

# REQUEST FOR INSTRUCTIONS

Colonel Richard Hammond (1621–1654), Governor of Carisbrooke Castle (1647–1648)

to William Lenthall (1591–1662), Speaker of the House of Commons (1640–1655, 1659–1660)

Carisbrooke Castle, 27 August 1648

I yesterday received a letter and instructions from both Houses of Parliament by the hands of Sir Peter Killigrew (who also then presented another to His Majesty), in answer to which I shall give you this account.

That although I apprehended a great deal of ambiguity in the said instructions, comparing the first of them with the last, which caused me to endeavor, as much as in me lay, to defer the taking His Majesty's engagement until I might receive from the Parliament an explanation of my said instructions, wherein I was very importunate with His Majesty. Yet His Majesty pressing me to receive his engagement, accordingly as it was signified to him in his letter and votes from the Parliament, and lest any obstruction of the treaty should seem to lie upon me, which His Majesty told me that in case of any such delay, he must charge me with. Upon most serious consideration, though in much doubtfulness, I resolved my duty to accept thereof; and, accordingly, His Majesty has given the engagement of his royal word to me (before Sir Peter Killigrew and other gentlemen), as is expressed in my last instructions; and this I now acquaint you with, in order to your commands.

And, withal, I must let you know that, according to my best understanding of my said instructions, I am in as great, or greater, straits than before what is intended by the Parliament in His Majesty's being in the same state and freedom as he was in when he was last at Hampton Court, I having not been there during His Majesty's said last residence in that place. Which makes me importune you that more direct and positive instructions may be speeded unto me, and that I may not be left unto generals in a matter I no better understand. In the meantime I shall apply myself, as much as in me lies, to as careful an observance of the instructions as possible may be.

His Majesty has told me, and so has divers of his servants who then and there attended him, that there was no prohibition to any whatever to come unto him; which, according to the limitations in my last instructions, I hold myself bound to observe; and also all communication of letters to and from any place whatever was not then hindered him. And His Majesty further told me that he now expects the same freedom, which I thought my duty to acquaint you with, and which I shall not hinder without particular instructions to that purpose.

Sir, if in anything I have mistaken your instructions, I beseech you to believe that (if the fault be not in the ambiguity of the instructions themselves) it is in my disability to judge them, and not through want of desire exactly to observe your commands; and that you shall ever find, when you shall please to give them me, so as I may best let you know it.

But, sir, I humbly beg leave here again to importune you that some better provision may be made for the great and weighty affair yet upon my hands by commissioners of Parliament as formerly, or otherwise, as to you may seem best. And this I desire not so much by reason of the burden which has so long and does still so heavily press me, but because of an inability I find in myself to perform to the advantage of your and the Kingdom's services, that part which I yet see behind in this my employment. And truly, sir, my sense of this is such that altogether, by the great blessing of God beyond my expectance and wonder, it has pleased Him alone to carry me well through the seeming worst part of it, I hope with that due respect to His Majesty and faithfulness to the Parliament as will now put to shame my many malicious traducers. Yet my earnest desires are that, for future, better provision may be made for this so great concernment.

But, sir, however you shall please to determine me, because of your commands to me for the security of His Majesty's person from being taken off this island (in which point, in these times of danger, especially in regard to the revolted ships, there cannot be too much security), I humbly offer it that, if possible, a considerable force of shipping may be sent out of Portsmouth for the guard of this coast. If not, that two or three of the least of

them may be ordered to ride at places most convenient about this island to command and examine passage boats; that so during the time of treaty (to avoid the confluence of people which otherwise will not be kept off) no persons whatever, except inhabitants of this island, may be suffered to land without sufficient passes. To which purpose I also intend to have strict guard upon every landing place. And further, that you will give order for the sending over one hundred horse and five hundred foot more, to continue during the time of treaty, with sufficient provisions of money, so that the county may be constantly preserved from being burdened by them.

Sir, I shall also acquaint you that although the votes of 16 November last are positively taken off, yet I do not hear particularly of the revoking those of the first of January, which are more strict, for the securing His Majesty in this castle, besides some others to the same effect, which I also understand are not taken off. But in the general vote of His Majesty having the same liberty as at Hampton Court, which I humbly offer to your consideration. And with it this also, that orders may be forthwith given for horses, and accommodation for His Majesty's riding abroad; and that augmentation may be made to the former allowance for provision for the King's family, the company being like to be much more than formerly. But I beseech you that it may be so made that the two companies, gunners and other officers, paid out of the former allowance, may not be unprovided for, especially at this time. And that moneys for what is past, according to the £1000 per month, may be speedily sent down for paying our debts; which, for want of timely supplies, are now grown very great.

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:5–10.