

tend to obtain Redress. They have also submitted to Consideration whether any people can be said to enjoy any Degree of Freedom if the Crown in addition to its undoubted Authority of constituting a Governor, should also appoint him such a Stipend as it shall judge proper without the Consent of the People and at their Expence, and whether while the Judges of the Land and other Civil Officers in the Province hold not their Commission during good Behavior, their having Salaries appointed by the Crown independent of the People hath not a Tendency to subvert the Principles of Equity, and endanger the Happiness & Security of the Subject.

In addition to these Measures, the House have wrote a Letter to their Agent Mr. De Berdt,¹ the Sentiment of which he is directed to lay before the Ministry, wherein they take Notice of the Hardship of the Act for preventing Mutiny and Desertion, which requires the Governor and Council to provide enumerated Articles for the King's marching Troops, and the People to pay the Expence; and also the Commission of the Gentlemen appointed Commissioners of the Customs to reside in America, which authorizes them to make as many appointments as they think fit, and to pay the Appointees what Sums they please, for whose mal-conduct they are not accountable; from whence it may happen that officers of the Crown may be multiplied to such a Degree as to become dangerous to the Liberation of the People, by Virtue of a Commission which doth not appear to this House to derive any such advantages to Trade as many have been led to expect.

These are the Sentiments and Proceedings of this House, and as they may have too much reason to believe that the Enimies [*sic*] to the Colonies have represented them to His Majesty's Ministers and the Parliament as factious, Disloyal, & having a Disposition to make themselves independent of the Mother Country, they have taken Occasion in the most humble Terms to assure His Majesty and His Ministers that with regard to the People of this Province, and as they doubt not of all the colonies the Charge is unjust.

The House if fully satisfied that your Assembly is too generous and enlarged in Sentiment to believe that this Letter proceeds from an Ambition of taking the Lead, or dictating to the other Assemblies; They freely submit their Opinion to the Judgement of others, and shall take it kind in your House to point out to them anything further which may be thought necessary.

This House cannot conclude without expressing their firm Confidence in the King, our common Head and Father, that the united and dutiful Supplications of His distressed American Subjects will meet with His Royal and favourable acceptance.

Signed by the Speaker
[Thomas Cushing]

A true copy²

Sam^l Adams, Clerk

¹Dennis De Berdt (d. 1770) helped to secure the repeal of the Stamp Act.

²The letter received by the North Carolina speaker is in the Manuscript Records, Office of the Secretary of State.

Edmund Fanning
to William Tryon

PRO CO 5/312, ff. 24-25b
CR-VII, 713-716

Hillsborough Ap^r 23^d 1768

May it please Your Excellency
Sir

I want Words to express the Concern I feel, while I communicate to your Excellency the wretched and deplorable Situation of this County; this my present uneasiness is greatly aggravated from a Sense of the Concern it must give you, in being informed that the late orderly & well regulated County of Orange, is now (O my favourite County & People how art thou fallen) the very nest and Bosom of Rioting & rebellion. The People are now in every part & Corner of the County meeting, conspiring, & confederating by Solemn Oath & open Violence to refuse the payment of Taxes and to prevent the Execution of Law, Threatning Death and immediate Destruction to myself & others. Requiring Settlements of the public, Parish, & County Taxes, to be made before their Leaders. Clerks Sheriffs Registers Attornies and all Officers of every Degree and Station to be arraigned at the Bar of their Shallow Understand[ing] & to be punished and regulated at their Will, & in a Word for them to become the Sovereign Arbiters of Right & Wrong. This Contagion & Spirit of Rebellion (for surely Sir it is rank Rebellion) took its Rise in the lower part of Anson spread itself into Orange and encouraged by some of the principal Men of Cumberland (as I am informed and verily believe) become considerable. On my return from Salisbury Sup^r Court hearing of the conspiracy I convened Four of the Head Men before me & expatiated to them on the Folly and Madness of their Conduct & Three out of Four readily acknowledged the Impropriety of their Conduct, Confessed a clear Conviction of their Error, & made me a Promise to put an end to it as far as in their Power. I dismissed them and expected to hear no more of it. But alas I find it was not to be effected. The Restless Tools of Faction were & continue still at work in their Dark Cabals. The Contagion (I am sorry to say it) is by indefatigable pains & Industry extending itself far & wide through this part of the Province. For Your Excellencys Information of the Manner of its taking its Rise here again after I went to Halifax and the several Stages of it since & the proceedings had thereon I beg leave to Refer your Excellency to the inclosed copies of several Letters. I was

