

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 5 October 1549 from Edward Seymour (d.1500-1552), Duke of Somerset, to his servant, Thomas Golding (d.1571), requiring Golding to order John de Vere (1512-1562), 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, to have his power in readiness. It is notable that Somerset writes, not to the Earl himself, but to the Earl's brother-in-law, Thomas Golding.

From the entry for Somerset in the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*:

*The outbreak of the rebellions [of 1549] brought Somerset's social programme, especially the enclosures commission, into question. His reluctance to employ force and refusal to assume military leadership merely made matters worse. When peace was restored most of the nobility and gentry had lost confidence in his leadership. Somerset did not at first appreciate this, and in a proclamation issued on 30 September commanded all soldiers to proceed to their appointed commands and to avoid London. On 5 October, however, he issued a letter over the king's signature commanding all subjects to arm themselves and proceed to Hampton Court to defend the king, and followed this up with appeals to Russell and Sir William Herbert for military assistance, and by moving the king from Hampton Court to the fortified castle of Windsor on 6 October. But at the same time his opponents within the council, including Warwick, Southampton, Baron St John (Paulet), Rich, and Northampton, met in London to demand his removal as lord protector, and in this they eventually procured the support of the mayor and aldermen of London. Faced with overwhelming opposition among the ruling élite, and unwilling to endanger king and country in a civil war, Somerset surrendered himself on the 11th, his protectorate was dissolved on the 13th and he was lodged in the Tower of London the next day.*

For the letter, see also Tytler, Patrick F., *England under Edward VI and Mary*, Vol. I (London: Richard Bentley, 1839) p. 212, available online.

We commend us unto you, and for the confidence we have in you, being our servant, we will and require you to solicit and give order for our very good Lord th' Earl of Oxford's things, servants and ordinary power, that he himself, and the same also, be in good readiness whatsoever shall chance to require his service for the King's Majesty, whereof if any occasion shall chance, we will signify by our letters. Thus we commit th' order of the whole unto your good discretion, and will you to use herein convenient secrecy. From Hampton Court the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1549.

Your loving Lord and master,

E. Somerset

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Three endorsements: (1) To our loving servant Golding, esquire; (2) Mr Golding; (3) The Duke of Somerset to Golding vo octobris 1549