

Information Against Cotton et al. (16 November 1629)

Sir Robert Heath

Transcript

British Library, Hargrave MS 311, ff. 210r–215v

210r

Lunæ 16.to die Nouembris A[nn]o 5.to Caroli Regis [*Right margin:*M.
Godde,] [*Left margin:* Rob[er]t Heath Rich[ard] Shelton, Thomas
Crewe, Humf[rey] Dauenport Rich[ard] Barkley, Heneage Finch,]

To the kings most excell[en]t Ma[jes]tie

Humbly Informeth yo[u]r most excell[en]t Ma[jes]ti[e] S[i]r Robert Heath kn[igh]t yo[u]r
Ma[jes]t[ies] Attorney generall, That whereas yo[u]r Sacred Ma[jes]ti[e] euer since yo[u]r
happy accesse to the Imperiall Crowne of this realme hath gouerned yo[u]r people with
so much justice & moderation that all yo[u]r good subj[ec]tes doo beare [tha]t reuerence
& loue vnto yo[u]r Sacred person as is justly due to so gracious a Soueraigne And yo[u]r
Ma[jes]ti[e] next to [th]e seruice of Almighty God & the mayntenau[n]ce of his true religion
hath preserued & mayntayned [th]e auntient & fundamentall lawes of this kingdome w[i]thout
Innouac[i]on/.

Yet so it is may it please yo[u]r most excellent Ma[jes]tie that som[m]e malicious persons
who are as yet vnknowne to yo[u]r sayd Attorney being ill affected to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] & to
yo[u]r happy gou[er]nm[en]t & intending to raise false scandalous & seditious rumors ag[ains]t
yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] & yo[u]r gracious gouernment, & intending to raise false scandalous &
seditious rumors against yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] & yo[u]r gracious gou[er]nm[en]t haue of late
wickedly & seditiously framed contriued & written a false seditious & pestilent discourse in
these words followinge / .

The Propositions for yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] seruice conteineth Two
parts The one to secure yo[u]r State & to bridle [th]e p[er]tinacy of
p[ar]liam[en]tes The other to increase yo[u]r Reuenue much more then it is./

Touching the First haueing considered diuers meanes I find non[n]e so important to
strengthen yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] regall Authoritie ag[ains]t all opposic[i]ones or practises of
troublesome Spirites & to bridle them then to fortifye yo[u]r kingdome by haueing a Fortresse
in euery cheife Towne & imp[or]tant place thereof furnished with Ordinance munic[i]on &
faithfull men as they ought to bee with all other Circumstances fitt to be digested in a busines
of this nature, Ordering withall [th]e trayned soldiers of [th]e Countie to bee vnited in one
dependancy with the said Fortes, aswell to secure their beginning, as to succour them in
occasion of suspect And allso to reteine & keepe their Armes for more security: Whereby
[th]e Countries are no lesse to be brought into subjecc[i]on, then [th]e Cities themselues &
Consequently [th]e whole kingdome Yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty haueing by this Course [th]e power
thereof in yo[u]r owne handes.

The Reasons of these Suggests are these/.

That in policy it is a greater Tye of [th]e people by force & necessity then merely by loue &
affecc[i]on; For by the one [th]e gou[er]nment resteth alwaies

(sure

210v

sure, but by the other noe longer then the people are well contented/ .

[*Left margin:2*] It forceth obstinate subjectes to be no more presumptuous then it pleaseth yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] to p[er]mitt them / .

[*Left margin:3*] That to leaue a State vnfurnished is to giue [th]e bridle thereof to [th]e Subject when by the contrary it resteth onely in the Princes hands /.

[*Left margin:4*] That moderne Fortresses take long tyme in wyning w[i]th such charge & difficulty as no Subjectes in these tymes haue meanes probable to attempt them /.

[*Left margin:5*] That it is a sure remedye against rebellions & popular mutinyes or against forrayne powers because they cannot well succede when by this Course the apparent meanes is taken away to force [th]e kinge & State vpon a doubtfull fortune of a sett battell as was the cause [tha]t mooued [th]e pretended Invasion against [th]e land attempted by [th]e kinge of Spaine in the yeare 1588.

