

SUMMARY: In this letter written on 28 March 1595, Oxford indicates that he has now had the personal meeting with Lord Burghley requested in his letter of 25 March 1595 (see CP 31/45). However, because of the shortness of time allowed and the presence of certain alderman, he was not able to reveal to Lord Burghley his source concerning the true value of tin production. It appears that he now does so by letter, indicating that the figures for tin production on which he had based his offer of £10,000 to the Queen in order to meet Lord Buckhurst's offer of £10,000 had been provided to him by Richard Carmarden, and that it was in fact Carmarden who had been the first person to encourage him to sue for the tin monopoly at that price by revealing to him 'the great quantity of tins whereof her Majesty is yearly deceived in her custom', and that Carmarden would have sued for the tin monopoly himself had it not been for fear of Lord Buckhurst. This letter appears to be closely connected to Oxford's undated memorandum BL Lansdowne 86/66 because in both Oxford indicates that he has recently been end-played by Lord Buckhurst, who, having originally forced the bidding up to £10,000, then dropped his own offer to either £7000 for the tin monopoly if he were required to put up the money to purchase the tin himself, or £10,000 for the monopoly if the Queen were to lend him £30,000 to purchase the tin. Now Oxford says that Lord Buckhurst claims his offer was not £7000 over and above the £3000 which the Queen currently receives in revenues from customs taxes on tin, but £7000 in total, that is, *only £4000 over and above the £3000 which the Queen currently receives in revenues from customs taxes from tin*. Oxford, who has offered £7000 above the Queen's current £3000 revenues, is understandably shocked at what seems to have been Lord Buckhurst's duplicity in this matter. Oxford now finds himself in the unenviable position of having his offer of £10,000, which is still open for acceptance by the Queen, £3000 higher than his competitor's. Oxford says he is still willing to go through with the offer, although he admits his own gains will be very little or nothing. All he requires is time to finalize agreements with the merchants who are his co-offerors so that his profit from his one-fifth share will be turned over to the Queen, as indicated in CP 170/126. However, seeing the Queen has allowed Lord Buckhurst to drop his offer to £7000 over and above her current revenue of £3000, he hopes the Queen will allow him to drop his own offer to £8000 over and above her current revenue of £3000.

My very good Lord, I do fully perceive how much I am bound unto your Lordship, wherefore I am sorry that the shortness of the time this day which I had with your Lordship, and the presence of the alderman, made me to forbear some things of importance in this matter of the tins. It is true that I have found the Lord of Buckhurst to have dealt with me very strangely, and otherwise than (till this experience had of his disposition) I would have believed, or otherwise suspected. But in effect I should have assured your Lordship that I have not ignorantly or rashly entered into this suit for a licence of transportation, but upon the solicitation of Mr Carmarden, and the conference of such as have had long experience in tin matters. He, I say, is the only man that set me in hand with this suit, & by whom I had the first light of the great quantity of tins whereof her Majesty is yearly deceived in her custom. Wherefore accordingly I have of long time

(so well as I could by writing and sending) made all the means I could to her Majesty that by that ways I might both do her Majesty service and myself pleasure, which thing Carmarden would have done himself if the fears of some counsellors (whereof one I have named) did not discourage him. Wherefore what he durst not enter into himself, that hath he from time to time encouraged me, showing me the small matter which is yearly answered to her Majesty, as your Lordship may perceive in my notes (which is agreeable with that of his the last year, for mine were taken out of his). And [+I] assure your Lordship, if her Majesty will but give me leisure to agree with them that have set me on, and to make my bargains with them, I do not doubt but to bring very shortly good assurance to your Lordship for her Majesty to perform so much as I have promised. I have already agreed with some, and I only stay but to finish with the rest, that what they shall pay to me, to turn their bonds to your Lordship for her Majesty's assurance, granting me the suit.

It is true that my gains shall be very little, or nothing, yet sith my Lord of Buckhurst hath so hardly dealt with me (as I will inform your Lordship whensoever I shall have opportunity therefore), I rather will content myself with nothing and make up the sum I have promised than he should effect his cross and overthwart towards me.

But I did always take that he would have given £7 thousand more than her Majesty yet had, and that made me offer the more which, by God's grace, I mean to perform. But considering he is fallen £3000 of that account, if I may be therefore spared, my gain will be something, and whereas he brings it to £7000, if I may have it for £8000, which is a thousand £ more, then I shall not be so much afeard of the decay of the mines nor of the self-will of the people (and such fears as are not forecast in vain).

Yet if her Majesty will have the uttermost rather than be thus put out, I do not doubt but to answer in all respects my promise, so that I may be assured none shall have it from me and that I have some small time given me to make an end of those agreements, whereof some I have already finished. Thus to inform your Lordship that which I forgot today. I fear I am too long.

Your Lordship's to command.
Edward Oxenford

Addressed: To the right honourable & my very good Lord, my Lord Treasurer of England

Endorsed: 28 March 1595, Earl of Oxford