

Letter Bk. II. tunity of monopolizing the Trade with the distant nations & has secured to them a short & easy Communication between
 p. 62 their northern & Southern Colonies, as they are Masters of Ontario Lake by means of their strong & well garrisoned Fort thereon named Cataracui, & the nature of the adjacent Country renders a Road to Niagara by Land impracticable they have not hitherto given themselves much trouble to render that place more defensible than nature has made it imagining for the two Reasons just mentioned that the English w^d never attempt its Conquest however strongly its vast Importance might invite them thereto. At present we have only a Trading-House distinguished sometimes by the Appellation of Oswego Fort on Ontario Lake where perhaps 50 or 60 Men from the N York Independant Companies may now be posted, but by w^t I can find the French may make themselves Masters thereof at a very small Expen^ce & without much difficulty just when they please unless some of the Indians should insist on its being a place of neutrality as they did during the last war between the two Crowns, should the Indians appear less desirous of reserving the place to the English at present (which indeed I am somewhat suspicious will be the Case) I apprehend the French will immediately dispossess us thereof as soon as they hear of your Arrival & that they have something to fear on Acco^t of their late acquired possessions on the Ohio. This as it seemed to me a matter of Importance I was unwilling to delay communicating till I shall have the pleasure of waiting on you w^{ch} as I am impatient of doing I hope I shall be able to accomplish soon after this shall have reached y^r hand in the mean time I beg leave to assure you Sir that I am

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[Sharpe to Dinwiddie.]

Annapolis feb. 27.

S^r

I take this Opportunity of acquainting you by Capt Rosse that I was advised Tuesday Even^g of Gen^l Braddocks Arrival by a Lett from S^r In^o S^t Clair dated at Fredericksburg the 22^d Inst. I have now writ to the Gen^l excusing myself for not waiting on him at present by reason our Assembly are now sitting they passed a Vote yesterday for £10000 for the Service I cannot learn that any Scheme is yet fallen on for raising the money but am not without hopes that a Bill will be prepared in such a manner as to obtain the Concurrence or Approbation of all the Branches of the Legislature, this a few Days will determine & enable me to inform you of the Issue of our Meeting. In Obedience he says wth your Desire Capt Steven has writ to inform me that M^r Dick has contracted for 200