

*In the presentation of Lord Bellomont's letter below, I have added paragraphs to make for easier reading. I have also bracketed two statements that were included in the original (America and West Indies series) presentation of the letter, but seem to be "notes". Pam Garrett, December 2015*

## **Letter: Lord Bellomont to Secretary Vernon, October 1700**

Oct. 18. 1700

N. York.

Governor the Earl of Bellomont to Mr. Sec. Vernon. The Advice frigate brought me the favour of your letter of June 26. I am heartily sorry for my Lord Sommers's being remov'd from his employment, and wish it may be as worthily fill'd by a successor, and the King as well and faithfully serv'd by another as he was by him. I am also extremely troubled for the Duke of Shrewsbury's indisposition of health that has forc'd him to resign his employment.

[Refers to his conferences with the Five Nations and success in bringing the Eastern Indians to declare for a subjection with them to the King.] This I cannot but thinke a very valuable service to England; but for ought I see, I must set a value on my services and recompense 'em myselfe, for any care that's taken of me at home.

I send you all the writings I have that any way relate to Kidd. The original articles are written with Mr. Livingston's own hand. There's no intricacy in all that matter. The design of the owners of that ship I have reason to know was very honest, and the successe I believe had been very fortunate and serviceable, had we not been persuaded by Mr. Livingston to put the ship under the command of a most abandon'd villain, for we were all of us strangers to Kidd, but imploy'd him upon Mr. Livingston's recommendation of his bravery and honesty, but he broke articles with us at the very first dash, for instead of sayling to those seas which pyrat ships frequent, he came hither directly to New York and loyter'd away severall moneths, and Mr. Livingston, who was got hither from England before me, told me at my arrival here that there was a private contract between Col. Fletcher and Kidd, whereby Kidd oblig'd himself to give Fletcher 10,000l., if he made a voyage. Mr. Livingston told me this was whisper'd about, but he could not get such light into it as to be able to prove there was such a bargain between 'em. That it was so, is probable enough, because Col. Fletcher suffer'd and countenanc'd Kidd's beating for voluntiers in this town, and taking with him about a 100 able sailors, which is a losse to this country to this day. I must say in justification of the noble Lords concern'd with me, that I do not believe any of 'em ever saw Kidd; and for my own part I never saw him above thrice, and Mr. Livingston came with him every time to my house in Dover Street. The whole matter of the outset of that ship was transacted between Mr. Livingston and me.

The 100 recruits which the Advice frigate has brought are very good, but the officers and souldiers mighty uneasy for want of full English pay, which I desire you will please to obtain the King's consent to; otherwise I must be forc'd to resign these Governments. 'Tis really a great wrong and oppression to them to have a deduction of 30 per cent. struck off from their pay in a

country that's full twice as dear to live in as London. If I were capable of pocketing almost all the 30 per cent. as Col. Fletcher did, I would not urge, as I do, the depriving myself of so beneficial an article, to give it to the officers and souldiers. In plain English, 'tis a great abuse, and much to the King's dishonour it should be continu'd; it has the air of a trick and a fraud upon the poor souldiers, and I will wash my hands of it and of the Government too, unlesse they have full English pay.

I desir'd you about a year and half ago to order Major Ingoldesby to his post; his company is at Albany, and he has been four years absent and taking his pleasure in England. Your taking a short memorandum of such a thing were not amisse. 'Tis an unpardonable neglect in that man to be away so long from his duty. His wife and children are starving at Albany, and he is so inhumane as not to look after or supply 'em in the least. I wish you would please to get him exchange'd for some honest, sober Captain in one of the Regiments in England, for he is a very rash indiscreet man, and had a principall hand in the execution of Leisler and Milburn.

I hope you and the rest of the Ministers will move the King in my favour, that I may have some compensation for the 1,000l. a year the King was pleas'd to bestow me of the Irish forfeitures, and which the Parliament have depriv'd me of, by the Act which resumes that and other grants of those forfeitures.

[Repeats news of the loss of the Rising Sun, etc.]

**I have a parcel of the swearingest and drunkenest souldiers in my company that ever were known in the world, and 'tis not possible it should be otherwise; both the Lieutenants Fletcher left me keep tap houses; one of 'em has the King's Commission and t'other Fletcher's. I know 'tis against the articles of war that officers should keep publick houses, but really till now very lately that the King pays the companies here again, I could not avoid winking at the Lieutenants taking that ill course for a livelyhood for them and their families; but the ill habit of it I find remains with them, and I cannot break them of it. But what is yet worse I cannot look on them as friends to me, or any design of mine for the King's service. The Council of Trade direct me to make an experiment in working some naval stores here with the souldiers. I cannot go about it with such officers, who, I believe, would rather traverse me in such a design than further it, and would I fear stir up a mutiny among the souldiers, if I should propose to 'em the working at Naval Stores for the King. I am not for breaking these Lieutenants, but exchanging them for honest good Lieutenants in some of the regiments in England. My first Lieutenant's name is Peter Mathews, bred up from a child with Col. Fletcher, and 'tis at his house that the angry people of this town have a club and hold their cabals. My second Lieutenant's name is John Bulkeley. There is also another Lieutenant in Major Ingoldesby's company, whose name is Mathew Shank, a most sad, drunken sott, and under no good character for manhood. I desire also he may be exchanged for a better man from England. I beg you will not forget this exchange of the three Lieutenants and of Major Ingoldesby, otherwise I have no businesse to stay in this country; and, to be plain with you, I would not stay a week here, were it not that I have a mind to**

accomplish the designs I am upon, for the service of England, viz., the securing the affections of our Five Nations and drawing new nations of Indians under the obedience of his Majesty, building the fort in the Onondage's country, and furnishing the navy and all the King's dominions with Naval Stores and ship-timber. All which things, it I can bring 'em to bear, may I hope passe for essential services.

I give a very good reason in my letter to the Council of Trade for taking off the 30l. per cent., the present deduction from the souldiers' pay, for I offer to pay the extraordinary, as chaplains, surgeons, gunners, matrosses and storekeeper's pay out of the profits I shall make by turning that money in trade, which I desire you to use as an argument to move the King to consent to full English pay for these officers and souldiers. I desire you will please to deliver my inclosed letter to the King. 'Tis not so much a letter of businesse as complement; I send you a copy of it, for your own perusall alone.

Signed, Bellomont. Endorsed, R. Dec. 9, 1700. Holograph. 6 pp. Enclosed,

[source] America and West Indies: October 1700, 16-19', in Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, Volume 18, 1700, ed. Cecil Headlam (London, 1910), pp. 567-611  
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol18/pp567-611>  
[accessed 26 November 2015].

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Richard Coote, Lord Bellomont in database](#)

[Link to Peter Mathews in database](#)

Note – A blog post is planned for the Spring of 2016, titled Peter Mathews – Tavern Keeper. It will give further detail on the happenings at the Mathews' "Tavern". After publication, it will be listed under [Peter Mathews in the database](#).