

SUMMARY: This letter from Raleigh to Lord Buckhurst and Sir William Cecil of 4 November 1600 indicates that the Queen had exercised her right to the pre-emption of tin at this time, and had given Raleigh a commission to negotiate a price with the tanners, which he had done, despite the fact that his negotiations on behalf of the Queen had been complicated by a higher offer from Bevis Bulmer. Several of Oxford's letters and memoranda on the tin trade discuss the Queen's right to exercise the pre-emption, that is, her right to purchase all the tin produced in a given year at a set price.

MAY IT PLEASE your Honours, according to the order which I had from you I have proceeded in Cornwall and agreed with the tanners for a price certain, twenty shillings in the thousand [+weight] less than I had commission to give them, which they desire by petition to have added, and which for mine own poor opinion I could wish that her Majesty out of her own liberality should bestow on them.

Master Brigham and Master Connock can inform your Honours how I have proceeded, who can best judge what my little credit here hath done in this business.

Master Connock himself hath taken great pains herein, and furnished me with many good arguments and reasons. Your Honours could not have employed any man, as I think, both for his diligence and knowledge of more sufficiency. Master Bulmer's offer of £29 held us long upon that price, and hath done us much wrong in this business, and had we not called such a jury as we did of the principal gentlemen, we had had a long work of it.

There are yet many things to be done which this gentleman can better inform your Honours of than myself, which your Honours will take care of. For myself, I have performed your commandments and have little else to do but to see promise kept with these poor men to whom my faith is engaged, and this bearer can inform your Honours truly whether the tanners do not more rely thereon than on all the rest of our arguments. I will shortly attend you myself, and in the meanwhile I humbly desire to be continued in your favours, and will remain ever ready to do all the honour and service I shall be able.

W. Raleigh

From Radford by Plymouth this 4th of November.

Addressed: To the right honourable the Lord of Buckhurst, Lord High Treasurer of England, and Sir Robert Cecil, knight, Principal Secretary.

Endorsed: 4 November 1600. Sir Walter Raleigh to my Lord Treasurer, and to my master, from Radford by Master Connock.

HMC Salisbury X, pp.374-5.