

APPENDIX G

INSTRUCTIONS TO LORD MACARTNEY, SEPT. 8, 1792

MY LORD,

Having to signify to your Excellency His Majesty's commands and Instructions on the subject of the Embassy to which he has been pleased to appoint you, I shall introduce them by recalling to your attention the occasion and subject of this measure.

A greater number of His Majesty's Subjects than of any other Europeans have been trading for a considerable time past in China—The commercial intercourse between several Nations and that great Empire has been preceded, accompanied or followed by Special communications with its Sovereign—others had support of Missionaries who from their eminence in Science or ingenuity in the Arts were frequently admitted to the familiarity of a curious and polished Court, and which Missionaries in the midst of their cares for the propagation of their faith are not supposed to have been unmindful of the views and interests of their country, while the English traders remained unaided, and, as it were, unavowed at a distance so remote as to admit of a misrepresentation of the national character and importance, and where too their occupation was not held in that esteem which ought to procure them safety and respect.

Under these circumstances it would become the dignity and character of His Majesty to extend his paternal regard to these his distant Subjects, even if the Commerce and prosperity of the Nation were not concerned in their success, and to claim the Emperor of China's particular protection for them with that weight which is due to the requisition of one great Sovereign from another.

A free communication with a people, perhaps the most singular upon the Globe, among whom civilization has existed and the Arts have been cultivated through a long series of Ages with fewer interruptions than elsewhere is well worthy also of this Nation which saw with pleasure and applauded with gratitude the several Voyages undertaken already by His Majesty's command and at the public expense in the pursuit of knowledge and for the discovery and observation of distant countries and manners.

The extent and value of the British Dominions in India, which connect us in some degree with every part of that country, point out also the propriety of establishing sufficient means of

1792]

Appendix G

233

representation and transaction of business with our principal neighbours there.

The measures lately taken by Government respecting the Tea Trade having more than trebled the former legal importation of this article into Great Britain, it is become particularly desirable to cultivate a friendship and increase the communication with China which may lead to such a vent throughout that extensive Empire, of the manufactures of the mother country and of our Indian Territories as beside contributing to their prosperity will out of the Sales of such produce furnish resources for the Investment to Europe now requiring no less an annual sum than one million four hundred thousand pounds.

Hitherto, however, Great Britain has been obliged to pursue the Trade with that Country under circumstances the most discouraging, hazardous to its Agents employed in conducting it and precarious to the various interests involved in it. The only place where His Majesty's Subjects have the privilege of a Factory, is Canton. The fair competition of the market is there destroyed by Associations of the Chinese—Our Super-cargoes are denied open access to the Tribunals of the Country, and to the equal execution of its Laws, and are kept altogether in a most arbitrary state of depression, ill suited to the importance of the concerns, which are entrusted to their care, and scarcely compatible with the regulations of Civilized Society.

Whether these evils have arisen from any settled policy of the Imperial Government, or from any ill founded jealousy of our national influence, or whether they are created merely by the corruption and abuses of a distant Provincial Administration, it will be your business to ascertain, as it will be among the chief objects of your present mission to endeavour to obtain a remedy for them, and you will render an acceptable service to your Country, if you shall be successful in the accomplishment of His Majesty's wishes which I have His Royal commands to impart to you together with such further instructions as may seem best calculated to promote the object of your mission. At the same time you may proceed in the reliance that in an undertaking both new and delicate and liable to be influenced by various contingencies which may arise in its process, every reasonable latitude will be allowed to your own discretion.

A common opinion has prevailed that the Chinese in general are studious to avoid any intimate connection or intercourse with Europeans, and that a similar principle operates upon the Imperial Government of Peking—However, although commercial jealousy aided by the tyranny and corruption of distant Delegates under a despotic Sovereign and the general depravity of the Inhabitants may have had that effect in the Province of

Canton, the representations of various Travellers afford the strongest reason to believe that the Emperor himself is accessible, that the reception of Foreigners at Pekin is courteous, whatever opinions they may entertain on the policy of encouraging foreign trade of which even at this moment, it must be confessed, we are extremely in doubt.