[*Left margin:6*] That yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] gou[er]nment is [th]e more secure by [th]e peoples more subjection & by their Subjection [th]e Gentrye or Parliam[en]tes must be forced to alter their Stile & to be conformable to yo[u]r will & pleasure for their wordes & opposition importeth nothing where [th]e power is in yo[u]r Ma[jes]ties owne hands to doe w[i]th them what you please, being indeed [th]e cheife purpose of his discourse & [th]e Secret intent thereof fitt to be concealed from any English att all either councellor of State or other for these & diuers other Waighty reasons.

It may be considered in this place to make yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] more powerfull & strong some orders to be obserued that are vsed in fortified Countryes, The gouernm[en]t whereof importes as much as [th]e States them selues I meane in tymes of doubt or suspect, w[hi]ch are these/.

[*Left margin:1*] Imprimis that none weare armes or weapons at all either in Citty or Countrye but such as yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] may thinke fitt to priuiledge & they to be enrolled /.

[*Left margin:2*] That as many high wayes as conveniently may be done bee made passable through those Cittyes & townes fortified to constrayne the passengers to trauell through them / .

[*Left margin:3*] That [th]e Soldjers of fortresses are sometymes chosen of another Nation (if Subjectes to [th]e same Prince) but howsoeu[er] not to be borne in [th]e same Prouince or within 40. or 50. Myles of [th]e Fortresses & not to haue freindes or correspon= dencye neere it /

4 That

211r

[*Left margin:4*] That at [th]e gates of each walled towne be appoynted officers not to suffer any unknowen passenger to passe without a Tickett shewing from whence hee cam[m]e & whether to goe & that [th]e gates of each Citty be shutt all night & the keyes kepte by the Major or Gouernor, Also the Inkeepers to deliuer the names of all vnknown passengers that lodge in their houses & if they stay suspiciously att any tyme to present them to [th]e

Gouernors whereby dangerous p[er]sons seeing these strict courses will be more wary of their acc[i]ons & thereby mischeiuous attemptes will be preuented /

Both w[hi]ch doubts are resolued in one & [th]e same reason in respect [tha]t in England each cheife towne com[m]only hath a ruynated castell well seated for strength whose foundac[i]on & stones remayning may be both quickly repayred for his vse & with little change & made strong enough I hope for this purpose w[i]thin [th]e space of one yeare by adding w[i]thall Bulwarkes & Rampires for [th]e ordinance according to [th]e rules of Fortificac[i]on /

The ordanau[n]ce of these fortes may be of Iron not to disfurnish your ma[jes]t[ies] navy or to be a greater charge [th]en is needfull /

To mayntayne yearly these Fortes I make accompt in ordinary pay 3000 men will be sufficient & will require 40000 li. charge p[er] annu[m] or thereaboutes being an expence that Inferior Princes vndergo for their necessary saffety /.

All which pretention added to [th]e Invincible sea force yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] hath already & may haue will make you [th]e most powerfull & obeyed king of [th]e world, w[hi]ch I could likewise confirme by many Examples but I omitt [th]em for breuitye.

And not to confuse yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty with too much matter yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] may find by [th]e scope of this discourse [th]e meanes shewed in generall to bridle yo[u]r Subjects [tha]t may be either discontent or obstinate, So am I likewise to conclude [th]e same intent p[ar]ticularly against [th]e p[er]versnesse of yo[u]r p[ar]liamentes aswell to suppress [tha]t p[er]nitious humor as to avoyd their oppositions against yo[u]r profitt being [th]e Second p[ar]t to be discoursed of /.

And therefore haue first thought fitt for better preuention [th]ereof to make knownen to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty [th]e purpose of a gen[er]all oath w[hi]ch yo[u]r Subj[ec]ts may take for sure avoyding of all rubbes [tha]t may hinder [th]e conclusion of these busynesses /.

It is

211v

It is further meant that no subject vpon payne of high Treason may refuse the same oath contayning onely matter of Alleageance & not scruples of poyntes of Conscience that may giue pretence to be denied.

The effect of the oath is this

That all yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] subjects doo acknowledge you to bee as absolute a kinge & Monarch w[i]thin yo[u]r dominions as is amongst [th]e Christian Princes & yo[u]r dominions^{Prerogative} as greate /.

Whereby you may & shall for yo[u]r selfe by yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] proclamac[i]on aswell as other Soueraigne Princes dooing the like either make lawes or reuers any made w[i]th any other acte so great a Monarch as yo[u]r selfe may doo & that without further consent of a p[ar]liam[en]t or need to recall [th]em att all in such cases / .

