

[Dinwiddie to Sharpe.]

Original.

W^msburg Virg^a Ian^y 29th 1754

Sir

Your kind Assurances of Cooperating with me in the common Cause for his Majesties Service gave me such Pleasure, as a Zeal like that which inspired them ought to give; and I now Address your Excellency the more chearfully, as I am perswaded of your Promptitude to contribute effectually to it, The Progress of the French and their avowed Designs make it necessary for me to apply for your Assistance and that the Men you can furnish may join our People as early as Possible in March, at a Place called Wills Creek, on the Head of Patowmack, which I have chosen for the Rendezvous, believing it to be the most convenient to all the Colonies of any that is near the scene of Action. The French have fortified themselves on Lake Erie, and on a Branch of the Ohio, and have 220 Canoes ready made, and a great many more blocked out, and everything in Readiness to execute their Design of falling down the River when the Waters serve in the Spring, and building Forts at every Place of Consequence. The Fort my Messenger was at mounted eight Pieces of Cannon six pounders, and was garrisoned with 150 Men, and they have already engaged the Chippoways, Ottoways and Orundacks to take up the Hatchet against the English, and themselves have Seized the Effects of his Majesty's Subjects who were Settled there & made Prisoners of their Persons. How they justify this Conduct your Excellency will see by the Inclosed Letter from their Commandant to me.

I think it wou'd very much conduce to the Success of the Service that the Command shou'd be undivided & therefore I shou'd be very glad of your Concurrance with my Sentiments, and that the Men you furnish might be put under the Command of my General Officer. I expect to meet our Assembly the 14th: of next Month, when I hope to be enabled to enter on more Vigorous Measures; at Present I have ordered out a Detachment from the Militia to cover the Works that are carrying on at our Fort on the Ohio, and shall with all Dispatch furnish them with the Stores & other necessaries for its completion. But as the French intend to be upon the Ohio early in the Spring with a greater Force than they had in the Fall which then consisted of 1500 Men it will be of the last consequence to have a sufficient Strength there early to oppose them, and the present Temper of the Indians increases the necessity, as they seem to defer coming to Action 'till they see us at their Backs to support 'em & I am perswaded that they then will Act honestly and effectually. Otherwise it is apparent to me that they will be lost to the British Interest as their