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THE BOARD OF TRADE AND DEFENSE OF THE OHIO VALLEY 1748-1753

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PRIOR to 1748 the British government had allowed the colonial governments in North America to direct matters involving the western lands and the Indians. Colonial management of the frontier, however, had resulted in confusion and corruption. Realizing the dangers inherent in intercolonial conflict over the development of the frontier, the British ministry decided in the late 1740s to form a general imperial policy regarding the lands to the west of the mountains. The president of the Board of Trade, George Montagu-Dunk, Earl of Halifax,¹ played a decisive role in setting colonial policy for the British in the Ohio Valley during this period. He became the primary motivator behind a major change in the basic assumptions of

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¹ George Montagu-Dunk, third Earl of Halifax of the second creation (1716-1771), assumed the surname Dunk upon his marriage to Anne Richards Dunk in order to inherit the splendid fortune of £110,000. Thereafter, he referred to himself as Dunk Halifax. The Countess of Hartford to the Countess of Pomfret, Oct. 15, 1740, *Correspondence between Frances, Countess of Hartford (afterwards Duchess of Somerset), and Henrietta Louisa, Countess of Pomfret, between the Years, 1738 and 1741* (London, 1805), 2: 165; Hartford to Pomfret, June 3, 1741, *ibid.*, 3: 295; Horace Walpole to George Montagu of Roel, July 22, 1751, W. S. Lewis and Ralph J. Brown, eds., *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with George Montagu* (New Haven, Conn., 1941), 1: 118; *ibid.*, 105. Estimates on the inheritance reached as high as £120,000. T. Dampier to Earl of Haddington, Oct. 14, 1741, *The Manuscripts of R. W. Ketton, Esq. of Felbrug Hall, Norfolk* (Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Twelfth Report*, Appendix [London, 1891], Pt. 9), 1: 204.

the British government concerning its colonial empire in the West. Instead of advocating the old mercantilistic idea of limiting the extension of the frontier in order to protect the fur trade, he promoted the idea that the value of the immense territory lay in its capacity to support several new and populous colonies. By permitting the settlement of the rich lands to the west of the Alleghenies, the British could increase their power in North America. New colonies would mean more markets to consume British products. Through the proper control of the sale of land English authorities could add substantial revenues to the royal treasury. Furthermore, Halifax observed with suspicion French movements in the Ohio Valley and the mountains. Determined to prevent such potentially profitable possessions in the West from falling into the hands of the enemy, he actively encouraged western expansion. The actions which the board took under his direction from 1748 through 1753 contributed greatly to renewed fighting in the Ohio Valley that led to the Great War for Empire.

For almost three decades Whig ministers, including Robert Walpole and Henry Pelham and his older brother, Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle, had deliberately conducted a policy of "salutary neglect." They had interfered as infrequently as possible in America and had avoided confrontation with the colonies about traditional mercantilist principles which emphasized the necessary primacy of the mother country over her American offspring.² After Newcastle came to office as secretary of state for the Southern Department in 1724, the Board of Trade possessed insufficient power either to obtain support at home for its policies or to execute them in America. Of all the imperial agencies, however, it most nearly approached the level of a general supervising department, record office, and clearing house for colonial affairs.

With the Anglo-French rivalry in North America threatening to disrupt colonial trade and administration at mid-century, and with the morale and prestige of the board suffering severely, the home government desperately needed to restore power to that agency in order to reinforce British authority in the colonies. Only the selection of an able administrator could provide the stimulus required for the board to become an important branch of government. Such an administrator was the imperialistically minded Halifax, who was appointed president of the board in the autumn of 1748. Immersing himself in the colonial

² Jack P. Greene, "An Uneasy Connection: An Analysis of the Preconditions of the American Revolution," in Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, eds., *Essays on the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1973), 32-80.

reports, he acquired an increased awareness of the expansion of wealth, size, and population of British North America. With that information he both enhanced his own reputation as an important figure in British politics and profoundly influenced British policy in America for the next twenty years. Under his guidance from 1748 to 1761, the board systematically sought to restore imperial authority in all colonial matters. Halifax believed that the subordination of the colonial assemblies to the royal prerogative was essential to efficient imperial administration. Disturbed by the tendency of the colonial lower houses to claim primary authority in local affairs, especially the "power of the purse," he initiated a campaign to reassert the royal prerogative in America. In so doing, he alienated much of the affection that colonial leaders still held for British imperial rule.

The efforts of Halifax between 1748 and 1756 represented a substantial reversal in the British attitude and behavior toward the colonies. His insistence on a strict observance of royal instructions marked a distinct shift from the permissive policy of "salutary neglect" promoted by Walpole and the Pelhams to a more restrictive policy of imperial regulation, which Britain maintained throughout the subsequent thirty years. As leader of the board, Halifax attempted to impose several measures which threatened to undermine the already fragile relationship existing between Britain and her colonies.

Specifically, he endorsed six policies: enforcement of the royal prerogative as the sovereign political authority in the empire; a permanent revenue to support an independent fixed civil list; strict regulation of trade and currency; imposition in America of parliamentary taxation for revenue (especially through a stamp tax); unification of the colonial military forces under a British commander-in-chief; and centralization of Indian management under two Indian superintendents (one for the northern colonies and the other for the southern colonies) in order to promote simultaneous colonial westward expansion and British protection of the Indians. He ultimately exercised a far-reaching influence upon the history of British North America by elevating the Board of Trade to the rank of an effective and independent imperial department that regulated colonial government, apportioned armed forces in America, and supervised Indian relations and trade as well as western expansion.

Not until Newcastle lost his stranglehold on the formulation of American policy did an opportunity develop for Halifax to advance to a position of power. By 1748 strained relations existed between Newcastle and Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, the secretary of

state for the Northern Department. When in February Chesterfield resigned in protest against the interference of Newcastle in the affairs of his department, the duke switched offices and appropriated the business of northern secretary. At the same time, Newcastle urged the elevation of John Montagu, Earl of Sandwich, to the Southern Department. But Sandwich replaced John Russell, Duke of Bedford, as head of the Admiralty so the latter could succeed Newcastle as director of American policy. For the first time in a quarter century, Newcastle did not possess formal control of American affairs. The new chief colonial administrator, furthermore, entered his office with a reputation as a capable and ambitious politician with a distinct set of policies. Bedford wanted power and authority, as well as high office, and fully understood that he could counter the predominance of the Pelhams, especially that of Newcastle, only by creating a unified and powerful faction within the administration.³ The death of Sir John Monson, the president of the Board of Trade, provided Bedford with the chance he needed to expand his personal power.