If political jealousy were the chief principle to excite such alarm in the Chinese as should lead them to discourage the entrance of foreigners, it is probable it would apply with singular force against the Russians, who, from the propinquity of their Dominions, the reputed greatness of their power, and the danger of their leaguings with the Princes of those Tartar countries which have sent forth the former conquerors of China, would be most likely in imagination at least to cause distrust in the reigning Government, and might possibly affect its security.

The contrary may be inferred from the admission of the Russian Embassy to Pekin under Peter the first, the subsequent residence of a Russian Agent at Pekin, and from the commercial intercourse frequently allowed since, as well indeed as from the reputed wisdom of the Chinese Administration; and a national character is not to be formed, nor the dispositions of the Superior Government estimated from the practices of a Seaport situated at the most distant extremity from the Metropolis, and a Province formerly the seat of Pirates and Robbers.

But if contrary to these suppositions and inferences, such jealousy, from whatever cause it may arise, should be found to exist, it will depend upon your management to obviate it by declarations the most free and unqualified, that in seeking to improve our connections with China, we have no views but the general interests of humanity, the mutual benefit of both nations, and the protection of our Commerce under the Chinese Government, subject nevertheless to its Laws and regulations, and formed upon a permanent principle equally beneficial to the subjects of both countries.

It is supposed that former endeavours made by the English, or other European Companies, to represent their grievances at the Court of Pekin, and to obtain defined privileges for their Trade, have failed from the intrigues of the Mandarines and Merchants of Canton, and from the inferior character of the persons who have been sent on such commissions. It has therefore been determined to attempt an Embassy to the Emperor himself, in the name of His Majesty The King of Great Britain. In which view it is presumed that a person of your Lordship's rank, who has already been honored and entrusted by the King in Stations of great trust and power, who has been successfully employed for the similar purpose of cementing friendship and

regulating commerce with the Russian Empire, and has been appointed to the Government of the British Dominions in India, would be most likely to meet with a favorable reception from a high minded people, accustomed to think lightly of the commercial character. The propriety of fixing this Embassy on a person thus dignified is enforced by the decided opinion of those who have been most experienced in the Company's concerns at Canton, and who have been Witnesses of the vexations under which they labour.

I observe that in the year 1753 an Ambassador from the King of Portugal sent for the purpose of obtaining some privileges for the Church, was allowed to proceed without interruption from Canton to Pekin, and was treated with great honor, but His Majesty leaves that to your own discretion whether to pursue that route or not. You must however be aware that every obstacle is likely to be thrown in your way from that quarter.

Objections of a similar nature would lie against your proceeding with a Russian Caravan, and the newly discovered communication through Thibet from Bengal seems too long and hazardous, as well as doubtful in the result.

It may therefore be better to proceed if possible directly by sea to some port on the east or north east coast of the Chinese Empire and to request a safe conduct for your advance from such port to the Capital in order to deliver your credentials with the Letter from your Royal Master to His Imperial Majesty. This precaution will be absolutely necessary, if, as I presume to be the case, that no Ambassador enters the Chinese Dominions without permission previously obtained.

But it is probable that before you reach the Coast of China you will receive such information from the Commissioners who were sent by the Court of Directors in the last ships to Canton on the subject of the notification made of the intended Embassy as will determine your route.

If it shall be absolutely necessary to stop at some Southern port of China before you proceed to the Northward, you will touch at Macao or Canton, where you will require and collect by the Company's Council, or by private enquiry such facts and information as may be useful to you in the prosecution of the objects of your Embassy, and receive such further aid as may be necessary to enable you to proceed from thence to the northward. If some cogent reason should occur to render an approach to Pekin by a northern port ineligible you will be under the necessity of proceeding by land from Canton, and must require such further aid and information as may be necessary to enable the Embassy to pursue that route.

