March 1763 when Thomas Ross, the secretary to the Company was exonerated from blame for the East Indian Articles of the Peace of Paris but the election of Sullivan to the ~~Directionship~~ in April 1763 was a triumph for the ~~administration~~ and brought to an end the opposition attempt to challenge the ministry in this commercial stronghold.⁵⁶

The results of these attempts at opposition, the weight of Hardwicke's opinion, the charges of 'faction', the violence of the younger zealots of the party and the fear of losing the friendship of Pitt gained by joint opposition to the Cider Tax, now seemed to drive Newcastle in one direction. By the beginning of June he was endeavouring to restrain the younger members of the party, while accentuating the need for co-operation with Pitt, the danger of losing his friendship, and the importance of the dinners which had been held in March to cement the alliance with him.⁵⁷ Newcastle took heart in the fact that the Court of Aldermen and the Common Council⁵⁸ of the City of London had refused to address and agitated

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55. B.M. Add. Mss. 32947 f273 Newcastle to West 23 March 1763. See also other letters on East India ~~Officers~~ in B.M. Add. Mss. 32948. See Sutherland op. cit. p. 107.
56. Ibid. pp. 108-109.
57. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32949 f6 Newcastle to Hardwicke 2 June 1763 ibid. f15 Newcastle to the Earl of Kinnoull 3 June 1763.
58. Ibid. f6 Newcastle to Hardwicke 2 June 1763; Ibid. f33 George Onslow to Newcastle 3 June 1763.

for action against Cambridgeshire to stop that county doing
 59
 likewise. The county did, however, address, but Newcastle
 described it to Hardwicke as harmless because it contained
 60
 more about war successes than the peace. There were, however,
 so many addresses that Newcastle was forced to evolve a new
 policy and on the 7 June he wrote to Hardwicke

"My opinion is, that the Spirit of addressing now
 prevails so generally, that it will be difficult to
 stop them anywhere, especially in Counties, where there
 are numbers of Tories, who will insist upon it, and
 Whigs who are disposed to it. In that case, nothing
 can be done, but as Your Lordship says, to make it as
 harmless as possible, with regard to puffs of applause,
 and quite innocent as to reflections &c, which is the
 spirit of most of the late addresses." 61

Moreover the administration was now making attempts
 through Pitt and Rockingham to strengthen itself by bringing
 into office either Pitt and his supporters or Newcastle and
 62
 his supporters. These negotiations were to last until the end
 of August and it is not surprising that during this period
 Newcastle's attitude to opposition was much more subdued.

While pursuing this moderated policy Newcastle still had
 to maintain the loyalty of his more "extreme" followers. A
 valuable opportunity presented itself at the end of June 1763
 through a bye-election in Essex and Newcastle made strenuous
 64
 efforts to rally his followers support for John Luther. He

59. Ibid. f36 Newcastle to Hardwicke 4 June 1763.

60. Ibid. f175 Newcastle to Hardwicke 20 June 1763.

61. Ibid. f52 Newcastle to Hardwicke 7 June 1763.

62. Ibid. f61 Hardwicke to Newcastle 8 June 1763; ibid. f70
 Newcastle to Hardwicke 9 June 1763; Rockingham Memoirs
 Vol. I, p. 168 et seq; B. M. Add. Mss. 32949 f225 Hardwicke to
 Newcastle 29 June 1763.

63. Rockingham Memoirs p. 170.

64. For him see The House of Commons 1754-1790 by Namier and
 Brooke Vol. III pp. 63-64.

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brought pressure to bear on Nicholson Calvert and on the

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dissenters through Rose Fuller and also urged Sir William

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Baker to obtain the support of his "City Friends" and thus

provided a means of re-opening a contact with Sir William Baker

which had lapsed for some time. He wrote to Baker

" It is so long since I have had the pleasure of seeing you, that I own, I long for an opportunity of talking over with you the present unintelligible system of affairs....I see a great run of addresses, which I conclude, are obtained by much solicitation, and from an inclination in weak and interested men, to take any Pretence granted or not to make their Court." 68

The difference in Newcastle's attitude towards Hardwicke and Baker on the question of these addresses exemplifies the role that he was playing in trying to conciliate both the hierarchy of the party and the younger zealots, for Hardwicke was a leader of one faction and Baker a leader of the other.

In reply Baker stated that the addresses were "solicited and in some cases extorted". He went on to suggest that the Newcastle Whigs should arrange for counter addresses to be drawn up thanking members of Parliament for opposing the Cider Tax which "might be extended upon more general plans to answer the purpose of showing the Sense of the people throughout the Kingdom." Baker visualised thanking members of Parliament for opposing the preliminaries of the Peace of Paris and went on to illustrate how difficult it had been for the ministry

65. See B.M. Add. Mss 32949 f202 Nicholson Calvert to Newcastle 26 June 1763; ibid. f224 Newcastle to Nicholson Calvert 28 June 1763.

66. Ibid. f214 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 28 June 1763; ibid. f248 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 30 June 1763; ibid. f277 Samuel Stennett to Newcastle 6 July 1763; ibid. f302 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 9 July 1763.

67. Ibid. f220 Newcastle to Sir William Baker 28 June 1763.

68. Ibid. f220 Newcastle to Sir William Baker 28 June 1763.

to procure the address from the City of London.

Newcastle grasped eagerly at Baker's suggestion. Here was a likely method of reconciling the old Whig hierarchy and the younger section of the party. Here was what appeared to be a useful tactic for opposition which steered clear of the dangerous ground of Wilkes and one also that did not hinder the negotiations to strengthen the ministry which were in progress. So Newcastle sent Baker's letter to Hardwicke describing it as a "sensible letter" but endeavouring to be cautious and agree with Hardwicke for he wrote

" I question much whether the Project of Counter Addresses would do. But there is no harm in considering it, and sounding our Friends upon it. What does Your Lordship think of it ? " 70

Hardwicke in reply agreed that Baker's letter was "very sensible". He expressed a wish to talk over "several Material things" in the letter with Newcastle as soon as possible but continued

" As at present advised, I feel the Project of Counter addresses or application of thanks to members for the opposition to the Peace would not succeed or have the effects proposed; because I am convinced that the objections to the Peace, such as it is, take place much more in the Town than in the Counties. People in the Country are in general glad to be relieved from a State of War and I believe would with great difficulty be induced to enter into any public protestations against it; even in a limited way wherein Sir William Baker puts it."

Hardwicke continued by discussing the proposal with relation to the cider tax. Here he felt that the additional

69. Ibid. f230 Sir William Baker to Newcastle 29 June 1763.

70. Ibid. ff242-3 Newcastle to Hardwicke 30 June 1763.

revenue was necessary for ^{the} government and as on the question of the peace ~~was~~ he said that the Newcastle Whigs were likely to be charged with inconsistency. In this case he referred Newcastle back to Walpole's Excise Duty of 1734 which they ⁷¹ had supported.

In the face of these objections from Hardwicke no real attempt seems to have been made ~~to~~ embarking on the policy that Baker suggested although Onslow on 7 July did send Newcastle a copy of the Surrey constituents address of thanks to their members for opposing the Cider Tax and urging them ⁷² to seek the repeal of the same, and on 20 July 1763 Newcastle wrote to Devonshire

" There is to be a great meeting at the Assizes at Croydon, for the County of Surrey, where the Address to the King will certainly be rejected, and the thanks of the County given to their representatives for their conduct in Parliament by a very great majority. We in Sussex shall content ourselves with not addressing, and without giving thanks to our members, which might start the other question. This indication of the real spirit in the county will not be agreeable to our ministers." ⁷³

and this seems to show that at least some attempt was being made to follow Baker's suggestion. This, however, was strictly a compromise. It seems as if Newcastle was adopting as much of Baker's policy as he could without annoying Hardwicke. He was still following the road of compromise and endeavouring

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71. Ibid. f252 Hardwicke to Newcastle 1 July 1763. For the question of the inconsistency of opposition see above pp. 184-186. For Newcastle's support of the 1734 Excise Duty see Sir Robert Walpole, the Kings Minister by J.H.Plumb, London 1960, p.254.
72. B.M.Add.Mss.32949 f287 Onslow to Newcastle 7 July 1763, ibid. f289 Copy of Address.
73. Ibid. f379 Newcastle to Devonshire 20 July 1763.

to hold the extreme sections of the party together.

On this issue Rockingham stood firmly on the side of Baker and Newcastle. Newcastle continued his letter to Devonshire by saying

" I long to know how our Friend the Marquess finds things in Yorkshire; and whether there is that zeal and spirit for Whiggism, which there used to be; which indeed appears most surprisingly in the Counties nearer London!"²

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Newcastle was soon to be answered for on 25 July Rockingham wrote jubilantly that there was to be no address from Yorkshire and on 30 July Newcastle replied congratulating Rockingham on the rejection of the address in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire and reporting the state of affairs in Surrey and the other southern counties where Newcastle was also attempting to secure the rejection of addresses.

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Newcastle gained nothing from this policy of compromise. On the one hand the protests were not strong enough to make a rallying cry for Baker and the more extreme sections of the party, while on the other they were sufficiently irritating to annoy the administration and possibly ^vinitiated the position of the Newcastle group in the negotiations that were going on during the summer of 1763. Newcastle by supporting Hardwicke (who had not been honest with Newcastle over his opinion on the Wilkes issue) while endeavouring to palliate Baker and his friends had placed himself in a most equivocal position.

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74. Ibid. f382 Newcastle to Devonshire 20 July 1763.

75. Ibid. f406 Rockingham to Newcastle 25 July 1763.

76. Ibid. f438 Newcastle to Rockingham 30 July 1763.

77. See above p. 177.

Rockingham who had absented himself in Yorkshire was, as far as can be seen, still on good terms with both the extremists and the hierarchy. Perhaps this was the first step to Rockingham's eventual accession to the leadership of the party.

In his frantic search for an opposition policy that would hold the party together Newcastle almost missed what was to be the main and most successful issue for opposition in the Parliamentary session which was to commence in December 1763. This was the question of Wilkes and the 'North Briton' case. On 8 July Hardwicke had written to Newcastle and commented on the affair ⁷⁸ and on 11 July Newcastle replied

"Your Lordship rightly says ' The most material Part of this affair seems to be the strong and violent Run, which appeared in the City of London on this occasion against the Court! I don't wonder they feel severely what has passed in this affair. They will never be able to get over it. It will run like wildfire thro'out the whole Kingdom and they have no Character amongst them respectable enough, to be able to stand it." 79

On 13 July Newcastle wrote in very similar terms to ⁸⁰ Devonshire. He probably thought personally that this was a good rallying point for the opposition and perhaps by this time sensed that Hardwicke had reservations. Yet there is not a great deal more heard of this issue and no attempt was made by Newcastle to use this to rally the younger section of his party.

In spite of the uselessness of Newcastle's policy it must

78. B.M.Add.Mss.32949 f297 Hardwicke to Newcastle 9 July 1763.

79. Ibid. f317 Newcastle to Hardwicke 11 July 1763.

80. Ibid. f334 Newcastle to Devonshire 13 July 1763.

be admitted that he came near to returning to office in August 1763 for in that month Pitt was nearly able to form⁸¹ an administration with the Newcastle Whigs and on 29 August Newcastle was able to draw up a list of his friends whom he wished to be considered for positions in the new government.⁸² Amongst these were Sir William Baker, Nicholson Calvert, Rose Fuller and Capel Hanbury. During these negotiations Pitt was also considering Rockingham for the post of First Lord of the Admiralty and suggested his name to the King for that office.⁸³ Newcastle, however, was much more in favour of Rockingham becoming Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.⁸⁴

When the negotiations proved abortive Newcastle was really left without a policy. He persisted in trying to cement an opposition alliance with Pitt,⁸⁵ a tactic which had not proved successful before.

On 24 September he wrote to the Duke of Devonshire

" The great point of all to be now considered is, if Mr. Pitt (whether from any management of my Lord Bute, or desire, or expectation of having the negotiation renewed with him or (which, I own, I think rather to be the case) from an unwillingness to engage, in the present miserable situation of things, and the little hopes of success) should finally refuse to take any active part - what in that case, we and our Friends should do, as to our conduct in Parliament? Whether First, we should, in all Events, summon our Friends, in both houses, to attend, or send their Proxies ?

81. See W.W.M. R1-382 Devonshire to Rockingham 30 August 1763 see also Rockingham Memoirs Vol. 1, p. 172 William Pitt to Rockingham 28 August 1763. B.M. Add. Mss. 32950 f312 Hardwicke to Newcastle 2 September 1763.

82. Ibid. f273 "Lords and Members of Parliament removed or resigned or who are to be considered" 29 August 1763.

83. Ibid. f312 Hardwicke to Newcastle 2 September 1763.

84. Ibid. f349 "Lords and Members of Parliament" 6 September 1763

85. W.W.M. R1-389 Rockingham to either Newcastle or Devonshire 31 October 1763.

and, whether, in consequence of that, we should form a plan of acting with those, who may be willing to join with us? And if that were to be the case I am persuaded Mr. Pitt would soon follow; But I give no advice." 86

On the same day Newcastle wrote to John White urging him to be in London before Parliament met and to encourage as many of their supporters as possible to be there so that they could consider what it was best to do. When White replied he stressed the need for a united plan of opposition as soon as possible, but Newcastle could find no plan and was still calling for a meeting of his supporters to evolve some policy. 87 88

There was in August, September and October 1763 a financial crisis in the City but consultations between Newcastle, Thomas Rous and Bartholomew Burton brought Newcastle no nearer a policy although generally in the past he had found some possible topics for opposition in financial matters. A false alarm at this time that there was to be an enquiry into his conduct of affairs while at the Treasury did nothing to improve things and Newcastle's inability to reach a satisfactory policy on finance must be related to Grenville's growing influence in the City. 89 90

Thus by 6 October 1763 Newcastle was thoroughly disconcerted and wrote to Devonshire

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86. B. M. Add. Mss. 32951 ff152-153 Newcastle to Devonshire 24 September 1763.
87. Ibid. ff168-169 Newcastle to John White 24 September 1763.
88. Ibid. ff259-260 John White to Newcastle 1 October 1763; ibid. ff249-254 Newcastle to Devonshire 1 October 1763.
89. B. M. Add. Mss. 32950 f179 Rockingham to Newcastle 20 August 1763; ibid. f235 Newcastle to Devonshire 27 August 1763; ibid. ff381-382 Newcastle to Cumberland 10 September 1763; B. M. Add. Mss. 32951 f265 Newcastle to Hardwicke 3 October 1763.
90. Ibid. ff292-293 Newcastle to Hardwicke 4 October 1763; ibid. ff295-296 H. V. Jones to Newcastle 4 October 1763; ibid. f315

"I am weary, at my age, and when I am determined to have no Employment, or an Honourable sinecure, nothing, purely for the sake of my name, if that is of any consequence, I will no longer be the vinegar of an opposition, without knowing of whom that opposition is to consist. I give myself a great deal of useless disagreeable trouble. Why should not My Lord Rockingham come to town? His Lordship is infinitely more concerned than I am and much more able to take a journey than I am. The Parliament meets the 15th of November, in a little above a month from this day. We shall some of us, see one another next week, and I suppose after that, not till the day before the meeting of Parliament. Nobody sent for, and who can send for any body, before they know whether anything is to be done? For one I cannot." 91

A week later Newcastle was still no nearer forming any plan of opposition but when he wrote to Legge on 13 October 1763 he stated that Sir William Baker urgently wished to see ⁹² Legge. This is important. Baker was the leader of the extreme section of the party and he was one of the prime movers in the formation of Wildman's club. From this point the initiative in leading the opposition passed from Newcastle to the younger members of the party.

Since he had fallen from office Newcastle had endeavoured to hold his party together. This had been possible while subjects for opposition presented themselves but even so the party began to break down into its component parts, the most notable division being the split between hierarchy and the 'young extremists'. Newcastle was only able to contain the latter group while he could offer a vigorous policy. When

90. (contd) H.V. Jones to Newcastle 5 October 1763; For Grenville's growing influence in the City see Joseph Salvador to Charles Jenkinson 21 October 1763; same to same 31 October 1763, printed The Jenkinson Papers ed. Nanette S. Tucker, London 1949, pp. 209-212.

91. Ibid. f331 Newcastle to Devonshire 6 October 1763.

92. Ibid. f395 Newcastle to Legge 13 October 1763.

this was no longer possible the younger group formed their own organisation and took the lead in opposition.

Winstanley sums up the situation at the end of 1763 most succinctly when he writes

"Before the end of November the administration had accomplished the most important part of its work, and the expulsion of Wilkes from the House of Commons, which took place on January 19th 1764, was only the logical outcome of all that had gone before. The Whigs had been routed and discredited, and their disgrace was not that they failed to save a popular hero, but that they had omitted to settle their differences before entering upon the fray. Torn asunder by internal dissensions, they had been rendered impotent for decisive action. Charles Yorke and Pitt had openly opposed one another and Newcastle had refused to sign the protest of the peers against the limitation of Parliamentary privilege because of his friendship for Hardwicke. The Duke of Devonshire, disgusted by Pitt's conduct, threatened to retire from political life unless the latter mended his behaviour; Charles Townshend and Lord Temple were not on friendly terms, and Charles Yorke, supported by his family, still cherished designs upon the chancellorship." Thus something very much like confusion after the rout prevailed in the camp of the opposition. The Wilkes case had proved a very apple of discord and the ministers acted wisely in prolonging the discussion of that question. The Whigs would not recover the ground they had lost until they discovered a point of attack upon which they were all agreed, and which Pitt approved.... Salvation was to come, however, and a triumph to be enjoyed, all the greater because of the previous humiliation." 93

Newcastle had pursued a policy of compromise that had brought little result. He had wanted to leave the door wide open for himself and his party to come back to office, and he had been reluctant, mainly because of the advice of the older hierarchy of the party, to enter into a systematic opposition. Yet he had endeavoured to maintain the allegiance of the more extreme

zealots like Baker who were anxious for action and went as far as he could without annoying Hardwicke in order to palliate the zealots. His attempts to bring pressure on Hardwicke to sanction a more active opposition indicate that Newcastle himself believed that this would be a useful tactic.

In these political circumstances it is hardly surprising that the merchants remained in the background. The financiers were demonstrating their natural desire to remain friendly with administration for economic reasons, the Newcastle Whigs were giving no real lead to the rest of the merchants involved in politics.

CHAPTER VI.THE RISE OF THE OPPOSITION AT WILDMAN'S CLUB.(A) INTRODUCTION.

In the foregoing chapters it is easy to discover a clear distinction between the Old Whig hierarchy centered around Newcastle, and the younger and more extreme men of the party who were to form the basis of Rockingham's support. To the former group were attached the 'monied interest' on which Newcastle placed so much reliance, to the latter merchants of the type so valuable to Rockingham when he came to power. The position of Sir William Baker in this structure is peculiar. Although strictly part of the 'monied interest' Baker always had more sympathy with the radical element and acting as Newcastle's city leader aligned himself more closely with the mercantile interest.¹ Baker's attitude was to make him important in the evolution of Wildman's Club and this was a development of supreme importance in the history of the Newcastle Whigs for it brought Rockingham to the centre of the party and when the rest of the older generation had died marked him out as Newcastle's successor. Moreover, although the mercantile element was not dominant at Wildman's Club it was an important interest, over one sixth of the members having strong mercantile interests,² and the pressure put on Newcastle and the rest of the Old Whigs by Wildman's was a radical and a mercantile pressure, similar to that exerted on Rockingham during the Stamp Act Crisis.

1. See above p.184.

2. See below p. 212.

The inactivity of Newcastle and the rest of the hierarchy in November and December 1762, particularly over the Peace of Paris, provoked a split in the ranks of Newcastle's supporters resulting eventually in the formation of Wildman's Club.³

In a letter written to Hardwicke on 29 November 1762 Newcastle noted that some of their supporters "were desirous of collecting themselves together" and unless an issue was found on which they could display their strength in Parliament they had threatened to look elsewhere for leadership.⁴ The following day Newcastle himself was informed by Onslow that a group of these supporters had dined at Grafton's house, shown themselves to be extremely discontented with the lack of a plan for opposition, and pleaded for action. Onslow ended his letter with an impassioned plea for an opposition policy.⁵

During December 1762, however, when the debates on the Peace Preliminaries took place in Parliament no real plan of opposition had been prepared and the party was very divided.⁶ This equivocal position was created by the conflicting loyalties of the Yorke family,⁷ by Newcastle's failure to gain a thorough-going alliance with Pitt,⁸ because Newcastle was

3. See above pp. 160-161.

4. B. M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff200-201 Newcastle to Hardwicke 29 November 1762 quoted above p. 159 also part-quoted Namier England in the Age of the American Revolution pp. 391-392.

5. B. M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff227-230 G. Onslow to Newcastle 30 November 1762. Cf. Namier England in the Age of the American Revolution pp. 391-392.

6. Ibid. pp. 396-397.

7. Charles Yorke left the Commons without voting, while

so war weary he was unwilling to strongly resist peace and finally because Hardwicke was insisting that Newcastle's policy in opposition should be consistent with former policy when in office.¹⁰

Following this failure Newcastle did his best to reassure and rally his supporters but considering their attitude before the debate on the Peace Preliminaries it is scarcely surprising that some of them decided to form a separate organisation which did not have Newcastle at its head.

(B) THE ORIGIN OF THE CLUB.

The political club that was eventually to become known as "Wildman's" made its appearance some time after a decision to form a club was taken at a dinner at George Onslow's on Tuesday 21 December 1762. Newcastle was present at this dinner and reported to the Duke of Devonshire that the "young men" of the party were strongly in favour of forming a club and eventually Rockingham had given in to them. Newcastle stated that he had opposed the club strongly on the grounds that it would lay them open to charges of faction and expose their weaknesses.¹¹ Newcastle was supported by Devonshire in his attitude¹² and also by Lord Kinnoull who wrote

7. (contd) Lord Royston voted for the Preliminaries there but Hardwicke himself both spoke and voted against the Preliminaries in the Lords. The Yorkess were torn between a desire to attain high office under the Crown and loyalty to the political party which they had supported for so long. Ibid P. 396.

8. Ibid. p. 395.

9. See above p. 155

10. See above pp. 145.

11. B.M. Add. Mss. 32945 ff341-347 Newcastle to Devonshire 23 December 1762 quoted above p. 165. part-quoted Namier op. cit. pp. 416-417. For the age of these men see ibid. p. 392.

12. B.M. Add. Mss. 32945 f373 Devonshire to Newcastle 26 December 1762. See above p. 166.

"As to the Club proposed, it appears to me to be a measure attended with many bad consequences....For my own part, I never will join in a measure which appears to me factious, But it is of little consequence what I do, I shall never be a favourite with the young men of spirits....Your Grace's dignity and credit which is both great at home and abroad must not be committed by these very worthy very amiable, but very zealous and much heated young friends." 13

Sir Lewis Namier says the next action of the "young men" on 31 January 1763 was an attempt to seek Pitt's help, an action of which Newcastle disapproved, and which, as I have explained previously, he wanted carried out only by members of the hierarchy¹⁴ of his party. Namier then concludes that by June 1763 Newcastle was himself taking the credit for the success of the organisation. His conclusion is based on a letter to Lord Kinnoull on 3 June 1763. In this Newcastle wrote

"The Society, which we had so successfully established by our dinners of the most respectable persons in both Houses, of which Mr. Pitt and my Lord Temple were principal parts, had given such a new spirit to our affairs, that soon showed itself in both Houses, and particularly in the House of Lords, to such a degree, that in the opinion of everybody, that was one of the principal causes of the sudden and not surprising retreat of the Ministers." 15

From this one would be led to believe that the club which was to become Wildman's grew steadily within the ranks of the Old Whig party.

Namier's conclusion is erroneous. The club that was to become Wildman's, although it did spring from the meeting on

13. B. M. Add. Mss. 32945 f385 Kinnoull to Newcastle 26 December 1762
 14. See Namier op. cit. p. 417; See above pp. 171-172.
 15. See Namier op. cit. pp. 417-418; B. M. Add. Mss. 32949 f15 Newcastle to Kinnoull 3 June 1763. Namier's error is perpetuated in His Majesty's Opposition 1714-1830 by A. S. Foord, Oxford 1964, pp. 311, 343.

21 December 1762 nevertheless grew up apart from the main development in opposition tactics and the attempted alliance with Pitt in 1763. I believe that the club existed informally during 1763 and its formal inauguration and rise to the forefront of opposition politics did not come until the Wilkes case became the prominent issue in politics very late in 1763 and early in 1764.

It is true that the next move of the "young men" on 31 January 1763 was to endeavour to seek Pitt's help,¹⁶ but Newcastle strongly deprecated this procedure because the move was not coming from the recognised leaders of his party. On the same day that he wrote to Hardwicke reporting what the "young men" desired to do, and that he was strongly against it;¹⁷ he also wrote to Rockingham and Devonshire urging them to go and see Pitt.¹⁸ On 5 February Newcastle wrote to Devonshire enquiring whether he had seen Pitt, without mentioning any other visit and on 6 February Devonshire replied saying that he was unable to see Pitt because the latter was ill.¹⁹ Therefore it seems unlikely that any of the "young men" saw Pitt during this period and there is no evidence showing that they did. Indeed, when Devonshire eventually saw Pitt on 17 February and Rockingham on 4 March 1763, the letters in which each of them report their visits make no mention of any contact

16. See above pp. 171-172.

17. B.M. Add. Mss. 32946 f264 Newcastle to Hardwicke 31 January 1763

18. Ibid. f259 Newcastle to Rockingham 31 January 1763; ibid f266 Newcastle to Devonshire 31 January 1763.

19. Ibid. f317 Newcastle to Devonshire 5 February 1763; ibid f399 Devonshire to Newcastle 6 February 1763.

between the younger members of the party and Pitt. Furthermore, on 18 March 1763, when Hardwicke wrote to Newcastle reporting a motion that Wilkes was about to make, calling for the subscribers to the last government loan, he stated that "Sir William Baker and our warm friends were much for it" but also made it quite clear that neither he, nor Baker and his friends,²¹ had any idea of Pitt's opinion of the matter. Indeed, it seems to have been Rockingham's mission to Pitt which was successful because on 8 March 1763 there was a great opposition dinner at which most of the Old Whig hierarchy and Temple and Pitt were present, but there is no record of the presence of any of the "young men" at this dinner.²² There is further evidence that Rockingham was in contact with Pitt later in March, May and June 1763 but no evidence that the "young men" of the party were in contact with him. Thus, if (bearing these points in mind)²⁴ one re-examines Newcastle's letter to Kinnoull two facts immediately emerge. Firstly, Newcastle writes of the society consisting of the "most respectable persons in both Houses."²⁵ On no other occasion does he speak of the group that were to emerge at Wildman's club in these terms and indeed it is easy to believe that he would be very reluctant to describe its members in this way. Secondly, the specific mention of Temple and Pitt also leads one to believe that

20. B. M. Add. Mss. 32947 f21 Devonshire to Newcastle 17 February 1763; ibid. f180 Rockingham to Newcastle 4 March 1763.

21. Ibid. f246 Hardwicke to Newcastle 18 March 1763.

22. See Hardwicke Correspondence Vol. III, p. 381 also p. 182. The dinner seems to have agreed on concerted opposition to the Cider Duty more than anything else.

23. W. W. M. R1-370 Newcastle to Rockingham 27 March 1763; B. M. Add. Mss. 32948 f404 Newcastle to Rockingham 29 May 1763;

Newcastle was referring to meetings that were inaugurated on 8 March 1763 and consisted only of opposition leaders and not the "zealous young men" as well, as Sir Lewis Namier's statement would seem to infer.

Moreover, on the day before Newcastle wrote to Kinnoull he had written a letter to Hardwicke discussing the Wilkes affair in which he contrasted the violent attitude of his "young zealous Friends" with the very moderate attitude of Pitt²⁶, and in an interview with Charles Yorke on 8 June 1763 Pitt spoke of being united with the "great Whig Lords"²⁷.

There is further evidence to support my contention that "Wildman's" developed away from the mainstream of the opposition which Newcastle was trying to develop, based on an alliance with Pitt.

Firstly, James Grenville wrote to his sister, Pitt's wife, on 20 January 1764 that,

"Our Club goes on with renewed vigour, I am infinitely perplexed by the pressing of many quarters to be of it."²⁸

If Pitt was associated with the club, Grenville was hardly likely to report in these terms to his wife. Moreover, no mention is made in this letter of any associations between Pitt and the club.

Secondly, in the two lists of members of the club that I have found, one of which is in Almon's History of the Late Minority and the other in the Newcastle Papers, although Temple

23. (contd) B. M. Add. Mss. 32949 f56 Hardwicke to Newcastle 8 June 1763.

24. See above p. 197.

25. See above p. 197.

26. B. M. Add. Mss. 32949 f6 Newcastle to Hardwicke 2 June 1763.

27. Ibid. f61 Hardwicke to Newcastle 8 June 1763.

28. Chatham Correspondence Vol. II, pp. 276-277. James Grenville to Lady Chatham 20 January 1764. Grenville was a supporter of

is listed as a member as well as the rest of the Old Whig hierarchy, Pitt is not.²⁹ The list in Almon is given for the year 1764 although the pamphlet was not published until 1766.³⁰

Newcastle's list is dated 9 February 1764. It should be noted that both these lists were drawn up well after the foundation of the club when it had achieved a place in the party and the inclusion in these lists of the hierarchy does not invalidate my argument that the club developed outside the main ranks of the party.

Thirdly, Newcastle was sceptical about the club even as late as July 1764 and in the letter expressing his scepticism of the club he writes to Legge about the necessity of securing Pitt's help.³¹ This would seem to support my contention that union with Pitt was not attempted through the zealous young men.

In the History of the Late Minority Almon wrote

"The case of Mr. Wilkes furnishing the minority with several strong and important questions, some gentlemen of weight and character early in the preceding winter proposed to the party a scheme of association, the purpose of which was to keep their friends together, and to give them the pleasure of meeting and conversing together. The idea was approved by a great part, though not all the minority; and a tavern in Albermarle Street kept by Mr. Wildman was fix'd upon for the place of meeting." 32

This distinguishes between the decision to form a club

28. (contd) Pitt. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p. 346.

29. London 1766 pp. 297-300; B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f409-414 "List of the Club" 9 February 1764.

30. The first impression of Almon's pamphlet published in 1765 was only 12 copies (see note inside cover of 3rd impression 1766) several larger impressions followed in 1766.

31. B. M. Add. Mss. 32960 ff332-333 Newcastle to Legge 20 July 1764.

32. Almon op. cit. p. 297.

in December 1762 and the actual formation of the club after the Wilkes issue became prominent and indeed this was what occurred.

In June 1763 Newcastle seems to have been out of contact with the more radical element of his party. There is no evidence that he was in contact with any of those ~~who~~ had advocated a club in December 1762 but he did try to renew his contact

with Sir William Baker, admitting that he had been out of touch with him for some time. ³³

Baker had not been present at the

meeting of 21 December 1762 but as a protagonist of strong ³⁴

opposition he seems to have been moving close to the "zealous young men" and the advocates for a club. Newcastle seemed to

feel this on 18 March 1763 when he reported Wilkes's ³⁵ motion.

It is true that in September 1763 Newcastle was using Thomas Walpole as an emissary to Pitt and Walpole was to be a member of the club, but he is to be classed more as one of Newcastle's government contractors or financiers and as a loyal Newcastle

supporter than as one of the "zealous young men." ³⁶ There is indeed no concrete evidence of any formation of a club before the end of 1763 and I would suggest that up until this time

no attempt was really made to organise the body and if it existed it was in a very unofficial way. It would really be surprising if any "semi-official" body had come into existence after March 1763 and before the end of the year for Parliament

33. B. M. Add. Mss. 32949 f220 Newcastle to Sir William Baker 28 June 1763.

34. See above p. 174.

35. B. M. Add. Mss. 32947 f246 Hardwicke to Newcastle 18 March 1763. See above pp. 178-179.

36. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32951 f126 Thomas Walpole to Newcastle 21 September 1763. Cf. Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. III, pp. 598-602.

was in recess for most of this time and the chief members of any "club" would be away from London.

Newcastle's correspondence gives indications of a body of opinion, not properly organised, outside the Old Whig hierarchy which he did not really consult in his search for a thorough-going alliance with Pitt. On 1 October 1763 he wrote to Devonshire

"I must earnestly beg....that the Duke (of Cumberland) would appoint a meeting with Mr. Pitt....Whatever is agreed upon I shall most readily and cheerfully come into, whether thro' Mr. Pitt's obstinacy - the real opinion of His Royal Highness and Your Grace, should be that, that, in the present situation of Mr. Pitt, nothing is to be attempted. Or whether you should think, that notwithstanding, our other strength should be collected and consulted and then, that it should be seen, what is the opinion of those, who must undertake the Business of the House of Commons, and what part they will take." 37

It thus seems reasonable to conclude that the "zealous young men" who had decided to form a club took no formal action for some time, perhaps because of Newcastle's opposition. They may have met together informally at dinners, indeed it is reasonable to suppose they did, but there is no evidence to suppose that any more specific action was taken.

The actual formation of the club seems to have been a result of actions by Legge, Sir William Baker and Charles Townshend (1728-1810). On 20 July 1763 Newcastle wrote to Devonshire saying that Legge was in the "rightest way imaginable" convinced that "all clans amongst us, must act together" and suggested Pitt, Charles Yorke, Sir William Baker and himself should meet to "propose a plan for the sessions." 38

37. B.M. Add. Mss. 32951 f254 Newcastle to Devonshire 1 October 1763.
38. B.M. Add. Mss. 32949 ff380-381 Newcastle to Devonshire 20 July 1763. See above pp. 185-186, 190.

This suggestion is very interesting for Legge was proposing a meeting of the leaders of the "clans" of the opposition rather than a meeting of the hierarchy. There was Pitt whose support both Newcastle and the "zealous young men" were anxious to secure, there was Yorke the Attorney General to represent the views of the Yorke family, Baker to represent the views of those who supported a more violent opposition and Legge himself to represent the opinions of the more "orthodox" of Newcastle's supporters. Devonshire does not seem to have been impressed with the idea and in his reply agreed only that³⁹ "there should be a meeting of the most considerable of our friends" and Hardwicke and other members of the Old Whig hierarchy would hardly have been more enthusiastic. Moreover at the end of August the idea must have gone into ~~obeyance~~ ⁴⁰ when Pitt attempted to form an administration and Newcastle and other members of the oppos-
ition had held out to them every prospect of taking office again.

By 10 October, however, Newcastle was suggesting a meeting of thirteen leaders of opposition on 10 November (just before the meeting of Parliament). These thirteen, who were to plan the campaign for the ensuing session, included representatives of the Yorkes and of the Pittites but no representatives of the
⁴¹
"zealous young men". Three days later, however, Newcastle wrote

39. B. M. Add. Mss. 32950 ff10-11 Devonshire to Newcastle 2 August 1763

40. For this see above p. 189.

41. B. M. Add. Mss. 32951 f369 "Heads of Business" 10 October 1763 Newcastle's thirteen men were the Duke of Grafton, Duke of Devonshire, Duke of Bolton, Duke of Portland, himself, Marquis of Rockingham, Earl of Hardwicke, Earl Temple, Pitt, Legge, Charles Townshend (1725-1767) Charles Yorke and James Grenville.

to Legge saying that he was going to send Sir William Baker
 42
 who very much wanted to see him In his reply Legge ~~stated~~ that
 he was very anxious to see Baker and wrote

"I think if Mr. Pitt, Charles Townshend (1725-1767), The Attorney General, Sir William Baker and Your Humble Servant had an alliance - offensive and defensive; and could meet frequently together, and concert Plans of operation, it might possibly produce some good; the case and the times require great union, and concert, and will by no means, admit so material a defalcation from the Alliance, as the Attorney General and his Father."

Legge, however, if he was very enthusiastic about having the "zealous young men" represented in the inner councils of the party by no means underestimated the importance of Newcastle himself for he continued

"If you should be jaded and give out, I don't know who there is of weight and experience and ability, and credit enough with the Whigs to replace you, and become the common centre of union, who will keep open House and open hands for them, and be if not the Vinegar at least the secretary of the opposition, I don't see, nor who can, and yet without such an officer and standard to resort to, I think the whole Corps will straggle, as the Court Brokers could wish them to do. These are but gloomy and unpleasant considerations, but I hope in a little time they will blow off, and that we shall all see our way clearer, than we have hitherto been able to do." 43

Newcastle on 16 October wrote to Devonshire saying that Pitt had been willing, when Newcastle saw him on 12 October, to confer with Legge, Charles Townshend (1725-1767) and Sir William Baker and was obviously trying to convert Devonshire to Legge's scheme. But Newcastle also made it clear that there was now a distinct

42. Ibid. ff395-396 Newcastle to Legge 13 October 1763.

43. Ibid. ff397-398 Legge to Newcastle 13 October 1763.

rift between Pitt and the Yorke⁴⁴s who had taken the government's line on the Wilkes issue and indeed from this time onward it became quite clear that any thorough-going alliance with Pitt was impossible, chiefly because Newcastle insisted on including the Yorke family in the alliance but also because Pitt was unwilling to make a whole-hearted alliance.⁴⁵ Meanwhile it seems very probable that Legge had made contact with Baker and this served to bring Baker, who was to be influential in the formation of the Wildman's Club, into the inner councils of the party.⁴⁶

It was planned that Rockingham should hold a dinner party on 11 November 1763 before the opening of the new session of Parliament. By 27 October Newcastle was considering who should attend this. In a memoranda of that day he noted his intention of having Baker attend the function and on 29 October Newcastle wrote to Cumberland⁴⁷

"It was agreed with the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Grafton, My Lord Rockingham and Myself, that we should dine at my Lord Rockingham's on Friday the 11th of November, the Friday before the meeting of Parliament. I suppose the persons to be there will be the Duke of Grafton, Duke of Devonshire, Duke of Portland, Lord Rockingham, myself, Duke of Bolton, Lord Hardwicke, Lord Temple, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Legge, Mr. Charles Townshend (1735-1767), the Attorney General, Query Mr. James Grenville, Query Sir William Baker." 48

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44. B. M. Add. Mss. 32952 ff1-12 Newcastle to Devonshire 16 October 1763.
 45. B. M. Add. Mss. 32952 f23 Newcastle to Rockingham 16 October 1763.
 46. ibid. f51 Newcastle to Devonshire 21 October 1763.
 47. B. M. Add. Mss. 32951.f398 Legge to Newcastle 13 October 1763.
 48. B. M. Add. Mss. 32952 f108 "Heads of Business" 27 October 1763.
 48. Ibid. f121 Newcastle to Cumberland 29 October 1763.

The only person who can be said to have been a representative of the "zealous young men" was Baker and there was obviously considerable doubt about his invitation. This dinner was never held, however, partly because Rockingham was ill and partly because Pitt refused to attend any meeting of this kind.⁴⁹

When Parliament opened, however, the opposition had found a rallying cry, for the issue of Wilkes was the most important matter before the government and they succeeded remarkably well in harrying the government. This success gave them a new unity. Moreover, Legge and Baker were in the fore-front of the attack and were probably co-operating and the evident hostility of Charles Yorke at this time possibly served to ram home the need for absolute unity.⁵⁰

Thus by 9 January 1764 Lloyds Evening Post was able to report

"A numerous and formidable Society of persons of distinction, abilities and influence in the nation is now forming, and a large house of a deceased Nobleman is hired for their Assemblies, which Society is to be called The Cotery of Revolutionists or of Antiministerialists from the French word Coterie, vulgarly called a Club in English." 51

In a memorandum on 15 January 1764 which consists of a series of points to be discussed at a meeting of opposition leaders Newcastle wrote that he wished to discuss with Baker

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49. Ibid. ff143-144 Rockingham to Newcastle 31 October 1763; ibid. f166 Newcastle to Rockingham 1 November 1763; ibid. ff184-191 Newcastle to Devonshire 2 November 1763.
50. B.M. Add. Mss. 32953 f16 Onslow to Newcastle 23 November 1763; ibid. f37 Onslow to Newcastle 24 November 1763; B.M. Add. Mss. 32954 f38 George Onslow to Newcastle 18 December 1763.
51. No. 1013 6-9 January 1764 p. 25. There were further remarks about the club in the next issue of the same newspaper.

the latter's plan of opposition. Sir William Baker was in close contact with the advocates for an opposition club, and it is reasonable to suppose that this matter would be mentioned and Newcastle would make his sentiments known.

A piece of positive information about the formation of Wildman's Club is in a letter from Legge to Newcastle on 30 January 1764 when the club is obviously being formed and

membership is under discussion. Legge wrote

"Our friend the Spanish Townshend (1728-1810) communicated to me the nature of the minority club, of which I am very ambitious to be an original subscriber and signify as much to him by this night's post. I honour the Establishment and make no doubt but the day will come when both the Institution and the members of it will be treated with respect, love and veneration in this land. Townshend will probably communicate to you the prudential and political reasons which make me approve the establishment exclusive of the personal vanity of making me one of the company. I have received a letter from Prouse (54) who will be in England about the end of May next.... Make him a member of this Club meo periculo at least eventually. I think it will do a great deal of good and I hope also that Dowdeswell (55) is already of it!"

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51. (contd) The house had been Lord Waldegrave's. See Walpole op. cit. Vol. I, p. 281 n. Waldegrave died in 1763.
52. B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f186 "Points" 15 January 1764.
53. Ibid. ff314-315 Legge to Newcastle 30 January 1764.
54. Thomas Prouse M.P. (1707-67) A country gentleman friend of Legge's. See Namier and Brooke, The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. III, p. 366.
55. William Dowdeswell (1721-1775) who was to be Rockingham's Chancellor of the Exchequer was a country gentleman. He appears in a list of Newcastle's dated 23 November 1763 headed "Some friends in the House of Commons" (B. M. Add. Mss 32953 f20 but as a query) Namier and Brooks, The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 333-335 state that he never joined the opposition club and in May 1764 Newcastle still classed him as a doubtful friend. He is not listed as a member of the club in either Newcastle's or Almon's list.
56. B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 ff314-315 Legge to Newcastle 30 January 1764.

It thus seems that if Newcastle had not entirely approved of the club he was actively concerned with it when it was formally constituted. When Newcastle replied to Legge on 4 February 1764 he wrote

"I have desired that your name and Offley's may be enter'd of the Club. As to the other Gentleman (Prouse) tho' I have the greatest honor and regard for his character, being not personally known to him I think he might think it wrong in me without particular direction from himself." 57

Newcastle was not then in control of the club but possibly he was exercising some sort of "honourary presidency" for the "zealous young men" would no doubt be unwilling to go ahead with the project without at least the nominal support of their titular leader. Thus, without mentioning the club, Newcastle persuaded Brice Fisher to see Sir William Baker in early February 1764 and on 9 February Fisher's name appeared on the list of members of the club. 58

Formation of the club seems to have been very rapid at this time for on 6 February 1764 George Onslow was able to write to Newcastle from "Wildman's" and there is a list of the members of the club containing 106 names in the Newcastle Papers dated 9 February 1764. Thus it may be concluded that the final organisation of Wildman's Club took place in late January and early February 1764 and it was by no means a direct 59

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57. Ibid. f361 Newcastle to Legge 4 February 1764. John Offley (1717-1784) M.P. 1747-1774. For him see Namier and Brooke op.cit. Vol. III, p. 223. Offley was a loyal Newcastle supporter.
58. B.M. Add. Mss. 32955 f356 Brice Fisher to Newcastle 'Friday morning' most likely 2 February 1764 as Brice Fisher was listed as a member of the club on 9 February 1764. Ibid.
59. f409 "List of the Club" 9 February 1764.
59. Ibid. f366 Onslow to Newcastle 6 February 1764, ibid f409 "List of the Club" 9 February 1764.

result of the meeting of December 1762.⁶⁰ Even though Newcastle kept in touch with the organisation, its formation was for the most part the work of the "zealous young men" of the party.

(C) THE MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATION AND ACTIVITIES OF WILDMAN'S CLUB.

Wildman's Tavern was situated in Albe⁶¹marle Street London and it was here that the club meetings were held. In his Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third Horace Walpole states that on January 1764

"The Court was alarmed at a club which the opposition formed themselves, holding their weekly meetings at a tavern erected on the occasion by one Wildman in Albe⁶²marle Street."

In view of this statement and the fact that there is a letter from Wildman to Newcastle headed Albe⁶³marle Street concerning the club and dated 1765 there can be little doubt that this was the location of it.

The only direct evidence of the club's organisation is in Wildman's letter to Newcastle of 25 January 1765.⁶⁴ This letter was written after the club had been seriously weakened in the latter part of 1764 and Newcastle himself was making an effort to revive it. There is, however, no reason to suppose that the arrangements in early 1764 were any different from those in

60. See above p.196.

61. B.M.Add.Mss.32965 f301 Thomas Wildman to Newcastle 25 January 1765.

62. I can find no evidence to support Walpole's statement that the tavern was erected at this time. If it were in Lord Waldegrave's former house (see above p.207) this could not be so. Probably Walpole means the tavern was opened at this time. Walpole *op.cit* Vol. II p. 45.

63. See above note 61. B.M.Add.Mss.32965 f301 Thomas Wildman to Newcastle 25 January 1765. See Appendix 1.

64. B.M.Add.Mss.32965 f301 Thomas Wildman to Newcastle 25 January 1765.

early 1765. In January 1765 the arrangements were that Almon provided facilities for dinner every day from Monday to Saturday. The cost of the table was to be £3.10.0 each day and it was to be for ten members. Each member of the club was to pay four shillings per week subscription and if there were above ten members present the additional ones were to be charged proportionately.⁶⁵ Dinners were thus a prominent part of the club's activities and it is reasonable to suppose that political discussions at dinner and speeches and toasts afterwards to rally the party were the club's major functions.⁶⁶ If Wildman was providing six dinners at £3.10.0 each every week this means he had to take £21 per week in subscriptions to cover his cost, and points to the fact that there were at least 105 paying members at the beginning of 1765 and Newcastle's list of the club consists of 106 names. It is dated 9 February 1764 and was thus completed shortly after the foundation of the club.⁶⁷ Almon's list in the History of the Late Minority consists of 149 names. This, Almon states is for the year 1764.⁶⁸ An examination of both lists shows that 105 of the

65. Ibid. f301 Thomas Wildman to Newcastle 25 January 1765.

66. Horace Walpole stated that there were only weekly meetings in 1764. His information may have been inaccurate because all the other evidence points to the fact that meetings were held more than once a week. When Newcastle wrote about "a Huzza at Wildman's once a week" he was thinking of the weekly meetings arranged at Wildman's during the Parliamentary recess in the summer of 1764. See above p.221. See also B.M.Add.Mss 32960 f332 Newcastle to Legge 20 July

67. 1764.

67. B.M.Add.Mss. 32955 f409.

68. pp. 297-300

106 names in Newcastle's appear in Almon's, 44 names appear in Almon's list that do not appear in Newcastle's and one name that of Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh, appears on Newcastle's list but not on Almon's. This points to the fact that Newcastle's list was a provisional list compiled earlier in the formation of the club than Almon's.

Of the 150 persons that can be compiled as a list of members by combining Newcastle's and Almon's list, twenty-eight were peers and twenty-three were neither peers nor did they in 1764 sit in the House of Commons, although some of them had been members of Parliament or were to become so later. There were among the club members twenty-nine persons with strong associations with trade and industry, if they were not all actually merchants and twenty-six of these twenty-nine were sitting in the House of Commons.

At first sight it may not seem that the proportion of the mercantile interest was very high, but it numbered among

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69. The case of Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh is peculiar but the inclusion of his name was possibly a mistake of Almon's or an error in Newcastle's source of information, for no event in Featherstonhaugh's life (see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 422-423) or his connection with Newcastle, as shown in the Newcastle Papers, suggest a reason why he should join the club at its formation and leave shortly afterwards.
70. These did not all sit in the House of Lords in England as some of these were Irish peers. This twenty-eight includes nobody sitting in the House of Commons.
71. M.P.s includes a few peers e.g. Lord Frederick Cavendish who sat in the House of Commons. I include in this list members dying in 1764 or being elected in that year.
72. These figures are compiled from Judd op. cit and Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790. 12 names appear in neither. Thus an analysis of Almon's list does not agree with C. B. Cone's statement in Burke and the Nature of Politics The Age of the American Revolution Kentucky 1957, p. 61.

it men like Sir George Colebrooke and Sir William Baker who were respected and influential supporters of Newcastle and who were in the van of the campaign for forming an opposition. Moreover the number of persons in the group with mercantile interests is out of all proportion to the number in Parliament at the time. Namier states that about fifty merchants were elected to Parliament in 1761 and in 1763 there were about ⁷³ eighty-five members with commercial interests. Thus the mercantile interest was far more strongly represented in the Wildman's group than in Parliament as a whole and this representation, both because of its numbers and because of the ⁷⁴ individuals concerned was bound to be influential.

In the History of the Late Minority Almon wrote that the club was instituted to keep the opposition together and to give members of the club the pleasure of "meeting and ⁷⁵ conversing together". In his Biographical, Literary and Political Anecdotes he noted that the "object of the institu- ⁷⁶ tion was singly to preserve union". In spite of this, however, the club immediately began political agitation, for "at the ⁷⁷ commencement of the institution" a political pamphlet was

72. (contd) that this list includes only M.P. members.

73. See above p. 6.

74. The leading members of the group having close association with trade among the twenty-nine were Sir William Meredith, Sir George Colebrooke, Sir William Baker, Henry Crabb Boulton, Peter Burrell, Bartholomew Burton, Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh, Brice Fisher, Rose Fuller, Capel Hanbury, Frazer Honeywood (died January 1764) John Thomlinson, and Thomas Walpole.

75. Op. cit. p. 297.

76. London 1797, Vol. II, p. 37.

77. Ibid. p. 38.

published entitled A Letter from Albemarle Street to the
78

Cocoa Tree Almon states that this pamphlet was produced by Earl Temple almost single-handed and

"One design of it was to proclaim the creed or what he hoped was and would continue to be the creed of the minority from their headquarters, that the nation might know the doctrines they professed, and the principles they avowed. But though the pamphlet was generally approved by the nation, yet there were some persons in the minority who thought it declared too much." 79

This pamphlet stated that the reign of George I and George II had produced no real issues concerning the "Liberty of the subject" but the early years of George III had furnished
80
an important question which showed who were true Whigs.

Temple's pamphlet focussed attention on General Warrants and it was this issue which the opposition found most useful.

When the new session of Parliament had begun in November 1763 Newcastle and his supporters had pressed the government as
81
hard as they could on the General Warrants question. After Christmas, however, with the issue narrowed down to a complaint of breach of privilege the new strength gathered by the opposition at Wildman's was clearly demonstrated.

The complaint against the King's messengers for imprisoning Wilkes and for the seizure of his papers was to be heard on 13 February 1764. For this motion some of the leading members of Wildman's issued a "whip" to all members of the club. Each member of the club who dined there on 9 February

78. London 1764. The pamphlet was reproduced in the Gentleman's Magazine for April 1764.

79. Biographical Literary and Political Anecdotes p.38.

80. A Letter from Albemarle Street to the Cocoa Tree pp.22-23.

81. See Correspondence in B.M.Add.Mss.32952 p.54.

82

undertook to speak to his friends. Newcastle did not entirely approve of this idea of the limitation of the "whip" to the club alone. He wrote to Lord/Cavendish that he thought "the summons should not be confined to members of the club only" and that he had⁸³ sent to several that are not members of the club."

The first critical division on the Wilkes issue was taken early on 16 February 1764 after an all-night sitting and this division and the next division on 18 February marks the high-water mark of the power of Wildman's. The figures on 16 February were 207 v. 197. On 18 February they were 234 v. 220.⁸⁴ The minority was listed and published in a broadsheet and in A letter to a Noble Member of the Club in Albemarle Street⁸⁵ from John Wilkes Esq at Paris Wilkes wrote

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"Your information that these (the broadsheets) lie in heaps with the two volumes of the North Briton, the Royal Register, and Gazetteer upon the table at Wildman's gives me great pleasure, as well as the resolution lately made to subscribe for pamphlets and not to suffer dinner to come upon the table till both Houses break up. Cultivate Wildman's. Such a coterie is of infinite importance." 87

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82. B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f421 Lord John Cavendish to Newcastle 9 February 1764; ibid. f444 Onslow to Newcastle 12 February 1764.
83. Ibid. f434 Newcastle to Lord John Cavendish 11 February 1764.
84. For a discussion of these figures see Namier, Structure of Politics pp. 150-152. See also Almon History of the Late Minority p. 271; B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f33 Newcastle to Pitt 18 February 1764.
85. Published February 1764. There is a copy of this broadsheet in the British Museum at Call Mark T. 1554. See Namier Structure of Politics p. 151.
86. London 1764. The pamphlet is obviously addressed to Lord Temple.
87. Ibid. p. 3.

An analysis of the division of 18 February shows that of the ninety-nine members of Wildman's who were members of Parliament eighty-eight voted in the minority. Of the eleven who did not vote with the minority seven were not in Parliament on that day and appear in the list of absentees at the foot of the broadsheet; one Frazer Honeywood had died and only three cannot be accounted for.⁸⁸

The reputation that the club gained in the public eye through its activities on the Wilkes issue is graphically portrayed in Churchill's The Candidate in which he wrote⁸⁹

"What Patron shall I chose ? shall public voice
or private knowledge influence my choice ?
Shall I prefer the grand retreat of STOWE or seeking patriots, to friend Wildman's go ?⁹⁰

To Wildman's cried Discretion (who had heard
Close standing at my elbow every word)
To Wildman's; art Thou mad ? canst Thou be sure
One moment there to have thy head secure ?
Are they not all (let observation tell)
All marked in Characters as black as Hell,
In Doomsday Book by Ministers set down
Who stile their pride, the honors of the crown ?
Make no reply --- Let Reason stand aloof ---
Presumptions here must pass as solemn proof.
That settled Faith, that Love which ever springs
In the best subjects, for the best of Kings,
Must not be measured now, by what men think,
Or say, or do -- by what they eat and drink,
Where, and with whom, the question to be try'd
And Statesmen, are the Judges to decide;
No Juries call'd, or, if call'd kept in awe,
They, fools confess'd, in themselves vest the law.

88. These three are John Jeffreys, John Walsh and William Earle. For them see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 under Jeffreys, Walsh and Earle, Vol. II, pp. 374-375, 673, Vol. III, pp. 602-603.

89. London 1764, p. 11.

90. Earl Temple's country seat.

Each dish at Wildman's of sedition smacks
 Blasphemy may be Gospel at ALMACK'S 91
 Peace, good DISCRETION peace -- thy fears are vain
 Ne'er will I herd with WILDMAN'S factious train
 Never the vengeance of the great incur,
 Nor, without might, against the mighty stir.
 If, from long proof, my temper you distrust,
 Weigh my profession, to my gown be just;
 Dost thou one person know, so void of grace
 To Pay his court to Patrons out of Place.

These divisions on the Wilkes case, however, marked the high-water mark of the power of the club and from this time onwards it grew weaker. Almon suggests the reason for this was the fact that

"These patriots now thought they had done enough to get themselves into offices, and they were afraid of attempting anything further lest they should ruin the probability of their supposed success...." 92

It is true that the opposition at Wildman's, like any other Parliamentary opposition, was seeking power but the administration had not been defeated or forced to negotiate with the opposition. No member of the Newcastle Whigs entered the ministry in the months after February 1764 and there is no evidence in correspondence that the leaders of the opposition felt that further opposition would ruin the chance of the Newcastle Whigs returning to power. Indeed, Wildman's seems to have become less powerful mainly because of the lack of another subject with which to harry the ministry.

In his Letter to a Noble Member of the Club in Albemarle Street Wilkes had noted the necessity for Wildman's to advocate

91. Almacks was a famous gambling club in the City. See London Coffee Houses by Bryant Lillywhite, London 1963, p. 670.
 92. History of the Late Minority pp. 283-286.

93

popular causes if it were to remain powerful, and on 25 February 1764 Newcastle wrote to Charles Townshend that

"the minority is now come to be so considerable, that we must consider what points of opposition will meet with general approbation."

Yet he made it quite clear that he was still more concerned with an opposition which gained its strength from an alliance with Pitt than from Wildman's club. Later in the same letter he continued

"Our Friends are every day calling out for a point. The difficulty is to find a good one." 94

Newcastle suggested Grenville's budget and the proposed measures affecting the North American Colonies, but his idea never gained the full support of the majority at Wildman's, even if those with commercial associations were active in opposition. 95 Moreover, in March 1764 when these topics were discussed in the House of Commons, Newcastle, and Charles Townshend the man on whose leadership he relied, were preoccupied with the death of Hardwicke and his replacement as Lord High Steward at the University of Cambridge. 96 Indeed Newcastle ~~himself~~ excused himself from attending a meeting of 100 members at Wildman's on 8 March for this reason, thus missing what seems to have been a golden opportunity of rallying the opposition. 97 In the absence of Charles Townshend and Legge,

93. p. 5.

94. B.M. Add. Mss. 32956 ff103-104 Newcastle to Charles Townshend 25 February 1764.

95. Ibid. f104 Newcastle to Charles Townshend 25 February 1764. See below p. 244. et seq.

96. B.M. Add. Mss. 32956 ff200-400 passim. See also Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend pp. 115-116. See below p. 244.

97. B.M. Add. Mss. 32956 f252 Newcastle to Devonshire 7 March 1764.

who was ill, it fell to Sir William Baker to lead the opposition to Grenville's budget. Baker found himself in a difficult position and did not make an all-out attack on Grenville.

Later in the month Newcastle tried unsuccessfully to retrieve the position, and on 23 March Onslow reported to Newcastle regarding Grenville's American Revenue Act

"Something must and I believe will be done. The uneasiness of our People grows every hour, and I fancy there will be a meeting of some People tomorrow night at Wildman's."

Efforts to rally the group, however, mainly because of differences between Newcastle and Charles Townshend and Newcastle and Charles Yorke proved abortive.

It was moreover, not only Newcastle and Charles Townshend who were ceasing to drive the Parliamentary opposition. In March 1764 Pitt, on the excuse of ill-health, had practically ceased to attend Parliament. This not only deprived the group at Wildman's of part of its inspiration but it made more difficult Newcastle's self-appointed task of forging a thorough-going alliance with Pitt, and Newcastle's interest in opposition declined. Temple, also, was less intent on driving the opposition and Almon admits that A Letter from Albe~~m~~arle Street was Temple's last effort to preserve the unanimity of the opposition.

97. (contd) It should be noted that all the evidence points to Newcastle only once personally attending a meeting at Wildman's. See below pp. 229, 232.

98. See below p. 247. 99. See below pp. 247-248.

100. B. M. Add. Mss. 32957 f225 Onslow to Newcastle 23 March 1764.

101. See below pp. 247-248.

102. Ibid. 32957 f5 Newcastle to Legge 13 March 1764; History of the Late Minority p. 289.

103. Biographical, Literary and Political Anecdotes Vol. II, p. 38.

Thus on 8 March 1764 an attempt to rally the opposition on the question of the Cider Tax met with only a half-hearted support. Almon notes that the opposition was handicapped by the absence of Pitt and Charles Townshend and states that many of the opposition were absent and did not attend partly because the members from the cider counties had not helped them in the General Warrants division.¹⁰⁴ He goes on to say that not only the coherence of the opposition broke down but that Wildman's declined and even ceased to exist.¹⁰⁵ This was not, however, the case and the club at Wildman's continued to exist, its driving force coming from the "zealous young men" who had been the founder members.

Regular meetings at Wildman's seem to have been maintained on the same basis, at least to the end of the Parliamentary session. Moreover on 19 April 1764 Newcastle, who was now becoming anxious about the unity of the party during the summer recess attended Wildman's and "prompted the Resolution of having a general meeting of the club the day before the opening of the session."¹⁰⁶

The "zealous young men" did more than Newcastle hoped, for

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104. History of the Late Minority p.289. Dowdeswell can be cited as an example of a "cyder Member" who did not support the Minority on the General Warrants issue, but Legge regarded Dowdeswell as one of his adherents and the fact that he did not support the opposition may have been due to Legge's absence from Parliament. See B.M.Add.Mss. 32956 f6 Legge to Newcastle 16 February 1764.
105. History of the Late Minority p.290. Biographical, Literary and Political Anecdotes Vol.II, p.38.
106. Ibid. 32958 f184 Newcastle to Lord Cornwallis 20 April 1764. This is probably the only time that Newcastle personally attended the club.

on 24 May at an "excellent dinner" they agreed to meet weekly every Thursday during the summer, but a more dangerous rift now appeared between Newcastle and the "zealous young men" at Wildman's.

In May 1764, on the prompting of Charles Yorke, Newcastle pressed the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint George Hay to the office of Dean of the Arches which had recently become vacant. Hay had supported the government in February 1764 on the Wilkes issue and on 17 February had been a prominent government speaker. It was out of deference to the Yorke family that Newcastle reluctantly supported Hay's candidacy for the position.

As Hay had played such a prominent part against them in February 1764 it is not surprising that the group at Wildman's were annoyed when they heard of Dr. Hay's promotion. They were in no position to understand Newcastle's devious manoeuvres to retain the friendship of the Yorke family. Thus on 8 June 1764 Newcastle wrote to the Duke of Devonshire

"I hear some of my Friends at Wildman's and particularly my good Friend Sir William Baker, are loud in blaming me for the part I have had in Dr. Hay's promotion; and neither allow Mr. Yorke's insisting upon it, or the providing for my Cambridge Friends to be an excuse or justification. Some People are not desirous to have men of the first abilities and consideration, to act with us for reasons of their own." 110

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107. Ibid. 32959 f91 G. Onslow to Newcastle 25 May 1764.
 108. 1715-1778. M.P. 1754-56, 1757-1778.
 109. For this issue see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 599-600.
 110. B. M. Add. Mss. 32959 f310 Newcastle to Devonshire 8 June 1764.

On 12 June Charles Townshend who had been staying with Sir William Baker found him "unreconciled to Dr. Hay's unmerited promotion but cheerful sanguine and pleased." On 13 and 18 June Newcastle wrote to Legge noting that Baker and his friends at Wildman's were loudly protesting about Hay's promotion. on the latter occasion he wrote of the necessity of Legge, Devonshire and Rockingham standing with him over the issue. Newcastle also tried to get into touch with Thomas Walpole so that he could explain the matter to another of the prominent and more moderate members of the club. By 19 June, however, Newcastle was writing to John White complaining of the attitude of both Baker and Thomas Walpole over the "Dr. Hay Affair". Newcastle stated that he had Rockingham, Legge, Lord John and George Cavendish and Lord Bessborough to support his point of view and that he would explain the matter fully to White.

The worst of the quarrel now seems to have been over, however, for on 22 June 1764 George Onslow wrote to Newcastle

"I was by no means in spirits (because Legge was dying) to enjoy the very good company at Wildman's where your Grace's Health and your Toast are established and constantly drunk, most sincerely. I'll answer for it by everybody present, who were Lord Bessborough, Lord Middleton, Lord Charlemont, Lord G. Cavendish, Lord Cornwallis, Sir Alexander Gilmore, Scawen. Fitzherbert, Sir Anthony Abdy, myself and 2 or 3 more." 115

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111. Ibid. f365 Charles Townshend to Newcastle 12 June 1764.
 112. Ibid. f377 Newcastle to Legge 13 June 1764; ibid. f439 same to same 18 June 1764.
 113. Ibid. f373 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 14 June 1764; ibid f407 Thomas Walpole to Newcastle 15 June 1764; ibid. f417 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 16 June 1764.
 114. B. M. Add. Mss. 32960 f17 Newcastle to John White 19 June 1764.
 115. Ibid. f20 Onslow to Newcastle 22 June 1764. James Scawen M. P. d. 1801 and William Fitzherbert M. P. 1712-1772 were supporters of the Newcastle Whigs.

Furthermore on 5 July Onslow wrote to Newcastle again that he proposed to dine at Wildman's and then come and see
 116
 him, without mentioning the Dr. Hay affair, and by the 18 July a rapprochement was taking place between Newcastle and
 117
 Thomas Walpole.

The "Dr. Hay" affair did, however, have two lasting effects. Firstly, Newcastle immediately began to distrust the type of opposition that the club represented even more than before and to pin his faith still more on an alliance with another opposition group. On 20 July he wrote to Legge

"His Grace (Devonshire) is very constant in his attendance at Wildman's every week, but believe me, my Dear Legge, I know enough of this country to be convinced, that a Huzza at Wildman's once a week, will not do alone tho' a very good thing. There must be other publick demonstration of union, there must be a constant union and concert, of reputable and efficient people in both Houses, who must conduct affairs, and they must be supported by Wildman's and the nation....I flatter myself you will be able to....convince some people of the error of depending solely, upon a popular Cry among our Friends, and others, that if they will take their Parts, they shall meet with the Encouragement they expect, and above all, one necessary man, that he shall be satisfied." 118

and he wrote to Thomas Walpole who was in contact with Pitt
 119
 at this time in similar terms on the same day.

Secondly a definite rift now appears between Newcastle and Sir William Baker who was really Newcastle's City leader.

116. Ibid. f188 Onslow to Newcastle 5 July 1764.

117. Ibid. f314 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 18 July 1764; ibid f316 T. Walpole to Newcastle 18 July 1764; ibid f328 same to same 19 July 1764.

118. Ibid. f332 Newcastle to Legge 20 July 1764.

119. Ibid. f336 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 20 July 1764.

As recently as 30 April 1764 Charles Townshend had written to Newcastle that "Sir William Baker should be desired to put the City in motion"¹²⁰ and although on 20 July and 1 September George Onslow reported to Newcastle of successful meetings at Wildman's in neither case is there evidence that there were mercantile or City men present except for the reconciled ¹²¹ Thomas Walpole. On 8 September 1764 Newcastle wrote to Rockingham

"I find this promotion of Dr. Hay is worked up with great violence amongst our Whig Friends, and particularly in the City where certainly it has done Mr. Yorke at least, very great mischief; and render'd him very unacceptable to all our best Friends." ¹²²

and on 30 September he wrote to Thomas Walpole in a style which suggests that Newcastle hoped Walpole would mediate ¹²³ between him and Sir William Baker."

The rift between Baker and Newcastle was very important for when in November 1764 Baker began to campaign for a vigorous opposition in the forthcoming Parliamentary session Newcastle was unable to restrain him. The link between Newcastle and his more radical followers who supported Baker became more tenuous and Newcastle's connections with his

120. B. M. Add. Mss. 32958 f160 C. Townshend to Newcastle 30 April 1764.

121. B. M. Add. Mss. 32960 f343 G. Onslow to Newcastle 20 July 1764 when Onslow reported a meeting of "The Duke of Devonshire, Lord Bessborough, Lord Cornwallis, Thomas Walpole and twelve more and B. M. Add. Mss 32962 f1 G. Onslow to Newcastle 1 September 1764 when he reported a meeting of "Lord Frederick (Cavendish) Lord Bessborough, Fitzherbert... Thomas Walpole, Walsingham and four or five more.

122. W. W. M. R1-433 Newcastle to Rockingham 8 September 1764. (Cf. B. M. Add. Mss. 32962 ff52-53 Newcastle to Rockingham 8 September 1764 (copy).

123. Ibid. f179 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 30 September 1764.

mercantile adherents became weaker. Indeed as late as January 1765 Newcastle felt that there was still an unhealed breach between himself and Baker because of the "Dr. Hay affair."¹²⁴

On 3 October 1764 Onslow reported to Newcastle

"Our Friends at Wildman's are desirous of meeting more often than once a week and beginning to get together and as Tommy Walpole says to shew spirit and zeal."¹²⁵

But in November 1764 Onslow reported twice to Newcastle the smallness of the number meeting at Wildman's. There were¹²⁶

several reasons for this. Firstly, as Onslow admitted, there were not many members in London.¹²⁷

Secondly, Newcastle's policy of seeking an alliance with Pitt as a corner stone of opposition policy was bound to weaken Wildman's. Moreover, at this time he was further elaborating this policy by entrusting the leadership of the opposition to Charles Townshend and General Conway.¹²⁸ Clearly he had far more faith

in these tactics than in the use of Wildman's club and as Sir William Baker was campaigning for an opposition that Newcastle regarded as too violent and which was bound to spring from Wildman's it was to Newcastle's advantage that this club should become weaker. On 14 November he wrote

124. B. M. Add. Mss. 32965 f40 Newcastle to Rockingham 4 January 1765. See below p. 229.

125. B. M. Add. Mss. 32962 f197 Onslow to Newcastle 3 October 1764.

126. B. M. Add. Mss. 32964 f99 G. Onslow to Newcastle 23 November 1764; ibid. f146 G. Onslow to Newcastle 30 November 1764.

127. Ibid. f146 Onslow to Newcastle 30 November 1764.

128. B. M. Add. Mss. 32963 ff50-52 Newcastle to Albemarle 26 October 1764. W. W. M. R1-441 Rockingham to Newcastle 23 November 1764. This policy seems to have been approved by Cumberland which made it all the more acceptable. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32963 ff364-367 "Substance of what passed with H. R. H. the Duke of Cumberland at Cumberland House Satdy. Nov 10th 1764."

to Rockingham

"I hear Sir William Baker declares for opposition and says he will bring one on, and lay some Points before the House, if nobody else will. He has I don't doubt very indiscreetly held a Language, which if known, will do great hurt and offence to those I am sure, we want; But I doubt, we may meet with difficulty to get them. Sir William Baker says I will do without them; that the nation is irritated against the present Ministry, that they will fall of themselves, whether they are attacked or not, and that he thinks we ought to give a Push or Shove.

I must acquaint your Lordship that I find the conversation very popular with all our young men and zealous friends and particularly the Cavendishes and Spanish Charles Townshend. I laid this before H.R.H. (Cumberland) It did not make much impression; he commended entirely the zeal of our young Friends but was clearly of opinion that we must not be governed and led by Sir William Baker and some very well intentioned young friends." 129

Cumberland believed that opposition without Pitt's help stood little chance of success and was willing to countenance it, but although Newcastle agreed there was little chance of success he believed, that unless lip-service at least was paid to the opposition planned by Sir William Baker and the "zealous young men" at Wildman's, he would lose the support of this group, and this might have drastic results even to the extent of leading
130
to the actual disintegration of his party. Baker's advocacy of a violent opposition and his strong reaction in the "Dr. Hay Affair" had brought him into closer sympathy with the "zealous young men" and Newcastle was no doubt perturbed at the thought of
his City

129. Ibid. ff377-378 Newcastle to Rockingham 14 November 1764.

130. W.W.M.R1-444 Newcastle to Rockingham 12 December 1764. In October and early November 1764 Baker seems to have been negotiating unsuccessfully with John Almon for the establishment of a Wilkite weekly paper; See Rea op.cit. p.93.

adherents and the young radicals pursuing an opposition possibly under the leadership of Baker.

A slight revival of Wildman's club appears to have taken place in early December 1764 as its members began to come to London for the new session of Parliament, but at the same time there were doubts that the club would continue on its present footing for on 4 December 1764 the young Duke of Portland wrote to Newcastle a letter in which he deplored the lack of opposition leaders, yet pointed to the "zealous young men" and continued

"Would it not be prudent to have the same appearance in publick as if opposition was to be carried on with the spirit that was wished for last year? Should not the club at Wildman's be continued as heretofore and the question of the warrants be renewed and supported...? All this I humbly apprehend might be understood by a few, might prevent disunion and have the weight and effect in the world." 132

There seems to have been no definite plan in Newcastle's mind to change the constitution of Wildman's even though he was coming increasingly to favour the leadership of the opposition by a few prominent men, and about 11 December he sent venison as a present to the club.

Indeed in January 1765 Wildman's club threatened to assume the role of centre and meeting place of the opposition which it had played in February 1764. There were two factors

131. B.M. Add. Mss 32964 f230 Onslow to Newcastle 7 December 1764
 ibid. f477 Onslow to Newcastle 21 December 1764.
 132. Ibid. f192 Portland to Newcastle 4 December 1764.
 133. Ibid. f249 George Onslow to Newcastle 11 December 1764.

that prevented this. Firstly Newcastle relied on an opposition alliance and secondly he was reluctant to allow the leadership of the opposition to be undertaken by anybody else than a recognised Parliamentary leader. This had served to enlarge the gap between the hierarchy of the opposition led by Newcastle on the one hand , and the "zealous young men" and Baker on the other. Only one man seemed able to bridge that gap and this was Rockingham who was fortunate as he came through the "Dr. Hay affair" unscathed and there is nowhere any criticism of him, even if Newcastle believed that he had his full allegiance over the affair. This meant that, with the death of Legge and Devonshire in 1764, by the beginning of 1765 Rockingham was the only member of the hierarchy of the party who could reconcile the opinions of Newcastle and the more aristocratic members of the party, on the one hand and the "zealous young men" and the City on the other. As Rockingham was to form a ministry within the next year and to succeed to the leadership of the party this achievement was of the greatest importance in his evolution as a political leader.

Thus at the beginning of January 1765 Rockingham was dining at Wildman's with junior members of the Whig hierarchy, like Sir George Savile and Portland and seeking to find the common ground for an opposition policy that would satisfy

134. See above p. 224.

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both Newcastle and the group led by Baker. A meeting was held at Sir George Savile's house similar to that of the previous year and Rockingham took the lead in endeavouring to thrash

136

out an opposition policy. He hoped to revive the question of General Warrants as a topic for opposition and was quite

willing to use both the traditional hierarchy and the "zealous

137

young men" for this purpose.

An attempt was made, possibly by Rockingham himself, to involve Newcastle personally in the proceedings at Wildman's. Newcastle was, however, reluctant to attend the club. He confessed at the time that he had never personally attended a meeting at Wildman's to organise opposition.

138

Newcastle still hankered after the leadership of his party by the traditional aristocracy. He still had reservations about the "zealous young men" particularly after the "Dr. Hay affair". On 4 January 1765 he wrote to Rockingham

"Don't mind what I said about Baker. It will not have the least influence upon me, but to be sure, his behaviour to me this summer has been most ungrateful and absurd. To be rubbing at me about Dr. Hay, to be forming his plans, entering into engagements for opposition, without saying one single word to me of it, considering his situation and mine is most extraordinary.

Believe me, My Dear Lord, the weight of nobility your Lordship, the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Grafton, the Duke of Bolton, Lord Ashburton, Lord Spencer, Ld. Cornwallis, Ld. Bessborough, the Cavendishes may do

135. B. M. Add. Mss. 32965 f10 Newcastle to Rockingham 2 January 1765; ibid. f28 same to same 3 January 1765.

136. Ibid. f36 George Onslow to Newcastle 4 January 1765. For the meeting at Savile's the previous year see Almon History of the Late Minority pp. 269-270.

137. B. M. Add. Mss. 32965 f29 Rockingham to Newcastle 3 January 1765.

138. Ibid. f38 Newcastle to Onslow 4 January 1765.

something but that we feel the great loss (of the Duke of Devonshire); and I much doubt whether H.R.H. (Cumberland) in his present state of health and firm opinion of the impossibility of making even a tolerable figure in our opposition will take an active part. Sir George Savile, I always reckon among the first of the nobility.

But Sir William Baker and my Friend Sir William Meredith to be the undertakers and the Heads of such a national opposition we ought to hope for success from, will be impracticable. At the same time, I am for keeping up the Ball and shall give all possible assistance in my power. But we must take care not to expose ourselves to hurt, and rather confirm than disturb the present ignorant, disjointed and I think ill-disposed administration in their employment.

But this is a matter to be talked on, when we meet." 139

Rockingham replied on the same day trying to allay
140

Newcastle's fears and a few days later Newcastle even seems
141

to have been contemplating dining at Wildman's. It was on
25 January that Thomas Wildman wrote to Newcastle describing

the club and from this letter I have drawn the conclusion
142
that the membership of the club was over 100 at this time.