Few public officials had displayed more incompetence than had Monson, who occupied the presidency of the board from June 1737 until his death on July 20, 1748. He had consistently refused to dispatch quickly colonial business from his office to the proper committees of the Privy Council and had never made a positive recommendation to those committees. Under steady pressure to correct the situation, Pelham and Newcastle procrastinated until Monson's death prevented them from delaying any longer. Newcastle did not want to expand the power of the presidency of the board to cabinet proportions because that would only contribute to a reduction of his own power as secretary of state. But Pelham strongly opposed the selection of either of the prospective appointees put forth by Newcastle, a notorious political manager who sought to deliver a lucrative sinecure either to his own inept brother-in-law, Thomas Osborne, Duke of Leeds, or to the equally unskillful Richard, Baron Edgemund. Pelham wanted to reorganize the board under an efficient minister.⁴

Bedford shared his doubts about those two candidates because

3 James A. Henretta, "Salutary Neglect": *Colonial Administration under the Duke of Newcastle* (Princeton, 1972), 282-83.

4 Duke of Newcastle to Henry Pelham, July 31, 1748, British Library Additional Manuscripts 32715, fols. 490-491 (hereafter cited as Br. Lib. Add Mss); Pelham to Newcastle, Aug. 9, 1748, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32716, fols. 28-31. The Pelham brothers were the sons of Sir Thomas Pelham, the great-uncle of George Montagu-Dunk. Thus they were also cousins of Halifax. Newcastle to Duke of Bedford, Aug. 21, 1748, Lord John Russell, ed., *Correspondence of John, Fourth Duke of Bedford* (London, 1842), 1: 489.

the French had renewed their efforts to supplant British authority in North America. Such developments made the choice of a strong leader at the board an especially compelling one. Seeing his chance to undercut Newcastle, Bedford broke the impasse by recommending that "it would be highly improper, considering the present situation of things, to have a nonefficient man at the head of the Board, and therefore . . . if Lord Halifax could be prevailed upon to exchange from what he now has to the Board of Trade (for which I should think him perfectly well qualified), the Duke of Leeds might succeed him as Chief Justice in Eyre." Bedford reckoned that his plan would grant Leeds a position requiring little or no work and would simultaneously place an efficient man at the head of the board, since "a post of business seems to be the properest thing for one of Lord Halifax's turn." ⁵

Finally, Newcastle agreed to Bedford's proposal as "the best scheme of all" and exhorted his colleague to prevail upon Halifax to accept "an employment of . . . useful business, and a good qualification for better and greater things." ⁶ Newcastle failed to perceive that this appointment benefited Bedford far more than it did himself. It replenished the declining fortunes of Leeds, but it also enhanced the power of the new southern secretary within his own department. Even more important, it put still another expansionist in a position to influence the decisions made by the British concerning their American colonies.

From the start, Bedford had understood the implications of the appointment of Halifax, and he admitted as much when he offered the position to him early in September. Enumerating the reasons behind his campaign for Halifax's promotion, Bedford wrote him:

The one was, that I look upon it as a Post of . . . usefull business and a good qualification for better and greater things; and the other, (which I own, has a little the Air of selfishness) was my desire to have a Person of Y[ou]r Lordship's weight and consequence, and for whom I have so true a regard at the head of a Board, with w[hilch] in my present situation as Sec[retary] of State for the Southern department, I must have so close and frequent a correspondence. I had the satisfaction to find that Mr. Pelham agreed entirely in sentiments with me in relation to whole affair.⁷

Upon learning of the opportunity, Halifax hurriedly dashed off a letter assuring Bedford "that nothing could have given me a more sensible satisfaction than the favourable sentiments you are so good as to

⁵ Bedford to Newcastle, Aug. 11, 1748, Russell, ed., *Bedford Correspondence*, 440-42.

⁶ Newcastle to Bedford, Aug. 21, 1748, *ibid.*, 489.

⁷ Bedford to Earl of Halifax, Sept. 3, 1748, *ibid.*, 497-99.

entertain of me, and the kind manner in which you make me an offer of the seat at the Board of Trade.”⁸ Officially commissioned on November 5, 1748, he formally began his work as head of the Board of Trade that same day.⁹

With his appointment the Pelhams opened a new period in British colonial rule in America. Halifax, a capable and vigorous young man, initiated an attempt to revitalize the board with the intention of developing an effective American department within the imperial government. For the first time in many years an intelligent and aggressive minister, who sought to arouse the British from their colonial policy of “salutary neglect,” headed the board. His ideas for change and his growing political importance produced a new official attitude toward the colonies and the acceleration of an activist policy by the board. This alteration ultimately revealed itself in full force during the 1760s, when British authorities attempted to enforce a restrictive and organized system of imperial rule in America. Halifax eagerly set to work to reassert the authority of the royal prerogative in colonial affairs. Colonial officials discovered quickly that disregarding his directives meant challenging a dangerous and powerful enemy at home and, in the end, their recall and disgrace as imperial representatives in America. Whereas the original drive for power by Newcastle and Pelham had caused a decline in the standards of colonial administration under Walpole, their attempt to preserve their paramount control of government resulted in a reform movement in colonial policy, especially within the board. The appointment of Halifax was the most important one that the Pelham administration ever made in colonial matters, because it led directly to conflict between royal authority and local sovereignty of the colonial assemblies.

His ascendancy to the Board of Trade executive position represented a pivotal point, at which the British decided to discipline their children. Enamored of his own abilities and achievements, Halifax strove for political recognition as defender of the rights of the crown in a struggle with the colonial legislatures. The measures that the board, under his direction, took to restrict the powers of the assemblies in America and to centralize control of defense policy and Indian affairs under British imperial officers marked the initial state of a change in British attitude during the mid-eighteenth century. As a result of his policies, the Earl of Halifax helped to catapult the

⁸ Halifax to Bedford, Sept. 7, 1748, *ibid.*, 505-6.

⁹ *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, from January 1741/2 to December, 1749* (London, 1930-1935), 8: 345 (hereafter cited as *Journal of B.T.*).

Anglo-American community toward its ultimate disintegration.

At the inception of his career at the board, Halifax could claim little knowledge of American affairs, but he rapidly eliminated this deficiency by launching into his new duties with great zeal. Cognizant of the faults of the imperial administrative system and of the reputation for impotence that the board had acquired over the years, Halifax injected new vigor into the languid agency through his personality and ability. In order to restore efficiency to colonial administration, he believed it absolutely necessary to reestablish first the power and dignity of his new office. Halifax endeavored to elevate the board to the rank of an effective and independent department of state.

