

need of. I believe the Militia Captains do not at present discover any Signs of Joy at receiving an order to march but a little use will I hope make many Difficulties vanish that now appear terrible & who can tell but a Man will after a while be the better esteemed among us for having served two or three Months in Defence of his Country: Should this be the Consequence of our Troops being disbanded there will be no Reason hereafter to lament that Event tho just now it does indeed open to us no very agreeable Prospect—

Since the Assembly broke up one of our Officers has brought hither a French Deserter that came into Fort Cumberland the 10th of last Month & also a French Cadet who was taken Prisoner near that place the same Day. They tell us that the Garrison at Fort Du Quesne the 27th of Novem^r consisted of about 40 Soldiers, 200 Canadians and some Indians but the Indians are for the most part settled in some Villages or Towns a little way beyond the Fort & are according to these mens Account about 600 fighting men. They say likewise that the French are about to build a larger stronger & more regular Fort on the Ohio at a small Distance above Fort Du Quesne & that they have already collected a good Deal of Stone & other Materials for that purpose. The Detachment with which both the Prisoner & Deserter came from Fort Du Quesne consisted of two officers six Cadets 7 Soldiers 14 Canadiens & 8 Indians, upon the Appearance of the Detachment that was ordered out from Fort Cumberland they instantly fled & none but the Cadet fell into our Peoples hands. What was their real Design & Destination we cannot certainly learn but from several Circumstances there is room to beleive that they only wanted to inform themselves thorougly of the Strength of Fort Cumberland & that they will make an Attempt on it early in the Spring for it seems their Scalping Parties have at times been much annoyed from that place it being our most advanced Post. I have at length been able to get a Collection of Seeds for you of some of our Flowering Shrubs &c a parcel of which I propose to send by the Master of the Vessel that I shall charge with this Lett^r & I will not fail to send another Parcel by the next Ship that sails for London from this Port. I am &c.

[Sharpe to Dinwiddie.]

4th Jan^y 1758.

S^r

If you receive this Letter at Hampton I should be much obliged to you for demanding of Capt Somerville (to whose Care I shall commit it) a Packett of mine directed to M^r Cecil