Indeed, the club still seems to have been active. On 5

January 1765 Lord Bessborough wrote to Newcastle

"What your Grace mentions of the company at Wildman's being very sanguine is certainly the case, and they only want some proper subject to be active upon. The General Warrants is the only one at present, that they talk of, and a good one it is, however, I wish there was some other subject, as this one cannot hold always and if the majority have any sense they will give that point up, as it seems most of the lawyers of their side declare such warrants illegal." 143

139. Ibid. f40 Newcastle to Rockingham 4 January 1765.

140. Ibid. f42 Rockingham to Newcastle 4 January 1765.

141. Ibid. f125 Ashburton to Newcastle 7 January 1765.

142. Ibid. f301 Thomas Wildman to Newcastle 25 January 1765.

143. Ibid. f93 Bessborough to Newcastle 5 January 1765.

Thus the revival of activity at Wildman's club was centred around an attempt to revive the Wilkes issue. This, ¹⁴⁴ unfortunately, was played out, and Bessborough's statement shows that it was the failure of Baker and the "zealous young men" to find another subject around which all sections of the party and the opposition groups could be rallied that limited the success of the club in 1765. I describe elsewhere in this work the activities of the Newcastle Whigs with regard to Grenville's American Stamp Act. This episode shows how spasmodic opposition became when the subject was not very ¹⁴⁵ controversial. In Newcastle's correspondence reference to sporadic attempts at opposition on other topics, for example Grenville's budget, show that the subject was not sufficiently controversial to rally either all Newcastle's party or the ¹⁴⁶ majority of opposition groups. Moreover by March 1765 Grenville seems to have been establishing the traditional link between administration and the City and this weakened Sir William Baker's ability to rally the opposition, and made him ¹⁴⁷ more reluctant to play a leading part in it, probably for fear of weakening his position in the City. What opposition there was thus become led by independent country gentlemen ¹⁴⁸ like William Dowdeswell who really had no following.

144. See for instance ibid.f326 George Onslow to Newcastle 2 February 1765.

145. See below pp.255-273.

146. See B.M.Add.Mss.32966 f10 Onslow to Newcastle 3 March 1765; ibid.f103 Newcastle to Onslow 26 March 1765.

147. Ibid.f79 Newcastle to Onslow 26 March 1765; ibid.f103 Newcastle to Onslow 26 March 1765; ibid.f111 Newcastle to Rockingham 26 March 1765; ibid.f115 Onslow to Newcastle 28 March 1765.

148. Ibid.f46 Newcastle to Conway 12 March 1765; ibid.f111 28

In spite of the difficulties facing it Wildman's did not die and indeed seems to have lasted until the formation of the first Rockingham administration, as during the negotiations for the formation of this ministry there are references to the club. At the beginning of the negotiations in June 1765 when Newcastle was anxious to find a position for Sir William Baker¹⁴⁹ one wonders to what extent Newcastle was motivated by the fact that Baker was a leader of the violent opposition centred at Wildman's, and to what extent he was motivated by the fact that Baker was his leading mercantile supporter, and influential in the City.

On 1 June 1765 Newcastle wrote to Rockingham noting that it was necessary for the "zealous young men" at Wildman's¹⁵⁰ to be patient and on 17 June he wrote to Portland

"We all have great obligations to the Duke (of Cumberland) for this signal mark of his patience, condescencion and judgement. Sure, the great man (Pitt) after all that has passed, will not excuse the King and if he does, sure our good friends at Wildman's Sir William Baker &c. will not approve it." ¹⁵¹

A "very great" meeting at Wildman's on 20 June 1765 failed to achieve anything, mainly because, Pitt at this time was at the point of withdrawing from the negotiations to¹⁵² form a ministry. Finally on 1 July 1765 when Newcastle

148 (contd) f79 Newcastle to Onslow 26 March 1765; ibid. f115 Onslow to Newcastle 28 March 1765.

149. Ibid. f407 "Names" 16 May 1765; ibid. f415 "Persons who should be immediately considered 17 May 1765" ; See also below p.

150. B. M. Add. Mss. 32967 f3 Newcastle to Rockingham 1 June 1765.

151. Ibid. f53 Newcastle to Portland 17 June 1765.

152. Ibid. f89 Onslow to Newcastle 21 June 1765.

wrote to Portland describing the state of the final negotiations that were to result in the first Rockingham administration he concluded his remarks on this topic with the words

"I hope you will approve what I have done. The Boys of Wildman's shall not be the Whig party." 153

No matter how facetious this remark was it serves to prove that right up to the formation of the first Rockingham administration, Newcastle had fears that the organisation at Wildman's club would lead to the weakening of the power of the traditional aristocracy in his own party.

With the event of the first Rockingham administration I have been unable to find any further reference and assume that the organisation now broke up. Its members had achieved their aim, they had broken up the ministry, and their colleagues the Whig hierarchy, if not they themselves, were now able to enjoy the perquisites of office.

Thus when Almon wrote

"But when the party was broken and disheartened, the club dwindled to almost nothing; meetings were seldom, and the companies small. So that in a little time the house barely furnished the shadow of a party." 155

he was by no means accurate, and he seems to have greatly exaggerated the decline in the club that occurred after the campaign over the Wilkes issue in February 1764. This no doubt was because of Almon's close link with Lord Temple. His works tend to give all the credit for Wildman's to Temple and

153. Ibid. f187 Newcastle to Portland 1 July 1765.

154. There was, however, an attempt to revive it in November 1766. See below p.464.

155. History of the Late Minority p.300.

he was probably trying to imply that with Temple's withdrawal from the leadership of the opposition the club broke down.

As this section has shown, however, this was by no means the case. Wildman's was a club that originated because the "zealous young men" of the Newcastle Whigs were discontented with the reluctance of their aristocratic leaders to launch a whole-hearted opposition. The controversy over Wilkes and the "North Briton" No.45 enabled the rest of the opposition temporarily to ally itself with the club in early 1764, but once this issue was played out Wildman's resumed its essential character as the focal point for the pressure of the younger and more active of Newcastle's supporters, as a vehicle by which they hoped to put pressure on him and to encourage him to a more active opposition. In this form it survived right up to the formation of the first Rockingham administration. Newcastle himself always seems to have been aware of the true nature of the club, and over the period it existed his attitude to it does not seem to have changed. He always had reservations about Wildman's because he felt it was challenging the position of the traditional Whig hierarchy.

Wildman's is important to this thesis because the mercantile element, as shown above was strongly represented there and was particularly active in the formulation of policy and leadership, especially through Sir William Baker. The club is also important because it played a significant role in the rise of Rockingham as a political leader. Rockingham was always able to remain friendly with both Newcastle and the

"zealous young men" and indeed it shows Rockingham for the first time in the light of a leader who could reconcile individuals who had very different points of view. The club was also significant for Rockingham^{because} he came into close contact with Sir William Baker and the "monied" and mercantile interests in national politics and those interests were to be of supreme importance during his political career.

The importance of Wildman's as a cohesive force must not be overlooked. In the eighteen months of its existence the club must have done a great deal to unify the party. For the first time Newcastle and Rockingham were able to ascertain exactly who were their supporters. Only one person defected from Wildman's or regretted belonging to it during this ¹⁵⁶ period.

The rise of Wildman's club was thus a very significant episode from the point of view of this thesis, and it also seems to have been a episode which to some extent has been misinterpreted in the past, mainly due to the polemical literature published by Almon.

156. This was Harcourt Powell. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. III, pp. 312-313.

APPENDIX.THE LOCATION OF WILDMAN'S CLUB.

Some confusion has arisen in secondary works over the precise location of Wildman's club and it appears possible that Thomas Wildman owned more than one club or tavern and their walls were the home for more than one political club. It does seem from the statement of Walpole, however, and from the remarks in "Lloyds Evening Post" quoted above (p.207) that the tavern was opened specifically for the club. In London Coffee Houses (p.648) Mr. Bryant Lillywhite locates Wildman's Coffee House at Bedford Street, the Strand, and continues by saying that it is impossible to reconcile the writings of Henry B. Wheatley in London Past and Present (London 1891), E. B. Chancellor in Annals of Covent Garden and its Neighbourhood (London 1930) and Annals of the Strand (London 1912) and the Survey of London (Vol. XXIX, The Parish of St. James, Westminster L. C. C. 1960).

Wheatley in one place locates Wildman's house in Bedford Street, the Strand, and in another at the "Bedford Head" Southampton Street, Covent Garden. (See Lillywhite op. cit. p. 648 Cf. Wheatley op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 147-148, Vol. III, p. 515 and Vol. I, p. 143.).

He describes the "Bedford Head" as "a noted tavern for eating drinking and gaming in Southampton Street, Covent Garden", states that it existed as early as 1716 and continues that during the period 1760-1770 it was kept by Wildman, the brother-in-law of Horne Tooke, at one time an intimate friend of John Wilkes. Wilkes, in one of his letters to Junius states that 'he' had long known Mr. Wildman and for several years belonged to a club which met once a week at the "Bedford Head". (Wheatley op. cit. Vol. I, p. 143 quoting Letters of Junius Vol. I, p. 367.)

Wheatley's work is based on A Handbook for London by Peter Cunningham (2 Vols. London 1849) but this work throws no light on Wildman's club at all, neither does Club Life in London by John Timbs. (London 1866)

Chancellor appears to have plagiarised Wheatley but also to have come to independent conclusions. In The Annals of the Strand (p.46) he writes that Wildman's famous coffee house, the home of the Wilkeites was located in Covent Garden. He also notes that Charles Churchill refers to Wildman's in his poem The Candidate (London 1764 p. 11) but this poem contains direct reference to a proscribed opposition and I believe it refers to the "zealous young men" who frequented a club in Albermarle Street. This poem was mentioned in the Gentlemens Magazine for May 1764 and described as just published (p.243. In April 1764 Churchill was still working on the poem. See The Correspondence of John Wilkes and Charles Churchill ed. E. H. Weatherly, New York, 1954 p.83, n 14.) and so appeared at the time when

the "Old Whig Wildman's Group" was making an impression on public opinion. In Annals of Covent Garden Chancellor identifies the "Bedford" or "Bedford Head" Southampton Street with the inn of that name at 41 Maiden Lane, Covent Garden and connects both Churchill and Wildman, the brother-in-law of John Tooke with it. From this it seems probable that there was a second club held at an institution owned by Wildman which had close Wilkeite association but at what date it is not clear. Neither list of members record Wilkes as being a member of Wildman's club (Cf. History of the Late Minority pp. 297-300 and B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f409 "List of the Club" 9 February 1764), and in view of Thomas Wildman's statement, Horace Walpole's statement and the fact that John Almon who was responsible for the publication of The History of the Late Minority wrote in his Memoirs of John Almon, Bookseller, of Piccadilly (London 1790, p. 16) that

"When the opposition club called the Coterie was established at Wildman's in Albemarle Street (1764) Lord Temple put Mr. Almon's name in the regulations of the house as bookseller and stationer to the club."

it is reasonable to conclude that the Wildman's club with which this work was concerned was in Albemarle Street and had no association with the Wilkeites club, if the latter existed at all. This view would seem to be supported by the L. C. C. Survey of London (Vol. XXIX, Parish of St. James, Westminster, Part I, The South of Piccadilly, London 1960, p. 330 n.) the most scholarly of the modern surveys.

CHAPTER VII.THE NEWCASTLE WHIGS AND THE AMERICAN COLONIES FROM THE PEACE OF PARIS TO THE PASSING OF THE STAMP ACT.

A. 1763-1764.

The attitude of the Newcastle Whigs towards the American colonies has, for the most part, been summarily treated in the preceding narrative. It was however, not an issue that suddenly sprung into prominence with the passing of Grenville's American Stamp Act. Questions of American policy were of importance in the counsels of the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs before 1765, but they were ususally subordinate to other matters and were considered by Newcastle merely as further issues on which to oppose the ministry.

The bearing of the Canada v Guadeloupe controversy on the American colonies during the negotiations for the Peace of Paris has been noticed above. It is also to be noted that when Newcastle opposed the Peace he was not taking the territory versus commerce line. Instead of denouncing American conquests and demanding that they should be exchanged for sugar islands, the finality of the continental acquisitions was conceded and the attack was concentrated on the impotence of Bute's ministry which had failed to secure anything in the West Indies after a year of additional success. Indeed, it seems that with Newcastle and his mercantile followers, particularly Sir William Baker, the security motive had the strongest weight. This was a shift in emphasis in established mercantile ideals. It involved a preference for territory where

acquisitions could best be justified from the economic standpoint because *they* provided markets for British produce: it was a preference for future safety both in the commercial and "security" fields. This was not a new colonial theory but the retention of Canada was to have significant effects on the trends of British colonial policy after 1763.¹

The next occasion on which American affairs became important to Newcastle was in the summer of 1763 when he was endeavouring to cement an alliance with Pitt. On 11 August 1763 Newcastle wrote a long letter to Devonshire reporting a meeting with Pitt. Newcastle discussed the difference of opinion that had appeared at the meeting and stated that in addition to Pitt's ideas on foreign policy

"the disturbances and insurrections in Ireland, the settlement of our colonies and new acquisitions in America, in which he (Pitt) was afraid, he might differ essentially with others, as perhaps, he might not think measures of power and force would be proper to obtain the view proposed, viz, the quieting of the insurrections in Ireland and the settlement of our Colonies, upon a proper foot with regard to themselves and their mother country."²

Newcastle had also discussed American affairs with the Duke of Cumberland at this time and in his letter to Devonshire he

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1. See above pp. 20-21 See also "British Motives for Expansion in 1763, Territory, Commerce or Security" by F.J. Ericson in Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science Arts and Letters Ann Arbor 1942, pp. 592-594.
 2. B. M. Add. Mss. 32950 f71 Newcastle to Devonshire 11 August 1763. The disturbances in Ireland at this time were associated with the "Whiteboys" movement and agrarian discontent. They were also possibly associated with the Earl of Northumberland to the Lord Lieutenancy. See The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century by J.A. Froude, London 1874, pp. 1-44.

informed the latter that Cumberland believed that

" The settling our colonies in America....must be done in such a manner to keep them dependent upon the mother country." 3

Newcastle thoroughly endorsed this opinion.

It was at this time the British government was arranging the 1763 Ordinance. In the original draft, the Board of Trade under Shelburne, proposed that General Murray should be made governor of Canada without an elected assembly.⁴ Newcastle soon knew about this proposal for he commented to Devonshire on 11 August on the effect that this was likely to have on the American Mainland colonies.

"Such an establishment....I apprehend, would shake the very foundation of our Colonies, who would with justice expect that that would be their fate very soon. This would blow up all our Trade, and make such confusion there. that neither our old nor new settlements would be of use to this country. This would certainly bring Mr. Pitt forth in the strongest manner, and I apprehend is very contrary to My Lord Hardwicke's opinion, upon the subject of our Colonies." 5

From this it becomes obvious that to Newcastle the chief value of the colonies was trade. This was a typically

3. B.M.Add.Mss.32950 f82 Newcastle to Devonshire 11 August 1763.
 4. See Knøllenberg op.cit. p.98. The negotiations for this ordinance in which both Shelburne and Egremont played a leading part culminated in the Royal Proclamation of October 1763. On 8 July Shelburne had suggested the restriction of settlement in the west of Canada to avoid friction with the Indians. Egremont replied on 14 July suggesting that the western territory so reserved should be under the authority of the Governor of Canada. Shelburne objected to this because the Governor of Canada would thereby become in effect the commander-in-chief of American forces and suggested that the commander-in-chief be given command over the lands not included within a civil government. See The Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations 1748-1782 by A.H.Basye, New Haven (U.S.A.) 1925, Yale Historical Publications Vol.XIV,pp.131-135 where it is also suggested that in this affair Newcastle obtained inaccurate information

mercantilist attitude to colonies, but on the other hand it suggests that Newcastle must have regarded the merchants trading to the colonies as being of great significance if he considered colonial trade as the prime reason for the importance of the colonies.

In a further conference with Pitt on 12 October 1763, Newcastle endeavoured to propose the issue of North America as a topic on which the Newcastle Whigs could co-operate with Pitt in opposition. On this occasion Newcastle asked Pitt if at the opening of Parliament he would ~~oppose~~ ^{oppose} the motion to thank the King for his proclamation to North America, as the full extent of the proclamation was not yet known. Pitt, however, refused to oppose such an address because "it signified nothing" and did at least show that the ⁶ ministry were doing something.

Thus on the same day Newcastle wrote to Rockingham

"He (Pitt) has now taken his part, and will on no account enter into an active part in support of a proper opposition." ⁷

American affairs next sprang into prominence in January 1764. During the autumn of 1763 the Treasury had been investigating the custom house scheme for a revision of the Molasses Act of 1733. Statistics had been gathered, opinions of merchants and colonial agents had been taken, and by mid-

4 (cont'd) at secondhand. See also "Lord Shelburne and the Proclamation of 1763" by R. A. Humphreys in English Historical Review Vol. XLIX London 1934, pp. 241-264.

5. B. M. Add. Mss. 32950 f83 Newcastle to Devonshire 11 August 1763.

6. B. M. Add. Mss. 32952 f7 Newcastle to Devonshire 16 October 1763.

7. Ibid. f23 Newcastle to Rockingham 16 October 1763.

December 1763 the Treasury's plan for lowering the molasses⁸ duty and using it for revenue was known. Newcastle's interest in the North American colonies at this time was probably first aroused by a letter written to him by George Onslow on 25 December in which he stated that

"It is generally believed that the accounts from North America are excessively bad."

and suggested that Newcastle should gain further details from⁹ Thomas Walpole. Newcastle knew of the proposals for the molasses duty by the middle of January 1764 for on 15 January he noted that he wished to discuss with Sir William Baker and Charles Townshend (1725-67) among other American issues;

"The state of N. America
The taxes to be laid there
The molasses duty reduced to two pence....
The Stamps." 10

The position of Sir William Baker as a "semi-official" adviser on American affairs to Newcastle has been mentioned¹¹ above. Charles Townshend was also regarded as one of the Newcastle Whig experts on colonial affairs. It was Townshend who, as President of the Board of Trade, had in March 1763 first proposed that the molasses duty be reduced to twopence¹² a gallon. Material in the Newcastle Papers points to the fact that the discussions with either, or both Townshend and Baker, took place on 18 January 1764 but there is no evidence of the result of this discussion.¹³

8. See "The Passage of the Sugar Act" by A. S. Johnson in William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series Vol. XVI, No. 4 Williams-burg Va. 1959, pp. 511-512.

9. B.M. Add. Mss 32956 ff201-202 G. Onslow to Newcastle 25 December 1763. Alarm had been created in N. America by the measures Grenville had taken in 1763. See Johnson loc. cit. p. 513.

For the next month the issue of America became of secondary importance with the growing excitement over the Wilkes case when the opposition was able to press the ministry so hard on 16 and 18 February 1764. In the circumstances it was hardly surprising that American affairs receded into the background. Yet by 25 February 1764 Newcastle, in his search for further topics for opposition, was considering both Grenville's budget in general and the American proposals contained therein. He informed Charles Townshend that there would be good material for opposition when the budget was opened and dealt with specific measures stating

"The next point of consequence arising from them (the budget proposals) is their disposition of North America. The Duke of Devonshire has already talked to you upon it and you must suggest to us, what it may be proper to do there.

But the great point of all is, that Mr. Pitt, Charles Yorke and you should thoroughly understand one another, and I see with pleasure that that may easily be." 14

Newcastle wanted the advice and opinion of his expert on American affairs but he made it quite plain that to him following expert advice was of secondary importance to the achievement of unanimity among the factions and hierarchy of the Whig party.

9. (contd) For an account of the co-operation between the administration and the merchants and lobbying by the merchants at this time see Agents and Merchants, British Colonial Policy and the Origins of the American Revolution 1763-1775 by Jack M. Sosin, Lincoln(Neb) 1965, p. 41 et seq.

10. B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f186 "Points" 15 January 1764.

11. See above p. 120-121.

12. See Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend pp. 38-40, 91-92, 114-115, 142-145.

13. B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f230 "Considerations for the Company this day" 18 January 1764.

14. B. M. Add. Mss. 32956 f104 Newcastle to Charles Townshend 23 February 1764.

In spite of Newcastle's desire for a plan of campaign little attempt was made to concert measures. On 7 March two days before Grenville was due to open the budget Newcastle wrote again to Charles Townshend

"On Friday is the Budget; no man in England knows better than yourself, what should be said, or done upon it; and therefore I am sure, you will judge what it may be proper to do. Sir William Baker I am sure will act with you." 15

Moreover, Newcastle had now become preoccupied with the replacement of Hardwicke, Lord High Steward of the University of Cambridge, who died on 6 March 1764. Townshend was Newcastle's chief agent in the election. He was sent to Cambridge and was still there when Grenville opened the budget debate on 9 March. Thus on 8 March he replied to Newcastle

"As to the Budget Sir William Baker has my papers; it is not a day for division: and you are to judge how far the election should give way to it. I shall obey not advise." 17

Newcastle evidently decided that the Cambridge election was of more importance than the budget because Townshend was not recalled from Cambridge. Townshend was, in any case, probably reluctant to come as he had previously spoken in

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15. Ibid. f250 Newcastle to Townshend 7 March 1764 quoted Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 115. Charles Townshend had spoken in favour of American Taxation in the Commons on 7 March when Grenville had stated that he intended to tax America. Ibid. p. 114.
16. Ibid. pp. 115, 123.
17. B.M. Add. Mss. 32956 f248 Charles Townshend to Newcastle 'Thursday' (8 March 1764) This document is dated 7 March 1764 but Thursday was 8 March 1764. Quoted Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 115.

favour of American taxation and would not want to lead an opposition. Moreover he was at this time preparing to desert the opposition. In addition Pitt and Legge were ill on 9 March and absent from Parliament as was Charles Yorke due to the death of his father.¹⁸ It thus fell to Sir William Baker to lead the Newcastle Whigs in the House of Commons in answer to Grenville's budget proposals. Grenville opened the budget with a speech that lasted three and a quarter hours which contained among other proposals the Sugar Bill and the resolution which was to lead in 1765 to the Stamp Act.¹⁹ Baker made a short speech in reply upon a plan apparently laid down and agreed with Townshend.²⁰

Baker's reply to Grenville was by no means one of violent opposition. He criticised certain details of the domestic measures suggested by Grenville and went on to deal with the intended colonial measures. He believed that Grenville's proposal of a duty of threepence a gallon on foreign molasses was too high to allow the French West Indies to sell to the British colonies and that it would "throw the trade into other channels"²¹ and suggested a duty of twopence

18. Cf. Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 116.

19. The fullest report of Grenville's speech is in the Harrowby Manuscripts, Nathaniel Ryder's Parliamentary Diary, Document 62. I am indebted to the Earl of Harrowby for allowing me to use these documents. At the end of the document there is a note that Grenville spoke for two hours and thirty five minutes. In B.M. Add. Mss. 32957 f5 Newcastle to Legge 13 March 1764 Newcastle states that Grenville spoke for three and a quarter hours. According to Horace Walpole, Grenville spoke for two hours and forty minutes. See Walpole to Hertford 11 March 1764 printed Correspondence of Horace Walpole ed. Mrs. Paget Toynbee Vol. VI, Pxford 1909, p. 25.

a gallon, rising later. Baker agreed with the duties proposed on the importation of foreign commodities into the colonies except that on indigo; he believed indigo was necessary for colonial cloth production and that the Carolina indigo industry was not great enough to supply the needs of the colonies.

Thus in general Baker agreed with most of Grenville's propositions. Nathaniel Ryder noted that he

"Agrees perfectly to our right to tax the colonies. Thinks the power of the crown extends no farther over the colonies than it does in England. And yet this power has been exerted by orders passed there by the King in Council which have gone to the plantations as kind of laws."

Moreover Baker specifically stated that he did not object to an American Stamp Duty and made some suggestions for the improvement of the administration of the Stamp Duty.²²

It is difficult to understand why Baker replied to Grenville in this way. The budget was an issue on which Newcastle was hoping to rally the opposition; moreover it was a subject on which the Newcastle Whigs had apparently plenty of warning. Baker was the leader of the group at Wildman's who were enthusiastic for opposition and yet he

20. B.M. Add. Mss. 32956 f342 Newcastle to Charles Townshend 10 March 1764.

21. Baker seems to have been right in believing that the duty was too high. See The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution by Oliver M. Dickerson, Philadelphia, 1951, p.86 where it is also stated that after the second revision of the duty in 1766 foreign molasses almost replaced British molasses in the colonial market.

22. Harrowby Mss. Nathaniel Ryder's Parliamentary Document 62 Report of Budget Debate 9 March 1764.

missed a golden opportunity. Nor is the attitude he adopted
 consistent with his attitude during the Stamp Act Crisis.²³

Mr. A. S. Johnson suggests the reason why the 1764 budget did not rouse the opposition was because Grenville planned no new taxes at home, and intended raising all necessary funds for the coming year without resorting either to borrowing or to further demands on British citizens. He suggests that the House of Commons would not object to making the colonies pay a tax that otherwise they would have to pay themselves.²⁴ It seems likely that Grenville's proposals were sound and popular enough for Baker to find it difficult to rouse opposition against them. Although Baker was acknowledged to be a strong speaker²⁵ he was not a leading Parliamentary tactician, and he would therefore find it hard to oppose Grenville. Moreover it was unusual for a man of the status of Baker to lead the attack on a man of the status of Grenville. Indeed Newcastle himself seemed satisfied with Baker's reply and ascribed the deficiencies of the opposition solely to the absence of Yorke and Townshend.²⁶

Newcastle now tried to retrieve his position. He made strenuous efforts which achieved little success to arouse Townshend and Yorke against the American measures. He was

23. See below p. 356.

24. Johnson loc. cit. p. 513.

25. Namier, England in the Age of the American Revolution p. 241.

26. B. M. Add. Mss. 32957 f5 Newcastle to Legge 13 March 1764.

unsuccessful because Townshend would not oppose without the
 support of Yorke who was unwilling to enter into opposition.²⁷

When Newcastle tried to rally his friends by telling them
 that Townshend intended to criticise Grenville's budget speech
 Townshend grew annoyed and stated quite specifically that
 this depended on Yorke's support.²⁸

Newcastle had little chance at this time to capitalise
 on mercantile opposition to the American duties. Sir Lewis
 Namier ascribes the division of the opposition partly to the
 clash between West Indian and North American interests
 especially on the molasses duty²⁹ but the situation seems to
 have been more complicated than this. Grenville's proposals
 of 1764 were an effort to strike a compromise between the
 interests of the West Indian merchants and the American
 continental merchants. The planters interest was served by
 raising the duty on foreign produced sugar, and the threepenny
 duty on foreign produced molasses would lessen the demand

27. Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 118. Townshend's
 father also died at this time and this prevented him from
 attending the House of Commons.

28. Ibid. p. 118.

29. Ibid. p. 118.

for that commodity while encouraging the growth of sugar plantations, especially in Jamaica and the newly acquired Windward Islands. On the other hand the American continental interest was served because of the moderate nature of the duties to be imposed.³⁰ There is no evidence that the American merchants intended to protest against the molasses duty. On 14 March 1764 West reported to Newcastle that on 22 March the American merchants would "apply (to Parliament) to be heard against so much as relates to the drawback on Foreign Linnens"³¹ and on 26 March 1764 John Thomlinson discussed the new duties in a letter to his father and noted that British merchants would oppose the proposals on foreign linen but said nothing concerning any mercantile opposition to the other measures.³² In these circumstances Newcastle had no clear cut issues on which to rally

30. The British Empire before the American Revolution Vol. X, The Triumphant Empire - Thunder Clouds Gather in the West 1763-1766 by L.H. Gipson, New York, 1961, p. 226.

31. B. M. Add. Mss. 32957 f47 West to Newcastle 'Wednesday 5 o'clock' docketed 14 March 1764. Grenville proposed removing the drawback on foreign linen re-exported from Great Britain. This meant that foreign cloth would be as cheap when sent directly to the colonies and this would cause a substantial loss to British merchants. See also ibid. f114 West to Newcastle 16 March 1764.

32. Records and Letters of the Family of the Longs of Longville Jamaica and Hampton Lodge Surrey ed. R. M. Howard. London, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 226. John Thomlinson M.P. to his father John Thomlinson 26 March 1764. John Thomlinson (1731-1767) was the son of Major John Thomlinson (d. 1767) (contd.)

his mercantile followers. Moreover he was coming under pressure from Rose Fuller, who had chiefly West Indian, but also American interests. On 16 March Fuller wrote to Newcastle

"He (Fuller) thinks the American Bill a very beneficial one to this Kingdom and most essentially to the Sugar Colonies - that he can see no reason for putting off the commitment of it beyond Thursday unless it be designed to give opposition to it, which he should be concerned to find and in which he could not joyn. The aforementioned Bill will not bear any delay for the old one expiring with the session (of Parliament) and there will be if it should be passed on Thursday, be(sic) scarce time left to notifye the new one to prevent North America from being filled with French produce both of Europe and America." 33

It is again worthy of note that Fuller's attitude was in marked contrast to his attitude at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis when he was Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House and was accused of partiality towards the Ministry and the American cause. 34

Newcastle's efforts to organise opposition were thus frustrated by the hostility of the West Indian interest, the equivocal attitudes of Townshend and Yorke, and the half-hearted nature of the opposition of Baker and the American merchants. It is not surprising that he now began to have reservations about opposing the American proposals. On 23

32. (contd) For these see Namier England in the Age etc pp. 246-247. The family had strong connections both with the West Indies and New Hampshire and were both planters and merchants. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. III, pp. 522-523. See also my Barlow Trecothick etc. pp. 23-24.

33. B. M. Add. Mss. 32957 f116 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 16 March 1764. Newcastle was apparently trying to postpone the committee stages of the bill in order to gain time to rally his forces and especially to get Townshend to consider the measure. See ibid. f87 Newcastle to Yorke 15 March 1764. The expiring bill referred to was the Molasses Act 1733.

34. See Smith op. cit. pp. 14-16 and below pp. 378-379.

March he wrote to the ailing Legge urging him to send his ideas on the measure to Townshend but added:-

"I rather think that it seems to be the opinion of some of our best friends that it would be imprudent to hazard any great point of consequence so late in the session and when we should not have time to proceed upon or carry into execution any measure of consequence, or any advantage, which by our success, or by the greatness of our numbers we might prosper by it." 36

Legge began to gather information for a pamphlet to answer Grenville's proposals but it was of little use for Newcastle's differences with Townshend and Yorke were now approaching a climax. He was still trying to encourage Baker to oppose Grenville³⁷ but on 23 March Townshend wrote to Newcastle explaining that Yorke wished to avoid opposition on minor issues and that Pitt was of the same opinion and was against all taxation. Townshend could see no point in opposition unless it was strongly supported and explained that he had voted against the molasses duty in committee on the previous day "in civility to Sir William Baker."³⁸ Thus on 23 March 1764 the Revenue Bill passed the committee of the Whole House "after a Debate³⁹ of several hours and a Division of more than two to one." Newcastle now tried to get Rockingham to put pressure on Yorke to support Townshend, he also wrote to Yorke himself urging

35. Legge was suffering from the fatal illness which led to his death on 23 August 1764.

36. B. M. Add. Mss. 32957 ff230-32 Newcastle to Legge 23 March 1764

37. Ibid f173 Sir William Baker to Newcastle 19 March 1764.

38. Ibid. f240 Townshend to Newcastle "Friday morning" 23 March 1764. Baker had stated that he considered the duty on molasses too high and was thus likely to vote against the measure in committee. See above p. 246

39. Israel Mauduit to the General Court of Massachusetts Bay 23 March 1764, Massachusetts Archives Vol. XXII, Boston 1923,

Letters 1763-1773 pp. 46-47 quoted Gipson op. cit. Vol. X, p. 225.

him to support Townshend, but Yorke declined to do so. It was now that Townshend grew annoyed with Newcastle for saying that he was going to attack Grenville's budget proposals and Newcastle was forced to apologise to Townshend, pointing out that he had done it solely in the hope of rallying his friends and did not realise that the opposition depended on Charles Yorke's support.⁴¹

It can therefore be concluded that the Newcastle Whigs failed to oppose Grenville's American proposals in 1764 mainly because their leader was unable to achieve any sort of unity among his followers to agree to a policy of systematic opposition. This suggests also that the opposition that Newcastle planned was not one of principle but one that was based on political expediency. In his search for an issue to embarrass the ministry Newcastle discovered Grenville's budget. When he found that the issue was not agreeable to all members of his party Newcastle was quite willing to allow the subject to drop and American affairs faded into the background until the passing of the Stamp Act when Newcastle went through almost identicals of manoeuvres for similar reasons.⁴²

In 1764 among Grenville's American proposals the Stamp Act resolution had appeared. Consideration of the resolution

40. Ibid. f278 Rockingham to Newcastle 27 March 1764; ibid f288 Newcastle to Yorke 27 March 1764; ibid. f290 Yorke to Newcastle 'Tuesday morning' (27 March 1764)

41. Ibid. f296 Newcastle to Townshend 28 March 1764.

42. See below pp. 255-273.

was postponed for a year. Various reasons have been put forward for this postponement. It has been suggested that Grenville wanted more information, that he wanted to establish a precedent of consultation with the colonies, or that he wanted to give the colonies an opportunity to tax themselves.⁴³

Professor Gipson suggests however, that one of the reasons for the postponement was because of the opposition that the measure threatened to provoke in the House of Commons.⁴⁴ This could well have been the case. Grenville was an astute Parliamentary tactician and he probably smelt danger in the Stamp Act proposals when they began to arouse opposition and thus pressed for their postponement. In 1764 the Newcastle Whigs were in a far stronger position to oppose than they were a year later. The mercantile element was newly unified by Wildman's and fresh from its success over the Wilkes issue. Legge and Devonshire who were dead a year later were in 1764 at least theoretically, available to help to lead the party. Moreover, the merchants were beginning to become organised to protest. As long as Grenville could maintain the argument on the issue of right to tax he was on unimpeachable ground, but inevitably once the Stamp Act was put before Parliament expediency would have to be debated and here the merchants could speak from experience and Grenville could not. Grenville

43. "The Postponement of the Stamp Act" by E. S. Morggn in William and Mary Quarterly 3rd Series, Vol. VII, no. 3, Williamsburg 1950, pp. 353-392 also "The Preparation of the Stamp Act" by CR. Ritcheson in ibid. 3rd Series, Vol. V, No. 4 Williamsburg 1953, pp. 343-357.

44. Gipson op. cit. Vol. X, p. 258 quoting Pennsylvania Gazette 10 May 1764.

was thus wise to defer the measure and in this and in his whole handling of the budget proposals in 1764 he contributed no mean share to the inefficiency of the opposition of Newcastle and his followers.

In view of what had happened in 1764 and what was to happen in 1765, however, it is interesting to note that when Charles Yorke asked Newcastle what measures of the administration he objected to in November 1764 Newcastle stated amongst others

" The Regulations in the West Indies and the new acquisitions of which I did not pretend to be a sufficient judge; But, that in fact, there was such a discontented spirit in all the Colonies, that it might cost much more, than we could spare, to keep them quiet." 45.

Thus among the Whig hierarchy Newcastle at least was aware that all was not well in the American colonies before the end of 1764.

45. B. M. Add. Mss. 32964 ff70-71 "An account of what passed on a visit which Mr. Charles Yorke made me here this day in the presence of Mr. Fred Montagu who came with Mr. Yorke." 21 November 1764.

B. THE PASSING OF THE STAMP ACT.

It is generally accepted that the Stamp Act passed through the British Parliament with very little opposition. This view has, however, been challenged by Professor F.J. Ericson in an article which perhaps has not received the attention it deserves.² This difference of opinion is significant for the present work because it is important to know how far, and for what reason, the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs opposed the Stamp Act. This facilitates an understanding of both the development of opposition policy and the attitudes adopted by the members of this party and their mercantile supporters during the Stamp Act Crisis.

The first debate on the Stamp Act took place on 6 February 1765 when George Grenville reminded the House of Commons of the Stamp Act Resolution of the previous year. It seems that the best "first hand" account of this debate³ is among the Harrowby Manuscripts and this is incomplete. Grenville, opening the debate, stated that taxing the American colonies was a difficult matter because of lack of precedents. He said that there was no doubt as to Parliament's right to tax the colonies and went on to justify this right.

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1. See for instance Miller op. cit. p. 112. Namier, England in the Age etc p. 240. Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis pp. 67-70.
 2. "The Contemporary British Opposition to the Stamp Act" by F.J. Ericson in Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science Arts and Letters Vol. XXIX, Ann Arbor 1943, pp. 499-505.
 3. Harrowby Manuscripts - Parliamentary Diary of Nathaniel Ryder, Document 61.

Grenville then stated that the year's delay had been in order to gather information, and that the tax was necessary to defray the increased cost of defending the colonies and to help solve the economic problems of the mother country after the Seven Years War. He rejected the argument that America should not be taxed because it would cause disturbances there, remarking that all new taxes met initially with opposition and if the Stamp Tax was not enacted for this reason it would lead ultimately to not taxing America at all. Grenville concluded by explaining why the Stamp Act was the most practicable tax that could be enacted.

Beckford replied to Grenville arguing the impropriety of this form of tax. He was the only person to dispute the right of Parliament to tax the colonies and he moved for the Speaker of the House to leave the Chair. He was supported by Barré who stressed the lack of information about the effect of Grenville's previous American measures and by Richard Jackson who argued that in the case of Chester and Durham, Parliament had agreed to their representation in order to tax them. Lord North spoke in favour of Grenville but the opposition was sustained by one of the Townshends and a further speech by Barré.⁴ The Diary in the

4. Ibid. Document 61. For Jackson's speech see The Fitch Papers Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society Vol. XVIII, Hartford Connecticut 1920, p. 316. Richard Jackson to Thomas Fitch 8 February 1765; ibid. p. 320, Jared Ingersoll to Thomas Fitch 11 February 1765. Jackson referred to 34 and 35 Henr VIII, c 13 and 25 Car. II, c 9. The Townshend who spoke against the Bill was either "Spanish" Charles (1728-1810) or Thomas (1701-80) or Thomas (1733-1800) but not Charles (1725-67) who later spoke for the Bill.

Harrowby Manuscripts now becomes more fragmentary but Sir William Meredith, Charles Garth, Rose Fuller, Sir William Baker and Barre⁵, for a third time in the famous speech in which he apostrophised the Americans as "Sons of Liberty" supported Beckford. On the other side Robert Nugent, Charles Townshend and Charles Jenkinson supported Grenville. Ryder's notes are now not full enough to conclude which side Sir Joseph Mawbey, Sir John Gibbons,⁶ William de Grey, and George Dempster⁷ took but other information proves that de Grey supported Grenville and Dempster opposed him.

Ryder's account terminates at this point before the debate had finished but further important information can be gathered from other sources. The only division during the passage of the Stamp Bill was taken in this first debate and this is the only occasion that it is at all possible to gauge the strength of the opposition. Alderman Beckford contending that the Stamp Act would "not go down" in the Colonies moved that the House adjourn. The motion was defeated by 245 votes

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5. This speaker described as "Nugent" by Ryder was Robert Nugent (1709-88) M.P. for Bristol. See "The Stamp Act Crisis: Bristol and Virginia" by W.E. Minchinton in The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography Vol. LXXIII, No. 2, Williamsburg April 1965 p. 148. See also Namier and Brooke The House of Commons Vol III, pp. 218-222.
 6. "De Grey" was giving a legal opinion, thus it is likely to be William de Grey (1719-81) the Solicitor General, who was very probably speaking for the administration. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons Vol. II, pp. 308-309.
 7. Other evidence shows that Dempster both spoke and voted against the Stamp Act on this occasion. See Letters of George Dempster to Sir Adam Fergusson 1756-1813 ed. Sir James Fergusson, London 1934, p. 85. letter of 26 January 1775. See also "Scottish Opinion and the American Revolution" by Dalphy I. Fagerstrom in William and Mary Quarterly Vol. XI, Williamsburg April 1954, p. 256.

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to 49. There is no list preserved naming the minority but they seem to have been mainly those who had connections with the West Indies or America. There is no indication that the supporters of the Rockingham and Newcastle Whigs were particularly strong amongst them.

After the defeat of Beckford's motion for the adjournment on 6 February, Grenville introduced the Stamp Bill itself on 13 February. Parliament refused to hear petitions against the Bill because they were against a money bill and because they cast doubts on the authority of Parliament. A petition from the London merchants trading to America and colonial petitions were thus not heard. When Parliament refused to hear petitions another champion of the colonies, General Conway, emerged to protest against taxing the colonies unheard. His protest

8. Miller op. cit. p. 113 quoting Parliamentary History Vol. XVI, p. 40. See also Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis pp. 67-68. See also The Bowdoin and Temple Papers, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society 6th Series, Vol. IX, Boston 1897, p. 49. Thomas Whately to John Temple 9 February 1765 quoted Gipson op. cit. Vol. X, P. 271.
9. Namier, England in the Age etc p. 240.
10. Their reasons appear to be genuine. See Morgan "Postponement of the Stamp Act" p. 394. In 1733 the House of Commons had agreed not to receive petitions against Money Bills except from the City of London which had special rights. See Precedents and Proceedings in the House of Commons by John Hatsell, London 1818, Vol. III, pp. 230-233, 237-238 Cf. also Commons Journal Vol. XXX, pp. 147-148 and Fitch Papers loc. cit. 333. Jared Ingersoll to Thomas Fitch 6 March 1765. See also "Charles Garth and his Connexions" by L. B. Namier, in English Historical Review Vol. LIV, London 1939 p. 650. Charles Garth to Committee of Correspondence of South Carolina, 17 February 1765. Cf. Sosin op. cit. p. 61.

was, however, unavailing and the Stamp Bill passed to the committee stage where minor amendments were made and without a major division eventually to the House of Lords.¹¹

In the House of Lords there again seems to have been little debate.¹² Indeed in the following year when the Lords repealed the Bill and the minority protested, one of the reasons they gave was that it had passed their House without one dissentient voice.¹³ This might possibly, however, be accounted for by the fact that there was already a constitutional precedent that the House of Lords did not interfere with Money Bills.¹⁴

The evidence presented above is not detailed enough to reach any conclusion on the amount of opposition to the Stamp Act, and evidence of a secondary nature must therefore be considered. Professor Ericson states that the traditional interpretation of the easy passage of the Stamp Act is based on two statements, firstly one by Horace Walpole who refers to "one slight day on the American taxes" and secondly one by Burke in 1774 when he said

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11. Cf. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, pp. 157-192; Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis pp. 68-70. In his Origin of the American Revolution p. 207 Professor Knøllenburg implies there was a second division on one of the petitions offered on 15 February 1765. I have found no other evidence to support this conclusion, however, Knøllenburg would seem to have misinterpreted Ingersoll's words which do not necessarily imply there was a second division. The Commons Journal Vol. xxx, p. 148 does not imply there was a division. Charles Garth did manage to get one amendment in the committee stage. See Namier, "Charles Garth etc" loc. cit. p. 651. Charles Garth to Committee of
12. Correspondence of South Carolina 22 February 1765.
13. Lords Journals Vol. XXXI, pp. 63 67.
14. Ibid. Vol. XXXI, p. 308.

" As to the fact of a strenuous opposition to the Stamp Act, I sat as a stranger in your gallery when the Act was under consideration. Far from anything inflammatory, I never heard a more languid debate in the House. No more but two or three gentlemen, as I remember, spoke against the Act, and that with great reserve and remarkable temper. There was but one division in the whole progress of the Bill, and the minority did not reach more than thirty-nine or forty. In the House of Lords I do not recollect that there was any debate or division at all. I am sure there was no protest. In fact the affair passed with so very little noise, that in town they scarcely knew the nature of what you were doing. The opposition to the Bill in England however could have done this mischief because there scarcely ever was less opposition to a bill of consequence." 15

In his Memoirs, Walpole partly contradicted himself for here he wrote

" When Grenville moved the resolutions, Colonel Barré was the first and almost the single man to oppose them treating severely Charles Townshend who supported the motion. Barré, Alderman Baker and a few more proposed to adjourn the consideration but were defeated by a majority of 245 against 49 after a debate that lasted till nine o'clock. On the fifteenth (February) when the bill was brought in Rose Fuller presented a petition from Jamaica desiring to be heard against it by counsel. This Grenville with heat and haughtiness, opposed, as it was a petition against a money bill. Conway pleaded for receiving the petition showing the distinction between this and taxes laid at home, where the persons to be taxed have representatives with whom they can trust their interests, and who can object to any designed burthens that may be too oppressive. Charles Yorke made a long speech against receiving the petition; but it was in truth a set speech in favour of the bill, and occasionally applied to the petition. The House ill-relishing opposition to a tax which was not to fall on themselves, the petition was rejected and the bill easily passed." 16

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14. See The Law and Customs of the Constitution by Sir W.T. Anson 5th edn. ed. G.M.L. Guyer, Oxford 1922, Vol. I, p. 282.
 15. Ericson loc. cit. p. 489, Walpole Letters ed. Toynbee Vol. VI, p. 187 Walpole to Hertford 12 February 1765. Burke's speech on American taxation, Works. Vol. II, p. 414.
 16. Walpole Memoirs Vol. II, p. 56.

This description does not show that there was a great amount of heated controversy, but the bill does not seem to have encountered abnormally little opposition. Walpole noted particularly that the House rose at nine o'clock whereas another authority noted that the division was taken "about midnight."¹⁷ Rising at either of these times could be a normal days' business, if not slightly longer than usual and the government does seem to have made some attempt to rule colonial petitions out of order. This, it can be concluded does not fully agree with Walpole's statement in his letters or his remark in his Memoirs a few pages earlier where he says with reference to the Stamp Act "This famous bill, little understood here at the time, was less attended to."¹⁸ These statements by Walpole, indicating firstly that the Act was little understood and secondly that the Commons were reluctant to oppose a tax that did not fall on themselves are of particular interest with reference to the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs and will be considered later.

Burke, as Ericson noted, also seems to have contradicted himself.¹⁹ Here the evidence is more concrete, for in the Annual Register for 1765 Burke wrote

17. Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis p. 68. Morgan's "about midnight" is probably drawn from Namier, "Charles Garth etc" p. 650. Garth to the Committee of Correspondence of South Carolina 8 February 1765. Perhaps it is possible to compare this with the sharply contended Cider Duties of 1763 during the course of which 6 divisions were taken. See Parliamentary History Vol. XV, pp. 1307-9.

18. Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis p. 49.

19. Ericson, loc. cit. p. 496.

"It must be owned however, to the honour of parliament that however smoothly the vote concerning the propriety of laying a stamp duty on the colonies might have passed the lower house in the preceding session, the final laying it on in the present was attended with no small debates, both as to the British legislature's right to tax the colonies without their concurrence, and the expediency of exercising that right, if any, for the present purpose; though the petitions questioning the jurisdiction of parliament were not suffered to be read in that house and the agents for the colonies refused to concur in another petition, which might have established a precedent of their being heard on behalf of their respective colonies against the tax." 20

In this Burke seems to show that there was some opposition to the Act. His statement quoted earlier was made later in his career in 1774 and by that time the Rockinghamites non-opposition to the Stamp Act had become part of their political doctrine as a matter of convenience as will be seen later.

After disposing of Walpole's and Burke's statements Mr. Ericson continues by saying that the record of the passage of the Stamp Act through Parliament has to be drawn from accounts in the American press as the Parliamentary History is fragmentary. Ericson states that the various accounts "were contradictory but agreed that considerable opposition
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was voiced within and without Parliament."

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20. See Annual Register Vol. VIII, 1765, p. 34. It is not clear when Burke wrote the Annual Register for 1765 but it would seem to have been after the formation of the Rockingham administration. See Cone op. cit. pp. 58, 59, 82, 83. The point about the expediency in the quotation would seem to support this view. The second petition Burke refers to would seem to be a reference to Grenville's plan that the agents should agree to the taxation of America and thus set a precedent of consultation. Cf. Laprade loc. cit. p. 745. See also "Edmund Burke; a Generation of Scholarship and Discovery" by Donald C. Bryant in The Journal of British Studies Vol. II, no. 1, Hartford, Connecticut 1962 p. 103.
21. Ericson loc. cit. pp. 493-4 who quotes London Evening Post January 15-17, 24-26, 26-29 as evidence of this. See also The Preliminaries of the American Revolution in the English Press 1763-1775 by F. J. Hinkhouse, London 1923 pp. 52.

Ericson's contentions are to a large extent supported by Professor Laprade who first of all takes Burke's statement in the Annual Register and comments that the opposition to the Stamp Act was not as little as is generally supposed to. Secpndly, Professor Laprade states that while the bill was on its way through Parliament the opposition, especially from interested circles in the City, became more emphatic, and notes that when Grenville asked if anybody objected to the right of Parliament to tax the colonies

"The members with mercantile connections, who realised and were disquieted by the probable consequences of the measure may not have replied on this point realising the futility of their opposition....Beckford later insisted he spoke against the bill." 22

With regard to the American press it is obvious that the correspondents of the American newspapers would like their readers to believe they opposed to the best of their ability what they knew was going to be an unpopular measure, and the opposition was more likely to be reported there than in England.

There is also a degree of conflict in the reports on the debates given by Americans at the time. Benjamin Franklin noted that the debate was less heated than many turnpike bills, Jared Ingersoll wrote two reports in one of which he stated that the opposition was chiefly from absentee West India planters and members connected with the colonies and

22. See Laprade op. cit. pp. 746-7.
 23. The Writings of Benjamin Franklin ed. A. H. Smythe, New York, 1906, Vol. IV, p. 390.

" A few of the heads of the minority who were sure to thwart and oppose the ministry in every measure of what nature or kind so-ever. I say except those few persons so circumstanced there are scarce any People here, either within doors or without, but what approve the measure now taken with regard to America." 24

In a second report Ingersoll gave a full account of the first debate and commented on Barre's famous speech

" These sentiments were thrown out so entirely without premeditation, so forceably and so firmly, and the breaking off so beautifully abrupt, that the whole house sat awhile as amazed, intently looking and without answering a word."

He however, concluded his report with the figures for the division and the comment

" The truth is I believe some who inclined rather against the Bill voted for it, partly because they are loth to break the Measures of the Ministry, and partly because they don't undertake to inform themselves in the fullest manner upon the subject." 25

As noted above many speakers against the Act on 6 February 1765 had connections with either the American or West Indian colonies. William Beckford, Rose Fuller, Charles Garth, Sir William Baker and Sir William Meredith may be quoted as examples. There is no evidence, however, that points to any organisation of opposition by the Newcastle group, although Ingersoll perhaps associated Baker's speech with that of a member of a systematic opposition. Mr. Steven Watson suggests

24. See "A Collection of the Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Jared Ingersoll" ed. F.B. Dexter in Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society Vol. IX, New Haven 1918 p. 317.

25. Fitch Papers op. cit. p. 317 et seq Jared Ingersoll to Thomas Fitch 11 February 1765.

26. I refer here to Ingersoll's reference to " a few of the Heads of the minority who were sure to thwart and oppose the ministry, in every measure of what nature or kind what so-ever." See above p. and n. 25.

that there was an organised opposition or constitutional grounds and that Rockingham personally declared opposition to the Stamp Act.²⁷ The reports on the debates do not substantiate the first statement and I can find no evidence to support the second. If Rockingham did oppose the Stamp Act it is an extremely important fact but it is not consistent with his behaviour in the autumn and winter of 1765-1766 when he was seeking information and considering what attitude to adopt towards the Act.²⁸

Ericson asks why, if the opposition was so great as he believes it to have been it was so soon forgotten and offers reasons for this. Firstly he suggests that the opposition became "confused with the rather divided stand of the Old Whig group."²⁹ Newcastle, Ericson states, was anxious to alienate neither the American nor the West Indian merchants and cites Dr. Sutherland and Winstanley in support of this statement.³⁰ This theory conflicts directly with the evidence presented above that opposition to the Stamp Act was coming from both West Indian and North American interests.³¹ The Act would hit both North American and West Indian merchants and was one of the few measures which they could possibly unite against. Thus it seems probable that the co-operation

27. Steven Watson op. cit. p. 106.

28. See below pp. 326-366.

29. Ericson loc. cit. p. 494.

30. Ibid. p. 494. Cf. Sutherland loc. cit. pp. 50, 54-55, 58, Winstanley op. cit. pp. 214, 218.

31. See above pp. 256-258.

between the two groups of merchants at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis began in February 1765, and this was the first sign of the breaking down of the antipathy between them. Had he been able to organise a whole-hearted opposition it is reasonable to believe that Newcastle could have secured a compromise between the two groups.

A more likely explanation for the equivocal attitude of the Newcastle Whigs is that their leaders were unwilling to allow a topic advocated by the "zealous young men" to become a major issue in opposition policy. This, in any case, was a time when the organisation of opposition was weak.³²

Grenville's proposals were probably "little understood" by the majority of the Newcastle Whigs, as Walpole notes. No doubt members knew that if the Americans did not provide additional revenue they themselves would have to find it, and therefore they would be a little wary of opposition to the Stamp Act. Thus if they were *dis*organised the Rockingham Whigs would probably have preferred to forget the episode.

On 19 March 1765 Onslow wrote to Newcastle saying that Pitt was "not without his complaints of the American tax not being sufficiently objected to this year."³³ Ericson cites this as evidence of the divided stand of the Newcastle - Rockingham group. The precise wording should be noted.

32. See Winstanley op. cit. pp. 216-217. See above p. 231.

33. B. M. Add. Mss. 32966 f69 Onslow to Newcastle 19 March 1765.

The word "sufficiently" suggests that there was at least some opposition and Pitt's comments would seem to mean that what little opposition there was, was not developed to the extent it could have been. There is no evidence in Newcastle's correspondence of any planned opposition to the Stamp Act. He, personally, did not reject a Stamp Duty out of hand for he had considered one in 1756 and 1757.³⁴ One is therefore led to the tentative conclusion that the "zealous young men" of the Newcastle - Rockingham group considered the Stamp Act as a possible subject for opposition and began to use this topic. Finding they were not getting the necessary support from the traditional leaders of the party they dropped the issue although a few of the more extreme of the group at Wildman's carried on their opposition to the bitter end.

It seems extremely unlikely that the reason why the subject was not developed to the full was the division of mercantile interests. What seems more likely is a division of opinion among the Whig leaders. Charles Yorke, an important supporter of Newcastle was in favour of the bill. If the Rockingham administration were later forced to pass the Declaratory Act partly because of his scruples over repeal they were more likely to give way on what was a very minor matter in deference to his opinion.³⁵ Thus Morgan points out

34. For this see Jared Ingersoll A Study in American Loyalism in Relation to British Colonial Government by L. H. Gipson, New Haven, U. S. A. 1920 p. 116. See also "English Stamp Duties 1664-1764" by Edward Hughes in English Historical Review Vol. LVI, London 1942, pp. 234-264.

35. For Charles Yorke and the Stamp Act Repeal see below p. 361. For his support of the Stamp Act see The Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke by Sir George Harris. London 1847, Vol. III

the opposition had insufficient solidarity to force a straight vote on the Act and could only force a division on whether to adjourn the debate and Ritcheson suggests that with the growing reaction to Grenville's American measures of 1764 there was a growing conviction that the Imperial Parliament should demonstrate its right to tax the colonies in a very positive manner.³⁶

Ericson's second reason for the fact that the opposition to the Stamp Act was so soon forgotten is that the Rockingham group were willing to allow the story of their opposition to go by default in order to establish an excuse for so soon repealing the Stamp Act. This, states Ericson, they secured on the plea that Grenville had hurried the bill through before the members had "opportunity to inform themselves on the head."³⁷ At first sight this argument might appear to be illogical because a party which stated that it had always opposed the Act would seem to be in a far stronger position to repeal it than one that did not. In fact it is not so. If the opposition to the Act was at the best half-hearted and the party divided, Rockingham and his colleagues when in power, might have been asked the awkward question of why they had not opposed the Act more and the unfortunate division in their party could have easily have become an effective

36. Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis p.68 Ritcheson loc.cit. p. 557. See also Namier, "Charles Garth etc" loc.cit. p.650. Charles Garth to Committee of Correspondence of South Carolina 17 February 1765.

37. Ericson loc.cit. p.494 quoting Considerations on the American Stamp Act and the Ministers who planned it London, 1765.

weapon for the Grenvilleites. Rockingham and his supporters moreover, did not become interested in the question of the expediency of the Act until they were actually in power. At the beginning of 1765 they were interested only in the subjects which appeared theoretically good for opposition and with which they could hope to worry the government. Very few people in England at the beginning of 1765 could have realised that the Stamp Act was to become a major constitutional political and economic issue.

Professor Laprade summarises the position with regard to Parliament most succinctly. He writes

"Parliament assembled in January 1765 in a vastly different atmosphere from that in which it had adjourned in the previous spring. True, the dismissal of General Conway from his army post for his votes on general warrants had insured the meddlesome activity of Thomas Walpole against the ministry. But Charles Townshend and Charles Yorke, being young men in a hurry were seeking the greener⁷ pastures of ministerial power. Legge, Hardwicke and Devonshire had died, Shelburne was on a honeymoon, Pitt had quit the fight ill and disgruntled, and could not be induced by Newcastle to come forward. A suggestion that a weekly paper would help the cause found Almon willing to publish, but no one to write except the ineffective Walpole. This total dissolution of organised opposition did not mean a corresponding increase in the strength of the ministry though it did mean, as always in the eighteenth century that, lacking influential means to lend weight or influence to the other side, the support of ministerial proposals was usually overwhelming. Under these circumstances, when forty-nine members of the House of Commons divided against the Stamp Act in committee it is a misinterpretation of the facts to conclude there was little opposition to it." 38

38. Laprade op. cit. p. 744.

It is therefore more just to conclude that there was nobody to rally opposition, rather than there was no opposition.

Outside Parliament and the Newcastle and Rockingham Whig group there appears to have been considerably more opposition to the Stamp Act. The Gentleman's Magazine describes the Act as the bill "that has been so warmly agitated without doors."³⁹ Opposition was great enough for pamphlets to be written to defend the Act.⁴⁰ The agents met with Grenville to protest against the bill and they did not work without the aid of the American merchants. Barlow Trecothick, who was to be so important later as Chairman of the Committee of London Merchants during the Stamp Act Crisis, was chairman of a committee of merchants that worked against the passing of the Stamp Act.⁴¹ As Morgan points out, the colonial non-importation movement after the Sugar Act of 1764, combined with the depression after the Seven Years War was making itself felt in England, but though they were generally opposed to the Stamp Tax the merchants had not yet become sufficiently alarmed to mobilise and concert their opposition.⁴²

39. Gentleman's Magazine Vol. XXX, London 1765, pp. 188-189. Ericson loc. cit. p. 496.

40. See Ericson loc. cit. pp. 500-502.

41. Ericson loc. cit. p. 497. See also my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 27 where Trecothick's activities are treated in detail Cf. Jensen op. cit. p. 127. Morgan op. cit. pp. 63-64. For the work of the agents see also Namier "Charles Garth etc" loc. cit. pp. 649-652 Charles Garth to Committee of Correspondence of South Carolina 8 February 1765, same to same 17 February 1765, same to same 22 February 1765.

42. Morgan The Stamp Act Crisis p. 63.

Jasper Mauduit reported in January 1765 "the merchants talk
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 much but cannot bring themselves to Act." On 11 February
 Jared Ingersoll reported, however,

"The merchants in London are alarmed at these things;
 they have had a meeting with the agents and are about
 to petition Parliament upon the Acts that respect
 the trade of North America." 44

There is no evidence, however, that either the merchants
 or the agents were concerting their plan of campaign with
 either Rockingham and Newcastle and the rest of the group.
 Indeed, there was no reason why the agents and merchants should
 co-operate with the parliamentary opposition. There was at
 this time no tradition of co-operation between the American
 and mercantile interests and the Rockingham Whigs and it was
 not an auspicious time to begin such co-operation while they
 were in opposition. Success was more likely to be achieved
 by petitioning the actual government in power. Ericson
 concludes by saying

" The evidence presented in this paper does not prove
 opposition to the Stamp Act in 1764-5 equal to that
 made in 1765-66. Neither the Americans, nor their
 merchant allies in Britain were as skilled in propaganda
 as they were soon to be. It is possible that the
 opposition by riot, boycotting and political protest was
 so striking after the summer of 1765 that the more
 normal protests of the former writers sank into the
 background of mens' memories. Both Grenvilleites and

43. Massachusetts Archives Vol. XXIII, p.426 quoted Morgan,
The Stamp Act Crisis p.63.

44. Fitch Papers op. cit. p.326. Jared Ingersoll to Thomas Fitch
 11 February 1765. On 15 February Rose Fuller did attempt
 to present a petition against the Act from the London
 merchants trading to America. See Fitch Papers op. cit.
 p.332. Jared Ingersoll to Thomas Fitch 6 March 1765. For
 these petitions see also Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 147
 where no London petition is mentioned but one from
 "Persons trading to and interested in the Island of Jamaica"
 which perhaps Fuller might have presented.

Old Whigs were willing to allow the facts to be suppressed. Historians have too frequently quoted a few statements tending to prove that there was little dissension. However the most significant agitation was probably that made in committee meetings, private interviews, and activities outside Parliament.... Especially important was the aid secured (by the agents) from such men as Trecothick and Fuller, who were to be the key men in the movement for the repeal of the Act they had sought to prevent. Even the deprecatory list of opposing forces showed a respectable number of political and economic leaders on America's side. It seems clear that the old Whig party did not come out in full force against the Act; but this does not prove lack of activity on the part of the 'friends of America'.... The evidence on the whole supports the contention that a large number of influential Britons felt that a significant innovation in colonial policy was being made and that they made vigorous opposition to it." 45

As far as the Newcastle Whigs were concerned this was not an episode during which they co-operated whole-heartedly with the mercantile classes. Nor was it an episode from which they learned a great deal which was to be of value in the future. Nor would it seem that the Rockingham administration took office with any preconceived notions on the correctness of the American Stamp Act. They did not have or evolve any policy on American measures at the time of the passing of the Stamp Act. The Newcastle Whigs did not come out whole-heartedly against the Act because leadership was lacking and as in 1764 there was a division of opinion among the upper ranks of the group. Newcastle and his intimate friends were sceptical of the group at Wildman's

45. Ericson loc. cit. pp. 504-505.

and of any initiative coming from them. Yet some of the group of Wildman's who indulged in opposition primarily to embarrass the government must have known of the opposition the agents and the merchants were making. Because of the lack of evidence one cannot deduce any co-operation between the two groups, but at the end of 1765 when they were in dire need of support Rockingham and his colleagues probably remembered the activities of Trecothick and his friends at the time of the passing of the Stamp Act and realised such support was now invaluable to them.

C. THE 1765 BUDGET AND THE PASSING OF THE AMERICAN
MUTINY AND QUARTERING ACT.

Shortly after the failure of the opposition on the Stamp Act, Newcastle twice wrote expressing dissatisfaction because of the lack of opposition to Grenville's 1765 Budget. Newcastle was particularly dissatisfied with the performance of Sir William Baker whom he believed had sufficient technical knowledge of finance to launch a full-scale attack on Grenville's "plans of oeconomy."¹

Baker was probably restrained by reasons similar to those that had handicapped him in the previous year.² Moreover, Newcastle's correspondence betrays no evidence of any attempt to organise any opposition to Grenville's 1765 budget. This suggests that the factors that had weakened the opposition to the passing of the Stamp Act were still operating. At the same time, however, Newcastle's supporters do seem to have been making a conscious attempt to gain the support of the City when they supported in Parliament a City petition for the rebuilding of London Bridge on 17 March 1765.³

On 1 April 1765, however, the Newcastle Whigs succeeded in arousing themselves on the American Mutiny Bill. Baker was in the van of the opposition and the clause which was most attacked was that which allowed troops to be quartered in

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1. B.M. Add. Mss. 32966 f103 Newcastle to Onslow 26 March 1765; ibid. f111 Newcastle to Rockingham 26 March 1765.
 2. See above pp. 245-247.
 3. B.M. Add. Mss. 32966 f55 Onslow to Newcastle 17 March 1765; ibid. f79 Newcastle to Onslow 21 March 1765.

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 private houses. This was a cause that was dear to the
 Newcastle Whigs for it involved the freedom of the subject
 as much as either the Wilkes case or the Cider Duties had done.
 Moreover the North American merchants led by Barlow Trecothick
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 were active in opposing this measure. Although there is no
 evidence to suggest that there was co-operation between these
 opposition groups, each group must have been aware that the
 other was working towards the same end and this probably made
 the coalescence of the two groups at the time of the Stamp Act
 Crisis easier.⁴ The incident provides another interesting
 parallel with the Stamp Act. The two groups were again
 working independently to "oppose a measure." Their efforts
 were again unsuccessful. When the two groups united in early
 1766 and Newcastle's party was in power they were successful.

4. Ibid. f136 Onslow to Newcastle '8 Monday night' (1 April 1765)
 5. See my Barlow Trecothick etc p.29. See also George Grenville
 to Welbore Ellis 27 April 1765 printed in Additional
 Grenville Papers ed. John R.G. Thomlinson, Manchester 1962,
 p.266.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ROCKINGHAM WHIGS COME TO POWER.

A) NEWCASTLE AND ROCKINGHAM 1762-1765.

During the period which encompasses the rise and development of Wildman's Club and the attempted opposition on American affairs Newcastle did not neglect established lines of attack on the government, nor did he neglect to try to conciliate his mercantile supporters in the usual way. Newcastle sought their help in elections and they were in turn rewarded with seats in the House of Commons. There were two notable examples of this in 1764. On the death of Frazer Honeywood, the member for Steyning, Sir William Baker advised Richard Fuller to seek the support of Honeywood's heir, Sir John Honeywood, and stand for that borough. Sir John agreed and Fuller's candidature was successful. Fuller, a banker, originally in partnership with Frazer Honeywood was a considerable speculator in government stock. He received Newcastle's whole-hearted support and West commented to Newcastle about Fuller and his business

"As the correspondence of the shop is very great having the draught of the Bristol banks, the very postage of their letters would amount to near £800 per annum and it is otherwise thought to be of great service to the House to have one of the partners in Parliament. Sir William Baker was one of the first promoters and has great influence over our Fuller." 1

1. B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f320 West to Newcastle 31 January 1764; ibid. f426 John Butler to Rev. Hurdis 10 February 1764; ibid. f434 Newcastle to Lord John Cavendish 11 February 1764. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p.477. Richard Fuller does not appear to have been related to Rose Fuller.

It was, however, not sufficient for a merchant merely to recommend a friend for in August 1764 when Sir George Colebrooke endeavoured to bring into Parliament a Sussex friend, Mr. Wicker, Newcastle received the suggestion with hostility and reported to another Sussex correspondent "all that Sir George Colebrooke could say could not réconcile me with Mr. Wicker." Wicker never seems to have entered Parliament and the case shows that if Newcastle was willing to go out of his way to oblige his mercantile friends he was discriminating in the choice of candidates he allowed them to make.²

Newcastle tried to keep the City financiers loyal to his cause and to embarrass the government financially through their loyalty to him. On 4 November 1763 he wrote to Devonshire that the "City was more determined than ever" to oppose.³ On 18 January 1764 financial affairs appear in a memorandum for discussion by the party leaders. By 25 February 1764, immediately after the opposition had run the government so close on the Wilkes issue, Newcastle was considering financial affairs as an important topic for opposition.⁴ When the heat of this Parliamentary session was over and during the summer

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2. B. M. Add. Mss. 32961 f32 Sir George Colebrooke to Newcastle 3 August 1764; ibid. f44 Newcastle to Colebrooke 4 August 1764 ibid. f204 Newcastle to John Page 13 August 1764.
3. B. M. Add. Mss 32952 f285 Newcastle to Devonshire 4 November 1763
4. B. M. Add. Mss. 32955 f230 "Considerations for the Company this day" 18 January 1764; ibid. f104 Newcastle to Charles Townshend 25 February 1764. See above p.218.

recess Newcastle tried to keep in contact with his mercantile followers and still hoped to embarrass the administration through the financiers.⁵

Newcastle was not the only leader of the party who cherished this hope, for on 30 April 1764 Charles Townshend wrote to Newcastle concerning opposition policy in the next session of Parliament and suggested, among other things, that

"Sir William Baker should be desired to put the City in motion, both as an example to other counties and as the attack nearest home."⁶

In September 1764 Newcastle was worried about the results that the promotion of Dr. Hay would have among his supporters,⁷ and as late as March 1765 Onslow reported to Newcastle

"I hear from unprejudiced people that he (Grenville) has got no credit in the City and is thought there to govern by Amyand and Cust. Baker persists in it that he has shown himself ignorant and mistaken."⁸

By this time, however, Newcastle seems to have had doubts about the loyalty of the financiers for he replied to Onslow

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5. B. M. Add. Mss. 32958 f154 Sir William Baker to Newcastle 17 April 1764; ibid. f236 Newcastle to Charles Townshend 29 April 1764; B. M. Add. Mss. 32960 f328 Thomas Walpole to Newcastle 19 July 1764; ibid. f337 Newcastle to Sir George Colebrooke 20 July 1764; ibid. f390 Newcastle to Thomas Walpole 25 July 1764; ibid. f466 Newcastle to Sir George Colebrooke 31 July 1764
 6. B. M. Add. Mss. 32958 f260 Charles Townshend to Newcastle 'Monday evening' (30 April 1764)
 7. B. M. Add. Mss. 32962 f53 Newcastle to Rockingham 8 September 1765. For the promotion of Dr. Hay see above pp. 221-225.
 8. B. M. Add. Mss. 32966 f55 Onslow to Newcastle 17 March 1765. For George Amyand (1720-63) and Peregrine Cust (1723-85) as financiers who supported Grenville see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 20-21, 291-293.

"I see Mr. Grenville's credit gains every day notwithstanding Sir William Baker's private opinion that he is ignorant and mistaken." 9

This is a convenient point to turn aside and comment on the policy that Newcastle had adopted towards the City financiers ever since his fall from power. While he was at the Treasury, Newcastle, as noted above, had forged strong links with the City financiers and had been careful to maintain their friendship, for in an age when the government relied on private loans in advance to underwrite its expenditure for the current year the friendship of the City bankers and financiers was a valuable asset. These financiers were of two chief types. Firstly, there were officials of the Bank of England and other great chartered companies such as the East India and South Sea Companies which had close links with the government. Secondly, there were the owners of and partners in the great private banking houses, men like Sir George Colebrooke and Sir Joshua Vanneck. 10

When Newcastle went out of office he persistently tried to maintain the loyalty of both classes of financiers in the hope of financially embarrassing the new government, and thus eventually, it is reasonable to suppose, forcing himself and his friends back into office as the only men who could possibly negotiate a loan. 11

9. B. M. Add. Mss. 32966 f79 Newcastle to Onslow 21 March 1765. Newcastle seems to have had a more accurate idea of the situation than Baker. See B. M. Add. Mss. 38404 f175 Joseph Salvadore to Charles Jenkinson 1 April 1765 printed Jucker op. cit. pp. 352-353.

10. See above pp. 81-82.

11. See Namier Structure of Politics p. 58. See also Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 235-237.

This policy was foredoomed to failure. Newcastle failed to realise that the Bank of England was bound by the very nature of its constitution to be in close alliance with the government in power as were also the chartered companies, who depended both on the government and on the Bank of England.¹² Moreover, lending money to the government, was to the great bankers, more a matter of business than of politics; they depended upon government contracts and the loans they could make for their livelihood. To rely on their support was thus to a great extent bound to be unsuccessful. Dr. Sutherland has pointed out how "each Treasury in turn took pains to forge its personal links with monied interests in the City."¹³ It thus seems fair to criticise Newcastle for embarking on what appears to have been futile tactics. With his long experience of politics and particularly his knowledge of the working of the Treasury it seems reasonable to conclude that he would at least have some understanding of the allegiance of the financiers. However, due to the peculiar circumstances of Pitt's relations with the merchants, his own with the City financiers and the split in mercantile opinion in the City of London, Newcastle had secured the downfall of the Pitt-Devonshire administration of 1756-7 partly through his

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12. For the close alliance of the Bank of England, the great Chartered Companies and the government see Sutherland The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics p. 23 et seq. also The Bank of England, A History by Sir John Clapham, Cambridge 1950, Vol. I, 1694-1797, 1944 pp. 53-104.
13. See Sutherland "The City of London in Eighteenth Century Politics" op. cit. p. 58.

alliance with the City financiers. Perhaps in 1762 he thought he could do the same again. It is true that after the end of 1762 these tactics cease to loom as large in Newcastle's plans for opposition but it can be seen that he still had faint hopes of using them until the formation of the Rockingham administration. It seems that he was becoming more interested in maintaining the financiers as potential allies when the Newcastle Whigs returned to office rather than embarrassing the administration.

In 1763 and 1764 Newcastle also tried to rally opposition when the government made, what he considered to be, unwarranted dismissals. This policy can be seen when Major General A^c Court and General Conway were dismissed in December 1763 and April 1764 and also on the rumoured dismissals of Philip Honeywood, Sir John Griffin and General Conway in December 1763.

The only new tactic for opposition suggested in this period came not from Newcastle but from Charles Townshend. On 30 April 1764 when he was reviewing the prospects for opposition Townshend suggested the setting up of a daily

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14. Sutherland "The City of London and the Devonshire Pitt Administration" loc. cit. passim See also Sutherland "The City of London in Eighteenth Century Politics" op. cit. p. 56.
15. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32954 f76 Newcastle to Albemarle 19 December 1763; ibid. f122 Newcastle to Devonshire 21 December 1763; ibid. f237 Newcastle to Devonshire 27 December 1763; Ibid. f223 George Onslow to Newcastle 26 December 1763; B.M. Add. Mss. 32955 f130 Newcastle to Albemarle 10 January 1764; B.M. Add. Mss. 32958 f192 Newcastle to Charles Townshend 21 April 1764; ibid. f218 George Onslow to Newcastle 26 April 1764; ibid. f220 Newcastle to Legge 26 April 1764; ibid. f236 Newcastle to Townshend 29 April 1764; For William A^c Court see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-90 Vol. II, p. 5 for Philip Honeywood see ibid. pp. 635-636 for Sir John Griffin see ibid. Vol. II, pp. 553-555.

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opposition newspaper. This plan was taken up to a certain extent by Newcastle but he never tried it as whole-heartedly

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as he did the more traditional tactics. Moreover in 1764

Newcastle was not only preoccupied with traditional opposition policies but also perturbed by his traditional fear of an

investigation into his organisation of Treasury finance during

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the Seven Years War.

Thus when negotiations which were to lead to the formation of the first Rockingham administration were set on foot in

1765, Newcastle had been out of power for almost exactly three years. Immediately after his dismissal he had tried to

embarrass the administration by seeking to maintain the

loyalty of the government financiers. At first this policy

was used to persuade Bute that Newcastle was essential to an

administration. It had succeeded with the Pitt-Devonshire

19

administration. After optimism about the success of this policy

Newcastle had gradually lapsed into opposition to the government.

The failure of his policy was hastened because the administration

were able to conclude peace and emphasised by the traditional

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loyalty of the financiers to the government in power.

Newcastle was thus forced to search around for other

16. B. M. Add. Mss. 32958 f260 Townshend to Newcastle 30 April 1764.
See above p.

17. B. M. Add. Mss. 32958 f311 Newcastle to Cumberland 5 May 1764;
B. M. Add. Mss. 32959 f125 Newcastle to Legge 27 May 1764; see
also Laprade loc. cit. p. 744 quoted above p. 269.