So proficiently did he work that the board became one of the most important factors in the development of Anglo-American relations during the next decade. Colonial affairs everywhere received more attention as the board carefully investigated and reread dispatches and colonial laws that had gone unnoticed in the previous quarter of a century. This routine work often took much time, but Halifax wanted to know the actual conditions in America before he advised the ministry. Therefore, he insisted that the whole membership of the board examine all controversial laws, with the less important colonial legislation receiving less scrutiny. Furthermore, Halifax early established a reputation as an accessible minister with whom colonists and colonial officials alike could conduct an ordinary, businesslike correspondence that revealed exactly where he stood on particular issues that arose. Abandoning the brief and general style of letters of his predecessors at the board, Halifax wrote in an alert, authoritative, and critical manner, demanding in return exact and full responses from his colonial correspondents. He cared not to play guessing games, but to obtain information about the colonies, as he perceived their increasing importance to the welfare of Britain.

Unlike his predecessors Halifax wrote many of the detailed reports of the board. He had accepted a promotion to an "office of business," and he geared himself toward fulfilling his necessary obligations to make the board exactly that. Critics charged him with being overbearing in his manner while only moderate in his talents, but he fought diligently for his right and that of the board to be regarded as the directing force in colonial affairs. Undeniably ambitious, Halifax zealously sought to improve the management of colonial business in the mercantilistic interest of England.¹⁰ By his serious efforts to raise

¹⁰ Arthur H. Basye, *The Board of Trade, 1748-1782* (New Haven, Conn., 1925), 35-36.

the credit of his department he soon secured almost universal recognition throughout the colonies and England. "Lord Halifax who now presided at the Board of Trade," wrote Horace Walpole, "was fond of power and business, was jealous of his own and his country's honour, encouraged and countenanced plans . . . for preserving and extending our trade and dominion in that hemisphere [North America], and as much as he could counteracted the supineness of the Administration."¹¹ Chesterfield also testified to the "parts, applications, and personal disinterestedness" of Halifax.¹²

Although it experienced periods of greater volumes of work and a larger number of meetings, the board never handled as great a diversity of business as in the early years of the presidency of Halifax.¹³ He entered office at a critical point in the struggle for colonial supremacy, since the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had brought King George's War to an indecisive close, portending future friction between England and France over the control of North America.

By the end of that war the wave of settlers moving westward had begun to trickle down the western slopes of the mountains into the fertile river valleys of the interior. Anticipating high profits from the increase in the value of land, various companies of speculators figured prominently in the penetration of the western areas. The Ohio Valley was particularly attractive to Virginians, because their colony had extensive charter claims in that region.

Late in 1747, Sir William Gooch, lieutenant governor of Virginia, had referred the question of western expansion to the board. One group of prominent speculators in Virginia, led by Colonel Thomas Lee, joined with several English merchants to form the Ohio Company in 1748. While Gooch awaited instructions concerning the extensive claims of several people in the trans-Allegheny region, John Hanbury, an influential London merchant representing the Ohio Company, petitioned the crown for a grant of 20,000 acres on the upper Ohio. He informed the board that the objectives of his company were to extend British trade among the Indians and to establish settlements in the Ohio Valley. The Ohio Company promised to settle one hundred families within seven years and to construct and maintain a fort. Hanbury argued that British merchants, the seaboard colonies, and

¹¹ Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, *Memoires of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George the Second* (London, n.d.), 1: 397.

¹² John Heneage Jesse, *Memoirs of Celebrated Etonians: including Henry Fielding, the Earl of Chatham, Horne Tooke, Horace Walpole, George Grenville, Thomas Gray, George Selwyn, Lord North, Earl of Bute, Earl Temple, [Earl of Halifax], etc.* (London, 1875), 2: 397.

¹³ Basye, *Board of Trade*, 37.

the crown would all benefit from the existence of such a company. The Ohio Company would secure the rich fur trade of the region for England, promote markets for British manufactured goods, strengthen the frontier of the older colonies, and supply additional revenue for the crown by quitrents. Because the Six Nations and the Ohio Indians had expressed a desire for British goods, Hanbury also emphasized that the British government could "forever fix [the Indians] in [the] British interest" if the ministry sanctioned his petition.¹⁴

Even before Halifax assumed office, the board had authorized the founding of the Ohio Company. On September 2, 1748, after an extensive study of the matter, the board succinctly reported to the Privy Council: "the settlements of the country lying to the westward . . . will be for His Majesty's interest and advantage . . . [His] subjects will be . . . enabled to cultivate a friendship and carry on a more extensive commerce with the Nations of Indians inhabiting those parts and such settlement may likewise be a proper step towards disappointing the views and checking the encroachments of the French by interrupting part of the communication from their lodgments upon the Great Lakes to the River Mississippi." ¹⁵ Despite an earlier warning from Gooch that the plan "might possibly give umbrage to the

14 Lieutenant Governor Sir William Gooch to Board of Trade, Nov. 6, 1747, Colonial Office records 5/1326, fol. 277, Public Record Office (hereafter cited as P.R.O.); Petition of John Hanbury [n.d.], C.O. 5/1327, 56, Library of Congress Transcript (hereafter cited as L.C. Tr.). Gwenda Morgan shows that the Ohio Company itself devised the provisions concerning the number of families to be settled and the construction of a fort. The Privy Council did not impose the provisions on the company as Hayes Baker-Crothers and Richard L. Morton have contended. The Board of Trade and the Privy Council merely endorsed the plan suggested by the Ohio Company. Gwenda Morgan, "Virginia and the French and Indian War: A Case Study of the War's Effects on Imperial Relations," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 81 (Jan. 1973): 25 (hereafter cited as *VMHB*); Board of Trade to Committee of Council, Feb. 9, 1748/9, C.O. 5/1366, fols. 25-28, P.R.O.; Board of Trade to Committee of Council, Feb. 23, 1748/9, C.O. 5/1366, fols. 214-20, P.R.O.; W. L. Grant et al., eds., *Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series* (Hereford, Eng., 1911), 4: 55-58. See also Hayes Baker-Crothers, *Virginia and the French and Indian War* (Chicago, 1928), 6; Richard L. Morton, *Colonial Virginia: Westward Expansion and Prelude to Revolution, 1710-1763* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1960), 2: 578; Kenneth P. Bailey, *The Ohio Company of Virginia and the Westward Movement, 1748-1792: A Chapter in the History of the Colonial Frontier* (Glendale, Cal., 1939), 25-28; Lois Mulkearn, ed., *George Mercer Papers Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia* (Pittsburgh, 1954), 1-2, 246-48, 407-8, 462.