Confirming [tha]t [th]e p[ar]liam[en]t in all matters (excepting cases to be sentenced as [th]e highest Court) ought to submitt to yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] will to giue the Negatiue or affirmatiue

conclusion & not to be constrained by his Impertinencies to any Inconvenience appur
=taining to yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] regall authority /.

And this notwithstanding any bad pretence or custome to [th]e contrary in practise w[hi]ch
indeed were fitter to be offered to a Prince Elected w[i]thout other right then to yo[u]r
Ma[jes]t[ie] borne successiue king of England Scotland Fraunce & Ireland & yo[u]r heyres
for euer & so resumed not onely of yo[u]r Subjectes but also of the whole world /.

Howe necessary [th]e dangerous supremacy of p[ar]liam[en]tes vsurpac[i]on is to be
preuenteed [th]e Example of Lewes [th]e 11th kinge of Fraunce doth manifest who found
[th]e like opposition as yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ie] doth & by his wisdomes suppressed it & [tha]t to
[th]e purpose here

Which is not to be put downe altogether Parliam[en]tes and their authority being in many
cases very necessary & fitt, but to abridge [th]em as darr as they seeke to derogate from
yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] regall authority or advancem[en]t of greatnesse /.

The caution in offring [th]e sayd oath may require some pollicy for [th]e easijer passage at
first either by singular or p[ar]ticular tractac[i]on & [tha]t so neere about one tyme ouer [th]e
land as one gou[er]nm[en]t may not knowe what [th]e other intendeth, So it may passe [th]e
easijer by hauing no tyme of combynac[i]on or opposition/.

There is

212r

There is another course also more certayne then his to bringe to passe his oath easily as also
yo[u]r profitt & what els is pretended w[hi]ch here I omitt for breuity by requiring a long
discourse by it selfe & haue sett it downe in p[ar]ticular Instrucc[i]ons to to informe yo[u]r
Ma[jes]t[ie] /

The Second p[ar]te of this discourse is touching yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] p[ro]fitt after yo[u]r
State is secured wherein I shall obserue both some reasonable content to [th]e people as
also consider the great expences [tha]t Princes haue noewadayes more then in tymes past to
mayntayne thei[r] owne greatnesse & safty of their Subjectes who if they haue not witt and
will to consider their owne Interest so much indifferently, yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ie] must repayre
their defectes & force [th]em to it by compulsion, but I hope there shall be no such cause
in poyntes so reasonable to encrease yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] revenue, wherein I sett downe
diuers meanes for yo[u]r gracious Execuc[i]on by such degrees & cautions as yo[u]r greate
wisdomes shall thinke fitt in a busynes of this Nature/.

[*Left margin: 1*] Imprimis the first meanes & course intended to encrease yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies]
Reuenues or p[ro]fitt withall is of greatest consequence & I call it a Decima being so termed
in Italy where in some p[ar]tes it is in vse ymporting the Tenth p[ar]te of all Subjectes estates
to be payd as a yearely rent to [th]eir Prince & aswell monyed men in townes as landed in
[th]e Countryes their values & estates esteemed justly as it is to [th]e true value yet w[i]th
reason to pay it & this is payd yearely in money, w[hi]ch course applyed in England for
yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] seruice may serue in stead of subsidies fifteenes & such like w[hi]ch
in this case are fitt to be released for [th]e Subjectes benefitt & content in the recompence
of [th]e said Decima w[hi]ch will yeild yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ie] more in certainty then they doe
casually by fiue hundred thousand pounds p[er] annu[m] att the least. /

[*Left margin:2*] Item[tha]t when yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] hath gotten money into yo[u]r hands by som[m]e courses to be sett downe it would bee a p[ro]fitable course to encrease yo[u]r Entrate to buy out all Estates & leases vpon yo[u]r owne landes in such sort as they be made no loosers whererby hauing yo[u]r land free & renting it out to [th]e true value as it is most in vse & not imployed as heretofore att an old rent & small fynes you may then rent it out for at least fowre or fiue tymes more money then [th]e old rent com[m]es vnto, So as if yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] landes be already but 60000 li. p[er] annum by this meanes it will be augm[en]ted at least twoo hundred thousand poundes p[er] annu[m] & to buy out [th]e tennantes Estates will com[m]e to a small matter by [th]e course to make [th]em no loosers considering [th]e gayne they haue already made vpon [th]e land & this is [th]e rather to be don[n]e & [th]e present course changed because it hath bene a custome vsed meerey to cosen [th]e kinge /

3 Item

212v

[*Left margin:3*] Item whereas most Princes doe receiue [th]e benefitt of Salt in their owne handes as a matter of greate profitt because they receiue it at [th]e lowest price possible & vent it, doth gayne yearly. / The same course vsed by yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie were worth at least one hundred & Fifty thousand pounds p[er] annu[m]/.