18. See Newcastle's correspondence with Barrington in B. M.
Add. Mss. 32955 and 32957.

19. See above pp. 129-137.

20. See above pp. 138-142 and

means of opposition. He tried to use the peace terms and the dismissal of the Duke of Devonshire. His efforts failed because of the reluctance of the other members of the Whig hierarchy to enter into a full-scale opposition. The pleas of Hardwicke and Yorke for "consistency" and "moderation" can usually be ascribed to their fear of promoting an opposition that could be described as factious and tainted with disloyalty to the Crown.²¹ Newcastle sought support from the hierarchy of his own party, or through alliance with the leaders of another Whig group rather than trusting in the younger and more violent members of his own party.²² Thus the most successful attack on the government in 1763 was the attack on the Cider Duties when Newcastle had the support of Pitt.²³ But the general lack of success of Newcastle's tactics may be seen in the fact that he was nearest returning to power when his opposition was at its lowest ebb.²⁴

When Wildman's club was formed there was a growing breach between Newcastle and the "zealous young men" of his party because Newcastle was reluctant to trust them and sought support elsewhere.²⁵ How small a part he played in the formation of Wildman's club demonstrates how much Newcastle was restrained by the rest of the Whig hierarchy.²⁶ Yet how much this organisation needed his support is shown by the fact that

21. See above p. 182 et. seq.

22. See above p. 183 et. seq.

23. See above pp. 179-181.

24. See above p. 183.

25. See above pp. 205-206.

26. See above pp. 196-210.

Wildman's was nearest to success over the Wilkes issue and on this they had the full support of Newcastle.²⁷ This success was not followed up and because of weaknesses in leadership and divisions in opinion the club was unable adequately to attack Grenville's American measures of 1764 and 1765. This exemplifies the paralysing effect of the divided stand of Newcastle and other members of the party hierarchy.²⁸

Thus in late 1764 and early 1765 the rift between Newcastle and the "zealous young men" continued to grow. Mutual suspicion was increased particularly by the "Dr. Hay affair."²⁹ In the middle of 1765 Newcastle was no longer able to bridge this gap. There was only one man who could; this was Rockingham.

In October 1761 Newcastle had regarded Rockingham as an important local territorial magnate,³⁰ but as Newcastle's position weakened after the fall of Pitt and he did all in his power to rally the dwindling number of his supporters, his contact with Rockingham increased. In a world where Newcastle felt his power to be slipping away from him it was perhaps natural that he should look to Rockingham because he wielded more power than any of the other Whig Lords and because it was essential to maintain the loyalty of Yorkshire to the Old Whig cause. In the final crisis that led to

27. See above pp. 214-216.

28. See above pp. 238-254.

29. See above pp. 221-225.

30. See above pp. 193-198.

Newcastle's resignation he kept in close contact with the young Marquis, informing him of events and it is indicative of his attempts to maintain Rockingham's loyalty, that one of Newcastle's last acts at the Treasury was to secure certain appointments which Rockingham wanted. This suggests that Rockingham was becoming more than a local territorial magnate.

When Newcastle hesitated on the brink of opposition in 1762 after his resignation, Rockingham's importance increased. Because of the disgust in Yorkshire over the Peace of Paris Rockingham was able to identify himself with the manoeuvres of Newcastle in opposing the peace. It was perhaps fortunate that Newcastle decided to oppose the peace otherwise both he and Rockingham would have found embarrassing the speeches of Savile and Armytage which were representative of the discontent in Yorkshire. Rockingham was thus able to strengthen his position in the Old Whig party while adopting a policy that was popular with his Yorkshire supporters.

When in December 1762 Rockingham resigned his post of Lord of the Bedchamber and was subsequently dismissed from his Lord-lieutenancy he had concerted measures with Newcastle and he was one of the "Pelhamite Innocents". These events were followed by a spontaneous outburst of support in

31. See above p. 126. See also B.M. Add. Mss. 32938 f291 Rockingham to Newcastle 15 May 1762; ibid. f427 Newcastle to Rockingham 24 May 1762.

32. See "The Rockingham Connection and County Opinion in the Early Years of George III" by C. Collyer in Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical Society (Literary and Historical Section) Vol. VII, part IV, Leeds 1955, pp. 251-268.

Yorkshire which were heightened by the management of the demonstrations by Rockingham's agents, particularly in the Rockingham Club at York.³³ His power in Yorkshire and allegiance to Newcastle was again clearly shown in 1763 when Yorkshire presented no Address of Thanks for the Peace of Paris.³⁴

In the following years while Newcastle's power declined Rockingham strengthened his position in the party. While the Old Whig hierarchy was restraining Newcastle in opposition Rockingham was able to identify himself with the "zealous young men."

It was Rockingham at the meeting of 23 December 1762 who gave into the idea of a club, and he was able to do this it seems, without arousing the displeasure of the hierarchy,³⁵ although there was an attempt to restrain him at this time.³⁶ In 1763 and 1764 Rockingham was again able to maintain authority over the "zealous young men" without incurring the displeasure of the Old Whig hierarchy. Several reasons may be offered for this. To some extent his vehemence may have been excused because of his youth, he was often absent in Yorkshire and was thus inaccessible to the rest of the leaders while Newcastle continually embroiled himself in controversies. Moreover Rockingham already had a reputation for disinterestedness in politics,³⁷ and he also pursued the recognised lines of opposition. He was for instance instrumental in securing the support of Pitt in the agitation

33. Ibid. pp. 258-260.

35. See above p. 2165.

37. See above pp. 195-1976. }

34. Ibid. pp. 260-261.

36. See above p. 187.

against the Cider Duties.

As the breach between Newcastle and Wildman's widened Rockingham became more important as a mediator. Dr. Sutherland has noted that it was Wildman's that helped to gain the support of the mercantile classes for the first Rockingham administration and Rockingham was in a fortunate position at this time. Secure in Newcastle's good will he was able at the same time to exercise a restraining influence and leadership over the "Wildman's Group". Rockingham was not afraid of men like Sir William Baker whose outspoken opposition Newcastle found embarrassing and moreover Rockingham was being consulted by the "Wildman's Group" whereas Newcastle was not. At the beginning of 1765 Rockingham was co-operating closely with the group at Wildman's in organising the opposition for the coming session of Parliament.

Everything was thus beginning to point to him as the next leader of the Old Whigs. The deaths of Hardwicke, Legge and Devonshire had not only removed Rockingham's rivals but made Newcastle lean more heavily upon him. Perhaps he was diffident and of mediocre ability and he may have desired to

38. See above p. 113.

39. Sutherland "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Administration" loc. cit. p. 150.

40. Guttridge The Early Career of Lord Rockingham p. 31.

41. See above pp. 229-240. See also B.M. Add. Mss. 32965 f10 Rockingham to Newcastle 2 January 1765; ibid. f28 Rockingham to Newcastle 3 January 1765; ibid. f36 Onslow to Newcastle 4 January 1765.

42. The traditional view of Rockingham's indifference towards politics and mediocre abilities is still accepted by most authorities. See for instance Steven Watson op. cit. p. 113 and the introduction to Vol. IV of The Correspondence of Edmund Burke ed. John A. Woods, Cambridge 1963. Part of

be neither a party leader nor a national politician but the fact that he represented the aristocratic Whig principles of the Newcastle group, his associations in Yorkshire and his gift of "reconciling individuals and inspiring devotion among a group"⁴³ drove him into the party leadership. As Burke wrote for Rockingham's epitaph, he

"far exceeded all other statesmen in the art of drawing together, without the seduction of self-interest, the concurrence and co-operation of various dispositions and abilities of men whom he assimilated to his character and associated in his labours." 44

In 1765 the Duke of Cumberland thus found him the only alternative to Grenville, and in selecting Rockingham as leader of a ministry clarified Rockingham's position as leader of a party and made him a national politician. This event was supremely important for Newcastle's successor had to be not only a man able to secure the allegiance of a party but also a man who had at least some experience in the art of government.

42, (contd) the intention of this thesis is to challenge this notion, see above p. 2, but it is not on the other hand maintained that Rockingham was full of enthusiasm for politics or a politician of genius. The connection of this diffidence with Rockingham's health is dealt with below p. 294.

43. Collyer, "The Rockingham Connection etc" loc. cit. p. 261.

44. Quoted Albemarle op. cit. Vol. II, p. 245.

B) THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST ROCKINGHAM ADMINISTRATION.

In July 1765 Rockingham did not begin his term of office with his own mercantile following. This support had to be painstakingly built up through the Stamp Act Crisis and the succeeding commercial measures.¹ When he came to power he was young and inexperienced but he gained recognition as leader of the Newcastle Whigs and when it became obvious that Rockingham was to be first minister he inherited from Newcastle certain commercial connections. In the formation of the ministry one can trace a certain "formal donation" of mercantile supporters from Newcastle to his successors, and Newcastle, who had determined to remain in the background, passed on to Rockingham the commercial and financial support that remained to him after the years of opposition.

No claim can be made however, that Rockingham came to power with the unanimous backing of the mercantile classes. It must, for example, be noticed that the Grenville administration was not without its own commercial backing and on 7 July 1765 Lord Hyde wrote to George Grenville that

"Many monied men and merchants (among others Mr. Harley) grieve at your intended removal." 2

1. See below pp. 326-409.

2. See The Grenville Papers (Being the Correspondence of Richard Grenville, Earl Temple K.C. and Right Hon. George Grenville) ed. W.J. Smith, London 1853, p. 69. For Thomas Harley (1730-1804) see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 586-588. He was the fourth son of Edward Harley, 3rd Earl of Oxford. A wine merchant, he spoke for general warrants yet voted against them. He voted against the Cider Duties and also against the repeal of the Stamp Act. In 1768 he became Lord Mayor of London.

Moreover, Grenville's wife recorded in her diary for Friday 19 July 1765 that

"The Governors of the Bank came to Mr. Grenville, said they did it as a mark of respect, that they sincerely lamented his dismissal and could never do business with any man with the same ease that they had done it with him." 3

To understand the way in which Rockingham achieved high office and gained Mercantile support before the Stamp Act Crisis it is necessary to trace the development of the negotiations begun by the Duke of Cumberland in early May 1765 to restore Pitt and Newcastle to power. In the early days of these negotiations the group at Wildman's, in which the mercantile element led by Sir William Baker was strong, were more in favour of Pitt taking office than even Newcastle was himself, and he was very much afraid that they would ruin the negotiations. Regarding this he wrote to Rockingham on 1 June 1765 that

"Our friends (Wildman's) must be prudent, avoid any offensive discourse on either side; and not be running officiously to Hayes which can do no good, and may produce great mischief." 5

Because Newcastle was reserved and did not seem to be throwing himself whole-heartedly into the attempt to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion he earned the opprobrium of

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3. The Grenville Papers Vol. III, p. 220. The diary that Smith describes as Grenville's was in fact written by his wife. See Thomlinson op. cit. p. 4 et seq. See also Savadge op. cit. p. 159.
4. See W. W. M. R13 "The Duke of Cumberland's narrative of changes in the ministry" pp. 9-11. For an account of the earlier negotiations see The Duke of Newcastle's Narrative of the Changes in the Ministry 1765-1767 ed. Mary Bateson, Royal Historical Society, London 1692, pp. 1-20. See also "John Roberts M.P. and the first Rockingham Administration" by J. E. Tyler in English Historical Review Vol. LXXVI, London 1932, pp. 547-560. For a general account of these negotiations see Winstanley op. cit. p. 220 et seq.

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Sir William Baker. Yet Newcastle was sufficiently in sympathy with the group at Wildman's to recognise their aspirations for a ministry with Pitt at its head.

When the negotiations with Pitt had finally broken down Newcastle, although he was personally determined not to hold high office, on 27 June 1765 put forward his own plan for an administration, nominating Rockingham as First Lord of the Treasury. It was finally agreed at a meeting held at Newcastle's house on 31 June 1765 that they should endeavour to form a new administration and insist that some of Bute's principal friends should be removed.

There was some dissension at the meeting. Rockingham, Newcastle, Lords George John and Frederick Cavendish, Conway and Portland were part of a majority who agreed to try to form a ministry while George Onslow, Thomas Walpole and Charles Townshend (1725-1767) were of the opinion that the attempt should not be made in the existing circumstances.

5. B.M. Add. Mss. 32967 f3 Newcastle to Rockingham 1 June 1765. Pitt was living at Hayes at this time.

6. Ibid. f8 George Onslow to Newcastle "Thursday noon" 6 June 1765. Also the negotiations were apparently rendered more difficult because the riots of the weavers on 15 and 16 May 1765 made it appear as if a change in administration would be giving in to the riots. See W.W.M. R13 "The Duke of Cumberland's Narrative etc" pp. 24-27.

7. See ibid. f53 Newcastle to Portland 17 June 1765 quoted above p. 232.

8. Ibid. f143 Newcastle to Ashburnham 27 June 1765; ibid f157 Newcastle to Albemarle 29 June 1765. See also Bateson op. cit. pp. 22-33.

9. See ibid ff128-139 "Plan of a new administration 27 June 1765" see also ibid f142 Newcastle to Ashburnham 27 June 1765.

10. See W.W.M. R1-455 Newcastle to Albemarle printed Albemarle op. cit. Vol. I, pp. 218-220; Walpole Memoirs Vol. II, p. 134.

Rockingham's rise to the position of first minister had been unusual. Although in the negotiations with Pitt in August 1763 he had not seemed unwilling to accept the post of First Lord of the Admiralty,¹¹ on 7 May 1765, however, Cumberland found that Rockingham

"Objected to any employment for himself, believing he might be of more use (as) an independent man, than personally engaged in the Service."¹²

Later however Cumberland wrote that although Rockingham

"from private reasons and inclinations, prefers a private life and really thinks he might be equally useful to his King and Country; yet when he saw the shyness of our friends, he shook off his natural dislike and was ready to kiss the King's hand in (what)ever shape was most for the public service in general."¹³

Thus, before 27 June, although Rockingham had refused the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland he had accepted the more sinecurial office of Lord Chamberlain.¹⁴ And yet Rockingham possessed a very real claim to lead a ministry. Cumberland and the King may have been more willing to accept him because the administration was regarded by them purely as a stop-gap¹⁵ until the services of Pitt could be secured. Rockingham was

11. B.M. Add. Mss. 32950 Hardwicke to Newcastle 2 September 1763. See also Winstanley op. cit. p. 174 and also p. 180. supra.

12. W.W.M. R13 "The Duke of Cumberland's Narrative etc" p. 12.

13. Ibid R13 pp. 22-23.

14. B.M. Add. Mss. 32966 ff395-401 Memorandum 15 May 1765. Cf. The Correspondence of King George III ed. Hon. Sir John Fortescue, Vol. I, 1760-1768 London 1927 p. 92 No. 61. See also Additions and Corrections to Sir John Fortescue's Edition of the Correspondence of George III, Vol. I, by L. B. Namier, Manchester 1937, p. 43. See also W.W.M. R1-454 Sir William Meredith to Rockingham 29 June 1765; ibid R1-473 Rockingham to Sir William Meredith n.d. but may be dated from internal evidence as July 1765.

15. See for instance B.M. Add. Mss. 32967 f3 Newcastle to Rockingham 1 June 1765.

too inoffensive to irritate Pitt, and was probably regarded as the sort of person who would do very little to entrench himself in power. George III in July 1765 was in no position to realise that Rockingham would have to face a crisis of the first magnitude in America and that his ministry would, as a result, inaugurate against the King's wishes, a policy towards the American colonies which was, in many senses, revolutionary.

In 1765 the King had to have as the leader of a new administration someone who could command votes in the House of Commons and Rockingham could do this more than any other of the leaders of his party. The "Old Whigs" were almost of a "federal" nature at this time. There was a group that acknowledged Newcastle as leader, another group led by Rockingham and other smaller groups led by men such as Portland, the Cavendishes, Richmond and Sir George Savile. Rockingham was the only man who could command the loyalty and allegiance of all these groups. When Pitt refused to form an administration the only other obvious leader of a new government was the ageing Duke of Newcastle, but when it became obvious that he was more intent on playing the "elder statesman"¹⁶ than leading the administration Rockingham was presented to George III as the only possible alternative to the "hated" Grenville.

Rockingham's explanation in a letter to Sir William Meredith in July 1765 would seem to be an accurate account of the situation.

16. See above p.291 and note 8.

" It must surprise you to know that I am at the head of the Treasury, especially when you knew I would not undertake Ireland from the situation, of my health and the difficulties I thought might ensue, but indeed the necessity here, made it necessary that something should be done, and therefore however unsuitable I might be for that office from my health and inexperience in the sort of business, yet I thought it incumbent on me to acquiesce in the attempting it, rather than throw any fresh confusion into the negotiations which had too many difficulties without my adding to them by a refusal of which my own private care and comfort have no doubt strongly inclined me to." 17

Once it was decided that Rockingham was to lead the new administration Newcastle gave him every assistance although he later stated that

"The putting my Lord Rockingham at the Head of the Treasury and thereby making him the first minister was done without my immediate knowledge, but very much with my approbation, for I profess to you now, he is the person in all England I wish there." 18

Newcastle was against the "Boys of Wildman's" holding a great deal of power in the new administration. This becomes clear in his attitude to Sir William Baker, perhaps the most prominent of Newcastle's mercantile supporters. On 3 July 1765 Mrs. Grenville recorded in her diary

"Mr. Grenville knows very authentically that the management of the King's business in the House of Commons has been offered to Sir William Baker who declined it." 20

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17. W.W.M. R1-473 Rockingham to Sir William Meredith n.d. but may be dated from internal evidence as July 1765. Rockingham's protestations concerning his health were quite justified. Always suffering from either congenital asthma or tuberculosis he contracted syphilis in 1750 while in Italy on the Grand Tour. He died in the influenza epidemic of 1782 suffering from both influenza and "water on the chest".
18. See also W.W.M. R170 Doctor's Certificate in Italian and Historical Memoirs of my Own Time by Sir N.W. Wraxall, Bart London 1904, pp. 472-473.
18. B.M. Add. Mss. 32972 f114 et seq Newcastle to John White 3 December 1765 quoted Bateson op. cit. p. 36.
19. B.M. Add. Mss. 32967 f187 Newcastle to Portland 1 July 1765 and above p. 234.

There is nothing in either the Newcastle or Rockingham Papers to substantiate this piece of information, and in view of the efforts to secure the assistance of Charles Townshend²¹ and other more prominent politicians it seems that it can have been no more than rumour. Perhaps Grenville merely expressed his opinion of Baker in a derisory way to his wife. Rockingham however, did consider appointing Baker as head of the Board of Trade,²² and Baker was prominent enough to expect at least a minor office. He does not seem to have found favour with Newcastle, however, possibly because of Newcastle's hostility towards the Wildman's group, the growing rift between Baker and Newcastle since the "Dr. Hay affair"²³ and possibly because of Baker's known "violence in opposition."²³

In spite of his reservations about Wildman's, Newcastle did try to find offices for his mercantile supporters. Rose Fuller presents one instance of this. On 30 June 1765 Fuller appears nominated in Newcastle's lists as "Treasurer and Paymaster of the Ordnance."²⁴ By 1 July this had been modified to "One of the Ordnance Places or Paymaster of the Marines"²⁵ and the same statement occurs in another document on 2 July.²⁶

20. The Grenville Papers Vol. II, p. 206.

21. Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend pp. 134-137.

22. W.W.M. R14-2 Rockingham's notes on removals etc July 1765.

23. See above pp. ~~221~~ et seq et passim. Baker does not appear on Newcastle's lists for an appointment.

24. B.M. Add. Mss 32967 f162 "Plan of a New Administration and a Disposition of Employment in the House of Commons" 30 June 1765.

25. Ibid. f185 "Taken out of the List of those not yet provided for" 1 July 1765.

26. Ibid. f195 2 July 1765.

In a similar paper dated 6 July Rose Fuller's name is deleted
²⁷
 under the heading Ordnance. On a paper dated 7 July 1765 and
 headed "Items for the Earl of Albe~~x~~marle" Newcastle writes "It
 is much to be wished Mr. Rose Fuller could have something He
²⁸
 would be a very useful man" and in a letter to Rockingham on
 12 July Newcastle wrote that if Frederick Montague would not
 accept a seat at the Board of Trade "I would most earnestly
 recommend for the public service Mr. Rose Fuller. I know,
 except my Lord Dartmouth, he would be more use than all the
 rest of the Board". Later in the same letter he again pressed
²⁹
 Rockingham to find Fuller a place and as late as 29 July
³⁰
 Newcastle was maintaining his efforts but Fuller eventually
 disappears from the lists unprovided for. He next appears
³¹
 as Chairman of the Stamp Act Committee. The merchant Capel
 Hanbury's hopes of office were also supported by Newcastle
³²
 but not as persistently and Hanbury too was unprovided for.
 It should be noted that an attempt had been made to find
 offices for Baker, Fuller and Hanbury prior to this in the
³³
 abortive negotiations of August 1763.

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27. Ibid. f257 "Plan of a New Administration and a Disposition of
 Employment in the House of Lords and Commons" 6 July 1765;
 Cf. f261 "Taken out of the List of those not yet provided
 for" 6 July 1765.
28. Ibid. f273.
29. Ibid. f346-53 Newcastle to Rockingham 12 July 1765. On 21
 July Newcastle was still suggesting Fuller for the Board
 of Trade, See B.M. Add. Mss. 32968 f140 "Items for my Lord
 Rockingham 21 July 1765"
30. Ibid. f233 "Short Items for my Lord Rockingham 21 July 1765."
31. See below p. 377.
32. See B.M. Add. Mss 32967 f185 "Taken out of the list of those
 not yet provided for" 1 July 1765. Ibid. f195 "Taken out of
 the list of those not yet provided for" 2 July 1765. This

Sir George Colebrooke also played his part at this time in bringing mercantile pressure to bear upon Newcastle. Although he appears to have been interested primarily in regaining the contracts he lost in 1763 he was not slow in putting forward the view of the City financiers and merchants. On the 4 July in a letter to Newcastle he wrote

"Personages in your Grace's situation, often ask us, after news out of the City, and what their friends in this part of the world are apt to say - May I be permitted to enumerate the Heads of our opinions and give your Lordship no further trouble ?
 Some public mark that Mr. Pitt approves of this A(dminis) That his plan on politics is to be pursued.
 That My Lord Chief Justice Pratt is to be publicly rewarded.
 That the present Parliament be dissolved, in order to redress the Mischiefs done in this Parliament by another
 That the unprovided debt be liquidated and a tax found for the interest.
 That the Navy of England be kept upon a most respectable footing the guilty punished and the others rewarded." 35

Although one cannot say that this opinion had great weight with Newcastle and the ministers for most of the suggestions put forward were common sense ones which Newcastle and his colleagues already had in mind, and kept in mind throughout the administration, this letter must have done something to reinforce Newcastle's opinion.

It has already been pointed out that many of the mercantile supporters of the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs were dissenters,

32. (contd.) Capel Hanbury must be the M.P. for Monmouthshire who died in 1765. He is not identical with the man who gave evidence before the Stamp Act Committee. See below p.381. Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 288-290.)

33. See above p. 192.

34. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32967 f434-436 Colebrooke to Newcastle 15 July 1765.

36

and that a high proportion of these were Quakers. Perhaps for this reason Newcastle was especially interested at this time in conciliating the dissenters and he encouraged Rockingham to secure their support by making contact with their leading ministers concerning the matter of the Royal Bounty. Newcastle personally took some action in this direction, for there is among his papers a letter from Thomas Toller (a dissenting minister Newcastle mentioned specifically to Rockingham) enclosing a list of the distribution of the Royal Bounty to dissenters. These were sent at Newcastle's particular request.

Newcastle also pressed Rockingham to find an office for James West, the former Secretary to the Treasury and Newcastle's friend and faithful servant. On 10 July Newcastle wrote to Rockingham imploring him to restore West to his old position or make him one of the Lords of the Treasury for, as he put it, West

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35. Ibid. f226-227 Colebrooke to Newcastle 4 July 1765. Colebrooke had stated earlier in the letter that Pratt should be rewarded as a 'sop' to Pitt, as an able lawyer and as a popular figure. He did get a peerage. The reference to the navy in connection with the punishment of the guilty is probably a reference to the decline in the British navy after the Seven Years War, see for instance The War for America by Piers Macksey, London 1964, pp. 166-167; or possibly a reference to George Grenville's economies. See also The Royal Navy, a History by William Laird Clowes. London, 1898, Vol. III, p. 365.
36. See above Part I, Chapter II.
37. B. M. Add. Mss. 32967 f180 "Measures" 1 July 1765. There is a copy of this at W. W. M. R1-456 dated 6 July 1765. See above pp 48-49. Cf. Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 576-577.
38. B. M. Add. Mss. 32968 f206 Thomas Toller to Newcastle 23 July 1765 ff2089210 List of distribution of Bounty to the dissenters.
39. B. M. Add. Mss. 32967 f338 Newcastle to Rockingham 11 July 1765; ibid. f346 same to same 12 July 1765; ibid. f390 same to same 14 July 1765.

"has a peculiar knowledge of the Character and dispositions of the several considerable men in the City, that was of great use to me, and I really believe if he would accept either of these, he would be of service to your Lordship as well as to the publick." 40

There is more in this than a simple desire to provide West with office. He had proved useful to Newcastle in the past and Newcastle without doubt realised how much the new young, inexperienced first minister would need every assistance he could get in the coming months. At the same time he was endeavouring to introduce Rockingham to other mercantile contacts, especially Bartholomew Burton, a director and former governor of the Bank of England. Burton eventually saw Rockingham on 17 July with some of the other directors of the Bank of England.⁴¹ On Sunday 21 July there was a dinner party at Newcastle's where Rockingham again met Burton and other City friends of Newcastle.⁴² Moreover to keep the allegiance of these same men Newcastle was endeavouring to get contracts that they had lost⁴³ returned to them.

Rockingham did not only build up his mercantile support by inheritance from Newcastle. He made efforts himself in this direction. One attempt may be seen in the employment of John Roberts as his secretary. Roberts as a former secretary

40. Ibid. f303 Newcastle to Rockingham 10 July 1765.

41. Ibid. f316 Rockingham to Newcastle 11 July 1765; f352 Newcastle to Rockingham 12 July 1765.

42. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32968 f60 Bartholomew Burton to Newcastle 18 July 1765; f82 Newcastle to Rockingham 19 July 1765.

43. Ibid. f361 "Plan of a new Administration and a disposition of employment in the House of Lords and Commons" 30 June 1765; f260 document of same title 6 July 1765, Cf. Fortescue op. cit Vol. I, pp. 128-161.

to Henry Pelham and as a Lord of Trade had many useful
⁴⁴
connections. Rockingham also made a personal effort to persuade
Sir William Meredith to accept a post at either the Admiralty
⁴⁵
or the Board of Trade. Meredith had strong connections with
⁴⁶
commerce in general and with Liverpool in particular. Rock-
ingham wrote to Newcastle about this appointment but his ideas
⁴⁷
seemed to have gained little sympathy from the latter, although
Meredith's name appears in lists of both Newcastle and George
III as a member of the Board of Trade. Rockingham did,
however, eventually succeed in getting him appointed as a
⁴⁸
Lord of the Admiralty.

Before the Stamp Act Crisis the first Rockingham adminis-
tration gained commercial support mainly by a process of
inheritance from the old leader of the party, Newcastle, but
also to some extent by the efforts of Rockingham himself.
The support gained in this way was, however, the support of
financiers and merchants who were typically loyal to adminis-
tration. It was the Stamp Act Crisis which was to win over
the main body of the trading classes.

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44. For Roberts see Tyler loc. cit. pp. 547-560. See also "Three
Eighteenth Century Politicians" by L. B. Namier in English
Historical Review Vol. XLII, London 1927 p. 408. See also
Namier Structure of Politics passim.
45. W. W. M. R1-473 Rockingham to Sir William Meredith n. d. but
can be identified from internal evidence as July 1765.
46. For Meredith see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons
1754-1790 Vol. III, pp. 130-133. Meredith had joined the
Rockingham group and Wildman's during early 1763. Before
this he had supported Grenville.
47. B. M. Add. Mss 32967 f316 Rockingham to Newcastle 11 July 1765.
ibid. f374 Rockingham to Newcastle 'Friday night' (11 July
1765) ibid. ff182-183 "Plan of a New Administration" 27
June 1765. Cf. Fortescue op. cit. Vol. I, p. 32 No. 101, ibid
pp. 153-159 No. 130 "List of Removals etc" 9 July 1765.
48. Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. III,
p. 131.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST ROCKINGHAM ADMINISTRATION.

A) INTRODUCTORY.

During the first Rockingham administration there was a constant interchange of advice and information between Rockingham, Newcastle, and their colleagues and those engaged in trade and commerce both in London and the provinces. This is not surprising for the major measures taken by the administration were of a politico-economic nature. Burke's claim that Rockingham's government was the first to consult merchants and encourage their meetings cannot be regarded as the literal truth.¹ Indeed in 1764 Grenville had both consulted and been consulted by the West Indian merchants.² On the other hand it cannot be disputed, as this chapter will show, that the opinions of the merchants exercised a great influence on the leaders of this administration.

When the Rockingham administration came to power in July 1765 its leader seems to have been quite unaware that in a very short time he would be faced with a political crisis of the first magnitude caused by Grenville's American Stamp Act. There were however signs that all was not well with American commerce and comments in the daily press indicated the slackness

1. Burke Works Vol. II, p.4. See above p.3.

2. See The Free Port System in the British West Indies, A Study in Commercial Policy 1766-1822 by Frances Armytage (Royal Empire Society, Imperial Studies) London 1953, p.25.

of American trade and the poor reception of the Stamp Act.³
 Lord Dartmouth, soon after assuming office as First Lord of
 Trade in July 1765, received a letter from Dennys de Berdt
 pointing out the depression of the American trade and Dartmouth
 met colonial agents and merchants during the summer.⁴ Moreover,
 on the very day that he was ordered to relinquish the Treasury,
 Grenville took steps to see that the revenue of the Stamp
 Act remained in America to defray the cost of the military
 defence of the colonies.⁵

The first definite news that Rockingham received of the
 American riots was about 5 October 1765,⁶ but the Virginia
 Resolutions had been known since August 1765. On 30 August
 1765 the Duke of Newcastle had written to General Conway
 asking to be excused a meeting at the Duke of Cumberland's
 that night because of the ill-health of the Duchess.⁷ A
 minute of the meeting sent to Newcastle by Conway proves that

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3. See for instance Lloyds Evening Post and British Chronicle No. 1240 3-5 July 1765, No. 1241 6-8 July 1765. Cf Hinkhouse op. cit. p. 55.
 4. See Dennys de Berdt to Lord Dartmouth n. d. but endorsed 'recd. July 1765' printed in "Letters of Dennys de Berdt 1754-1770" ed. Albert Matthews in Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts Vol. XIII, Transactions 1910-11 Boston 1912, pp. 431-432. De Berdt, a merchant, was agent in London for the Massachusetts House of Representatives, November 1765 to April 1770. Cf. Sosin op. cit. p. 71.
 5. See "A Postscript to the Stamp Act. George Grenville's Revenue Measures a Drain on Colonial Specie?" by Jack M. Sosin, American Historical Review Vol. LXIII, New York, July 1958, pp. 922-923.
 6. See Smith op. cit. p. 47.

the meeting was to discuss a dispute with the Assembly of
 Jamaica and the Virginia Resolutions.⁸ In his letter Newcastle
 had written

"The business that you meet upon this night, is of the utmost importance; and I am afraid, attended with difficulty. For my own part, I don't pretend to be a judge of what should be done. I am afraid what has been done has not produced the desired effect. I conclude General Amherst will be consulted and some honest North American merchants should be talked to. I suppose my Lord Dartmouth will furnish you with all the lights that are come to the Board of Trade."⁹

Amherst had been British commander in America during the
 Seven Years War¹⁰ and was thus considered knowledgeable on
 American affairs and apart from officials Newcastle suggested
 the American merchants should be consulted as they were probably
 more informed about conditions in the colonies than anybody
 else in the country. The important conclusion that can be
 drawn from this letter is that before the Stamp Act Crisis had
 commenced a leading member of the first Rockingham administra-
 tion had realised that the American merchants could give valu-
 able advice and assistance on American affairs. Newcastle's
 efforts to gain mercantile support did not stop here. In
 September 1765 he made strong but unsuccessful efforts to
 secure the election of Barlow Trecothick, the leader of the
 American merchants in London as member of Parliament for Shore-
 ham. The efforts of Newcastle failed because Trecothick was

7. B. M. Add. Mss. 32969 f221 Newcastle to General Conway 30 August 1765.

8. Ibid. f225-6 Conway to Newcastle 1 September 1765; ibid f257 "Minute of the Meeting of His Majesty's Servants at His Royal Highness's the Duke of Cumberland's 30 August 1765"

9. Ibid. f221 Newcastle to Conway 30 August 1765.

10. See Dictionary of National Biography Vol. I, pp. 357-8.

unable or unwilling to afford the expense of standing for
 Shoreham and because he sought election for the City of London.¹¹
 During the course of the correspondence about Shoreham
 Newcastle made the interesting statement that Trecothick was
 already considered an authority on North American affairs and
 that the Rockingham administration would be glad of his advice
 within Parliament.¹²

Although the administration did not receive definite news
 of the American riots until October 1765 as early as 11
 September 1765 Newcastle was noting "The Stamp Act" in memoranda¹³
 as an item for discussion with Lord Rockingham. In the same
 memoranda Newcastle also mentioned the trade of the American
 colonies in general and the trade with the foreign West Indies.
 By 9 October Newcastle's memoranda had grown far more specific
 and he wrote about "The Disturbances and Riots in New England
 &c."¹⁴ and "The Violence in America." By 12 October 1765
 Newcastle was writing to Rockingham

" I am very much at a loss in my own opinion what to
 do upon these American Disputes.... I see great incon-
 veniences on both sides of the question, and very little
 effect by enforcing the execution of...the Stamp Duty,
 by force the asserting the Right of this country to

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11. B. M. Add. Mss. 32970 f50 Trecothick to Newcastle 24 September 1765; ibid. f52 same to same 24 September 1765; ibid. f54 Newcastle to Trecothick 24 September 1765; ibid. f76 same to same 26 September 1765; ibid. f56 "Shoreham Proposals" 24 September 1765; ibid. f82 Trecothick to Newcastle 27 September 1765. Cf. my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 91-93; Smith op. cit. pp. 91-93.
12. B. M. Add. Mss. 32970 f54 Newcastle to Trecothick 24 September 1765. Cf. Smith op. cit. p. 92.
13. B. M. Add. Mss. 32969 f344 "Items for Lord Rockingham" 11 September 1765.
14. Ibid. 32970 Memoranda 8 October 1765.

lay taxes there, for I very much fear you will scarcely be able to get much from it and by the perturbation of the clandestine trade, they will not be in a position to pay much, or to receive and pay for our manufactures from hence." 15

By the middle of October Rockingham was thus aware of the crisis that was to face him in the American colonies. He had not been idle on American affairs meanwhile. On 14 August 1765 the Daily Advertiser spoke of the "Elegant Entertainment" given to the Rockingham leaders by the West India merchants at the King's Arms Tavern. There was a constant supply of information on American affairs through both official and private channels, and at the end of September 1765 Rockingham was in contact with the Archbishop of York over ecclesiastical affairs in America. By 25 October 1765 Rockingham was thus writing to Viscount Irwin

"I don't imagine Mr. G. Grenville's popularity is very high in your neighbourhood. The difficulties he has thrown upon trade by very inconsiderate regulations must affect any opinion in his favour among the mercantile gentlemen, and the notable confusion which he has raised in America, tho' it lays difficulties upon the present administration, yet so far it serves them, as it shows that he had neither prudence nor foresight." 19

Thus by October 1765 American affairs were looming large in the eyes of the leaders of the Rockingham administration. It was obvious moreover that this was not a single clear-cut issue. There was the question of the general

15. W.W.M.R1-504 Newcastle to Rockingham 12 October 1765. The "clandestine trade" referred to is the trade with the foreign West Indies.

16. ~~Of~~ Cone op. cit. p. 82.

17. See below pp. 341-363.

18. See above p, 63.

depression in the American trade, the clandestine trade with the foreign West Indies, and the problem of the American resistance to the Stamp Act, and the depression in trade caused by the Stamp Act itself.

Doctor Sutherland has divided the commercial policy of the ministry into three phases. Firstly there was "a general but vague feeling that something should be done to revive the North American trade!" This feeling was connected with the bullion question and the trade with the foreign West Indies. Secondly there was the Stamp Act Crisis and thirdly the investigation into North American and West Indian commerce which led to the Free Ports Act of 1766 and related commercial measures.²⁰ It is obvious that the general question of the American commerce underlay all these phases of commercial policy. Although these phases overlapped and were interconnected it is a convenient sub-division by which to discuss the first Rockingham administration.

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19. Rockingham to Viscount Irwin 25 October 1765 printed Historical Manuscripts Commission - Reports on Manuscripts in Various Collections Vol. XVIII, (Lindley- Wood Papers) London 1913, p. 183, printed Ritcheson op. cit. p. 41.
20. Sutherland "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry" English Historical Review Vol. XLVII, pp. 46-72.

B) THE BULLION QUESTION AND THE TREASURY MINUTE OF
15 NOVEMBER 1765.

The initial American problem with which the first Rockingham administration was faced was that in an attempt to reform the administration of the colonial customs laws and improve the revenue from colonial trade Grenville had in 1763 and 1764 prevented the North American and West Indian colonies obtaining bullion and other goods from the foreign West Indies. This had always been a clandestine trade but it was vital to the British colonies for they used the bullion obtained in this way to pay for goods obtained from the mother country. Grenville's actions, involving the cutting off the supply of gold, led to the stopping of remittances of specie to Great
21
Britain and the cancellation of orders to British manufacturers. It must be emphasized that this was not a problem created by the Stamp Act, although it was created by legislation to which the Stamp Act formed a climax. As early as April 1764 Grenville had been forced to deal with the problem and measures which seem to have been an attempt to solve it were taken on
22
6 June 1764 and February 1765. These measures which implied the admission of bullion allowed foreign vessels to take "refreshment" in British ports but did not allow the bringing
23
in of foreign goods. These measures were only a partial

21. Armytage op. cit. pp. 24-27. See also The Rise of the British Treasury, Colonial Administration in the Eighteenth Century by Dora Mae Clark, Yale Historical Publications, Vol. XX, New Haven U. S. A. 1960, pp. 135-136.

22. Armytage op. cit. pp. 25-26. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff190-192, Evidence of Mr. Beeston Long before a committee of the House of Commons, 17 February 1766; P. R. O. Treasury Minute Book, T. 29 Vol. XXXVII, p. 192 et seq.

solution to the problem. They did not for instance allow²⁴ the Florida merchants to import vital dyestuffs.

In the letter in which he congratulated Dartmouth on coming to office Dennys de Berdt mentioned the bullion trade but the first specific reference to this problem in the papers of the leaders of the new administration seems to be in a memoranda of Newcastle's dated 11 September 1765 and headed "Items for Lord Rockingham". One of the 'items' is "The²⁵ Opening the trade with the Spaniards in America." Further to this on 12 October 1765 John Roberts wrote to Newcastle after Newcastle had asked him for his opinion on "American Affairs" Roberts wrote

"I....am at a loss how to understand what your Grace is pleased to require of me; The general expression American affairs, not confining me to any particular part of a subject which is very extensive and comprehends much variety of matter." 26

Roberts confined his remarks to the general disorders in America and did not mention the bullion trade specifically but he did write

" If your Grace be pleased to fix upon any~~one~~ distinct point I will endeavour to procure materials from the Board of Trade for your better and more full information." 27

23. Armytage op. cit. pp. 25-26. Cf. Clark op. cit. p. 136.

24. Armytage op. cit. p. 26.

25. Dennys de Berdt to Lord Dartmouth July 1765 in Letters of Dennys de Berdt loc. cit. p. 431; B.M. Add. Mss. 32969 ff344-45 fair copy at ff 364-65 "Items for Lord Rockingham" 11 September 1765.

26. B.M. Add. Mss. 32970 ff 302-03 John Roberts to Newcastle 12 October 1765.

27. Ibid. ff302-03 John Roberts to Newcastle 12 October 1765.

Newcastle used Robert's letter in a memoranda which he prepared for discussion with the Duke of Cumberland on 13 October, but there is again no specific mention of the bullion question.²⁸ The first important action in this affair seems to have been taken by Rockingham between 18 and 24 October 1765 when he sent to Newcastle, Lord Northington and Charles Yorke specially written memoranda relating to the bullion trade. In his covering letter in each case Rockingham apparently stressed the urgency and importance of the matter.²⁹ Mrs. Armytage says that the papers sent to Newcastle were "possibly written by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Dowdeswell."³⁰ Her evidence as to the authorship of the papers is based on the fact that Newcastle wrote to Rockingham with regard to one of the papers saying 'I am glad to see, for the sake of the public and your Lordship that so able a paper comes from the hand it does' and a statement of Northington's that he had 'perused the several papers with Mr. D's proposal to alter the regulations put on trade' and that he agreed with Mr. Dowdeswell that 'the Acts never intended to prohibit bullion'.³¹ This is very slender evidence on which to base even a tentative conclusion that the

28. Ibid. f322 "Items for the Duke of Cumberland" 13 October 1765.

29. Armytage op. cit. p. 31 is more inclined to date these papers about 22 October but Newcastle wrote to Rockingham thanking him for sending the papers in question on 20 October. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32970 f422 Newcastle to Rockingham 20 October 1765; Cf. ibid. 32971 f13 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 October 1765. See also W. W. M. R1-512 Rockingham to Northington (draft) ante 23 October 1765; ibid. R1-513 Northington to Rockingham 23 October 1765; ibid. R1-515 Charles Yorke to Rockingham 25 October 1765; B. M. Add. Mss. 35911 ff63-64 Rockingham to Charles Yorke 24 October 1765. Yorke and Northington were consulted as the chief legal officers of the administration and this was a matter on which an official opinion was necessary.

papers were written by one man. From their varying nature it would seem that they come from the pens of different authors. Moreover, in the same letter mentioned above, Newcastle wrote "I easily grasped the authors of the three respective performances",³³ and discusses the merits of each of the three papers he had been sent. This points to the fact that each paper came from an independent hand.

As these papers seem to have exerted considerable influence on the formation of policy at this juncture it is worthwhile to consider them and their authorship in some detail. Copies of the three papers sent by Rockingham to Newcastle exist in the Newcastle Papers and two of the three in the Rockingham Papers, and a copy of the third in the Burke Papers. These three papers are entitled "Considerations on the laws made for the increase of navigation and for the regulation of the plantation trade, as far as they relate to the bullion trade" "Memorial on the Treaties with Spain" and "Proposals". Newcastle, when writing to Rockingham, speaks of these three papers, but Northington of several and identifies Dowdeswell positively as the author of the set of "proposals". This is confirmed in a draft letter by Rockingham.³⁴ Additional papers

30. Armytage op. cit. p. 31.

31. Ibid. pp. 31-32. B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 f13 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 October 1765.

32. Armytage op. cit. pp. 31-32; W. W. M. R1-513 Northington to Rockingham 23 October 1765.

33. B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 f13 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 October 1765

34. W. W. M. R35e^b See below p. 314.

among the Newcastle Papers are docketed "Mr. D's Paper..."
 "Reflections upon the trade in general and upon the trade with
 the Spanish West Indies in Particular" and "Mr.....thoughts
 on the American trade." Mrs. Armytage identifies the author
 of the last paper as John Roberts but in this paper it is
 stated that

"Mr....differs in opinion with Mr. R. in toto. Mr. R.
 is for laying aside the authors and Mr.....thinks...."

which points to John Roberts being the author of another
 paper, not of this one. Moreover when Newcastle wrote to
 Rockingham on 22 October he stated categorically that John
 Roberts had not written any of the three papers he received
 but identifies him as the author of a fourth paper. This
 must be the "Reflections" and it is this paper with which
 "Mr.....thoughts" disagrees.

35. Copies of the three papers sent by Rockingham to Newcastle exist at W.W.M.R35 "Letters, Minutes, Reports, Statistics relating to the Bullion Trade, October - November 1765" and at B.M.Add.Mss.33030 ff392-7 "Considerations on the laws made for the increase of navigation and for the regulation of the plantation trade, so far as they relate to the bullion trade" ff297-307 "Memorial on the Treaties with Spain" ff311-316 "Proposals" and at B.M.Add.Mss 32971 ff29-35 "Considerations etc" ff36-43 "Memoirs on the Treaties with Spain" ff22-28 "Proposals". In the Rockingham Papers the "Proposals" are at R35-8 h,i,j, (3 copies) the "Considerations" at R35-8 d,e,f,g,(4 copies). Contrary to what Mrs. Armytage says no copy of the "Memoirs" is in evidence at W.W.M.R35 but there is a copy in the Burke Papers at Bk25b "Memorial of the former treaties with Spain with regard to Trade" Other papers on the bullion trade exist in B.M.Add.Mss.32971 ff44-45 "Mr.D's Paper" ff46-63 "Reflections upon trade in general and upon the trade with the Spanish West Indies in particular" ff16-21 "Mr.....thoughts on the American trade."

36. Armytage op.cit. p.32,n.2. Other papers are also in evidence at W.W.M.R35 and at W.W.M.R1-317 where there are three extracts of letters concerning the Spanish trade and one

It is thus possible to identify Dowdeswell as the author of one paper and John Roberts as the author of another, but I have not been able to find any evidence as to the authorship of the remaining papers although possibly some may have been composed by merchants or other American experts with whom the administration was in contact. Newcastle's concern with trade is obvious in his letter to Rockingham on 22 October 1765 and it is in this that Dr. Sutherland sees the reflection of mercantile influence. Newcastle wrote

"I have now read and considered, with the greatest attention and pleasure the three papers your Lordship was so good as to send me. They are all, in my opinion extremely well wrote, and prove sufficiently their point, that we are at liberty, both by law, and Treaty, to admit the Spanish bullion, into any part of our dominions in America, and that seems to be the point at present, contended for. But, as your Lordship drop'd to me in conversation, that that would not quite do our business, I do hope, if this method is finally approved, and carried into execution, liberty will also be given for Spanish vessels, to return with certain commodities, not interfering with our own manufactures, such as lumber &c; the produce of our northern colonies; or otherwise, the great stagnation of our trade with North America, and the exportations of our woollen manufacturers thither, will not be put upon the foot it was, before Mr. Grenville gave those fatal orders."

38

36. (contd) letter with a paragraph concerning the Spanish trade underlined. These are dated 20 April 1764, 30 January 1765, and 10 May 1765. There is also an additional paper on the bullion trade in John Robert's hand at B.M. Add.Mss. 33030 ff68-73 endorsed "Trade November 1765" but see p. 338 below. For Yorke's additional information see B.M. Add.Mss. 35911 f67 Governor Pownall to Yorke 3 November 1765. There are also copies of some of the three and another paper in the Yorke Papers. See ibid. ff91-98 "Memoirs on the Treaty with Spain", ibid. ff109-116 "Considerations on the laws etc" ibid. ff116-127 "Observations on the Commerce of our Colonies with those of Spain so far as regards the Legality of the Importation of Bullion in Foreign Bottoms."

The pressure put on the government by the northern industrial towns at this early stage of the ministry is also obvious from this letter. Moreover the petitions to the Treasury on 30 October 1765 made it clear that there was an acute stagnation in both American and West Indian trade.³⁹ Rockingham was also receiving private information on America at this time which pointed to the depression in trade and both he and Newcastle must have found it difficult throughout this crisis to ascertain to what extent the trade depression was caused by the stopping of the bullion trade and to what extent by the Stamp Act and Grenville's other American measures. In the same letter after some general comments Newcastle proceeds to examine each of the three papers in detail.⁴⁰ Later he continues

"The last paper, the Proposals, is in my humble opinion, very proper as far as it goes, as I have before mentioned: But I would submit it to your Lordship's consideration, whether it might not be possible (tho' I am afraid it may not) to remedy the fatal consequences of Mr. Grenville's orders, and bringing the trade back, upon the former foot, without doing it, in so public a manner, and giving such notice to it, to all the world; for tho' I admit, that the papers on that head sufficiently shews, that we have a right to admit their illicit trade into our colonies, yet what chicane Spain may make upon the interpretation of these treaties, nobody can tell. Other nations also may think themselves concerned

37. B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 f14 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 October 1765
 38. Ibid. f13 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 October 1765. Cf. Sutherland 'Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry' loc. cit. p. 60.
 39. See petitions in P. R. O. Treasury Papers T1/443. See below p. 316.
 40. B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 ff13-14 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 October 1765.

to prevent it, and even Spain itself, when they see of what consequence this illicit trade is of to us, may be endeavouring by all methods in their power and within themselves to prevent it; and this might in some measure disappoint our object.

There is also one more observation I would submit to your Lordship, whether, if this method is to be pursued, it might not be best to do it, from the respective offices, without any public application to the King, which possibly might be sent to the Privy Council."

These two paragraphs probably explain why Rockingham attempted to deal with the question of the American trade at the Treasury Board in the early months of the Rockingham administration rather than by a full-scale Parliamentary enquiry.

There can be no doubt that Rockingham was in contact with merchants at this time for among the Rockingham Papers there is an undated document in Rockingham's hand which is endorsed "Draft of observation relative to Mr. Dowdeswell's ⁴¹Proposals" but which actually seems more like a draft of a letter that Rockingham sent with the Papers. It reads

"The many memorials from the great trading ports and the information which we have desired and obtained from considerable merchants in London and the country has fully satisfied us that the complaints were well grounded and that it was a very desirable object to give relief. I will not longer detain your Lordship from the perusal of the enclosed papers only just to remark that since the proposals were drawn up by Mr. Dowdeswell it has occurred that in regard to the mode mentioned of the Board of Treasury applying to the King in Council it has been doubted whether that is a proper mode."

41. W. W. M. R35-6, f.

This letter can hardly be to Newcastle from Rockingham for Rockingham would address Newcastle as Your Grace and not your Lordship, but Rockingham also sent the letters to Northington the Lord Chancellor, who was impressed by them and also to Charles Yorke the Attorney General. Sir William Baker, however, who was consulted and was well qualified to speak on this issue took a less favourable view⁴² of the papers than Rockingham. Thus, Rockingham it would seem had the opinion of some merchants on the question and also Sir William Baker the leading expert of the Rockingham Whigs on American affairs. In his speech on American taxation Burke stated

"Lord Rockingham very early in that summer (1765) received a strong representation from many weighty English merchants and manufacturers, from governmors of provinces and commanders of men of war, against almost the whole of the American commercial regulations, and particularly with regard to the total ruin which was threatened to the Spanish trade." 43

That Newcastle was less well-informed at this time is shown by his memoranda entitled "Points for Consideration with my Lord Rockingham tomorrow" dated 27 October 1765 in which he notes he is going to ask Rockingham for the opinion⁴⁴ of Northington, Yorke and Baker. Indeed, one of Newcastle's constant complaints throughout this ministry was that Rockingham 'failed to inform and consult him' and he wrote to Lord Albe⁴⁵marle mentioning this on 28 October.

42. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32971 ff85 Rockingham to Newcastle 24 October 1765.

43. Works Vol. II, p. 399.

44. B.M. Add. Mss. 32971 the original is at ff65-66 and a copy dated 28 October at ff173-176.

45. B.M. Add. Mss. 32971 ff177-78 Newcastle to Albe⁴⁵marle 28 October 1765.

By this time as Doctor Sutherland notes there appeared to be some attempt at crystallisation of the mercantile agitation.⁴⁶ At a Treasury Board meeting on 30 October 1765 at which Rockingham, Dowdeswell, Lord John Cavendish and Thomas Townshend were present memorials from the merchants of Manchester, Liverpool, Lancaster, Halifax, Leicester and Derby representing "the stagnation of the American and West Indian trade and the lack of remittances" were read and it was decided to ask for the opinion of the Attorney General and Solicitor General concerning the legality of the importation of bullion into the American colonies in foreign ships. On 5 November at another Treasury Board meeting a further petition this time from the Merchant Venturers was read and on the same day Thomas Townshend wrote to the Merchant Venturers stating that the Treasury Board had the matter in hand and that Rockingham and Dowdeswell had it "much at heart!"⁴⁷

Whether this mercantile opposition was organised or not is difficult to say. It may have been organised in embryo form by Barlow Trecothick in a similar manner to the petitions to Parliament for the Repeal of the Stamp Act.⁴⁸

46. Sutherland loc. cit. p. 60; P. R. O. Treasury Papers T1/443, ff47, 53.

47. P. R. O. Treasury Minute Books T.29 Vol. XXXVII, pp. 192-6, 204; See also petitions in P. R. O. T1/443. See also Thomas Townshend to Robert Nugent 5 November 1765, Merchant Venturers Correspondence, box marked "Letters 1754 - Bundle 9" (Townshend had a seat on the Treasury Board) I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the Society of Merchant Venturers in allowing me to use their records. See also W. W. M. R60 where there is a copy of a memorial from Liverpool and another from Lancaster, the Liverpool memorial being docketed 17 August 1765.

48. See below pp. 349-53 and my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 39-43.

Yet it is strange that there is no memorial from the London merchants. That Trecothick was in contact with Rockingham is proved by a paper in his hand among the Rockingham Papers concerning remittances of the American contractors and he was examined as the agents' representative by the Treasury Board⁴⁹ at which Rockingham was present on 8 August 1765. This affair was strictly a business matter but having made contact with him it seems probable that Trecothick was one of the London⁵⁰ merchants Rockingham consulted. Dr. Sutherland states that the questions asked Trecothick in the House of Commons in March 1766 point to some organisation at this time but I am more inclined to believe this organisation refers to the⁵¹ time of the Stamp Act Crisis. Sir George Savile, however, wrote a letter to Rockingham on 1 November 1765 which points to some organisation. He wrote

"Capt. Gream writes that I must be surprized at receiving a naked memorial without a single line of explanation and void of mercantile terms &c. The nakedness he means is that it does not state the causes of the decline of trade with the taxes and the Spanish matters. The last he says he can account for as being a matter not to be talked of aloud, the first he blames much.

I could not help observing the circumstances and yet I am not sure but it might do as well; pointing out the grievance might have looked concerted or at least the effect of party spirits and the wonder does not want pointing out. Their saying they are hurt and drawing no consequence has really I think more the air of sincerity. You can find out what hurts 'em. They

49. See W.W.M. R36 paper commencing "by the 2nd April there remained in the hands of Mr. Apthorp the Agent" and my Barlow Trecothick etc p.32. Cf. P.R.O. Treasury Minute Books T.29 Vol. XXXVII, p.89.

50. See W.W.M. R35-6, f.

51. Cf. my Barlow Trecothick etc pp.40-42; Sutherland loc.cit. p.60; B.M. Add. Mss. 33030 f103.

speaking as ignorant men our trade is hurt what the devil have you been doing. For our part we don't pretend to understand your politics and American matters but our trade is hurt." 52

On 13 November 1765, the opinion of the Solicitor and Attorney General was ready and the Treasury Board, again with Rockingham present, resumed consideration of the new position of the manufacturing towns. On the basis of the advice of Yorke and his colleagues that bullion could be imported into the American colonies in foreign ships, instructions were sent out and a Treasury Minute prepared. The Minute Book states that besides the merchants' memorials "several letters and papers relative to the present state of commerce" in America were read. The Minute was not finally ready until 15 November and a copy was sent by George Onslow to Newcastle, on the following day. On 19 November Newcastle wrote to Rockingham expressing his approval in these words

"I cannot forbear beginning by expressing my great approbation of your Treasury Minute relating to the Bullion. It is in my humble opinion an able a paper as ever I read: and I am sure it will do you great honour. As well as an able, it is a very artful one; it proves its facts as it goes, shews the evil and the necessity of the remedy, from undoubted proofs, from America, and the uncontroverted opinion of all the great manufacturing towns in England, and it shews also the power of doing it, by the tender opinions of our friend Charles Yorke; who is now a party concerned, to defend it. And in short it is as strong an article of impeachment, against George Grenville, as can be found, and it will shew you have been doing something. I must know the author." 54

52. W. W. M. R1-519 Sir George Savile to Rockingham 1 November 1765.
 53. See P. R. O. Treasury Minute Books T. 29 Vol. XXXVII, pp. 229-30, B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 ff394-5 Copy of Treasury Minute 15 November 1765, ff402-3 Onslow to Newcastle 16 November 1765.
 54. B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 f422 Newcastle to Rockingham 19 November 1765.

This letter demonstrates several important points. It is quite obvious that there had been some difference of opinion over the proceedings with Charles Yorke. This was perhaps an omen for the Stamp Act Crisis. Here a difference of opinion with Yorke was in great measure responsible for the exact policy that the Ministry adopted.⁵⁵ It shows also that Rockingham was by no means a "passenger" in the administration as is sometimes thought. Indeed the Minute was apparently sketched out by Rockingham personally, then Grey Cooper, Charles Yorke and John Roberts worked on it.⁵⁶ Newcastle obviously realised that he played an important part in this particular episode, as Rockingham's regular attendance at Treasury Board meetings during this episode seems to demonstrate his enthusiasm.⁵⁷

The Treasury Minute Book makes it quite obvious that the bullion question was brought to the notice of the administration by mercantile and manufacturing interests and the Minute of 13 November 1765 was made strictly for their benefit. Thus there seems little doubt that this was a question on which commercial influence was of supreme importance. The three papers that Rockingham sent to his colleagues definitely exercised considerable influence over the precise formulation of policy, and the method of execution. These papers could be interpreted as being a justification for Rockingham's measures. They informed the ministers that what they intended

55. See below pp. 361-362.

56. Clark op. cit. p. 158.

57. For Rockingham's attendance see P. R. O. Treasury Minute Books T. 29, Vol. XXXVII, May 1765 - May 1766.

to do was perfectly legal. It is possible that Rockingham was already playing for mercantile support, and that by 22 October 1765 he already knew what he intended to do over the bullion question and his main problem was to convince the rest of the administration that what he intended to do was right.

The final chapter in the episode of the bullion question was very similar to the final chapter in the episode of the repeal of the Stamp Act. On 25 November 1765 a letter of thanks for the Treasury Minute was read at the Treasury Board from the Merchant Venturers, and on 26 November a letter of thanks from the merchants and manufacturers of Liverpool was read and on 2 December one from Lancaster. There is a copy of the letter from William Reeve, the Master of the Merchant Venturers to the Treasury Board among the Rockingham Papers. He also sent a letter to Rockingham personally couched in identical terms.

Rockingham himself seems to have taken some measures to find out if the Treasury Minute met with the approval of the merchants. On 24 November 1765 Lord Strange wrote to him that he would have forwarded the address of the Manchester merchants sooner

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58. P. R. O. Treasury Minute Book 4.29 Vol. XXXVII; pp. 235, 242, 255. Cf. Below pp. 452-453. See also T1/447 f381; T1/451 f83. Thomas Townshend had apparently seen that the Merchant Venturers were informed, see Robert Nugent to William Reeve 17 November 1765, Merchant Venturers Records "Letters 1754 - Bundle 10."
59. W. W. M. R56-1 William Reeve to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury 21 November 1765.
60. W. W. M. R56-2 William Reeve to Rockingham 21 November 1765 (Copy)

" but that you were desirous of knowing if the Manchester Gentlemen approved of what was done. On what you said relative to the Minute I communicated to them only the purport of the order to the Commissioners of the Customs, and I find them well pleased with what is done. I expect a public letter of thanks from them to the Treasury, which shall be transmitted as soon as I get it." 61

On 29 November Strange sent a public address of thanks
62
to Rockingham from the Manchester merchants. In this address the merchants expressed some concern because the orders were confined to a few of the southern colonies whereas most goods
63
were sold in the northern American provinces. In his reply to the address Rockingham hastened to allay the fears of the merchants and stated that the measures were identical for
64
all the colonies.

This episode is of the utmost interest. It betrays in miniature many characteristics of the Stamp Act Crisis which was to follow so closely on its heels. As at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, there were consultations among leading members of the administration, consultations with government experts on America, information and advice from merchants, mercantile pressure and petitions and a possible attempt to crystallise mercantile agitation. As at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis a definite crystallisation and organisation of mercantile agitation took place followed by government

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- 61. W.W.M. R56-3 Lord Strange to Rockingham 24 November 1765.
 - 62. W.W.M. R56-5 Strange to Rockingham 29 November 1765.
 - 63. W.W.M. R56-4 Merchants of Manchester Address of Thanks to Rockingham 27 November 1765.
 - 64. W.W.M. R56-6 Rockingham to Merchants of Manchester December 1765. (Draft).

action and finally letters of thanks. The only difference between the two affairs was one of magnitude. This difference was exaggerated because while the bullion question could be dealt with outside Parliament, the later crisis necessitated a full-scale Parliamentary enquiry and thus had to be brought to full public notice. From his handling of the bullion question the youthful leader of the administration must have learned much, particularly in the organisation of politico-commercial legislation and must have gained much useful knowledge on the American colonies and acquired many contacts who were invaluable during the Stamp Act Crisis.

C) THE STAMP ACT CRISIS.

1. Introductory.

The Stamp Act Crisis is generally acknowledged to be the period when the Marquis of Rockingham and his colleagues endeavoured to persuade a reluctant King, House of Lords and House of Commons that the repeal of the American Stamp Act was a political, economic and imperial necessity. This was the crisis for the ministry for its life became dependent on the carrying of the repeal, but this crisis had begun for Rockingham and his colleagues long before an attempt was made to introduce the repeal into Parliament.

Dr. Sutherland has put forward the theory that the Stamp Act Crisis interrupted the ordered lines of commercial policy of the Rockingham administration which would probably have resulted in a reduction of the molasses duty and the passing of the Free Ports Act, but before the Treasury Minute of 15 November 1765 was formulated it must have been obvious to Rockingham and his colleagues that they had yet to face a major problem associated with the American Stamp Act and this knowledge must have influenced commercial policy which would not develop independent of the Stamp Act Crisis.

The Crisis for Rockingham can be divided into four phases. In the first phase commencing at the end of August 1765 Rockingham knew that all was not well in America, that the colonies appeared to be on the verge of revolution, that

65. Sutherland "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry" loc. cit. p. 60 et seq.

there was a severe slump in British trade to the colonies and that a vital section of the community, the British merchants, were ⁶⁶un~~suffering~~ ~~case~~ ~~result~~ ~~ship~~. In this first period Rockingham must have felt that a political crisis was upon him yet he was incapable of acting until he had much more information. Thus the activities of the Treasury Board to enforce the Stamp Act during these months gradually became ⁶⁷something of a ~~facade~~. Rockingham can have had very little real hope that the Americans were going to settle down and accept the Stamp Act and during this period his main task was to gain information.

The second phase in the crisis was the period from the middle of November 1765 until nearly the end of January 1766 during which the ministry formulated its policy. The final policy was "hammered out in two small informal meetings at Rockingham's on 19 and 21 January 1766"⁶⁸. This phase was probably the most difficult for Rockingham. He fully realised the weaknesses of his ministry and how imperative it was for it to either evolve a policy that was acceptable to the King and the Grenvilleites or to obtain outside support. Rockingham must have realised that Pitt was angling for office on his own terms and that he was unwilling to co-operate with the Rockingham administration in spite of all its efforts to

66. See above p. 25 et seq.

67. See below pp. 326-328.

68. See Charles Townshend, His Character and Career by Sir Lewis Namier, the Leslie Stephen Lecture 1959, printed Cambridge 1959 p. 24.

conciliate him. Failure to enlist the support of Pitt and inability to formulate a policy that would be successful in pacifying the Americans and at the same time acceptable to the King and to the other strong political groups forced Rockingham to look outside Parliament for support for his ministry. He thus turned to the merchants, and it has been suggested that the ministry was so long in reaching a decision on the Stamp Act because they were preoccupied in gaining mercantile support which they needed in order to put pressure on Parliament.

The third phase of the crisis was to execute the policy decided upon. Rockingham had to steer the Declaratory Act and the repeal of the Stamp Act through Parliament. The die was now cast and there was no going back. Every possible means had to be used to carry out the policy. The main difficulty lay in the House of Commons where the King's placemen and the Grenville faction were hostile. Here Rockingham used his chief weapon, the merchants, with supreme skill. They were used in two ways. Firstly they gave evidence before the Stamp Act Committee and secondly they petitioned the House of Commons. By these two methods the necessary amount of pressure was brought to bear, independent members were convinced and Rockingham justified the repeal on the grounds of economic necessity.

69. Sutherland loc. cit. et passim also British Politics and the American Revolution by C.R. Ritcheson, Norman U. S. A. 1950, pp. 23-62. Cf. Morgan op. cit. p. 266.

70¹ See Ritcheson op. cit. pp. 23-62, Sutherland loc. cit. passim.

The fourth phase was less critical. It involved securing the acceptance of Rockingham's policy in the colonies. By repealing the Stamp Act, Rockingham had inevitably made Grenville appear mistaken in passing it in the previous year. To prove that Rockingham was right the repeal of the Stamp Act had to stop the trouble in the colonies and show that the symptoms of discontent there had sprung from the way that the Stamp Act had affected trade. Professor Morgan has suggested that the Americans were demanding more than the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1765-66,⁷¹ but it must be admitted that to a large extent Rockingham's measures were successful in pacifying the colonists.

2. The Onset of the Crisis.

The first definite news that Rockingham received of the American riots was on 5 October 1765 but the Virginia Resolutions had been known since August 1765.⁷² In this situation it is not surprising that at a Treasury Board meeting on 13 September 1765, at which Rockingham and his Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Dowdeswell, were present, orders were made to be circulated to colonial governors urging them to ensure that the Stamp Act was executed.⁷³ This measure indicates that the Rockingham administration was preparing to deal with any trouble that might arise in the American colonies and had at

71. See Morgan op. cit. pp. 282-283.

72. See above pp. 302 et seq.

73. P.R.O. Treasury Papers T.29 Treasury Minute Book Vol. XXXVIII p. 131.

this time no intention of repealing the American Stamp Act. At a further meeting on 7 October letters were read from Andrew Oliver, the Stamp Distributor at Boston, announcing his resignation after the riots there and on 11 October the resignation of the New York Stamp Officer, James McEvers, was made known at the Treasury Board by the reading of a letter from McEvers to Barlow Trecothick. Again the only reaction of Rockingham and his colleagues was to take action to see that the Stamp Act was enforced, and this policy was continued as late as November 1765. Professor Clark has suggested that when Grenville fell there was a great deal of work for the actual administration of the Stamp Act still to be done. This thesis is borne out by a copy of a letter among the Newcastle Papers from Thomas Whately to the Commissioner of Stamps dated 9 July 1765 explaining how the Treasury would appoint Stamp Distributors should a vacancy occur. The letter is endorsed,

"This seems the only direction given by the late administration relative to the Stamp Act." 77

This continued enforcement of the Act may have been purely routine.

The measures that the Treasury Board took in November 1765 were far less positive than those taken in the previous months.

74. Ibid pp. 159, 165. For McEvers and Trecothick see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 22-23. Cf. Sosin ib. cit. p. 73.

75. P. R. O. Treasury Papers T. 29 Treasury Minute Book Vol. XXXVII, pp. 159-165.

76. Clark The Rise of the British Treasury p. 139. Cf. Sosin loc cit. pp. 924-5.

77. B. M. Add. Mss. 32967 f290 "Copy of a letter from Mr. Whately to the Commissioner of Stamps 9 July 1765."

Although, for instance, action was taken on 1 November 1765 to see that the Stamp Act was enforced in New Jersey this was a special case; for William Coxe, the Stamp Distributor for that colony had resigned, the Board were informed, without the least sign of resistance to the Stamp Act. It is true that on the same day the Board made efforts to obtain information as to the best method of paying over the revenues from the Stamp Act to the Deputy-Paymaster at New York, but this was merely an attempt to gain information and did not involve any policy decision on the enforcement of the Stamp Act. When the official resignation of Coxe was received on 25 November 1765 it provoked no comment that is recorded in the Treasury Minute Book, which is perhaps even more significant evidence that the minister's zeal for enforcement of the Stamp Act was declining. It would thus seem that if initially Rockingham was prepared to enforce the Stamp Act in the hope that after a display of disapproval the Americans would eventually settle down and pay the tax, his actions became increasingly hesitant until by the middle of November 1765 action at the Treasury Board can have been no more than a facade while members of the administration sought information about the Stamp Act.

Newcastle seems to have had some inkling of the gravity of the approaching crisis as early as 30 August 1765. It was

78. Clark op. cit. p. 197.

79. Ibid p. 234

80. B. M. Add. Mss. 32969 f221 Newcastle to Conway 30 August 1765 quoted above p. 303.

perhaps regrettable that he was absent from a Cabinet meeting on that date which seems to have taken a less grave view of the situation and resolved with regard to the Virginia Resolutions

" If any instruction - a general approbation of what Gov. Fauquier has done, a conclusion from his representation of things that these violent resolutions were the effect of heat in a few members of the assembly present and that when the full assembly shall meet again and shall have had time to consider maturely the nature of the resolution taken they will with proper management be early brought to reverse them.

That he should support by all prudent measures the authority of the British Parliament in that country and transmit constant accounts of every occurrence relative to this subject that shall appear important for his M(ajesty)'s information." 81

Rockingham himself does not seem to have been fully aware of the gravity of the situation as late as 23 October 1765. On that day Thomas Hollis showed Rockingham Jonathan Mayhew's account of Boston's attitude towards the Stamp Act and recorded in his diary that Rockingham was most civil and

"read the letter attentively, but by no means appears to feel the importance of it nor the very imminent danger there is at this time of losing our northern colonies. That being the case with respect to him and also it should seem by his talk with his brother ministers....." 82

Professor Clark states, however, that Newcastle was ready for repeal of the Stamp Act by 12 October 1765 and cites as evidence a letter from Newcastle to Rockingham of that date. In this letter Newcastle questioned the utility of proceeding with the Stamp Act as he saw little prospect of obtaining any worthwhile

81. B.M. Add. Mss. 32969 f257 "Minute of the Meeting of His Majesty's Servant at His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland's 30 August 1765."

82. Bridenbaugh op. cit. p. 199 quoting diary of Thomas Hollis. For Mayhew see Dictionary of American Biography ed. Dumas Malone Vol. XII, London 1933, pp. 454-55.

revenue from it. It is perhaps reading a little too much into the letter to say by this date that Newcastle was ready for
⁸³ repeal, for on the following day Newcastle wrote a memoranda for a meeting with the Duke of Cumberland on American affairs in which he mentioned executing the Stamp Act by "fair means" and "some relief" after a dutiful submission to the British
⁸⁴ Parliament and an application to the King.

Rockingham had begun, however, in September and October 1765, to gather information about the Stamp Act. During the Stamp Act Crisis he received a number of unsolicited and solicited dissertations about American affairs from a variety
⁸⁵ of people. The earliest of these dated 5 September 1765 was written by John Wentworth; another written by Henry McCulloch was received in October 1765. John Wentworth had strong political and mercantile associations with tNewNew Hampshire and McCulloch had been closely connected with the
⁸⁶ preparation of the Stamp Act. Other dissertations reached Rockingham in November and December 1765 and January 1766. One from Nicholas Ray who was a leading American merchant in London was written on 29 November 1765; another from Dr. John Fothergill a leading Quaker known to Rockingham was first written to Lord Dartmouth and passed on to Rockingham. In late December or early

83. Clark op. cit. p. 149 citing W. W. M. R1-504 Newcastle to Rockingham 18 October 1765 quoted above pp. 304-305.

84. B. M. Add. Mss. 32970 f312 "Items for the Duke of Cumberland 13 October 1765".

85. Cf. The Introduction to my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 11 et seq.

86. Ibid. pp. 81, 157, et passim.

January 1766 Rockingham received a dissertation from John Carter a country gentleman from Deal in Kent. Carter wrote originally to Newcastle on 14 December 1765 and the dissertation must have been passed by him to Rockingham. Malachy Postlethwayt, probably the country's greatest living economist wrote to Rockingham on 22 January 1766 and finally Thomas Crowley a Quaker merchant who wrote under the pseudonym ⁸⁷ Amor Patriae wrote twice on 10 and 20 January 1766.

In his dissertation Wentworth described the geography and resources of the mainland colonies and questioned the ability of the Americans to pay the Stamp Duties because of the lack of specie in the colonies. He suggested the reform of the laws of trade and the reduction of the molasses duty to one penny per gallon and pointed out the benefit that Great Britain gained from the colonies under the mercantile system. Henry McCulloh pointed out the parts of the Stamp Act most objected to by the Americans, and while attempting to justify the Act again drew attention to the lack of specie in the colonies and suggested modifications to make the Act workable. Nicholas Ray suggested that the withdrawal of the British troops from America would render the Stamp Act unnecessary but wanted the authority of the British Parliament over America asserted in terms similar to the Declaratory Act which was eventually passed, while Fothergill justified American resistance as actions against measures that seemed

87. Ibid. pp. 178, 218, 246, 169 and 202.

to the colonists tyrnical and oppressive. Fothergill thus desired that the colonies should be treated with kindness and the 'power' of Parliament to tax the colonies ignored. Carter suggested the withdrawing of all vestiges of British authority from America to bring the colonies back to loyalty, or a tax on all ships leaving for America as an alternative to the Stamp Act. Postlethwayt put forward a scheme for reconciling England and her colonies and the repeal of the Stamp Act in return for a declaration from the colonies that they would not manufacture goods that would prove detrimental to British industry. Crowley advocated suspension of the Stamp Act and the meeting of an imperial Parliament to agree on a tax for America. The number of these dissertations and the variety of opinions expressed show that Rockingham was well-informed of the many possible courses of action open to him.

Besides these dissertations Rockingham was receiving information from other sources. Perhaps the best example of this is the fact that William Bollan, the agent of the Massachusetts Council, in October 1765 began to send Rockingham information from America and he continued to do this throughout the Stamp Act Crisis.

During this period Rockingham was also endeavouring to get into touch with groups of merchants. When acknowledging the Manchester Merchants' Address of Thanks for the Treasury Minute of 15 November he wrote

88. Ibid. pp. 81-86, 155-157, 213-217, 178-183, 246-247, 167-169, 202-204.

89. Ibid. pp. 237-239. Cf. Sosin op. cit. p. 73.

"In the ensuing session of Parliament after the re-elections very important considerations ought and must come before the House of Commons. I mean particularly a thorough enquiry into the state of trade between this country and the colonies. Every information that can lead mens' minds to form right principles on so important a consideration will be of the utmost service...." 90

Meanwhile Rockingham had received letters from a Wakefield

91

woollen merchant, John Milnes, about the Stamp Act. The first

letter was probably sent to Rockingham's Yorkshire friend

Sir George Savile and passed to Rockingham. The second was

92

written to Rockingham himself. Savile appears to have been

procuring information for Rockingham from merchants. On 5

November 1765 he wrote to Rockingham in a letter concerned

with the decline in trade caused by Grenville's American

93

measures, "I have no answer from Leeds or Wakefield."

By the end of 1765 two other figures in the Stamp Act Crisis, Edmund Burke and Joseph Harrison, had come into contact with Rockingham. Both were employed by him during the Stamp Act Crisis. Edmund Burke had become Rockingham's private secretary by 11 July 1765 and was thus in a position to help

94

Rockingham during the whole period of the Stamp Act Crisis.

90. W.W.M. R56-6 Rockingham to the Merchants of Manchester December 1765 (draft) See above pp. 320-329. The re-elections referred to are the formal re-elections occasioned by the formation of the Rockingham administration.

91. For Milnes see Wakefield, its History and People by J.W. Walker, Wakefield, 1934, p. 397. See also my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 223-233.

92. W.W.M. R24 Milnes to "Sir" 21 November 1765 and ibid W.W.M. R24 Milnes to Rockingham 24 November 1765. Cf. my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 226.

