

DIARY

Sir Ralph Verney (1613–1696), Member of Parliament for Aylesbury (1640–1645)

3 January 1642

The King sent Mr. Francis, a serjeant-at-arms, to Mr. Speaker¹ with a message, and he was called in to the House and delivered it at the bar, but he was not suffered to bring in his mace.

The message was thus,

Mr. Speaker, the King commanded me, upon my allegiance, to repair to you where you are now sitting, and to demand five gentlemen, members of this house—Mr. Hollis,² Sir Arthur Haselrig,³ Mr. Pym,⁴ Mr. Hampden,⁵ and Mr. William Strode,⁶ and when they are delivered he commanded me in his name to arrest them for high treason.

Upon this he was commanded to withdraw, and the House resolved to send four Members to the King, to let him know they had received the message and would take it into consideration, but being there was no charge delivered in against those five gentlemen, they have not delivered them, but they have taken care to have them in a readiness to answer any legal charge. And then the House commanded Mr. Speaker to call up these five gentlemen by name, and enjoined them to attend *de die in diem* till the house took further order.

The Serjeant of the House was sent to tell Serjeant Francis that we had sent to the King about these five gentlemen.

Mr. Pym and Mr. Hollis had their papers and studies sealed up by warrant under the King's hand, and the House sent a serjeant-at-arms to arrest those that did it and break of the seals, and had a conference with the Lords, and they likewise sent to break open the seals, and it was done accordingly. We sent to them to join with us because they had protested with us to defend the privileges of Parliament.

The five gentlemen which were to be accused came into the house, and there was information that they should be taken away by force. Upon this, the House sent to the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and common council to let them know how their privileges were like to be broken and the city put into danger, and advised them to look to their security.

4 January 1642

Likewise some Members were sent to the four Inns of Court to let them know how they heard they were tampered with, all to assist the King against them, and therefore they desired them not to come to Westminster.

Then the House adjourned till one of the clock.

As soon as the House met again 'twas moved, considering there was an intention to take these five men away by force, to avoid all tumult, let them be commanded to absent themselves. Upon this the House gave them leave to absent themselves, but entered no order for it, and then the five gentlemen went out of the House.

A little after the King came, with all his guard and all his pensioners, and two or three hundred soldiers and gentlemen. The King commanded the soldiers to stay in the hall, and sent us word he was at the door. The Speaker was commanded to sit still, with his mace lying before him, and then the King came to the door and took the Palsgrave in with him and commanded all that came with him upon their lives not to come in. So the

¹ Sir William Lenthall (1591–1662), Speaker of the House of Commons (1640–1647, 1647–1653, 1654–1655, and 1659–1660)

² Denzil Holles (1599–1680), M.P. for Dorchester (1640–1661)

³ Sir Arthur Haselrig (1601–1661), M.P. for Leicestershire (1640–1645)

⁴ John Pym (1584–1643), M.P. for Tavistock (1624–1643)

⁵ John Hampden (1594–1643), M.P. for Wendover (1624–1643)

⁶ William Strode (1598–1645), M.P. for Bere Alston (1624–1645)

doors were kept open, and the Earl of Roxburghe⁷ stood within the door, leaning upon it. Then the King came upwards, towards the chair, with his hat off, and the Speaker stepped out to meet him. Then the King stepped up to his place, and stood upon the step, but sat not down in the chair. And after he had looked a great while, he told us he would not break our privileges, but treason had no privilege; he came for those five gentlemen, for he expected obedience yesterday and not an answer.

Then he called Mr. Pym and Mr. Holles by name, but no answer was made. Then he asked the Speaker if they were here, or where they were. Upon that the Speaker fell on his knees and desired his excuse, for he was a servant to the House and had neither eyes nor tongue to see or say anything but what they commanded him. Then the King told him he thought his own eyes were as good as his, and then said his birds were flown, but he did expect the House should send them to him, and if they did not he would seek them himself, for their treason was foul, and such an one as they would all thank him to discover. Then he assured us they should have a fair trial, and so went out, putting off his hat till he came to the door.

Upon this the House did instantly resolve to adjourn till tomorrow at one of the clock, and in the interim they might consider what to do.

Edward P. Cheyney, ed. *Readings in English History Drawn from the Original Sources: Intended to Illustrate a Short History of England* (1908):475–477.

⁷ Robert Ker (c. 1570–1650), Earl of Roxburghe