[*Left margin:4.*] Item it is likewise vsed in other p[ar]ts [tha]t all waighes & measures either in priuate houses shopps or publiq[ue] market[s] should bee viewed to be just & sealed once a yeare paying to [th]e Prince for it w[hi]ch in England applyed to yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] vse w[i]th order to pay vj d. for sealing each waight or measure would yeild neere Sixtye thousand pounds p[er] annu[m]

[*Left margin:5.*] Item though all Countryes pay a Gabella for transportac[i]on & so likewise in England yet in Spayne there is impost vpon [th]e woolls w[hi]ch in England is so greate a wealth & benefitt to [th]e SheepM[aste]rs as they may well pay you 5 li. p[er] cent[um] of [th]e true value at [th]e sheeringe w[hi]ch I conceiue may be worth one hundred & Forty thousand poundes p[er] aannu[m] /

[*Left margin:6*] Item whereas [th]e Lawyers fees & gaynes in England are excessiue to yo[u]r Subjectes p[re]iudice it were better for yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] to make vse thereof & impose on all causes sentenced w[i]th [th]e p[ar]tie to pay 5 li. p[er] cent[um] of [th]e true value [tha]t [th]e cause hath gayned him. And for recompence thereof to lymitt all Lawyers fees and gettings whereby [th]e Subject shall saue more in fees & charges then he giueth to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] in [th]e Gabella w[hi]ch I beleeeue may bee worth one yeare with another Fiftyy thousand poundes /.

[*Left margin:7*] Item whereas [th]e Innes & victualing houses in England are more chargeable to [th]e trauellers then in other Countryes It were good for yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] to lymitt [th]em to certayne ordinaryes & raise besides a large imposition as is vsed in Tuscany & other p[ar]tes that is a prohibiting of all Inns & victualing houses but such as shall pay it & to impose vpon [th]e cheife Inns & tavernes to pay 10 li. a yeare to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] & [th]e worst 5 li. p[er] annu[m], & all alehouses xx s. p[er] annu[m] more or lesse as they bee in custome, Of all sortes there are so many in England that this impost may well yeild one hundred thousand pounds p[er] annu[m] to yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie /

[*Left margin*:8.] Item in Tuscany & other p[ar]tes there is a Gabella of all cattell or flesh & horses sold in markettes paying 3 or 4. p[er] cent[um] of what they are sold for which by conjecture may be

worth

213r

worth in England twoo hundred thousand pounds p[er] annu[m] vsing [th]e like custome vpon Fish & other victuals (bread excepted) And for this cause all flesh & fish & victualls in [th]e Markett to be prised and sold by waight whereby [th]e Subject saueth more in not being eo// cosened [th]en [th]e Imposition importeth [th]em/.

[*Left margin*:{9}] Item in Tuscany is vsed a taxac[i]on of 7 p[er] cent[um] vpon all alienac[i]on of landes to [th]e true value & also 7 p[er] cent[um] vpon all dowryes & marriage moneys, the like if it were justly vsed in England were worth at least one hundred thousand poundes p[er] annu[m] w[i]th many other taxac[i]ons vpon meale & other marchandises in all townes aswell as port townes w[hi]ch here I omitt w[i]th diuers others as not so fitt for England /.

And in satisfacc[i]on of [th]e Subject for these taxes yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] may bee pleased to release [th]em of Wardships & to enjoy all their estates at eighteene yeares old & in [th]e meane tyme their p[ro]fites to be p[re]serued for their owne benefitt /

And also in forfeitures of estates by condemnac[i]ons yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] may release yo[u]r Subject as not to take [th]e forfeiture of [th]eir lands but [th]eir goodes high treason onely excepted /.