His Majesty from his earnest desire to promote the present

undertaking and in order to give the greatest dignity to the Embassy has been graciously pleased to order one of His Ships of War to convey you and your suite to the Court of China. With the same view he has ordered a military guard to attend your person to be composed of chosen men from the Light Dragoons, Infantry and Artillery with proper Officers under the command of Major Benson whom he has determined to raise to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel upon this occasion. This guard will add splendor and procure respect to the Embassy, the order, appearance and evolutions of the Men may convey no useless idea of our Military character and discipline, and if it should excite in the Emperor a desire of adopting any of the exercise or manœuvres among his Troops, an opportunity thus offers to him for which a return of good offices on his part is naturally to be expected. It will be at your option to detach one of the Lieutenants of the Ship, or of your guard in His Majesty's uniform to accompany the Messengers whom you will send to announce at Pekin your arrival on the Coast, if you should approach that Capital by Sea.

Besides the Chinese Interpreters whom you have already procured, you will perhaps meet in your progress some Portuguese, Spanish, or Italian Missionary or other intelligent person free from national attachment or prejudices, who may be useful to be employed in your service.

Should your answer be satisfactory, and I will not suppose the contrary, you will then assume the character and public appearance of His Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary, and proceed with as much ceremony as can be admitted, without causing a material delay, or incurring any unreasonable expense; you will procure an audience as early as possible after your arrival, conforming to all ceremonials of that Court which may not commit the honor of your Sovereign or lessen your own dignity, so as to endanger the success of your negotiation.

Whilst I make this reserve I am satisfied you will be too prudent and considerate to let any trifling punctilio stand in the way of the important benefits which may be obtained by engaging the favorable disposition of the Emperor and his ministers. You will take the earliest opportunity of representing to His Imperial Majesty that your Royal Master already so justly celebrated in foreign Countries on account of the voyages projected under his immediate auspices for the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge, was from the same disposition desirous of sending an Embassy to the most civilized as well as most ancient and populous nation in the world, and to communicate and receive the benefits which must result from an unreserved and friendly intercourse between that Country and his own.

You will take care to express the high esteem which His Majesty has conceived for the Emperor from the wisdom and virtue with which his career has been distinguished. A like compliment may be made in the event of the death of Kien-long, to the Prince who will be his successor, as he has been in the management of the public affairs for some time.

It is not unlikely that the Emperor's curiosity may lead to a degree of familiarity with you in conversing upon the manners or circumstances of Europe and other countries, and as Despotick Princes are frequently more easy of access than their Ministers and Dependants, you will not fail to turn such contingency to proper advantage. I do not mean to prescribe to you the particular mode of your negotiation, which must be left to your circumspection and the judgement to be formed upon occurrences as they arise; but upon the present view of the matter, I am inclined to believe, that instead of attempting to gain upon the Chinese Administration by representations founded upon the intricacies of either European or Indian politics, you should fairly state, after repeating the general assurances of His Majesty's friendly and pacific inclinations towards the Emperor, and his respect for the reputed mildness of the administration; first, the mutual benefits to be derived from a trade between the two nations, in the course of which we receive, beside other articles, to the amount of twenty millions of pounds weight of a Chinese herb which would find very little vent, as not being in such general use in other countries, European or Asiatic, and for which we return woollens, cottons and other articles useful to the Chinese, but a considerable part is actually paid to China in Bullion.

Secondly that the great extent of our commercial concerns in China requires a place of security as a depot for such of our goods as cannot be sold off or shipped during the short season that is allowed for our Shipping to arrive and depart; and that for this purpose we wish to obtain a grant of a small tract of ground or detached Island, but in a more convenient situation than Canton, where our present Warehouses are at a great distance from our Ships, and where we are not able to restrain the irregularities which are occasionally committed by the Seamen of the Company's Ships, and those of private Traders.