93. W.W.M. R1-519 Savile to Rockingham 1 November 1765.

94. See Edmund Burke to Charles O'Hara 11 July 1765 printed in The Correspondence of Edmund Burke Vol. 1, 1744-1768 ed. T. W. Copeland, Cambridge, 1956, p. 211.

Rockingham recorded on two occasions, 25 November 1765 and 19 April 1766 making payments to Burke "For obtaining various information and materials relative to the Trades and Manufactures." ⁹⁵ Joseph Harrison seems to have been in contact with the administration very soon after its formation. In late June and early July he was on a sailing expedition with Sir ⁹⁶ George Savile. In early October 1765 Harrison recorded meeting ⁹⁷ and dining with William Dowdeswell. On 4 November 1765 Harrison gave evidence before the Treasury Board on the best method to ⁹⁸ pay over the Stamp Duty to the Deputy Paymaster in America and in April 1766 Harrison was able to write to John Temple

"Ever since the beginning of this session of Parliament I have lived at the Marquis of Rockingham's where I am at present employed as assistant to his private secretary Mr. Burke....and my intimate acquaintance with American affairs has at this time enabled me to be particularly useful, so that I have the Satisfaction of enjoying some share of his Lordship's favour and confidence." ⁹⁹

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95. W.W.M.R15 Notebook of Secret Service Payments. Cf. Burke Correspondence Vol. 1, p. 211. Burke was paid £150 on 25 November 1765 and £100 on 19 April 1766. These statements are recorded in W.W.M.R15-1 of which R15-2 is a duplicate. In W.W.M.R15-3 it is again recorded "Nov. 25th Mr. Burke on acct....£150" then written in Rockingham's hand "for obtaining various information and materials relative to the Trades and Manufactures."
96. See The Bowdoin Temple Papers loc. cit. p. 65 Joseph Harrison to John Temple 12 July 1765.
97. Ibid. p. 70 Joseph Harrison to John Temple 11 October 1765.
98. P.R.O. Treasury Papers, Treasury Minute Book T.29 Vol. XXXVII p. 189.
99. Bowdoin Temple Papers loc. cit. p. 72 Joseph Harrison to John Temple 15 April 1766 quoted my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 100.

Harrison's appointment may have been due to the fact that as a former resident of the colonies, colonial merchant, and customs official he could provide valuable information for
 100
 Rockingham, but Rockingham may also have been motivated by the fact that in October 1765 he had arranged and sworn Harrison into a senior post in the colonial customs service only to learn almost immediately afterwards that the previous
 101
 holder was still alive and thus he had to disappoint Harrison. During the Stamp Act Crisis Harrison acted as a useful link between Rockingham and American refugees coming to England,
 102
 he also procured several witnesses for the Stamp Act Committee.

On 7 November 1765 Barlow Trecothick, the key mercantile figure in the repeal of the Stamp Act wrote to Rockingham on the subject of the Stamp Act for the first time. It is clear from Newcastle's efforts to secure his election for Shoreham that he was already regarded as a staunch supporter of the Rockingham Whigs and in August 1765 Trecothick had given evidence before the Treasury Board on the question of remit-
 103
 tances to the British forces in America.

Trecothick's first letter to Rockingham on the Stamp Act is endorsed

"Mr. Trecothick, relating to the dangerous riots of America to trade and government on account of the Stamps." 104

100. Ibid. pp. 100-128. See also my "Joseph Harrison and the Liberty Incident" in William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, Vol. XX, No. 4, October 1963, p. 585.

101. Bowdoin and Temple Papers, loc. cit. p. 71, Joseph Harrison to John Temple 11 October 1765.

102. See my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 115, 116. Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 39-72. The term refugee is used as in Smith op. cit. to describe a British or colonial official who left the colonies because he had become unpopular through the Stamp ^{act}.

The letter is in a bundle that seems to have been collected together at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis and all the letters in it contain information about the riots in America and the Stamp Duty.

Trecothick's letter is concerned almost entirely with the effects of the Stamp Duty upon trade. He pointed out that the refusal of the Americans to use stamped paper would mean that no American merchant could legally clear vessels for England and thus would not risk sending any. This, Trecothick stated, would deprive the sugar colonies of supplies and the British merchants of remittances. Thus British merchants in turn would be forced to stop exporting which would cause cancellation of orders to manufacturers and hence unemployment. Trecothick concluded

"My Lord the chasm is a terrible one, from 1st Nov. to 1st March the soonest any repeal or suspension of the Act can reach America, if Parliament is not to meet for business till January. So long a stop to circulation must be fatal to all or most branches of American commerce.... Too great delay and caution in administering the remedy may render the diseases of this embarrassed nation incurable; and even an upright and virtuous administration may therefore be deemed accountable from effects proceeding from the errors of their predecessors."

105

His letter put the viewpoint of the merchants in a nutshell. They were concerned almost entirely with the effects of the Stamp Act on commerce and in seeking an immediate remedy to

103. For Trecothick and Shoreham see above pp. 303-304. On the question of remittances see P. R. O. Treasury Papers, Treasury Minute Books T.29 Vol. XXXVII, p. 87.

104. W. W. M. R24-43 Trecothick to Rockingham 7 November 1765.

105. Ibid. R24-43 Trecothick to Rockingham 7 November 1765.

the embarrassment the Act was causing them.

Rockingham replied inviting Trecothick to see him "on
 106
 Tuesday evening" at "a mere private dinner party." Rocking-
 ham's draft reply is undated but Trecothick had written on
 Thursday 7 November 1765. This leads one to believe that the
 107
 Tuesday in question must have been 12 November. This draft-
 letter and the subsequent meeting are important because they
 mark the beginning of Rockingham's efforts to formulate a
 108
 policy on the Stamp Act.

Other leaders of the ministry were also active in securing
 information upon the Stamp Act. Although Newcastle constantly
 complained that Rockingham acted without consulting him and
 although he was, to some extent, treated as an "elder states-
 man" by the rest of the administration the part that Newcastle
 played at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis was by no means
 109
 inconsiderable. Having excused himself from the meeting of
 110
 30 August Newcastle asked Conway to send him a Minute of the
 111
 meeting on which he commented and according to his memoranda
 in September he seems to have discussed the American problem

106. W.W.M. R81-181 Rockingham to Trecothick (draft) undated
 This draft is endorsed "Lord Rockingham's memos and notes
 on American affairs" and also in pencil "Draft of a
 letter to Barlow Trecothick" The contents make it obvious
 that the second endorsement is correct.

107. Smith op. cit. p. 93 states that 7 November 1765 was a
 Sunday but see Handbook of Dates for Students of English
 History ed. C.R. Cheney, London, Royal Historical Society,
 1955. The accuracy of this can be confirmed by reference
 to the dating in B.M. Add. Mss 32971. In my Barlow
 Trecothick etc I unfortunately followed Smith's dating.

108. See below pp. 341-342.

109. See below pp. 356-357, 382-3.

110. See above p. 502.

111. B.M. Add. Mss. 32969 f222 Newcastle to Conway 30 August 1765.

112

fairly frequently with Rockingham. At the beginning of

October 1765 Newcastle had written to his old friend and

colleague, John Roberts, for his advice on American affairs.

113

Newcastle summarised Roberts's ideas in a memorandum for a dis-

ussion with the Duke of Cumberland. The proposals involved

treating the colonies sternly yet kindly. They were to be

induced to submit to Parliament and petition the King on

114

account of their grievances. Moreover Newcastle was present

at meetings when the Stamp Act was discussed in October 1765

and gave his opinion in much the same way as he did on the

115

bullion question.

Charles Townshend was another minister who was active at this time for on 24 October he wrote to Dr. Richard Brocklesby that he wanted to converse with an American merchant whose "name was Kelly" stating

"I want to converse with a merchant on the nature cause and extent of the European, illicit American trade, and

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112. Ibid. f263 Newcastle to Conway 2 September 1765; the Minute is at ibid f257 "Minute of the meeting of his Majesty's Servants at his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland" 30 August 1765. For Newcastle's memoranda see ibid. 343 "Items for Lord Rockingham 9 September 1765" ; ibid. f364 "Items for Lord Rockingham 11 September 1765."
113. See above p. 308 and B.M.Add.Mss 32970 ff302-3 John Roberts to Newcastle 12 October 1765.
114. B.M.Add.Mss.32970 f312 "Items for the Duke of Cumberland" 13 October 1765.
115. See B.M.Add.Mss.32970 f379 Newcastle to Rockingham 17 October 1765 where Newcastle writes "I was surprised you had not the First Lord of Trade at our meeting the other night. I believe it is the first time that ever that happened upon business which regarded singly the American plantations". See also B.M.Add.Mss.32971 f317 "Considerations to be laid before my Lord Rockingham only" 9 November 1765.

to speak with him upon the efficiency or inefficiency of the last Act to prevent it."

He concluded

"I cannot in a letter give my sentiments upon the subject of our difficulties in N.America....but this I may say no Parliament ever met in such a critical minute nor did ministers upon so bold a precipice." 116

Although the desired meeting was obviously not primarily to discuss the effect of the Stamp Act, it shows that Townshend was at least interested in the trade to North America. On 30 October he had still not seen Kelly for he wrote again to Brocklesby

"I shall be very happy to see Mr. Kelly whose knowledge I know is very extensive and whose character and independence gives great weight to his information."

Trecothick and his lieutenant and fellow-merchant, Capel Hanbury, were trying to get into contact with Townshend at this time for in the same letter he wrote

"I am to thank you also for the message from Mr.H(anbury) and Mr.T(recothick). They will find me open and candid very proud of their favour, and very free from prejudice." 117

In another letter about the same time Townshend wrote

116. Letters of Charles Townshend to Dr. Brocklesby now in W.L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor Michigan; Townshend to Brocklesby 24 October 1765. Dr. Richard Brocklesby 1722-1797 was a Quaker doctor and friend of Burke. See the Dictionary of National Biography Vol. VI, London 1886 p.374 In Edmund Burke, New York Agent by Ross J. Hoffman, Philadelphia, 1956 p.28 n.8 the author states that some of these letters are to unidentified persons but the letters of 24,27,28,30 October contain evidence consistent with them having been written to Burke. In the lack of conclusive evidence I take the letters to have been written to Brocklesby but if they were written to Burke it seems that he was in close contact with the merchants at a date far earlier than can be proved by the rest of the evidence presented in this thesis. I am indebted to the

"It will be a real pleasure and honour to me to receive the confidence designed by me by Mr. Hanbury and by Mr. Trecothick. I know their extensive trade. I respect their character and shall be happy in communicating with them upon the present formidable and unhappy temper and situation in the colonies." 118

Townshend who was in the country at the time stated that he was willing to come to town especially to meet Trecothick and Hanbury. On 10 November, however, Townshend had still seen neither Trecothick, Hanbury or Kelly for he wrote

"Will you let Mr. H(anbury) and Mr. T(recothick) know that I shall be very happy to see them on Saturday or Monday as shall best suit their convenience....Mr. Kelly disappoints me much in not coming." 119

Townshend wrote on Sunday 10 November and from this letter it can be presumed he was in contact with the merchants by 16 Or 18 November.

The evidence presented demonstrates that Rockingham, Newcastle and Townshend were making efforts to secure an appreciation of the nature and extent of the American problem and other ministers were ~~doing likewise~~¹²⁰ ~~and vice~~. Rockingham's activity is perhaps the most noteworthy. His industry, on the

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116. (contd) W. L. Clements Library for the loan of the microfilm of these and the Dowdeswell letters. The Kelly referred to is probably the William Kelly who appeared before the Stamp Act Committee. See Smith op. cit. pp. 174-193.
117. Ibid. Letters of Charles Townshend to Dr. Richard Brocklesby Townshend to Brocklesby 30 October 1765. The letters in brackets have been written in the same hand as the draft.
118. Ibid. Townshend to Brocklesby undated but endorsed October or November 1765.
119. Ibid. Townshend to Brocklesby 10 November 1765. I have supplied the bracketed letters in this quotation.
120. Cf. Sosin op. cit. pp. 73-75. and Lloyds Evening Post 4 - 6 December 1765 where it is reported that Sir William Meredith had been enquiring into the state of the cloth trade in Lancashire and another gentleman "under the direction of the Marquis of R." in Halifax.

basis of the evidence presented above, exceeded that of both Newcastle and Townshend and his attempts to gain both information and the sympathy of the merchants show that he was at least a conscientious politician, and establish that from the beginning the policy adopted by the administration was the result of careful and painstaking labour. In this early stage of the crisis Rockingham had gained advice from many different sources, and the information that he received represented many shades of opinion both British and American.

3. The Formulation of Policy.

The earliest meeting to discuss the policy that was to be adopted towards the Stamp Act seems to have been the dinner party to which Rockingham invited Trecothick in mid-¹²¹ November 1765. Having extended his invitation to dinner Rockingham wrote "I may then be able to talk more fully". Prior to this in the letter he had stated some of his own ideas on the Stamp Act. He wrote

"The difficulties are great the importance of the obedience in the colonies and British Legislature is no slight matter and yet perhaps it may be beyond doubt that the occasion which gave rise to all this confusion was ill-judged here. The particular and great inconvenience which you mention were perhaps intentionally to be so in order to force the compliance." ¹²²

In reply to Trecothick's pressing for an earlier meeting of Parliament Rockingham continued

¹²¹. See above p. 357. For a summary of the Stamp Act Crisis from this point see Sosin op. cit. p. 78 et seq. n. d. ¹²². W. W. M. R81-181 Rockingham to Trecothick n. d. but see above p. 337.

"When you consider the present circumstances you will not find that an earlier meeting of Parliament than intended can be of the utility you would hope, the Persons who were the planners &c of the Act will be the chief persons sitting in the House and the time necessary for re-elections must still be given before you could expect any moderation measures. Even as yet we have not all the evidence, which a few days or weeks will give us of the disposition of America and upon this point it is both necessary and wise to wait for good grounds to proceed upon." 123

Rockingham's draft reply is full of deletions and he obviously had considerable difficulty in composing it. He was finding already that

"The dilemma of the Rockingham government...was to find a way to redress the grievances of the merchants, and at the same time assuage the injured honour of Parliament and maintain at least the semblance of authority." 124

The attempts to restore stricken commerce while maintaining the rights of the British Parliament to legislate for the American colonies was the chief difficulty in formulating a policy.

There are unfortunately no records of who attended, or what occurred at, the dinner-party which was held about 12 November 1765 but as well as making the beginning of the attempts of the ministry to formulate a policy it also marks the inauguration of co-operation between the Rockingham administration and the merchants on the question of the Stamp Act, as distinct from mercantile pressure on the administration.

There was a further meeting of ministers on American

123. W.W.M. R81-181 Rockingham to Trecothick n.d. but see above pp.336-7 and for Trecothick's request for an earlier meeting of Parliament
 124. Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis p.265.

affairs on 20 November. This was called at Newcastle's request for he wrote on 17 November to Conway

"I must beg you would be so good as to let us have a meeting on Wednesday night for any business, either American as was designed or any other that may require consideration." 125

Barrington, the Secretary of War wrote to Newcastle on 18 November confirming this meeting, but no evidence of what was discussed there exists. There can be little doubt that there were other meetings of Ministers and informal discussions towards the end of November similar to the meeting held on 12 November, and the Ministry was also preparing the speech for the opening of Parliament. 127

Progress on the formulation of policy was slow. Rockingham at least had not made up his mind by the end of November 1765. On 27 November he wrote that he hoped

"to avoid the discussion of the Stamp Act till good Principles (~~were~~) laid down for easing and assisting North America." 128

and as late as 31 December 1765 Burke was able to write to Charles O'Hara with regard to America

"Administration has not yet conclusively (I imagine) fixed upon a plan in this respect, as every days information from abroad may necessitate some alteration."

- ~~125.~~ B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 f408 Newcastle to Conway 17 November 1765.
 126. B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 f414 Barrington to Newcastle 18 November 1765.
 127. See B. M. Add. Mss 32972 f29 Newcastle to John Offley 23 November 1765; B. M. Add. Mss. 32972 f29 Newcastle to Conway 24 November 1765.
 128. W. W. M. R19 Rockingham's notes on American affairs. Cf. Clark Rise of the British Treasury pp. 149-150.

although Burke personally was by this time convinced that the Stamp Act would have to be repealed.¹²⁹

At the beginning of December 1765 the pressure exerted on the administration by the merchants began to increase. At a general meeting of the merchants of London on Wednesday 4 December 1765 when Trecothick took the chair a committee of twenty-eight merchants was formed consisting of the principle merchants trading to each colony. Trecothick was elected chairman of the committee for on 6 December he was able to sign himself "Chairman to the Committee of Merchants of London to North America."¹³⁰ At this meeting it seems that particular merchants were chosen to represent each colony. For instance,¹³¹ Nicholas Ray was chosen to represent New York. It is likely that this meeting had been arranged at an earlier one for on 20 February 1766 the New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy recorded that

"That" After a private meeting of some staunch friends of America, a meeting was advertised of all the merchants trading to it....of whom a committee was appointed." ¹³²

Pressure also appears to have been put on the London merchants by the merchants of Bristol. The Committee appointed¹³³

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129. Burke Correspondence Vol. 1, p. 228. Edmund Burke to Charles O'Hara 31 December 1765. Cf. Cone op. cit. pp. 86-87.
130. See W.W.M. R1-537 "Copy of a letter to Leeds from Mr. Trecothick relating to the American Trade". (Cf. below App. 1)
131. See my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 35, 218 quoting New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy 20 February 1766. For Ray see also above p. 331 and my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 213-222.
132. See New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy 20 February 1766 quoted my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 218.
133. See W.W.M. R27 Minutes of the Stamp Act Committee p. 47 where Trecothick in his examination before the House of Commons stated "We were called on by the Bristol merchants this hastened our meeting for all the merchants trading

was asked

"to consider of the best method of application for procuring the Relief and Encouragement of the North American trade and to the manufacturing Citys and Towns for their Concurrence and Assistance."

134

and the meeting then adjourned until 6 December.

When the Committee met again on the appointed day a circular letter was approved and sent to 30 of the provincial and manufacturing towns together with a copy of the proceedings of the London merchants on 4 December. This letter stated that the slump in American trade had caused the meeting of the London merchants and noted, as this probably affected other merchants as well, that the London merchants desired the support of the other merchants in a

"regular application to Parliament or otherwise by a Petition from your Body by all the Interest you can make."

The opinion of the other merchants on the matter was requested
135
as the London merchants intended to use their views as a guide.

Among the Rockingham Papers there is a copy of the letter and proceedings which is a copy of the document sent to the
136
merchants and manufacturers of Leeds. There is also a draft in Trecothick's hand of the letter that was sent to the provincial towns. This document has been endorsed;

133. (contd) to North America...." Cf. Minchinton loc. cit. p. 152
see also Merchant Venturers Correspondence correspondence
in Bundle 10, Letters 1765 - and Masters Letter Book.

134. W.W.M. R1-537.

135. Ibid. W.W.M. R1-537 Cf. W.W.M. R27, pp. 47-48.

136. Ibid. R1-537 Copy of Trecothick's General Letter to town
of Leeds 6 December 1765.

"This letter concerted between the Marquis of R. to Mr. Trecothick the principal instrument in the happy repeal of the Stamp Act, ^{which} without giving up the British authority quieted the Empire." 137

If this letter was drafted to be sent out to the towns by Rockingham and Trecothick and copies were sent out by the merchants committee on 6 December, it would appear that this letter was drafted between 4 and 6 December for on 4 December the committee took no such action. The Gentleman's Magazine after reporting the meeting of 4 December noted

"A deputation from this committee waited on the Ministry to request their countenance in their intended application to Parliament and it is said met with great encouragement." 138

and it seems that the letter was agreed to at the meeting with the ministry. The precise method in which the original letter was drawn up is difficult to discern. If the original draft were Rockingham's it is reasonable to assume that it would be in his hand and most likely among the Rockingham Papers. If the document had been drawn up at a meeting of Rockingham and Trecothick and Rockingham was the prime mover of the measure it seems likely that he would have acted personally as amenuensis. As the document is in Trecothick's *hand* and practically without deletions it is probably not a draft but a copy of the letter that the merchants committee decided

137. Ibid R1-535 There is some doubt as to the authorship of this endorsement. Albemarle op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 319 states that it is Burke's hand but Smith op. cit. p. 284 contends that the writing is not that of Burke. I believe that the handwriting is that of Lady Rockingham and Dr. L. S. Sutherland has assured me that my assumption is correct although the late Sir Lewis Namier has informed me that he believes that the handwriting is definitely Burke's.

138. Vol. XXXV, p. 588.

to send which Trecothick gave to Rockingham.

On 6 December there was no agreement in the ministry on American policy and as late as 2 January 1766 Rockingham wrote to Newcastle about the disagreement in the Cabinet over the repeal of the American Stamp Act. ¹³⁹ Denny de Berdt, a London American merchant, the agent in London for the Massachusetts House of Representatives, did record, however, to an American correspondent on 16 December 1765

"I have the pleasure to acquaint you the ministry are entirely convinced of the bad tendency of the late regulations and disposed to relieve you, but expect a warm opposition from the old ministry and what they call the country party...." ¹⁴⁰

The weakness of the ministry had been obvious from the start and Rockingham probably realised by December 1765 that the merchants might be ^auseful weapon to use. Whether he had any idea at this time of using the petitions which the circular letter evoked as a means of putting pressure upon the House of Commons is difficult to say.

As the circular letter is couched in the broadest possible terms it seems probable that its author was fully aware of the ministerial problems. It thus seems likely that Rockingham agreed to Trecothick's suggestion of a circular letter provided it demanded no action that would prejudice the merchants against any measure the government was likely to adopt. Thus

139. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f11 Rockingham to Newcastle 2 January 1766.

140. Denny de Berdt to Samuel White 16 December 1765 printed in "Letters of Denny de Berdt 1757-1770" loc. cit. p. 307. I have not been able to identify clearly who the "country party" were. Perhaps Rockingham was referring to the country gentlemen who would object to the repeal of the American Stamp Act because taxation at home would be increased.

the actual circular letter would be drawn up by the merchants committee and a copy sent to Rockingham for his approval. The petitions that the committee succeeded in obtaining by this letter by the time that Parliament opened were of the greatest importance, but Trecothick and the committee also collected a large number of letters from America countermanding orders for British goods. With other members of the merchants committee Trecothick had called upon the Duke of Grafton and General Conway and presented these letters before 11 December.¹⁴¹ By 1 January 1766 Trecothick was already preparing the London merchants' petition. Among the Rockingham Papers there is a document in Trecothick's hand endorsed "Draft of Application from the London merchants through Mr. Trecothick."¹⁴² This document is dated 1 January 1766 and is the same save for a few minor alterations as the petition that the London merchants presented in the House of Commons on 17 January of which there is a copy in the same bundle of the Rockingham Papers. It therefore seems that Trecothick and Rockingham either co-operated to produce the London merchants petition or Trecothick drafted it and Rockingham gave the document his approval. With the petition Trecothick presented a series of "Proofs and Observations" in which he endeavoured to justify the allegations made in the petition. There is also a copy of this document among the Rockingham Papers. Copies of both¹⁴³

141. Clark, British Opinion and the American Revolution p.41
 see also Lloyds Evening Post and the British Chronicle
 no. 1315, 11-13 December 1765, p. 575. (cf. below Appendix 1)
 142. W. W. M. R57.
 143. W. W. M. R57.

documents also exist among the Newcastle Papers which seem to be copies made for Newcastle. The 'Proofs and Observations' are in Joseph Harrison's hand which presupposes Rockingham had them copied for him.¹⁴⁴

Dennys de Berdt, another member of Trecothick's merchant committee, was also active at this time. As agent for the House of Representatives of Massachusetts he had shown the petitions sent to him from America to Lord Dartmouth before¹⁴⁵ 14 December 1765. On the 27 December he wrote to an American correspondent :

"As soon as the ministry who are entirely in Your interest think it proper for me to Act, which they will faithfully inform me what steps to take...." ¹⁴⁶

By such means were the merchants gradually increasing the pressure they could bring to bear on the administration. In turn the administration was realising the value of mercantile pressure and was beginning to organise it.

When Parliament met after Christmas the petitions caused by Trecothick's letter began to come flooding in. Counting the London petition there were twenty-six from English and Scottish manufacturing and trading towns, complaining of the decline in American trade. The first twenty-four of these petitions were presented at nine sittings of the House

144. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff210-11 is the Petition and ff214-5 is the Allegations.

145. Dennys de Berdt to Samuel White 14 December 1765 in "Letters of Dennys de Berdt" loc. cit. p. 307. Cf. below Appendix 1.

146. Ibid. p. 309 De Berdt to Samuel White 27 December 1765.

147

of Commons, held within a space of thirteen days. The pressure on Parliament was obviously increased by the arrival in so short a time of so many petitions. It is probable that as the provincial merchants arrived in London they reported to Trecothick and he arranged that the petitions should be presented in groups and not singly. Dennys de Berdt wrote on 16 January

"The London Merchants Petition is delivered, the several Parts of the Country will follow...." 148

147. Journals of the House of Commons Vol. XXX, London 1767, p. 462 et seq. The petitions were read as follows;

17 January 1766.	London, Merchant Venturers of Bristol, Merchants of Bristol, Liverpool, Halifax, Leeds, Lancaster Manchester, Leicester, and Bradford (Wilts)
20 January 1766	Frome, Birmingham, Coventry, Macclesfield, Wolverhampton, Stourbridge, Dudley.
21 January 1766	Minehead.
22 January 1766	Taunton.
23 January 1766	Witney.
24 January 1766	Glasgow and Chippenham.
28 January 1766	Nottingham.
29 January 1766.	Melksham.
24 February 1766	Worcester.
27 February 1766	Sheffield.

Clark op. cit. p. 42 states "On January 17th the House of Commons received ten petitions for the repeal of the Stamp Act, on 20th seven more and by 27th February eight more - thirty-five in all" This total of thirty-five does not agree with the constituent figures which agree with mine. The source is the same and the final total would thus appear to be a mis-calculation. Rockingham appears to have begun to list the petitions and their dates as well. See R58-1 which is an incomplete list of petitions.)

148. De Berdt to Samuel White 16 January 1766 in "Letters of Dennys de Berdt" loc. cit. p. 310.

In his examination before the Stamp Act Committee Trecothick stated that the merchants of London had declined to supply a draft of a petition because they thought it "improper".¹⁴⁹ Indeed had a draft been supplied the whole campaign could far too easily have been interpreted as a deliberate ministerial attempt to play on mercantile support. On 2 January 1766 Trecothick had written to William Reeve at Bristol:

"I have....to acquaint you and the rest of the worthy Brethren of your City, that the cause of you not having received a minute detail of our proceedings here, arises from the Consideration, that the particular distress of Commerce in each port and manufacturing town will be best expressed from their own feelings, it being the wish of our committee that such only as either are or soon expect to be aggrieved should complain - on this basis you will doubtless forward your complaints."

He went on to say that no copy of the petition would be made public until after it had been presented to Parliament but outlined the principal contents of the petition for Reeve.¹⁵⁰ Thus, although he was willing to admit before the Stamp Act Committee that the petitions had been sought Trecothick was anxious to show that this did not detract from their significance and he stated that he believed that they would have come had no circular letter been written.¹⁵¹ The fact that twenty-six towns petitioned and only thirty circular letters were sent out is some measure of the success of the movement.

Moreover Trecothick and his colleagues were not working without opposition. On 1 January 1766 Sir William Meredith, the staunch Rockingham Whig, wrote to Edmund Burke stating

149. W.W.M. R27 "Minutes of the Stamp Act Committee" pp.47-48.

150. Merchant Venturers Correspondence, Bundle 10, Trecothick to Reeve 2 January 1766.

151. W.W.M. R27 "Minutes of the Stamp Act Committee" p.57.

that Trecothick's letter had been concealed from the Liverpool
 152
 merchants until Meredith had asked to see it. Here the Mayor,
 James Poole, seems to have consulted the Earl of Buckingham-
 shire, a supporter of Grenville, and having been advised
 against a petition, the merchants did not petition in spite of
 153
 an additional letter from Trecothick.

It must also be acknowledged that if Trecothick was the
 leader of the pressure group in London, the London merchants
 were not the only mercantile group endeavouring to organise
 agitation. Reference has been made above to the original
 initiative of the Merchant Venturers. They also seem to have
 154
 put pressure on the merchants of Birmingham, and the merchants
 of Liverpool in their turn, apparently ignorant of the initi-
 ative taken by the Merchant Venturers, tried to persuade the
 155
 latter to produce a petition to Parliament. Moreover minis-
 terial agents also seem to have been active in trying to
 156
 produce petitions.

There is an interesting relationship between the places

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152. W.W.M. "Burke Letters" 1-49 Meredith to Burke 1 January 1766.
153. See B.M. Add. Mss. 22358 Correspondence of Lord Buckinghamshire 1762-68, Buckinghamshire to Mayor of Norwich which consists of copies of Trecothick's Circular Letter of 6 December. Poole to Trecothick 14 December 1765, Trecothick to Poole 27 December 1765 Poole to Buckinghamshire 10 February 1766, For Buckinghamshire's association with Grenville see The Grenville Correspondence, passim.
154. See above p. 344 and Merchant Venturers Correspondence Bundle 10, Letters 1765, J. Twigg to the Merchant Venturers 26 December 1765.
155. Ibid. American Committee at Liverpool to William Reeve 31 December 1765.
156. See Lloyds Evening Post and British Chronicle No. 1312 4 December 1765 - 6 December 1765 p. 551. See also W.W.M. Bk 1-49 William Meredith to Edmund Burke 1 January 1766.

from which the petitions came and the day on which they were presented. The petitions were presented in two main groups. On 17 January ten petitions were presented. These came from three main areas: the West Riding industrial area, the Lancashire industrial area and the Bristol area. On 20 January seven more petitions were presented. Five of these were from the Birmingham area, one from the Bristol area and another from Cheshire. There does not seem to be any pattern about the other petitions but the fact that most of the big industrial regions, particularly the Birmingham area, managed to present all their petitions on one day points to a considerable amount of local organisation as well as organisation by Trecothick
157
in London.

Not only did the circular letter omit reference to any specific measures, but also none of the petitions sought the
158
repeal of the Stamp Act directly. This may be taken as evidence, as Sir George Savile believed, that the merchants
159
knew only that their trade was suffering, or as evidence that Rockingham's co-operation with Trecothick before the ministry had decided upon the exact policy to pursue, made it necessary for the merchants to demand amelioration in general terms only. This latter explanation is the more likely. If the merchants

157. See above p. 350 n. 147. Cf. my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 42-43.

158. Cf. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 462 et seq.

159. See above p. 350 W.W.M. R1-519 Sir George Savile to Rockingham 1 November 1765.

had demanded repeal of the Stamp Act and the ministry had agreed upon this solution not only would it have looked as if they had reached too precipitate a decision but it would have given the Grenvilleites an excellent opportunity to attack the Rockingham Whigs for subservience to the merchants. Concerning this Newcastle wrote the following comment

"Necessary to restore the tranquility of North America - (to) re-establish our commerce.
I am against taxation. The manufacturers here (are) against the Stamp Act - Repeal not mentioned (in the petitions) - (because) to have begun at the Repeal and go out (with) Repeal - A plan improper to do - but yet the right." 160

Under the pervading influence of the merchants the policy of the administration to repeal the Stamp Act and yet to precede the repeal by a Declaratory Act was gradually evolved.

161
After Rockingham's dinner party on 12 November 1765, which Trecothick attended, there is no definite evidence of further meetings until 13 December. It is, however, reasonable to assume that there were other meetings in the ensuing months

In mid-December efforts were still being made to find out Pitt's opinion. Contact with him was maintained through his chief mercantile adherent, William Beckford. Following a meeting at which both Beckford and Sir William Baker were

162
present on 15 December, Onslow wrote to Newcastle

160. B. M. Add. Mss. 33001 f83 Memorandum of Newcastle 3 February 1765.

161. See above p. 341.

162. Grenville Papers Vol. III, p. 110. Mr. Jenkinson to Mr. Grenville 15 December 1765.

"I have the pleasure of telling Your Grace that I found Beckford all I could wish. The thing Mr. Pitt doubts about is nothing material. In the American matter he does not doubt indeed. Beckford declares he is thoroughly and unalterably averse to the late People, and that he talks of coming up the first day, if he thought it possible for them to think of carrying a question against us. In short he is as friendly as we could possibly expect, and I make no doubt will show it. Beckford himself will certainly be strong in our favour o' Tuesday. (The opening of Parliament)." 163

In view of these reassuring statements which must have come to Rockingham's ears it would seem it was not until towards the end of December at least that Rockingham began to regard the merchants as his chief ally. Perhaps it was not until the repeal campaign was well under way.

Conferences between the merchants and the administration appear to have been frequent at this time. George Onslow stated that on Friday 13 December he was "engaged to a great dinner at Dowdeswell's of Americans". There are records of other dinner parties on 27 and 31 December which were used to discuss the question of America. On 1 January 1766 Newcastle wrote to Rockingham concerning a dinner party on 27 December

"There was a meeting at your Lordship's house of Lord Egmont, Mr. Conway, Lord Dartmouth, Mr. Attorney General, (Charles Yorke) and I am not sure, if there was not Sir William Baker, Mr. Dowdeswell was there, several

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163. B. M. Add. Mss. 32972 f251 Onslow to Newcastle 15 December 1765; "late People" refers to the Grenville administration and "the first day" to the first day of the session of Parliament.
164. B. M. Add. Mss. 32972 f202 Onslow to Newcastle 11 December 1765.

resolutions were proposed to be taken in both houses by Mr. Attorney General relating to the proceedings in America and agreed to; and one strong motion made by Mr. Yorke, for an Act of Parliament declaring the right of the Parliament of England; and also an address to the King, promising to support His Majesty to the utmost extent the last, or the two last, I hear were strongly objected to by my Lord Egmont and Mr. Conway." 165

Tentative attempts were thus being made to formulate a policy. Sir William Baker attended the meeting, one would suppose, as a government expert on trade. He had been consulted by Rockingham on the question of American trade as early as
166
October 1765.

Rockingham replied to Newcastle's letter of 1 January 1766 making some comment on the dinner party of 27 December 1765 and mentioning a second one on 31 December at which
167
Baker, Trecothick, George Aufrere, Dowdeswell, Lord Dartmouth and General Conway were present and at which "much passed in general conversation on the subject of the Trade and the facilities which might be given to it and the alteration to some late regulations". He continued

"Upon the whole what has yet passed either at the former or at the latter dinner, I think one thing seems to be the general opinion that is the Legislative Right of this country over the colonies should be declared....

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165. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f3 Newcastle to Rockingham 1 January 1766. Cf. ibid. f11 Rockingham to Newcastle 2 January 1766.
166. B. M. Add. Mss. 32971 f163 "Points for Consideration with my Lord Rockingham tomorrow" 29 October 1765. See above p. 315.
167. Another merchant M.P. and supporter of the administration. For him see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 143-6. Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p. 34.

I think it also seemed the general opinion that in the King's speech and in all the Parliamentary proceedings the intention of giving the colonies every possible relief in Trade and Commerce should go hand in hand with declarations of authority or censures of riots and tumults. The main matter in which as yet I cannot see exactly where and how the different opinions can be brought to agree is what must finally be done upon the Stamp Act. All would agree to various amendments and curtailings of the Act. Some as yet - not very many to a suspension, very few to a repeal. Your Grace knows that among ourselves there are differences of opinions and I am sure your Grace knows that we must have but one opinion and stick steadily to it when this matter comes into parliament." 168

Rockingham then mentioned a further attempt to enlist Pitt's
169

support and concluded "Trecothick and the merchants and
170

trading and manufacturing towns go on well". The absence

of evidence of other informal meetings does not mean that

none were held. Indeed the existing evidence quoted above

points to the probability of other meetings similar to that

of 13, 27 and 31 December.

168. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 ff11-13 Rockingham to Newcastle 2 January 1766. Cf. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f327 "Some occurrences of yesterday sent to Mr. White 28 June 1766" The difference of opinion referred to were probably those with Charles Yorke. See below pp. 361-364 . Cf. Ritcheson op. cit. p. 51, Winstanley op. cit. p. 256.

169. Ibid. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f13 Rockingham to Newcastle 2 January 1766. For Rockingham's attempt to obtain the support of Pitt before this in December 1765 see Chatham Correspondence Vol. II. p. 355 Shelburne to Pitt 21 December 1765, ibid. p. 359 Pitt to Shelburne December 1765 n. d. but obviously a reply to Shelburne's letter of 21 December 1765.

170. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f13 Rockingham to Newcastle 2 January 1766.

If Rockingham as leader of the administration was acutely aware of the merchants as a pressure group on the ministry and was becoming aware of their possible uses as a means of putting pressure on Parliament to obtain support for the ministerial policy, Newcastle seems to have perceived more clearly than the other ministers the importance of the commercial aspect of the crisis. In reply to Rockingham's explanation of the meetings of 27 and 31 December he wrote

" I fear....that the idea of authority and relief going hand in hand...will be found very difficult, and for the one, I should incline rather to be deficient, in that, which is only a declaration in words, than in the other, on which depend the most material interest of this country, viz, the recovery, or enjoyment of our trade, and commerce; for, when once that to America is lost as it is at present totally suspended, the other branches of trade to foreign countries is at present so low, and depends so much on the will and caprice of the power with whom we trade, that there is no great dependence to be had upon it." 171

If Newcastle's statement is evaluated in relation to the information presented in the section of this thesis devoted to trade it can be seen that he made an accurate assessment of
172
the situation.

The tentative plans to formulate a policy made at the meetings in late 1765 were made more urgent because of the opening of Parliament on 16 January 1766. As the Rockingham ministry was weak in the House of Commons it was necessary that a clear policy should be laid down on which its supporters

171. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f25 Newcastle to Rockingham 3 January 1766.
172. Cf. above pp. 18-40 especially pp. 23, 28.

could vote without hesitation. Unanimity of opinion was essential. Repeal thus became preferable to amendment, for whereas bickering would arise within the ministry on the nature of the amendment, repeal was a clear cut issue on which the ministry would either succeed or fall. Modification was more likely to cause division within the party and Rockingham must have been aware that in spite of the King's predilection for amendment ¹⁷³ it would probably satisfy neither the merchants nor the Americans. In spite of the general nature of the merchants' petitions Rockingham can have had little doubt that they were demanding repeal and he desperately needed their support for his ministry.

The Stamp Act was not only an imperial and economic problem, it had now also become a bone of contention in party politics. Not only were the Rockingham Whigs, the Grenvilleites and the King involved, Rockingham was perpetually concerned with the uncalculable influence of Pitt and his hold on the people, and he and his followers were more likely to vote for a measure that would win popular support such as the repeal of the Stamp Act than for its maintenance or modification. ¹⁷⁴ Amendment thus appeared to have less chance of success than repeal of the Stamp Act and when Rockingham and his colleagues decided on repeal these considerations must have weighed heavily on their minds. To carry repeal Rockingham

173. See the note on the King's opinion on the repeal of the Stamp Act at W.W.M. R2-28 c. 21 February 1766 and ibid. R2-29 c. 21 February 1766. Cf. Albemarle Vol. I, p. 298 et seq; Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-90 Vol. III, p. 455.

174. Cf. Steven Watson op. cit. pp. 114-116.

was driven into the arms of the merchants; their support was a necessity. Until repeal was decided upon complete co-operation could not begin, for Trecothick and his colleagues would not have unconditionally supported the administration. The policy of repeal thus became a political manoeuvre necessitated by the occurrences in America, the activities of a pressure group, the attitude of the opposition and the need for a united ministry. In spite of this the Declaratory Act had to be accepted as a salve to the conscience of those members of the administration who felt that American resistance to the Stamp Act challenged the authority of the British parliament.

These were the facts which Rockingham and his colleagues bore in mind when they finally evolved their policy in January 1766 at the time the merchants petitions were being presented. The King's speech at the opening of Parliament was deliberately
175
ambiguous. There were good reasons for this. Firstly, even if Rockingham and many other members of the Cabinet had
176
accepted the repeal of the Stamp Act as a necessity, there were still waverers, most notably the King and Charles Yorke, and
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these had to be convinced. Secondly it was Yorke who drew up
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the King's speech and finally there was no point in unnecessarily alarming those sections of the Commons that were
179.
dedicated to the Stamp Act.

175. Gipson, The British Empire etc Vol. X, pp. 376-377. Cf. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 446.

176. See "The Great Debate in the Committee of the Whole House of Commons on the Stamp Act 1766 as reported by Nathaniel Ryder" by L. H. Gipson in The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Geography Vol. 86, No. 1, Philadelphia, January 1962 p. 10.

177. See below p. 361 and pp. 391-392.

178. See above p. 357 and note 173.

As Sir Lewis Namier has stated the final policy to be adopted seems to have been evolved at two small informal meetings¹⁸⁰ at Rockingham's home on 19 and 21 January 1766. Namier goes on to say that of those present Charles Townshend was "by far the ablest and best versed in American affairs" and it was his idea of a Declaration of Right coupled with a repeal of the Stamp Act first enunciated in a speech on 17 December 1765¹⁸¹ which emerged as policy. It is to be noticed, however, that Townshend's attitude was somewhat ambivalent and he did not¹⁸² play a leading part in the repeal campaign. Charles Yorke seems to have been the member of the Cabinet who was most concerned with the question of the right of the British Parliament to tax the American colonies. It seems largely to have been in deference to his opinion that the Declaratory Act was phrased in strong terms and that it was passed before the Stamp Act, for Yorke wanted the power of taxation specifically stated.¹⁸³ Rockingham himself realised that repeal was the essential factor. He wrote to Charles Yorke

"The Resolutions (agreed upon at the meetings of 19 and 21 January 1766) in general exceed in spirit what the generality of our friends wish; but in expectation

179. See Gipson op. cit. pp. 376-377. See also W.W.M. R1-549 Yorke to Rockingham 30 December 1765.

180. Namier, Charles Townshend p. 23.

181. Ibid. p. 23. Cf. Namier and Burke Charles Townshend pp. 138-139.

182. Ibid. pp. 138-140, Namier Charles Townshend pp. 22-24. Cf. Smith op. cit. p. 19.

183. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32973 f3 Newcastle to Rockingham 1 January 1766; Add. Mss. 35430 Political Correspondence of Charles Yorke 1754-1768 ff31-2, Rockingham to Yorke 17 January 1766 f33 Rockingham to Yorke 20 January 1766; ff37-8 Rockingham to Yorke 25 January 1766. See also W.W.M. R1-560 Yorke to Rockingham 25 January 1766. Cf. Ritchison op. cit. pp. 25-26.

that coming into them will pave the way for the actual repeal of the Stamp Act, I think they will be agreed to. In one of your alterations I dislike the expression of undoubted rights, and am sure, upon consideration how goading that word would be to a great person in the House of Commons, it cannot be advisable to put it in.

The other alteration which I particularly object to, is the insertion of 'taxation' and I think I may say that it is our firm resolution in the House of Lords (I mean among ourselves) that the word must not be inserted. I see more and more the difficulties that surround us, and therefore feel the necessity of not temporizing.

Convinced as I am that the confusion at home will be much too great (if the repeal is not obtained) for us to withstand either as private or publick men - my opinion being entirely for repeal, I shall certainly persist in that measure." 184

It is noteworthy that Yorke's objections to the policy were paralleled by his objections to the Treasury Minute of 15 November 1765.

With regard to these meetings which settled policy Newcastle wrote to Rockingham on 20 January 1766

"I, this moment, hear that your Lordship has a meeting; tomorrow night of the Duke of Grafton, Mr. Conway, Lord Dartmouth, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Charles Townshend, the Attorney General, Mr. Hussey, that Lord Hardwicke was spoke to, but does not go, to settle Parliamentary Proceedings upon the American affairs. I hear also, that you are all like to differ widely among yourselves. My informer was uncertain whether Lord Egmont was to be there or not." 186

On the night of the meeting Lady Rockingham reported to Newcastle

"He (Rockingham) has seen tonight a pretty mixed set of company and bids me say that the conversation he has had with them promises to be productive of things going on well.... My Lord is now at supper in the next room with part of those mentioned which are Lord Egmont

184. B. M. Add. Mss. 35430 f38 Rockingham to Yorke 25 January 1766.

185. See above, pp. 318-319.

186. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f202 Newcastle to Rockingham 20 January 1766. Richard Hussey (1715-1790) M.P. For him see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p. 662.

Charles Yorke and Charles Townshend and who else I know not." 187

On 23 January Rockingham was able to send Newcastle the resolutions that had been agreed upon at the meetings. The Resolutions condemned the Colonial opposition to the Stamp Act, made arrangements for punitive measures and a declaration of the right of the British Parliament to legislate for America. Newcastle did not approve of these resolutions. He expressed his sentiments to Rockingham upon them in the following words

"The Repeal your Lordship knows is the great point with me; that is the only thing that can set things right, and I am afraid, that such a number of resolutions and some of them in such strong terms, will prevent even the Repeal from having its effect, and leave the Colonies in the same confusion and distraction as it is at present." 188

Similar resolutions had previously been proposed and rejected at a meeting at Lord Northington's for on 24 January Newcastle wrote again

"That my Ld.R. always knew that my great point was the Repeal, and that I thought, that ought to precede any other resolutions; and am not less of that opinion from having seen, and perused those resolutions proposed, which I apprehend, are pretty much the same, with those laid before us, at my Ld. Chancellor's by Gen'l Conway and were unanimously agreed there to be laid aside." 189

There does not appear to be any other reference to the meeting at Northington's.

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187. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f224 Lady Rockingham to Newcastle 21 January 1766.
 188. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f260 Newcastle to Rockingham 24 January 1766.
 189. B. M. Add. Mss. 33001 f56 Items for Ld. Rockingham 24 January 1766.

Newcastle was also trying to use his influence with
 190
 Charles Yorke at this time. His views on the repeal of the
 Stamp Act and the motives which moved him to support it are
 admirably summarised in a letter he wrote to the Archbishop
 of Canterbury on 2 February 1766. In this he said

"I am most thoroughly of the opinion, that the interest, and the very being of this country, as a trading nation depends upon the immediate repeal of the Stamp Act; not as an illegal Act, but as the most imprudent, and pernicious one, that ever was made, and that was, as is very well known, my opinion when it passed....

I have been bred up to think that the trade of this nation is the sole support of it. I have the mortification to see, that our trade is declining in every part of the world, but in America, and in many places quite gone....If this should continue, and I know of no other means of preventing it, but a total and immediate repeal of the Act, we shall undoubtedly have riots, mobs and insurrections in all the great trading towns in the Kingdom; and numbers of our manufacturers turned a starving....

It is said on the other side, Don't yield, persevere and they must come back....But what I fear most is, they will fling themselves into the hands of France or Spain, who will gladly take up their cause; and we may have a war in America sooner than we imagine.

The total cession by France of all their possessions in America, I always thought and said was a most valuable acquisition to this country, that cession is now complete; we are now beginning to receive the benefit of it, when by this unfortunate Stamp Act, we are not only deprived of that additional advantage, but also of the real and solid ones, which this country has long enjoyed from our own plantations." 191

Newcastle thus favoured repeal because of the commercial crisis that the Stamp Act had created but he was also influenced

190. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f275 Newcastle to Rockingham 25 January 1766.

191. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 ff342-3 Newcastle to the Archbishop of Canterbury 2 February 1766. The opinions expressed in the third paragraph of this extract which emphasize the strategic argument for repeal form an interesting parallel with Pitt's views.

by strategic reasons and in these reasons can be seen the influence of his long years of political power.

Agreement to repeal the Stamp Act and to precede the repeal by a Declaratory Act had been reached at the meetings of the leading members of the ministry. Rockingham was now in a position to co-operate fully with the merchants as repeal must have been a policy that was highly satisfactory to them. I have discovered no evidence on the merchants' attitude to the Declaratory Act. Rockingham probably tried to explain it away to the merchants as a necessity because the rights of the British Parliament had been challenged and endeavoured to play down its importance. Possibly the merchants were so preoccupied in obtaining repeal that they overlooked the importance of this measure. In any case Rockingham now needed the support of the merchants more than ever before because the policy formulated had to be executed. Rockingham knew he had to pass the Declaratory Act to hold the ministry together; he also knew by this time that Pitt would oppose it just as Grenville would oppose the repeal.¹⁹² The merchants now represented his only hope of survival. He had to use them, together with the other evidence before the Stamp Act Committee, to secure repeal, just as he had used the merchants' petitions during the period the policy of

192. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 ff237-40 "Lord Rockingham's Account of his conversation with Mr. Pitt on Tuesday last the 21st inst." 23 January 1766.

repeal was being formulated, to prepare the way for measures which would relieve the slump in the American trade. The merchants had now ceased to be a pressure group and had become his chief allies. How far they influenced Rockingham's personal decision in favour of repeal is difficult to say. They are not mentioned in his correspondence as exercising pressure upon him, but one must suspect their activities cannot have been without influence.

4. The Parliamentary Campaign.

The Committee of the Whole House to examine the American
 Papers sat for the first time on 28 January 1766. On 24
 February 1766 the resolutions from the committee which were to
 form the basis of the repeal of the Stamp Act and the Declar-
 atory Act, were reported to the House of Commons by Rose Fuller,
 the chairman of the committee. These resolutions were based
 on the policy which had been formulated by Rockingham and his
 colleagues in January 1766. During the sixteen parliamentary
 meetings between 28 January and 24 February 1766 the committee
 sat on thirteen occasions and examined twenty-six witnesses.

Mr. Smith states

Over half of the witnesses had most definite connections
 with the ministry, and many of the others had probable
 connections. In all nineteen of the twenty-two witnesses
 were probably known to the ministry in one way or another.

Of the twenty-two witnesses Smith considers, fourteen were
 British merchants or manufacturers.

Between 28 January and 24 February fifty-four witnesses
 were ordered to attend the committee according to the Journals
 of the House of Commons. This means that in this period the
 committee heard only half of the available witnesses, and of
 the twenty-six witnesses who gave evidence the names of only

193. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 501.

194. Ibid. pp. 601-2.

195. Smith op. cit. p. 9.

196. Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 2, n. 1 and 36 n. 3,

197. Smith op. cit. p. 280. In my total of witnesses I have
 included the extra four witnesses to which Smith refers
 in p. 2, n. 1.

198. I include John Masterman the goldsmith in this total.

199. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, pp. 513-602.

200

fifteen appear in the Commons Journals. The witnesses not mentioned in the Journals are the provincial and lesser manufacturers and merchants. ²⁰¹ It is difficult to understand why the names of these men who gave evidence on 12, 13, and 17 February are omitted from the Commons Journals and whether it has any significance. Another question that may be asked is did the other men who were called fail to give evidence before the committee before 24 February 1766 ?.

Further consideration of these problems seems necessary. Smith lists and classifies the witnesses who gave evidence according to the Minutes of the Committee in the Rockingham Papers, and I have marked with an asterisk in the list below those whose names appear in the Commons Journals and added further detail where necessary.

<u>Name of Witness</u>	<u>Commons Journal</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Detail</u>	<u>Date of Evidence</u>
Dr. Thomas Moffatt	*	Refugee		31 January 1766
Martin Howard	*	Refugee		31 January 1766
Major Thomas James	*	Refugee		31 January 1766
Colonel George Mercer	*	Refugee		31 January 1766
Barlow Trecothick	*	Merchant (London)	London Merchants' Committee	11 February 1766
Capel Hanbury	*	Merchant (London)	London Merchants' Committee	11 February 1766
Daniel Mildred	*	Merchant (London)	London Merchants Committee	11 February 1766

200. The names of Morris, Crafton, Bunney, Dawson, Elam, Farrar, Halliday, Hamilton, Glassford, Hose, Irwin definitely do not appear. John Masterman Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 513 may be the George Masterman who gave evidence. Smith pp. 232-5. James Kerr Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 530 may be the James Carr whose evidence is in B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff182-203.

201. Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 36-37.

James Balfour	*	American	12 February 1766
William Kelly	*	American	12 February 1766
Thomas Morris		Frameworkknitter (Nottingham)	12 February 1766
Robert Crafton		Hosier (London)	12 February 1766
Joseph Bunney		Hosier (Leicester)	12 February 1766
Obadiah Dawson		Woollen and worsted manufacturer (Leeds)	12 February 1766
Emanuel Elam		Woollen manufacturer (Leeds)	12 February 1766
Benjamin Farrar		Unidentified (Halifax)	12 February 1766
William Halliday		Merchant (Liverpool)	12 February 1766
George Masterman	*	Goldsmith (London)	13 February 1766
William Reeve	*	Merchant (Bristol)	13 February 1766
Robert Hamilton		Fustian and Check Manufacturer (Manchester)	13 February 1766
John Glassford		Merchant (Glasgow)	13 February 1766
Benjamin Franklin	*	Agent	13 February 1766
John Hose		Shoemaker (London)	13 February 1766

To these may be added the names of the other four men who gave evidence on 17 February 1766. 202.

James Carr		Merchant	17 February 1766
James Irwin		Planter	17 February 1766
Beeston Long	*	Merchant	17 February 1766
Richard Oswald	*	Retired Merchant	17 February 1766

Of these four, three were concerned with the West Indies, the fourth, Oswald, was obviously a Grenvilleite witness. 203

The Commons Journals gives the names of individuals ordered to attend the committee as witnesses. In the list below I have bracketed the names as given by Smith and marked with an asterisk the men who are actually known to have given evidence before the Stamp Act Committee. 204

202. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff182-203 "Minutes of the Stamp Act Committee". Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 2-3 n. 1.

203. Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 2-3, ppn. 1. For Oswald (1705-1784) see also Dictionary of National Biography Vol. XIV, p. 122b. He was possibly a relative of James Oswald (1715-63) ibid p. 122d who spoke and voted against the Stamp Act Repeal. For him see also Namier and Brooke The House of Commons op. cit. Vol. III, pp. 237-40. For the use of the term refugee see above n. 102.

15 January 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee.

Dr. Thomas Moffatt *
 Martin Howard *
 Major Thomas Jones (James) *

29 January 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee.

Colonel George Mercer *

3 February 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee on Mr.
 Nugent's motion. 205

Dennys de Berdt
 Joseph Sherwood
 Thomas Life
 Benjamin Franklin *
 Henry Wilmot
 George Walker
 Stephen Fuller
 William Knox
 Edward Montague

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3 February 1766 - On Sir Robert Ladbroke's motion.

Barlow Trecothick *
 James Crockatt
 Brook Watson
 John Stewart
 George Hayley
 Gilbert Franklyn
 Edward Athawes
 Capel Hanbury *
 Daniel Mildred *
 William Kelly *
 Stephen Sayer
 William Bollan
 John Smith
 John Powell
 John Wentworth
 James Balfour *
 William Davies
 (George) John Masterman *
 John Bland
 Nicholas Ray

7 February 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee.

Lieutenant Balfour
 Captain Rooke
 Matthew French
 Captain Drummond

Captain Partridge
 Mr. Young
 Mr. Hosfall
 Captain Dillon
 Daniel Perreau
 William Reeve *

11 February 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee.

James Kerr (Carr) *
 Colonel Robert Spragge
 John Morgan

12 February 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee on Mr. Nugent's motion.

Robert Hale

13 February 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee on Thomas Whateley's motion. 207

Beeston Long *
 Richard Maitland

13 February 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee on Mr. Nugent's motion.

Captain Turner
 Mr. Jackson
 - Williams

15 February 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee.

Richard Oswald

17 February 1766 - Ordered to attend Committee on Lord Frederick Campbell's motion. 208

James Glen

204. This list is compiled from Commons Journals Vol. XXX, pp. 513-602. I am assuming that the only men who gave evidence before 24 February are those whose evidence is recorded in the copies of the minutes of the evidence in the Newcastle and Rockingham Papers. I do not include in this list Daniel Race of the Bank of England who was ordered to attend the Committee on 24 January with an account of bullion from America 1748-1765. See Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 500. There is a record of Race's evidence in a letter from Grey Cooper to Rockingham 'Tuesday 9, 9'clock'. The document can be dated from internal evidence to 15 or 14 February 1766. It is misplaced in a bundle of papers on the bullion trade.

The first four men ordered to attend the Committee appear to have been American refugees. The argument that these men had every reason to do as the ministry wished has been presented elsewhere. Then on 3 February on Mr. Nugent's motion nine more witnesses were ordered to attend the Committee. This Mr. Nugent must have been either Robert Nugent or his son Edmund Nugent. Robert Nugent was member for Bristol and he was considered to be the first member for that city who truly represented the commercial interests there. But he voted against the repeal of the Stamp Act and seems to have consistently opposed the Rockinghams. Like his father, Edmund Nugent was connected with the Grenvilleites and it is therefore immaterial which of these two proposed the witnesses; neither would have been working for Rockingham. Indeed as all these men were colonial agents and Grenville had consulted the agents when considering the Stamp Act he possibly hoped to use them to prove that the Stamp Act was practicable and no other form of taxation in America was

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205. See below p. 372.
 206. See below p. 374.
 207. See below p. 375.
 208. See below p. 376.
 209. See Smith op. cit. pp. 39-84. For the use of the term refugees see above p. 102.
 210. See Naier Structure of Politics pp. 90, 356 n. 1 and The Chatham Administration 1766-68 by John Brooke, London 1956, p. 19. For his representation of Bristol see B. M. Add. Mss. 35692 ff 130-133, Dean Tucker to Hardwicke 13 March 1765. See also Judd op. cit. p. 163, Morgan op. cit. p. 267. For Robert Nugent's opposition to the repeal of the Stamp Act see the Parliamentary History pp. 90-97. See also Savedge, op. cit. p. 137 et passim.

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possible. The men whom Nugent called on 12 and 13 February were probably opposition witnesses also and Mr. Jackson was probably Richard Jackson the Connecticut colonial agent who was a friend of the Grenvilleites. Indeed the only men mentioned who seem to have any connection with the ministry were Dennys de Berdt whose connection does not appear to have been very close, and who was never called to give evidence, the brother of Rose Fuller, Stephen, who as a West Indian Colonial agent was probably expected to be antipathetic to the American interests and Benjamin Franklin, who did turn out to be a star ministerial witness, had co-operated with Grenville before and appears to have been unpopular in the colonies for supporting the Stamp Act.

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211. Morgan op. cit. pp. 64-65. De Berdt was agent for the Massachusetts House of Representatives in London, November 1765 to April 1770. See Letters of Dennys de Berdt p. 294. Franklin was agent with Richard Jackson for Pennsylvania See Benjamin Franklin by C. C. Van Doren, New York 1939, pp. 314-315. Edward Montague was agent for Virginia 1761-1772 but more especially the representative of the House of Representatives. William Knox was agent for Georgia 1763-1765. See The Colonial Agents of the Southern Colonies by Ella Lonn, Chapel Hill 1945, appendix 1 p. 393. Life appears to have acted for Jackson the agent for Massachusetts Bay at times and a Mr. Walker was agent for Barbados in 1767. Stephen Fuller was agent for Jamaica. See Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations January 1764- December 1767, London 1936, pp. 331, 359, 22 and 28. Sherwood was agent for New Jersey in 1763 and Wilmot for the Leeward Islands in 1762, he also appears to have been agent for the "Proprietors of the East Division of New Jersey" January 1759 to December 1763, pp. 252, 409.
212. See The Jenkinson Papers 1760-1766 Jucker p. 358 Charles Jenkinson to George Grenville 11 April 1765 quoting B. M. Add. Mss. 38304 f134; Smith op. cit. p. 270.
213. See Morgan op. cit. pp. 64-65; Smith op. cit. p. 269, "Benjamin Franklin and the Stamp Act" by V. W. Crane in Proceedings of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts Vol. XXXII, Transactions 1933-37, Boston 1937, p. 66.

The motion of Sir Robert Ladbroke, by which twenty more witnesses were called, is of a different nature. Ladbroke was a supporter of the Rockingham Whigs during the first Rockingham administration and he was also one of their City allies.²¹⁴ Of these twenty witnesses, Trecothick, John Stewart, George Hayley, Capel Hanbury, Daniel Mildred and Nicholas Ray were definitely members of Trecothick's merchants committee. The Charles Crockatt on the London merchants committee may be a relative of the James Crockatt mentioned in the Commons Journals or a member of a family mercantile house, as may be Edward Athawes: as there is a Samuel Athawes mentioned in the London Merchants Committee.²¹⁵ Nicholas Ray's other connection with Rockingham has already been noted.²¹⁶ William Bolan and John Wentworth were also associates of Rockingham at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis.²¹⁷ William Kelly and James Balfour were Americans who seem to have been ministerial witnesses and John Masterman²¹⁸ may be George Masterman the goldsmith who gave evidence. Of these twenty witnesses, ten had some definite connections with the ministry and three more were possibly connected and ten were also definitely London merchants. It seems likely that Rockingham was marshalling the mercantile evidence.

214. See my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 18.

215. Cf. my list above with W. W. M. R1-537, List of Committee of London North American Merchants. // See also A Complete Guide to all Persons who have any trade or concern with the City of London and Parts Adjacent, London 1765 List of Merchants p. 136 where both Charles and James Crockatt are mentioned and p. 123 where Edward Athawes alone of the Athawes appears in this list. See Appendix p. 415.

216. See above p. 331.

217. See above pp. 330-332.

218. See Smith op. cit. pp. 36, 155-193.

No names appear in the Commons Journals to indicate who took the initiative to put forward the witnesses proposed on 7 and 11 February. No claim can therefore be made that these were ministerial attempts to organise the evidence but William Reeve, a Bristol merchant and valuable ministerial witness was proposed on 7 February.

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Thomas Whately, Grenville's close friend, proposed two other mercantile witnesses on 13 February, presumably to support Grenville. These were Beeston Long and Richard Maitland.

Beeston Long was leader of the West India merchants, and in a speech in the House of Commons as early as 14 January 1766

Grenville had requested that Long should give evidence that as First Lord of the Treasury Grenville had done everything

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in his power to foster trade with America. When Long came to give evidence he was very cautious and confined his evidence to the West Indies and it would seem that Grenville, who hoped to play on the antipathy between the North American and the

West Indian merchants, failed, because for once the hostility

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between the two groups had broken down. Maitland possibly had connections with the ministry and this may be the reason why he never gave evidence. Thus Grenville's plan to produce

219. See London Guide 1765 List of merchants where the names of Trecothick, Crockatt, Watson, Stewart, Athawes, Hanbury, Mildred, Powell, Bland and Ray appear. John Smith is listed and there is a William Davy.

220. See Smith op. cit. pp. 236-245.

221. Jucker op. cit. pp. 414-416.

222. Anecdotes of the Life of the Right Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham by John Almon, London 1793, Vol. II, pp. 42-43.

223. See Sutherland loc. cit. pp. 60-66. For Beeston Long see The Minute Book of the West India Merchants Vol. I, April

mercantile evidence seems to have miscarried. He appears to have been unable to produce a series of mercantile witnesses as the ministry did. Richard Oswald was probably ordered to attend the committee as a "last hope" on 15 February 1766.²²⁴

The last proposal was that of Lord Frederick Campbell who proposed James Glen. Campbell was Conway's brother-in-law but Glen did not give evidence and it is impossible to draw any conclusion from this proposal.²²⁵

The evidence thus points to a considerable amount of marshalling of mercantile witnesses by the ministry. Perhaps some witnesses were not heard because the ministry felt it had proved its case sufficiently well or their witnesses may not have been as satisfactory as that of the witnesses who were heard. Moreover among the Harrowby Papers is the record of further evidence given by Kelly, Brooke Watson, John Wentworth and Robert Hale on 27 March 1766 when the committee was sitting on the question of the general reform of the laws of trade.²²⁶ Thus some of the witnesses may have been called for the continuation of the committee. A further relevant fact is that when Henry Cruger wrote to his father in New York he stated

"The debate in Parliament lasting so long on the Stamp Act determined me to return to my business ere it was

223. (contd) 1769 to April 1779. I am grateful to the West India Committee for allowing me to use this source.

224. See Richard Maitland to Charles Townshend 20 March 1767, Townshend Papers, William L. Clements Library.

225. See Brooke op. cit. p. 138 n. 2.

226. Harrowby Manuscripts, Document 63, Ryder's Shorthand Diary Proceedings of the House of Commons 27 March 1766.

terminated. I was three weeks in London and every day with some member of Parliament, talking as it were for my own life. It is surprising how ignorant some of them are of trade and America. The House at last came to a resolution to examine only one person from each place that brought petitions. Mr. William Reeve being the senior of us who went from Bristol was put in the votes.
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There was always the time factor to be considered for this committee constantly complained of the large amount of work to be done, and the ministry must have been well aware of the urgency of the situation.

One can only hazard a guess why the names of some of the men who gave evidence do not appear in the Commons Journals. Perhaps Rockingham felt the need to "fit in" some evidence from provincial and smaller manufacturers at the last moment to prove that it was not only the great, well-known London manufacturers that were affected, or perhaps it was purely an error on the part of the clerk. It does appear significant that it is the names of one class of witness in particular that are omitted and that the majority of these witnesses were textile manufacturers who especially felt the depression caused by the Stamp Act as they carried on a substantial trade with America.

Before going on to survey the evidence itself it is finally necessary to consider the chairmanship of the committee. There were two chairmen, Rose Fuller who was chosen and acted for eight days and George Cooke who held the position for

227. Henry Cruger Jnr. to Henry Cruger 4 February 1766 in "The Commerce of Rhode Island" 1726-1780, Vol. I, 1726-1774 in Massachusetts Historical Society Collections 7th Series, Vol. II, Boston 1919, p. 139.

five days while Fuller was ill. Fuller was a close associate of Newcastle and as a West India planter and English iron manufacturer was definitely biased against the Stamp Act. He voted with the Rockingham ministry on questions connected with the Stamp Act, his views were well known in Parliament and his management of the committee was criticised. Horace Walpole wrote in his Memoirs

"Many speakers had not been attended to, others, forced to sit down without being heard. Something of this was imputed to the partiality of Rose Fuller, the Chairman; and before he could make his report, Mr. Shiffner ironically proposed to thank him for his great impartiality; Onslow defended, and moved to thank him seriously. This provoked so much, that Fuller was accused of not doing his duty by suppressing the riots and insults offered to several members who had voted against the repeal." 228

and in January 1775 when the merchants were again petitioning Parliament on America, Burke wrote to Rockingham with reference to the Stamp Act

"But I showed Ellis the journals yesterday morning, where Rose Fuller was in the chair for repealing that Act, one of the tellers in the division, and a principal actor and zealous manager on the whole." 229

A search of Fuller's papers has

228. See Walpole Memoirs Vol. II, p. 300 quoted Smith op. cit. p. 16.

229. Burke to Rockingham 12 January 1775 printed Burke Correspondence Vol. III, p. 98 quoted Smith op. cit. p. 15. See also Gipson op. cit. p. 396 quoting Harrowby Manuscripts, Ryder's Diaries, document 63.

however revealed no new material on the Stamp Act Committee.

The other chairman, George Cooke, also appears to have favoured the repeal of the Stamp Act but his impartiality was not
231
questioned.

It may thus be concluded with reasonable certainty that Newcastle, Rockingham and their colleagues made sure that the evidence, particularly the mercantile evidence which was to be produced before the committee, came from sources that were favourable to ministerial policy and was heard in the most favourable circumstances possible. There is also clear indication that the actual evidence, questions and answers were prepared. Among the Newcastle Papers is a memorandum headed
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"Questions for Mr. Trecothick" and in the Rockingham Papers is a document endorsed "Minutes of the Evidence of Effect of
233
Duties on Trade sent by Sir W. Meredith and Sir G. Savile." This document appears to be a record of the preparation of some of the ministerial evidence placed before the House of Commons and contains questions about the American trade put to Capel Hanbury, James Balfour, Emanuel Elam, Obadiah Dawson,
234
and other witnesses before the Stamp Act Committee. Moreover Mr. Smith has shown that the ministry prepared the evidence of some witnesses, in particular that given by Benjamin Franklin

230. I am indebted to the Archivist of the Sussex Archaeological Society for allowing me to study these papers.

231. See Smith op. cit. pp. 16-17.

232. B.M. Add. Mss. 33001 f94 Memorandum, no date.

233. W.W.M. R42.

234. For this see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 228-229.

235

and William Kelly and on 2 January 1766 Trecothick wrote to
William Reeve

" We are endeavouring to obtain an exact account of the balance of export from hence to each colony for three or four years past as also of the sum now due to this city and it is much to be wished that you could furnish a like estimate as the Customs keepers account can little be depended upon and it seems to me very material that the politicians should be told as nearest as may be. I hope to have ours ready for the first day." 236

Such efforts by Trecothick to obtain statistics point to the preparation of evidence in conjunction with the ministry.)

Mr. B.R. Smith has already discussed in detail the evidence given before the Stamp Act Committee. He states that excluding Franklin and the refugees "the witnesses were almost all
237
concerned in the trade with the colonies". He continues

"Trade was considered to be the foundation of the British Empire, and no doubt it was for that reason that the enquiry concentrated on the boycott and its effects. Thus the majority of witnesses were merchants and manufacturers quite different from Franklin, for they had gained their experience of the colonies at second-hand through their trade with North America. Many of them had visited the colonies in connection with their business affairs, but their evidence concerned the depleted condition of their trade and not the Colonies themselves." 238

The first mercantile witness to give evidence was Barlow Trecothick on Friday 11 February 1766. During his evidence

235. See Smith op. cit. pp. 25-33; Benjamin Franklins Autobiographical Writings ed. C. C. Van Doren, New York 1946, pp. 151-152; "Benjamin Franklin, Englishman and American" by V. W. Crane, Maryland Historical Society Proceedings Vol. XIX, Baltimore 1936, pp. 108-109; W. W. M. R96, "Papers relating to the Questions that Mr. Jackson asked Mr. Kelly about the exports of Great Britain to the Colonies 1766" quoted Smith op. cit. pp. 25-32.

236. Merchant Venturers Correspondence, Bundle 10, Barlow Trecothick to William Reeve 2 January 1766.

237. Smith op. cit. p. 283. For the use of the term refugee see above

238. Ibid. p. 283.

Trecothick as Chairman of the London Merchants' Committee

was also questioned about and explained the work of that

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Committee. Smith states that Trecothick

"Dealt with all the aspects of the trade with the Northern Colonies and the effect of the boycott on trade and manufactures. He demonstrated the threat of unemployment in the growing manufacturing centres and discussed the effect of the Stamp Act on the New England Colonies. He showed that the Colonies would abandon (what he considered) their natural interests and establish their own industries rather than buy British goods. In all he displayed such an immense knowledge of the trade and of the New England Colonies that even if such of it had been prepared in advance, he reveals that he is an expert on the matter!"²⁴⁰

Trecothick's evidence was supported on the same day by that of two other London merchants, Capel Hanbury and Daniel Mildred. Hanbury gave proof that the Stamp Act was harmful to the Virginia tobacco trade with which he was particularly concerned. Mildred's brief evidence again bore out what

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Trecothick had said.

After the examination James West wrote to Newcastle

"The witnesses were called in. Trecothick was examined four hours and gave a full clear and satisfactory account of the distress at home and abroad and stated everything as he did to Your Grace this morning. Hanbury and Mildred confirmed him in everything. Hanbury added that Virginia had a large well disciplined militia, who with the country, if force was used to establish the Acts would rescind it by force."²⁴²

This seems to be an indication of the extent to which these witnesses were prepared. Prior to this in the same letter West had noted that whereas Sir William Meredith only wanted the witnesses examined on the effects and consequences of the Stamp Act, Charles Townshend had opposed him and stated that he would not repeal the Act on "questions of right or violence" but only

239. See above pp. 350-351 Cf. Smith op. cit. p. 96.

240. Ibid. pp. 97-98. 241. For them see Smith op. cit. pp. 130-157.

242. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f411 West to Newcastle 11 February 1766.

on grounds

of expediency, and therefore the witnesses must be examined

243.

about the whole state of America. The detailed nature of the questions put to the witnesses seems to show that Townshend's view was adopted.

On the following day Wednesday 12 February 1766, after the

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examination of three more witnesses the questioning of the

provincial manufacturers and merchants was commenced. Thomas

Morris was the first of these and he seems to have been a

hosier of some consequence for he stated that he had dismissed

100 hands in six months. His evidence was short and concerned

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solely with the decline in the stocking trade. The next

246

witnesses were Robert Crafton, a hosier of London and Joseph

247

Bunney, a Leicester hosier. Both stated that the orders they

had received from America were conditional on the repeal of the

Stamp Act and Bunney also dealt with the decline of the

stocking manufacturing industry in Leicester as a result of

the Stamp Act. They were followed by the Yorkshire woollen

manufacturers Obadiah Dawson and Benjamin Farrar, who spoke

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of the decline of the Yorkshire woollen industry while Emanuel

Elam also from the West Riding gave evidence of American

243. Ibid. f411 West to Newcastle 11 February 1766.

244. James Balfour of Virginia, Colonel George Mercer of Virginia and William Kelly of New York. Cf. Smith op. cit. pp. 154-193.

245. Ibid. pp. 194-5.

246. Ibid. pp. 196-199.

247. Ibid. pp. 200-205.

248. Smith op. cit. pp. 206-215, 221-225. Farrar appears to have been a brother-in-law of Sir George Armytage (1734-1783) M.P. for York and friend of Rockingham. See B.M. Add. Mss. 3293 ff51-3 Rockingham to Newcastle 14 November 1761; B.M. Add. Mss. 32989 f175 Lady Rockingham to Newcastle "Tuesday morning" (15 March 1768) This may account for his appearance as a witness and may be his link with the Rockingham administration. Smith op. cit. pp. 221-222

attempts to manufacture woollen goods that he had noticed
 during a recent visit to the colonies.²⁴⁹

On the final day of examination of witnesses another seven witnesses were examined. Six of these were concerned with trade and industry, the seventh was Benjamin Franklin.²⁵⁰ The first of the mercantile witnesses was William Halliday, a Liverpool merchant who gave evidence of the decline of the Liverpool American trade.²⁵¹ He was followed by George Masterman a London goldsmith, who gave an account of the bullion handled in the trade with the American colonies.²⁵² William Reeve, the Master of the Merchant Venturers whose business handled about one fifth of the total trade of Bristol, gave evidence next and gave an account of the effect of the Stamp Act on the trade of Bristol and the Gloucestershire nail industry.²⁵³ Robert Hamilton a textile manufacturer then represented Manchester, and John Glassford, a tobacco merchant, Glasgow. The latter was concerned mainly with the debts owing the Glasgow merchants which were imperilled because of the Stamp Act.²⁵⁴ The final mercantile witness on that day after Benjamin Franklin had given his evidence was John Hose, a London shoemaker. He seems to have carried on an extensive business for he stated that he normally employed over 300 men but the Stamp Act had reduced this to forty-five. He was solely concerned with the effect

248. (contd) seems to have found difficulty in identifying him.

249. Ibid. pp. 216-220. For later association between Elam and the Rockinghamites see Burke to Rockingham 22-23 August 1775. Burke Correspondence Vol. III, p. 194.

250. Smith op. cit. pp. 268-275.

251. Ibid pp. 225-231.

252. Ibid. pp. 232-236.

253. Ibid. pp. 237-245.

254. Ibid. pp. 246-275.

255

of the Stamp Act on his own business. The mercantile witnesses represented almost all of the manufacturing areas in England and Scotland and nearly all of the important branches of the export trade to America. To incur the expenses of a lengthy stay in London and leave their businesses, even in a time of depression, shows how important these merchants must have felt their task to be. Indeed Reeve had been in London five weeks, Glassford was especially appointed by the Glasgow ~~merchants~~ and Hamilton was sent back again to London after the

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Stamp Act Repeal.