And to allowe [th]e councell of Lawyers in case of life and death as also not to see condemned w[i]thout ij witnesses with such like benefittes w[hi]ch importeth more their good then all [th]e taxac[i]ons named can prejudice them /.

[*Left margin*:{1}0.] Item [tha]t som[m]e of [th]e former taxac[i]ons vsed in Ireland & Scotland as may easely be brought about by [th]e first example thereof vsed in England may very well be made increase yo[u]r revenue there more then it is by twoo hundred thousand poundes p[er] annu[m] /.

[*Left margin*: 11] Item all offices in [th]e land greate & small in yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] grant may be granted w[i]th condic[i]on to pay yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] a p[ar]te yearely according to the value this in tyme maye be worth as I conceiue one hundred thousand poundes p[er] annu[m] Adding also Notaryes Attorneys and such like to pay some proporc[i]on yearely towardses it for beinge allowed by yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] to practise & prohibiting els any to practise in such places /

[*Left margin*: 12] Item to reduce yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e]s houshold to bord wages as most other princes doo reseruing som[m]e fewe tables, this will saue yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] Sixty thousand poundes p[er] annu[m] & ease greatly [th]e Subject besides both to carriages & prouision w[hi]ch is a good reason [tha]t yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] in honer might doe it /.

[*Left margin*: 13.] Item I knowe an assured course in yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] navy w[hi]ch maye

saue at

213v

saue at least Fifty thousand pounds p[er] annu[m] w[hi]ch requiring a whole discourse by it selfe I omitt onely doo promise to doo it whensoever you comand /.

[*Left margin:*14] Item whereas yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] lawes doo com[m]and [th]e strickt keepinge of fasting dayes you may also p[ro]hibit those dayes to eate egges cheese of whitmeates, onely to such as are contented to pay xviiij d. a yeare for [th]e liberty to eate [th]em & [th]e better sort x s. The imployment of this mony bee for [th]e defence of [th]e land in mayntayninge [th]e Navy Garrisons & such like much after [th]e fashion of Crusado in Spayne as yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] knoweth being first begunne there vnder [th]e pretence to defend the land against [th]e Moores And [th]e same vsed in England may yeild one yeare w[i]th another one hundred thousand poundes w[i]thout any disgust to any because it is at euery ones choyce to giue ir or noe /.

[*Left margin:*15] Lastly I haue a course vpon [th]e Catholiques & very saffe for yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] being w[i]th their good liking as it may be wrought to yeild yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] at least twoo hundred thousand poundes per annu[m] by raising a certayne value vpon their landes & som[m]e other impositions w[hi]ch requiring a long discourse by it selfe selfe I will omitt it here setting it downe in my Instrucc[i]ons /.

It will saue yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] at least one hundred thousandes per annu[m] to make it payne of death & confiscac[i]on of goodes & landes for any of [th]e officers to cosen you w[hi]ch nowe is much to be feared they doo else they could not be so rich And herein to allowe a Fourth p[ar]te of [th]e benefitt to him [tha]t shall find out [th]e cosinage Here is not meant officers of State as [th]e Lord Treasurer & ces being Officers of the Crowne /.

The sum[m]e of all this accompt amounteth to twoo Millions & Two hundred thousand poundes p[er] annu[m], Suppose it be but one Million & on halfe as assuredly yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] may make by these courses sett downe yet it is much more then I p[ro]mised in my letter for yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] seruice besides som[m]e sum[m]es of money in the present by the Courses followinge /.

[*Left margin:*1] Imprimis by the Princes marriage to make all [th]e Earles in England, Grandees of Spayne & Principi w[i]th such like priuileges & to pay Twenty thousand poundes a peece for it /.

2. As also

214r

[*Left margin:*{2}] As also if you make them feuditaries of [th]e townes belonging to their Earledomes if they will pay for it besides as they doo to the kinge of Spayne in the kingdome of Naples /.

[*Left margin:*3] And so likewise Barons to be made Earles & Peeres to pay ten thousand poundes a peece I thinke might yeild fiue hundred thousand pounds & oblige them sure to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty.

[*Left margin:*4.] To make choyce of 200 of the richest men of England in Estate [tha]t be not noble men & make [th]em Titulati as is vsed in Naples & paying for it [tha]t is a Duke 30000 li. a Marquesse 15000 li. an Earle 1000 li. a Baron or viscount 5000 li.