Thirdly, that our views are purely commercial, having not even a wish for territory, that we desire neither fortification nor defence, but only the protection of the Chinese Government for our Merchants or their Agents, in trading or travelling through the country, and a security to us against the encroachment of other powers who might ever aim to disturb our trade; and you must here be prepared to obviate any prejudice which

may arise from the argument of our present dominions in India, by stating our situation in this respect to have arisen without our intending it from the necessity of defending ourselves against the oppressions of the revolted Nabobs, who entered into cabals to our prejudice with other nations of Europe, and disregarded the privileges granted to us by different Emperors, or by such other arguments as your own reflections upon this subject will suggest.

This topic I have reason to believe will be very necessary to enforce by every means in your power, as it is the great object of other European Nations to inspire not only the Indian powers, but likewise the Emperor and Ministers of China with an idea of danger in countenancing the Subjects of Great Britain, as if it were the intention of this Country to aim at extending its territory in every quarter; as nothing can be more untrue than these representations, it will not be difficult for you to find arguments which may counteract the effect of them.

If any favorable opportunity should be afforded to your Excellency it will be advisable that the difficulties with which our Trade has long laboured at Canton, should be represented. But in making such a representation you will endeavour to convince the Emperor, that it is far from His Majesty's design to attribute any act of misconduct to persons employed under the Chinese Government, but with a view only to apprise His Imperial Majesty that such difficulties do exist in full confidence that from his wisdom and justice they will not hereafter be experienced.

Should a new establishment be conceded, you will take it in the name of the King of Great Britain—you will endeavour to obtain it on the most beneficial terms, with a power of regulating the police and exercising jurisdiction over our own dependants for which competent powers would be given so as effectually to prevent or punish the disorders of our people which the Company's Supracargoes in their limited sphere of action must see committed with impunity—Should it be required that no Native Chinese be subject to be punished by our jurisdiction, or should any particular modification of this power be exacted, it is not material ultimately to reject either of these propositions provided British Subjects can be exempted from the Chinese jurisdiction for Crimes, and that the British Chief or those under him be not held responsible, if any culprit should escape the pursuit of justice, after search has been made by British and Chinese Officers acting in conjunction.

If the Emperor should be inclined to allow such an establishment, great care should be taken in fixing upon the situation, that it may be such as may suit the safety and convenience of

our Shipping, that it may facilitate the vent of the goods we may import there; and that it may be near the countries where the best sorts of Teas are produced, and which are described as lying between the 27th and 30th degrees of North Latitude; but admitting the choice to be granted, perhaps it may even then be impossible to embrace in it the several objects to which I have adverted—the principle, however, having been once admitted by the Chinese Government, it is hoped that Your Excellency might by good management succeed in obtaining a second establishment by which all these objects may possibly be attained. I mention these points as being extremely important in themselves, at the same time I am sensible that the choice of a place or places, if you should be so fortunate as to have the option left to you, must be governed by a variety of considerations to which few, if any in this country can be totally competent, and you must therefore be regulated by the best information you are able to obtain from persons you will meet with abroad conversant on the subject, or by circumstances to arise as you proceed in the business.

If on the other hand all your attempts to obtain a new establishment, should be decidedly ineffectual, you must turn your principal attention to the relief of our present embarrassments at Canton, by an extension of our privileges, and a revision of the proceedings which have taken place to our prejudice and discredit; and whatever may be the decision of the Imperial Government, unless, indeed, it should be a rejection of all your requests, it will be desirable to obtain it in writing under such formalities as are usual on such occasions.