It was the task of the merchants to overcome Parliament's resistance to the repeal of the Stamp Act on grounds of principle, and to convince members that this was a first-rate economic crisis and that the Stamp Act had to be repealed on grounds of expediency. The merchants had to convert Parliament to the opinion of men like Newcastle who pressed for the

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repeal of the Stamp Act for economic reasons.

Although the repeal of the Stamp Act was a victory for the merchants, for the ministerial witnesses, for Trecothick and the Rockingham Whigs, it was above all a victory for those who placed the economic importance of the colonies first. It was a mark of the growing political power of the commercial classes, but the fact that the Declaratory Act was passed

255. Ibid. pp. 276-'79.

256. Smith op. cit. pp. 23-24 quoting W.W.M. Burke Letters 1-48 Archibald Henderson to Burke 9 February 1766; W.W.M. R58 Robert Hamilton to Rockingham 16 May 1766.

257. B.M. Add. Mss. 32973 f342 Newcastle to the Archbishop of Canterbury 2 February 1766. See also above p. 364.

shows that the right of Parliament to tax the colonies, if it was contested, would be upheld in England.

The fact that many of the witnesses before the Stamp Act Committee had connections with the Rockingham administration ²⁵⁸ has been noted above. For the mercantile witnesses this is worth considering in a little more detail. Trecothick's connection with the ministry has already been considered in detail. Hanbury and Mildred were his colleagues on the London Merchants Committee. Moreover Hanbury and Trecothick were connected in business and the Hanbury family had been ²⁵⁹ associated with Newcastle previously in electoral affairs. Both Hanbury and Mildred were Quakers and there was a close link between the Quakers and the ministry through Doctor John ²⁶⁰ Fothergill. Evidence exists of contact between Dawson and ²⁶¹ Rockingham and Farrar with Rockingham, and if no definite connection between Rockingham and Elam can be proved in 1766 either Dawson or Farrar could have suggested him as a witness.

Sir William Meredith helped to organise the merchants in Liverpool and William Halliday's connection was probably gained ²⁶² through him. Likewise Rockingham had close contact with the Manchester merchants either through Sir William Meredith or Lord Strange who early on in the ministry was helping Rocking- ²⁶³ ham to get into contact with merchants.

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258. See above pp. 374-376. 259. See Smith op. cit. p. 135.
 260. See above pp. 330-332 and my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 184-186.
 261. See above pp. 382-383 and Smith op. cit. p. 206.
 262. See above pp. 351-352 and Smith op. cit. p. 227.
 263. Ibid. pp. 247-248.

The link with George Masterman again appears to have been through Trecothick. In his "Proofs and Observations on the London Merchants Stamp Act Petition" Trecothick mentions
 264
 Masterman. Hose was linked directly with Trecothick through a contract to supply the latter with shoes to the value of £22,000 a year for export to the American colonies. William Reeve already knew Newcastle and the Lord Chancellor, Northington. Moreover he had already had dealings with the ministry as Master of the Merchant Venturers. He had written
 265
 to the Lords of the Treasury on 21 November 1765 thanking them for the Minute on the Bullion Trade and to Charles Yorke on 23 December 1765 asking assistance in opposing the new duty
 266
 on the Irish trade. Finally Glassford was linked to the administration through another Glasgow merchant, Archibald
 267
 Henderson, who was a friend of Burke.

Thus of the fifteen English mercantile witnesses eight seem to have been known to the inner core of the administration before the committee sat. These were Trecothick, Hanbury, Dawson, Farrar, Halliday, Reeve, Hamilton and Glassford. Trecothick seems to have introduced Masterman and Hose and he probably introduced Mildred as well. Dawson or Farrar may have formed the link with Elam and possibly some of the

264. Ibid. p. 227; W.W.M. R57 "Extract of the Allegations in the Petition to the House of Commons of the London Merchants trading to North America....with Mr. Trecothick's Proofs and Allegations."

265. Smith op. cit. p. 276, W.W.M. R27 Minutes of the Stamp Act Committee p. 70.

266. Smith op. cit. pp. 237-8, W.W.M. R56 Reeve to Rockingham, Dowdeswell, and other Lords Commissioners of the Treasury 21 November 1765, B.M. Add. Mss. 35637 Reeve to Charles Yorke 23 December 1765. 267. Smith op. cit. p. 261.

other merchants introduced Morris, Crafton and Bunney. Of supreme importance was Trecothick's circular letter which could be used to enlist support for the administration and it must have been a very powerful force.

The close link of these mercantile witnesses with the administration is very important. The pressure brought to bear upon Parliament by a number of merchants working in close contact with the administration must have been far greater than the pressure unco-ordinated mercantile agitation would have exerted. Indeed it is doubtful whether isolated spontaneous petitions and unprepared evidence could have secured a repeal, for the Rockingham administration needed a political weapon as well as public support. Concerted agitation gave them this political weapon.

The Stamp Act Committee appears to have examined its last witnesses on the Stamp Act on 17 February 1766. It met again on 18 February but there is no record of evidence for that date in the Newcastle and Rockingham Papers and on 19 February George Onslow wrote to Pitt

"I have been unable to get that (the evidence) of yesterday, which was indeed not very essential to the present question, being chiefly produced for facts relative to the Spanish trade." 268

268. Smith op. cit. pp. 8, 13. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 589. Neither the copy of the evidence in W. W. M. R27 or B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 ff182-203 possesses any record of evidence for 18 February 1766. Also in the Commons Journals it is generally noted where a witness who has given evidence is no longer needed. Cf. Vol. XXX, p. 586. George Onslow to Pitt. 19 February 1766 printed Chatham Correspondence Vol. II, p. 387.

The Committee sat again on 21 February and reached a conclusion - the report from the Committee being ordered to be heard on 24 February 1766. ²⁶⁹ On 21 February the Committee had asked permission to sit again and this permission was granted for 4 March. ²⁷⁰ On that date the meeting of the Committee was postponed and further postponements resulted in it not assembling again until 24 March 1766, when it was ordered to consider a review of the North American Trade in general. ²⁷¹ On 27 March and on seven further occasions the Committee considered this and it was from these sittings that the Free Ports Act ²⁷² and other commercial measures of the First Rockingham administration relating to America were evolved. ²⁷³

The evidence before the Stamp Act Committee had occupied more time apparently than Rockingham and his colleagues had wished, for on 14 February Sergeant Hewitt had written to Newcastle with respect to the proceedings in the committee on 13 February,

"It was intended to go so far into the American affair as to close the evidence so as to be able when the house meets again to go into the great question." ²⁷⁴

269. Commons Journals Vol. XXX. p. 598.

270. Ibid. p. 598.

271. Ibid. pp. 626, 646, 663, 673, 688. Cf. Smith op. cit. p. 8.

272. Smith op. cit. p. 8.

273. See below pp. 416-447.

274. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f432. Sergeant Hewitt to Newcastle 14 February 1766. This is James Hewitt (1709-89) M. P. for Coventry 1761-66 subsequently Justice of the Kings Bench and Lord Chancellor of Ireland. See Namier Structure of Politics p. 22. The great question referred to is whether to repeal the Stamp Act or not.

On the same day Newcastle wrote to Rose Fuller, the chairman
 275
 of the Stamp Act Committee who had been ill

" I understand that the great question of the Repeal comes on in the House of Commons on Monday; and that Mr. Pitt comes to town on Sunday evening, to be present in the House on Monday." 276

The Monday referred to would seem to be 17 February and in fact the actual crisis concerning repeal did not begin until after the last witnesses were heard on Tuesday 18 February.

Onslow wrote to Newcastle (to correct him) on Saturday 15 February 1766 saying that the question of repeal could not begin until 18 February at the earliest as George Grenville had "his evidence to examine"²⁷⁷ and late on 14 February Onslow had written to Pitt

"I also wrote to inform you, Sir, that we have just now finished all the papers and evidence, which has been lengthened out to this time, I won't say by a useless, but by a worse than useless, by the most artful, premeditated string of questions, calculated for a particular purpose, which I trust in God will be defeated, notwithstanding the combined force which is to act in support of it. Of that combination we have had proof today, if any was wanting after what you saw the other day, by a thorough union between the late administration and those who call themselves Lord Bute's friends...."

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The first real test of the weight and use of the mercantile

275. See above p. 378.

276. B. M. Add. Mss 32973 f440 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 14 February 1766.

277. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f9 Onslow to Newcastle 15 February 1766 For Grenville's evidence see above p. 375. Cf. Smith op. cit. p. 13 and above p. 376.

278. George Onslow to Pitt 14 February 1766 "Friday night 12 o'clock" printed Chatham Papers Vol. II, p. 378. There is no record of evidence for 14 February in either B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 or in W. W. M. R27. Perhaps the day was spent in discussing the papers after the witnesses had been heard.

evidence came on 21 February when in the concluding stages of the Stamp Act Committee the administration knew it would have to force the resolution to repeal the Stamp Act on to the reports that were to be given to the House of Commons. Concerning this debate, William Baker, the son of Sir William Baker wrote to a correspondent:

"Mr. Conway began by summing up the evidence which had appeared before them relative to the decay of the Commerce between G. Britain and America, and the deplorable state of our manufactures. G. Grenville interrupted him with setting forth the impropriety of entering so precipitately into an affair of such importance as the repeal of an act, to which reports had that morning been circulated of many of the Southern Colonies having submitted. Mr. Conway replied that he had heard of no such reports; that no advices of that kind had arrived at his office, that the Board of Trade had received none - that no resolutions of a Committee were so final as to be charged with precipitation, since upon the Report they might be altered, amended, or totally cancelled as to the House might seem most convenient. Baffled in the introduction of this dilatory finesse, the objector was silent and Mr. Conway was suffered to proceed in his speech, which was not less sensible or less spirited for the little artful obstructions thrown in his way. Conway has a candour in his manner peculiar to himself, and a manliness of expression in which, on provocation, he shews himself superior to most. His arguments were founded entirely on the state of our manufactures, and the Decay of trade. He was clear and concise and concluded with his motion "that leave be given to bring in an Act for the Repeal of the Stamp Act, and for regulating Trade and Commerce &c. as may be seen more fully in the Votes. The Motion was seconded by Grey Cooper - He was too flowery not to convince every one that he had studied his speech, and too full of Latin quotations to have that weight which many of his arguments deserved...A debate arose upon this, very dull and tedious, a mere repetition of what had been so often canvassed before...Mr. Burke was the only man who could keep up the attention of the House on a subject already threadbare, and received such compliments on his performance from Mr. Pitt, as, to any other man would have been fulsome, but applied to him were literally true and just."

Even though the petitions had been dealt with and the mercantile evidence had been heard, Newcastle, Rockingham and their colleagues were still endeavouring to use mercantile pressure on the House of Commons, and the merchants who were in London for the repeal campaign during the debates dined together at the King's Arm Tavern then went en masse to hear the debates. During the course of the debate in the evening of 21 February a running commentary was provided by James West's reports to the Duke of Newcastle. In the first report West wrote

"It is said they will not divide - I think we should, and if a list of those that are against the question be handed about, it will effectively do the business of the opposition in the City and in the manufacturing towns....The lobby and stairs are crowded with merchants." 281

At 2.15 am. on the morning of 22 February it was eventually decided by a majority of 275 to 167 to include the repeal resolution in the report of the committee. Rockingham reported to the King

"The joy in the Lobby of the House of Commons which was full of Considerable Merchants both of London and from different manufacturing parts of the country was extreme." 283.

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279. Baker Letters, Hertford County Record Office, William Baker to Mr. Talbot 25 February 1766. I am indebted to the Hertfordshire County Archivist for allowing me to use these letters. William Baker (1743-1824) (M.P. 1768-1774, 1777-1784, 1790-1802, 1805-7) was to succeed Trecothick as the City representative of the Rockingham Whigs. For him see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-90 Vol. II, pp. 42-43 and my Barlow Trecothicketc pp. 138-142.
280. Clark, British Opinionetc p. 43.

and to Newcastle

"I also told him (the King) of the immediate joy in the Lobby and of what sort of persons it was composed." 284

Rockingham was thus attempting to use mercantile opinion as a lever with George III, prejudiced as he was in favour of
285
modification of the Act. Indeed the rejoicings in the City of London must have been a powerful force, for even this preliminary decision, which really amounted to no more than a contemplation of repeal, was the signal for widespread
286
rejoicing among the trading people and merchants of London.

Horace Walpole commented

"In reality it was the clamour of trade, of the merchants, and of the manufacturing towns that had borne down all opposition. A general insurrection was apprehended as the immediate consequence of upholding the bill, the revolt of America and the destruction of trade was the prospect for the future. A nod from the Ministers would have let loose all the manufacturers of Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester and such populous and discontented towns who threatened to send to Westminster to back their demand of repeal. As it was, the lobby of the house, the Court of Requests, and the avenues were beset with American merchants. As Mr. Conway went away they huzzard him thrice, stopped him to thank and compliment him, and made a lane for his passage. When Mr. Pitt appeared the whole crowd pulled off their hats, huzzaed, and

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281. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 ff45-46 West to Newcastle 21 February 1766. West's other letters are at ibid. f47 same to same 21 February 1766 ("20 past 12 ") and ibid. f49 same to same ("¼ past 2 ") i.e. 22 February 1766.
282. Ibid. f49 West to Newcastle 21 February 1766 ("¼ past 2 ") See also Gipson loc. cit. p. 10 et seq.
283. Rockingham to George III 22 February 1766 printed Fortescue op. cit. Vol. I, p. 275 no. 260.
284. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f67 Rockingham to Newcastle 22 February 1766. See also Chatham Correspondence Vol. II, p. 393 Pitt to Lady Chatham 22 February 1766.
285. See Winstanley op. cit. pp. 267-269. See also the notes in W. W. M. R2-28 R2-29. Cf. Henry Cruger Jnr to Henry Cruger Snr 14 February 1766 in "The Commerce of Rhode Island" 1726-1780 Vol. I, loc. cit. p. 141.
286. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f71 Onslow to Newcastle 23 February 1766.

many followed his chair home with shouts and benedictions. The scene changed on the sight of Grenville. The crowd pressed on him with scorn and hisses. He swelling with rage and mortification, seized the nearest man to him by the collar. Providentially the fellow had more humour than spleen 'Well, if I may not hiss' said he 'at least I may laugh' and laughed in his face. The jest caught - had the fellow been surly and resisted, a tragedy had probably ensued." 287

This gives indication of the strength of mercantile pressure and it is not surprising that mob violence was feared considering how fresh the riots over the North Briton No. 45 and the proposed cider tax were in men's minds. That Walpole was not exaggerating the situation is shown by a letter William Baker, the son of Sir William Baker, wrote to a correspondent when he stated

"No one who was not present can have an Idea of the exultation in the crowded Lobby, on the declaration of the majority. The members of the ministry, as they came out of the house were deified with applause, the others were hardly secure from violence. And the line in their conduct between the justifiable and the licentious would have been as difficult to draw, as it was impossible to repress the extravagance of it." 288

In his speech on American Taxation Burke said

"I remember, Sir, with a melancholy pleasure, the

287. Walpole Memoirs Vol. II, pp. 211-212.

288. Baker Letters, William Baker to Mr. Talbot 25 February 1766.

situation of the honourable gentleman (General Conway) who made the motion for the repeal, in that crisis, when the whole trading interest of the empire, cramming into your lobbies, with a trembling and anxious expectation waited almost to a winter's return of light, their fate from your resolutions. When at length you had determined in their favour, and your doors, thrown open, shewed them the figure of their deliverer in the well-earned triumph of his important victory, from the whole of that grave multitude there arose an involuntary burst of gratitude and transport. They jumped upon him like children on a long absent father. They clung about him as captives, about their redeemer. All England, all America joined to his applause. Nor did he seem insensible to the best of all earthly rewards, the love and admiration of his fellow citizens. Hope elevated and joy brightened his crest. I stood near him, and his face, to use the expression of the scripture of the first martyr "his face was as if it had been the face of an angel." 289

Ritcheson notes that the division of the 22 February shows the effect of mercantile pressure and concludes

"The merchants responded solidly to the petitions of the commercial cities and representatives from the large urban constituencies had felt the pressure also."

He also states that independent and unattached members were

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persuaded by the mercantile arguments.

Sir Lewis Namier notes that only six merchants out of about fifty-two who sat in Parliament on February 1766 voted against the repeal of the Stamp Act. He continues in a footnote

"The only two merchants representing Scottish constituencies, James Coutts, the banker M.P. for Edinburgh, Sir Alexander Grant, M.P. for Inverness Burghs, voted against the repeal, so did Robert Jones and John Stephenson, who were followers of Lord Sandwich and connected with the East India Company, but had no

289. Burke Works, Vol. II, pp. 407-408

290. Ritcheson op. cit. pp. 60-62.

interests in America; George Prescott, originally a Leghorn merchant-banker helped to a seat in Parliament by Henry Fox; and Henry Shiffner - he was connected with the Grenvilles in 1760, had become very nearly bankrupt and was given a secret service pension of £500 p.a. by Newcastle's successor in 1763 or 1764...." 291

According to the list of the minority given in the Newcastle Papers and Judd's Members of Parliament 1734-1832 of the 78 members of Parliament sitting in 1766 who had mercantile associations only 16 voted against the repeal of the Stamp Act and according to Namier only eight of the six-
292
teen were supporters of Grenville. I list those sixteen below

<u>Name.</u>	<u>Classification according to Judd.</u>	<u>Party according to Newcastle.</u>
William Matthew Burt	West Indies Interest	Grenville
George Prescott	" "	"
James Colleton	" "	"
William Hussey	Merchant	"
Chauncey Townsend	"	"
Henry Shiffner	"	"
Bartholomew Burton	Banker	"
Lord Robert Clive	Nabob	"
Sir Lawrence Dundas	Merchant	Bedford. 293
Thomas Erle Drax	West Indies Interest	"
Robert Jones	Nabob	"
John Stephenson	"	"
James Coutts	"	Bute
Sir Alexander Grant	West Indies Merchant	"
Thomas Harley	Merchant	Tory
Sir Thomas Stapleton	West Indies Interest	"

291. Namier, England in the Age etc p.254 and n.5. Cf. Sutherland loc. cit. p.65 n.2.

292. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32974 f154 "2nd Division on the Repeal of the Stamp Act" being read for the first time" where the minority is given as 167 as it is in ibid f49 West to Newcastle 21 February 1766 (" $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2") (i.e. 22 February 1766) I have analysed these figures by comparing them with Members of Parliament 1734-1832 by Gerritt P. Judd, New Haven, 1955. I have for this analysis counted the following classifications of Judd as having mercantile associations; - Merchants, Bankers, Nabobs, India Interest, West Indies Interest, West Indies Merchants, Manufacturers. See Judd ibid. pp.90-94. See also Namier, Structure of Politics etc p.154.

None of the merchants in the above list except Chauncy Townsend who supported Grenville seem to have been active in the American trade in 1766, and Sir Alexander Grant is the only West Indies merchant who voted against repeal. His loyalty to Bute was presumably stronger than to his fellow merchants. In the case of the West Indies Interest members there was always a division of opinion between those who had plantation interests, particularly absentees, and those whose interest was purely commercial. Sir Lewis Namier considers the presence of Bartholomew Burton's name on the list a mistake.

The resolutions of the Stamp Act Committee which were introduced into a formal sitting of the House of Commons on 24 February 1766 were thus basically the same as the resolutions that had been agreed upon by the leaders of the administration at the meetings at Rockingham's house on 19 and 21 January 1766.

293. It is perhaps a little odd that Dundas voted against repeal for he was related to Rockingham by marriage. See ("Lord North and the Speakership 1780" by J.E. Tyler in Parliamentary Affairs, The Journal of the Hansard Society Vol. VIII?, London 1954-55 p. 376 n. 7.) See also Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p. 359.
294. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 163-4, 225-8, 238-9, 263-4, 340, 857-361, 528-9, 586-7, 691-2 Vol. III, 324-5, 434, 6, 476, 474. See also for Chauncy Townsend in particular Namier England in the Age etc pp. 244-246.
295. See Armytage op. cit. pp. 26-29 passim.
296. Ibid. p. 39 n. 3. See also Capitalism and Slavery by E. Williams, Chapel Hill, 1944, pp. 76-7, 92. See also "The London West India Interest in the Eighteenth Century" by L. M. Penson, English Historical Review Vol. XXXVI, 1921, pp. 373-383.
297. Namier, Structure of Politics p. 154 n. 2. The presence of Burton's name on the list considering his close association with Newcastle in opposition before, conflicts with the tendency of the great chartered companies like the Bank of England and the East India Company to support the administration in power. See above pp. 29-30. See also Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p. 164.

The merchants petitions and their evidence before the Stamp Act Committee had not after the 21 January altered or amended the policy of the administration. It had been used by Rockingham and his colleagues to secure the acceptance of a policy already decided upon.

On 24 February the resolution to bring in a Bill to repeal the Stamp Act was carried by 240 votes to 133. On 26 February the Repeal Bill and the Declaratory Bill were given their first reading; on 27 February they were given their second and finally on 4 March the Declaratory and Repeal Bills were passed; the latter by 250 votes to 122. The third reading was marked by Bamber Gascoyne reading a letter which Sir William Meredith had written to the Mayor of Liverpool which stated

"Lord Bute's friends Mr. Grenville's party and the rank Tories voted for this bloody question and considering we had been twice beaten in the House of Lords, we were surprised to find our numbers were 275 to 167; I hope soon to send you word of the repeal. P. S. Mr. Pitt will soon be at the head of affairs." 300

Gascoyne, no doubt, hoped to discredit the ministry by bringing to light one of the more extreme methods they had used to gain mercantile support and ensue hostility to Grenville. There is no evidence that I have discovered as to any part played by the merchants in the proceedings after 24 February. Indeed it is difficult

298. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 601. Cf. above p. 361.

299. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, pp. 602, 608, 612, 621, 626. For an account of the debate on the bills see B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f79 Onslow to Newcastle 24 February 1766, ibid. f91 same to same 26 February 1766, f101 Newcastle to Earl of Hopetown 27 February 1766, ibid. f134 Onslow to Newcastle 4 March 1766.

300. Walpole op. cit. Vol. II, p. 216. Cf. Harrowby Mss, Ryder's Shorthand Notes, Document 63.

to see what they could have done. They had made their effort. Now they had to wait for the results while the measures they had worked for went through the normal process to become law. In this interval, however, it is logical to assume that they kept up their pressure in the lobbies of the House of Commons as they had during the Stamp Act Committee stage of repeal. When the King gave his placemen his approval to vote against the repeal the merchants could do little for they had no influence on the King's placemen. The merchants had played their part in procuring a majority in the House of Commons for the repeal and there can be little doubt that they were of vital importance to the Rockingham administration at this critical juncture.

301

The activities of the merchants in the lobbies of the House of Commons at this time is interesting and important. Mr. J. M. Morris claims that in the 1760's lobbying techniques were haphazard and that it was not until after the War of American Independence that lobbying by major industries became highly developed. He goes on to say that when

" an emergency demanded association on a national scale manufacturers would sometimes agree to frame their petitions to the government according to a standard form. They might even allow a particular group - usually the merchants of London, because they were handy to Parliament and the government offices - to speak for industrial and commercial opinion as a whole." 302

301. For this see above note 286. For an account which suspects the influence of the Dowager Princess of Wales in the matter see Richard Champion to Caleb Lloyd (n.d.) quoted Two Centuries of Ceramic Art in Bristol by H. Owen, London 1873 p.47.

302. See "Samuel Garbett and the Early Development of Industrial Lobbying in Great Britain" by J. M. Morris, Economic History Review Second Series, Vol. X, London 1957-58 pp.450-1.

The Stamp Act Crisis shows the characteristics which Mr. Norris mentions and on this occasion a further development had taken place because there were local organisations in towns like Bristol and Liverpool which were co-ordinated by the merchants of London, and because the London Merchants' Committee were endeavouring to seek out petitions and almost outline their form. However, a retrogressive step occurred as well, as the Rockingham administration was able to use the mercantile pressure group for its own ends to secure a majority for the repeal of the Stamp Act in the House of Commons.

Another interesting fact is that Samuel Garbett, the Birmingham iron manufacturer, whom Mr. Norris regards as the father of the lobbying technique had been in contact with William Burke who was working closely with Edmund Burke on the Stamp Act. In these circumstances it may be asked why, with all the other organisations for the repeal so complicated, the activities of the merchants in the lobbies seems to be so haphazard and undirected? Mr. Norris also offers a reason for this. Firstly, as so many of the new industrial towns were not represented in Parliament they usually had to present their case through a county member who did not speak for them alone. Secondly, he says that the government disliked lobbying as it took the initiative out of their hands.

"When ministers felt it necessary or advisable to have the opinion of manufacturers on economic legislation, they took it in the form of expert advice from individuals before a Parliamentary or Council Committee." 305

303. See above p.351 et seq.

304. See Calendar of Home Office Papers of the Reign of George III 1760 - 25 October 1766 ed. Joseph Redington, London,

The Stamp Act Crisis appears to exemplify this point also.

On 4 March the Repeal Bill was introduced into the House of Lords. Here the ministry seems to have had some intention of repeating the tactics used in the House of Commons. On 11 February Newcastle had written to John White to see if, and when, it was proper for the London merchants to petition the House of Lords. He stated

"The merchants of London and of several other great towns in England, intend to petition the House of Lords upon the Inconvenience of the Stamp Act concluding I suppose with their wishes, that it should be repealed. The petitions have been some time in the House of Commons and the merchants are to be heard this day, upon them. I wish you would let me know, at what time, these petitions should be presented in the House of Lords; whether they may not be presented before the Bill of Repeal comes from the House of Commons, (which as it is a money bill, must arise there) for if that can't be done before such a Bill comes up to us, if such a Bill does not come at all, the merchants will have no opportunity of being heard before the House of Lords." 306

Trecothick seems to have been aware that the ministry was trying to organise the repeal campaign in the House of Lords. On 3 March 1766 he wrote to Newcastle returning a copy of the evidence given before the Stamp Act Committee in the House of Commons and saying "as yet I have not heard in what manner the business is to be conducted in the House of Lords". 307

304. (contd) 1878, p. 637, no. 2064 Samuel Garbett to William Burke 14 December 1765. Cf. Norris loc. cit. p. 452. William Burke was in Parliament and acting as secretary to General Conway at this time.

305. Norris loc. cit. p. 451.

306. B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f415 Newcastle to White 11 February 1766.

307. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f133 Trecothick to Newcastle 3 March 1766.

Further evidence of attempted mercantile pressure on the House of Lords is a memorandum among the Newcastle Papers dated 1 March 1766 and headed " Questions to be asked Alderman Trecothick." It consists of a series of questions very similar to those asked Trecothick in his examination before the House of Commons but the ~~date~~ of the paper makes it impossible for it to be connected with an examination of Trecothick in that House. One is therefore led to assume that Newcastle was contemplating an examination of evidence of some sort in the House of Lords. All the questions on the paper bear a relationship to the London merchants petition and it seems most likely that Newcastle intended to have the questions asked Trecothick when he presented the London Merchants' petition. There is another memoranda of Newcastle's dated 16 March 1766 entitled "Further Considerations on the Stamp Act" in which he writes,

"The cause of the total stagnation the Stamp Act -
The Remedy the Repeal
 This fact proved by the papers and by evidence,
 Sorry they were not heard." 309

Perhaps it is now necessary to enquire exactly how much evidence there is of organisation of the repeal campaign in the House of Lords. It should be noted that four witnesses

308. B. M. Add. Mss. 33001 f125-6. "Questions to be asked Alderman Trecothick" 1 March 1766. Cf. my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 46-48. Cf. also The London Merchants Petition at B. M. Add. Mss. 32973 f421. This petition is dated 12 February 1766 and is the copy of the one presented to the House of Lords.

309. B. M. Add. Mss. 33001 f163.

were called before the House of Lords Committee on the American Papers. These witnesses were Major Thomas James, Dr. Thomas Moffat,
 310
 Martin Howard and Colonel George Mercer. There is no evidence in the Lords Journals as to who arranged for the calling of witnesses. They were examined on 31 January 1766, the same day
 311
 as their examination before the House of Commons. I have been unable to trace any record of the evidence they gave. That the ministry considered further witnesses for the House of Lords is proved by a letter from Grey Cooper to Rockingham in which he described the evidence Masterman gave in the House of Commons and concluded

"I do not advise your Lordship to call this gentleman to give the same evidence in the House of Peers. I think the tendency of it is not so favourable as was at first imagined."
 312

The resolutions reached by the House of Lords' Committee on 10 February included a Declaratory resolution but no resolution on the repeal of the Stamp Act, probably because the Repeal Bill
 313
 had to start in the House of Commons. It should be noted that in the House of Lords the resolutions were reached a fortnight before those in the Commons. This may possibly have been because it was easier to settle business in the House of Lords and Rockingham and Newcastle then hoped to give some direction to policy in the Commons, or more likely because the House of Lords

310. Journals of the House of Lords Vol. XXXI, 1765-67 (London 1768) pp. 246, 247, 253. These four men were the refugees. See above p. 335 n. 102.

311. Lords' Journals Vol. XXXI, p. 253.

312. W. W. M. R34 Grey Cooper to Rockingham "Tuesday 9 o'clock" (can be dated from internal evidence as 18 February 1766)

313. Lords' Journals Vol. XXXI, p. 258.

did not have to spend time on mercantile evidence.

On 5 March the Repeal Bill and the Declaratory Bill were read for the first time in the House of Lords. Three petitions from mercantile towns were presented to the House of Lords, the first two from London and Bristol, on the same day as the first reading of the Bill.³¹⁴ These petitions, it is interesting to note,³¹⁵ asked that the Repeal Bill should pass into a law. This has the appearance of organised pressure but on 7 March the third petition from Glasgow, was presented and this asked for relief in much more general terms.³¹⁶

There would thus seem to have been tentative plans by the administration to organise mercantile pressure on the House of Lords. This pressure was not used again and Newcastle, at least, seems to have regretted it. It is difficult to explain why the pressure was never used. Possibly it was not necessary, while Newcastle may have felt that the case for the repeal of the Stamp Act would have been stronger had such pressure been used, Rockingham and other leaders of the administration may not have felt that it was wise to repeat a campaign so successfully organised the first time, fearing that it would give the mercantile pressure too artificial an appearance.

The real crisis of the Repeal debate in the Lords seems to have been on 11 March on the second reading of the Bill.³¹⁷

314. Ibid. pp. 291-2.

315. Ibid. p. 291 et seq.

316. Ibid. p. 296.

317. Ibid. p. 303. See also Parliamentary History Vol. XVI, pp. 166. 187.

It was Newcastle, during the debate, who moved that the petitions
 of the London merchants should be read. ³¹⁸ During the debate he
 spoke as follows

"Have never varied my opini(o)n during the progress of this
 Bill and shall upon the pres(en)t occas(io)n give Y(our)
 L(ordships) my reasons for wishing the repeal of this Bill.
 With regard to the commercial interests of this country
 from best intelligence I can receive the trade of this
 Country is declining in every other part of the w(orld)
 but America - The Turkey trade our rivals the French have
 taken a great part from us Our ? trade is much lessened.
 Our Portugal not withstand(in)g the immense sums we have
 expended on their acc(ount) has been diminishing for
 several y(ea)rs past and is now in a state I(m) sorry to
 see it in.

Alludes to the Lords Petitions and other Petitions to the
 H(ouse) of C(ommons) and the general state of American
 trade w(hi)ch [if nothing else were involved] wo(ul)d be
 sufficient to shew the ~~an~~expediency of cont(i)n(ui)ng
 the Stamp Act in Am(eric)a." ³¹⁹

The importance of commercial considerations to Newcastle is
 obvious from this part of his speech.

The famous protest of thirty-three peers followed. According
 to the Lords Journals 136 peers were present on that day in the
 Lords and the Bill was carried by a majority of thirty-four. ³²⁰

The Repeal Bill finally passed the House of Lords on 17
³²¹
 March 1766.

Newcastle seems to have feared that the Repeal Bill might
 be rejected in the House of Lords. On 15 February he had written
 to the Archbishop of Canterbury

"We think it (the repeal of the Stamp Act) is sure in the
 House of Commons, and we hope that the House of Lords will
 not venture to reject it afterwards, the consequences may

318. B.M. Add. Mss. 35912 f82. In this volume of the Hardwicke
 Papers there are thirty folios commencing at f76 which are
 a report of the debate in the House of Lords on the repeal
 of the Stamp Act. It is difficult to decide who was the
 author but the hand is possibly Rockingham's. He did not
 apparently speak in the debate.

be so alarming; which consequences will be so strongly supported by the testimony of the first merchants in the City of London." 322

Newcastle had good grounds for fearing that the passage of the Stamp Act through the House of Lords would be difficult for the administration had already met with rebuffs there, and in the debate on the Declaratory Resolution the Rockingham Whigs had apparently found themselves in a minority on two minor matters. 323 However, even at this date there was something of a tradition 324 that the House of Lords did not reject money bills. Newcastle might even have feared a constitutional crisis of some sort if the House of Lords rejected the Bill, and he did his utmost to persuade various members of the House of Lords to support the repeal of the Stamp Act. 325 Lord Northington, in his speech during the debate in the House of Lords, hinted at the same fear. 326

On 18 March 1766 the Repeal Bill having passed the House of Lords, the King went down to Parliament to give the royal assent to the measure and the Declaratory Act. On this occasion Thomas Farr, a Bristol merchant who had been in London to work for the repeal of the Stamp Act, wrote to his brother, another Bristol merchant

319. Ibid. ff82-3. I have supplied the letters in the round brackets. The square brackets exist in the mss. The question mark replaces a word which is illegible.
320. Lords' Journals Vol. XXXI, p. 308.
321. Ibid. p. 308.
322. B. M. Add. Mss. 22974 f6 Newcastle to the Archbishop of Canterbury 15 February 1766.
323. Ritcheson op. cit. pp. 58-9 (no authority cited) See also Gipson op. cit. Vol. X, p. 404. Cf. W. W. M. R1-577 Newcastle to Rockingham 11 February 1766 quoted Albemarle op. cit. Vol. I p. 302.
324. See A Constitutional History of England 1642-1801 by M. A. Thomson, London 1938, pp. 263-5, 343-4.

"All the North American merchants propose going in cavalcade to attend him, amongst whom I am summoned and believe I shall go in the procession." 327.

Thus the merchants were active up to the very last moment in the repeal campaign and were ready to demonstrate their feelings even to the King.

5. The Acceptance of Repeal.

It was not only in the colonies that the news of the repeal of the Stamp Act was greeted with widespread jubilation but in England also. Barlow Trecothick was chosen Sheriff of London 15 April 1766 and on 23 April he presided over a great dinner to celebrate the repeal of the Stamp Act. This dinner was one of "the most brilliant ever seen in the City". It was attended by nine dukes. Trecothick with considerable difficulty persuaded the Duke of Newcastle to attend. Far more important than this was the immediate revival in trade that took place. This did far more to cement the alliance between the Rockingham Whigs and the merchants than any dinner or celebration could do.

When it became fairly certain that the Stamp Act would be repealed Trecothick co-operated with Rockingham to see that the repeal received a satisfactory reception in the colonies.

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325. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f6 Newcastle to the Archbishop of Canterbury 15 February 1766. ibid. f101 Newcastle to the Earl of Hopetown 27 February 1766; ibid. f127 Newcastle to the Archbishop of York 2 March 1766.
326. B. M. Add. Mss. 35912 f90 Report of the repeal debate in the House of Lords.
327. Merchant Venturers' Records, Letters 1754, Bundle 10, Thomas Farr to Richard Farr 17 March 1766.
328. See my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 52. See also Albemarle op. cit. Vol. I, p. 320. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f453 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 April 1766.
329. See above pp. 29-30.

On 22 February 1766 Sir George Savile wrote to Rockingham. The letter is endorsed "Considerations on the Repeal of the Stamp Act and Recommending a Suitable Behaviour to the Americans on that Occasion by Sir George Savile." In these considerations Savile stated that the chief argument that could be put forward against the repeal of the Stamp Act was that the colonists would regard it as a triumph and justification of their violent opposition and the Declaratory Act would thus become valueless. If, however, the colonists received the repeal with "submission and gratitude" the policy of the ministry would be justified. Savile therefore suggested that the merchants should write to their correspondents in the colonies and advise them to behave in a proper manner on receiving the news of the repeal of the Stamp Act. The date of Savile's letter is interesting. On 22 February 1766 more than 3000 letters were apparently despatched to America by merchants and their correspondents noting the Stamp Act would be repealed. Even if this figure is an exaggeration the knowledge that many letters had been sent to America with news of the critical division could well have inspired Savile to write to Rockingham with his scheme. Savile's idea seem to have been extensively adopted by the Rockingham administration; Trecothick's merchant committee was active in writing these letters and letters of this nature bearing the signature of the committee of merchants were sent to America. It seems probable that Trecothick and

330. W.W.M.R1-340 Sir George Savile to Rockingham 22 February 1766.
 331. See England and America 1763 to 1783 - The History of a Reaction by Mary A.M. Marks, London 1907, Vol. I, p. 58.

his committee sent a copy of the letter to the merchants in each colony and many other of the individuals considered in this work wrote to their own private friends in the same manner. Trecothick wrote similar letters also on the passing of the Free Ports Act and apparently the London merchants hired a special ship to take the news of the repeal to Boston. There is also evidence that Doctor Thomas Moffat, the refugee who had given evidence before the Stamp Act Committee composed a letter of this nature to a correspondent in the colonies and that Rockingham and Savile corrected the draft of this letter.

This policy seems to have met with only limited success. There is a small bundle of letters among the Rockingham Papers concerned with the reception of repeal which points to the fact that Rockingham attempted to collect such letters. It contains, however, only four documents which Rockingham can have regarded as reports of a favourable reception of repeal and three which he must have regarded as unfavourable. William Reeve attempted to send Robert Nugent, the member of Parliament for Bristol, news of the satisfactory reception of repeal which was communicated

332. See the letter from the London merchants in "London Merchants on the Stamp Act Repeal", Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc. 1921-23 Vol. LV, Boston 1923, pp. 215-223 (Printed Documents) W. W. M. R35 letter endorsed "Letter from New York"; London merchants to the merchants of Connecticut 18 March 1766, Conn. Hist. Soc. Coll Vol. XIX, The Pitkin Papers New Haven 1920, p. 279; see also Guttridge American Correspondence etc p. 14 Richard Champion to Caleb and John Lloyd 23 February 1766.

333. Letters of Denys de Berdt p. 314. De Berdt to Samuel White March 1766, ibid., p. 315. De Berdt to Samuel White 17 March 1766. See also Morgan op. cit. pp. 282-283.

334. See The Grenville Papers Vol. III, pp. 237-8 n. 1 Thomas Moffatt to Dr. Styles a Physician at Newport Rhode Island 18 March 1766. For Moffatt see Smith op. cit. pp. 39-54 and above p. 368.

to George Grenville, but on 14 March 1767 William Samuel Johnson wrote to Jonathan Trumbull

"The merchants are grown very cool in their regard towards us, partly because they have not received the remittances they expected since the repeal of the Stamp Act, and because they think we did not, as they say, express the proper gratitude to them for the service they did upon that occasion. Mr. Ray told me the other day, that for most of the Provinces, and particularly Connecticut they had not received answers to their letters; though I assured him I know such letters were prepared, and I believe forwarded...." 337

6. Conclusion.

I have in the foregoing section endeavoured to provide a true assessment of the part played by the English commercial interest in securing the repeal of the Stamp Act. The opinions of authorities differ. As long ago as 1904 Miss Helen M Hodges wrote

"The hostility of the British manufacturers, merchants and workmen and the decrease of British trade was probably even more influential in effecting the repeal than the disturbances in America." 338

and in her article "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry" in 1932 Dr. Sutherland fully acknowledged the part played by the merchants. More recent authorities, particularly American, tend to minimise the importance of the part played

335. W.W.M. R55. The bundle contains seven documents one of which (55-2) is a draft reply of Rockingham's. Letters which Rockingham probably answered as favourable are R55-1 Letter from New York to Barlow Trecothick and the merchants trading to North America 6 May 1766, R55-7 Vote of Thanks of House of Representatives of Massachusetts Bay 20 June 1766; R55-7 Thomas Cushing to Rockingham 21 June 1766 (covering letter to R55-7); R55-5 Samuel Cary to Rockingham 21 May 1766. Letters which Rockingham must have regarded as unfavourable are R55-3 extract of a letter from "Charleston to Mr. Shoe-brake" 16 May 1766 and R55-5 "Memorandums relating to the manner of Sir H. Moore's introducing Repeal of the Stamp Act to the General Assmby &c 1766"

336. Grenville Papers Vol. III, p. 248 Mr. Nugent to Mr. Grenville 17 June 1766.

by the merchants. Professor Morgan in The Stamp Act Crisis³⁴⁰ makes little more than a passing reference to their activities, and Professor Ritcheson, while acknowledging that the Rockingham Whigs capitalised on mercantile dissent states that it was far more the faulty parliamentary tactics of Grenville in not adopting the policy of amendment which secured the repeal of the Stamp Act³⁴¹ rather than the pressure of the merchants. Professor Gipson's opinion seems to have altered somewhat in recent years. In The Coming of the Revolution³⁴² he was prepared to concede a certain amount of influence to the merchants but in "The Great Debate on the Committee of the Whole House of Commons on the Stamp Act 1766 as Reported by Nathaniel Ryder" he writes

"In following these secret debates one is led to deduce that the economic consideration was not the leading cause for the resolution repealing the Stamp Act - despite the effectiveness of the pressure of public opinion upon the members in open session, especially on Edmund Burke, created by the unhappy situation of the British merchants. A review of the details of the debates on the Committee of the Whole House reveals that one of the considerations having great influence not only upon the ministry but also upon the members of the House of Commons was the military factor. It became clear that the relatively small number of British regulars deployed over a vast area of North America as compared to the potential strength of the colonies, now possessing many thousands of men trained in the use of arms, the military position of Great Britain in the thirteen colonies was a weak one. With this revelation came the conviction that should action be taken against the colonials to enforce the Stamp Act, they would turn to France and Spain for help, which would be granted.

337. W. S. Johnson to Jonathan Trumbull 14 March 1767 The Trumbull Papers loc. cit. p. 487.

338. "The Repeal of the Stamp Act" by Helen M. Hodges, Political Science Quarterly Vol. XVIII, Lancaster Penn., 1904, p. 263.

339. Sutherland op. cit. pp. 46-72 passim.

340. Morgan op. cit. pp. 261, 271-272.

341. Ritcheson op. cit. pp. 46-47, 61.

342. The Coming of the Revolution by L.H. Gipson, New York 1954 p. 106 et seq.

The mother country thus had to face the probability, which subsequent events were to substantiate in 1777, that any attempt to subdue a colonial revolt under these disadvantageous conditions, would lead to the outbreak of a new European war, a war of revenge....In the secret parliamentary debates....certain members not only saw the serious threat to the mercantile system but, what is even more important, they also saw the seriousness of potential military involvement. Undoubtedly, the deep apprehension of European participation in a war resulting from any attempt to enforce the Stamp Act, which General Conway, leader in the House of Commons, had voiced so clearly in his major speech, had continued to ~~try~~ ^{win} in the ~~eyes~~ ^{eyes} of members and to swing the final vote for repeal."

There can be little doubt that this difference of opinion reflects a cleavage in the views of supporters of repeal which is reflected even today. It is true that the debates which followed the evidence given before the Committee of the Whole House did not reflect so great a pre-occupation with mercantile evidence. But the ministry had justified the repeal on economic grounds in the Committee. They had now to justify it on other grounds. Support for the policy of the Rockingham Whigs could not be won only on the grounds of a trade depression.

The continued pressure kept up by the merchants through the repeal campaign must, however, not be underestimated. The pressure was relentless even if unco-ordinated³⁴⁴. That the campaign was sufficiently important for the Parliamentary opposition to try³⁴⁵ to counter and discredit it, is some measure of its success, as is the fact that Newcastle at least had the idea of organising³⁴⁶ a mercantile campaign to put pressure on the House of Lords.

343. Gipson, "The Great Debate etc" loc. cit. pp. 40-41.

344. See above p. 353

345. See above p. 375-376.

346. See above p. 400-402.

Perhaps it was only fear of a constitutional crisis that made the passage of the Repeal Bill through the House of Lords relatively easy. Moreover, the pressure in the lobbies which could easily have developed into riots and the extension in lobbying technique which took place emphasise the intensity of pressure and its unusual nature.

Above all this, however, is the influence that the activities of the merchants had upon the Rockingham Whigs. Starting perhaps as a source of information the merchants became a pressure group agitating for repeal and the ministry's chief ally in securing repeal. Yet while they were the ministry's "trump card" in securing repeal they were still putting pressure on the ministry to secure that measure. Once Rockingham had decided on co-operation with the merchants he could not have worked for less without forfeiting their support.

One must also distinguish between the merchants inside and outside Parliament. Whereas the chief pressure on the ministry came from the merchants outside Parliament, the merchants in Parliament were almost unanimous in favour of repeal. There was a solid American merchant vote for repeal and an almost united West Indian merchant vote. This was the value of the merchants in Parliament and no doubt they co-operated with their colleagues outside Parliament. Yet it was perhaps the merchants outside Parliament who were more influential in settling policy than those inside Parliament, and it was to these chiefly that

Rockingham turned to try to ensure that his policy received a satisfactory reception in the American colonies.³⁴⁸

The Stamp Act Crisis was also important for the Rockingham Whigs because it marked the end of one era and the inauguration of a new one. Before 1765, although the Newcastle Whigs were traditionally the party of the mercantile element, co-operation with the merchants was for ~~mere~~ the most part limited to the contact of individual merchants with Newcastle or other party leaders. The advice of merchants was sought on occasions and there was spasmodic co-operation at an elementary level but little more. The Stamp Act Crisis, however, forced the first Rockingham administration into close co-operation with the American merchants. Never before had they assisted or worked together in so highly organised a manner. Once begun, this co-operation could not be stopped. In future the Rockingham Whigs represented far more than any other political group the interests of the mercantile element, and the legacy survived in spite of the party's long period in opposition, and the difficulties which were to ensue in the years immediately following the party's fall from power.

This development also marked a change in the mercantile associates of the Rockingham Whigs in that they were no longer the representatives of the Bank of England and the great chartered companies - the 'City interest' that administration would turn to when in need of assistance. Rockingham's mercantile associates were for the most part outside Parliament,

348. See above pp. 406-409.

less wealthy men more directly concerned with trade. It cannot be denied that the development was associated with the change in leadership, a change from the ways of Newcastle to the ways of Rockingham. It also marked an alteration in the nature of support. Rockingham's mercantile associates were not those who supported a party traditionally in power but those who supported a party usually in opposition.

I have discovered no evidence that Rockingham began to forge the traditional links of administration with the City financiers.³⁴⁹ Perhaps his stay in power was too short for him to do this, and perhaps finance was not a sufficiently pressing problem during his stay in office, but his alliance with a group which was traditionally opposed to the influence of the City financiers must have worked against him forging links which were important for an administration that was to survive for a long period.

349. See above p.81.

APPENDIX.Membership of The London Merchants' Committee formed on 4
December 1765.

The following are listed as members of the London Merchants' Committee according to W.W.M.R1-537, Copy of general letter from the Merchants' Committee to the town of Leeds.

Mr. John Strettel	Mr. Nicholas Ray
Mr. Antony Vialars (Junr)	Mr. David Barclay (Junr)
Mr. Grey Olive	Mr. Daniel Mildred
Mr. Antony Merry	Mr. John Buchanan
Mr. Jonathan Barhard	Mr. John Stewart
Mr. Dennis Deberdt	Mr. Samuel Athawes
Mr. George Haley	Mr. Capel Hanbury
Mr. Thomas Lane	Mr. Gilbert Franklyn
Mr. Gilbert Harrison	Mr. Edward Bridger
Barlow Trecothick Esq.	Mr. William Greenwood
Mr. William Neate	Mr. Charles Crokatt
Mr. Richard Neave	Mr. Charles Ogilvie
Mr. Harris	Mr. Clark
Mr. Chambers	Mr. Alexander Hanna

D) THE PASSING OF THE FREE PORTS ACT AND RELATED COMMERCIAL MEASURES.

On 14 February 1766 Henry Kruger had written to his father

"The Parliament have not yet done anything about the Sugar Act and other destructive restraints on your trade. It will come as soon as the Stamp Act is settled. I imagine they will rescind all the restrictive clauses, and grant you everything you ask. Their eyes are at last opened and they seem convinc'd what vast Benefit will accrue to this Kingdom by giving you almost an unlimited trade, so far as doth not interfere with British Manufacturers. The West Indies are collecting all the Force to oppose us; I have reason to say they will at length be defeated.

'Tis said French sugars, Coffee, Cotton etc the Produce of foreign Islands will have the Indulgence of being imported into our Colonies duty free, but must be put in King's warehouses and the Proprietors constrained to ship them off again (to any part of the world they please) in a stipulated time.

The Duty on Molasses will be reduced to 1d. per gallon." 350

and on March 1766 after the repeal of the Stamp Act Denys de Berdt wrote to William Smith;

"There is yet much to be done. The Admiralty Courts must be restrained, the exorbitant duty on molasses lowered and the restraints on Trade removed and these we hope to effect through the favour of the present ministry who justly think the Interest of England and her Colonies one." 351

But if contemporaries viewed the passing of the Free Ports Act and its related measures as part of the programme for the reform of the laws of trade no such consensus of opinion exists among modern historians.

350. Henry Kruger Junior to Henry Kruger Senior 14 February 1766 printed "Commerce of Rhode Island 1726-1780" Vol. 1, loc. cit. p. 143.

351. "Letters of Denys de Berdt" loc. cit. p. 314. For the Admiralty Courts see Morgan op. cit. pp. 23-24.

As already pointed out Doctor Sutherland interprets the coming of the Stamp Act Crisis as an interruption in the orderly development of the commercial policy of the first Rockingham administration. ³⁵² She sees the passing of the Free Ports Act as an example of the unrestrained power of the merchants over the Rockingham Whigs, in which the merchants capitalising on the power they had gained during the Stamp Act Crisis sought a general reform in the laws of trade. ³⁵³

Another authority contends

"The decision to establish a free port in the British Empire represented a significant modification of the principle of 1650. As a landmark in the history of British colonial policy, the innovation may be compared with the decision of the British government to keep Canada rather than Guadeloupe in 1762. The first West Indies Free Port Act of 1766 was intended as a means of obtaining wider markets for British goods, and it demonstrated as did the choice of Canada in 1762, that English industry had outgrown the bounds of the old colonial empire and must henceforth rely on the acquisition of new markets and of fresh sources of raw materials." ³⁵⁴

Moreover, Mrs. Armytage points out that if an outlet for manufactured goods was obtained by the Free Ports Act there was no real breach of the Navigation Laws, for the goods to be imported were goods that did not compete with those produced in either Britain or the colonies. The authors of the Act were trying to revive a trade that formerly existed

352. See above p. 323.

353. Sutherland "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry" loc. cit. p. 66.

354. "The Origins of Free Ports in British North America" by G. S. Graham, Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXII, Toronto 1942, p. 265.

in the Spanish Indies. Both Mrs. Armytage and Dr. Sutherland see the passing of the Act as the culmination of the co-operation between the North American and West Indian merchants.³⁵⁵

It should therefore be emphasised that the passing of the Free Ports Act and the other measures connected with it were in no sense to complete a process started by the repeal of the Stamp Act as is sometimes implied in histories of the American Revolution.³⁵⁶ These measures were, in their own right, an important part of the commercial policy of the first Rockingham administration.

On 21 February when the Committee of the Whole House to Consider the American Papers reported it was continued in session on general trade affairs. On this date it was agreed that it should meet next on 4 March³⁵⁷ but the meeting of the Committee was postponed several times. The next time it met was on 24 March 1766 when it was ordered "to consider the Laws relating to the trade of America³⁵⁸". After this the Committee met eight times on 27 March, 4, 24, 30 April³⁵⁹ 5, 6, 7, and 8 May. From these meetings emerged the Free Ports Act and related commercial measures of the Rockingham administration.

355. Armytage op. cit. pp. 2, 13. Sutherland loc. cit. p. 66.

356. Miller op. cit. p. 235.

357. See above p. 388. Cf. Commons Journal Vol. XXX, p. 586.

358. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 688.

359. Ibid. pp. 697-808 passim.

The Committee had finished with the Stamp Act on 24 February and the order of 24 March entailed taking into consideration "what virtually amounted to a review of the North American trade in general." ³⁶⁰ Early in March 1766 Burke wrote to Charles O'Hara

"We now prepare for a compleat revision of all the Commercial Laws which regard our own or the foreign plantations from the Act of Navigation downwards; It is an extensive plan. The North Americans and West Indians are now in treaty upon it, and as soon as they have settled some preliminaries (and they are better disposed, than anyone could think, to practicability and concord) the whole arrangement will be ordered, between them and some of the Board people and detached members and will be brought into the House a regular and digested scheme." ³⁶¹

Although a "regular and digested scheme" never appears to have been brought into the House, Burke's letter makes obvious the important part the merchants were to play in the forthcoming legislation. Discussion in the House of Commons was not begun until the North American and West Indian merchants ³⁶² had reached some sort of agreement. This fact, together with the amount of other business that had accumulated during the lengthy debates on the repeal of the Stamp Act, and the attempts to co-ordinate ministerial policy with the merchants accounts for the lengthy postponement of the meeting of the Committee until the 24 March and the change of function of the Committee of the Whole House on that ³⁶³ day.

360. Smith op. cit. p. 8.

361. Burke to Charles O'Hara 14 March 1766 printed Burke Correspondence Vol. 1, pp. 239-240.

362. B.M. Add. Mss. 33030 f206 Agreement of West Indian and North American merchants 19 March 1766.

363. See above p. 418.

The central problem responsible for the delay in the sitting of the Committee and the further delay in securing the passage of legislation through Parliament was the difference among the mercantile elements. North American and West Indian interests had seldom been in agreement until the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, but they had been able to unite at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis to secure the repeal of legislation which both considered detrimental to their trade. Once the repeal of the Stamp Act was obtained and other legislation was involved the differing interests reasserted themselves. Moreover the conflict became more complicated than a struggle between the North American and West Indian interests. There was a conflict between West Indian planter interests, West Indian merchant interests, the sugar refiners of London, and British merchants trading to the continental North American colonies who partially represented another interest involved, the New England merchants trading with the West Indies.

The New England merchants were dependent on the foreign West Indies to market their lumber and provisions because the British West Indies were too small a market for all of this. In return for these goods the New England merchants obtained molasses and the specie to trade with Great Britain. The New England merchants were thus represented and supported by the British merchants trading to North America in the

demand for a reduction of the duty on foreign molasses imported into North America and the opening of Free Ports in the British West Indies. They also wanted a reduction in the duty on foreign sugars imported into Great Britain. These demands were opposed by British West India planters intent on buying supplies at rock-bottom prices and maintaining monopoly prices on their produce. The British West India merchants who were chiefly carriers of goods were interested in increasing the amount of goods available for British and colonial markets and thus tended to support the reduction of the molasses duty and the duties on other commodities but not the opening of Free Ports which threatened their trade monopoly. The London sugar refiners were interested only in increasing the amount of sugar available for home and overseas markets for existing legislation tended to restrict the amount of raw materials available to them. This division of West India interest explains why William Beckford and Rose Fuller appeared on opposite sides in the forthcoming controversy.

This complicated controversy became further confused by two other factors. There were differences between London and the provincial merchants over what particular measures were best to secure their ends, and various political factions vied for support of the different mercantile groups to assist their rise to power as the Rockingham administration disintegrated.³⁶⁵

365. See War and Trade in the West Indies by R. Pares, Oxford 1936

Burke reported the negotiations between the North American and the West Indian merchants in a letter to Charles O'Hara on 1 and 4 March 1766 but minimised their differences of opinion.³⁶⁶ On 12 March Rockingham mentioned the dissensions between the groups when he reported to the King the preliminary agreement that had been reached on 10 March 1766.³⁶⁷

In this preliminary agreement negotiated at the King's Arms Tavern the West Indian and North American merchants' committees agreed to the reduction of the duty on foreign molasses imported into North America to one penny per gallon, to allow the import of certain foreign commodities, sugar, coffee, and cotton, duty free provided they were re-exported as legally allowed to Britain and Europe, and the lowering of the duties on certain foreign commodities entering North America. In the draft of the document in the Rockingham and Newcastle Papers there is no specific mention of the opening of a Free Port in Dominica, but in marginal notes on one copy in the Rockingham Papers the idea is introduced and the Free Port at Dominica appears in what seems to be a final version of the paper to the Board of Trade Papers.³⁶⁸ This

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365. (contd) Chapter IX passim and Merchants and Planters by R. Pares, Economic History Review Supplement No. 4, Cambridge 1960, pp. 32-37; Armitage op. cit. p. 39 n. 8, Williams op. cit. pp. 76, 92; Savidge op. cit. pp. 250-253.
366. Burke Correspondence Vol. I, pp. 239-240 quoted above p. 419.
367. Rockingham to George III 12 March 1766 printed Fortescue op. cit. Vol. I, p. 281.
368. W. W. M. R60 Documents headed "At a meeting of the Committee of the West Indian and North American Merchants at the King's Arms Tavern" 10 March 1766; Cf. document with similar heading at P. R. O., B. T. 6/75 ff 539-42. Armitage op. cit. p. 39. Sutherland loc. cit. pp. 63-66; Cf. Sosin op. cit. pp. 81-82.

indicates the willingness of the West Indian merchants to compromise on the molasses duty, but not initially on the Free Ports and that the North Americans had compromised by not insisting on the reduction of the duty on foreign sugar imported into Great Britain.

The Gentleman's Magazine commented on the settlement of 10 March as follows;

"In settling these important points the interest of the North American Colonies, of the West Indian islands, of the public revenue, and the general system of British commerce were maturely considered. The parties concerned were not directed by partial regards, but the public good: To conciliate opposing interests was no easy task; but the good sense and moderation of those to whom these affairs were committed, at length happily effected that conciliation of jarring interests, which hitherto had been considered impossible."

It reported that the proof of the knowledge and integrity given by the North American merchants forced the West Indian merchants to negotiate with an interest that they had previously derided. Now it had become an influence on government to be reckoned with, and although the North American merchants were suspicious at first, remembering the treatment they had received previously, when they discovered that the West Indians were in earnest, a successful compromise was reached. On 11 March 1766 the West Indian and North American Merchants Committee met again but their deliberations were inconclusive especially about the problem of ships laden with French sugars stopping at Channel ports on their way from America and again on their return. It was agreed to defer a decision until the advice of more American merchants could be obtained.

Before the merchants could meet again, however, a deep rift had appeared between the groups represented. This to a large extent was the responsibility of the Bristol Merchant Venturers. They had met on 10 March 1766 and drawn up a set of resolutions similar in essentials to those drawn up by the West Indian and North American Merchants' Committees on the same day. The Bristol merchants had, however, sent representatives to London who had also pressed for the reduction of the duty on foreign sugars imported into Great Britain and who supported by the North American merchants in London, Liverpool and Lancaster made the opening of a Free Port at ³⁷¹ Dominica the prime objective of their campaign. Thus although on the 3 April 1766 the London West India and North American Merchants' Committee had agreed to press the administration to allow the re-exportation of certain British manufactures and ³⁷² North American provisions from Jamaica and Pensacola, Florida, no agreement had been reached over the question of the duty on foreign sugars and the opening of the Dominica Free Port and there was a definite breach between the North American and West India groups. Beckford led the powerful section of the West Indians opposed to the more extreme demands of the ³⁷³ merchants, the Fullers, however, still supported the alliance

369. (contd) sketch of the Transactions that led to the new Regulation of Commerce that have lately been agitated in favour of the Colonies".

370. Savadge op. cit. pp. 261-262.

371. Savadge op. cit. p. 260 et seq.

372. W.W.M. R~~e~~-60 Document commencing "At a meeting of the joint Committees of the West Indian and North American Merchants" 3 April 1766.

373. Chatham Papers P.R.O. 30/8 Beckford to Pitt 18 April 1766

with the North American group and Newcastle was still using
 374
 Rose Fuller as an adviser on America. It should also be remem-
 bered that Fuller was Chairman of the Stamp Act Committee.

On 7 and 8 April 1766 the agitation for a Dominica Free
 Port reached a climax with the presentation of concerted
 petitions by the merchants of Bristol, Liverpool, Lancaster,
 375
 Manchester and London. At this stage Rockingham hastily
 called a Cabinet meeting on 12 April 1766 to try to settle
 376
 policy. As at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis there was
 no unanimity of opinion in the Cabinet. Rockingham and
 Dowdeswell were prepared to support the North Americans
 against the West Indians, but Newcastle was luke-warm in
 support of the Free Ports Act in the face of West Indian
 opposition. Northington, Egmont and Grafton seem to have been
 377
 hesitant to support the measure if not actually against it.

373. (contd) Cf. Sutherland loc. cit. p. 66.

374. Cf. Sutherland IBID loc. cit. p. 66. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f185
 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 15 March 1766, f189 Newcastle
 to Rose Fuller 18 March 1766, f196 Fuller to Newcastle
 20 March 1766.

375. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, pp. 704-750. It is not clear
 why these five towns should have petitioned. They do
 represent the three major ports trading to America with
 the addition of Manchester and Lancaster. Abraham
 Rawlinson perhaps the chief protagonist of the Free Ports
 Act was a Lancaster merchant (see below p. 427.) and he
 appears to have been working closely with Manchester
 merchants. See my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 252-255. In
 London, Trecothick's committee was probably active, and
 the correspondence in the Merchant Venturers Papers,
 Bundle 9 shows how closely Rawlinson, the London merchant,
 and the Bristol merchants co-operated. Co-ordination of
 activity with the Liverpool merchants was probably
 maintained through Sir William Meredith.

376. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f348 Rockingham to Newcastle 11 April
 1766. Cf. Sutherland loc. cit. p. 66.

377. B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f349 Rockingham to Newcastle 11 April
 1766, f350 Newcastle to Rockingham 11 April 1766, f370
 Rockingham to Newcastle 13 April 1766. Cf. Armytage op.
cit. p. 39. Sutherland loc. cit. pp. 66-69.

At the meeting it was decided to lower the duty on molasses and allow the warehousing of foreign sugars in America, but consideration of the Dominica Free Port was put off until the next session of Parliament. ³⁷⁸ As well as the lack of unanimity another factor that must have weighed heavily with the ministry in taking the decision was the influence of Pitt. He now appears to have supported the West Indians against the Free Ports. A deputation of London merchants, Barlow Trecothick, David Barclay and Capel Hanbury appear to have visited him in early April concerning this and the visit appears to have been followed by one from Burke and Abraham Rawlinson the Lancaster merchant, who was so active in working for the ³⁷⁹ Free Ports Act.

Pitt sensed danger, realising that if he supported the North Americans against the West Indians he would lose popularity. Accordingly he gracefully retired from the fray and did not accede to the entreaties of either of the deputations ³⁸⁰ that visited him.

The position of the ministry was now becoming weaker. It

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378. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f370 Rockingham to Newcastle 13 April 1766, ^{ibid.} f372 Newcastle to Rockingham 13 April 1766.
379. Ibid. f389 "Items for the King" Ibid. f421 "An account of Mr. Walpole's Conversation with Mr. Pitt" 17 April 1766, Burke Correspondence Vol. I, p. 251 Burke to O'Hara 23, 24 April 1766. For Abraham Rawlinson see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 252-255 and below p. and also Merchant Venturers Correspondence, Bundle IX, Abraham Rawlinson to William Reeve 12 April 1766. Cf. Savadge op. cit. pp. 262-266.
380. Chatham Correspondence op. cit. Vol. II, p. 419 Thomas Nuthall to Pitt 8 May 1766, Sutherland loc. cit. p. 68. Cf. Savadge op. cit. pp. 277-282.

was divided among itself. Pitt would not support it and Grenville remained hostile. Moreover, mercantile support which had helped it through the Stamp Act Crisis was no longer unanimous. Much credit must therefore go to Rose and Stephen Fuller who secured conciliation between the mercantile groups. This was especially the case because the demands for particular legislation had become increasingly confused among different political factions and different mercantile groups. After the inconclusive meeting of 11 March the demands of the Bristol merchants had ^{been} further modified. Three representatives seem to have been at work on their behalf and each had a different priority. Abraham Rawlinson the Lancaster merchant was one of the Bristol agents in London and he was preoccupied with the demand for the opening of Free Ports and the reduction of the duty on imported foreign raw cotton. Thomas Farr the Bristol merchant was particularly concerned to secure the modification of the Sugar Act desired by the Merchant Venturers and Robert Nugent the member of Parliament for Bristol, no doubt trying to regain some of the prestige he had lost because of his behaviour during the Stamp Act Crisis, sought the measures demanded by the North American merchants. He concentrated on getting as much sugar as possible for the home

381. See B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 f247 rough notes. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 ff62-63 "A Copy of a Letter from Stephen Fuller Esq. Agent for the Island of Jamaica to the Rt. Hon. William Dowdeswell Esq...." ibid. f114 Onslow to Newcastle 8 May 1766; ibid. f147 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 10 May 1766; ibid. f149 "Mr. Fuller's remarks relating to the Free Ports" 8 May 1766. See also rough notes made by Fuller - Fuller Papers, Sussex Archaeological Society, Bundle IX; Cf. Sutherland loc. cit. p. 69. Armytage op. cit. pp. 40, 41.

market and wanted Free Ports at Dominica, Kingston, Jamaica and Pensacola, Florida together with direct export of foreign
382
sugar from these ports to Great Britain.

On 22 March 1766 the London North American merchants had accepted in essentials the proposal of the Merchant Venturers represented to them by Thomas Farr. This involved the landing in England of foreign sugars from the West Indies to protect the sugar refiners from foreign competition and ships sailing to America from continental Europe stopping in England to protect the British merchants trade with the colonies. To these proposals was added the demand for Dominica as a Free
383
Port.

After this meeting Nugent became the chief Bristol representative in London and the Bristol viewpoint was modified accordingly. In early April 1766, Nugent was aware, however, that the House of Commons was only willing to agree to the opening of a Free Port in Dominica and this would be with important limitations on the importation of sugars from thence. It was probable that British planters on the island would be debarred from producing sugar and all sugars from Dominica would be regarded as foreign. The demand for a Free Port became supreme over other demands when Nugent became Bristol's chief representative in London.³⁸⁴ Moreover

382. Savadge op. cit. pp. 262-264. Cf. Merchant Venturers Correspondence Bundle 10 Letters 1754 -

383. Savadge op. cit. 267-268.

384. Savadge op. cit. 268 et seq.

the Bristol merchants made little attempt to restrain Nugent from pressing for the reduction of the sugar duty.³⁸⁵ The rift between the North American and West Indian merchants grew wider and the London North American merchants complained that their Bristol allies had deserted them.³⁸⁶

Meetings at the Exchequer between Dowdeswell, Nugent and the London merchant George Hayley about 10 and 17 April produced no conclusive result, primarily it would seem because the West Indian interest was not sufficiently represented.³⁸⁷ These meetings were followed by a petition from the London sugar refiners to the House of Commons demanding more sugar for re-export and one from the "Manufacturers Dealers and Carriers of Sugar in Bristol" demanding more sugar for home consumption.³⁸⁸ presented on 14 April 1766.

The final agreement secured by the Fullers on 8 May 1766 was essentially a compromise. In return for a reduction of the molasses duty and allowing the import of foreign sugars into North America the West Indians secured safeguards for the home markets all sugars coming from North America to Great Britain were to be deemed foreign and the import of foreign sugar only permitted as long as the high rate of duty then in force continued. The fourth resolution reads "that relief

385. Savadge op. cit. p. 274.

386. Savadge op. cit. pp. 275-276.

387. Savadge op. cit. pp. 278-279.

388. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 759; Savadge op. cit. p. 280.

be given to the Spanish trade by a species of Free port in Jamaica for Spanish bottoms (To be proposed this year)" and the tenth "The Free port off Dominica to be carried into execution this year" has been crossed out. It has been replaced by "The Free port off Dominica for goods of foreign American growth to be proposed for consideration but not absolutely determined..this session" in a draft copy of the Resolutions among the Newcastle Papers. In addition to this there are resolutions dealing with the duties on brandy and rum and it was agreed to abolish the duty on foreign cotton. The document is docketed "House of Commons May 8th 1766 Agreement of the West India Committee"³⁸⁹. It thus seems that the Fullers secured the agreement of members of the West India Committee first and then reported their agreement to the North American Merchants' Committee. The deletion of the Free Ports clause indicates that the North American group had been forced to moderate still further their proposals on the Free Ports question after the document was drawn up and safeguards given for the home sugar market.

I have found no evidence that there was a separate West India committee among West Indian members of Parliament other than those members who represented the West India Committee which had been negotiating with the North American Merchants' Committee. The document was probably agreed in

389. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 f243 (draft) f245 and f247 Agreement of the West India Committee 8 May 1766 printed Sutherland loc. cit. pp. 70-72. Cf. Sutherland loc. cit. p. 69. Armytage op. cit. pp. 41-42.

the House of Commons because it was the most convenient place for the Fullers to meet West Indians who would be both members and witnesses before the Committee of the Whole House which sat on that day. The last sentence of the document indicates that the West India Committee would inform the North American Committee of their agreement.

It is not clear how the Fullers managed to bring the conflicting interests together but the nature of the compromise suggests that all realised that unless some sacrifice was made no interest would achieve anything. This idea is confirmed by a letter from Grey Cooper to Rockingham on 29 April 1766 before agreement had been reached in which he wrote

"Some of the merchants are most anxious and desirous of taking advantage of this necessary delay and recommend it to the consideration of your Lordship whether the main question had not better be brought on upon the free ports. I told them I thought that was impossible at this period of the session, but they do not seem satisfied with a general answer - I can find no other."

390

Once co-operation between the two groups had been achieved it seems to have been possible to continue it for some months for on 13 June 1766 the London North America Merchants were able to write to their mercantile correspondents in the colonies;

"It is incumbent on us to mention the happy union between the West Indian and North American merchants which has proved a great advantage in combating the opposition. It took place early in this session (of Parliament) and for the general good, we sincerely wish it always to subsist in its present cordiality." 391

390. W.W.M.R1-603 Grey Cooper to Rockingham 29 April 1766.

391. London Merchants to John Hancock and other American merchants 13 June 1766 printed "London Merchants and the Stamp Act Repeal" loc.cit. p.220.

In Parliament the passing of the Free Ports Bill and related measures was conducted in much the same way as the campaign for the repeal of the Stamp Act had been. Initially Burke, at least, hoped to obtain a "Compleat revision of all Commercial Laws". He requested Charles O'Hara to send him some proposals so that Treland could be included in the scheme. However, these proved unsatisfactory³⁹² because, as Burke explained to O'Hara, a prejudiced interest opposed almost all the proposals. When Burke tried to secure the free export of soap from Ireland to the West Indies the proposal received some support from provincial merchants at first but eventually the measure was defeated,³⁹³ and it became obvious that the measures to be passed would have to be confined to those upon which the great commercial interests were intent. The procedure followed by the Committee of the Whole House was repeated. Witnesses who had not been heard, although ordered to attend the Stamp Act Committee, were ordered to attend again. On 27 March the merchants of London were examined on their petition of 17 January 1766 and other witnesses were questioned on that day.³⁹⁴ Among the Harrowby Papers there is a record of the evidence of 27 March including the information given by William Kelly,³⁹⁵ Brooke Watson, John Wentworth and Benjamin Hales.

As mentioned above concerted petitions from Lancaster,

392. Burke Correspondence Vol. 1, p. 239, Burke to O'Hara 1, 4 March 1766, p. 246 Burke to O'Hara 27 March 1766, ibid. p. 246 Burke to O'Hara 29 March 1766.
393. Ibid. p. 249 Burke to O'Hara 8 April 1766, ^{ibid.} p. 254 Burke to O'Hara 24 May 1766.
394. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, pp. 688, 702.
395. Harrowby Manuscripts, Nathaniel Ryder's Diary, Document 63. For Kelly and Wentworth see above pp. 330-339 Brooke Watson

Liverpool, Bristol, London and Manchester were presented to
 396
 the House of Commons on 7 and 8 April. Further witnesses were
 ordered to attend the Committee and examined in much the same
 397
 way as the witnesses before the Stamp Act Committee. As might
 be expected a significant number of these witnesses were West
 398
 Indian agents and merchants. In all, a further twenty seven
 witnesses were called by the Committee. It is not clear
 whether they were all examined but judging by the Commons
 399
Journals a reasonable proportion were.

On 8 April 1766 Burke wrote to Charles O'Hara;

"Last night we closed the examination of our witnesses
 to the propriety of opening Dominica as a Free Port
 which concludes the enquiry previous to the resolutions
 that are to be the foundation of the new American Trade
 Act. These resolutions will be proposed in the Committee
 for America next Monday." 400

Burke did not mention Jamaica or Pensacola. presumably because
 the House was not willing to consider these, as Nugent stated,
 or because they were not a point at issue between the different
 401
 mercantile groups.

No resolutions were introduced into the Committee of the
 Whole House on Monday 14 April as Burke suggested. Indeed on
 402
 that day its sitting was postponed for a week. The resolutions

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395. (contd) was a London merchant and Benjamin Hales was
 Collector of Customs at Boston.
396. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, pp. 704-708. See above p. 425.
397. Cf. Ibid. pp. 750, 790, 797.
398. E.g. Beeston Long, Chairman of the West India Committee,
 Richard Maitland, James Irvin, James Carr.
399. Ibid. pp. 739, 797, 801, 808.
400. Burke Correspondence Vol. I, p. 248 Burke to O'Hara 8 April
 1766.
401. See above p. 420 interseq.
402. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 794.

were not introduced until 9 May when the West India and North
 American Merchants' Committees had reached agreement. The
 403
 dissension at the Cabinet meeting on 11 April may have also
 404
 been responsible for this delay for on 23, 24 April Burke
 wrote to O'Hara;

"When the Free Port come to be debated in full cabinet
 the old stagers frittered it down to an address to the
 King for the opinion of the board on the matter &c.
 so we came hopping into the house with half a measure;
 the most odious thing, I am sure to my temper and
 opinions that can be conceived. However this miserable
 remnant is better than nothing." 405

There does not appear to be any trace in the Commons
Journals of the "half a measure" referred to and it is perhaps
 significant that the additional witnesses mentioned above
 were ordered to attend the Committee on and after 17 April 1766.
 From this evidence one can only make tentative suggestions
 as to what was happening. With lack of support ~~from~~ from the
 merchants and dissension within the Cabinet it would seem that
 it was decided at first to make a discreet withdrawal from
 the Free Port measure but then when agreement seemed possible
 among the merchants the measure was revived. The additional
 twenty seven witnesses called before the Committee may also
 point to this conclusion. Perhaps they were used to convert
 hesitant government supporters as well as unattached members
 to the scheme. It is also possible that the administration

403. See above p. 429. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 811.

404. See above p. 425.

405. Burke Correspondence Vol. I, p. 251. Burke to O'Hara 23, 24
 April 1766. The Board referred to was probably the Board
 of Trade but possibly the Treasury Board. Cf. P. R. O.
 Treasury Minute Books T. 29 Vol. XXXVI, p. 20 (f10) for
 business of this week before the Treasury Board.

may have been playing for time while the merchants reached agreement.