It is to be vnderstood [tha]t [th]e Auntient Nobility of Barons made Earles are to precede these as Peeres though these be made Dukes or Marquesses /

This may raise a Million of poundes or more vnto yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie To make gentlemen of lowe quality & Francklyns & Fermors Esq[ui]res to p[re]cede them would also yeild yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] a great sum[m]e of money in present /

I haue another course to yeild yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] at least three hundred Thousand poundes in money w[hi]ch as yet tyme serueth not to discouer vntill yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] be resolved to p[ro]ceede in some of [th]e former courses w[hi]ch till then I omitt /.

Other courses also that may make present money I shall study for yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] seruice & as I fynd [th]em out acquaynt you w[i]thall /.

Lastly to conclude all this discourse, By the applicac[i]on of this course vsed for yo[u]r profitt It is not onely to make you [th]e richest king [tha]t euer England but also the saffety augmented thereby to bee most secure besides what is shewed in the first parte of this discourse I meane by the occasion of these taxac[i]ons & raising of moneys, yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty shall haue cause & meanes to employ in all places of [th]e land So many offices & Ministers to be obliged to you for their owne good & Interest us nothing can be attempted against yo[u]r p[er]son or royall Estate over land but som[m]e of these shall in all probability haue meanes to fynd it out & hinder it, Besides this course will repress many disorders & abuses in the publique gouernm[en]t w[hi]ch were hard to be discouered by men Indifferent.

To prohibite gorgeous & costly apparell to be worne but by p[er]sons of good quality shall Saue the Gentry of [th]e kingdome much more money then they shall be taxed to pay to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty. /

Thus w[i]th all humility I take my leaue & kisse yo[u]r gracious hand desiring pardon for my error I may com[m]itt herein /.

The

214v

The w[hi]ch false seditious & malicious discourse & writinge so framed contriued & written as aforesayd the authors thereof intended should be diuulged & dispersed as if the same had bene entertayned by yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] with purpose to be putt in execuc[i]on, thereby to raise feares & jealousyes in the myndes of yo[u]r good Subjectes [tha]t yo[u]r sacred Ma[jes]ty had a purpose to alter & innovate [th]e auntient lawes of this kingdome & [th]e auntient manner & forme of [th]e governm[en]t thereof and to drawe all thinges to be disposed of at yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] absolute will & pleasure & to comand & dispose of the Estates goodes & reuenues of yo[u]r subjectes or such p[ar]te or porc[i]on thereof as yo[u]r selfe pleased w[i]thout [th]e consent of yo[u]r subjectes and to make & repeale lawes & statutes by yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] proclamac[i]on onely w[i]thout consent of p[ar]liam[en]t And that to ouerawe & oppresse yo[u]r sub[ec]tes you purposed to plant and mayntayne garrisons & fortfyed castells & places in a warlike manner in all the principall Cittyes & townes in this yo[u]r kingdome /.

Which if it should be beleued by yo[u]r people could not but raise infynite discontentm[en]tes amongst them The consequences whereof might be of extreame & almost inevitable danger to yo[u]r Ma[jes]t[ies] p[er]son & State & to [th]e whole frame of this kingdome & to [th]e greate dishonor of yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] w[hi]ch all & eu[er]y yo[u]r good & loyall sub[ec]tes are in their duty & alleigeau[n]ce to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ty bound to preuent to [th]e vttermost of their powers & to discouer to yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie or som[m]e of yo[u]r priuy

Councell or other Majestrate all such false & seditious discourses & Writings whensoever they shall com[m]e to their handes or knowledge /.

Neuerthlesse Francis Earle of Bedford Rob[er]t Earle of Somerset John Earle of Clare S[i]r Rob[er]t Cotton kn[igh]t & Baronett John Selden Esquire & Gilbert Barrell gent[leman] forgetting the duty w[hi]ch they owe to yo[u]r gracious Ma[jes]tie their leige Lord & intending to further & cherish those false scandalous & seditious rumors whereby matter of discord & sclaunder might growe betweene yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie the greate men of this kingdome & yo[u]r people & not regarding [th]e greate dangers & euill

consequences

215r

consequences thereof hauing gotten the sayd discourse or writing or som[m]e copy or copyes thereof into their handes, Every of them the sayd S[i]r Robert Cotton John Earle of Clare Robert Earle of Somerset & Francis Earle of Bedford John Selden & Gilbert Barrell at seu[er]all tymes w[i]thin the space of Eight moneths nowe last past did make or write or caused to be made or written seu[er]all Copyes thereof & amongst themselues & also to & amongst many others haue published diuulged and dispersed the same to the greate & insufferable scandall & dishonor of yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie & of all yo[u]r most just & gracious gou[er]nm[en]t And non[n]e of them before such publicac[i]on thereof did make [th]e same knowne to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] or any of yo[u]r priuy counsell or any other lawfull Majestrate as in duty they and euery of them ought to haue don[n]e /.