It is necessary you should be on your guard against one stipulation which perhaps will be demanded of you, which is that of the exclusion of the Trade of Opium from the Chinese Dominions as being prohibited by the Laws of the Empire—If this subject should come into discussion, it must be handled with the greatest circumspection. It is beyond a doubt that no inconsiderable portion of the Opium raised within our Indian Territories actually finds its way to China; but if it should be made a positive requisition, or an article of any proposed Commercial Treaty that none of that drug should be sent by us to China, you must accede to it rather than risk any essential benefit by contending for a liberty in this respect, in which case the sale of our Opium in Bengal must be left to take its chance in an open market, or to find a consumption in the dispersed & circuitous traffic of the Eastern Seas.

A due sense of the wisdom and justice of the King of Great Britain, which it will be your business to impress, as well as of the wealth and power of this country, and of the genius and

knowledge of its people, may naturally lead to a preferable acceptance of a Treaty of friendship and alliance with us as most worthy of themselves, and in a political light as most likely to be useful to them from our naval force being the only assistance of which they may foresee the occasional importance to them.

In case the Embassy should have an amicable and prosperous termination, it may be proposed to His Imperial Majesty to receive an occasional or perpetual Minister from the King of Great Britain; and to send one on his own part to the Court of London in the assurance that all proper honors will be paid to any person who may be deputed in that sacred character.

During your residence in China it will be an object highly worthy of your attention and best efforts, to endeavour to encrease our Exports to China as well in the assortments usually sent as in any other products or Manufactures of Great Britain and of our Indian territories which might be favorably received by the Chinese. The Directors of the East India Company, who have ordered one of their ships to accompany the Embassy, have shipped on board a great variety of articles of British goods not for the purpose of Sale, but to be dispersed and distributed by you in the most likely manner to excite a taste for and establish the use of such Articles in China. They have also shipped a great variety of patterns and Specimens of our Manufactures, that the Chinese may be able to judge from thence of their quality and perfection, and how far they may be adapted to their climate taste and manners.

You will naturally in the course of your residence in China extend your remarks as far as can be done without exciting jealousy, which must be carefully avoided, to every circumstance likely to throw a light upon the present strength, policy and government of that Empire, now less understood in Europe than they were in the preceding century. It would be likewise desirable to ascertain whether any and what intercourse has taken place of late years between the Emperor of China and any other European State.

You will carry with you some considerable presents for the Emperor and Chief persons of his Court, which you will distribute in such a manner as you may judge most advisable to answer the purposes of your mission. Your Excellency will also in addition to the Specie put on board the *Hindustan* have a credit upon the Factory at Canton for such sum of money, as, it is conceived, will be necessary to answer all contingent purposes.

Besides the persons immediately useful in your negociation you are allowed to take with you others, who being versed in

such sciences and arts as are most esteemed in China, may tend to increase the respect for the country from whence they came, and are no doubt provided with the materials and instruments necessary for making the most curious and striking experiments, especially such as from their novelty are not likely to have been formerly exhibited by the Missionaries in China, or not at least upon so extensive a scale. Models of the latest inventions of this Country cannot fail to gratify a curious and ingenious people; and so liberal a procedure may probably obtain in return, a free inspection, as well as models of their numerous inventions, together with accounts and descriptions of their most valuable arts and Manufactures and Specimens of their most useful productions.

With these instructions you will receive a letter from His Majesty especially addressed to the Emperor Kien-long—But as from his great age and infirmities his death has been for some time expected, you will receive another letter to the Emperor of China for the time being.

It is possible that you may find it either necessary or expedient to touch upon the Coast of Japan. That Country produces Tea as good as, and probably cheaper than that of China. The difficulties of trading there, which have so long deterred other nations from attempting it, are now said to have almost ceased.

It is [not] impossible that the competition of the Japan market with that of China might render the Commodities of both places cheaper to the purchaser. The probability of such a resource might at least operate in some degree to facilitate the negociations at Peking.

You will therefore likewise receive a letter addressed to the Emperor of Japan which you will either deliver, send or suppress as circumstances may induce you to think necessary or advisable.