15 Board of Trade to Committee of Council, Sept. 2, 1748, C.O. 5/1366, fol. 208, P.R.O. Although the order of the Privy Council was given on February 23, it was not read at the Board of Trade until April 6, when action thereon was delayed until the board received further information requested from Gooch in its letter of January 19, 1748. Gooch's answer of June 16 was received by the board on August 16. Mulkearn, ed., *Mercer Papers*, 1, 462-63.

French," Halifax enthusiastically approved the proposal of the Ohio Company because it coincided exactly with his desires for western expansion. Ordered by the Privy Council in November to prepare a set of additional instructions for Gooch, Halifax produced a document on February 23, 1749, that endorsed the provisions suggested by Hanbury regarding the settlement of the region. Halifax added one other provision when he suggested that the crown continue to collect quitrents from those settlers who moved to the frontier but who retained land in the older colonies. He also recommended that, after ten years had expired, the crown should force the Ohio Company to pay quitrents only on the land under cultivation in the new tract.¹⁶

Halifax, with the aid of Bedford, persuaded Pelham that "the country west of the great mountains was the centre of the British dominions."¹⁷ Accordingly, in March 1749, Pelham approved a draft of additional instructions proposed by the board and empowering Gooch to grant the Ohio Company a charter for 200,000 acres of land in the vicinity of the forks of the Ohio River. The order specifically stated that the grant lay within the colony of Virginia. Furthermore, the board promised the Ohio Company an additional grant of 300,000 acres as soon as that group of speculators erected a fort and settled the original grant with two hundred families. The board wrote Gooch that it hoped the scheme would go into effect immediately and that he would do all he could to promote it. Halifax expected him to provide information on the progress of the enterprise, including the number of settlers involved. On July 12, 1749, Gooch and his council made the grant to the Ohio Company according to the royal instructions.¹⁸ By

16 Gooch to Board of Trade, June 16, 1748, C.O. 5/1327, 7, L.C. Tr.; Privy Council to Board of Trade, Feb. 23, 1748, C.O. 5/1327, 1, L.C. Tr.; Order in Council, Nov. 24, 1748, C.O. 5/1327, 21, L.C. Tr.; Board of Trade Draft of additional instructions to Gooch, Dec. 13, 1748, C.O. 5/1327, 61-64, L.C. Tr.; *Journal of B.T., from January 1741/2 to December, 1749*, 8: 380, 382, 386-87; Board of Trade to Committee of Council, Feb. 9, 1748/9, C.O. 5/1366, fols. 25-28, P.R.O.; Board of Trade to Committee of Council, Feb. 23, 1748/9, C.O. 5/1366, fols. 214-20, P.R.O.; Grant et al., eds., *Acts of Privy Council, Colonial*, 4: 55-58.

17 Quoted in Owen A. Sherrard, *Lord Chatham: Pitt and the Seven Years' War* (London, 1955), 46.

18 Order of Council [approving the draft of the additional instruction proposed by the Board of Trade], Mar. 16, 1749, C.O. 5/1327, 93-96, L.C. Tr.; Board of Trade to Gooch, Mar. 4, 1748/9, C.O. 5/1366, fol. 222, P.R.O.; Henry R. McIlwaine and Wilmer L. Hall, eds., *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia* (Richmond, Va., 1945), 5: 295-98. Upon conferring with Hanbury, the board learned that his petition and Gooch's request were one and the same. Therefore, on March 16, 1749, the board rescinded the "additional instructions" of December 13, 1748, and issued new ones in behalf of the Ohio Company. The instructions of December 13 were thus superseded by those of March 16 and were never sent to Virginia. Nonetheless,

sanctioning the charter, the home authorities departed significantly from the usual procedure for granting land. The company had received its charter directly from the crown and not from Gooch, even though, as the colonial executive, he possessed the power to grant such a charter. Gooch was not a vigorous expansionist, and he had hesitated to take action. While the board undoubtedly welcomed the enunciation of mercantilist principles by the petitioners of the Ohio Company, Halifax supported the project for security reasons rather than for the economic benefits the mother country would derive from trade and land speculation. He envisioned that a well-populated frontier under imperial control would provide the best security for the seaboard colonies. Therefore, Halifax committed his agency to an aggressive western policy in order to stop French occupation of the Ohio Valley.¹⁹

The activities of the Ohio Company, however, brought it into conflict with traders and settlers from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, each of which claimed extensive lands in the West by virtue of its original colonial charter. Hanbury, the powerful lobbyist of the Ohio Company, concluded an agreement with the proprietor of Pennsylvania, Thomas Penn, concerning the plans of his company and those of Pennsylvania for settlement and construction of the projected fort on the Ohio River. The two men decided that the Pennsylvania assembly would provide the financial support for the erection of the fort. But the pacifist Quaker element in that colonial legislature refused to appropriate funds for the project. Consequently, controversy over the rival claims continued. At the request of Thomas Lee, chief councillor and acting governor of Virginia after the departure of Gooch in the autumn of 1749, the board considered a proposal of the Virginia council for running a boundary line between Virginia and Pennsylvania. As extra bait Lee added: "If by these further indulgences from his Majestye, the Ohio Company are allowed to carry on their trade and make their settlements they hope to engage the Indians of the several nations soe effectually in the British Interest that the encroachments of the french will be prevented." Although the board spent over two years investigating the matter, it did not settle the boundary question until after the next Anglo-French war ended. Because the Ohio Company did not know for certain which colony

the "additional instructions" of December 13 are most frequently cited by historians. Mulkearn, ed., *Mercer Papers*, 408, 463.

19 Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775* (Lincoln, Neb., 1961), 3-5; Morgan, "Virginia and the French and Indian War," *VMHB* 81 (Jan. 1973): 40-41.

owned the land in the Ohio Valley, its members did not invest large amounts of money in the establishment of settlements in that region prior to the French and Indian War.²⁰ Meanwhile, Halifax focused on combatting the rising French influence in that area.

