

Province or promoting the Common Cause. I have endeavoured Letter Bk. III to convince the Assembly of this & to persuade them to let the Money be disposed of in such a manner as would most effectually preserve their Country & offend the Enemy, & in Order to this I have recommended the building a strong Fort on an Eminence at the Conflux of the North & South Branches of Potowmack (on the Expediency of which I took the Liberty in Feb<sup>r</sup> last to communicate my Sentiments to the R<sup>t</sup> Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Lords of Trade) which with a small Fort between that place & that where our People intend to build one would always keep open the Communication between the Inhabitants & Fort Cumberland, & would be very convenient or rather absolutely necessary as a place of Arms in any future Expeditions to the westward a Body of 500 or 600 Men which had I wherewith to support them I could easily raise from among our Inhabitants, posted in those Forts with Orders to be constantly patrolling or ranging on the Frontiers would effectually prevent any Incursions of Indians & be always ready to act in Conjunction with any Troops that should be raised in the Neighbouring Colonies, or able of themselves to send Detachments to annoy the Indians in their own Country. but as our Assembly imagine such measures would involve them in greater Expences than they think their Constituents can well bear & oblige them to keep up a Body of Troops much longer than they propose by the Bill that is now under their Consideration, I am afraid it will be impossible for me as I have already hinted to prevail with them to do what the Safety of the Back Inhabitants requires & without which they may expend considerable Sums of Money to very little purpose. I have been advised that a Captain of the Virginia Regiment, which consists of about 500 Men with a Detachment of Sixty fell in lately with a party of Indians by whom they were entirely defeated; the Captain, Lieutenant, & 15 Men being killed the Rest retired to a little Sort of a Fort that was near the place where the Action happened. Another Party of Indians have been attacked in Virginia with better Success & a French Ensign that led them being killed, there were found in a little Bag tied about his Neck Instructions from Dumas the Commandant at Fort Du Quesne ordering him to make an Incursion with a party of 50 Savages to Conogochiegh (a place about 70 Miles on this Side Fort Cumberland) & destroy the Magazine of Stores & Provisions that has been left there ever since last Summer. This inclines me to think that the French do not expect any Expedition will be carried on by us to the westward this Season & that they are so anxious to prevent a possibility of it by destroying the Ammunition & Stores that they may detach as many of their Garrison as they can possibly spare to the North-