It seems probable that many of the witnesses were not ministerial witnesses at all for on 8 May 1766 Thomas Nuthall wrote to Pitt

"Mr. Beckford has treated the House of Commons every day this week, and I may say, until night too, with his evidence relative to the alterations of the duties, free ports etc. I should tell you that Mr. Nugent insists in bringing the question of a free port before the House now, whatever inclination the Treasury Bench may have to defer it till another session, so that matter may probably come to be decided before the House rises." 406

Perhaps it was this pressure from Nugent that kept the question of the Free Ports alive. On 21 April 1766 seven
407
witnesses were ordered to attend the Committee by his motion. A number of the remaining twenty witnesses may have been proposed by Beckford to resist the Free Ports Act. Indeed it would seem at this time that the struggle between the two rival mercantile factions was being fought out, both inside and outside Parliament. But it is certain that now the time of crisis was passed members were becoming uninterested in evidence on trade. Nuthall continued his letter to Pitt on

406. Chatham Correspondence Vol. II, pp. 417-418. Thomas Nuthall to Pitt 8 May 1766. Cf. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f56 Onslow to Newcastle 30 April 1766, ibid. f58 West to Newcastle 30 April 1766.

407. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 750.

8 May remarking

"It seems a ghastly appearance, on the part of the directors of the political machine, when, in a question of such importance as that now before the House, concerning the American duties, free port &c only seventy members could be found to attend their duty." 408

In reply Pitt wrote

"American evidence will have sweated the House, finely, though the cool attendance will have mitigated the sultry hours of investigation." 409

There is other evidence on the presentation of witnesses and the fierce controversy over the Free Ports measure. On 24 April 1766 James West wrote to Newcastle

"By various delays we did not get into the examination of witnesses till 6 o'clock, so that will certainly employ us tonight, and we shall not proceed to the Resolution till tomorrow, and even then I fancy no great matter will happen." 410

No resolutions, however, appear to have been introduced on
411

25 April. On 30 April George Onslow reported to Newcastle with regard to American affairs and the Free Ports

"It has been agreed on all sides to put off the matter till Monday to hear evidence from West India Planters." 412

Grenville was at this time attacking the ministry because they dared to interfere with the Navigation Acts and were

408. Chatham Correspondence Vol. II, p. 618, Nuthall to Pitt 8 May 1766.

409. Ibid. p. 420 Pitt to Nuthall 11 May 1766. Cf. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f98 Onslow to Newcastle 7 May 1766. Cf. Armytage op. cit. p. 40.

410. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f13 West to Newcastle 26 April 1766.

411. Cf. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 762.

412. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f56 Onslow to Newcastle 30 April 1766.

allowing themselves to become subservient to mercantile
 413
 influence. Horace Walpole recorded that towards the end of
 April when Rose Fuller moved to have the merchants' petitions
 referred to the Committee of the Whole House he was opposed
 414
 by Grenville and on 30 April West wrote to Newcastle

"Mr. Grenville spoke strongly against every part of the
 American measures and particularly the first question
 to be proposed for lowering the Duties on molasses, which
 he said was a fine end of what administration promised
 with regard to the colonies, in taking off tax after tax
 upon evidence at the Bar ex parte only, and the overbear-
 ing and delegation of administration to a club of North
 American merchants at the King's Arms Tavern, who he
 hoped would never be suffered to give law to G.B." 415

On 6 May Grenville appears to have attacked the influence of
 416
 the American merchants again.

On 7 May even the ministry appears to have felt that the
 evidence was going to be too long. On that day West wrote to
 Newcastle

"Nothing has happened today worth your Grace's notice.
 No division has passed. The examination going on. Mr.
 Maitland now at the Bar, is the only evidence of the day.
 Captain Collett took up all yesterday. Every person
 seems uneasy that some end is not put to an examination
 which is threatened to be prolonged which can give no
 information and which is very ill attended." 417

Onslow wrote on the same day

"The same poor miserable evidence is still on his legs
 (Maitland) and giving answers to a thousand nonsensical

413. Armytage op. cit. p. 41. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f58 West to
 Newcastle 30 April 1766. For the Grenvilleites opinion
 on the Free Port Bill see Grenville Papers Vol. IV, p. 239
 Thomas Whately to George Grenville 24 May 1766.

414. Walpole op. cit. Vol. II, p. 224.

415. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f58 West to Newcastle 30 April 1766.

416. Ibid. f83 Onslow to Newcastle 6 May 1766. (Letter not dated
 but can be dated from internal evidence)

417. Ibid. f97 West to Newcastle 7 May 1766. Maitland and
 Collett were both concerned with the trade to the West
 Indies.

questions to about twenty of us which is the utmost of our numbers." 418

The worst was now over, however, for on the following day West was able to report that the evidence was finished and all Dowdeswell's resolutions including the Free Ports one had been passed. 419 Onslow wrote to Newcastle

"I wish you joy of my being able to tell you I think we shall finish our American matters tonight and move all our resolutions. I send you the agreement of the West India Committee which Rose and Stephen Fuller have had infinite merit in procuring. If the Free Port is talked of tonight we shall be late." 420

In exultant mood Rockingham wrote to Newcastle

"Lord Rockingham presents his compliments to the Duke of Newcastle and returns his Grace's congratulations on the very pleasing appearance in the House of Commons on the American and West Indian Regulations and particularly on the general approbation with which the resolution on the Free Ports was received." 421

On 9 May 1766 the Resolutions of the Committee of the Whole House were presented to the House of Commons and two bills brought in, one for the establishment of Kingston in Jamaica and the Island of Dominica as free ports, and the other including the reduction of duties agreed to including ^{the} Molasses Duty and the duty on cotton. The third contested point the reduction of the sugar duty was added the next day, 10 May 1766. 422 The bills now passed rapidly through both houses.

In the middle of May Newcastle began to fear that the

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418. Ibid. f98 Onslow to Newcastle 7 May 1766.
 419. Ibid. f110 West to Newcastle 8 May 1766 8 o'clock, ^{Ibid} f112
 West to Newcastle 8 May 1766 '½ past 9'.
 420. Ibid. f114 Onslow to Newcastle 8 May 1766.
 421. Ibid. f116 Rockingham to Newcastle 8 May 1766.
 422. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, pp. 808-843 passim. Cf. Savage op. cit. p. 282.

Free Ports Act might be defeated in the House of Lords and he began to marshal support there in much the same way as he had done for the repeal of the Stamp Act.⁴²³ Burke wrote to Abraham Rawlinson about this and Rawlinson replied to Burke

"Last night I recd. the favor of your letter of the 19th inst. which has a little alarmed me, yet I hope there is no fear of the (Free Ports) Bill failing in the House of Lords. A journey to London will be the most inconvenient thing that can possibly happen to me at this time."⁴²⁴

The Acts finally received the Royal Assent on 6 June⁴²⁵ 1766, and ~~were~~ regarded as a triumph even by the West Indian merchants for they invited Newcastle to a dinner to celebrate⁴²⁶ the event.

It is important to distinguish between the Dominica Freeport and the freeports on the island of Jamaica. The Jamaica freeports of Kingston, Savannah la Mar, Montego Bay and Santa Lucea were opened for the Spanish trade. To safeguard planter interests the importation of goods which they produced on the island was prohibited and to safeguard British markets in the colonies for British merchants no foreign manufactures could be imported. Exports from the Free Ports allowed were negroes and all British commodities legally imported except naval stores and certain enumerated articles. For Dominica in which Freeports were opened for French trade any produce of the foreign West Indies could be admitted. Enumerated goods had to be exported direct to Great Britain as in Jamaica and the Act involved elaborate

423. B. M. ADD MSS 32975. f189 Newcastle to the Bishop of Worcester 15 May 1766. Cf. above p. 400 et seq.

424. W. W. M. Burke Letters 1-55 Rawlinson to Burke 23 May 1766.

precautions to stop the smuggling of French sugars from Dominica into other British West India Islands or British North America, and to safeguard the planter interest in Dominica. The Acts thus tried to harmonise all the interests of those who had sought them and thus they proved unworkable.⁴²⁷

It is difficult to assess the precise role played by the merchants in obtaining this legislation. Dr. Sutherland suggests that following the repeal of the Stamp Act the situation got out of hand as far as the Rockingham Whigs were concerned and that the negotiations between the American and West Indian groups became more important in the formulation of policy than parliamentary proceedings and ministerial discussion.⁴²⁸

Neither Rockingham's nor Newcastle's correspondence at this time, however, betrays evidence that they were being driven unwillingly into commercial legislation by mercantile agitation. Nor does the power of the merchants over the administration seem obvious to all contemporary observers. On 17 March 1766 Denys de Berdt wrote to Samuel White in America

"You will have the molasses duty reduced to 1d. and a new regulation of the Admiralty Courts, a Bill being soon brought into the House for that purpose, and some other advantages to trade which will be supported by the body of merchants and should be attended to by yours. &c"

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425. Commons Journals Vol. XXX, p. 843.

426. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f400 Stephen Fuller to Newcastle 15 June 1766.

427. Armytage op. cit. pp. 42-43.

428. Sutherland loc. cit. pp. 65-66.

429. "Letters of Denys de Berdt" loc. cit. p. 315.

De Berdt was in close contact with the mercantile element and it is reasonable to suppose that he would have commented if he felt they were dominating the administration. On the other hand Grenville and other opponents of the administration were likely to seize on mercantile influence and use it as a weapon to discredit the ministry. As Rockingham and his colleagues⁴³⁰ had decided to try and revise the laws of trade they were likely to turn to the merchants as the most useful experts to advise them on what measures they should take, and it is understandable^d that the merchants became more than detached advisers because of the part they had played in helping the ministry to obtain the repeal of the Stamp Act. It must be noted, however, that the idea of a Free Ports Act was not new in the spring of 1766. Mrs. Armytage has, for instance, traced the origin of the Act back to as early as February 1763 in a letter from Colonel Dalrymple to Lord Bute,⁴³¹ and both Rockingham and Newcastle had advisers who were not merchants. There is ample evidence among their papers of ideas⁴³² and information being sent to them from non-mercantile sources.

An interesting light is thrown on the problem of mercantile influence by the three agreements between the two mercantile groups. The earliest document, the Agreement of 10 March 1766, is a series of resolutions each commencing with the

430. See for instance B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f58 West to Newcastle 30 April 1766 quoted above p. 437.

431. Cf. Armytage op. cit. p. 36.

432. See W. W. M. R37-39; B. M. Add. Mss. 32974 f340 John Roberts to Newcastle 10 April 1766; Add. Mss. 33030 ff243-318.

word "Agreed" and merely states that the agreement "shall have the general concurrence and assistance of the whole trade, on both sides, to carry them into execution". The second agreement of 3 April 1766 again drafted at the King's Arms Tavern, starts with a proposal which begins "that it be recommended to administration" and concludes

"The Committee agreed that the said proposal be laid before the administration in order to its being brought into Parliament in such form as shall be judged most expedient for the benefit of the trade, being of opinion that the intended purpose would be arrived thereby." 434

Neither document shows any hint of dictating policy to the ministry. The third document is, however, different. Drawn up on 8 May 1766 in the House of Commons by the West India Committee, it consists of eleven resolutions being used directly as the basis of legislation and indeed on that day the resolutions leading to the Free Ports Act were introduced into the House of Commons. This may well be taken as evidence that the ministry had become subservient to the demands of the merchants. On the other hand the ministry could not hope to act until the two great mercantile interests had reached an agreement, for any precipitate measure would be found unsatisfactory by one, if not both, of the factions. In the matter of the Free Ports no political principle was at stake and the Rockingham Whigs were genuinely seeking to

433. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 f206 Agreement of West Indian and North American Merchants 10 March 1766.

434. W. W. M. R60 Agreement of the Committee of the West Indian and North American Merchants 3 April 1766.

435. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 f243 Agreement of the West India Merchants 8 May 1766.

436. See above p. 438.

pass wise commercial legislation. It was not vital, as it had been with the Stamp Act, to settle the measures immediately. With the evidence coming to an end it was essential on 8 May that resolutions should be introduced into the Committee of the Whole House. The form of the agreement may thus reflect only the hurried nature in which the resolutions were introduced in a form capable of immediate use. There was, however, no time for leisurely discussion by Rockingham and his colleagues and in this way perhaps there is a degree of truth in the statement that the merchants were calling the tune of ministerial policy.

The part played by individual merchants at the time is interesting. On 30 September 1766 Dr. John Fothergill wrote to an American Quaker correspondent, James Pemberton of Philadelphia

"Lord Chatham opposed many measures the Free Ports scheme especially. Abraham Rawlinson of Lancaster was the projector of this scheme, he convinced the North American committee of its utility, they obliged the West Indian committee to be of the same sentiment by clear reasoning and the chief opposition arose through William Beckford and through his connection with W.B."

437

The key to an understanding of Rawlinson's position seems to be that as a Lancaster merchant he was interested in increasing the supply of cotton available for the Lancashire cotton industry. A Free Port would make more cotton available as would the reduction of the duty on foreign cotton which he secured. In 1765 the cotton manufacturers had

437. Fothergill Papers. Pennsylvania Historical Society. I am indebted to Dr. Christopher Booth for the loan of the microfilm of these papers.

complained about the difficulty of getting raw materials under the existing laws, and it was thus presumably for his own ends that Rawlinson agreed to represent the Bristol merchants.⁴³⁸ Yet by turning the discussion on to other matters besides sugar he probably eased the passage of the measures he desired. Rawlinson seems to have been consulted by Rockingham and Dowdeswell on matters connected with American trade at this time. On 14 April 1766 Dowdeswell wrote to Rockingham

"On the proposal made by Messrs Rawlinson and Heywood, if foreign cotton is admitted duty free there will be no necessity of warehousing it. The propriety of the thing speaks itself."⁴³⁹

There is also a paper among the Rockingham Papers referring to this docketed "Mr. Rawlinson and Mr. Heywood's proposals about Cotton and Coffee 1766".⁴⁴⁰ Rawlinson appears also to have given evidence on American trade before the Committee of the Whole House although his name is not recorded in the Commons Journals as among the witnesses.⁴⁴¹ He drafted the Lancaster merchants' petition for the Free Ports Act and was the first signatory.⁴⁴² At this time he was cooperating very closely with Burke and appears to have been active in the campaign to conciliate Pitt. He was the "very respectable member of Lancaster" who went with Burke to visit Pitt at Hayes.⁴⁴³ It would thus seem that Trecothick's part at the

438. See The Founding of the Second British Empire 1763-1793 Vol. II, by Vincent T. Harlow, London 1964 pp. 281-282. Savidge op. cit. p. 262 et seq and above p. 427.

439. See W. W. M. R1-599 Dowdeswell to Rockingham 14 April 1766. Heywood was a Manchester merchant who was cooperating closely with Rawlinson. These proposals appear to have been incorporated in the agreement of the West Indian and North American merchants of 10 March 1766. Cf. B. M. Add. Mss. 33030 f200.

440. W. W. M. R39-3.

time of the Stamp Act Crisis had now been taken over by Rawlinson. Rawlinson, in much the same way as Trecothick,⁴⁴⁵ became a loyal adherent of the Rockingham Whigs. If, as Fothergill suggested, the Free Ports scheme was almost a personal plan of Rawlinson's much weight is lent to Dr. Sutherland's contentions on the strength of the mercantile influence in the latter months of the Rockingham administration. However, as Mrs. Armytage makes clear the Free Ports scheme⁴⁴⁶ was no new idea in 1766.

Rawlinson does not seem to have been entirely satisfied with what was achieved and on 23 March 1767 he wrote to Burke a long letter criticising in detail the measures he had helped to achieve. As a criticism of the measures of the first Rockingham administration by a merchant this letter is significant. Rawlinson wrote

"I am highly obliged by your kind letter of the 31st Jan(uar)y last; and you should not have been all this time without my feeble reply, for your consideration, had not our friends been out of power, and thro' no other channel do I expect much regard to commerce, which makes me the more desirous to see them in administration again.

It was not the taking off the duties on all foreign cotton that I particularly dissented from, although I might think and do still, that it would have been better had the Duties remained on Levant cotton...in order

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441. Public Record Office, Treasury Papers, T1, Bundle 435 f55 rough notes of evidence.
442. Ibid. Bundle 443, f50.
443. W. W. M. Burke Letters 1-54 Rawlinson to Burke 11 May 1766, Ibid 1-55 Rawlinson to Burke 23 May 1766.
444. Burke Correspondence Vol. I, p. 251, Burke to O'Hara 23, 24 April 1766; Merchant Venturers Correspondence Bundle marked Letters 1754 - Bundle 10 Abraham Rawlinson to William Reeve 12 April 1766. Cf. above p. 426.
445. See my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 254-255.
446. Cf. Armytage op. cit. pp. 35-38.

to have enhanced the price here, and thereby prevented its to^ogeneral use in Lancashire manufactures, where it has done a deal of harm, and will in future very likely do more as the Law now stands....Had the duty continued, and a bounty on English plantation cotton been granted out of the Duty only, it would I think have had a good effect - these are my private sentiments only.

What I principally dissented from and what worried me was taking off the prohibition that lay on all foreign cotton, from France, Holland &c which you know could not, by the Act of Navigation be imported on any terms before the first of July last and so far am I from being able to alter my sentiments that I can assure you the more I think of it, the more I am confirmed in my opinion that it will be found a very injudicious and pernicious clause, and probably the time is not very remote when you may be anxious to have it amended or repealed, as you were in the last session to procure this expected acquisition, however this may be, I have the satisfaction to agree entirely with you in this principle that the supply of manufactures is the same and that we ought not by any means to hazard the leading point; but here my dear Burke I fear your zeal for manufactures has carried you into a dangerous and unconstitutional importation wherein no Safety dwells...."

Rawlinson went on to point out the loss to colonial cotton growers as a result of cheap foreign cotton coming in and the loss to colonial merchants this involved. Rawlinson seems have been really concerned with gaining a good supply of cheap cotton for Lancashire and the Lancaster merchants.

The letter shows the loyalty of Rawlinson to the Rockingham Whigs but also the luke-warm nature of his support now the party was out of power. It acknowledges the debt of the commercial interest to the Rockingham administration and does something to support Burke's claim on this score. It also shows that Rawlinson was a traditional mercantilist at heart

447. W.W.M. Bk1-69 Rawlinson to Burke 23 March 1767.

448. See above p.3.

concerned with the position of the colonies as producers of raw material and the welfare of manufacturers and merchants in the mother country. Burke endorsed the letter

"The narrow notions of a merchant - but praising the liberal and enlightened notions of the Rockingham administration on commercial matters in general." 449

Richard Maitland was another merchant who was active at the time. In a letter to Charles Townshend he claimed that he had succeeded in obtaining the incorporation of a clause reducing the duty on foreign coffee and cocoa in the Act⁴⁵⁰ repealing certain duties in the American colonies. This provides another example of the personal influence of one merchant on legislation if it was only Maitland's influence which made the ministry incorporate the clause concerned.

The methods and tactics used by the first Rockingham administration at the time of the passing of the Free Ports Act were comparable to those of the Stamp Act Crisis. In the later months of the ministry, however, there would seem to be some justification for the claim that the merchants had ceased to be the agents of the ministry and had become more responsible for the formulation of policy than the ministers themselves.

449. W. W. M. Bkl-69 Rawlinson to Burke 23 March 1767.

450. See Townshend Papers William L. Clements Library, Richard Maitland to Charles Townshend 20 March 1767.

E. OTHER MEASURES.

I have found little evidence to suggest that the merchants were active in pressing for the other major measures carried out by the first Rockingham administration or that there was any co-operation between the merchants and the ministry on these measures. There is, for instance, no evidence which I have discovered, suggesting that the merchants were active in working for the repeal of the Cider Duty, and there is little reason to suppose that they would have become involved in this measure since they were not really concerned when it was enacted.

On 13 May 1766 Rose Fuller and Sir William Baker acted as intermediaries between the administration and John Wilkes at the time that the ministry was taking up the question of general warrants. In view of Baker's previous advocacy of Wilkes he was an obvious choice for a mediator between Wilkes and the administration. Fuller seems to have adopted a similar attitude to Baker on this question and this is perhaps why he was the other intermediary. Both seem to have acted for the administration rather than the mercantile classes. There is no particular reason why merchants should have been interested in this controversy nor in other measures besides those already discussed. Having faced

451. Almon, Anecdotes of the Life of the Right Honourable William Pitt etc. Vol III p. 67.

452. See above pp. 214-235.

453. Namier and Brooke, The House of Commons 1754 -1790, Vol. II p. 479.

accusations of excessive mercantile pressure the administration would probably be anxious not to use their mercantile allies, further, and the merchants having achieved their aim were probably unwilling to meddle in political affairs which did not really concern them.

THE END OF THE FIRST ROCKINGHAM ADMINISTRATION.

Even while the Free Ports Bill was under consideration the Rockingham administration was tottering to its end. It had suffered its death-blow with the resignation of the Duke of Grafton at the end of April 1766.¹ When this resignation occurred Newcastle suggested a ministerial reshuffle whereby Conway would become Secretary of State for the Northern Department, Hardwicke Secretary of State for the Southern Department and Charles Townshend should be created a third Secretary of State for America and the West Indies.² Newcastle's idea seems to have been primarily to placate the merchants for he wrote to Rockingham

"No man in England understands it (America) so well, and consequently nobody would be so agreeable to those, who are particularly interested, in what relates either to the West Indies, or North America."³

but he was also interested in gaining the support of the brilliant Townshend for a weak administration.⁴

From the ministerial reshuffle, however, Townshend did not emerge as a third Secretary of State. He either declined the position when it was offered to him, or Rockingham, who does not appear to have been a strong supporter of the appointment, offered him the position in a half-hearted manner,

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1. Brooke op. cit. p. 1.
 2. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f89 Newcastle to Rockingham 6 May 1766 Cf. Namier Charles Townshend p. 25, Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend pp. 143-144.
 3. B. M. Add. M ss. 32975 f89 Newcastle to Rockingham 6 May 1766 quoted Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 143.
 4. B. M. Add. Mss, 32975 f104 Newcastle to Conway 7 May 1766.

if at all.⁵

Newcastle, however, still seems to have been intent on shoring up the administration with mercantile support. On 26 May 1766 he was suggesting a post for Rose Fuller at the Board of Trade.⁶ It would seem that Newcastle was now endeavouring to use mercantile influence in any possible way to prop up a tottering ministry. If the merchants saw further commercial reforms in the offing as a result of such an appointment Newcastle no doubt believed they would use all their influence to help preserve the Rockingham administration in power. Yet Newcastle declined the invitation of Beeston Long and Rose Fuller to dine in the City on 19 June 1766 on the pretext of a prior engagement. The Rockingham Whigs do seem, however, to have been well represented at the dinner by Admiral Keppel and Newcastle's absence does not seem to have created any ill-feeling,⁷ his reluctance to attend functions of this nature probably being known.⁸

After the fall of the administration Newcastle endeavoured to maintain the alliance with the mercantile class. Being absent from home when a deputation of London merchants trading to North America and the West Indies called on him to thank him for the commercial measures of the Rockingham

5. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32975 f164 Rockingham to Newcastle 12 May 1766. ibid. f207 Rockingham to Newcastle 18 May 1766, ibid. f225 Newcastle to the Bishop of Oxford 20 May 1766; Namier Charles Townshend p. 26 Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend pp. 143-144.

6. B.M. Add. Mss. 32975 f276 Newcastle to Rockingham 26 May 1766.

7. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32975 f400 Stephen Fuller to Newcastle 13 June 1766, ibid. f416 Newcastle to Beeston Long 15 June 1766. ibid. f414 Albeſmarle to Newcastle 15 June 1766

administration on 16 August 1766 he wrote an apologetic letter to their leader, Barlow Trecothick, inviting them to come at any time that was convenient to them.

Perhaps the reception given to Newcastle and Rockingham when they returned to the provinces is indicative of the favourable attitude of the mercantile classes to the commercial measures of the first Rockingham administration. Firstly it should be noted that Newcastle made an almost triumphal entry into Lewes, and Rockingham appears to have been received in a similar way in Yorkshire. Two hundred citizens of York rode out to meet him and welcome him home and when he visited York the bells were rung. It must be acknowledged that neither York nor Lewes are good examples of eighteenth century mercantile towns and that both were the "home centres" for the respective leaders of the Rockingham Whigs. Such a reception was, however, exceptional and must be taken as evidence that the measures that the administration had taken were popular.

There is however, more convincing evidence. Rockingham also received an address of thanks from the deputation of London merchants which had called on him on 14 August 1766.

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7. (contd) ibid. f430 Beeston Long to Newcastle 17 June 1766, f462 Newcastle to Admiral Keppel 20 June 1766.
8. See above p. 406.
9. B.M. Add. Mss. 32976 f417 Newcastle to Trecothick 14 August 1766. The other merchants with Trecothick were Beeston Long, Capel Hanbury, John Moore, Samuel Vaughan and James Stuart.
10. B.M. Add. Mss. 32976 f460 Podlard to Newcastle 25 August 1766.
11. B.M. Add. Mss. 32976 f464 Newcastle to Grantham 26 August 1766. ibid. f466 Grantham to Newcastle 26 August 1766. Cf. Clark op. cit. p. 46. Lloyds Evening Post August 20-22, 27-29, Sept 1, Sept 3-5, 8-10 1766.

Rockingham also received addresses of thanks from Hull, York, Halifax, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Wakefield, Lancaster, Bristol (Merchant Venturers) and Liverpool.¹³

These addresses are significant showing the popularity of the commercial measures of the first Rockingham administration. They point to the success the administration had achieved in co-operating with the merchants and the fact that the commercial interest, at least, felt that the legislation passed by Rockingham and his colleagues was successful in alleviating the slump in trade they had been suffering when the administration came to power. Although the considerable disillusionment with Pitt for accepting a peerage at the time that the addresses were presented must be borne in mind and it must be acknowledged that the merchants, feeling that they had lost their influence, with one group might have been trying to consolidate it with another, the fact remains that as the administration was out of power there was little point in currying favour. The addresses must be interpreted, partly at least, as an expression of the spontaneous feeling of the commercial classes. Concerning this Hardwicke wrote to Rockingham on 24 August 1766

" I was much edified by the account in the papers of your reception in Yorkshire, with the address of the

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12. WWM. R59-24 Address of thanks of London merchants. On the address Rockingham has written " Barlow Trecothick, Capel Hanbury, Beeston Long, James Stuart, John Moore, Samuel Vaughan" as if they were the men who presented the address. See also p. 8.
13. WWM. R58 and 59 B. M. Add. Mss. 32976 f490-5 Copies of the addresses with Rockingham's replies.
14. Ibid. f488 Rockingham to Newcastle 29 August 1766.

manufacturers, &c. and had before read with pleasure the handsome and well-merited compliment to your Lordship by the Committee of Merchants in town upon your dismissal from office. You are really beating the late Great Commoner at his own weapons, and receiving the eulogisms which his puffs have hitherto supposed that nobody was entitled to but himself." 15

Among the addresses there is a notable difference between those of the manufacturing and those of the more commercial towns. It appears that in the manufacturing towns the Rockingham administration measures were most appreciated for here a large proportion of the population had suffered from the slump caused by the Stamp Act Crisis, even if the merchants from the commercial towns were more vociferous and more influential. It is interesting to note that Rockingham wrote in a "Sketch of an answer to the Manchester Letter"

"One of the most pleasing circumstances which attended my late situation was, that it brought me acquainted with many of the Gentlemen, for the Credit and their knowledge in Trade I shall always remember that circumstance with the highest satisfaction; and I hope I have had some advantage from it." 17

He also wrote

"The advantages which in my former situation I enjoyed along with many others then in His Majesty's Service from the information on all commercial points which were brought or sent to us by gentlemen merchants from the differing manufacturing parts of England. Our inclination for the welfare of our country would have been equally warm, but we might not have judged so well without those informations and I hope that all the gentlemen who so freely gave their attendance in London,

15. WWM. R1-679 Hardwicke to Rockingham 24 August 1766 quoted Albemarle op. cit. Vol. II, p. 10.

16. Cf. the addresses in B.M. Add. Mss. 32976 f490-5.

17. WWM. R59-27.

do not regret their trouble either from their reception there or the consequences of their journey." 18

It would thus seem that Rockingham valued the support of the merchants and he was fully aware of this valuable, even if incalculable, force which had been introduced into his party.

Moreover the alliance between the merchants and the Rockingham Whigs during the first Rockingham administration was producing its effect on the party, which had changed since the resignation of Newcastle in 1761. At first, under the leadership of Newcastle, unsure and hesitating steps had been taken to secure an alliance with the merchants but with Rockingham's rise to power and the coming of the Stamp Act Crisis the mercantile element had reached a position of importance in the party. Newcastle and the older leaders still placed more emphasis on negotiation and manoeuvre between political groups with influence in Parliament and the years until 1768 were to see a rearguard action fought to maintain Newcastle's system. Nor was the path of more popular support an easy one. It necessitated many years in the political wilderness and even to Rockingham the choice of support outside Parliament rather than alliance within cannot have been deliberate. It was Rockingham's adherence to principle and his unwillingness to compromise with other political groups that forced him to look for a support that was more widely based than alliance with another political faction.

18. WWM. R60 Draft of answer to the Manchester Merchants.
CF. WWM. R1-674 Rockingham's answer to the Manchester Address 1766.

19. Cf. Ritcheson op. cit. pp. 82-83, 103-105.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ROCKINGHAM WHIGS; MERCANTILE INTERESTS AND THE CHATHAM ADMINISTRATION - JULY 1766 - OCTOBER 1768.

A) JULY - NOVEMBER 1766 - THE BEGINNING OF OPPOSITION.

The first Rockingham administration had been seriously weakened at the end of April 1766 by the resignation of the Duke of Grafton.¹ In July 1766 when Northington resigned the Great Seal it received its death-blow and Rockingham felt that he would prefer to be out of office rather than continue² as leader of the administration in its weakened state.

His wishes were to be granted. On 12 July 1766 George III³ began negotiating with Pitt to form a new administration and although at first it seemed that Pitt hoped to use the Rockingham administration as the basis of his own, and Newcastle hoped that Rockingham would be able to retain⁴ office, it soon became clear that this was not to be the case. Although there were only three resignations within⁵ the Cabinet there were six outside it and more significant still was the return to power of men who had served Grenville⁶ but had opposed Rockingham.

The new administration was indubitably Pitt's and not a strengthened Rockingham administration.

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1. See above p.450.
 2. B. M. Add. Mss. 32976 f19 Rockingham to Newcastle 6 July 1766.
 3. See Brooke op. cit. pp.4,7.
 4. B. M. Add. Mss. 32975 f175 Newcastle to Rockingham 18 July 1766, ibid. f175 Newcastle to Onslow 18 July 1766.
 5. Brooke op. cit. pp. 16-18.
 6. Ibid. pp. 18-19.

It had just sufficient of Rockingham's supporters in it to stop the old ministry going initially into opposition but the real planners of the policy of the Rockingham administration, Rockingham himself, Newcastle, Dowdeswell, Charles Yorke and Burke were without office and amongst these were the men who had chiefly been in control and co-operated with the merchants to secure the repeal of the Stamp Act, and the passing of the Free Ports Act and its corollaries.

In spite of the small amount of real power remaining to the Rockinghamites in the new administration, resignations were discouraged and no opposition to the ministry was planned. As early as 12 July 1766 Newcastle had mentioned⁷ to Rockingham the imprudence of a formal opposition, and on 3 August at a meeting of the leading Rockingham Whigs Newcastle urged that the party should remain closely united⁸ but not forwardly oppose the new administration. Rockingham

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7. W.W.M.R1-645 Newcastle to Rockingham 12 July 1766. Brooke op. cit. pp. 20-21; W.W.M.R1-685 Albemarle to Rockingham 31 August 1766; Ibid. R1-686 Newcastle to Rockingham 31 August 1766.
8. B.M.Add.Mss. 32976 f96 "A Narrative of what passed relating to the present change in the administration from the time His Majesty first acquainted His Ministers that he had sent for Mr. Pitt in several letters to Mr. John White of Walling Wells Nottinghamshire" 11 July - 4 August 1766.

himself was anxious that his party should maintain "a good humoured correspondence" with their allies in the Chatham administration. He believed that Chatham would have to lean on the Rockinghams for support in Parliament and that the real threat to the Rockingham Whigs and victory for Chatham would come if divisions appeared in the party.

Mr. Brooke states that the idea behind this policy of Rockingham and Newcastle was to maintain, within the Chatham administration, a group of Rockinghamites on which the ministry would be forced to lean and who would enjoy all the advantages of office under Chatham whilst paying allegiance to Rockingham. He continues by observing that a call for resignations in July 1766 would have met with little response because Newcastle's friends had no desire to wander in the political wilderness again. Brooke criticizes Rockingham for not realising that because of self-interest when they were in power, the allegiance of those Rockinghamites

9. Ibid. f489 Rockingham to Newcastle 29 August 1766.

10. W.W.W. R1-682 Rockingham to Albemarle 29 August 1766, quoted Albemarle op. cit. Vol. II, p. 13.

holding office in the Chatham administration would be given for the most part to Chatham and the King rather than to Rockingham, and the latter's policy was a sure way of weakening his party.¹¹

Winstanley, however, sees Rockingham's policy in a more favourable light. He questions whether opposition was opportune for on many issues the Rockinghamites agreed with the Chatham administration: systematic antagonism would lead to a charge of factious opposition, and they could not hope to prevail, outnumbered as they were, by supporters of the government. Any chance of success against the administration, Winstanley states, was dependent on an alliance with the Bedford Whigs and the supporters of George Grenville. On the basic issue of America the Rockinghamites had marked differences of opinion with these two groups for they had been responsible for the policy that led to the American Stamp Act and if in their desire for office the Bedford Whigs might be willing to relinquish their American policy the Grenvilleites would certainly not.¹²

11. Brooke op. cit. pp. 21-23.

12. See Lord Chatham and the Whig Opposition by D. A. Winstanley Cambridge 1912, pp. 58-60.

It might also be added that there seems a strong possibility that his alliance with the mercantile classes prejudiced Rockingham in favour of support for the administration rather than opposition. He had gained mercantile support by reversing Grenville's policy and the merchants would be sure to look at alliance with the Bedfords and Grenvilleites with suspicion if not with hostility. Moreover it had only been very recently that the Rockinghamites had weaned the merchants away from their adulation of Chatham, and Rockingham and his friends could not have been sure in August 1766 how the merchants were going to receive the new administration. As far as their alliance with the mercantile classes was concerned their support of the administration must have seemed a far better proposition than opposition and we cannot doubt that this was of influence.

As Rockingham had retired to Wentworth in August 1766 it was somewhat difficult for him to keep in touch with the leaders of the mercantile faction but he was still in touch with provincial merchants and manufacturers. Newcastle, during the late summer and autumn of 1766 was in close contact with Trecothick and he was also endeavouring to cultivate the Rockinghamites other mercantile associates. Newcastle reopened his correspondence with Trecothick by an enquiry about a letter of thanks for the commercial policy of the first Rockingham administration he had received from the Massachusetts

13. See above p. 453.

Assembly, and through Trecothick he tried to make contact with Capel Hanbury. Newcastle was also trying to arrange that the North American and West Indian merchants committees should visit him.¹⁴ This correspondence between Trecothick and Newcastle is important for with the correspondence on the corn shortage in September and November 1766 it provides practically the only evidence of the existence and work of the London American merchants committee after the end of the first Rockingham administration.

On 17 and 18 September Newcastle wrote to Rockingham

"I hear the Ministers are puzzled about the exportation of Corn. If some method cannot be found to prevent it, before the Parliament meet, the consequences may be bad."¹⁶

In the same letter Newcastle requested That Rockingham send him a copy of his answer to the Address of the Liverpool merchants, and when Newcastle was summoned to a Privy Council meeting to discuss the shortage of corn on 24 September 1766 he seems to have made some efforts to co-operate with Trecothick who with some other London merchants, was active in dealing with this problem.¹⁷ The Cabinet Council laid an embargo on the

14. See B.M.Add.Mss. 32977 f77 Newcastle to Trecothick 13 September 1766; f83 Trecothick to Newcastle 15 September 1766; f111 Newcastle to Trecothick 20 September 1766; f126 Trecothick to Newcastle 21 September 1766; f147 Trecothick to Newcastle 'Tuesday evening' (23 September 1766); f238 Newcastle to Trecothick 11 October 1766.

15. See below pp. 461-2nd n. 17.

16. W.W.M.R1-694 Newcastle to Rockingham 17 and 18 September 1766.

17. B.M.Add.Mss. 32977 f111 Newcastle to Trecothick 20 September 1766; f147 Trecothick to Newcastle 'Tuesday Evening' (23 September 1766); f169 Newcastle to White 27 September 1766. The London merchants trading to North America came to an agreement to import corn cheaply from North America. See P.R.O. 30/8 Chatham Papers Bundle 54 Trecothick to Chatham 11 November 1766. Cf. my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 55.

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exportation of corn to alleviate the shortage, and this measure met with the approval of the various mercantile bodies including the London merchants who had petitioned for it.

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Newcastle's assiduity in preserving contact with the mercantile element was seen again early in October 1766. On 11 October 1766 he wrote to Trecothick asking him to come to see him on Sunday 12 October in order to discuss a candidate who would stand for Shoreham in the next Parliamentary election. Newcastle's motive in writing to Trecothick was that he wanted a wealthy merchant to stand for the borough and Trecothick had been offered the seat in September 1765 but had declined it. Trecothick, by this time, one may assume, was regarded by Newcastle at least, as the leader of the mercantile supporters of the Rockingham Whigs and this was probably a tactic to strengthen the mercantile support of the party. Perhaps Newcastle hoped that Trecothick would now consent to stand for Shoreham and enter Parliament for a Newcastle borough, thus cementing the alliance between him and Trecothick. Although there is no evidence that the proposed conference with Trecothick took place, there is no evidence to the contrary and one may assume it did. Eventually the merchant Peregrine Cust was elected for New Shoreham in 1768 and he was possibly Trecothick's recommendation, but he never appears

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18. B.M. Add. Mss. 32977 f160 Newcastle to Grantham 25 September 1766.

19. Ibid. f169 Newcastle to White 27 September 1766.

20. Ibid. f238 Newcastle to Trecothick 11 October 1766. For Trecothick and the Shoreham election in September 1765 see above p.304.

to have been a great supporter of the Rockingham Whigs.

Following this at the beginning of November 1766 Newcastle appears to have seized on some temporary distress in the hosiery trade at Nottingham and to have been seeking as much information about it as he could. He endeavoured to interview a Nottingham hosiery manufacturer, Abel Smith, on the matter.²² Whether Newcastle was genuinely interested in the hosiery trade or saw in this merchant a further opportunity to extend the commercial and industrial contacts of the Rockingham Whigs is not clear.

Another member of the first Rockingham administration who was in contact with the industrial element at this time was William Dowdeswell. He appears to have written to Charles Townshend in October 1766 introducing some glass manufacturers to the new Chancellor of the Exchequer who expressed his willingness to see them.²³ Whether Townshend ever saw the glass manufacturers and whether this introduction bears any relationship to the fact that glass imported into the American Colonies was one of the articles taxed in the Townshend Revenue Act of 1767 I have been unable to discover.

The spirit of opposition was now, however, beginning to rise among Rockingham's followers. There was some movement for a revival of Wildman's club for in a letter to Rockingham²⁴ on 9 November, Newcastle enclosed a letter to himself from

21. Ibid. f388 Newcastle to Sir Samuel Cornish 14 November 1766.
 Cf. Namier, England in the Age etc pp. 174, 193, 252, 305.
 Cf. Namier and Brooke The House of Commons, Vol. II, p. 292.

22. B. M. Add. Mss. 32977 f327 Sir Edward Wilnot to Newcastle 5 November 1767 and f329 enclosure on hosiery trade;
 B. M. Add. Mss. 3307 f91 Abel Smith to Newcastle 27 November 1766

George Onslow written on 7 November in which Onslow wrote

"I dined yesterday at our new club where we had a very good company, Geo and John Cavendish, Sir G. Colebrooke, Tom Walpole (who by the bye toasted Lord Rockingham) Gilmore, T. Townshend, Baker, Rose Fuller, who will be with us, Fitzroy and 2 or 3 more." 25

It is to be noted that four of the members present had strong connections with finance and trade.

On 6 November Albermarle had written to Newcastle

"I know nothing of the Marquis's notions, I saw him for a day or two at Newmarket but I don't know what his politics are. I hope and believe he means to be quiet, as to opposition it is a most ridiculous thought if it is in the head of anybody. I am so strongly averse to it myself, that I have long determined never to oppose again." 26

But by the middle of November 1766 Rockingham seems to have begun to think that the policy of supporting the Chatham administration was not paying many dividends. When on 17 November Lord Edgcombe was dismissed from his post of Treasurer of the Household and Conway disagreed with Chatham over the dismissal, Rockingham either perceived his opportunity or felt sufficiently strongly about the dismissal of Edgcombe to believe that action was necessary.

On 19 November a meeting of the most important Rockingham

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22. (contd) Although Newcastle had local interests there is no reason to suppose that his interest was influenced by these on this occasion.
23. See Charles Townshend to Dowdeswell 25 October 1766, Dowdeswell Papers, William L. Clements Library. The letter gives no indication where these glass manufacturers worked.
24. See W.W.M. R1-702 Newcastle to Rockingham 9 November 1766.
25. Ibid. R1-704 George Onslow to Newcastle 7 November 1766. I have found no further evidence on the revival of Wildman's.
26. B.M. Add. Mss. 32977 f332 Albermarle to Newcastle 6 November 1766.
27. Brooke op. cit. pp. 51-55. For Conway's disapproval of the dismissal see W.W.M. R1-709 Rockingham to Scarborough 20 November 1766.

Whigs was held at Rockingham's house in Grosvenor Square. At this meeting it was decided

"That something must be done to show spirit, to keep our friends together, and to encourage Mr. Conway to persist in the good disposition he was in at present, that if nothing was done the party and all the friends of the late administration would be weeded out by degrees, our friends angry and discouraged and everything left to the arbitrary dispositions of my Lord Chatham."

As a result of this it was decided that the Duke of Portland, the Earl of Scarborough, Lord Bessborough and Lord Monson should resign from the administration and "further
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resignations in the House of Commons might follow afterwards".
Rockingham explained the idea to Scarborough in these words

"My reasoning was that we could not in honour to our Friends suffer them to be removed one by one - without showing resentment - that those in and those already removed and all standers by would say in truth that we abandoned the Party to Ld. Chatham's mercy - who from this and the preceding circumstances did not show the least favourable intention. That the Corps must keep together and that all our struggles for the last four or five years would be thrown away in regard to the material object of being the check to Ld. Bute.

That I thought all interested or necessitous men would fly more and more to (en)list in Ld. Bute's corps under a protection that stood all the various changes of administration and that perhaps some who were niether interested nor necessitous - but irritated by Ld. Chatham would from their resentment to him adopt anything which might lead to satisfy their revenge." 30

The general idea behind this plan was to force Conway to

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28. For the precise place where this meeting was held see Brooke op. cit. p. 55, n. 1. Rockingham says the meeting took place in George Onslow's house in Curzon Street. See W. W. M. RL-709 Rockingham to Scarborough 20 November 1766.
29. B. M. Add. Mss. 32978 ffl-5 "A Short Narrative of what passed at my Lord Rockingham's on Wednesday the 19th of November 1766" Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 55-56.
30. W. W. M. RL-709 Rockingham to Lord Scarborough 20 November 1766

resign out of loyalty to the Rockinghams, and it was thought that if he did the administration would fall immediately as Chatham would be left without a leader in the Commons.³¹

Rockingham thus hoped to preserve the party and its loyalty to himself and possibly to get himself back into power again. In fact only three Commoners, Sir William Meredith, Sir Charles Saunders and Admiral Keppel resigned and Conway after vacillating for some time did not.³² Newcastle was not in favour of this policy as he thought that it would not force Chatham to resign nor would Rockingham be able to provide an alternative administration with the forces at his disposal if Chatham did.³³

Ritcheson sees in this incident an attempt by Chatham, (who was annoyed because Dowdeswell and Burke had supported Grenville's plan for the necessity of a bill of indemnity to excuse those involved in the grain embargo) to break old Whig cohesion and drive them out of power. He states

"The mass exit of the Old Whigs, binding its members in common adversary, saved that party from dissolution. They were to wait long in the wilderness but they would live to fight another day."³⁴

It is nowhere recorded that either Rockingham or Newcastle gave any consideration to their mercantile adherents while

31. Ibid. pp. 54-61 Winstanley op. cit. 75-86. Cf. W. W. M. R1-709 Rockingham to Scarborough 20 November 1766.

32. Brooke op. cit. pp. 57-61. For the resignations see also Albe-Marle op. cit. Vol. II, pp. 19-29.

33. B. M. Add. Mss. 32978 f35 Newcastle to Bessborough 22 November 1766; f52 Newcastle to Portland 24 November 1766; By 5 December 1766 Newcastle had, however, changed his mind about the policy see ibid f185 Newcastle to Rockingham 5 December 1766, although this may have been purely to preserve the unanimity of the party.

34. Ritcheson op. cit. p. 77.

executing the policy of resignation. Yet this was an important event as far as the mercantile supporters of the Rockingham party were concerned for Mr. Brooke writes

"On November 25, 1766 on the motion for a committee to inquire into the state of the East India Company, the Rockinghams voted for the first time against Chatham's Administration, and thus began a period of opposition which ended only with the fall of Lord North in 1782."

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This statement needs qualification. The Newcastle Correspondence shows that there was no definite intention on 25 November of organising opposition to a government measure. Indeed, many of the Rockinghams either abstained or voted with the administration. Onslow reported the debate to Newcastle as follows;

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"Burke openly and roundly opened the opposition and was supported by G. Grenville and the Bedford people equally. Charles Yorke was warm and thorough in his oppositions. Lord John (Cavendish) spoke and Dowdeswell strongly against the question, the former with infinite respect to Conway and indeed to all of his old friends he was likely to differ with. Conway and Charles Townshend took their part as strongly in favour of the question. The Butes acted exactly as they did last year. There went with Dowdeswell only the Cavendishes, Beauclerk, Walsingham, Plumer, F. Montague and Jack White. Sir W. Meredith went away, I hear disapproving of the opposition. Fitzherbert, Rose Fuller and everybody else with us. So the opposition your Grace observes consists of the Grenvilles, the Bedfords and to my real sorrow those old friends I have mentioned, assisted by Mr. Yorke."

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35. Brooke op. cit. p. 61.

36. B. M. Add. Mss. 32978 f62 Newcastle to Rockingham 25 November 1766; ibid f74 Rockingham to Newcastle 26 November 1766; ibid. f76 Newcastle to Rockingham 26 November 1766; ibid f84 Albe~~marle~~marle to Newcastle 26 November 1766.

37. Ibid. f86 Onslow to Newcastle 26 November 1766. Onslow a faithful adherent of Newcastle held office in the administration, voted for the motion and appeared very sorrowful about voting against the Rockingham Whigs.

Even if, however, the opposition by the Rockinghamites to the Chatham administration cannot be dated specifically from 25 November, from this time it began to crystallise and by the end of the year it was quite clear that the Rockinghamites were in opposition to the Chatham administration.

This event was of supreme importance to the mercantile section of the party. For the first time they were faced with the choice of supporting opposition or administration, and that administration was led at the end of 1766 nominally by Chatham, the former idol of the merchants. The Rockinghams had gained their mercantile following when they had been in power, now they had lost all semblance of power could they maintain it? The merchant's natural proclivity was to support administration for he obtained government contracts. Moreover petitions from industrial towns were more likely to get a sympathetic hearing if the men who bore them supported administration. It would thus seem that the events of November 1766 were of ^{more} profound importance to the Rockingham Whigs and their mercantile supporters than the fall of the first Rockingham administration had been. For the first time the merchants' loyalty was being tested. For the first time they were faced with a choice. Was the allegiance of Rockinghams mercantile following stronger to administration and the "plums" it could offer than its allegiance to a political party? The test that this mercantile following was to undergo was to be long and hard for the Rockinghams

did not again achieve office until 1782. In these fifteen years its personnel varied considerably. Many merchants, including Trecothick the leader in 1766, had died before 1782.³⁸ Some remained loyal but many despaired and defected to administration particularly in the hard years on the eve of the War of American Independence when the Rockingham Whigs appeared to have no chance of returning to power. When, however, the Rockinghams seemed near success in overthrowing the ministry and as disaster followed disaster during the war, many merchants came over to the Rockinghams.

The death of Newcastle in 1768 was a real dividing line in this process. It ended finally the image of the Rockinghams as a party with a tradition of power. It also ended the link of the party with government financiers and Rockingham was left with only the limited mercantile support he had gained during the Stamp Act Crisis. The years 1766-68 saw also the weakening of Newcastle's link with government finance and Rockingham's continued apprenticeship as a party leader. During the last two years of Newcastle's life, Rockingham learned much from him in patience and assiduity that was to make it possible for him to develop the Rockingham Whigs as a coherent political party in the years after Newcastle's death.³⁹

38. Trecothick who died in 1774 had continued to lead the mercantile section of the Rockingham Whigs, particularly in the City of London until that time.

39. Guttridge op. cit. p. 25 et passim.

(B) NOVEMBER 1766 - JULY 1767 - THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, ENQUIRY, DOWDESWELL'S MOTION FOR THE REDUCTION OF THE LAND TAX AND AMERICA.

During the Parliamentary session 1766-1767 there were three main issues, which affected the Rockingham Whigs and their relations with their mercantile associates. These issues were the enquiry into the affairs of the East India Company, Dowdeswell's motion for the reduction of the Land Tax to three shillings in the pound on 27 February 1767, and America, which came to the forefront of politics again with New York's resistance to the Mutiny and Quartering Acts and the passing of the Townshend Duties in May and June 1767. Although these topics were interwoven and were to some extent being debated in Parliament concurrently, for the sake of clarity it is easier to deal with the Parliamentary session 1766-67 by topic rather than chronologically.

By 25 November 1766 when the Rockinghams had for the most part voted against Beckford's motion to enquire into the East India Company, Parliament was becoming preoccupied with that subject.⁴⁰ The lack of complete unanimity among the Rockinghamites on this occasion may be explained by their differing interests in the East India Company. Few of the leading Rockinghamites had strong links with the Company at this time although some were in the process of acquiring them.⁴¹ That

40. For a detailed examination of this enquiry see Sutherland East India Company pp. 147-176. See also Brooke op. cit. pp. 72-79, 87-91 et passim Winstanley op. cit. pp. 92-105, 125-127.

41. See Sutherland op. cit. p. 143, Brooke op. cit. p. 75.

the path they were to follow was not a clear cut one is demonstrated by a letter Newcastle wrote to Rockingham on 22 November 1766 enquiring what line the Rockinghamites intended to adopt towards Beckford's motion. At this stage it was not obvious that the motion was likely to challenge any Whig principle or arouse any question of consistency with their former actions.

Rockingham at first seemed chiefly concerned with Parliamentary tactics and opportunities to harass the Chatham administration. On 8 December he wrote to Newcastle

"The East India affairs come on tomorrow, the list of papers which Beckford will call for is expected to contain many improper to be laid before the public. I saw Mr. Yorke this morning, Mr. Dowdeswell dined with me and I am clear (if the administration persist to back Beckford) that good matter for debate and division will arise." 43

Newcastle, who seems to have been more aware of the importance of mercantile support wrote in his reply

"As far as relates to publick measures, and behaviour in Parliament, I am persuaded that will be such, as will be agreeable to the best part of the motion; but what I mean, is, more particular attention to connections and

42. B.M. Add. Mss. 32978 f62 Newcastle to Rockingham 25 November 1766. Mr. Brooke (op. cit. p. 75) accounts for Newcastle's enquiry by saying that as Newcastle's supporters had declined in numbers and influence in the House of Commons he was not always consulted by Rockingham on questions of policy. This does not, however, seem to have been the case on this occasion nor have I discovered any example of Rockingham organising measures in the House of Commons without consulting Newcastle up to this time. When Rockingham did not inform or consult Newcastle it was because he himself had not done anything about the measure. See for instance the question of resignations of the Rockingham Whigs towards the end of 1766. B.M. Add. Mss. 32978 ff152-192 passim.

43. Ibid. f222 Rockingham to Newcastle 8 December 1766.

interests, in the several parts of the United Kingdom. That, I think, more material to the permanent interest of the country, and the real support of the Whig cause than any immediate Act that can possibly be undertaken at present." 44

None of the merchants who figured so prominently at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis appear in the Rockingham and Newcastle correspondence at this time except Rose Fuller, who had voted with the administration on 25 November 1766. Newcastle wrote to Fuller on 12 December and requested to see him, and although East India affairs were not mentioned one cannot doubt that this would be one of the topics Newcastle would have liked to discuss. Fuller, however, could not or did not wish to see Newcastle, who had by this time become convinced that the enquiry into the East India Company was not a good thing for he wrote

"I am fully convinced upon the most mature consideration that the general enquiry into the present state of a great Company, acting under a legal charter, without any fact alledged, or the least complaint made, is of most dangerous consequence, and will greatly offend credit in general, and the legal property of all concerned in the funds." 48

When Beckford continued the enquiry on 9 December 1766 by calling for various papers, however, there was still little unanimity among the Rockingham Whigs and very few of them appear to have voted against the measure.

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44. Ibid. f241 Newcastle to Rockingham 9 December 1766.
 45. Ibid. f86 Onslow to Newcastle 26 November 1766. See above p. 467. Fuller had apparently fairly strong affiliations with Grafton and the administration as well as with Newcastle.
 46. Ibid. f370 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 16 December 1766.
 47. Ibid. f394 Fuller to Newcastle 17 December 1766.
 48. Ibid. f244 Newcastle to Lord Viscount Gage 9 December 1766.
 49. Ibid. f264 Onslow to Newcastle "Wednesday morning" (10 December 1766)

On 17 December 1766 Newcastle had a discussion with Rockingham and found that by this time Rockingham was wholeheartedly against the measure. Newcastle also at this time seems to have expressed considerable surprise at the behaviour of some of his mercantile contacts for he wrote after the meeting

"I found My Lord Rockingham very clearly of opinion against this enquiry into the affairs of the East India Company; and indeed nobody can be more so (especially as to the manner of doing it) than myself; as I think, publick credit, (especially in Companies, acting under the law, and Legal Charters) must be affected by it, and I am amazed to see some of the principal persons in the City - who are so good judges of Trade and Credit and are themselves such honest and discerning men, should have hitherto -- concurred in the measure taken for this enquiry. But I am persuaded they will soon see the great inconvenience of going farther. But the conduct of our friends, upon this point, must depend upon the particular measures which shall be proposed by the administration." 50

The key to the reaction of the mercantile supporters of the Rockingham Whigs probably lies in this last sentence. Receiving no leadership from Rockingham or Newcastle the various merchants responded as each particular measure affected their interests, for as Dr. Sutherland has stated the Rockingham Whigs had no established links with the East India Company. Although they had contact with men on both sides of the party war within the Company they were more closely connected with the opposition to the Directors than with the Directors.⁵¹ Dr. Sutherland

50. Ibid. f401-402. "A Short Account of what passed yesterday with the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Bessborough and Myself" 18 December 1766.

51. Sutherland op. cit. p. 135. At this time the struggle within the East India Company was a struggle between Clive and the Directors and Lawrence Sullivan who was opposing Clive's

concludes

"Their intervention is significant not because of anything which it achieved at the time, but because the line they took in these years determined their East India policy in the future, and because such men as Burke and the Duke of Richmond gained their first interest in East India affairs while opposing the Government's intervention at this time." 52

Just as the American policy of the Rockingham Whigs had emerged in a pragmatic way at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis now another aspect of their policy was emerging. The mercantile following of the party now knew the "party line" on East India affairs just as they knew it on American affairs, and this was to have considerable influence later on the strength and membership of their mercantile following.

The first real intervention of the government in the eighteenth century into the affairs of the East India Company had another important result as far as the mercantile following of the Rockingham Whigs was concerned. It created a third pressure group among the merchants for now, as well as the West India group and the American group, there was a group of merchants whose interests could run directly counter to the other two and had to be reckoned with. Prior to 1767 this group had hardly existed at all but Rockingham

51. (contd) administration of the affairs of the Company in India. Although Rockingham had no friendship for Sullivan, through the Burkes and their patron Lord Verney, the Rockingham Whigs came in contact with the speculative interests supporting Sullivan and through George Dempster M.P. a staunch Rockingham Whig they came into contact with John Johnstone and his supporters who were also supporting Sullivan. This support was not unqualified, however, for in the Company elections of 1767 the Rockinghams supported the Directors. (Sutherland op. cit. p. 155)

52. Sutherland op. cit. pp. 155-6.

and his colleagues were to find increasingly in the succeeding years that they were a force to be reckoned with. From 1767 the East India Group could rival the powerful West India Group and the "more loosely related group of persons with interest,⁵³ direct or indirect, in the American trade."

If Rockingham and his colleagues could not secure any real agreement as to the policy to be pursued towards the East India Company neither could the administration, and having called for the papers⁵⁴(which would/involve either those for the Company or those against in any difficulty)the enquiry was adjourned until 22 January 1767. In late November and December 1766 for the first time, the Rockingham Whigs appear to have begun a negotiation with the groups supporting the Duke of Bedford and George Grenville in an attempt to make an alliance⁵⁵ to overthrow the administration. The negotiation appears to have been opened by Lord Lyttleton, a supporter of Grenville. The Earl of Bessborough and Newcastle became particular advocates of the scheme after it was known that Chatham's negotiations with the Bedford Whigs had broken down⁵⁶ early in December 1766. Lyttleton, however, had apparently⁵⁷ negotiated without his chief's consent and when it looked as if the Rockinghamites would have to make the first real approach so many of the other leading Rockingham Whigs were against the

53. "The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics" by L. S. Sutherland, Economic History Review Vol. XVII, No. 1, London 1947, p. 23.

54. Brooke op. cit. pp. 76-79.

55. Ibid. pp. 79-87.

56. Ibid. pp. 81-84.

57. Ibid. p. 82.

alliance that nothing further came of the negotiations. No thought of the effect of an alliance with the Bedford and Grenville Whigs upon the mercantile following whose support they had deemed so invaluable at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis appears to have occurred to any of the leaders of the Rockingham Whigs at this time. Rockingham's chief objection to the alliance was that when Lord Lyttleton had approached him he had stipulated the Treasury for either Earl Temple or Grenville. This would be contrary to Rockingham's principles, as his first administration had acted in direct opposition to Grenville's measures when he was at the Treasury. The only merchant who appears to have been in contact with the Rockingham Whigs at this time was Rose Fuller, who was in contact with Newcastle purely on Sussex election business more in the role of a country gentleman than as a mercantile supporter.

On 1 February 1767 Newcastle appears to have lost one of his merchantile supporters in Parliament with the death of John Thomlinson. (Junior).

58. Ibid. pp. 86-87.

59. Ibid. pp. 82, 85. Cf. B. M. Add. Mss. 32978 ff398-402. "A Short Account of what passed yesterday with the Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Bessborough and Myself" 18 December 1766. For Rockingham's handling of these negotiations see W. W. M. R1-743 Rockingham to Dowdeswell 8 January 1767.

60. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32978 f370 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 16 December 1766; f394 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 17 December 1766; f414 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 19 December 1766; f426 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 19 December 1766; f500 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 28 December 1766; B. M. Add. Mss. 32979 f156 John Norris to Newcastle 9 January 1767; f176 Rose Fuller to Newcastle 10 January 1767; f329 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 25 January 1767. Cf W. W. M. R1-734 Newcastle to Rockingham 16 December 1766.

Although Thomlinson's father had been an influential American merchant and partner of Trecothick, ~~the~~ son never seems to have been ~~as~~ influential and does not appear to have been consulted by Newcastle who wished William Baker's son to take up Thomlinson's position as member for Steyning when he died. Sir William Baker dined with Newcastle on 3 February 1767. Burke also seems to have been present at the meeting and it is probable that East India Company affairs were discussed. Newcastle had in any case discussed the affairs of the East India Company with Baker by 31 January 1767.

With Chatham's withdrawal from politics at the beginning of 1767 the enquiry into the affairs of the East India Company became a "damp squib" and after long and protracted negotiations between the company and administration a temporary settlement, for two years, was reached, in May and June 1767, by which the Company was to pay the government the sum of £400,000 annually and a statutory limitation to shareholders dividends at 10% was declared.

By the end of December 1766 the Rockingham Whigs

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61. B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 f5 Newcastle to John Butler 1 February 1767.
62. For the Thomlonsons see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 23-24, 35; See also Namier England in the Age etc passim. Judd op. cit. p. 356 has omitted John Thomlinson (senior) from his list of members.
63. B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 f12 Newcastle to Thomas Pelham 2 February 1767.
64. B.M. Add. Mss. 32979 f411 Newcastle to Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh 31 January 1767; B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 f16 John White to Newcastle 2 February 1767. Baker was probably reckoned by Newcastle to be an expert on East India Company affairs for he had possessed in the past much influence in the company. See Sutherland op. cit. p. 19 n. 2.
65. See Brooke op. cit. p. 133; Sutherland op. cit. pp. 157-176; Winstanley op. cit. pp. 125-127.

had evolved a general policy of opposition to the enquiry. When, however, steps were taken by administration early in 1767 to pursue the enquiry in the House of Commons the opposition made by the Rockingham Whigs was very desultory and half-hearted even though this was a topic on which the Chatham administration, by no means united, could be acutely embar-

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rassed. On 5 March 1767 the Rockingham Whigs did not even force the House of Commons to a division on the issue of the printing of the papers already presented to the House. 68

Awakening too late to their error on 9 March 1767 they tried to organise a strong opposition and ran the administration close on the motion for the adjournment after the Company had presented a petition against the printing of the Papers. On 14 April as a last effort Sir William Meredith moved to dissolve the committee and after a long debate the motion was rejected by 213 votes to 157. After the Easter adjournment the Rockinghamites were unable in this session to press the administration hard in the House of Commons. 70

66. See above pp. 471-473.

67. See Brooke op. cit. pp. 99-133.

68. Ibid. p. 113.

69. Ibid. p. 115. For the attempt to organise opposition see B. M. Add. Mss. 32980 f220 Rockingham to Newcastle 7 March 1767; ibid. f226 Newcastle to Rockingham 8 March 1767; ibid. f228 same to same 8 March 1767; ibid. f230 Newcastle to Lord Gage 8 March 1767; ibid. f232 Newcastle to Bartholomew Burton 8 March 1767; ibid. f234 Newcastle to James West 8 March 1767; ibid. f236 Newcastle to Thomas Pelham 8 March 1767; ibid. f244 Newcastle to Matthew Fetherstonhaugh 8 March 1767.

70. Brooke op. cit. p. 136; Winstanley op. cit. pp. 123-4.

The desultory nature of the opposition can be partly accounted for by Rockingham's wooing of Conway and Townshend to make them defect from the administration and thus bring it down. Their known opposition to the enquiry into the East India Company and the fact that they seemed likely to resign must have seemed a more hopeful possibility to Rockingham than organised parliamentary opposition, which necessitated⁷¹ co-ordination with the Bedford and Grenville Whigs.

Other factors must, however, be taken into consideration. At the beginning of January 1767, Newcastle, although against⁷² the enquiry thought that Charles Townshend, whom he still regarded as an ally, had the matter well under control. He wrote

"I think I know enough myself to judge that the method the administration took, to bring it (the affairs of the East India Company) abruptly into the House of Commons without any plan laid, or any complaints made, or, as appeared without having had any intercourse, previously with the directors, either, as to the state of their affairs, or their ability or inclination, to assist the government, but only by way of menace, and force, was a most imprudent and offensive measure; and did give just alarm to trade, and trading companies.

I hear now they have altered their method; and the friends of Lord Chatham give out, that they shall agree with the Company, get a million for the public, and carry all before them... But what I want to know is, the real state of the fact, and what is right to be done, the power given to the Company by their Charter; the nature, and value of their acquaintance, and the right there may be in the public, to apply part of them to their advantage, and to make future regulations with regard to them."⁷³

71. Brooke op. cit. pp. 112-118.

72. For Charles Townshend and this enquiry see Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 160 et seq.

73. B. M. Add. Mss. 32979 ff151-2 Newcastle to the Archbishop of York 9 January 1767.

Thus Newcastle, although bearing the trading interest in mind still felt that the government had a possible claim on what would without doubt be a useful revenue. Although this point of view was not expressed by any of Newcastle's colleagues it might possibly have had some weight with them. Under pressure, however, from Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh and Sir William Baker whom he consulted on East India affairs, Newcastle seems, by the end of the month to have come round to accepting what was inevitably the point of view of those financially interested in the Company and there can be little doubt about it that he was at this time ⁷⁴ ~~found~~ ⁷⁴ ~~ing~~ ⁷⁴ ~~the~~ opinions of the merchants. Newcastle had always stood for the great trading interests of ~~the~~ kingdom and from them in the past he had gained much of his support. It was unlikely that he would change sides now and turn against them. By 8 March 1767 Newcastle was echoing the sentiment of Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh who was very much against the printing of the East India Company papers, remarking that the administration

"had committed folly enough by calling for them. The contents of them will be known full well as it is, both by the French and the Dutch, and we may live to see some fatal consequences arise as well to the Publick as private property from this intelligence: Commercial affairs should not thus be exposed; especially those of so great moment as the E. India Company which the French and Dutch look upon with so much jealousy." 76

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74. Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh (1714-1774) M.P. 1755-1774, a large holder of East India shares. For him see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 422-433.
75. B.M. Add. Mss. 32979 f335 Matthew Featherstonhaugh to Newcastle 25 January 1767.
76. B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 f232 Newcastle to Bartholomew Burton 8 March 1767. In correspondence about the division on 9 March against the printing of the papers, Newcastle almost

and Newcastle wrote to Bartholomew Burton

"When this question comes to be debated, it is impossible for the House to be for it. To expose the state of the Company to our rivals there, the French and the Dutch, who will not fail to take their advantage of it; to make such a precedent, which, if it is carried will sooner or later, go thro' all the moneyed companies in the kingdom; and particularly the Bank, for the minister of the House of Commons (Beckford) it is well known, is an enemy to all companies, and for laying all trade open. I dread for the sake of the publick, all such bold proceedings, the consequence of which must be fatal to trade and commerce and to our credit."

If Newcastle thought all his mercantile followers would oppose the enquiry he was not entirely accurate in his assessment of mercantile opinion for some merchants voted against the Rockinghams on 9 March 1767, the most notable being Newcastle's old ally Bartholomew Burton.⁷⁷ After this Newcastle tried to use Sir William Baker to win over Bartholomew Burton,⁷⁸ at the same time keeping his finger on the pulse of mercantile feeling both in the House of Commons and at the meetings which the East India Company were holding.⁷⁹

76. (contd) copied the words of Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32980 f226 Newcastle to Rockingham 8 March 1767; f230 Newcastle to Lord Gage 8 March 1767; f232 Newcastle to Bartholomew Burton 8 March 1767; f244 Newcastle to Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh 8 March 1767.

77. B. M. Add. Mss 32980 f246 Portland to Newcastle 9 March 1767; f248 West to Newcastle 9 March 1767 in which West writes "Ryder Burton Fonneyeaux &c against us. Dundas Major Henniker with us." Although West appears to have been surprised that Burton voted against the Rockinghams, Newcastle had been suspicious of him formerly (see above p. 169) and his allegiance to the government was probably strong as he was a Director of the Bank of England. For Burton see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p. 164. Major and Henniker were merchants with affiliations to Grenville, the Fonnereaux as government financiers supported the administration in power. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 447-448.

78. B. M. Add. Mss. 32980 f137 Newcastle to Sir William Baker 12 April 1767.

The defection of some mercantile allies is possibly the reason why, after spasmodic opposition in the House of Commons the Rockingham Whigs towards the end of the Parliamentary session carried on a relentless opposition in the House of Lords to the proposed settlement of the Company's affairs.⁸⁰ The need to tread warily because of Townshend, and Conway was now gone. What was now essential was a show of strength to rally the party supporters and to make quite clear the official policy or party line on this question.

It would thus seem that the factors which influenced the behaviour of the Rockingham Whigs towards the East India Company in 1767 were threefold. Firstly, their opposition to the attempt by the government to deprive the Company of revenues conflicted with the Whig principle of the sanctity of property. The Charter of the East India Company was to them ~~inviolable~~ as it had been legally granted by Parliament. When in 1783 Burke supported Fox's India Bill he was at pains to distinguish between an attack on the actual charter and an attack on the East India Company which had abused the obligations and trust imposed on it, because the Charter by conferring privileges also implied duties. Secondly it was

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79. B. M. Add. Mss. 32980 f280 West to Newcastle 13 March 1767; f310 West to Newcastle 16 March 1767; f315 John Woodhouse to Portland 16 March 1767; (copy). At the general court of the Company on 13 March 1767 West wrote (f280) of "a Mr. Baker a young lawyer of the Temple who spoke vehemently against the tyranny of an invisible minister, whom neither King, Parliament nor E. India Directors could obtain a sight of" This Mr. Baker was William Baker, Sir William Baker's son. See my Barlow Trecothick etc pp138-142, *and above* p340
80. Brooke op. cit. pp. 142-145. See also Rockingham's Correspondence at the time W. W. M. R1-797 Richmond to Rockingham 12 June 1767; ibid R1-798 Hardwicke to Rockingham 16 June 1767;

convenient for the Rockinghams to oppose the enquiry from the point of view of political tactics. They were moving more and more into opposition to Chatham, The East India question was a convenient matter on which to oppose the administration and with which possibly to secure more resignations of their supporters. Finally any of their supporters, especially the mercantile element, who had any financial interest in the East India Company were bound to oppose the enquiry. It must, however, be admitted that this factor was of secondary importance judging from the evidence presented above.

Having failed to capitalise on the dissension within the Ministry or the East India Company in late January and early February 1767 the Rockingham Whigs turned to the Land Tax as a subject which was likely to embarrass the administration. This topic appeared to be particularly useful as a motion for the reduction of the Land Tax could cause little difference of opinion between the Rockinghams⁸² the Bedfords and the Grenvilles.

The idea of taking one shilling off the Land Tax was William Dowdeswell's.⁸³ He put it forward at a meeting on 11 February 1767 with Rockingham, Hardwicke, Burke and Sir William Baker.⁸⁴ Baker's presence at a meeting of this kind is unusual.

80. (contd) Ibid. R1-799 same to same 22 June 1767; ibid R1-800 same to same 25 June 1767; ibid R1-801 draft of a speech on the East India Bill by Rockingham (undated)

81. Burke Works Vol. IV, p. 6 et seq.

82. Brooke op. cit. pp. 103-105.

83. W. W. M. R1-747 Savile to Rockingham (undated) positively identifies Dowdeswell as the author of the scheme.

84. B. M. Add. Mss. 35362 ff61-62 Hardwicke to Yorke 11 February 1767. Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 105-106.

He was not normally present at meetings of the Rockingham Whigs where policy was formulated but this meeting may have
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 been to discuss the East India Company as well. Rockingham was an advocate of the scheme and corresponded with Sir George Savile about it.
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 Dowdeswell feared that if he did not move the motion, George Grenville would and the former would lose popularity. This argument seems to have affected Rockingham
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 too. The plans for the reduction of the Land Tax were perfected at a further meeting at Rockingham's on 21 February 1767 at
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 which Sir William Baker was again present. This suggests that he was representing that section of the party anxious for opposition. Newcastle's aid was obtained to secure his adherents' votes for the measure and Rockingham also was
 89
 active in mustering support.

On 27 February 1767 Dowdeswell's amendment that the Land Tax should be reduced to three shillings in the pound was
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 carried by 206 votes to 188. Mr. Brooke states that of the eighty English knights of the shire fifty voted for the
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 reduction of the Land Tax and only nine against. It was this class that stood to benefit most from the reduction of the Land Tax and from whom the Rockinghamites could expect most support, and Dowdeswell seems to have been under considerable

85. B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 f82 Newcastle to Rockingham 14 February 67.

86. W.W.M. R1-747 Savile to Rockingham undated. In the Handbook of Correspondence of Charles 2nd Marquis of Rockingham National Register of Archives, 1959 p.63 this letter is dated as January 1767. There is no evidence that the reduction of the Land Tax was planned in January 1767 and it would seem more likely to be about the middle of February.

87. B.M. Add. Mss. 35362 ff61-62 Hardwicke to Yorke 11 February 1767; B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 ff138-9 Rockingham to Newcastle 21 February 1767.

local pressure from the Worcestershire country gentlemen he
 92 represented. This measure was not likely to receive much
 mercantile support for a land tax that did not fall on property
 was most likely to fall on trade and in the City the financiers
 viewed the measure with suspicion and regarded it as against
 93 the public interest.

For the first time since the repeal of the Stamp Act the
 Rockingham Whigs had won an important division in the House of
 Commons and it is particularly interesting to note the way the
 merchants had voted, considering that this was not likely to
 be a measure of great popularity with them. In the Division
 List in the Newcastle Papers under the heading "Friends of the
 Late Administration" it is recorded that two of Newcastle's
 mercantile adherents, Arnold Nesbit and Bartholomew Burton,
 voted against the measure. There are twenty nine names under
 this heading. Under the title "Kings Friends" the names of
 nine merchants appears, three under the heading "Lord Bute's
 Friends". "Lord Chatham's Friends" include the names of
 Beckford, Nicholson Calvert and Rose Fuller, the former
 94 Chairman of the Stamp Act Committee. In the list of "Friends

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88. Ibid. ff138-9 Rockingham to Newcastle 21 February 1767.
 89. Ibid. f147 Newcastle to Portland 22 February 1767; f149
 Newcastle to Thomas Pelham 22 February 1767; f151 Newcastle
 to Albe/marle 22 February 1767; f153 Newcastle to John
 Norris 22 February 1767. W.W.M. R81-189 Division List dated
 in error 'Saturday night February the 13th 1767' Cf. Brooke
op. cit. p. 109 and n. 2.
 90. B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 f176 West to Newcastle 27 February 1767;
 Brooke op. cit. pp. 107-108.
 91. Ibid. p. 107 n. 4.
 92. See The English Land Tax in the Eighteenth Century by W.R.
 Ward, London 1953, p. 76 n. 3.
 93. Walpole Memoirs Vol. II, p. 392.
 94. B.M. Add. Mss. 33037 f377-8 "Members of the House of Commons
 who voted against taking off one shilling Land Tax in
 their particular classes" The merchants who are classified

to the Late Administration" who voted for the measure, sixty-seven names occur. The merchants among these are George Aufrere, Sir William Baker, Sir George Colebrooke and John Hanbury.⁹⁵

It would thus seem that by February 1767 much of the mercantile support which had flocked to the aid of the first Rockingham administration to secure the Repeal of the Stamp Act had disintegrated when it came to measures in which the Rockinghams were not avowedly supporting the mercantile interest. Other allegiances were stronger. The two men who were most well known as American merchants, George Aufrere and Sir William Baker, had voted for the reduction of the Land Tax but either political interest, for both were staunch supporters of the Rockingham Whigs, or their interest as landowners, may have been stronger than their allegiance to trade and finance.⁹⁶

The reduction of the Land Tax was not regarded by the administration as a major defeat,⁹⁷ and neither Rockingham himself nor his supporters seem to have regarded it as a major triumph or overestimated the importance of their victory. Sir George Savile pointed out to Rockingham that they were no nearer coming to power on their own terms, if they wished

94. (contd) as "King's Friends" are Anthony Bacon, Sir Ellis Cunliffe, Peregrine Cust, Chauncy Townsend, Sir Samuel Fludyer, Thomas Fonnevau, Zachary Fonnevau, John Henniker, and Nicholas Linwood. As "Ld Butes" friends are James Coutts, Adam Drummond and Samuel Touchet.

95. Ibid. ff380-381 "Members of the House of Commons who voted for three shillings Land Tax in their particular classes"

96. For Baker and Aufrere's political careers see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 34, 39-41.

to accept office they would still have to accept Chatham's terms, and if they overestimated their success they would probably become incautious and eventually be totally defeated.