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle amounted only to a truce between two weary enemies. Neither the French nor the British relinquished their claims to several disputed areas in North America, including the Ohio Valley. Following the end of King George's War, the French initiated a new movement southward from Niagara toward the Ohio in order to check the westward expansion of the British colonists. Roland Michel Comte (and later Marquis) de la Galissonnière, the able governor-general of New France, believed that the preservation of French Canada depended upon keeping the English settlements to the east of the Allegheny Mountains. If the British gained control of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, they would break the line of communications between Canada and Louisiana and drive the French out of North America.²¹

In order to forestall British westward expansion, la Galissonnière and his successor, Pierre Jacques de Taffanel, Marquis de la Jonquière, asserted French ownership of the Allegheny and Ohio rivers, resurrected the old French policy of cultivating the friendship of the Iroquois, and undertook a program of defensive expansion in the Ohio Valley to discourage British traders. La Jonquière wanted to exert greater force and to build one or more forts in the upper Ohio Valley; la Galissonnière, who had returned to France in 1749, persuaded the French ministry to approve aggressive action on the frontier.²² Thus the French began a final effort to confine the British

20 Jack D. Marietta, "Conscience, the Quaker Community, and the French and Indian War," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 95 (Jan. 1971): 9; Col. Thomas Lee to Board of Trade, Oct. 18, 1749, C.O. 5/1327, 195-97, L.C. Tr.; Lee to Board of Trade, Sept. 29, 1750, C.O. 5/1327, 233, L.C. Tr. Lee's request was of no consequence in the board's decision to send treaty goods. His first letter was not received until September 30, 1750, and not read until October 11, 1750, eight months after the treaty goods arrived in Virginia. Eventually, Pennsylvania, not Virginia, inherited much of the land granted to the Ohio Company, because the Pennsylvania claim was accepted as the more legitimate one. Mulkearn, ed., *Mercer Papers*, 409-11, 466-67, 493; Bailey, *The Ohio Company*, 121-22.

21 "Memoir on the French Colonies in North America," Dec. 1750, E. B. O'Callaghan et al., eds., *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany, N.Y., 1853-1887), 10: 220-32 (hereafter cited as *N.Y. Col. Docs.*).

22 Lieutenant Governor James Hamilton to Board of Trade, [?], 1751, Samuel Hazard et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st ser. (Philadelphia and Harrisburg, 1852-1856), 2: 60-63 (hereafter cited as *Pa. Archives*); Ministerial Minute on Dispatches from Louisiana, Sept. 18, 1750, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 10: 219-

settlements to the strip of land between the Allegheny Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean.

As the French attempted to drive British traders out of the Ohio Valley and to establish hegemony over the various Indian tribes north of the Ohio River, the Board of Trade received distressing reports from British colonial officials familiar with frontier conditions. For two decades British Indian traders had been able to undersell their French competitors. Consequently, French influence among those tribes had diminished considerably during King George's War. Governor George Clinton of New York, however, complained to the board throughout 1749 and 1750 that the French "are indefatigable in their endeavors, to withdraw all the Indian Nations from the British Interest. . . ." In relating the precarious position which his colony occupied, Clinton emphasized the efforts of the French to disrupt the British alliance with the Six Nations, who had assisted the British throughout the eighteenth century. He feared that a fort, which the French proposed to build on the southern shore of Lake Ontario, would cause substantial damage to British relations with the westernmost Iroquois nations, the Senecas and the Cayugas. By attracting the trade of those tribes, such a fort would severely injure the British trading center at Fort Oswego. Although Clinton declared that he had done all he could "to prevent these mischeifs by informing the neighbouring Governors of the French artifices and by pressing the assembly of this Province," he strongly urged the board to devote serious attention to Indian affairs because of their "great importance to the safety and prosperity of the Northern colonies."²³

Cadwallader Colden suggested the construction of British forts on the frontier "not only to defend" the colonies in case of war, but also "to prevent the Incroachments which the French are daily making on the King's territory in time of peace [in order] to secure the fidelity of the Indians."²⁴ The board also learned from the president of the

20; Theodore Calvin Pease, ed., *Anglo-French Boundary Disputes in the West, 1749-1763*, in Illinois State Historical Library, *Collections* (Springfield, Ill., 1936), 27: xiv-vi.

23 Governor George Clinton to Board of Trade, Sept. 12, 1750, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 587-88; Clinton to Board of Trade, Mar. 14, 1748/9, *ibid.*, 476; Clinton to Board of Trade, June 3, 1749, *ibid.*, 485-87; Clinton to Board of Trade, Oct. 17, 1749, *ibid.*, 529-30; Clinton to Board of Trade, Mar. 17, 1750, *ibid.*, 545; Clinton to Board of Trade, June 7, 1750, *ibid.*, 561-62; Clinton to Board of Trade, July 30, 1750, *ibid.*, 576-78; Clinton to Board of Trade, Dec. 2, 1750, *ibid.*, 598-99.

24 Cadwallader Colden to John Catherwood, Nov. 21, 1749, *The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden* (New York Historical Society, *Collections*,

Ohio Company, Colonel Thomas Lee, that the French had persuaded "those very Indians that had [earlier] encouraged" an increase in British trade in the Ohio Valley to alter their attitude toward English traders. By October 1749 the Ohio tribesmen, suspecting that the British intended to steal their lands, refused to trade with the Ohio Company representatives. Disturbed by reports that the French had resolved to plant one thousand families of their Indian allies and Iroquois "on the New River a branch of the Mississippi," Lee denounced the French as "intruders into America."²⁵

Before the administration of Halifax began in 1748, the board had followed no clearly defined Indian policy. It had sought to preserve the Anglo-Iroquois alliance and the friendship of other strong tribes on the northern and southern frontiers as a protection against the French and Spanish. It had encouraged intertribal warfare in order to prevent hostile unions of the larger tribes. Interested in developing a profitable fur trade with the Indians, the British had regularly distributed large numbers of presents to the tribesmen in order to secure their cooperation and to enhance British trade. The board had accepted the cost of presents as a regular charge upon the home government. For the most part, however, the board had expected the individual colonies to assume the burdens of local defense in time of peace. The British home government traditionally had allowed each colony to handle its own Indian problems, either through the governor and his council, an Indian agent, or a board of commissioners acting for the colony. But the management of Indian affairs by the colonies had collapsed because of the graft of unscrupulous traders and because of rivalry and jealousy among the colonies. Abused and cheated by dishonest traders and perplexed by conflicting stories told them by various colonial competitors, the Indians objected to the mistreatment they had endured.²⁶

50-56, 67-68 [New York, 1917-1923, 1937]), 4: 163 (hereafter cited as *Colden Papers*).