In the small but fertile Kingdom of Cochin China not only Tea but Sugar in great abundance is said to be produced, and exported from thence at a cheaper rate than from any other part of the East or West Indies. The alarming increase in the price of the last article in Europe not only affects the lower class of the people, among whom it has become a necessary of life; but the public revenue, as well in its own diminished consumption, as in that of other taxable articles with which it is used. This consideration renders any Country that is likely to supply the want of it at a reasonable rate an object of attention in the present instance. It is not impossible that in the course of the voyage you are about to undertake, you may have occasion to touch at places where you may, if sufficiently authorized improve our Trade or introduce our Manufactures.

It is therefore thought advisable to give you a general letter and commission to the States and Princes of the East, relying upon your tried prudence and discretion in the use of it; as in general a variety of circumstances may occur upon the spot to which no instructions can be made to apply, His Majesty is willing to entrust Your Excellency with a discretionary power to avail yourself of them, guarding at all times against the possibility of committing either your Sovereign or your Country, and that you will be determined at all events not to put to any hazard the advantages which the East India Company already enjoys in its Commerce with China.

As it is expedient to provide for the contingency of your death, and for the event of your returning to Europe before any person is sent to relieve you, or your occasional absence from the Capital by having a person in the character of resident Minister there, or in case you should find it necessary to send a person in a public character to Japan, Cochin China or elsewhere His Majesty is graciously pleased to grant dormant credentials of Minister plenipotentiary to Sir George Staunton, whom he has already appointed at your request to be his Secretary of the Embassy.

It must at the same time be understood that such credentials are to be used, only in case of your death or absence as above mentioned or by your special appointment and under your directions, and in the exercise of the power therein mentioned, he is strictly to conform to and abide by the instructions addressed to you.

During the continuance of your Embassy, you will take every possible opportunity that may arise of transmitting to me for His Majesty's information an account of your proceedings, and also of communicating with Earl Cornwallis, or the Governor General of Bengal for the time being, with whose views and good efforts for promoting the Trade of India to the East, it is particularly desirable you should co-operate as far as they may not be inconsistent with the present Instructions.

Sincerely wishing your Excellency a prosperous voyage and complete success in the very important objects of it,

I am, &c

(signed) HENRY DUNDAS.

APPENDIX H

INSTRUCTION NOT TO PRESS FOR DEBTS

To His Excellency The Viscount MACARTNEY &c. &c.,
8th Sept., 1792

MY LORD,

I have been repeatedly urged by Mr. Vansittart, Mr. Law and Mr. Smith as well in their own behalf, as in the behalf of others interested in certain Debts said to be due to them by Subjects of the Chinese Government, to direct your Lordship to represent to the Emperor of China the injustice they suffer from those debts not being paid, in the hope of obtaining the interposition of the Emperor for the recovery of those Debts. Your Lordship, I know, is perfectly informed as to the nature of those Debts and likewise of the remonstrances which the Chairman and the Directors of the East India Company have made against your Lordship making any interference on the subject. They state that the Debts were contracted directly against the Laws and authority of the Chinese Government, and they further contend if any such relief as that asked was to be obtained, they know from past experience the effect would be to bring fresh Impositions on the chief articles of Commerce in which they deal with the Country of China. With a due attention to the important interests alleged to be brought into risk by your Lordship's interference, and considering that the East India Company are at the expense of the Embassy, I think it totally incompatible with my duty to give your Lordship the Instructions which I have been requested to give to you. At the same time as the property of British Subjects to so large an amount is stated to be at stake, I cannot receive their representations with indifference. It is therefore my wish that your Lordship should inform yourself with as much accuracy as your situation and local circumstances will enable you to do, of the real state of these transactions, of the disposition of the Emperor of China respecting them, and how far in your judgement any interposition can be used for the recovery of those Debts, without injuring any of the Interests of the East India Company in the exercise of their commerce and connection with China, and I shall be glad to be informed by you what is the result of your observations respecting those particulars.

I am, &c

(signed) HENRY DUNDAS.