

Instructions
to
Commissioners
going to Canada

March 20, 1776:

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Commissioners
Going to Canada

[BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, CHARLES CARROLL,
AND SAMUEL CHASE]

Gentlemen, you are with all convenient dispatch to repair to Canada & make known to the people of that country the wishes & intentions of the Congress with respect to them.

Represent to them that the arms of the united colonies having been carried into that province for the purpose of frustrating the designs of the British court against our common liberties, we expect not only to defeat the hostile machinations of governor Carlton against us, but that we shall put it into the power of our Canadian brethren to pursue such measures for serving their own freedom & happiness as a generous love of liberty and sound policy shall dictate to them.

Inform them that in our judgement, their interests and ours are inseparably united — that it is impossible we can be reduced to a servile submission to great Britain without their sharing our fate and on the other hand, if we shall obtain, as we doubt not we shall, a full establishment of our rights, it depends wholly on their choice, whether they will participate with us in those blessings, or shall remain subject to every act of tyranny, which british ministers shall please to exercise over them. Urge all such arguments as your prudence shall suggest to enforce our opinion concerning the mutual interest of the two countries and to convince them of the impossibilities of the war being concluded to the disadvantage of these colonies, if we wisely & vigorously co-operate with each other.

To convince them of the uprightness of our intentions towards them you are to declare that it is our inclination that the people of Canada may set up such a form of government as will be most likely in their judgement to produce their happiness.

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