He continued

"This triumph or victory or whatever it may be, seems rather to call for extreme caution and reserve than for hot pursuit....But I should rather incline to think as Your Lordship does that it is far from decisive, every reason that made it perhaps generalship to shape this question, is an argument for its not being decisive. Popular, county members, county Gentlemen, a near election. You tell me the 206 consisted chiefly of us G(eorge) G(renville) B(edford) C(ounty M(embers) and Tories - Pretty well; I beg you will let me know who it consisted of wholly. I do not see who you will add unless one or two might vote by mistake and men who might perhaps have voted for 3d-6d for any other puny way you will imagine." 98

and Rockingham wrote to Newcastle

"I saw Charles Yorke and Lord Mansfield last night, they were both well pleased with the defeat of the administration, for tho' in truth it is not quite a serious defeat, it is a very unpleasant event." 99

It has been stated that the victory of the Rockinghamites might have had the effect they least desired for by depriving the government of revenue it may have hastened the passing of the Townshend Duties but a more recent authority contends that Townshend's plans for the American Duties were completed by this time.

American affairs began to come into importance again in January 1767. On 26 January in the Committee of Supply on

96. (contd) For them as property owners see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 129-137, 143-146.

97. Brooke op. cit. p. 108.

98. W.W.M. R1-760 Sir George Savile to Rockingham (undated) but dated in Rockingham handlist as 3 March 1767.

99. B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 f194 Rockingham to Newcastle 1 March 1767.

100. Cf. Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 175 and "Charles

the Army estimates Grenville moved an amendment that the⁴⁸⁸ expenses of the troops stationed in America should be met by
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the colonies themselves. This motion was easily defeated but was made notable by the fact that Charles Townshend in a speech against the amendment pledged himself to produce a
102
revenue from America. Mr. Brooke states that Grenville found
103
no support outside his own group but if the Rockingham Whigs did not vote for the motion neither did they vote against it. Onslow reported the debate to Newcastle in these words

"The House is just up and we have had a debate on G. Grenville's motion for the troops employed in the service of America, by the Colonys where they served. You see the mischief and the intent of it. They were foolishly divided and were 33 to 106. The Bedfords and I think, all the Cavendishes &c. went away; except Dick Vernon, so there were none but Grenville's own People. C. Townshend and Conway did exceedingly well. Beckford also spoke. G. Grenville and Id. G. Sackville were the only speakers on their side." 104

It would seem that the Rockingham Whigs realised the intention of Grenville to reintroduce the principle on which the Stamp Act had been based, that of making the American colonies contribute at least part of the cost of their own defence, and it is strange that they did not whole-heartedly challenge Grenville by voting against him. One can only explain their behaviour as a disinclination to vote for the administration or an attempt to preserve some sort of friendship with Grenville by not voting against him. It must be
remembered

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100. (contd) Townshend and American Taxation in 1767" by P.D. G. Thomas in English Historical Review Vol. LXXIII, 1968 pp. 42-43.
101. Brooke op. cit. p. 93.
102. Ibid. pp. 93-94. Namier and Brooke Charles Townshend p. 173.
103. Brooke op. cit. p. 93.
104. B. M. Add. Mss. 32979 f343 Onslow to Newcastle 'Monday Evening' (26 January 1767) Richard Vernon (1726-1800) M.P. for Bedford a staunch Bedford Whig supporter, see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. III, pp. 584-586.

that at the end of 1766 the Rockinghamites had been negotia-
 ting with the Grenvilleites ¹⁰⁵ and that less than a month after
 this incident they were working with them, to secure the
 reduction of the Land Tax.

Mr. Brooke criticizes the Rockingham Whigs for not
 opposing Grenville and states

"The Rockinghams were silent on January 26. Dowdeswell
 was in the House and Burke was well within handy distance
 but neither spoke against a policy which threatened to
 undo all the good achieved by the repeal of the Stamp
 Act. In truth, the pro-Americanism of the Rockinghams
 was rather accidental than conscious a shibboleth in
 British party politics rather than a serious factor in
 imperial affairs." ¹⁰⁶

He goes on to say that the Rockinghamites policy of "consistency"
¹⁰⁷
 meant only consistent opposition to Grenville and that
 'consistency' required that they should defend the Declaratory
¹⁰⁷
 Act against Chatham.

In fact on this occasion neither Grenville nor Townshend
 can be said to have conflicted with the American policy of the
 Rockingham Whigs as proclaimed in the Repeal of the Stamp Act
 and the Declaratory Act. If the Rockinghamites were to
 criticize either Grenville or Townshend they would have to do
 so on grounds of expediency and neither of the speakers gave
 sufficient details to allow Rockingham's supporters to do this.
¹⁰⁸
 Moreover on such dubious ground they would probably be unwill-
 ing to endanger their friendship with Charles Townshend.

105. See above p. 475.

106. Brooke op. cit., p. 96. Cf. Thomas loc. cit. p. 50.

107. Ibid. pp. 96-98.

108. Ibid. pp. 93-94.

Perhaps the Rockingham Whigs went away because they could vote neither with the administration for which Townshend spoke on this occasion, nor for Grenville. If they voted for either, men like Trecothick would have been bound to question their action.

Shelburne, at least, was alarmed by Townshend's speech, although when he reported to Chatham, Chatham did not seem unduly perturbed.¹⁰⁹ Newcastle also may have been slightly perturbed when Townshend's words were reported to him for on 30 January he wrote to a Cambridge correspondent complaining that he had not seen Townshend all the winter and requesting that this mutual friend brought them together when he was in London.¹¹⁰ Mr. Brooke, however, takes the absence of reference to the debate in the correspondence of Rockingham and Newcastle as evidence of lack of concern with the issue.¹¹¹

Other American issues now began to gain the attention of the Rockingham Whigs. In February 1767 a petition signed by more than 250 New York merchants challenging the Navigation Acts and condemning the commercial legislation of both Rockingham and Grenville ministries indiscriminately because it "severely clogged and restricted" colonial trade was presented to Parliament.¹¹²

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109. Chatham Correspondence Vol. III, pp. 182-8 Shelburne to Chatham 1 February 1767, pp. 188-90 Chatham to Shelburne 3 February 1767, Brooke op. cit. p. 95.
110. B. M. Add. Mss. 32979 f405 Newcastle to Dr. Powell 30 January 1767.
111. Brooke op. cit. p. 94.
112. Sosin op. cit. pp. 97-98, Winstanley op. cit. p. 108. Cf Commons Journal Vol. XXXI, pp. 158-160.

On 16 February Rockingham wrote to Newcastle

"Today the New York petition is expected to be presented. It will occasion some conversation. I understand the administration mean to have it lie upon the table and to which we shall consent. Charles Townshend, Conway, Dowdeswell and Burke talked about it yesterday and agreed much in opinion." 113

With reference to this petition Shelburne had written to Chatham on 6 February

"Merchants have unanimously disavowed the New York petition and say that a Mr. Kelly has been the demon who has handled this fire and who is the sole author of it!" 114

The Mr. Kelly referred to would seem to be William Kelly the New York merchant who had been a witness before the Stamp Act Committee. Kelly seems to have known Rockingham, Portland and Newcastle well. He had returned to America after the repeal of the Stamp Act. 115

Unfortunately there is no record of the discussion among the Rockingham Whigs about the New York petition. As the petition challenged their policy when in power and Burke did not support the petition one must suspect that they agreed with Shelburne about it even though Kelly had been one of their associates during the Stamp Act Crisis. Moreover as English merchants viewed the petition with disfavour there was little prospect of it gaining the support of the Rockingham 116

113. B.M. Add. Mss. 32980 f108/Rockingham to Newcastle 16 February 1767.

114. Chatham Correspondence Vol. III, p. 191 Shelburne to Chatham 6 February 1767.

115. Smith op. cit. pp. 174-175, Cf. Sosin op. cit. p. 97 n. 13.

116. Hoffman op. cit. p. 49.

Whigs. At this time Trecothick, together with other merchants interested in the American trade, and colonial agents were putting pressure on the government for the repeal of Grenville's Currency Act of 1764 which was regarded as prejudicial to both English trade with America and colonial commerce and they seem to have been successful in opposing the American Salt Duty. Trecothick and the rest of the merchants and agents working with him must have been appalled by the extreme opinions put forward in the New York petition and by arousing public indignation against the colonists the petition can only have handicapped their work. There is no evidence that they were concerting measures with the Rockingham Whigs at this time but this is scarcely surprising for the work they were engaged upon necessitated putting pressure on ministers outside Parliament rather than a full scale political attack on ministers in the House.

In February 1767 the question of the resistance of the colonies, particularly New York, to Grenville's Mutiny Act came under consideration and in the House of Lords the Duke of Bedford called for the American Papers. Newcastle was afraid that the discussion of America might lead to a breach

117. Sosin op. cit. p. 93 et seq.

118. Trumbull Papers loc. cit. p. 229 William Samuel Johnson to William Pitkin 16 May 1767. See also my Barlow Trecothick etc p. 55 and Barlow Trecothick loc. cit. Part 2, p. 31.

119. See Sosin op. cit. pp. 93-98. 120. Miller op. cit. pp. 237-241.

121. Lords Journal Vol. XXXI, pp. 493-496 24 and 25 February 1767 appear to be the only dates towards the end of February when the Duke of Bedford was present in the House of Lords and 25 February is the only day when there is any mention of American business there in the Journal.

of the alliance that was being built up with Grenville and the Bedford Whigs which had been strengthened by common action to secure the reduction of the Land Tax on 27 February 1767. He wrote to Rockingham on 28 February

"I wish my Ld. Mansfield and my Lord Hardwicke's thoughts were known upon this motion of the Duke of Bedford's for the American Papers. It would be unlucky, if just at this time when we, by our united strength have carried such a victory in the House of Commons, anything should now be proposed in the House of Lords, in which we could not concur, which I am afraid must be the case."

122

Newcastle hoped to get information from the American merchants on the American situation and also possibly wanted their opinion. He continued his letter

"I wish your Lordship would enquire of Trecothick or some of our American friends, what the fact is, that is complained of; how far they have refused to comply with the resolutions of the House of Lords or the directions of Parliament."

123

Neither the Rockingham nor Newcastle correspondence, at this time, contains any further reference to consultation of the merchants or enquiry into American affairs but at the end of March when the Rockingham Whigs had been negotiating an alliance with the Grenville and Bedford Whigs for about a fortnight Newcastle wrote

124

"Lord Rockingham has three points on which he will insist
 To have a majority of Friends in the Cabinet.
 To give the whole care of West Indies and North America to my Lord Dartmouth, with the Seals as third Secretary of State.
 To insist that Mr. Grenville should have nothing to do with North America.
 That the measures which were taken by His Lordship in the Treasury with regard to the trade and commerce in America and the laying taxes there, should be maintained and pursued."

125

It would thus seem that any discussion that Rockingham had pursued with the American merchants in March 1767 with regard to American affairs had only strengthened his belief that the American measures enacted by the first Rockingham administration were right and correct and the best policy was to continue on that course if possible. In this way Rockingham no doubt hoped to strengthen the mercantile support of his party. Mr. Brooke contends that each of the conditions above were laid down almost entirely as a barrier to Grenville's influence in any new joint administration, but bearing in mind the relationship of the Rockingham Whigs with the merchants this would not seem to be the sole reason for the conditions and even though the negotiations proved abortive, Grenville's supporters did not seem to regard the conditions as unreasonable or improper.

In spite of this there was no unanimity of opinion among the leaders of the Rockingham Whigs upon American affairs at this time, for on 10 April 1767 when the Duke of Bedford moved in the House of Lords for an address to the King to take into consideration an Act of the province of Massachusetts Bay for pardoning the rioters in the Stamp Act disturbances

123. Ibid. f187 Newcastle to Rockingham 28 February 1767.

124. For these negotiations see Brooke op. cit. pp. 121-6. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 119-121.

125. B. M. Add. Mss. 32980 f450 "Persons named by My Lord Rockingham to be the Friends without whom he would take no steps" Quoted Brooke op. cit. p. 126.

126. Ibid. p. 126.

127. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32981 ff1-2 "Substance of a Conversation this day with Mr. Rigby" 1 April 1767, ff27-28 "Substance of a Conversation with Lord Mansfield" 4 April 1767.

Rockingham, Dartmouth, Monson and Edgcumbe voted against it, Hardwicke and Grentham voted with the Bedfords and Newcastle Portland, Albe~~m~~arle, Scarborough and Bessborough abstained, primarily it would seem to avoid voting against Rockingham.

128

Rockingham explained his ideas in a letter to his wife

129

"Yesterday the Duke of Bedford made a motion in the House of Lords - the matter proper and what we might have concurred in, but upon the whole it rather appeared to be somewhat unfair or uncandid to the Administration. Many of our friends were desirous of joining in the question against the Administration, and yet I felt as if our joining in it might have the appearance of pevishness and want of candour - of course I determined to vote with Administration. Many of our friends staid and voted with me and many went away not to vote against. There was no tye upon us to vote with the Duke of Bedford for in fact they did not communicate with us on the matter. If they had and the question in all parts had been made suitable to our opinions we and they should have joined and I believe the consequences would have been a majority against administration."

In taking his action Rockingham seems to have paid little or no attention to mercantile opinion. Newcastle, however, paid more attention and endeavoured to explain his own and his colleagues actions and opinion in a letter to his leading mercantile supporter Sir William Baker on Sunday 12 April 1767

"Mr, Grenville will make the same motion tomorrow, in the House of Commons, that the Duke of Bedford did in the House of Lords, on Friday last, upon the Assembly of New England taking upon them to pardon the rioters, without the intervention of the Crown. I own, I never was clearer in my life, in opinion, for any question,

128. See Brooke op. cit. p. 127. There is a division list in B. M. Add. Mss. 32981 ff102-103 For the abstention of Newcastle, Portland, Albe~~m~~arle, Scarborough and Bessborough see ibid. ff137-8 Newcastle to Sir William Baker 12 April 1767.

129. W. W. M. R156-13 misdated April 10 1767 should be April 11 1767 quoted Brooke op. cit. pp. 12708.

than I was for that. I thought it would have had all the good consequences imaginable and no one bad one. As nothing was said against, but that it was an imputation of neglect of Duty in the administration. If it was so, I don't see any great inconvenience in that; it would have show'd my Lord Bute and my Lord Chatham (and there is my point) that with the Duke of Bedford &c. we were masters of the House of Lords. It would be showing a spirit upon a point, that concerned no other colony, but this, and was entirely separate from all other considerations and disputes, relating to North America, and by taking this easy step we might be enabled perhaps the better to resist other violent measures, that might be proposed in the course of the affair....I could not convince My Lord Rockingham of this; and out of regard singly to him I did not vote, as I hear, nine or ten others did." 130

Probably Newcastle was sufficiently interested to endeavour to justify his actions to the mercantile section of his supporters, and to endeavour to reassure them that there was no radical change in his opinion on American affairs for he was taking the line that events in Massachusetts had been exceptional and the Rockingham ministry had never condoned violence.

The most crucial issues of America became important during May 1767. The Committee to examine the American Papers seems to have been postponed from 30 April 1767 until 8 May. On 5 May 1767 it was further postponed until 13 May because
131
Charles Townshend could not attend. Before 5 May Rockingham and his supporters were quite active and Rockingham appears to have been trying to organise opposition to a government bill that would have prevented all the American governors giving their assent to measures from the provincial legislatures

130. B. M. Add. Mss. 32981 f137-8 Newcastle to Sir William Baker 12 April 1767 quoted Brooke op. cit. p. 128 but an important part of the letter is omitted without any mark of omission.

until the colonies had complied with the Quartering Act. He
 132
 hoped for Conway's support on this and Newcastle seems to have
 approved of the action. Rockingham appears to have discussed
 the opposition with the leading Rockingham Whigs, the Duke of
 Richmond, William Dowdeswell, Sir George Savile and Sir William
 Meredith and Newcastle tried to sound the opinion of John

133
 White. Mr. Brooke states that Rockingham's plan was to
 embarrass the cabinet rather than to demonstrate in favour of
 134
 the colonies or give support to Conway, but it must be borne
 in mind, that opposition to the type of bill proposed by the
 government would have been regarded with a favourable eye by
 the mercantile element. By 13 May 1767 when the committee
 actually sat the opposition was fully ready for the government
 measure and Dowdeswell was to offer an alternative scheme,
 by which the Mutiny and Quartering Acts were to be enforced
 135
 and the loyal colonies rewarded.

When the American Committee actually opened on 13 May 1767
 it is interesting to note that Rose Fuller the former chairman
 136
 of the Stamp Act Committee was in the chair. Townshend
 proposed three resolutions, firstly one declaring that New York
 had disobeyed the Mutiny Act, secondly one condemning as

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131. Burke Correspondence Vol. I, ed. Copeland p. 309 Edmund Burke
 to Marchioness of Rockingham 28 April 1767, Brooke op. cit.
 p. 136.
132. B. M. Add. Mss. 32981 f287 Rockingham to Newcastle 4 May 1767.
133. Ibid. f289 Newcastle to Rockingham 4 May 1767; f295
 Rockingham to Newcastle 5 May 1767; f326 Newcastle to
 White 8 May 1767.
134. Brooke op. cit. p. 136.
135. B. M. Add. Mss. 32981 f365 Rockingham to Newcastle 12 May 1767;
ibid. f385 Newcastle to Rockingham 13 May 1767.
136. Ibid. f375 West to Newcastle 13 May 1767.

inadequate the provision that New York had made for the Mutiny Act and thirdly the one attempting to penalise the colonies until they had complied with the Mutiny Act of which the Rockinghams had prior knowledge. Conway contested the first resolution but the Rockinghams concentrated on the third, as planned, and their opposition was concerned more with the legality of the measure than with expediency. Rockingham had, before this, taken the advice of Lord Mansfield and Charles Yorke. ¹³⁷ If, however, Rockingham's opposition was mainly on the issue of legality, opposition to the third measure was most in accord with the attitude the Rockingham Whigs had adopted when in power and therefore, for the Rockinghams the one best calculated to win mercantile support.

Following the three resolutions Townshend went on to say that he had always been unable to distinguish between external and internal taxation and went on to "mention some taxes not as Chancellor of the Exchequer but as a private man for the future opinion of the House in a Committee of Ways and Means." ¹³⁸ He then outlined the famous Townshend Duties. In the debate that followed the issue of the taxation or non-taxation of America took second place to the indignation aroused by colonial resistance to the Mutiny and Quartering Acts.

137. See Brooke op. cit. pp. 136-137; B.M. Add. Mss. 32981 f297 Mansfield to Newcastle 5 May 1767; B.M. Add. Mss. 35430 ff73-74 Rockingham to Charles Yorke 3 May 1767; Autobiography and Political Correspondence of Augustus Henry 3rd Duke of Grafton ed. Sir W. Anson, London 1898, pp176-8 Thomas Bradshaw to Grafton Thursday morning (14 May 1767).

138. B.M. Add. Mss. 32981 f373 West to Newcastle 13 May 1767. Townshend appears to have had the advice of Adam Smith in drawing up these duties. See "Adam Smith in Downing Street 1766-67" by W.R. Scott in Economic History Review Vol. VI.

West reported to Newcastle

"Mr. Grenville seconded Mr. Townshend's taxes and proposed a tax on paper currency which Mr. Townshend at last agreed to add to his others. Mr. Grenville proposed that no person should have any office whatsoever that did not swear and subscribe to the superiority of Great Britain, as he took the oath of allegiance. Mr. C. Yorke who was heard with difficulty thought the measures could scarce be too strong.... Sir G. Savile thought strong measures were necessary as we were only carrying an Act of Assembly and making paper war. Lord John Cavendish is just come and seems in the same way of thinking." 139

It would have been extremely difficult for the Rockinghams to raise the issue of the expediency of taxing America when the government could prove by reference to the Mutiny and Quartering Acts that the Rockingham policy of repeal of the Stamp Act and Declaratory Act had not really quietened America. They might have been misled by the distinction between internal and external taxation which Townshend drew even if he did not believe in it, and opposition could easily lead them into the dangerous ground of challenging Parliamentary authority over America, and they were as firm supporters of this as Grenville, as the Declaratory Act showed.

Besides the fact that the issues were not clear cut there was also the fact that this was the end of the Parliamentary session. Immediately after the debate on 13 May 1767 West reported to Newcastle that two of the staunchest Rockingham Whigs, George Aufrere and Sir William Meredith, would not attend Parliament further that summer. George Aufrere was an influential merchant who had been active at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis and Meredith had important mercantile

connections for he was member for Liverpool. Burke also stated in his speech on American taxation that to satisfy the English merchants the duties were deliberately trivial and except the tea duty laid on none of the "grand objects of ¹⁴¹commerce". These reasons may account for the lack of interest in the duties among Rockingham's mercantile supporters and suggest that they were only moderates in the American cause. Attendance in the House continued to decline and on 16 June West reported to Newcastle that there were not more than fifty ¹⁴²members present. Indeed by 15 May 1767 when Charles Garth, Rose Fuller and William Dowdeswell endeavoured to have Townshend's measures recommitted there was a noticeable decline in enthusiasm in the House compared to 13 May 1767, and it would also seem that the Rockinghamites voted with the administration on this occasion. ¹⁴³One is led to the conclusion that the mercantile supporters of the Rockingham Whigs were not sufficiently worried by the Townshend Duties to oppose them. Sir William Baker, their leader, was more concerned with New York's disobedience to the Mutiny and Quartering Act and was strongly in favour of Grenville's idea of a test whereby anybody holding office in the colonies should swear to the ¹⁴⁴superiority of Great Britain. Again this presents the moderate view adopted by Rockingham's mercantile supporters.

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139. B. M. Add. Mss. 32981 f378 West to Newcastle 13 May 1767.
 140. Ibid. f380 West to Newcastle 13 May 1767. For Meredith see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. III, pp. 130-133.
 141. Burke Works Vol. II, p. 360.
 142. B. M. Add. Mss. 32982 f346 West to Newcastle 16 June 1767.
 143. B. M. Add. Mss. 32981 f391 West to Newcastle 18 May 1767.
 See also Anson op. cit. p. 179 Thomas Bradshaw to Grafton 16 May 1767.

He was not, however, in the House of Commons on 13 and 15 May
 145
 1767. Newcastle was against Grenville's idea of a test.

Pragmatic as ever he feared that it would throw America into
 146
 confusion again. Burke and Dowdeswell opposed the measure.

When the Townshend Duties were introduced into the
 Committee of Ways and Means and drawn up into a bill some
 opposition seems to have come from William Dowdeswell and Sir
 147
 William Baker, but the leaders of the Rockingham Whigs made
 no attempt to organise this opposition and it was left to the
 effort of individual members. The lack of interest of the
 Rockinghamite leaders in the Townshend Duties was probably
 due to the fact that at this time they were preoccupied with
 the parliamentary tactic of attempting to defeat the adminis-
 tration in the House of Lords during May and June 1767. Here
 the issues were American and East Indian but in no instance
 do the leaders of the Rockingham Whigs appear to have
 consulted their mercantile associates or asked their opinions.
 The merchants were still merely a subordinate body, to be
 consulted only on questions directly affecting them, and only
 when Rockingham and Newcastle felt that they were to be useful.

Thus while the leaders of the Rockingham Whigs were
 preoccupied with affairs in the House of Lords, the end of the

144. See above, ibid. f378 West to Newcastle 13 May 1767. Cf. Anson op. cit. p. 190 Thomas Bradshaw to Grafton 16 May 1767. See also B. M. Add. Mss. 32982 f51 Newcastle to Rockingham 17 May 1767.

145. Ibid. f51 Newcastle to Rockingham 17 May 1767.

146. Ibid. f51 Newcastle to Rockingham 17 May 1767.

147. Ibid. f317 Frederick Montague to Newcastle 12 June 1767; ibid. f327 Newcastle to West 13 June 1767.

parliamentary session came, many members retired to the country and in the confusion over New York's resistance to the Mutiny Act the Townshend Duties became law and were almost overlooked by the leaders of the Rockingham Whigs and their mercantile associates. Yet the merchants still valued the connection with the Rockingham Whigs for on 10 May 1767 Abraham Rawlinson had approached Burke asking him to stand for Lancaster in the forthcoming Parliamentary election.¹⁴⁸

The Parliamentary session 1766-1767 exemplifies the way in which the relationship between the Rockingham Whigs and the mercantile classes was to develop after the end of the first Rockingham administration. The Rockinghamites lost the close contacts with the merchants, which they had while in office, partly because the merchants were more accustomed to secure the policy they desired by putting pressure on administration rather than co-operating with an opposition group, and partly because the Rockinghams did not cultivate the friendship of the merchants because they were not accustomed to do so. The loyalty of certain individual leaders of the merchants from 1765-66 seems to have endured and been maintained. Trecothick and Rawlinson are examples of this but Trecothick did not concert the pressure he was putting on the ministry in 1767 with the group to which he owed political loyalty.¹⁴⁹

148. W.W.M.R1-76 Rawlinson to Burke 10 May 1767; Burke Correspondence Vol. 1, ed Copeland p. 325 William Burke to Edmund Burke 4 September 1767. See below p. 529.

149. See above pp. 491-2 Sosin op. cit. p. 103 states that Trecothick was in Parliament during the debate on the Townshend Duties but this is not the case. He was not elected until 1768.

Newcastle persisted in trying to maintain the loyalty of the financiers who had aided him when in office, but it is to be suspected, mainly because he was looking forward to their usefulness when the party was again in office and party politics and Whig principles took first place rather than mercantile support. It was only when the former coincided with mercantile opinion that any real use could be made of mercantile support.

Yet in general the Rockingham Whigs were pursuing a policy which was bound to gain the sympathy of the British mercantile classes. This was not purely accidental. The policy pursued by the Rockinghams during the parliamentary session 1766-1767 was based on the policy evolved during the Stamp Act Crisis under pressure from and in co-operation with the merchants. There is some justification for Rockingham's claim to "consistency" in that one policy was the logical outcome of the other and Mr. Brooke's criticism of Rockingham, his supporters and their policy is perhaps too harsh. With the background of the party, their recent experience of office and the political conditions of the mid-eighteenth century it is difficult to see how they could have behaved differently. The policy they had adopted whilst in office had never wholeheartedly espoused the American cause. They did not claim to be the unqualified champions of the colonists on all issues.

In opposition as in office they sought and listened to advice and opinions and then determined their policy in the light of what they heard and read in conformity with their Whig principles.

It may also be pointed out that the period shows clearly how far the change in leadership from Newcastle to Rockingham had progressed in the party. Rockingham was not whole-heartedly endeavouring to forge alliances with other political groups in order to return to power; the politics of an opposition party were emerging. As Professor Ritcheson has pointed out had Newcastle still been in control of the party he "would have made a coalition with Lucifer to maintain or achieve
150
power."

150. Ritcheson op. cit. pp. 82-83.

C) THE NEGOTIATIONS OF JULY 1767.

The month after Parliament had gone into recess was occupied by negotiations to strengthen the administration. A detailed account of these negotiations forms no part of this thesis but certain aspects of them are significant and worthy
151
of notice. These show how little direct impact mercantile influence had on political measures when the Rockinghams were out of power but how unconscious influence still existed.

The King gave the Duke of Grafton the task of strengthening the administration and the Duke approached Rockingham first. Rockingham aimed to form an administration from his own group, his allies in the Chatham administration and the Bedford Whigs. Assuming from the start that he had been given full power to negotiate to form a new ministry under
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his leadership, he therefore approached the Duke of Bedford,
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and also through Richard Rigby, George Grenville. At first it seemed as if the negotiations were going to be successful and Rockingham would achieve his aim, but when on 20 and 21 July 1767 the Bedfords and Rockinghams met to discuss detailed arrangements the negotiations broke down. The King now made it clear that he had never given Rockingham the power to form
154
a completely new administration.

The two critical meetings in the negotiations on 20 and 21 July took place at Newcastle House. At the first meeting

151. A full account of these negotiations is contained in Brooke op. cit. pp. 162-217, See also Winstanley op. cit. pp. 152-177.

152. Brooke op. cit. pp. 163-5.

153. Ibid. pp. 174-182.

Rockingham, Newcastle, Richmond, Portland, Keppel and Dowdeswell of the Rockinghams and Bedford, Weymouth, Sandwich and Richard Rigby of the Bedford Whigs were present. The second meeting was somewhat smaller. Rockingham and Dowdeswell of the Rockinghams attended and Bedford and Rigby with Newcastle acting as "chairman".¹⁵⁵ Richard Rigby represented Grenville's point of view at the conference and sought a declaration from Rockingham that he "would assert and establish the superiority of this country over its colonies". Rockingham grew angry when asked for such a declaration. He later wrote to Newcastle

"Your Grace will remember that at the meeting at Your Grace's House upon our being called upon for a declaration on N(orth) A(merican) matters in consequence of G. Grenville and L(ord) Temple's desire that I grew warm and did say that I considered it a Trap and that whatever answer we gave - it would probably be laid before the Publick with whatever colour was thought proper - in order to throw an odium upon us." ¹⁵⁶

Rockingham also felt that as Grenville sought a declaration from him on North America the latter suspected that Rockingham was going to give up Great Britain's superiority over her colonies. Rockingham also felt that the terms of the declaration implied a "consent for doing something" to "assert and establish" British authority over the colonies immediately.¹⁵⁷ The Duke of Bedford, however, endeavoured to

154. Ibid. pp. 174-211. For the King's interview with Rockingham at the conclusion of the negotiations see W.W.M. R1-845 Rockingham to Hardwicke 26 July 1767.

155. Brooke op. cit. pp. 203-210.

156. W.W.M. R9-18 erroneously docketed Rockingham to Bedford but from internal evidence obviously to Newcastle undated but probably September 1767. For the "private account" mentioned in the document see B.M. Add. Mss. 32983 f392 Narrative of the negotiations by....

allay the hostility caused by this declaration. He interpreted the declaration as follows

"That with regard to the American Colonies no new measures should be understood to be agreed upon at this meeting, unless new matter arises, but if new matter should arise.. the sovereignty of this country should be asserted and established with firmness and temper."

This declaration by Bedford and the fact that Dowdeswell changed the words "asserted and maintained" to "supported and established" at the second meeting eventually solved the problem of the policy to be adopted towards America satisfactorily as Newcastle later admitted.

The negotiations eventually broke down because Rockingham insisted that Conway should lead any administration in the House of Commons of which he was to be First Lord of the Treasury. The Duke of Bedford was adamant that Conway should serve the new administration in no other way than in a military capacity and suggested Dowdeswell as a leader for the administration in the lower house, but when Dowdeswell declined the Rockinghams fell back on their insistence on Conway and the negotiations broke down.

157. Ibid. ff351-55 "Narrative of what passed here last night" 21 July 1767. Cf. W.W.M. R1-845 Rockingham to Hardwicke 26 July 1767 and copy at W.W.M. R9-31.
158. W.W.M. R9-7. Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 207-8. B.M. Add. Mss. 32983 ff351-4 "Narrative of what passed here last night" 31 July 1767; ibid. f392 Narrative of the negotiations by..
159. B.M. ADD. MSS. 32985 f74 Newcastle to Rockingham 11 September 1767.
160. W.W.M. R1-838 Report of the meeting of 20 July 1767, ibid R1-845 Rockingham to Hardwicke 26 July 1767 quoted Albymarle op. cit. Vol. II, p. 52 but wrongly dated 2 July 1767. Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 209-210.

Dowdeswell declined the office suggested

"for many reasons which he then gave(at the meeting),
and for many more which he kept in his own breast."

Foremost among these reasons seems to be that Dowdeswell was not Rockingham's first choice and he was put forward by Bedford, and that Dowdeswell was not satisfied with the basis of the negotiations of July 1767 believing that the Rockinghamites should not accept any orders unless they came directly from the King and that they ought to be more firm with the Bedford
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Whigs.

Rockingham's insistence on Conway was because he felt that he must have a strong man, in whom he could confide, to lead the proposed administration in the House of Commons and that Conway was the only man who could preserve the close links
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with the present administration. The Bedfords objected to Conway ostensibly because he was connected with the present
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administration which was supposed to be at an end. It has, however, been suggested that the real reason why the Bedfords broke off the negotiations over Conway was because they wanted
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his post for themselves.

The fact that an eventual solution to the American declaration was reached and then the negotiations broke down

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161. See W.W.M. R1-838 Report of meeting of 20 July 1767; ibid R1-842 "Thoughts on the present state of publick affairs and the propriety of accepting or declining administration" 23-24 July 1767; Cf. Brooke op. cit. p. 205 n. 3.
162. W.W.M. R1-838 Report of meeting of 20 July 1767.
163. Ibid. R1-838 Report of meeting of 20 July 1767.
164. Pares, King George III and the Politicians p. 85, n. 1. IN support of this Pares cites as evidence the fact that after the Bedfords entered the ministry Shelburne was gradually edged out of the other Secretary of State's office.

over Conway must be related to American policy. If Rockingham was suspicious over Bedford and Grenville's attitude towards America he was hardly likely to allow a member of the Bedford clique to lead the administration in the House of Commons. Having vetoed Conway, and because Dowdeswell declined, the Rockinghams had no other candidate who could lead the administration in the House. Moreover, Bedford made it clear that he wanted a member of his party leading the House of Commons with Dowdeswell as Chancellor of the Exchequer as chief representative of the Rockinghams there. Thus the failure of the negotiations over Conway was not in fact a breakdown over a trivial point. Without Conway to lead, Rockingham would have little hope of having his policy adequately explained and directed in the House of Commons.

After the negotiations had failed Rockingham wrote to Newcastle

"I hear that Lord Temple and G. Grenville's friends give out that the three corps are not at all broken by what has passed, attribute the going off the negotiations entirely to the subject of General Conway and say nothing about the N(orth) A(merican) affair, or the honourable and becoming portion of office which was to be allocated undefined to them, and in short taking no notice that their conduct gave any umbrage." 166

Burke explained the whole episode to Newcastle, when he discussed it with him, as a question of principle, in which

165. B. M. Add. Mss. 32983 f351 "Narrative of what passed here last night" 21 July 1767.

166. B. M. Add. Mss. 32984 f287 Rockingham^t to Newcastle 15 August 1767.

Rockingham was deeply involved, for Burke believed that unless Rockingham insisted on high office for Conway he would have betrayed Conway who was his friend. There also seems to have been some idea that Conway was the only man who could possibly hold Grenville in check. Indeed, Newcastle appears to have put Rockingham's insistence on Conway down to a fit of pique and this attitude was spread by him to his friends, thus soon after the negotiations broke down, Albemarle, who had been present, twice expressed the feeling that it would have been better had the negotiations broke down on the American question rather than over Conway. Although in this Albemarle shows ignorance of the precise course that the negotiations took, his idea seems to show that the Rockingham leaders were beginning to realise how important a plank of their platform American policy had become.

Mr. Brooke criticises the attitude of the Rockinghams to the American question during the negotiations and states that the final form of the declaration evolved shows

"how far the Rockinghams were from appreciating the nature of the dispute with the colonies, and indicates how little they would have been able to prevent a separation had they returned to office." 171

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167. Ibid. f358 Newcastle to Albemarle 29 August 1767.
 168. B. M. Add. Mss. 32985 f253 Newcastle to Albemarle 28 September 1767.
 169. W. W. M. R1-839 Albemarle to Rockingham 23 July 1767, copy at B. M. Add. Mss. 32983 f383; ibid. f387 Albemarle to Newcastle 5 August 1767.
 170. See above p. 509.
 171. Brooke op. cit. p. 208.

This is not strictly true. To Rockingham any fresh difficulties with the colonies which had arisen in the year since he had left office could still be solved in terms of the formula he had accepted when in office. The Declaratory Act had asserted Britain's authority over the colonies but the expediency of asserting that authority was still questionable. Looking at the American problem in this light Rockingham was not bound to have an altered appreciation of it. Moreover Rockingham was more concerned in the negotiations with resisting Grenville than solving the American problem. In September 1767 he wrote to Dowdeswell

"I desire to establish the two fundamental principles on which we set out and as I can not believe that any of our Friends will depart from these lines our only difference can arise from Variety of opinion in regard to the most probable means of accomplishing these objects.

Our first principle was that Lord Bute's power was dangerous and therefore to be restricted.

Our second arose from Mr. Grenville's conduct as a Minister, whose measures and opinions we opposed and afterwards corrected, and therefore consistency requires that we never should aid to throw Government into his hands much less act the part of assistants in an administration so formed.

To enter into any more discussion on these principles is needless, but it may be right occasionally to resort to revise and to fix these acknowledged principles in the minds of our Friends, lest from other more immediate motives of passion and resentment they may lose sight of the original good foundation and adopt and pursue a conduct on a line in which the publick may not be so ready to go along with them, and may attribute the motive not to be of publick service but of private interest."

172

It is obvious that the wishes of his mercantile followers were not uppermost in Rockingham's mind during the negotiations with the Bedford Whigs neither does Dowdeswell mention the merchants in his correspondence at this time and his chief pre-occupation throughout the negotiations was to see the Rockingham Whigs back in office. ¹⁷³ One of the Rockingham Whig leaders was concerned with principle, the other with political manoeuvre. Neither was concerned with the allies they had found so useful when they were in power a short time before.

It must, however, be remembered that both in his insistence upon Conway and in his actions with regard to the proposed declaration on American policy Rockingham was defending a policy which had been evolved under mercantile pressure and with mercantile co-operation. If Rockingham was to come to power again and his American policy was to be tested he would again need mercantile support and this fact may well have been at the back of his mind. The merchants would be alarmed if Rockingham relinquished the authority of Great Britain over the colonies, for they would fear losing the benefits of the Navigation System. I have found no evidence that any of Rockingham's mercantile supporters had considered colonial autonomy at this date.

They would also feel that fresh measures to "assert" the

173. See for instance the comments Newcastle makes in B. M. Add. Mss. 32983 ff351-362 "Narrative of what passed here last night" 21 July 1767; see also ibid. f367 Newcastle to Rockingham 25 July 1767; B. M. Add. Mss. 32984 ff195-6 Newcastle to Portland 7 August 1767. Newcastle felt it was impossible for Rockingham to form an administration without the support of Bedford. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32985 f214 Newcastle to Lord Frederick Cavendish 23 September 1767.

authority of Great Britain over the colonies could easily repeat the turmoil that the Stamp Act had caused. The merchants thus had as much a vested interest in the maintenance of the status quo as did Rockingham. Moreover, it should be noted that during the negotiations Rockingham did not give way on the American issue. It was chiefly Bedford who reinterpreted, or moderated, the declaration that Grenville desired and Rockingham had good reason to fear Grenville's attitude on America. Finally it must be noted that Rockingham must have realised that the merchants were not likely to support an administration that the Bedfords led in the House of Commons because they had passed the Stamp Act.

A very apt comment on these negotiations was made by Dowdeswell in a paper he wrote a few days after the negotiations had failed. In this he wrote

then

"What can/be done ? Nothing but to finish with honour. We have hitherto acted with the strictest honour. If our friends will not joyn us it is impossible for us to joyn them....

I confess that I see no fair prospect before us. This may possibly weaken us as a party, it depends upon the virtue of our friends whether it will or not, but I am sure it will do us honour as individuals.

In these unhappy times when we find ourselves well in the opinion of mankind the wisest thing we can do is to stand still and enjoy the reputation which we have, not risque if for something new, the chances of which are so much against us." 174

174. W.W.M. R1-842 "Thoughts on the present state of public affairs and the propriety of accepting or declining administration" 23-24 July 1767, copy in Lady Rockingham's hand (see covering letter ibid. R1-841 Dowdeswell to Rockingham 24 July 1767) quoted Brooke op. cit. pp. 213-6.

It can be concluded that if the negotiations of July 1767 foundered on matters of principle the unconscious pressure of mercantile opinion was at least important in maintaining the principles it had helped to evolve.

D) THE BREACH WITH BEDFORD AND GRENVILLE.

The sequel to the failure of the negotiations with the Bedford Whigs was their entry into the administration in December 1767 and a definite rupture between them and the Rockinghams and also between the Rockinghams and Grenville. With the failure of the negotiations of July 1767 Rockingham left London for Yorkshire and remained there for most of the time during the summer and autumn of 1767. During this time relations between him and Newcastle were not close. Newcastle felt that Rockingham had needlessly broken off the negotiations with the Bedford Whigs because of Conway and that it would be impossible for Rockingham to form an administration, in the circumstances then existing, without the support of Bedford and Grenville. Newcastle saw Lord Frederick Cavendish on 27 September 1767 who agreed with him that Rockingham could form no administration without an alliance with the Bedford Whigs but who also believed that Conway was essential to such an administration as "the only man that can keep down George Grenville and prevent him being minister". Upon this matter Newcastle violently disagreed with him. Prior to this on 29 August, Newcastle had seen Burke who had explained to him

175. See above p.516 and also B.M. Add. Mss. 32985 ff214-5 Newcastle to Lord Frederick Cavendish 25 September 1767; ibid. f253 Newcastle to Albemarle 28 September 1767. Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 295-6.

176. Ibid. f253 Newcastle to Albemarle 26 September 1767. Contact between the Cavendishes and Conway was very close at this time. See ibid. f136 Frederick Cavendish to Newcastle 19 September 1767 where Cavendish records going to visit Goodwood with Conway. The Cavendishes were also at Wentworth during October and probably in September too. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32986 f63 Portland to Newcastle 20 October 1767, thus Rockingham had closer contact with Conway than Newcastle.

that Rockingham was "in honour" committed to see that Conway
 177
 had an important share of office.

On 1 October, Rockingham, back in London temporarily, wrote to Newcastle discussing their difference of opinion. He stated

"I should think the first step among ourselves is to fix firmly in our minds, what were and what I hope and trust are, the fundamental principles on which we have acted, I must beg to lay stress on Principles in the plural number because I think the publick are very near equally interested in our adherence to the same line of conduct we have always held against the power of Lord Bute, and also in the prevention of the return of power into the hands of one who when minister, had his measures opposed by us, and when we were ministers those measures were corrected much to the publick security and advantage." 178

A meeting between Rockingham and Newcastle to compose their differences followed this letter but it does not appear to have been very successful. Albemarle visited Bedford at Woburn
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 again about this time but all that could be agreed upon was "opposition upon proper points to this Bute administration and no sort of connection or correspondence with the present
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 ministers."

Professor Ritcheson notes the growing division in the ranks of the Old Whigs at this time. He states

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177. See above p509 and also B.M.Add.Mss.32984 f358 Newcastle to Albemarle 29 August 1767.
178. B.M.Add.Mss.32985 f307 Rockingham to Newcastle 1 October 1767. Rockingham also stated these principles to Dowdeswell. See W.W.M.R1-857 Rockingham to Dowdeswell 9 September 1767 (copy at R9-1) He had come south for the two race meetings at Newmarket and visited London between them. See Brooke op.cit. pp. 315-316.
179. B.M.Add.Mss.32985 f343 et seq Newcastle to Bessborough 4 October 1767.
180. Ibid. f358 Newcastle to Albemarle 5 October 1767.

"The old corps, Newcastle, Portland and Albemarle looked nostalgically to the days when a united Whig party held sway. They strongly desired an alliance with Bedford and with Grenville should that be possible. Control of the group had however passed from their hands and now rested with the "boys" led by Rockingham, Burke and Dowdeswell. Rockingham was not sanguine for an alliance built on so negative a ground as mere hatred of Bute. Indeed he declared himself unwilling to treat the King's Friends harshly, and in fact he coveted their support should he come again to power. Underlying the reluctance to draw nearer to the opposition groups, however, was a consideration which the old corps could not be expected to understand. The "boys" feared that a Bedford alliance would draw them closer to Grenville whom they detested."

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and concludes

"It was Rockingham's insistence - quixotic to the old corps - upon viewing his party as founded on principle and a community of interest which took precedence over the love of office."

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Yet Rockingham's statement of principles at this time and his adherence to the policy initiated by the first Rockingham administration shows that he was, at this time, far more aware of and far more susceptible to the presence of outside influence on the party than Newcastle was, and the bulk of this external pressure, as Rockingham must have realised, was mercantile. Newcastle, as during the negotiations, appears to have been preoccupied with the desire to gain power again, and early in

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October he was trying to negotiate with Grenville. However, he was not the only member of the Rockinghams who was discontented with their leader's policy. Albemarle and Charles Yorke

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supported Newcastle's point of view but Richmond supported an

180. Ritcheson op. cit. p. 103

181. Ibid. pp. 104-5.

182. B. M. Add. Mss. 32986 fl Newcastle to Mansfield 15 October 1767.

183. Brooke op. cit. p. 297.

alliance with Grafton and the existing administration. In a letter to Rockingham on 4 October 1767 he put forward, in a series of rhetorical questions, his reasons for doing this, asking among other things;

"Have the present ministry any favourite measures in view to which they require your compliance? Have the Bedfords none as to America, and are their notions of trade and foreign affairs likely to be submitted to your Lordship particularly Mr. Grenville's....I come now (and it is time) to my last question which I think is a very material one. Will you be most likely to carry with you your friends in the City and those who are attached to you from principle and opinion when you joyn with the Bedfords and Grenvilles, or with the Duke of Grafton and Conway? "

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Rockingham was thus not the only one of the party's leaders to consider the value of mercantile support. Richmond had, however, reached different conclusions from Rockingham. The latter saw him on 9 October but could not satisfy him and Richmond promptly withdrew from politics until 1769. Rockingham held back from Richmond's solution partly because of his suspicion of the influence of Bute in the existing administration and because, while wary of Grenville, he did not wish to lose touch with Conway. Rockingham would not join the administration without the Bedfords, and this policy prevailed. He had at least reached a rational and consistent conclusion, and would not purchase the support of the Bedfords, by giving the lead in a new administration to Grenville; he would not sacrifice all he had fought for in the past, for power.

184. W.W.M.R1-863 Richmond to Rockingham 4 October 1767 quoted Brooke op.cit. pp. 297-9.

185. W.W.M.R1-869 Rockingham to Dowdeswell 9 November 1767; see Brooke op.cit. p. 301.

186. Ibid. p. 307.

187. Winstanley op.cit. pp. 181-182.

Uptil November 1767 tentative efforts continued to be made particularly by Newcastle, Albemarle and the Keppels, ¹⁸⁸ to cement an alliance with the Bedford Whigs. By 20 October 1767 Portland was able to tell Newcastle that after a meeting of a number of his supporters at Wentworth, Rockingham no longer insisted on Conway holding high office and was willing ¹⁸⁹ to give Grenville cabinet rank. When Conway attempted to enlist Lord Edgcumbe's support for the administration and the Rockinghams eventually learned of this Conway definitely ceased ¹⁹⁰ to be an obstacle to an alliance with the Bedford Whigs. Rockingham, however, still refused to be drawn into an alliance with the Bedford Whigs and join in a ministry in which Grenville ¹⁹¹ might have a major part.

Rockingham was still making the same mistake that he had been making all the time in believing that it was Grenville who initiated the policies of the Bedford Whigs. ^{192.} No small part of Rockingham's suspicion of Grenville must be attributed to his recognition of the value of the support of the merchants and their declared hostility to Grenville's policies. Strangely enough when Keppel complained to Newcastle that Grenville was the chief stumbling block to an alliance with the Bedford

188. Brooke op. cit. pp. 302-7, 315-318.

189. B. M. Add. Mss. 32986 f63 Portland to Newcastle 20 October 1767. For the meeting at Wentworth see Brooke op. cit. p. 318 who says it took place in September. Dowdeswell, Lord John Cavendish, Portland and Burke attended the meeting. Dartmouth was invited but did not come. Newcastle was not invited. See Brooke op. cit. p. 315 n. 1.

190. B. M. Add. Mss. 32986 f244 Newcastle to Princess Amelia 4 November 1767. Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 310-311.

191. Ritcheson op. cit. p. 106. Cf. W. W. M. R1-861 Rockingham to Portland 15 September 1767 quoted Albemarle op. cit. Vol. II, pp. 57-59.

Whigs, Newcastle stated that he was as averse to Grenville
193
holding high office as any member of the Rockingham Whigs.

It was thus perhaps, in no small measure, due to the influence of the merchants that when Parliament met on 24 November 1767 all that was agreed upon between the Bedfords and the Rockinghams was "opposition upon proper points to the present administration". Bedford and the leaders of the Rockingham party did not even meet in London on the eve of the
194
session. Newcastle was hoping at this time to discuss the American situation with Rockingham for in a memorandum docketed "Heads for Lord Rockingham" he writes

"The conduct of the colonies upon the last Act of Parliament, to take from them the power of passing any Act, until they had complied with the last Act of Parliament about quartering the troops." 195

When Parliament opened Dowdeswell attempted to amend the Address regretting there was no mention in the King's speech of measures to increase trade. The Rockinghams thus hoped to demonstrate that they meant opposition and they hoped that this was a topic on which all opposition groups could unite,
196
Bedford having ^{been} given prior information of the motion.

192. Brooke op. cit. p. 317.

193. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f37 Admiral Keppel to Newcastle 19 November 1767; ibid. f49 Newcastle to Keppel 19 November 1767. In all his efforts to make Rockingham compose his differences with Bedford, Newcastle had often during the summer and autumn concealed or reinterpreted Bedford's words. See for instance Winstanley op. cit. p. 183 n. 4.

194. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f49 Newcastle to Keppel 19 November 1767. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 186-187.

195. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f55 Heads for Lord Rockingham 20 November 1767. For this Act see Miller op. cit. p. 248.

196. Brooke op. cit. p. 321. Cf. W. W. M. R1-865 Newcastle to Albe~~m~~arle (copy) 24 November 1767.

Dowdeswell was vehemently attacked by Grenville who stated that it was necessary to enforce the superiority of Great Britain over the colonies, and said "turning his eyes towards Mr. Dowdeswell" that some people thought otherwise and he could never support them in power or co-operate with them. The reason for Grenville's full-blooded attack would seem to be that Bedford had passed on to him a rumour that he had heard, that Rockingham had told the Duke of Bridgewater that he would never sit in the ~~same~~ cabinet as George Grenville. Onslow in reporting the debate to Newcastle tried to play down Grenville's attack for he merely stated that whereas Burke and Wedderburn had supported Dowdeswell warmly, Grenville "said little or nothing for him". Rockingham was, however, more perturbed. He wrote to Newcastle

"It is remarkable that Mr. Dowdeswell confining himself to the exact line on N(orth) A(merica) affairs which had been approved of by those who met at your Grace's on the memorable Tuesday night should find no friend of the D(uke) of Bedford's willing to rise to check the ardour of Mr. G(eorge) G(renville). Mr. Grenville's expressions were strong indeed and he lamented that any man must move (that) a member of Parliament should hold such doctrines as Mr. Dowdeswell had held and (he) declared that he never had nor never would concur in any system or arrangement of administration formed with such ideas."

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197. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f113 "The substance of what it is supposed Mr. Grenville said in his two speeches" 24 November 1767.
198. See Winstanley op. cit. p. 321. Cf. The Grenville Papers Vol. IV, p. 234. Brooke op. cit. p. 321 n. 4 quoting Memoirs and Correspondence of George Lord Lyttleton ed. R. J. Phillimore, London 1865, pp. 734-741.
199. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f103 Onslow to Newcastle 24 November 1767.

He continued by saying that now the Bedfords must be called upon to explain their conduct and there must be either a thorough-going alliance or a complete breach with them as a ²⁰⁰ result.

Newcastle was therefore instructed at a meeting of the Rockingham Whig leaders on 25 November 1767 to ask Bedford for an explanation of Grenville's conduct and why his supporters had failed to support Dowdeswell's motion. ²⁰¹ The day after this meeting Newcastle wrote to Sir William Baker, explaining that he was unable to see him the previous day because of the meeting of the Rockingham Whigs, indicating what the meeting had decided and despairing of any alliance with the Bedfords. ²⁰² This letter makes it clear that Newcastle had previously discussed the Bedford alliance with Baker, but it is nowhere recorded what Baker's sentiments on the matter were.

Rockingham hoped that the meeting would produce " a final and decisive issue" to the attempted alliance with the Bedford Whigs ²⁰³ "rather than a superficial healing". It did. In spite

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200. Ibid. f87. Rockingham to Newcastle 24 November 1767. This letter was written in the early hours of 25 November. The Tuesday mentioned is Tuesday 21 July 1767. See above p.505.
201. Brooke op. cit. pp. 320-321. Winstanley op. cit. p. 321 n.4.
202. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f125 Newcastle to Sir William Baker 25 November 1767.
203. Ibid. f109 Rockingham to Newcastle 25 November 1767.

of Newcastle's efforts to pour oil on troubled waters, Rockingham after Newcastle's meeting with Bedford, regarded any prospect of an alliance with the Bedfords at an end. By 29 November 1767 the Bedfords were negotiating with the Chatham administration
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and by 17 December they had joined the government.

Rockingham may be blamed for causing the final break-down of the negotiations because he refused to give an explanation
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of his rumoured remark to the Duke of Bridgewater. He seems to have despaired long before this time, as the evidence presented above shows, of making an effective alliance with the Bedford Whigs. Grenville's attack on the Rockinghams' American policy must only have confirmed his opinion, that the alliance with the Bedfords was hopeless. He must have realised that the merchants who had been so valuable a support to him when in power would not support such an alliance, particularly after Grenville's declaration in the House of Commons which no doubt would soon have become well-known among them. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that he made virtually no attempt to patch up the quarrel after 24 November 1767 and the evidence suggests that the reconciliation meeting on 26 November was not
206
pressed for by Rockingham. Thus mercantile pressure and

204. Brooke op. cit. p. 324, Winstanley op. cit. pp. 191-193.

205. Winstanley op. cit. pp. 189-191. Newcastle did attempt to explain away as rumour, or said in temper, Rockingham's supposed words about not consenting to serve with Grenville at his meeting with Bedford on 26 November. Bedford, however, called for a personal explanation from Rockingham. See B.M. Add. Mss. 32931 f289 et seq (misplaced document in a volume for 1761) "Substance of what passed this morning with the Duke of Bedford" 26 November 1767 where it is stated that Bedford said Grenville made a second attack on the Rockinghams' American policy on 25 November, far worse than the first.

influence must indirectly bear some responsibility for the failure of the Rockinghams to join the administration in July 1767 and to form an alliance with the Bedfords from July until November 1767. The mercantile alliance of the first Rockingham administration was still affecting Rockingham and the Rockingham Whigs. It appears to have had very little effect on Newcastle but, as shown above, his ideas and influence were of little significance in the development of the policy of the party at this time.

Yet for the Rockinghams the failure of the negotiations had a sting in its tail. On 3 December 1767 West reported to Newcastle that Camden had said that it was impossible for "Stamp Men" and "No Stamp Men" to agree. ²⁰⁷ Because they did not agree the "Stamp Men" had joined the administration and the failure of the Rockinghams to join the administration meant that even though Charles Townshend was by this time dead, the opposition to his duties met a sterner resistance than the opposition to the Stamp Act did during the first Rockingham administration. It may be asked whether Rockingham realised that by refusing to join the administration and by refusing to make an alliance with the Bedford Whigs he was indirectly forcing the government into a sterner policy towards America. ²⁰⁸

206. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 ff87-88 Rockingham to Newcastle 24 November 1767 (written in early hours of 25 November). Ibid f109-110 Rockingham to Newcastle 25 November 1767; ibid f119 Rockingham to Newcastle 26 November 1767. Rockingham wanted to call on Bedford for an explanation of his conduct, he did however draw up with the other Whig leaders the Paper that Newcastle showed to Bedford on 26 November 1767. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32931 f289 (misplaced document) "Substance of what passed this morning with the Duke of Bedford 26 November 1767."

On the other hand as the Rockingham Whigs failed to make an alliance with another political party and were becoming condemned to opposition they were gradually forced to seek a wider basis for their political support. This led, in succeeding years, to the strengthening of some of the mercantile ties formed during the first Rockingham administration and as Professor Ritcheson states

"Rockingham's conception of party was thus taking on a surprisingly modern tone. While the old corps poured out a stream of advice, threats and entreaties he was writing to Dowdeswell of Newcastle's hurries and Impatience and want of Steadiness to adhere strictly to....one of the Fundamental Principles on which we have acted." 209

He continues by saying that although Rockingham's policy condemned the party to long years in opposition, he saved the party as an independent unit, and allowed/^{it}to develop in a modern style, seeking a far wider base for its support. The 210 inspiration for this wider support was the merchants, the allies that the administration had found during the Stamp Act Crisis.

207. B. M. ADD. Mss. 32987 ff149-150 West to Newcastle 3 December 1767.

208. Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 332-333.

209. W. W. M. R1-860 Rockingham to Dowdeswell 14 September 1767.

210. Ibid. Ritcheson op. cit. pp. 106 - 7.

210. Ibid. pp. 106 - 7.

(E) THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1768.

From the point of view of this thesis the Parliamentary business that was transacted after November 1767 and before the general election of March 1768 is of little importance. In this period Newcastle seems to have made only one effort to muster his mercantile following for a parliamentary division and this was on a purely local affair of a Surrey ^{211.} turnpike road. When the East India Company came under discussion again in Parliament the Rockingham Whigs made no attempt to rally their mercantile²¹² following. Most of the party leaders were now becoming preoccupied with preparations for the forthcoming general election.

Rockingham had retired to Yorkshire following the failure of the negotiations of July 1767 and on his travels through the county one would suspect that he met his mercantile friends and that politics were discussed. There are, among his papers, two letters, one from a merchant in Manchester and another from Lancaster, thanking Rockingham for gifts of venison for the ²¹³ entertainment of the town corporations. In making these gifts Rockingham must have had in mind the support he had received from these places during the first Rockingham administration, the need for continued mercantile support, and the forthcoming

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211. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f266 Newcastle to Thomas Pelham 13 December 1767. ibid. f278 "Letters wrote this day" 14 December 1767.
212. Ibid. f296 Rockingham to Newcastle 16 December 1767; B. M. Add. Mss. 32988 f21 West to Hurd's 15 January 1768.
213. W. W. M. R1853 Robert Hyde to Rockingham 2 September 1767; ibid. R1-865 John Bowes to Rockingham 21 October 1767. Lancaster can be placed in a special category at this time as preparations for the impending election had already commenced there.

general election, in which for Rockingham, Lancaster was to figure so strongly.

Another merchant with whom Rockingham was in contact at this time was John Milnes, the Wakefield woollen manufacturer, who had been important at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis. At this time Milnes seems to have been consulting Rockingham concerning a debt that Milnes had owing to him through trade with Portugal, and for which he was unable to secure repayment. Rockingham seems to have taken a personal interest in the problem for there are endorsements in his hand on the documents
214
concerned. As Rockingham had been in contact with Milnes on political affairs at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis and there is no letter from Milnes to Rockingham extant explaining the Portugese debt affair it is logical to assume that the two met and it is likely that politics were discussed if the state of Milnes' trade was under consideration. Rockingham may have contemplated taking some political action with regard to Milnes' trade later in the year, for on 21 December he wrote to Newcastle

"Lord Hardwicke dined with me today and says he will pay you a visit in the holidays. I think he approves that some notice should be taken after the meeting of Parliament both of the augmentation of the army in Ireland and also some enquiry into the state of the Portugal trade.

Charles Yorke called after dinner and means to see Mr. Dowdeswell and Burke on these subjects again during the recess." 215.

214. For this affair see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 230-232. The documents referred to there as W.W.M. R27-30 have since been re-arranged and are now W.W.M. R1-794. There is no personal letter from Milnes to Rockingham but the first document is a letter from Edward Hay in Portugal to John Milnes dated 31 May 1767. From the date of this document

Burke and Newcastle appear to have been more active than Rockingham during the summer months. As early as 10 May 1767 Abraham Rawlinson had approached Burke with the suggestion that the latter should stand for Lancaster in the next general election and Burke must have spent some time considering the situation and talking the matter over with Rockingham and possibly with Rawlinson too although he does not appear to have gone to Lancaster during the summer of 1767 and there is no record that Rawlinson visited Burke.

After the Rockingham administration fell from power in July 1766 correspondence and contact between Rawlinson and Burke lapsed. It was re-opened by Burke who wrote to Rawlinson on 31 January 1767. Rawlinson replied in March 1767 with a letter which made it quite clear that he regarded the Rockingham Whigs as the only party who could pay regard to commercial affairs and entered into a detailed criticism of the commercial measures of the first Rockingham administration.

Burke was thus maintaining contact with a merchant with whom he had been associated during the first Rockingham administration. That this contact was worthwhile was shown by

214. (contd) it is logical to assume that Rockingham was dealing with the affair in the summer of 1767.

215. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f374 Rockingham to Newcastle 21 December 1767. There is no evidence in the Commons Journals or Lords Journal that Parliament devoted any time to trade with Portugal after Christmas 1767 and before the general election of 1768.

216. W. W. M. Bk 1-76 Rawlinson to Burke 10 May 1767; See above p502.

217. This letter is missing see Copeland and Smith, op. cit. p. 375 but is referred to in the letter from Rawlinson to Burke 23 March 1767 (W. W. M. Bk 1-69.)

218. W. W. M. Bk 1-69 Rawlinson to Burke 23 March 1767 quoted above p. 445-446.

Rawlinson's words; the merchants were coming to rely on the Rockingham Whigs. By March 1767 at least one important merchant was regarding the Rockingham Whigs as the only party that represented the mercantile interests, and when Rawlinson asked Burke to stand for Lancaster in May 1767 it may have seemed a triumph for Burke's political ideas for it looked as if the claim that the Rockingham Whigs represented trade put forward in A Short Account of a Late Short Administration ²¹⁹ was being justified and accepted by the merchants.

When Rawlinson approached Burke he said that the Lancaster merchants wanted a representative who understood commercial problems and who would promote the interest of the merchants and the manufacturers. Burke was gaining a reputation for being able to speak for the commercial classes. Yet he did not stand. Burke seems to have withdrawn because at Wendover he had a safe seat but at Lancaster, a thriving commercial centre, he would have to undergo an expensive contest with Sir George Warren, the government candidate, who spent ²²⁰ lavishly. Loyalty to his party also seems to have been a factor, probably the chief, in dissuading Burke from standing, for when Burke visited Rockingham at Wentworth and discussed his candidacy he found Rockingham antagonistic. Rockingham

219. Burke Works Vol. II, p. 4.

220. Cone op. cit. pp. 153-160. Cf. Burke to Charles O'Hara 27 October 1767 printed Burke Correspondence Vol. I, ed. Copeland p. 330.

appeared to feel that Burke's candidacy at Lancaster would be resented by the Cavendishes who might look on this as their province and expressed the wish that the party should be spared a struggle in the north-west. ²²¹ Burke's decision not to stand was clinched when he visited the borough although he never ²²² specified his reasons.

Perhaps this incident is an apt commentary on the relations between the Rockingham Whigs and the merchants in 1767. The preferences of the merchants were still subordinate to claims of leadership by birth, political expediency, and questions of party discipline. Although they were willing to encourage and use mercantile support to perform a task set before them the Rockingham Whigs were not willing to go out of their way to cultivate mercantile support.

Newcastle was the most active of the three statesmen in keeping in contact with the American mercantile interest upon election affairs for he regarded the general election as being of the utmost importance. On 12 November 1767 he wrote to Admiral Keppel

"Our plan, in my humble opinion, both in and out of parliament, ought to be that which may best carry the publick with us, and, consequently, be the more likely to be of service to our friends in the choice of the next parliament, for there must ultimately end all our endeavours. It is from the next parliament that this country must be saved, and the cause of those who wish it best supported"²

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221. Cone op. cit. p. 158. The Cavendish interest was based on the estates that the family had inherited from Sir William Lowther.

222. See Cone op. cit. p. 158.

223. B. M. Add. Mss. 32986 f391 Newcastle to Admiral Keppel 12 November 1767 quoted Winstanley op. cit. p. 184 n. 1. Cf. Brooke op. cit. p. 339.

The new Parliament was indeed to take many important decisions particularly with regard to America and in view of Newcastle's opinion of the importance of the election it is not surprising that he was in contact with his mercantile associates, especially those who had been of assistance at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis. He kept in contact with Rockingham throughout the course of the election and discussed the candidature of the party's mercantile adherents with him. On 20 November 1767 in a memorandum headed

"To consult my Lord Rockingham upon the following persons whom I should wish to bring into Parliament if I had room."

Newcastle included the names of Sir William Baker, his son,
224
and Bartholomew Burton.

Newcastle was in touch with Rose Fuller, mainly over election affairs in Sussex. The two seem to have met on 16 August 1767 and although Sussex election affairs appear to

have been the main topic of conversation, commercial affairs may have been discussed, for when Newcastle wrote to Fuller asking him to attend him he stated that he wanted his opinion on other topics besides the Sussex elections, ²²⁵ but by September 1767 Newcastle was suspicious of Rose Fuller and described him as "the Duke of Grafton's friend". This was possibly because Fuller had voted against the reduction of the Land Tax and seemed to be supporting the Chatham administration even if he had assumed a pro-Rockinghamite attitude over the Townshend Duties. These suspicions, however, do seem eventually to have been allayed. ²²⁶ Another "City friend" with whom Newcastle was in contact over Sussex election affairs was ²²⁷ Bartholomew Burton. Newcastle was also trying

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225. B. M. Add. Mss. 32984 f120 Newcastle to Rose Fuller 30 July 1767. Ibid f137 Rose Fuller to Newcastle, 1 August 1767.
226. B. M. Add. Mss. 32985 f13 Newcastle to Mansfield 4 September 1767. See also ibid. f94 Newcastle to John Norris 14 September 1767, ibid. f353 Newcastle to Thomas Pelham 5 October 1767; B. M. Add. Mss. 32986 f428 Newcastle to Norris 14 November 1767. Cf. above p. 467 and p. 485. See also Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p. 479. For a more favourable view see B. M. Add. Mss. 32989 f202 John Norris to Newcastle 18 March 1768.
227. B. M. Add. Mss. 32984 f126 Bartholomew Burton to Newcastle 31 July 1767. Newcastle was in contact with Burton again in

unsuccessfully to procure a living for the son of John Bristow
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 one of his old City associates, and was depending upon the
 help of the merchants Peter Burrell and Sir George Colebrooke
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 in the Sussex elections. Newcastle met Sir George Colebrooke
 and Arnpld Nesbit on 30 August and election affairs appear to
 have been again discussed although Newcastle was again suspi-
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 cious of their allegiance. In Sussex also, at Shoreham, Newcastle
 was endeavouring to assist the East India merchant, Peregrine
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 Cust.

Newcastle was also in touch with Sir William Baker who
 was incapacitated and recovering (from the effects of a paralytic
 stroke) at Bath. There was some discussion between Newcastle
 and John White whether Sir William Baker's son, William Baker,
 232
 should stand for Parliament at Retford in the 1768 election.

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227. (contd) September. See B.M.Add.Mss.32985 f88 Newcastle to Mansfield 14 September 1767.
228. Ibid. f189 Newcastle to the Dean of Lincoln 6 August 1767; ibid. f223 Dean of Lincoln to Newcastle 15 August 1767. John Bristow M.P. (1701-68) a merchant chiefly interested in the Portugal trade and the South Sea Company had been consulted by Newcastle on financial affairs and was regarded as a Newcastle supporter. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. I, pp. 118-119.
229. B.M.Add.Mss.32984 f210 Richard Turner to Newcastle 7 August 1767; ibid. f218 Newcastle to the Duke of Dorset 8 August 1767. Peter Burrell (1723-1775) was a London merchant and an erratic Newcastle supporter. For him see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 160-163. For Colebrooke see above p. 133. Richard Turner in his letter of 7 August 1767 mentions a Mr. Amyand in the same sentence as Burrell. This cannot be Sir George Amyand the City financier upon whom Newcastle had relied so often (see Namier Structure of Politics pp 55-56) for he died in 1766 and his son John was only sixteen years old at this time (see Judd op. cit. p. 104) and could be either Claudius Amyand (1718-1774) who had left Parliament in 1756 (ibid. p. 104) or ~~whom~~ whom I have been unable to trace any connections or George Amyand (1748-1819) son of Sir George who changed his name to Cornewall on marriage in 1771. See Judd op. cit. p. 160 also The Complete Baronetage

Eventually at this election Sir William Baker retired and his son William Baker replaced him as the member for Plympton Erle. Newcastle arranged this with Lord Mount Edgcumbe.

As on earlier occasions Newcastle regarded the Dissenters as important and was intent on gaining their support. After a Sussex election meeting he wrote to John White

"I knew you would like I should have the approbation of everybody and not less of the Honest Protestant Dissenters The Presbyterian Minister, after I had spoke turned to our first man amongst the dissenters and said, My Lord Chatham could not have spoke better. The other replied not from the heart as this man does." 234

229. (contd) Vol. V, 1707-1800 p. 1 under Amyand.
230. B. M. Add. Mss. 32985 f5 Newcastle to Thomas Pelham 3 September 1767. Arnold Nesbit (1721-1779) was a London merchant who owned plantations in the West Indies. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 194-195.
231. B. M. Add. Mss. 32986 f362 Newcastle to Richard Tonson 11 November 1767. See also B. M. Add. Mss. 32985 f391 Newcastle to Admiral Keppel 12 November 1767. Cust was eventually elected see B. M. Add. Mss. 32989 f201 Henry Robinson to Newcastle 18 March 1768. For Cust see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 291-293.
232. B. M. Add. Mss. 32985 f202 Sir William Baker to Newcastle 23 September 1767; ibid. f278 Newcastle to Sir William Baker 29 September 1767; ibid. f238 Newcastle to White 3 October 1767. William Baker Junior (1743-1824) was eventually to enter Parliament as member for Plympton Erle in 1768, the borough for which his father had sat until that time and to become a staunch supporter of the Rockingham Whigs. For him see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 138-142. For Burton and Baker see also B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 fb3 Memoranda "To consult my Lord Rockingham upon the following Persons whom I should wish to bring into Parliament if I had room" 20 November 1767. For Baker's political career see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, pp. 42-43
233. See B. M. Add. Mss. 32988 f411 Sir William Baker to Newcastle 29 February 1768; B. M. Add. Mss. 32989 f7 Newcastle to Lord Mount Edgcumbe 1 March 1768; ibid. f227 Newcastle to Lord George Cavendish 20 March 1768. Cf. Judd op. cit. p. 110.
234. B. M. Add. Mss. 32984 f330 Newcastle to John White 25 August 1767. For other occasions when Newcastle regarded the Dissenters as important see above pp. 48-52.

At this time also the Duke of Portland was endeavouring to persuade Newcastle to use influence with the dissenters to gain the support of John Cookson, a dissenting London linen draper who possessed considerable influence in Lancashire and Westmoreland, and on 5 October 1767 Newcastle recorded entering some dissenting ministers to dinner.

In March 1768 Newcastle again became concerned with the Dissenters. On 5 March he wrote to William Dowdeswell asking him to write to a dissenting minister, Dr. Stennet, in order to gain the assistance of the dissenters in Gloucestershire. It is not clear why Newcastle wanted Dowdeswell to write to Stennet for he already knew Stennet himself. In the same month Newcastle was trying to gain support of the dissenters at Lewes in order to win the election there. He endeavoured to get the dissenters to put pressure on the Sussex dissenters.

In November 1767 both Rockingham and Newcastle became

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235. B.M. Add. Mss. 32985 ff3-4 Portland to Newcastle 2 September 1767. For Cookson see The Universal Directory London, 1763 Part III, p. 118 where John Cookson of Poultney is listed under the heading Warehousemen and Shopkeepers. According to Portland, Cookson had influence over the dissenters in the north-west through the marriage of his niece to a member of the Torr family of Broughton Towers, Lanca.
236. B.M. Add. Mss. 32985 f358 Newcastle to Albemarle 5 October 1767. For the Dissenters see above Part I, Chapter II.
237. B.M. Add. Mss. 32989 f35 Newcastle to Dowdeswell (no date but probably 5 March 1768) ibid. f153 Thomas Gibbon to Newcastle 12 March 1768. Dowdeswell was anxious to assist George Augustus Selwyn (1719-1791) who was opposed at Gloucester.
238. See Above p.41 and note 239 below. Newcastle wrote to Stennet about the Sussex dissenters on 12 March 1768.
239. B.M. Add. Mss. 32989 f63 Newcastle to Ridge 6 March 1768; ibid. f143 Newcastle to Bailey 10 March 1768; ibid. f139-FII7 Newcastle to Drs. Stennet, Longford, Gibbons and Toller 10 March 1768; ibid. f189 Newcastle to Michell 12 March 1768; ibid. f145 Newcastle to Dr. Stennet 12 March 1768.

involved in election affairs at Lancaster. When Burke refused to stand there the Lancaster merchants pressed Lord John Cavendish to stand. On 10 November Rockingham wrote to Newcastle

"The gentlemen and merchants of Lancaster have prevailed upon Lord John Cavendish to stand there. The zeal and spirit not only in the merchants but even in the much of the majority of the gentlemen who have estates around Lancaster on behalf of Lord John, will I trust ensure success. They mean it as a compliment and a mark of the continuance of that favour and opinion which they considered that administration wherein your Grace and we all acted." 240

and on 9 November to Dowdeswell

"L(or)d John Cavendish is statted at Lancaster. The Neighbouring Gentlemen and Three parts in four of the Merchants have at length prevailed and made him stand. By the delay he has lost some advantage but the zeal and spirit of the Commercial interest will bear down all diffiulties and I hope it is safe." 241

Rockingham, at least, seems to have regarded this event as a result of the first Rockingham administration and its commercial legislation.

This influence of the Lancaster merchants is made clearer by a letter that Lord George Cavendish wrote to Newcastle on the following day in which he said

" A great number of the principal merchants and of the gentlemen of the greatest weight in the neighbourhood of Lancaster would propose John as a candidate for that town...I take the liberty to enclose to Your Grace the names of those at whose advice it was, that John was proposed as candidate. Many of your friends in the City will know many of them to be persons of great weight." 242

240. B. M. Add. Mss. 32986 f330 Rockingham to Newcastle 10 November 1767. For this election see Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. 1, pp. 316-317.

241. W. W. M. R1-869 Rockingham to Dowdeswell 9 November 1767.

242. B. M. Add. Mss. 32986 f355 Lord George Cavendish to Newcastle 11 November 1767. Unfortunately the list mentioned is missing. It appears to have been given to James West. See ibid. f418 Newcastle to Lord John Cavendish 14 November 1767. The list is, however, not to be found in the West Papers.

On receipt of this letter Newcastle used the list to organise support for Lord John Cavendish. James West was sent with it to Newcastle's City friends to put pressure on any one with any influence in Lancaster and the news that Cavendish was standing for Lancaster appears to have created a considerable stir among the supporters of the Rockingham Whigs.

At first things looked most hopeful for Cavendish at Lancaster. On 16 November 1767 James West reported to Newcastle that Lord John Cavendish was sure of a victory and would possibly take Burke in with him as the other member. West also noted that the Quakers, a very influential body at Lancaster, were solidly behind Lord John Cavendish. This, one would suspect, was due to the influence of Abraham Rawlinson. West had gone to the extent of sending to the Customs House to find out which merchants had the largest consignments of goods in London for Lancaster in order that they could be encouraged to influence their correspondents. In a letter to Lord John Cavendish on the following day Newcastle acknowledged the great part that Abraham Rawlinson was playing in these events. He wrote to Rockingham on the same day

"My friend, my good Lord George, has sent me a full account of the Lancaster affair: I most sincerely congratulate your Lordship upon it: for it is the greatest proof of

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243. Ibid. f418 Newcastle to Lord George Cavendish 14 November 1767; B.M. Add. Mss. 32987 ff5-6 Newcastle to Portland 16 November 1767.
244. Ibid. f425 John Norris to Newcastle 'Saturday night' (14 November 1767)
245. Ibid. f1 West to Newcastle 16 November 1767.
246. Ibid. f19 Newcastle to Lord John Cavendish 17 November 1767.

the sense of the principal merchants, and traders of that part of the kingdom, that can be given and must and ought to show everybody in town and country, how much the mercantile part of the nation, (and that is a great and most valuable part of it) approves the conduct of your Lordship's administration." 247

Newcastle as well as Rockingham was now ascribing events at Lancaster to the success of the commercial legislation of the first Rockingham administration.