In consideration of all w[hi]ch premisses Forasmuch as [th]e sayd spreading publishing & diuulging of all such scandalous and malicious tales newes & rumors & not making the same knowne to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] or yo[u]r priuy Councell or other Majestrate is contrary to [th]e good lawes & Statutes of this yo[u]r realme and contrary to [th]e duty & alleaigean[ce] that they owe to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] And for that [th]e venome thereof may be this vndue meanes be dispersed & infused in & vnto many others in & through whose handes those false seditious & malicious papers or writings haue or may com[m]e And for [tha]t [th]e danger thereof is exceeding greate & may be of infinite ill consequence if in tyme [th]e same be not preuented & for example and terror to all others be not seuerely punished /.

May it therefore please yo[u]r most excell[en]t Ma[jes]ti[e] to grant vnto yo[u]r sayd Attorney yo[u]r Ma[jes]ties most gracious writtes of Subpena to be directed to the sayd S[i]r Robert Cotton kn[igh]t & Baronett John Selden Esquire & Gilbert Barrell gent[leman] & also to signifye yo[u]r highnes Royall pleasure according as is vsuall in such cases to the sayd John Earle of Clare Robert Earle of Somerset and

Francis

215v

Francis Earle of Bedford Comanding them & eu[er]y of them att a certayne day & under a certayne payne therein to be containd p[er]sonally to bee & appeare before yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] & the right ho[n]or[ab]le the Lordes & others of yo[u]r highnes most ho[n]or[ab]le priuy Councell in yo[u]r highnes Court of Starchamber then & there to answere to the premisses & to stand to & abide such order direcc[i]on sentence & decree therein as to yo[u]r Ma[jes]ti[e] & the sayd Lordes & others shall be thought most meete & agreeable to justice

And yo[u]r^{said} Attorney shall &ces

Other manuscript witnesses

- British Library, Harley MS 1323, ff. 57r–67r
- British Library, Harley MS 3791, ff. 123r–125r
- British Library, Sloane MS 1199
- British Library, Additional MS 23967, ff. 24r–33r
- British Library, Additional MS 69909, ff. 50r–51v
- British Library, Additional MS 72421, ff. 140r–147v
- British Library, Hargrave MS 489, ff. 17r–25r
- British Library, Hargrave MS 489, ff. 26r–41v
- British Library, Hargrave MS 489, ff. 42r–57v
- British Library, Harley MS 2217, ff. 102r–106r
- British Library, Harley MS 597, ff. 178r–184r
- British Library, Sloane MS 1200, ff. 77x–85x
- British Library, Stowe MS 152, ff. 40x–43x
- British Library, Stowe MS 153, ff. 41x–46x
- British Library, Stowe MS 159, ff. 16r–27x
- Beinecke Library, Osborn fb150, ff. 55r–64v
- Bodleian Library, MS Carte 77, ff. 304r–309v
- Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson A 127, ff. 55r–68v
- Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C 674, ff. 68r–74r
- Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.4.13, pp129–130
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.121, ff. 123r–141v
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.b.277, ff. 232r–240v
- Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, XII.B.30
- Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, XII.B.4
- Houghton Library, fMS Eng 977, ff. 1r–14v
- Huntington Library, Hastings Legal Papers Box 4, ff10
- Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS 538/39, ff. 356r–366x
- Northamptonshire Record Office, FH2825, ff6
- Northamptonshire Record Office, IL 3405
- Queen's College, MS 121, ff. 344–351
- The National Archives, SP 16/151, /69 [ff.96r–100r]
- Woburn Abbey, MS 33, ff. 1r–21v

© 2017–2025 University of Birmingham, University of Bristol. Provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence.

<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/HeathInformationAgainstCotton1629.html>