²⁵ Lee to Board of Trade, Oct. 18, 1749, C.O. 5/1327, 195-97, L.C. Tr.; Lee to Board of Trade, May 11, 1750, C.O. 5/1327, 180, L.C. Tr.; Lee to Board of Trade, Sept. 29, 1750, C.O. 5/1327, 231-46, L.C. Tr.

²⁶ Robert C. Newbold, *The Albany Congress and Plan of Union of 1754* (New York, 1955), 20-21; John R. Sahli, "The Growth of British Influence Among the Seneca to 1768," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 49 (Apr. 1966): 130; Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwestern Frontiers, 1748-1763* (Stanford University, *Publications: History, Economics, and Political Science*, 6, No. 2 [Stanford, 1950]), 26-28; John Carl Parish, "Edmond Atkin, British Superintendent of Indian Affairs," in Louis K. Koontz, ed., *The Persistence of the Westward Movement and Other Essays by John Carl Parish* (Berkeley, Cal., 1943), 154.

After he assumed his new position, however, Halifax devoted much attention to Indian affairs and required each colonial governor to forward to the board every detail concerning treaties, trade relations, land grants, war matters, and presents. Inundated with letters from colonial officials in America, Halifax became the first official in London to understand the full significance of the western colonial issue. Cognizant that the friendship of the Indians, especially that of the Six Nations, was necessary for the English to combat the French menace, he set about to formulate a policy to conciliate the Indians. Therefore, after 1748, the board maintained a policy designed to protect Indian hunting grounds from encroachments and to prevent misconduct by British traders. Without the reconciliation of the Indians, western expansion by the British would become very difficult. Frauds perpetrated on the Indians by deceitful traders, meanwhile, might easily result in dangerous and costly wars. Throughout his tenure at the board, Halifax argued for complete imperialization of Indian affairs.²⁷

The period between 1748 and 1754, therefore, marked the beginning of accelerated competition between the French and British for the allegiance of the Indians. In order to guarantee their friendship, the board advocated the use of many expensive presents as bribes. Any irregularity in sending the gifts strained Anglo-Indian relations. Therefore, Halifax wanted such presents punctually delivered.

The colonial assemblies of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia bore most of the expense along the western and northern frontiers. Outstanding men such as Sir William Johnson of New York, Conrad Weiser and George Croghan of Pennsylvania, and Colonel Thomas Lee of Virginia dispensed tremendous numbers of gifts among the Indians in order to secure their loyalty and to fortify the frontier against the French. The Iroquois claimed that the Ohio Valley belonged to them by the right of conquest. Many of the Indians living in that region were related to the Six Nations, while the Iroquois looked upon the remaining tribes as their subjects. Recognizing the Ohio Valley as the key to the western frontier, Weiser and Croghan spearheaded a British effort to retain the friendship of the Ohio Indians. These men, who served Pennsylvania as interpreters and traders, increased the distribution of goods among the tribesmen of that region and thus obtained an alliance with the powerful Miamis by 1750. During the

²⁷ Clarence W. Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics: A Study of Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution* (Cleveland, 1917), 1: 112-16.

period from 1748 to 1751, Pennsylvanians dominated the Indian trade in the Ohio Valley.²⁸

Up to 1751 the only Virginian who comprehended the Indian issue on the frontier was Lee. Interested in the westward movement because of his intense desire "to extend the British empire" and to make money, Lee wrote the board in June 1750 that he had arranged a meeting at Fredericksburg with the Six Nations "and several of their tribes on the Ohio." He intended to distribute presents in order to achieve a peace and asked Croghan to assist Virginia in allotting those gifts. Furthermore, Lee employed Christopher Gist, a Maryland surveyor and frontiersman, to explore the land granted to the Ohio Company. Ordered by Lee to invite the Ohio Indians to receive more presents, Gist tried unsuccessfully in November 1751 to coax them into accepting the proposed occupation of Indian lands. A few months later Lee died, leaving the Ohio Company without a forceful leader who could extend British interests in western America.²⁹

By the autumn of 1750 Halifax had become dismayed with developments on the New York frontier. Clinton had informed the board that the Six Nations had good reason to accuse the British of neglecting them as allies. Although he had intended to bestow many presents upon the Iroquois in reward for their assistance in the preceding war, the New York assembly had refused to grant him money to finance his Indian operations. Involved in a bitter struggle with the lower house over the extension of the royal prerogative in his colony, Clinton agreed with Johnson that further delay in the delivery of presents to the Iroquois might do permanent damage to the British alliance with

28 For information on Johnson's career in Indian diplomacy prior to 1754 see Milton W. Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson, Colonial American, 1715-1763* (Port Washington, N.Y. and London, 1976), 15-99. Weiser had spent thirty-four years dealing with the Indians and was aware of their appetite for presents. He generally opposed the policies of Johnson and the interests of New York. Conrad Weiser to Richard Peters, July 20, 1747, *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser., 1: 761-62; Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts*, 89-92; Paul A. W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760, Friend of Colonist and Mohawk*, 2d ed. rev. (New York, 1971), 247-54, 258-71, 277-349. Next to Johnson, Croghan was the most prominent Indian agent during the mid-eighteenth century. Samuel Hazard, ed., *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government* (Philadelphia, 1838-1853), 5: 287-95 (hereafter cited as *Pa. Col. Recs.*); "Journal of George Croghan, 1750-1765," in Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* (Cleveland, 1904), 1: 48-49.

29 Lee to Hamilton, [?], 1749, *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 422-25; Lee to Board of Trade, June 12, 1750, C.O. 5/1327, 189, L.C. Tr.; William M. Darlington, ed., *Christopher Gist's Journals with Historical, Geographical, and Ethnological Notes and Biographies of his Contemporaries* (Pittsburgh, 1893), 34-35, 221-22; Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 304, 598. Lee died in February 1751.

their confederacy and with the Ohio Indians. Halifax dreaded that "this neglect of the Five Nations may prove the more fatal, particularly at this time" because of the "unjustifiable attempts of the French to disturb the Peace in America by stirring up the Indians." Accepting the prognosis of Johnson, Halifax warned Bedford that if the French succeeded in upsetting the British alliance with the Ohio Indians the Iroquois "must also submit to them."³⁰ Meanwhile, relations between the English and Iroquois deteriorated in the early 1750s.³¹

