

SUMMARY: In this letter written on 9 April 1595, Oxford advises Lord Burghley that the merchants associated with him in the offer to raise the Queen's revenue from tin from £3000 to £10,000 have backed out of the agreement. Oxford says they were dissuaded by certain persons who have been named to him, but whose names he does not reveal in his letter. It would appear that those who conspired to defeat Oxford were merchants connected with the Turkey Company, which transported most of England's export tin. Because of this development, Oxford doubts that the merchants associated with Lord Buckhurst in his offer for the tin monopoly will go through with their promise either, although he urges that, if Lord Buckhurst does have backers willing to go through with his offer, it would be to the Queen's advantage to accept it. Oxford reiterates that his purpose throughout in following 'the great matter', that is the suit to rise the Queen's customs taxes from tin to £10,000, has always been to advance the Queen's profit, particularly in view of the fact that originally Lord Buckhurst and his associates had offered a mere 1000 marks [£666] for the monopoly whereas at that time Oxford had offered the Queen £3000. Oxford requests that, although he has now been forced to abandon 'the great matter', Lord Burghley will nonetheless further his original suit for the licence to transport tin, for which he promises that he will give the Queen £1000 more per year than she currently receives.

My very good Lord, I have laboured so much as I could possibly to advance her Majesty's customs of tin, and had performed it if mine undertakers had kept promise with me on Monday last to have set to their names with their own hands to the bargain, but through the cunning dealing of some they are dissuaded, and I cannot bring them back again to their former purpose. Wherefore if your Lordship think my Lord of Buckhurst have undertakers, I think it best for her Majesty to take that course which is best for her service. But I doubt our merchants were all one, & that he will find them as backward now to him, for I see (and I believe your Lordship shall find it true) that the Turkey Company have so packed that her Majesty's intention will find no issue. Nevertheless, when your Lordship hath made trial of all, if it shall please her Majesty to employ my service, I will use all diligence to further her profit.

And if it so happen that my Lord of Buckhurst be able to bring forth undertakers (which I do not believe), yet whereas I was the first that offered £3000 to her Majesty whenas there was but a 1000 marks proffered by others, and thereby was an occasion to cause her Majesty to stay until she was better advertised, I desire your Lordship yet to further my suit for the transportation, whereby I shall advance her Majesty a £1000 by year more than she hath.

The great matter I have followed ever with a mind to bring all the profit thereof to her Majesty, and brought it on so far as the undertakers, as I have said, were ready to set down their hands, yet so dissuaded by certain persons which they have named unto me that they have, like merchants, gone from their word and promise.

Your Lordship's to command,
Edward Oxenford

Addressed: To the right honourable and his very good Lord, the Lord Treasurer of
England

Endorsed: 9 April 1595, Earl of Oxford, his merchants have gone back