

His Majesty, who has been at Kew ever since the melancholy event of the death of Prince Alfred, will not be in town till to-morrow, so that I have not been able to receive his particular commands upon the subject of your letter.

It is, besides, of so important a nature, that you will readily conceive that the opinions of His Majesty's confidential servants must be taken upon it before I can give you an answer.

You will in the meantime assure M. de Vergennes (who cannot but admit the necessity of this short delay), that no time will be lost in taking up the consideration of this business.

If you have an opportunity, I desire that you would acknowledge, with suitable expressions of personal regard for him, my receipt of M. de Vergennes' answer to my letter.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) GRANTHAM.

No. 4.

*Lord Grantham to Mr. FitzHerbert.*

(No. 5. Separate.)

Sir,

*St. James', September 3, 1782.*

AS M. de Vergennes alluded to a negotiation said by him to have been carried on in 1775 and 1776 with Lord Rochford, and broken off by Lord Weymouth, I think it necessary to state to you in a few words what passed on that occasion, and to furnish you with a short précis of the correspondence upon it.

Upon complaint of some damages suffered by French from English fishermen the accounts were stated, examined, and very liberally paid to the entire satisfaction of the Court of France. This incident gave rise to a proposal on the part of France for obtaining a tract of coast on the Island of Newfoundland, nearly on the same pretence as it is asked for in the present instance.

Lord Rochford did never, to the best of my information, encourage it. He did not indeed put an end to it, but wished it might not be pressed at that time on account of the troubles in America.

Lord Weymouth more explicitly declined entering into the negotiation at all, but communicated to M. de Vergennes, through Lord Stormont, the orders given to the Commanders on that station, with which M. de Vergennes appeared at that time quite satisfied.

The question now does not at all relate to the right on either side; it is in reality a question of calculation upon the advantages which France may gain, and of the expediency of granting or rejecting the proposition.

For the sake of stating the question, I have in a separate paper drawn it up, and added some observations upon it; and as M. de Vergennes only considers what he said to you as loose hints and general conversation, you are hereby furnished with something in reply to them, which will, however, show him that the subject has not been unattended to.

As to the grant of the full and complete sovereignty of some island near the coast, such as he describes Belle Isle to be, and the possession of it upon principles so different to those by which in the Treaty of Paris the Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon were given up, it is a matter of such importance that, till it comes on in some more formal shape, an answer to it cannot even be hinted at.

I am, &c.  
(Signed) GRANTHAM.

Inclosure in No. 4.

*Précis of Correspondence.*

Lord Rochford to  
M. Garnier,  
February 12, 1775.

DESIRES a statement of the loss of some French fishermen, in order that they may be indemnified.

M. Garnier,  
February 14, 1775.

Speaks of the sedentary establishment at Bonavista as a reason for hindering the English from settling against both our inclinations.