Sensing the uneasiness of the Six Nations regarding French claims to the Ohio Valley, Clinton notified the board in December 1750 that he had invited all the other colonial governors to confer with the Iroquois "and other Indians in the British Interest" at Albany the following June. In a report to the Privy Council on April 2, 1751, Halifax praised the plan as "a very wise one," which, if successful, could greatly strengthen the security of the British colonies. Describing the Six Nations as "the most constant and best allies of the British Interest in America," Halifax emphasized the urgent need to recover their fidelity in order to protect the "valuable Province" of New York. He suggested that the Privy Council equip a new governor for New York with stricter instructions, including one that authorized him to secure a permanent revenue from the assembly. With this fund the British could again supply the Indians with enough presents to pacify them. Halifax expressed amazement at the unwillingness of the New York assembly to appropriate sufficient funds to protect the people of the colony, especially after the assemblymen had learned of the French intrigues among the Indians.³²

To the dismay of Clinton, however, only Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Connecticut responded to his invitation by sending commissioners to the conference with the Indians at Albany on July 17,

³⁰ Clinton to Board of Trade, June 7, 1750, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 561-62; Clinton to Board of Trade, July 30, 1750, *ibid.*, 576-78; Board of Trade to Bedford, Oct. 12, 1750, *ibid.*, 597; Board of Trade to Clinton, Oct. 15, 1750, *ibid.*, 597-98; Mulkearn, ed., *Mercer Papers*, 493-94.

³¹ Clinton to Board of Trade, July 28, 1749, *ibid.*, 520-21; Clinton to William Johnson, Sept. 24, 1750, James Sullivan and Alexander C. Flick, eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany, N.Y., 1921), 1: 301-2; Councils of Johnson and the Six Nations, July 2, 5, 1751, *ibid.*, 339-44; Clinton to Johnson, Nov. 5, 1752, *ibid.*, 383.

³² Clinton to Board of Trade, Dec. 13, 1750, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 603; see also Clinton to Board of Trade, Dec. 2, 1750, *ibid.*, 598-99; Clinton to Board of Trade, Dec. 19, 1750, *ibid.*, 604; Clinton to Board of Trade, Jan. 2, 1750/1, *ibid.*, 606-7; Clinton to Board of Trade, Jan. 17, 1750/1, *ibid.*, 608; Board of Trade to the Privy Council Committee [incorrectly titled, "Report of the Privy Council upon the State of New York"], Apr. 2, 1751, *ibid.*, 635-39; Catherwood to Clinton, [n.d., probably Feb. or Mar. 1752], *Colden Papers*, 4: 304-6.

1751. His own assembly merely granted "the usual sum in time of peace" in order to renew the "Covenant Chain" with the Six Nations. At that meeting Clinton and the Iroquois exchanged mutual assurances of British protection and Indian loyalty. Exhorting the tribesmen to strengthen themselves by forming strict alliances with their neighbors in the Ohio Valley, he suggested that the Six Nations prevent the French from building a fortress at Niagara. After the conference Clinton learned from the commanding officer at Oswego that the French had renewed their efforts to eject all English traders from western New York. Apparently the French had also started to construct a war vessel on Lake Ontario, which Clinton feared would enable them "to dispossess us of Oswego." Perceiving that the French might eventually attain "an absolute influence over all the Indian Nations," he warned the board that "without directions and instructions of a different nature from any hitherto given, no Governor, in my opinion, has it in his power to do what is requisite for preserving the fidelity of the Indians, and securing commerce among them . . . [and] that some method [must] be speedily thought on to secure the Colonies against the designs of the French."³³

As early as 1721 the board had intended to empower a governor-general in North America to conduct all Indian relations. During the period of "salutary neglect," however, the British ministry had set aside all ideas of establishing centralized administration of Indian affairs.³⁴ In August 1748 both Clinton and Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts had pressed the board to appoint "one or more suitable persons to inform themselves of everything which may be useful (either by gaining or preserving the Friendship of those [Six] Nations) for promoting trade among them and for preventing their being abused and cheated in their Trade." Their flattering reports on Johnson as an Indian commissioner clearly impressed Halifax, because he extolled Johnson to the Privy Council as "a very diligent, honest, and able Officer."³⁵

³³ Clinton to Board of Trade, June 13, 1751, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 703-4; Clinton to Board of Trade, July 17, 1751, *ibid.*, 713-15. The Six Nations agreed to make peace with their ancient enemies, the Catawbas, who sent six chiefs to this meeting at the request of Clinton and Governor James Glen of South Carolina. Since the British were friends of the Iroquois and the Catawbas, Clinton thought it "necessary for the British interest" that these traditional foes end their mutual hostility. See also Clinton to Board of Trade, Oct. 1, 1751, *ibid.*, 738.

³⁴ Clinton to Newcastle, Dec. 9, 1746, *ibid.*, 313-14; Henretta, "Salutary Neglect," 29-31; John R. Alden, "The Albany Congress and the Creation of the Indian Superintendencies," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27 (Sept. 1940): 194-95 (hereafter cited as *MVHR*).

³⁵ Clinton and Governor William Shirley to Board of Trade, Aug. 18,

In addition to exhorting the board to develop a plan of defense for the colonies, Clinton submitted in October 1751 a report on the state of Indian affairs prepared by Colden during the summer. Earlier that spring Colden had received a plan devised by Archibald Kennedy, a member of the New York council, which favored a colonial confederation, the establishment of a buffer colony between the English and French, and a unified Indian policy. Advocating the appointment of a "superintendent of Indian affairs" to replace the inefficient and self-serving New York Indian commissioners at Albany, Kennedy suggested that the superintendent should report semiannually to the governor and council of New York. The colonial executive would then dispatch the information to the board. Furthermore, the board should insist upon the development of a fair system of public trading to prevent fraudulent treatment of the Indians. In order to finance an Indian department, the home government could levy duties in England on Indian trade goods sent to America and on furs imported from the colonies. Motivated by Kennedy's ideas, Colden designed his own plan. He encouraged the appointment of a royal superintendent of Indian affairs who would correspond regularly with the board and colonial governors. This superintendent would be responsible for redressing grievances of the Indians, providing them with smiths and missionaries, and guaranteeing the just treatment of the tribesmen by all English traders. Colden proposed that the crown pay the superintendent from a duty levied on wine and liquor imported into or produced in the colonies, in order to free him from financial dependence upon the colonial lower houses.³⁶ He expected the Indian superintendent to prevent the Six Nations from abandoning their alliance with the British. Although Halifax undoubtedly found the proposals of

1748, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 438-39; Board of Trade to Privy Council Committee [incorrectly titled, "Report of the Privy Council upon the State of New York"], Apr. 2, 1751, *ibid.*, 638.