When Lord John Cavendish wrote to Newcastle on 24 November he was not so optimistic as Newcastle had been. Although he admitted that he was likely to win the election at Lancaster and acknowledged the great help that Abraham Rawlinson had been Cavendish pointed out that his opponents, who had four months start on him, had "engaged all the lower sort of people and spared no expense to keep them firm to them." 248 Burke was active on behalf of Cavendish; he obtained the support of William Reeve, the Bristol merchant who had co-operated with the Rockingham Whigs at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, to engage all the votes he could for Cavendish. 249 Rockingham also was active on behalf of Cavendish, endeavouring to persuade the Manchester merchant Robert Hamilton to help Cavendish and in return soliciting patronage on behalf of Hamilton. 250

247. Ibid. ff15-16 Newcastle to Rockingham 17 November 1767. Cf. f19 Newcastle to Lord John Cavendish 17 November 1767.

248. Ibid. f103 Lord John Cavendish to Newcastle 24 November 1767. The Court candidate at this election was Sir George Warren. He received support from Lord Strange. See ibid. f1 West to Newcastle 16 November 1767; B.M. Add. Mss. 32986 f329 Rockingham to Newcastle 10 November 1767. For this election see The Parliamentary Representation of the Six Northern Counties of England 1603-1886 by W.W. Bean, Hull, 1890 p. 276.

249. B.M. Add. Mss. 32987 f173 Newcastle to Rockingham 5 December 1767; ibid. f198 George Weare, Mayor of Bristol to Newcastle 7 December 1767; ibid. f202 Newcastle to George Weare 8 December 1767 (Cf. copies at W.W.M. R1904-5) Reeve, who

In spite of all the efforts on his behalf, in the middle of March 1767 Lord John Cavendish withdrew from the election at Lancaster, finding that he was bottom of the poll and that an enormous amount of expense was inevitable. He was eventually elected for York, where, after his failure at Lancaster, Rockingham persuaded him to stand and put pressure on the Rockingham Club and the corporation to receive his election. Benjamin Farrar, one of the Yorkshire mercantile witnesses before the Stamp Act Committee appears to have been used by Rockingham as an agent in this election.

Following Cavendish's failure at Lancaster, Rockingham received a letter signed by twenty-three Lancaster merchants among whom was Abraham Rawlinson, regretting the loss of Lord John Cavendish as Parliamentary candidate for the borough.

The other election involving merchants and trade in which Rockingham seems to have been particularly interested was at Liverpool. Here the staunch Rockingham Whig Sir William Meredith had, at a bye-election in 1767, succeeded in bringing in another pro-Rockingham West-Indian merchant and plantent

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249. (contd) was at this time in London, was pressing Newcastle to go to Bristol to receive the Freedom of the City when he next visited Bath. Newcastle, however, declined pleading ill-health.
250. W.W.M. R1-881 Robert Hamilton to Rockingham 23 November 1767; ibid. R1-896 Rockingham to Thomas Ræus 4 December 1767.
251. B.M. Add. Mss. 32989 f191 Lord John Cavendish to Newcastle 16 March 1768.
252. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. II, p. 204.
253. W.W.M. R1-983 a and b. 2 drafts, Rockingham to Charles Turner n.d. ibid. R1-1000 Lord John Cavendish to Rockingham 9/10 March 1768; ibid. R1-1004 Lady Rockingham to Newcastle 18 March 1768; ibid. R1-1013 James Rowe (Lord Mayor of York) to Rockingham. For the Rockingham Club see above p.

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Richard Pénant, as his fellow member and Rockingham was con-
 sulted during the bye-election. In 1768 Meredith and Pénant
 again successfully contested Liverpool. In 1768 Barlow
 Trecothick was also standing for election for the City of
 London. Newcastle seems to have taken an interest in Trecothick's
 election and on 18 December 1767 James West reported to Newcastle
 that "there was a most numerous meeting at the King's Arms
 for Mr. Trecothick." By 17 January, however, West was more
 pessimistic, reporting to Newcastle that Trecothick, Joseph
 Mellish and Bartholomew Burton were unlikely to be in the next
 Parliament. When this occurred Newcastle wrote to Rockingham
 urging him to help these candidates as much as he could. On
 19 January West wrote to Newcastle's amanuensis Hurdis, explain-
 ing Trecothick's unpopularity

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254. B.M. Add. Mss. 32989 f187 Rockingham to Newcastle 16 March 1768; ibid. f191 Lord John Cavendish to Newcastle 16 March 1768; ibid. f175 Lady Rockingham to Newcastle "Tuesday morning" (15 March 1768) in which Farrar is mentioned as a brother-in-law to Sir George Armitage (1734-1783) M.P. for York, a friend of Rockingham's; ibid. f177 Newcastle to Lady Rockingham 15 March 1768 in which Newcastle states he knew Farrar (presumably through the Stamp Act Committee) See above p.382. For the election at York see Brooke op. cit. pp. 347-350.
255. W.W.M. R1-1015 John Bowes and 22 other signatories to Rockingham 20 March 1768.
256. See Namier and Brooke The House of Commons 1754-1790 Vol. I, p. 318 Vol. II, p. 262.
257. W.W.M. R1-876 Sir William Meredith to Rockingham 21 November 1767; ibid. R1-994 Sir William Meredith to Rockingham 2 December 1767.
258. Namier and Brooke op. cit. Vol. II, p. 262.
259. B.M. Add. Mss. 32987 f325 West to Newcastle 18 December 1767.
260. B.M. Add. Mss. 32983 f33 West to Newcastle 17 January 1768; ibid. ff35-36 Newcastle to Rockingham 18 January 1768. Joseph Mellish was another City friend of Newcastle. Burton seems to have retired in 1768. See below p.543 and n. 266.

" I am sorry to tell him (Newcastle) that the opposition to Alderman Trecothick gains great strength from his actions as a friend to the Colonies, in opposition to the trade of Great Britain, which however untrue His Grace too well knows, has the weight in popular elections." 261

On the same topic William Samuel Johnson wrote to William Pitkin

"Experience has shown the utility of moderate measures and every deviation from the former system will, I am persuaded, be found prejudicial to both countries. Some there are who have the same right notions of these matters, amongst whom I may name the worthy Mr. Trecothick, who has very just and clear opinions of the true interest of Britain and her Colonies, and is a friend to America upon principle, as well as by education, though unfortunately for him, those opinions and this friendship are now turned warmly against him. He has offered himself a candidate for the City of London at the approaching election, and is almost every day violently abused in the papers as an enemy to this country, and unfit to represent his fellow citizens, because he received his education at Boston, and has, upon many occasions, espoused the interests of the Colonies. Strange objections these, you will say! especially in the mouths of those who, at the same time insist that members of Parliament which they elect are also the representatives of America. It has, I know, been long the labour of our enemies to render the case of the Colonies unpopular, and they would now, it seems have a friendship for America constitute an odious character in the City of London and render enmity to that country a necessary qualification for a member of Parliament....Surprising as these objections must appear to all unprejudiced observers, yet seconded as they are with warm declarations upon the inimical nature and tendency of the Boston resolves and proceedings with respect to the trade and manufactures of this country, they seem to make unhappy impressions and will, I fear, endanger this gentleman's election." 262

261. Ibid. f49 James West to Thomas Hurdle 19 January 1768.

262. William Samuel Johnson to William Pitkin 12 March 1768, "The Trenchbull Papers" loc. cit. pp. 267-268.

Trecothick's actions on behalf of America had not met with unanimous approval; the interests of the merchants and the colonists were not always synonymous. In spite of this Trecothick was eventually elected for the City and on 24 March Newcastle commented to Richmond

"My Friend, Mr. Alderman Trecothick was with me this evening to notify his election for the City. This is a great point and he will be a very useful man." 263

and in April William Samuel Johnson observed to William Pitkin
264
that Trecothick would be "a useful and very worthy member."

Indeed the Rockingham Whigs had gained an important victory. They had now secured a mercantile leader with distinct American connections in the House of Commons, a mercantile leader of very different characteristics to Sir William Baker who always had close affiliations with finance and administration.

In the same letter in which he recorded Trecothick's unpopularity James West also recorded another example of how he was working on behalf of the mercantile interest of the Rockingham Whigs and strengthening their position. He wrote

"I am sure that he (Newcastle) will be glad to hear that on Sir Samuel Fludyer's death who was to be gov. of the Bank (of England) next year, I have prevailed on his good friend Mr. Burton to take that most important office a second time, the next year; and my friends among the directors and proprietors will support him therein." 265

263. B. M. Add. Mss 32989 f254 Newcastle to Richmond 24 March 1768.

264. William Samuel Johnson to William Pitkin 29 April 1768, "The Trumbull Papers" loc. cit. p. 271.

265. B. M. Add. Mss. 32988 f49 West to Hurdis 19 January 1768. Sir Samuel Fludyer was an American merchant and government contractor. Apparently he did not die until 21 January 1768. See Namier England in the Age of the American Revolution p. 242, n. 2.

This manoeuvre appears to have been unsuccessful for Burton was never governor of the Bank after 1762 and he seems to have retired from politics at the general election of 1768.²⁶⁶

In view of the illustrations given above it can be concluded that Newcastle was very active on behalf of the mercantile supporters of his party during the general election of 1768. This is specially noteworthy as he had supposedly retired from politics in December 1767 after his serious illness in that month.²⁶⁷ It is also significant that a great number of individuals on whose behalf Newcastle was active had been his close associates during the Stamp Act Crisis. Rose Fuller, Barlow Trecothick and Sir William Baker are probably the most outstanding of these. The attempt to support Trecothick and thus gain a City leader for the Rockingham Whigs is particularly important. One should not underestimate Newcastle's influence and importance in 1767 and 1768 as Mr. Brooke seems to do when he writes

"By July 1767 the number of Newcastle's followers had diminished to six; these were the only votes he could command in the House of Commons chosen while he was head of the Treasury and the Crown's chief election agent. Only one remained of his numerous City friends on whom he had depended for advice on commercial and financial business Sir William Baker."

and

"Newcastle suffered badly at the General Election of 1768."²⁶⁸

Newcastle appears to have been reasonably satisfied with the results of the general election of 1768. On 30 March he wrote to the Duke of Portland

266. See Namier and Brooke *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 164.

267. See below p. 545, 268. Brooke *op. cit.* pp. 283, 342.

268. B. M. Add. Mss. 32989 f276 Newcastle to Portland 30 March 1768

"The appearance hitherto of the new Parliament pleases me extremely. There are now above an hundred new members and I think, by the best judgement I can form at present, we shall have a good chance of having a great, if not the greatest part of them." 269

and on 22 March he had written to Rockingham

"The new Parliament, which in general, will be composed of Persons pretty much unknown, will, however, have a very great number of Members of the first Consequence Family and Fortune, entirely attached, where I wish them to be, to my Friend the Marquis of Rockingham. And I think when the Elections are all over, Your Lordship will appear to have such a number of Friends as will give you the greatest weight in Parliament." 270

It may be concluded that the 1768 election was of great importance to the Rockingham Whigs and an election in which they consolidated their position with the mercantile influence. The events that had occurred during the first Rockingham administration were clearly of lasting significance.

269. (contd) quoted Brooke op. cit. p. 350. For an analysis of how the new members voted on particular occasions see Brooke op. cit. pp. 351-353.

270. W. W. M. R1-1018 Newcastle to Rockingham 22 March 1768.

(F) THE RETIREMENT AND DEATH OF NEWCASTLE.

271

After his serious illness in December 1767 and even while the preparations for the General Election of 1768 were coming to a climax, Newcastle made up his mind to retire finally from politics. He seems to have first announced his intention in a letter to Lord Mansfield on 20 December 1767. In this letter Newcastle stated that because of his health and age he had long wished to retire from politics but had not been able to see the way he could do this because it would have meant "abandoning quite the interest of the publick and the cause of my friends." Now, however, he felt that

" the great reputation he (Rockingham) has gained, both during his short administration and since, the high esteem he certainly is in with the most considerable people and bodies of men in this country, the great number of them who will certainly follow him, have made me choose, My Lord Rockingham, as the person upon whom I could most safely depend, for the support of the true interest of this country and the most unparalleled Friendship, regard and confidence which he has show'd me.... "

Newcastle therefore had determined to retire from politics and allow Rockingham to manage his political affairs.

272

In two letters after this Newcastle endeavoured to make his supporters aware of his retirement. The first of these

271. Cf. Brooke op. cit. p. 345; Winstanley op. cit. p. 202.

272. B. M. Add. Mss. 32987 f363 Newcastle to Mansfield 30 December 1767. It is interesting to note that Newcastle states in this letter that he had received a private undertaking from Rockingham that he would consult Mansfield if necessary Mansfield was Rockingham's uncle and he had often advised him in his youth. See Collyer "The Rockinghams and Yorkshire Politics 1742-1761" loc. cit. p. 352.

letters was to James West, whom Newcastle instructed to inform his City friends and those members of the House of Lords who supported him, of his decision and to ask them to give their support to Rockingham. It is interesting to note that Barlow Trecothick was mentioned specifically together with Bartholomew Burton and Joseph Mellish even though Trecothick was not yet in Parliament. The second letter was to Thomas Pelham and gave him the same instructions with regard to Newcastle's Sussex supporters. In two letters shortly after this West reported his compliance with Newcastle's instructions.

In spite of his decision to retire from politics Newcastle, as noted above, played a full part in the 1768 election campaign and as late as 8 February 1768 he was engaged in marshalling votes to support ^{Sir} George Savile's Nullum Tempus Bill. Although Newcastle scarcely ever attended the House of Lords after December 1767 he does seem to have continued to be quite active politically, and also acted as an elder statesman giving the party advice. In August 1768 he was concerned with questions of patronage, for on 23 August he wrote to Sir George Colebrooke asking him to secure a friend of Thomas Pelham a position in the East India Company. Indeed

273. B. M. Add. Mss. 32988 f23 Newcastle to West 16 January 1768.

274. Ibid. f25 Newcastle to Thomas Pelham 16 January 1768.

275. Ibid. f33 West to Newcastle 17 January 1768; ibid. f48 West to Hurdis 19 January 1768.

276. Ibid. f232 Newcastle to West 8 February 1768. The Nullum Tempus Bill was occasioned by the controversy between the Duke of Portland and Sir James Lowther over Inglewood Forest. See Winstanley op. cit. pp. 205-209, Brooke op. cit. pp. 243-247.

277. See List of Lords present in Lords Journals Vol. XXXII

in January 1768 Newcastle wrote to Rockingham that he had been reproached for his interference in public affairs after he had declared that he had resigned. ²⁷⁸ In fact he was very anxious that Rockingham should come to power again, and saw Sir George Savile as a potential leader for the administration in the ²⁷⁹ House of Commons.

Newcastle regretted the hostility of Rockingham to the Grenvilleites for he felt that no administration could be formed without their assistance. ²⁸⁰ He had debates reported to him and seems to have been particularly interested in the speeches of his former mercantile associates, men like William Baker and Barlow Trecothick, although it is not clear whether he was more interested in the subject matter than the speaker. On 19 May 1768 West reported to Newcastle that when the riots in London associated with Wilkes were being discussed, William Baker had spoken and that

"Alderman Tregothick gave an account of the state of the seamen and the fear and dread of the merchants on that account." ²⁸¹

Newcastle also entertained the relatives of his former City associate, Sir Joshua Vanneck, who were now becoming

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277. (contd) 1768-1770 pp. 3-162. Newcastle attended the House of Lords on 24 November 1767. After that he only attended once more on 13 September 1768 to take the oaths for the new session of Parliament. For the patronage question see B. M. Add. Mss. 32991A f21 Newcastle to Sir George Colebrooke 23 August 1768.
278. W. W. M. R1-957 Newcastle to Rockingham 27 January 1768.
279. B. M. Add. Mss. 32990 f39 Newcastle to Rockingham 5 May 1768. Newcastle seems to have been particularly impressed by Savile's promotion of the Nullum Tempus Bill.
280. Ibid. f75 Newcastle to Bessborough 16 May 1768.
281. Ibid. f103 West to Newcastle 19 May 1768, ibid. f107 Matthew

important in politics and he was kept well informed of the activities of other mercantile associates such as Rose Fuller.²⁸³ Newcastle remained in close contact with Rockingham at this time. When Rockingham was away from home this contact was maintained by Lady Rockingham, and the summer of 1768 seems to have been a period when Rockingham and Burke felt they were particularly sure of the support of the mercantile class. Indeed on 18 July 1768 Burke wrote to Rockingham saying that the latter was in a very good position to conduct the government of the kingdom since he had "the confidence of the whole mercantile interest".²⁸⁴

It is quite clear that Rockingham was keeping his finger on the pulse of mercantile opinion for in a letter to Newcastle on 16 April 1768 Rockingham informed him that he intended dining with the Lord Mayor of London and the other City officials on 18 April so that he could find out their political opinions.²⁸⁵

In the last months of Newcastle's life two political problems came to the forefront, John Wilkes and America. John Wilkes had become important again during the Middlesex election of 1768 and in May 1768 the Massacre of St. George's Fields had occurred and had served to keep Wilkes in the centre of the

281. (contd) Fetherstonhaugh to Newcastle 19 May 1768. Trecothick was supporting a petition of the London Merchants on the ~~acts~~ presented at this time. See copy of the petition at W. W. M. R1-1054.

282. B. M. Add. Mss. 32990. f250 Newcastle to Rockingham 28 June 1768. The men referred to are Sir Joshua Vanneck's son and his son-in-law Thomas Walpole.

283. Ibid. f309 Thomas Pelham to Newcastle 15 July 1768. Ibid f370 Thomas Pelham to Newcastle 2 August 1768.

political stage. Wilkes capitalised on the real economic distress of the lower classes and both government and opposition recommended repression of the disorders that he was causing. It is interesting to note that at no time during the 1768 Wilkite disturbances did the Rockinghamites endeavour to win popular approval by supporting Wilkes, and Wilkes does not seem to have been an issue on which the Rockingham Whigs could use the alliance with the mercantile classes to advantage. During the London and Middlesex election the City and its financial community seem to have been predominately hostile to Wilkes although the aged and ailing Sir William Baker seems to have made an effort to take up his cause during the London election.

As far as America was concerned both government and opposition were involved in dealing with the American re-action to the Townshend Duties of 1767. The issues at stake at this time were, in particular, the Boston non-importation agreement and the Massachusetts Circular Letter of 1768 and the riots that the Townshend Revenue Acts had occasioned. Newcastle was not unduly alarmed by these events for on 23 July 1768 he wrote to Rockingham

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284. Ibid. f303 Newcastle to Lady Rockingham 13 July 1768; ibid. f311 Rockingham to Newcastle 17 July 1768. The Correspondence of Edmund Burke Vol. II, ed. L. S. Sutherland, Cambridge 1960, p. 3, Burke to Rockingham 18 July 1768.
285. B. M. Add. Mss. 32989 f342 Rockingham to Newcastle 16 April 1768.
286. See Brooke op. cit. pp. 354-360; Winstanley op. cit. pp. 218-230.
287. Christie op. cit. p. 27; "The Middlesex Election of 1768-1769" by George Rude, English Historical Review Vol. LXXXV, London 1960, p. 609.
288. Brooke op. cit. pp. 365-366; Winstanley op. cit. pp. 232.

"These New England people always were a refractory people; ever since and indeed even in King William's time." 289

As a result of the disturbances in America, Grafton and Hillsborough replaced Sir Jeffrey Amherst, the non-resident governor of Virginia by Lord Botetourt who was expected to reside there and help soothe the refractory colonists. Botetourt was a former adherent of Bute, and the Rockingham Whigs saw in Amherst's replacement not only the removal of a capable and meritorious officer but also the sinister influence of the favourite.²⁹¹

Newcastle not only deplored the policy of the government but he considered it a useful topic for political opposition by the Rockingham Whigs.²⁹² His hopes were raised when it was reported that there was considerable discontent in the City of London with this policy of the government and it seems extremely likely that he may have had some idea of using mercantile discontent to gain popularity for the American policy of the Rockinghams.²⁹³ In June 1768 the "Liberty Incident" took place and the chief victim of the Boston mob was Joseph Harrison, who had been Burke's assistant during the Stamp Act Crisis and for whom, just before he resigned in 1766, Rockingham had secured the position of Collector of Customs for Boston. When news of the incident was received the Rockingham Whigs

289 B. M. Add. Mss. 32990 f340 Newcastle to Rockingham 23 July 1768.

290. Brooke op. cit. pp. 366-368.

291. B. M. Add. Mss. 32990 f389 Newcastle to Rockingham 6 August 1768; Ibid. ff405-407 Rockingham to Newcastle 11 August 1768. Cf. Brooke op. cit. p. 368 et seq. See also W. W. M. R1-1080 Albermarle to Rockingham 2 August 1768.

292. B. M. Add. Mss. 32990 f374 Newcastle to Albermarle 3 August 1768.

293. Ibid. f378 Albermarle to Newcastle 4 August 1768; ibid f389 Newcastle to Rockingham 6 August 1768.

tended to take a much more serious view of events in the colonies, particularly after the report that Harrison sent Rockingham. ²⁹⁴ By 24 August Newcastle was writing to Albemarle

"I wish your Lordship would let me have what particulars you may have picked up relative to the behaviour of our Colonies in America. It is represented very bad. And I am afraid it is so. It is even called a revolt." 295

On 31 July Sir George Savile had written to Rockingham viewing the events in America in the most serious light and on 14 August Dowdeswell did the same. Savile had heard the news about Harrison when he wrote and by 14 August Dowdeswell ²⁹⁶ must certainly have done so, for Rockingham had informed Dowdeswell when he wrote to him on 11 August discussing the ²⁹⁷ dismissal of Amherst and the confusion of American affairs. With regard to the new outburst of American resistance to the authority of the mother country Savile felt that, to some extent, it was inevitable that colonies should rebel and become independent. He wrote:-

"I am afraid these same colonists are above our heads and I am almost ready to think that G(eorge) G(renville)'s Act only brought on a crisis 100 or possibly 50 years sooner than was necessary. This indeed is, regarding Colonies, almost all the ill that can be done, for in

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294. For Harrison and this affair see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 101-128 and my "Joseph Harrison and the Liberty Incident" pp. 585-593. For the Rockinghams' reaction to the Liberty Incident see especially Burke Correspondence Vol. II, p. 11 Rockingham to Burke 11 August 1768.
295. B. M. Add. Mss. 32991A f27 Newcastle to Albemarle 24 August 1768.
296. W. W. M. R1-1077 Sir George Savile to Rockingham 31 July 1768, Dowdeswell Papers, William L. Clements Library, William Dowdeswell to Rockingham 14 August 1768. Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 368-373. Harrison was a personal friend of Savile and he wrote to Savile personally about the "Liberty Incident" see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 111-120.
297. W. W. M. R1-1083 Rockingham to William Dowdeswell 11 August

my opinion, (which may be in this a little singular) it is in the nature of things that some time or other Colonies so situated must assume to themselves the rights of nature and resist those of Law, which is Rebellion. By rights of nature I mean advantages of situation or their natural powers, I am sorry I have confounded Right and power so much." 298

Dowdeswell felt that it was no longer possible to argue for the repeal of American taxation on the grounds of commercial expediency because it was the principle of taxation that the Americans were obviously resisting and he wrote

"It is the duty of the administration to support the government of this country, and obtain the execution of the laws. They are not to suppose resistance. Their case differs from ours in this. We had a real grievance a very heavy tax from which we meant to relieve the colonists. The tax now in question is no heavy burden upon them: and the objections to it should rather come from this side of the water than from theirs. The Ministers have therefore a principle to meet, but no grievance unless the principle of the colonists is right and ours is wrong, a thing not to be admitted by the Administration or by us."

Therefore Dowdeswell could not agree to a repeal of the Townshend Duties unless the Americans submitted to British authority. He continued

"If they (the colonists) submit and make no resistance I should like very well the repeal of C(harles) T(ownshend)'s duties, but they are really too insignificant to be an object either to them or us, and to go further would be in favour of their principle and tend to revive their claim some other day."

He added ominously

"I must however confess to you that I think we shall be soon trying who shall stand most forward in proposing terms of accomodation to end a struggle by which this country, possessed of everything has everything to lose

297 (contd) 1768. It is logical to assume from this letter that the letter of Harrison's sent to Rockingham was the one reporting the "Liberty Incident".

298. W. W. M. R1-1077 Sir George Savile to Rockingham 31 July 1768.

and nothing to get. For a contest with the colonists, supported as they will be by the enemies of this country, must be destructive to us in the first place..."

He concluded

"This leads me to my decision for such moderation. I could find much to say against any dissent that any man could offer: but upon the whole moderate measures are less dangerous, and if we come off at last with a loss those must answer for it who have wantonly and unnecessarily revived the question, and I believe now profess that these duties were laid merely as a test to the Americans...." 299

Both Savile and Dowdeswell now admitted that the American controversy had developed further ^{since} and the Rockingham administration had repealed the Stamp Act. This is significant, for important leaders of the Rockingham Whigs admitted that the situation was no longer static. Both Savile and Dowdeswell took a gloomy view of the situation, both had little to offer Rockingham in the way of a policy and both admitted that the Americans now seemed to be challenging the right of the British Parliament to tax them. In 1768 commercial matters were no longer at the heart of things and Rockingham must have been painfully aware of this when he wrote to Dowdeswell on 11 August and mentioned that the demand from America for Yorkshire ³⁰⁰ woollen goods was "the greatest ever known". In the circumstances in the summer of 1768 the alliance of the Rockinghams with the mercantile classes was not likely to prove valuable. As William Samuel Johnson reported to William Pitt on 30 July

299. Dowdeswell Papers William L. Clements Library, William Dowdeswell to Rockingham 14 August 1768. Quoted Brooke op. cit. pp. 370-372.

300. W. W. M. R1-1083 Rockingham to Dowdeswell 11 August 1768.

"The intelligence relating to the commotions in Boston has been received here with equal concern and indignation. The impressions it at first made were surprising: the stocks fell greatly and there seemed to be a general consternation, but indignation soon took place of every other sentiment, and all parties united in demand of vengeance (as they expressed it) against that insolent town." 301

and on 20 October 1768 he wrote

"The merchants say they had no thanks for what they did on former occasions and do not yet seem to interest themselves much in our favour. Should they embark in the cause it would give great weight to our solicitations." 302

Rockingham tended to agree with Dowdeswell and Savile's assessment of the situation. It is not clear whether he admitted that the situation had changed but he still placed his reliance on the policy that the first Rockingham administration had enacted. On 2 October he wrote to Joseph Harrison, the victim of the Liberty riot :

"I own I feel just as angry at the dangerous madness of some in America as at the passion and obstinacy of some at home, and my only reliance is - that there are still at home those who will adhere to their maxims, justness and mildness towards the colonies † and that in the colonies there are still as many who will co-operate with them by checking a conduct in the Colonies which has every now and then broke out in the most dangerous and offensive manner.

The Declaratory Bill which we brought in to fix and ascertain the rights of this country and its Colonies is what I must and still ever adhere to. The exerting of this right is a matter which ought to be well considered and the ability of the colonies ought ever to be the first postulatum ground to go upon. There is no entering into the arguments pro and con in this subject without making my letter much too long and especially to you who already know my sentiments on the matter.

301. "Trumbull Papers" loc. cit p.293. William Samuel Johnson to William Pitkin 30 July 1768.

302. Ibid. p.298 William Samuel Johnson to William Pitkin 20 October 1768.

If the affairs in America go on with warmth, I have no doubt that the restrictions of the Acts of Navigation will be considered as a virtual taxation - I am sure so far I should agree with them, that they have the same Tendency as a Tax and allways were, it is an argument to those, who often assert that the colonies pay nothing to the support of the mother country. If I tie my tenants to grind at the manor mill, I certainly raise money upon them virtually for I let my mill the better for their being tied to be its customers." 303

Newcastle expressed his ideas on the American situation in a letter to Rockingham on 12 September. He had a different opinion about the situation and wrote

"I hope our friends will adhere to the principles that they have acted upon, (when Parliament meets) when we repealed the Stamp Act. It is the same question and my Lord Hillsborough's view plainly to set up, and support the contrary doctrine there. I hope we shall disappoint him, for I think it comes to that, the Parliament will never join in a measure that must totally destroy all connection with the Colonies and is directly contrary to their proceeding in the Repeal of the Stamp Act and the principles upon which that repeal was founded.

I doubt by great mismanagement, the measure of conquering the Colonies, and obliging them to submit is become now more popular than it was. It is certainly the measure of the administration and I am afraid some of our Friends are a little tender on that point. But it must not be submitted to: and for my own part, whoever is for it I must in conscience, enter my protest against it. And I hope, our Friends will consider before they give into so destructive a measure.

The Court have already laid their hands upon the East Indies....And, if they are suffer'd to do what they please in America, this nation will find itself in time, deprived of its two greatest and its most real and considerable strength and support." 304

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Newcastle also wrote a similar letter to Dowdeswell.

303. Ibid. R1-1100 Rockingham to Harrison 2 October 1768.

304. B. M. Add. Mss. 32991A ff94-96 Newcastle to Rockingham 12 September 1768. Part printed Brooke^{et al.} pp. 373-374.

305. Ibid. ff111-12 Newcastle to Dowdeswell 17 September 1768.

Newcastle seems to have seen far less to the root of the American problem than Savile, Dowdeswell or Rockingham. His ideas had not developed with the changing situation and it would seem that he was unwilling to admit that the American situation was not static. This may have been partly due to senility and partly to his semi-retirement which left him short of accurate information, but he had always reached his opinion on problems with reference to the needs of party politics and he was doing the same here. It was important to Newcastle that there should be a clear division of opinion between government and opposition on the American issue.

In the years after 1768 the solution to the American problem, which the Rockingham Whigs offered, seems to have owed far more to Newcastle's ideas than to Dowdeswell's. This was unfortunate. The "Newcastle solution" founded on British commercial interest offered little hope of solving the American problem. As this solution was based upon a mercantile support, which grew less strong as merchants turned to other fields besides America, it grew less popular politically.

Dowdeswell realised that the issues that divided England and her colonies were no longer of great commercial importance. His readiness to accept a changing situation and look for a solution based on compromise would seem to have been far more likely to attain success. Thus to some extent the commercial alliance of the Rockingham Whigs may be blamed for their failure to evolve a satisfactory solution to the American problem. Desiring to protect the trade of Britain

306. Cf. "Trumbull Papers" *loc. cit.* p. 298 William Samuel Johnson to William Pitkin 20 October 1768 quoted above p. 554

and maintain their alliance with the commercial classes they were handicapped in their attempt to find a real solution to the aspirations of the developing American Colonies of which they professed to be the champions.

In September and October 1768 Newcastle seems to have gained some idea of Dowdeswell's notions on America. He became alarmed that members of the Rockingham Whigs should agree to Dowdeswell's ideas of supporting the ministry and making the Americans submit. He wrote to Dowdeswell about this endeavouring to make Dowdeswell conform to the "party line" and he also wrote to Rockingham and Albemarle urging them to make the party show an united front. At the beginning of October 1768 Newcastle wrote to Rockingham urging him to make a plan with his friends for the coming session of Parliament. There is no mention of the mercantile interest in this letter and at this time there seems very little doubt that the mercantile interest was not in the inner councils of the Rockingham Whigs. ³⁰⁷ The statesman whose opinion and actions upon America Newcastle was most satisfied with at ³⁰⁸ this time was the young Duke of Richmond.

Until his death on 17 November 1768 Newcastle was kept well informed of the development of events in America and he died in an atmosphere of deepening gloom for every report

307. B. M. Add. Mss. 32991A f107 Newcastle to Albemarle 16 September 1768; ibid. f111 Newcastle to Dowdeswell 17 September 1768; ibid. f206 Newcastle to Rockingham 8 October 1768.

308. Ibid. f220 Newcastle to the Marchioness of Rockingham 10 October 1768; ibid. f224 Newcastle to Lord Frederick Cavendish 10 October 1768.

seemed to demonstrate how serious the situation in the colonies was becoming.³⁰⁸ Only one event lightened the gloom. On 3 November 1768 Rockingham wrote to Newcastle that the situation had not further deteriorated. He wrote

"I have just received an account from the City that advice is received from Boston with the account of the arrival there of the first two regiments and that the select men have very quietly ordered quarters for them in Fort William, so that hitherto has no violence happened."³⁰⁹

Rockingham had been expecting violence but it did not occur. Most of his information at this time seems to have come via Barlow Trecothick.³¹⁰

By a strange paradox right at the end of his life just when Newcastle was urging the staunchest opposition to the American policy of the government, Rockingham and the other Whig leaders tried to heed his former advice about co-operating with George Grenville. Thus in November 1768 in the reply to the address at the opening of Parliament, they would not raise the question of America for fear of dividing the opposition and losing the support of George Grenville.³¹¹

Instead of America, Corsica was chosen by the Rockingham Whigs as a subject for opposition in November 1768.³¹² The Corsicans under Pasquel Paoli had rebelled against Geonese

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308. Ibid., f281 Mansfield to Newcastle 20 October 1768; ibid. f345 Albermarle to Newcastle 29 October 1768; ibid. f359 Albermarle to Newcastle 30 October 1768. For Newcastle's death see Winstanley op. cit. p. 239. 1768.
309. B. M. Add. Mss. 32991A f376 Rockingham to Newcastle 3 November 1768. See W. W. M. R1-1112 Barlow Trecothick to Rockingham 4 November 1768 (morning) ibid. R1-1113(a) Barlow Trecothick to Rockingham 4 November 1768 (1 pm) ibid. R1-1113(b) Barlow Trecothick to Rockingham 4 November 1768 (4 pm) ibid. R1-1114 Parry Wentworth to Rockingham 4 November 1768.
311. B. M. Add. Mss. 32991A f265 Newcastle to Richmond 17 October 1768. ibid. f403 Albermarle to Newcastle 7 November 1768.
312. Ibid. f403 Albermarle to Newcastle 7 November 1768.

rule and during 1768 Corsica was coming under the power of France. Barlow Trecothick and another London merchant, Samuel Vaughan, in 1768 and 1769 were active in collecting subscriptions for Pasquel Paoli. Paoli wrote a letter of thanks to them for their efforts. This letter was published in the London Chronicle in translation, but the original of the letter is among the Burke Papers at Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire. It thus seems likely that the Rockingham Whigs were active in urging Trecothick on in the matter of the subscription. Some of the funds for the subscription were public but there ~~were~~ also substantial private donations and probably much came ~~from~~ the Rockingham Whigs. Soon after this event Sir William Meredith wrote to Burke refusing to participate in another subscription because he had not been consulted over that which had been raised for Paoli. As the letter from Paoli to Trecothick and Vaughan is among the Burke Papers it seems logical to conclude that it was the Rockingham Whigs who gave the driving force to the subscription. The Rockingham Whigs were still finding those merchants with whom they had worked at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis valuable, and they probably worked through Trecothick as he was a very convenient City patriot and was in a good position to organise a subscription of this nature.

313

313. For this see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp.66-67. See also "Pasquel Paoli, an Inspiration to the Sons of Liberty" by G.P.Anderson, Colonial Society of Massachusetts Publications Proceedings 1924-1926 Boston 1927, p.180 et seq. See also Burke Letters, Northamptonshire Record Office, Lamport Hall, A/XIV/33 Paoli to Trecothick and Vaughan 20 March 1769; London Chronicle 22-25 June 1769; W.W.M. Burke Letters, Bk1-131 Sir William Meredith to Burke 28 August 1769.

Newcastle died in a changing world. Chatham had resigned in the middle of October 1768 and his restraining influence on American policy and on men like Grafton was now finally removed.³¹⁴ Newcastle's party seemed to be becoming more and more a party of opposition when he died and to be losing that sense of urgency in the search for political power which he always gave it. If, in the end, Newcastle's ideas on American affairs set the pattern for the policy of the Rockingham Whigs rather than Dowdeswell's perhaps it was because these conformed more with the ideas of Rockingham personally. There is no evidence that Rockingham's belief that the solution to the American problem was the Repeal of the Stamp Act and the Declaratory Act and the non-implementation of a stated right,³¹⁵ had been modified by November 1768.

But if Newcastle's influence on the Rockingham Whigs at the time of his death was small his contribution to the party, whether they cared to acknowledge it or not, had been great. Newcastle had built up the connection of the Old Whigs with the "City Interest". He had maintained this connection after his fall in 1762 and had secured the support of this interest for opposition in 1763 and 1764. He had done much to reconcile the City Interest with the somewhat antipathetic force of mercantile interest during the first Rockingham Administration 1765-1766. He had accepted the mercantile interest and

314. Cf. Brooke op. cit. pp. 381-384.

315. For Rockingham's ideas on America at this time see W.W.M. R1-1100 Rockingham to Harrison 2 October 1768 quoted above pp. 554-5.

realised its growing value and the leader of this interest, Barlow Trecothick, Newcastle regarded until his retirement in 1768 as his adherent, rather than Rockingham's. ³¹⁶ It was Newcastle more than anybody else who had chosen Rockingham as his successor as the leader of the Old Whigs and it was Newcastle who helped and aided Rockingham to establish his position. After Newcastle's death, because the Rockingham Whigs were continually in opposition, mercantile support was more valuable to them than the support of the financiers. After 1768 the City interest ceased to be so important but from Newcastle the Rockingham Whigs learned how to handle the merchants who became a similar type of pressure group.

Old as he was Newcastle had been at the centre of politics at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, and his assiduity and skilful handling of the merchants at that time was of great assistance to Rockingham. From him Rockingham seems to have inherited an appreciation of the value of information from the commercial classes.

In the last two years of his life when he was again in opposition Newcastle tried to guide his supporters in what he thought was the best policy and tried to show them that it was in the best interest of England and themselves to gain office if they possibly could. These principles were often forgotten in the years immediately after Newcastle's death.

Above all Newcastle seems to have prized the alliance with the financial and mercantile classes which Rockingham never appears to have forgotten.

316. See above p. 546.

CONCLUSION.

A) ROCKINGHAM, NEWCASTLE AND THE MERCHANTS.

The scene which emerges in this thesis is painted against a backcloth of growing mercantile representation in the House of Commons, slight perhaps, but none the less significant,¹ particularly in an age which was the prelude to one of great industrial growth and rapid trade expansion, and which itself was a climax of a great mercantile empire. During this period the two leaders of the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs, the party which Burke claimed represented the mercantile classes, were in contact with an appreciable number of merchant members of Parliament, indeed with a much higher proportion than the size of the party warranted.² As is to be expected, Newcastle, because of his long tenure of office and his particular connection with government finance, was particularly associated with financiers, bankers, and more wealthy merchants. On the other hand Rockingham, who was by 1768 emerging as an opposition leader, was connected with less prominent and less wealthy merchants and manufacturers who allied with him to put pressure on Parliament, both when he was in and out of office, to secure the enactment of legislation which was favourable to their commerce.³

The relations between the politicians and merchants considered in this thesis show an increasing preoccupation with American affairs. This is scarcely surprising as the years 1761-68 saw some of the most important preliminaries in the events which led up to the struggle between Great

1. See above pp. 6-8.

2. See above pp. 12-14.

3. See above pp. 15-17.

Britain and her American colonies. Moreover for the American merchant this was a period of change and readjustment: America as a market was becoming much more important and was changing its role ~~from~~⁴ a source of supply to a market. The Stamp Act Crisis occurred at a time when the American market was generally expanding and it made the effect of the general post-war slump much harder. It cannot be doubted that the use of mercantile discontent by the first Rockingham administration was not merely a piece of political management. It was a true relection of the severity of the crisis in the American trade occasioned by the Stamp Act,⁵ for the emergence of an organised group of American merchants at this time and the evidence given before the Stamp Act Committee points to the fact that by 1765 there was considerable specialisation in that trade. The effect of British legislation after 1766 was never so severe or immediate as at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis, nor were these effects felt at a time of widespread slump. Moreover after 1766 the merchants began to weigh their personal economic interests against the political and constitutional issues of the rights of the British Parliament and realising increasingly that the struggle with the colonies had not ended in 1766 they began to insure themselves against economic loss by turning to other markets. Concern for the welfare of their American customers thus gradually changed to bitterness at the loss of their trade.⁶ Thus the nature of the trade and the magnitude

4. See above pp. 20-21.

5. See above pp. 25-27.

6. See above pp. 29-34.

of the crisis at the time of the Stamp Act does much to explain why the Rockingham Whigs suddenly emerged in 1765 as the great champions of the trading interest. For the first time for many years trade had come to the forefront of the political stage. The informal alliance to which Newcastle had only paid lip-service may have existed for some time but it was only with the Stamp Act Crisis that it became obvious to all and it must be admitted that it was not conscious choice but political necessity which made Rockingham use the alliance.⁷ The success of the Rockingham Whigs in repealing the Stamp Act, their difficulty afterwards in holding their mercantile supporters together and pursuing an effective opposition to measures which they realised were detrimental to commerce can also be related to the economic pattern of trade with the American colonies.

The connection between the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs and the merchants seems to have originally derived from the traditional association of the Whigs with religious dissent and from Newcastle's continued attention to trade and finance as a result of his preoccupation with government finance. In his respect for dissenting opinion Newcastle continued a tradition which had been established by Walpole. He, far more than Rockingham his successor, considered the dissenters as a separate entity, as an interest whose support it was worthwhile to cultivate.⁸ Rockingham's different attitude can be related

7. See above pp. 341-367.

8. See above pp. 43-72.

to the change that was occurring in dissent. The dissenters were becoming less powerful as a unified interest. They had lost much of the religious fervour which distinguished them in the early eighteenth century,⁹ and with increased economic growth trade and industry often became more important to members of this class than religion. Rockingham could often win the same support as Newcastle among the dissenters by interest in economic affairs but in Newcastle's early years in office at least, the interest of the dissenters in general had to be considered as something separate from trade and commerce. Other features contributed to this difference¹⁰ attitude between the two Whig leaders. As the eighteenth century progressed the dissenters became more radical. When they became the champions of American liberty and political reform they had become too extreme to earn the sympathy of the Rockingham Whigs, who were thus forced to redefine their attitude towards religious dissent and they revived the old Whig principle of religious toleration on which the alliance with the dissenters had originally been built. The Rockingham Whigs continued to represent the dissenters in so far as they supported religious toleration but the order of priorities had been reversed. Thus under Rockingham the party became one which stood chiefly for the trading interest and supported religious toleration partly because many traders were dissenters. Under Newcastle the party had been the champion of dissent and because many dissenters were merchants and traders of some sort, had paid particular attention to trade.

~~10. See above pp. 67-69.~~

This change in attitude can also be related to the change in nature of the party from the time of Newcastle to the time of Rockingham. Under Newcastle the party was usually in power and it was important to maintain the allegiance of identifiable interests which could be turned into blocks of votes at election times and loyal supporters of government when controversial legislation was to be enacted. Under Rockingham the party became one of opposition. It was intent on defending the principles on which it believed it had based its actions when in power, not with marshalling its supporters: for eighteenth century oppositions did not necessarily secure the overthrow of administration because their supporters were more numerous and more cohesive. Abstract principles such as religious toleration were more important to Rockingham and his colleagues than the support of the dissenting interest.¹¹ Moreover this phenomena can be related to the differences in character between the two leaders of the party. Newcastle was a practical politician, used to power and accustomed to manipulating votes. Rockingham was an opposition leader. An idealist concerned with the vague principles of Whiggism, he was not really interested in the realities of running a party or an administration, or a government machine. Indifferent to whether he was in power or not Rockingham was content as long as his own character and that of his fellow Whig aristocrats remained untarnished. Thus the party under Rockingham

11. See above pp. 71-72.

became dominated by ideals and condemned to opposition. Newcastle would have willingly sacrificed any or all of his principles to secure office.

In her article "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry" ¹² Dr. Sutherland stated that the attitude of the mercantile classes when they supported Pitt from 1757-1761 shows that the alliance of the merchants with the high Whigs of which Burke boasted, as distinct from the alliance of Newcastle at the Treasury with the financial interests generally known as the 'monied interest' cannot have begun before the period of opposition beginning in 1762. It is thus in the period between 1762 and 1765 that we must look for the real beginnings of the association between the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs and the mercantile classes, for in 1765 when the first Rockingham administration took office the first results of this alliance were to be seen in the co-operation between Rockingham and the merchants at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis.

When Pitt resigned in 1761 he possessed the loyalty of the less wealthy merchants inside Parliament and the merchants ¹³ outside Parliament, while Newcastle possessed the loyalty of the government financiers and those merchants who aimed at government contracts or high political office. This situation governed the development of ~~contrast~~ the relations of the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs and the merchants and was of profound influence in the development of Rockingham as a party leader. On Pitt's resignation Newcastle and his colleagues

¹². Loc. cit. pp. 48-49

¹³. See above pp. 73-82.

who remained in office carried out a series of manoeuvres designed to secure the support of the whole mercantile class for the administration. After an initial success the attempt failed. Pitt's mercantile following returned to him and Newcastle and the administration were left with only the traditional alliance between government and the 'monied interest'. Rockingham played little part in these activities. He was not yet a national politician, merely a local magnate, but his association in local politics during his early years with independent country gentry and trade were to be influential when he took his place as a national politician as he was to do within four years.

It must be admitted that Newcastle was not really perturbed at the failure of the administration to retain the united support of all the mercantile classes. He had maintained the support of the government financiers who to him were the most important members of the mercantile classes and with whom he was most concerned and to whom he was most sympathetic. Newcastle's concern with the state of the stock market and mercantile bankruptcy can be understood if it is considered from the point of view of the man who was responsible for raising government loans. It was from this group of merchants that Newcastle sought advice and information on financial affairs and it was their attitude which influenced his attitude to the new war with Spain when it broke out, although it must be admitted

14. See above pp. 83-90

16. See above pp. 90-91.

18. See for example pp. 91-112.

15. See above pp. 90-98.

17. Cf. pp. 99-116.

19. See above pp. 102-117.

that Newcastle's idea on the conduct of the war in general differed at this time from that of a number of his mercantile supporters in this class.²⁰ Perhaps it is a mark of his success in his dealings with the government financiers that Newcastle could afford to differ with them on^a major issue of government policy and yet still retain their loyalty.

It cannot be contended that the differences between Newcastle and the rest of the Cabinet which led to Newcastle's resignation in 1762 were caused because Newcastle stood for the mercantile point of view. His general desire for peace and the continued support which he wished to be given to Frederick the Great were, however, policies likely to render him popular and earn the support of the government financiers.²¹ Having resigned Newcastle attempted to embarrass the government by maintaining the loyalty of the government financiers to himself. This tactic was doomed to failure because it was not to a person or party that the financiers owed their allegiance but to administration from which they gained their economic livelihood.²² Moreover Newcastle was not a good opposition leader. He was too used to power to be able to effectively organise an opposition and too afraid of charges of disloyalty and faction to be willing to declare himself an out and out opponent of the government. Indeed he was more concerned with embarrassing the government so that he could force himself back into power rather than with actual opposition.²³ It is true that Newcastle's tactics only failed when Bute was able

20. See above pp. 104-105.

22. See above p. 138.

21. See above pp. 108-109.

23. See above pp. 129-137.

to negotiate a peace and so reduce public expenditure but even before this it was quite obvious that the loyalty of the government financiers to Newcastle was wavering, and that they were in fact willing to deal with the Bute administration.²⁴

Newcastle now began a vain search for an effective opposition policy. He turned first to the peace settlement which was not a good choice. At first Newcastle himself did not know the terms that he was going to oppose and any opposition to the peace terms was likely to meet with a very mixed reception from those mercantile followers whom he had left. Most of them would be glad for peace to be restored for the sake of their trade. Only a few proved able and willing to challenge the government on the issue that the terms were not the best that could be made considering the success Britain had achieved during the war.²⁵

The failure of Newcastle to rally his supporters on the peace preliminaries and on the dismissal of the Duke of Devonshire was significant. For in the discontent which this caused lay the origin of Wildman's club which was closely linked with the rise in importance of Rockingham as a political leader and the mercantile section of the party. The real beginning of this group which was discontented with Newcastle's policy can be dated from the meeting of 30 November 1762.²⁶ The party now began to break down into two groups, young and old. The group which was in general younger ~~was~~ more radical and anxious for opposition. The older group was more conservative and having been used to power was less willing

24. See above pp. 129-130.

26. See above pp. 160-161.

25. See above pp. 145-160, 171-175.

to enter opposition. It was the former group which was able to capitalise on the marked increase of outside influence on Parliament, which Dr. Sutherland has noted, and on mercantile influence in particular. This movement as Doctor Sutherland has observed was closely associated with the growth of popular radicalism and was able to support the first Rockingham administration during one stage in its development. It was significant that the opposition at Wildman's club fastened on the Wilkes issue as a key plank in their opposition policy for this enabled them to harmonise more condanantly with the radical pressure groups developing. The position that Rockingham occupied in the development of Wildman's club was also important. He was clever, or fortunate, enough to maintain sympathy and popularity with the new and developing young element of the party without antagonising Newcastle and the older members of the party less anxious for opposition. Rockingham thus became marked out for the leadership of the party.

Until the formation of Wildman's club in January 1764 Newcastle and his followers continued to work without a real policy. He still hankered after the support of the government financiers and opposition to the peace terms, an issue which a more skilled leader would have abandoned as soon as he realised that he could not gain the unanimous support of his followers and an alliance with Pitt. The North Briton case again demonstrated the lack of unanimity among the Whig leaders

27. Sutherland loc. cit. p.49.

29. See above pp.228-233.

31. See above pp.214-218.

28. See above pp.216-35.

30. See above pp.166-193

and opportunities to rally the opposition^{on} such issues as the Cider Tax and the rivalry between Clive and Sullivan in the East India Company were missed.³² The more the opposition failed the more Newcastle looked to an alliance with Pitt instead of trying to rally his supporters.

Indeed ~~it~~ was not until the party began to utilise the new forces that were represented at Wildman's club that a policy was found or any success in opposition was achieved. The period of over a year when Newcastle searched for a policy before the rise of Wildman's club is essentially a transitional period. Both the government financiers and merchants of other types seem to recede into the background of the story. The old alliance of Newcastle with the government financiers, with the notable exception of one or two followers who recognised him as their political leader, had broken down and the alliance with the new mercantile element had not yet been built up. The number of financiers whom Newcastle could rely upon by the end of 1763 was only one or two. It is significant that the only merchant that has any prominence in association with Newcastle during this period was Sir William Baker. He was not really a government financier but a merchant anxious to climb the social scale who successfully emerged as a country gentleman.³³ Baker was really a typical political adherent of Newcastle. Yet Baker was of supreme importance. He became associated with the radical group at Wildman's, maintained his loyalty to Newcastle although heavily criticised by him, and formed the prototype of the merchant from whom Rockingham

32. See above pp. 178-183.

33. For Baker see my Barlow Trecothick etc pp. 129-137.

was to gain so much support.

At first sight the merchants do not appear to be really important in the development of Wildman's club. But the relatively high proportion of merchants in the Club and the calibre of some of them meant that their views became of great significance. Men like Sir William Baker were in the van of opposition and as American commercial issues came into the foreground of politics the importance of the merchants was bound to increase. A rift developed between Newcastle and Baker over the 'Dr. Hay affair' and Newcastle seemed to move more and more out of sympathy with the Club and the radical element of his party. He was not able to bridge the gap between the two sections of his party and the way was opened for Rockingham to be Newcastle's successor for he had antagonised neither group. Moreover when the party had to form an administration in 1765 and it became an urgent necessity for the party to have an active leader, those older members of the party who had a prior claim to its leadership had died.

As Wildman's club became important the issue of America became more prominent for the rise of Wildman's coincided with Grenville's American legislation. Sir William Baker had, since the Seven Years War, acted as an American expert to the Newcastle Whigs but when in 1764 the duty of leading the opposition to Grenville's budget fell upon him the limitations

34. See above p. 212-213.

36. See above p. 221-225.

35. See above pp. 245-247.

37. See above pp. 284-288.

of mercantile leadership became obvious. Even a merchant as prominent as Baker had neither the political skill ^c nor personal standing which allowed him to lead a real attack upon the government. In 1764 the great weakness of the mercantile section of the party also emerged for the first time. The mercantile interest was not one unified group: different groups of merchants desired different policies and the conflict between the interests and the West Indian and the North American merchants which was only healed for the great crisis of the Stamp Act was always present in the background. Even the enthusiasm and impetus created by the highly successful organisation at Wildman's Club was not sufficient to make the mercantile interest put up a unified front against Grenville's measures of 1764.

The first indication that antagonism between the West Indian and North Americans was breaking down came in the opposition to the Stamp Act in 1765. In this case, however, the full force of unified mercantile opinion could not be felt for the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs were divided among themselves; the opposition being restrained by the scruples of Newcastle and his older colleagues. Moreover, as yet, the alliance between the merchants and the Newcastle and Rockingham Whigs was still in its embryonic state. There was no tradition of co-operation and the division among the leaders of the party and the fact that the merchants were not so strongly opposed to the measure that they were driven to violent action meant

38. See above p. 247.

39. See above pp. 255-273.

that this was not the opportunity for the inauguration of co-operation. In the Stamp Act Crisis both parties were under extreme pressure to begin working together. It does seem clear, however, that the passing of the Stamp Act, the 1765 budget and the Mutiny and Quartering Acts contributed in a limited way to the growing association between the merchants and the Rockingham and Newcastle Whigs and paved the way for the co-operation at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis.⁴⁰

Newcastle's desire to secure office for some of his more prominent mercantile supporters when the first Rockingham administration was formed cannot really be regarded as an effort to secure representation for the mercantile interest in the administration.⁴¹ It must be regarded as an attempt to secure office for long-standing political adherents and the sympathy of the 'monied interest'. Moreover it is symptomatic of Newcastle's opinions in 1765 that it was Rockingham who considered Sir William Baker for office and not Newcastle who pressed him to do this, for Baker had been a prominent member of Wildman's Club and became alienated from Newcastle over the 'Dr. Hay Affair'. It is not surprising that the merchants who Newcastle suggested for office had never really incurred his displeasure because of the violence of their opposition. Nor considering Newcastle's ideas on Wildman's is it surprising that he did not press for stronger mercantile representation in the new administration. It is also demonstrative of Rockingham's position as mediator between the

40. See above pp. 259-275.

41. See above pp. 295-299.

two sections of the party that it was he who tried to find a position for Baker.⁴²

Yet Newcastle did not entirely neglect mercantile support for in the summer of 1765 it was he who was endeavouring to secure the allegiance of Barlow Trecothick, already prominent among the American merchants, by obtaining a seat in Parliament for him in the Newcastle interest.⁴³

From the very beginning of the first Rockingham administration American affairs became very important and from August 1765 events began to march in a direction which was to force Rockingham into alliance with the merchants. Contact with merchants petitions to the Treasury, and letters of thanks to the petitioning merchants over the Treasury Minute of 15 November 1765 was a full dress rehearsal for the repeal of the Stamp Act. This earlier incident also had the difference of opinion with Charles Yorke which heppened again and was to be so important during the Stamp Act Crisis.⁴⁴ The only thing it really lacked was the examination of witnesses by Parliament and this was because it was not necessary to deal with the matter in Parliament. It was the gravity of the Stamp Act Crisis and the necessity of a full-dress performance before Parliament that led to the full organisation of the merchants and the cementing of the alliance with the Rockingham Whigs.

The evidence presented in this thesis does not suggest that Rockingham was pressurised into repealing the Stamp Act through mercantile agitation. It cannot be contended that

42. See above pp. 294-295.

43. See above p. 335.

44. Cf. pp. 318-319 and pp. 361-362.

Rockingham was not under pressure from the merchants but he did come to his decision to repeal the Stamp Act independent of this pressure although making full use of the information on trade which the merchants gave. Only when Rockingham had reached his decision could pressure be translated into co-operation and a thorough-going alliance between administration and merchants be formed.⁴⁵ The fact that Rockingham reached his decision at a late date and it was not apparent immediately, made it seem that he was forced to give into mercantile pressure, whereas in fact the major reason for the delay was the search for information and a policy which would be acceptable to all of Rockingham's followers.

It was the real economic hardship which the merchants were undergoing in late 1765 which drove them into the arms of the administration but it must be admitted that Rockingham was forced to seek help from the merchants because of his failure to enlist Pitt's support and because he found it difficult to formulate a policy which was acceptable to the King and other political groups in a House of Commons where he was already weak. Once policy was decided, co-operation with the merchants could be embarked upon and here it must be admitted that Rockingham with supreme skill used his new-found allies to execute his policy.⁴⁶

The initiative for alliance with the Rockingham Whigs did not lie entirely in the agitation of the merchants because of the slump in their trade. In the autumn of 1765 both

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45. Cf. above pp.365-366.

46. See also pp.367-405.

Rockingham himself and other leading colleagues in the administration were making deliberate efforts to gain information and opinions from merchants.⁴⁷ In view of the traditions of the party and developments in the years of opposition immediately before the administration came to power this is scarcely surprising.

Barlow Trecothick was the key merchant in the campaign for the repeal of the Stamp Act. He cannot have been unknown to Rockingham when direct contact between the two was first established in November 1765, for only a few months before Newcastle had been trying to secure Trecothick's election at Shoreham. Co-operation between the two began at informal dinner parties but Trecothick's importance increased after the formal foundation of the London Merchants Committee on 4⁴⁸ December 1765 and his election as its chairman. If the circular letter which this body sent out was not drawn up in Rockingham's presence, Rockingham had at least agreed to both the idea behind the letter and its form. Much the same sort of process seems to have been used when the London merchants' petition was drawn up at the end of the year, and the organisation and presentation of concerted petitions seems to have had ministerial approval as does the form of petitions. The merchants showed respect for their allies by constructing the petitions in such general terms that the administration was not embarrassed by them.⁴⁹

47. See above pp. 330-340.

48. See above p. 344.

49. See above pp. 353-354.

Although the critical decision to rep^Aal the Stamp Act was taken solely by the party hierarchy, it was taken knowing mercantile opinion, feeling mercantile pressure and aware of the need for mercantile support. Thus, since it sought mercantile support the policy of the administration became essentially a compromise between what was commercially popular and what was politically acceptable.⁵⁰

Parliament seems to have sensed that the parade of witnesses before it was not an impartial attempt to ascertain the truth but an organised campaign to force it into a specific measure. This feeling led to the accusations against Rose Fuller, the chairman of the committee and the questions to Trecothick⁵¹ about the organisation of mercantile petitions. The task of the merchants was to convince uncommitted members that the repeal of the Stamp Act was necessary for economic reasons and to justify Rockingham's policy, when it was likely to be challenged by the Grenvilleites as a submission to force. The administration had the difficult task of executing a policy which seemed appropriate yet difficult to implement because its opponents could interpret it merely as an indication of weakness. There is no evidence, however, that Rockingham and his colleagues regarded the policy as the inevitable result of overwhelming circumstances.

The use of mercantile pressure continued to the very end of the repeal campaign. There were tentative efforts to organise a campaign in the House of Lords similar to that

50. See above pp. 409-413.

51. See above pp. 351-378.

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pursued in the House of Commons and the administration finally tried to ensure that the policy was successful by using the merchants to write to the colonists in order to obtain a suitable reception for the measure when it arrived there.

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The credit and reputation gained by the merchants at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis enabled them to take the lead in planning the Free Ports Act and the other commercial legislation of the first Rockingham administration. Here, however, the weakness of the merchants, their division into American and West Indian factions became apparent. This legislation was pushed through Parliament in much the same way as the repeal of the Stamp Act. Petitions, witnesses, and evidence was used but now the ministry had lost its driving force. Even though it was hoped to embark upon a comprehensive scheme to overhaul the laws of trade they were growing weaker and the great crisis which had stung them into action had passed. Thus the Free Ports Act and other commercial legislation after the repeal of the Stamp Act was very much of an anti-climax and the ministry found itself in some ways dominated by its commercial allies. Only commercial measures in which they were really interested were becoming legislation. Yet only in this sense were the merchants dominating the administration. Rockingham and his colleagues did believe in the legislation they enacted and were in no sense driven by the need for mercantile support along a path which they were reluctant to follow. It seems more the case that the

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52. See above pp. 401-403.

53. See above pp. 406-409.

54. See above pp. 416-417. Cf. above pp. 440-443.

55. Cf. above pp. 440-443.

56. See above pp. 432-435.

administration was limited in what it achieved by the divisions and squabbling among the merchants. Yet as Dr Sutherland states the administration

"Because it had followed without system in the ways of others and played for commercial support, it was put at the mercy of a new commercial strength and organisation, And the Rockingham Ministry saw within a few months, what it had certainly never foreseen, the most fundamental changes of the century in British trading policy. It also saw the most definite step in the growth of the commercial men's confidence in their own political power, which among other things formed a basis for the widening claim for a greater share to it. But, since this was rather accidental to them because of the ministry's policy, their practical experience, so far from leading them away from the traditions of Old Whig rule once again consolidated even the extremists among them in it." 57

Two mercantile leaders important to the Rockingham Whigs emerged during the first Rockingham administration. These were Barlow Trecothick and Abraham Rawlinson. Their careers illustrate the tendency of Rockingham to gather life-long supporters from allies in one particular crisis. They did not cease to support Rockingham as soon as the administration fell from power. Trecothick became the City leader of the Rockingham Whigs and Rawlinson and his heirs, although less active politically, remained associated with the Rockingham Whigs. This allegiance was not merely for personal gain for none is discernable. It must have been from respect for Rockingham and respect for his principles. It was the support of men like Rawlinson and Trecothick that enabled the Rockingham Whigs to

survive the long years of opposition and emerge a more broadly
 58 based party. Yet it cannot be said that Rockingham made a
 conscious choice of support outside Parliament rather than
 alliance within. It was his strict adherence to principle and
 his unwillingness to compromise with other political groups
 that forced him to look for support from men like Trecothick
 and Rawlinson.

Dr. Sutherland writes with reference to the mercantile
 alliance of the Rockingham Whigs

"A disunited opposition it was before 1765, an opposition
 of compromise it became afterwards." 59

This statement is in many ways true. The mercantile alliance
 was partly responsible for the Rockingham Whigs failure to
 enter opposition immediately the Chatham administration was
 formed, for they realised that Chatham still possessed at least
 some claim to be regarded as the champion of the merchants. 60
 It also made them hesitate to form a thorough-going alliance
 with the Grenvilleites for the policy that they had enacted
 when in power in co-operation with their mercantile allies
 had been diametrically opposed to Grenville's policy. It is
 typical that when the party fell from power it was Newcastle
 who attempted to cultivate the party's new-found allies. 61
 Rockingham retired to the north and seems to have resumed
 something of his traditional indifference towards politics. 62

58. For Rawlinson and Trecothick see my Barlow Trecothick etc
 pp. 20-74, 252-5 also my "Barlow Trecothick" loc. cit.

59. loc. cit. p. 56.

60. See above pp. 456-459.

61. See above pp. 456-514.

62. See above pp. 460-462.

That the merchants were by no means central to party politics at this time is obvious. When the policy of resignation was embarked upon in November 1766 no consideration seems to have been given by the party leaders to the effect that this would have on their mercantile following and when the party moved into more formal opposition at the end of 1766 the real test of mercantile loyalty began.⁶³

At first the Rockinghamites do not seem to have been aware that their political circumstances had been changed through their actions when in power. They therefore failed to give their mercantile followers a lead on the question of the East India Company in 1767 and this was to be a question that was to be influential in the formation of yet another mercantile group in politics, the East India group.⁶⁴ Newcastle in particular was influenced by his former association with the 'monied interest' at this time.⁶⁵ Nor was mercantile opinion taken into account when the negotiations with the Bedford Whigs were entered upon and it was decided as an opposition tactic to move for the reduction of the Land Tax.⁶⁶ Neither of these measures were likely to win the favour of the Rockinghamites former mercantile supporters and the links with the merchants at this time appear to have ~~become~~ gradually weaker. There is in these events, however, very little of the opposition of compromise of which Doctor Sutherland speaks.⁶⁷ Yet it was precisely because they were not considering the mercantile

63. See above pp. 456-469.

64. See above pp. 470-478.

65. See above p. 1

66. See above pp. 483-487

67. Sutherland, "Edmund Burke and the First Rockingham Ministry" loc. cit. p. 57.

alliance that the Rockingham Whigs had at this time ceased to be an opposition of compromise. American affairs were coming into prominence again, the Rockingham Whigs from both choice and obligation began to pay more heed to their mercantile followers and their point of view and the opposition became again one of compromise.

The attitude taken by the Rockinghamites to Grenville's motion that the colonists should pay for the troops stationed in America and their attitude to the New York Merchants petition of 1767 seems to have been conditioned partly by their sympathy with mercantile opinion on America. Their policy may have been calculated to win mercantile approval but there is very little evidence of real consultation or close co-operation.⁶⁸ This is perhaps not surprising for the early period of opposition must again have been a period of adjustment both to opposition and to the new alliance of the party, and it is too much to expect the Rockinghamites to change the ways of nearly half a century immediately and respond at once to a new pressure group especially when the party was founded so strongly on Whig principles. It was more Rockingham's desire for consistency and his attempt to support the measures that he had enacted that the alliance continued at this time than any conscious effort on the part of the Rockingham Whigs. Thus when the Townshend Duties came to be debated not only did both the Rockingham Whigs and the merchants miss the true significance of the measure

68. See above pp. 488-509.

but the Rockinghamites fought with their hands tied behind their backs because of American resistance to the Mutiny and Quartering Acts.⁶⁹ In the 1767 negotiations with the Bedford Whigs the Rockinghamites assumed what may be described as a pro-mercantile attitude because of Rockingham's desire for consistency, not through any deliberate consideration of mercantile opinion.⁷⁰ It was ~~not~~ only the young men of the party, men like the Duke of Richmond who saw the true value of the mercantile alliance.⁷¹ It was the pressure of the mercantile alliance in the past which had helped to forge Rockinghamite policy that prevented the alliance with the Bedford Whigs in 1767, not pressure from the merchants ~~in~~. Yet when the real rupture with the Grenvilleites came over American policy in November 1767 it must have been patently obvious to Rockingham and his followers that the differences were not purely those of principle, but that their association with the mercantile interest was also at stake. A Rockinghamite motion to increase the trade of America was the occasion of the rupture and the principle challenged the priority of expediency over the exertion of a legislative right.⁷² Thus the final break between the Rockinghamites and the other major opposition group occurred. The Rockinghams were left on their own in the opposition wilderness and unaided they had to work out the implications of the mercantile alliance.

The general election of 1768 marked the beginning of the

69. See above pp. 499-500.

71. See above pp. 517-518.

70. See above pp. 505-514.

72. See Cf. above pp. 520-524.

consolidation of the co-operation of the merchants which had occurred during the first Rockingham administration. The importance and value placed on their mercantile followers by Rockingham and Newcastle during this general election is obvious.⁷³ Yet it cannot be claimed that they were pioneering a new relationship and going out of their way to encourage new supporters. The developments which took place at this time were far more a consolidation of the past; it was the consolidation of the achievement during the Stamp Act Crisis. Yet this election must have done much to re-inforce in Rockingham's mind an appreciation of the value and importance of his mercantile associates. Moreover with the retirement of Newcastle a few months before he died⁷⁴ the old emphasis of alliance with the 'monied interest' and alliance with another political group, in many ways opposed to the mercantile alliance, was removed. Rockingham was left free to find his own path. It was not easy, for the immediate American issues (resistance to the Townshend Duties and the Liberty Incident) which came to the forefront so soon after Rockingham had assumed sole control of the party,⁷⁵ were not structured ~~so~~ such a way that mercantile support could be utilised.

Thus the early years of opposition after 1766 were not ~~really~~ productive of any real new development in the field of mercantile support. They saw the consolidation of the position that Rockingham had assumed when in power and in alliance with the merchants. They saw a certain amount of mercantile

73. See above pp. 526-544.

74. See above pp. 545-560.

75. See above pp. 549-558.

influence and sympathy for the mercantile classes but it must be admitted that the Rockinghamites did not capitalise fully on the value of their mercantile allies and when they considered the viewpoint of the merchants their opposition became one of compromise.

In the succeeding years the implications of the mercantile alliance at the time of the Stamp Act crisis were worked out ^{as} but/the attitude of the Rockingham Whigs hardened on issues such as America and constitutional reform they alienated sections of mercantile opinion and they could only retain 'middle-of-the-road' support. Indeed it seems true to say that only at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis did the Rockingham Whigs have the practically unanimous support of the mercantile classes. Thus Burke's statement that the Rockingham Whigs were the party of trade ⁷⁶ can only be accepted with strict limitations. The Rockingham Whigs represented the trading interest more than any other political party during the years 1761-68 but the policy was never an unqualified and committed support for the trading interest.

76. Cf. above p.9.

(B) NEWCASTLE, ROCKINGHAM AND THE ROCKINGHAM WHIGS.

The picture of Newcastle that emerges during this thesis is far more the picture drawn by Winstanley and Professor Butterfield than that drawn by Horace Walpole, Namier and Mr. John Brooke.⁷⁷ It is impossible to deny Newcastle's shortcomings, his constant suspicions, jealousies and readiness to take affront. Yet he emerges in this work as a careful administrator of a party machine and often seems to see to the heart of a political matter in terms of political tactics far better than many of his colleagues. It is true that he had long experience of political affairs and this experience was paying dividends but the ability to use successfully past experience is indicative of some political ability. It is true that Newcastle seems to have had very little success as an opposition leader after 1761 but he had been in power for nearly all his life and it is perhaps too much to ask an old man to be sufficiently flexible to change the habits of a lifetime and suddenly emerge as a capable active opposition leader, especially in the condition of the early years of the reign of George III. Perhaps the characteristic of Newcastle which dominates the picture drawn of him in this thesis is that of industry. This was fortunate for Rockingham's strongest characteristic was indifference to the

77. Cf. Winstanley Personal and Party Government pp. 10-12, Lord Chatham and the Whig Opposition pp. 13-15, George III and the Historians by Herbert Butterfield London 1957, pp. 245-248 et passim, Walpole Memoirs passim, Namier, England in the Age etc p. 70 et passim, Brooke op. cit. passim.

administrative and patronage affairs that Newcastle loved so much. As Rockingham rose to power Newcastle could thus be complementary to him, and the value of his industry became obvious when the party took power again, and when the Stamp Act Crisis occurred Newcastle was given ample opportunity to show his flair for mustering and organising support and counting votes. As Professor Butterfield says Newcastle practised Burke's idea of a party system

"As a result, Newcastle had a contribution to make; and some part of his work was actually inherited by the Rockingham Whigs. He was the real founder of that connection, though he did not in fact work out an adequate idea of party - did ^{not} realise, for example, how his own following was doomed to be reduced as soon as he came into conflict with George III." 78

In much the same way this thesis points to the fact that the current fashion of writing off Rockingham as a mere nonentity, a puppet whose strings were usually controlled by Burke, needs careful re-examination. ⁷⁹ Rockingham was still a young man when the story narrated in this thesis ends in 1768, but he had emerged into the front-rank of political leaders. Although it may be acknowledged that his high birth and aristocratic background originally gave him political importance on the local scale it was his own personality that made him a national political leader. That he was interested in national political events can be seen from the year 1761-1762⁸⁰, but it was his supreme ability as a mediator between conflicting interests that eventually enabled him to come to the

78. Butterfield op. cit. p. 246.

79. Cf. above p. 34 and pp. 34 - 409 passim

80. See above pp. 156.

forefront of the political scene. Wildman's gave him his chance and this was taken. Perhaps Rockingham has been misjudged, because he more than any other eighteenth century political leader did not want political power and was extremely ~~indifferent to it~~. But when he was forced to take political responsibility, as he was when he formed his first administration, he proved himself industrious, capable and tactful. Which other political leader besides Rockingham could have solved the problems created by Grenville's American Stamp Act without creating any antagonism except from the Grenvilleites who were bound to be antagonistic unless their policy was enforced? Indeed if Rockingham is to be criticized at the time of the Stamp Act Crisis it must be on the ground that he was too meticulous in seeking a solution to the crisis that would accommodate all the interests involved. One must, however, agree with Winstanley when he writes that Rockingham was not

"adapted by nature to be a leader of men or a champion of a lost cause." 81

and that

"shy and retiring by disposition, a poor speaker, and rarely taking part in debate, he was the pilot who shunned rather than weathered the storm." 82

Yet it should always be borne in mind that Rockingham was perpetually dogged by ill-health. Born with a congenital chest complaint he contracted syphilis whilst on the grand tour and these two conditions were to dog him for the rest

81. Winstanley, Personal and Party Government p. 243.

82. Ibid. p. 243.

of his life.⁸³ Against physical handicaps such as these it seems remarkable that he should have achieved what he did in leading a party and as the head of two administrations.

Rockingham's rise as a party leader can be dated from the time when he began to mediate between the opposing factions of the Newcastle Whig hierarchy and gave in to the younger more violent members demand for a club on 21 December 1762. From this time onwards Rockingham became of increasing importance as he was the only person able to keep the sympathy of both wings of the party. This was particularly the case when open war was declared between Newcastle and the younger zealots over the "Dr. Hay Affair".⁸⁴ Rockingham came through unscathed. Accusations of violence were not hurled against him by Newcastle and the "old guard" and he remained popular with the Wildman's group. Thus Rockingham became marked out for leadership of the party and his rapid rise to power was hastened by the death within eighteen months of most of the older members of the party who could have challenged him for power.⁸⁵ The peculiar circumstances which surrounded the negotiations of 1765 set the seal on Rockingham's position. He was the only person, whom everybody might accept, that could form a ministry at this time.⁸⁶ In power he proved himself industrious in seeking information and capable of taking decisions. Moreover his ability to keep his head in a time of extreme strain must have emerged during the long months of

83. See above p. 294 n. 17.

85. See above pp. 284-288.

84. See above pp. 221-225.

86. See above pp. 289-300

the Stamp Act Crisis and above all the quality which Burke was so ready to acknowledge, the ability to accommodate and reconcile different interests.⁸⁷ It must also be admitted that Rockingham had sufficient political acumen to turn quite readily to the allies, the merchants, who presented themselves at a time when he was so desperately in need of support.

When the first Rockingham administration fell from power and Rockingham became for the first time a true opposition leader his limitations became apparent. Because he was indifferent to political power he was not suited to be an opposition leader if the duty of that leader was to get his party back into power as quickly as possible. To Rockingham the return to power came low on a long list of priorities at the top of which were the maintenance of his Whig principles and the defence of the policy which he had enacted when in power. Thus he became preoccupied with consistency and this principle often ran counter to any hopes of achieving office, and his capacity as an opposition leader was far more than his capacity as the leader of an administration. Little evidence has emerged during the course of this thesis to support Mr. Brooke's contention that Rockingham liked first place in general both as an administration and party leader. Nor is there evidence, as Brooke suggests, that Rockingham lacked

87. See above p. 288.

application, was ambitious, "shone in history with the reflected light of other men" or was, as Walpole contends

"a weak, childish and ignorant man, by no means fit for the head of Administration". 88

Moreover this thesis supports Professor Butterfield's contention that there is continuity in the Rockingham Whigs as a political party from the days of Newcastle to those of Rocking-
89
ham. It shows them as a group not created but inherited by Rockingham and definitely something more than an ordinary faction. It also shows that they were always concerned with trade and mercantile opinion and they represented these factions probably more than any other party. Yet political principles were never sacrificed for mercantile support and mercantile connections, although important to the party were never an overwhelming influence in the period under consideration.

88. Brooke op. cit. p. 25 quoting Walpole op. cit. Vol. III, p. 222.

89. Butterfield op. cit. pp. 221-222.

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