

# REQUEST FOR INSTRUCTIONS

Colonel Robert 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, 28 November 1648

Since my last to you, Colonel Ewer<sup>1</sup> is come into this island. At his coming, I demanded of him to know what instructions he had, and from whom, because, though I held myself obliged to obey the General's<sup>2</sup> commands in going to him, yet I had a trust upon me from the Parliament, no way, as I conceived, relating to the General or army, which I must be faithful unto to the utmost of my power, and careful (as much as in me lay) that the Parliament's and Kingdom's services might not be prejudiced in my absence.

Upon which he produced a letter, signed John Rushworth,<sup>3</sup> and in the name and behalf of the General Council of the Army, ordering him to come hither. And if in case I should according to the commands of the General's letter repair to the headquarters, then he to secure the person of the King in Carisbrooke Castle, or otherwise, as he should think fit. And in case I should refuse, then to do as God should direct him; giving him power to call over other forces. And if he should so secure him, then if he found any hazard in being here, to give them notice, and to bring the King over the water.

This was the substance, to my best remembrance, of his said instructions. To which I gave him an answer to this effect, that I knew none who even had authority over me as a soldier but the General (except the Parliament), neither did I hold myself obliged, or would I give obedience, to any other authority or person whatever. But that to the matter of his directions, as I conceived, I ought not to give obedience to any save to the Parliament alone, who had entrusted me, and only had power so to do. But further plainly told him that if he, or any other, should so proceed to violate my instructions from the Parliament whilst I continued so in trust, I held myself bound in conscience, honor, and duty to oppose them to my utmost. And accordingly, God assisting me, I resolved to do. This was the substance of my answer, upon which he is resolved forthwith to go along with me to the headquarters.

This I hold my duty to acquaint you with, and also what order I have taken in my absence for the preventing such practices, as you will perceive by the enclosed directions and instructions (which I assure you is the all in my power to do) that, upon the consideration of it, you may take such further order, in an affair of so high concernment, as to your wisdom shall seem best.

Whatever the event be, I can say with the testimony of a good conscience that in this whole weighty business, which has now more than twelve months been upon me, I have, as in the presence of God, faithfully and honestly discharged my trust to the best advantages of your services, and not more in anything than in this. And if for a reward of it, and all other hazard, labor, and blood I have undergone and spent in your services, I may now receive a discharge from you of this burden, so much too heavy for me, I shall rest fully satisfied, bless my God, and thank you.

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:66–68.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaac Ewer (c. 1612–1650) had served as lieutenant-colonel in Hammond's Fourth Regiment of Foot (1646–1648).

<sup>2</sup> Sir Thomas Fairfax (1612–1671), Lord General

<sup>3</sup> John Rushworth (c. 1612–1690), Secretary of the New Model Army