unwilling as recommended in the Letter from M^r Hart¹ & M^r Nash² to Trouble your Excellency before I came into the County Anticipating the pain I judged your Excellency would feel, and desirous if by any Means practicable to suppress the Insurrection without trouble of your Excellency, And I own, Sir, I thought it too inglorious a Conduct in me & unworthy of the Command that I am honoured with by your Excellency for to go immediately to Brunswick without Returning to my Regiment. I therefore set out from Halifax the 20th & arrived here last night (retarded by heavy Rains & great Freshes) and this Day got all the Information in my power of the State Situation & Number of the Regulators (as they are please[d] to call themselves, tho' by Lawyers they must be termed Rebels & Traitors) and learn that on this Day they have a grand Association & that on the 3^d Day of May they are to environ the Town with Fifteen Hundred Men & then to execute their Vengeance on me and if not Satisfied in every Particular to their Desire (which is impossible) why then to lay the Town in Ashes &c but I cannot believe them any thing like so numerous neither do I apprehend such inevitable Death as the Universal Panick & the popular Cry seems to suggest & Threaten. Col^o Gray³ Maj^r Lloyd⁴ Cap^t Hart Adjutant Nash & Cap^t Thackston⁵ seem to think not above One Hundred Men can be raised in this County who will with Spirit & Courage oppose them, for say they those who are not for them will not fight against them. Unluckily for the Cause of Government the County Court is next Week to be held in this Town and considering the prevalency of that party & the impossibility of enforcing any Order among the tumultuous throng and Rabble which ever attend Courts, I thought it most advisable to be silent until Tomorrow Week when in the Evening I propose to send off a Detachm^t of the Trusty & loyal few that I can command for to apprehend Three or Four of the Principals under the Cover of the Night, & to have them brought Instantly to Town where on the Tuesday following, I verily expect an Attack from the whole united force of the Regulators or Rebels at which Time I intend, as do also the aforementioned Officers to *bravely repulse them, or nobly Die*. If I can rally force to withstand One Attack I then shall plume myself as being the Commanding Officer in this County & then shall expect to be joined immediately by Numbers who now think it desperately Dangerous and almost inevitable Death to oppose them, so powerful are they thought, & so alarming are the Apprehension of the Populace at this Time—and was it not that they will be Awed by their Guilt & We supported & encouraged by our Loyalty & attachment to the Constitution & Government our defeat would be indubitably certain & sure. They say they can Command Powerful & Numerous Aids from Anson Rowan & Mecklenberg and if so, it becomes the important Concern of Governm^t and undoubtedly my Duty early to apply to your Excellency for Orders to raise the Militia and if any will obey (which I think they will some

few) to give them Battle immediately, & if any Advantage can be once gained the Show will be over I am convinced. And to do that, I think (tho' almost singly) that I need Nothing but your Excellency's express Orders which I hope to be honoured with by three O'clock in the afternoon on Sunday the first of May next. I should considering the shortness of the Time & Exigency of Affairs have waited for another Visit, If the legality of my Raising the Militia on an Insurrection, had not been doubted without your Excellency's Express Orders & Directions under our present Militia Law. If any dangerous attempts are made at any Time I shall immediately dispatch an Express with the particulars & shall notwithstanding y^e threats of those Traitorous Dogs bound to stand by & Assist each other by the most Solemn Oaths oppose them with Resolution and Courage, and if I have but your Excellency's Orders I can't but flatter myself with Success from the few Recruits that can be raised even among ourselves, tho' it is, except by Three or Four chosen Leaders, thought impracticable, but if from this Acc^t of the Matter it is thought fit by Your Excellency *I wish to make the Experiment*. I think it shamefull, and I hope unnecessary to call in the Aid of other forces to subdue the Rebels of our own County but I shall wait & obey your Excellency's commands with punctuality & pleasure.

I thank Your Excellency for favour by M^r Sathburn,⁶ & shall endeavour to make his stay in Orange as safe & agreeable as possible I have not seen that Gentlemⁿ as yet but expect Him to dine with me tomorrow—my Duty to Her Excellency M^{rs} Tryon & do me the favour to believe that I am most cordially and sincerely with the highest Sense of Gratitude and Respect most absolutely at Your Excellency's full Command

Edm^d Fanning

¹ Thomas Hart, Hillsborough, was grandfather of Thomas Hart Benton. As commissary officer for Tryon's troops he had occasion to deal directly with the governor on numerous occasions; he was resented so much by the Regulators that they whipped him along with others during the September, 1770, term of court at Hillsborough. Powell and others, *Regulators*, 80, 81, 184, 246, 401.

² Francis Nash (1742-1777) had aroused the hostility of the Regulators because of his position as a justice of the peace and clerk of the county court. The clerk's office in colonial times was a particularly lucrative one; however, Nash twice offered (1766 and 1768) to refund fees to anyone who felt abused by his charges. Nash was captain of militia and his first actual service was at the Battle of Alamance. After Alamance Nash resumed his role in the political life of Orange County, serving as its representative in the assembly and rising to prominence in the army. He became a brigadier general of the First Regiment of the Continental Line and suffered a hero's death at the Battle of Germantown. Ashe, *Biographical History*, III, 292-302.

³ John Gray was one of the earliest residents of Orange County. He had helped to survey the southern boundary of the Granville tract and had at the same time acquired valuable land for himself. His home was the meeting place for the first Orange County court, and Gray was a vestryman for St. Matthew's Parish when it was organized. For several terms he served as the county's assemblyman, was captain of the militia, sheriff, and justice of the peace. At times he held several offices at once. At the time this letter was written Gray