³⁶ Cadwallader Colden, "The present state of Indian affairs, with the British and French colonies in North America, with some observations thereon for serving the Fidelity of the Indians to the Crown of Great Britain and promoting Trade among them," Aug. 8, 1751, *ibid.*, 738-47; Archibald Kennedy, *The Importance of Gaining and Preserving the Friendship of the Indians to the British Interest* (New York, 1751), 15. The plan was printed anonymously with an accompanying letter, also anonymous, by Benjamin Franklin, who expressed his general agreement with Kennedy's plan. The plan was also printed in London in 1752. John R. Alden maintains that Kennedy was the first person to use the title of "superintendent of Indian affairs" in connection with the English management of Indian policy. Alden, "The Albany Congress," *MVHR* 27 (Sept. 1940): 195-97. See also Colden to Clinton, Aug. 8, 1751, *Colden Papers*, 4: 271-87; Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson*, 81; Harry M. Ward, "Unite or Die": *Intercolony Relations, 1690-1763* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1971), 142, 151.

Colden interesting once he read them, the board took no immediate action upon them late in 1751. Halifax remained at his country estate, pouting because Newcastle had not persuaded the king to accede to his demands for more authority as president of the Board of Trade.³⁷

With the appointment of Robert Dinwiddie as lieutenant governor of Virginia in July 1751 Halifax placed an ardent expansionist in a position to challenge the French in the Ohio Valley. Previously, Virginians had exhibited little concern over Indian affairs, partly because the French and their allies had not directly threatened their colony. Before Dinwiddie assumed office in Virginia the anxiety of colonists in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania increased substantially as the French menace loomed closer. Since Pennsylvania occupied an especially vulnerable position on the frontier, that colony might well have led its neighbors in an effort to block the French intruders. Alarmed by the news of French aggression in their proprietary colony, the Penns in England quickly consulted Halifax. Then the proprietors wrote Lieutenant Governor James Hamilton, who earlier had notified the board about the rising French threat in the Ohio Valley, and offered to contribute £400 for the erection of a fort at the forks of the Ohio River. Promising an additional annual sum of £100 for its maintenance, the Penns suggested that the "command of this might be given to the principal Indian Trader, and be obliged to keep Four or Six men at it who might serve him in it; and the House be his Magazine for Goods."

In May 1751 Hamilton dispatched Croghan to represent Pennsylvania at a conference with several western tribes. His job was to obtain their approval of the fort. Both men knew that the Quakers, who dominated the assembly, adamantly opposed the appropriation of money for defense measures. The Quakers preferred to provide finances for presents to the Indians, which the assembly believed best symbolized the peaceful intentions of the Pennsylvania government. The proprietors, however, considered large expenditures for presents impractical in view of the French pressure on the Ohio frontier. Although he did not oppose the use of gifts, Hamilton strongly favored the construction of a fortified trading house among the Ohio Indians as a measure of security. After Croghan returned with a request from the Indians for a fort, Hamilton recommended it to the assembly. The Quakers argued that the forks of the Ohio lay outside the western

³⁷ Halifax to Newcastle, Nov. 12, 1751, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32725, fol. 398; Pelham to Newcastle, Nov. 29, 1751, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32725, fol. 455; Basye, *Board of Trade*, 69.

limits of the colony. According to the original charter, Pennsylvania could not extend more than three hundred miles from the Delaware River. Claiming that Croghan had either misunderstood or misrepresented the request of the Indians and the danger of attack by the French, the assembly refused to vote money to establish the fort. The Quakers believed they could retain the loyalty of the Indians even with the French in their midst. As late as 1753 Hamilton pleaded in vain for a fort.³⁸

Confined on the west by its charter, as well, Maryland did not move to challenge the French. In Dinwiddie, however, Virginia had a governor who advocated expansion into the Ohio Valley primarily to defend Virginia and to defeat the French. Moreover, as a shareholder in the Ohio Company, he admitted that he had "the Success and Prosperity of the Ohio Company much at heart." Ultimately, he contended that the British "dominions on this continent" were of a "value not to be estimated" and that "in time, if properly protected," they would comprise "the western and best empire in the world." Therefore, he urged the Virginia House of Burgesses to adopt measures to improve relations with the Indians. Furthermore, he notified the board of the pressing need to resolve Indian problems in the Ohio Valley, as well as disputes between Pennsylvania and Virginia traders in that region.³⁹

Unable to compete successfully with Pennsylvania and Virginia in providing the Indians with presents, the French resorted to more aggressive measures after 1751 in the Ohio Valley. They massacred the Miami village of Pickawillany on the Great Miami River in June

38 Hamilton to Board of Trade, Feb. 4, 1750/1 [?], *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser., 2: 60-63; Thomas Penn to Hamilton, [?], 1751, *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 515, 546, 609; *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1774), 4: 137, 146, 152, 156; Albert T. Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement* (Cleveland, 1926), 75-76; Theodore Thayer, *Israel Pemberton: King of the Quakers* (Philadelphia, 1943), 60; Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1959), 35-44; Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 321-23; Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson*, 93; Dinwiddie's "Memorial" to Board of Trade, Sept. 10, 1751, C.O. 5/1327, fols. 417-19, P.R.O. The memorial was not read until March 11, 1752, when Hanbury was called by the board for consultation on the matter. Mulkearn, ed., *Mercer Papers*, 410, 465.

39 Lieut. Gov. Robert Dinwiddie to Thomas Cresap, Jan. 23, 1752, R. A. Brock, ed., *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie* (Virginia Historical Society, *Collections* [Richmond, Va., 1883-1884]), 1: 17-18 (hereafter cited as Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*); Dinwiddie to Henry Fox, May 24, 1756, C.O. 5/17, P.R.O.; Henry R. McIlwaine and J. P. Kennedy, eds., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1776* (Richmond, Va., 1909), 8: 5, 103, 171 (hereafter cited as McIlwaine and Kennedy, eds., *JHB of Va.*); Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, Jan. 20, 1752, C.O. 5/1327, 453-54, L.C. Tr.

1752 in order to confiscate valuable British goods and to eliminate La Demoiselle, a Miami chief and a staunch ally of the British since 1748. This slaughter of the Miamis marked the end of peaceful competition between the European rivals for the allegiance of the Indians in the Ohio Valley. Thereafter, both the French and British used gifts to secure warriors in preparation for the eventual conflict.⁴⁰

Dinwiddie advocated the appropriation of money from quitrents to cover the cost of the presents given to those Indians who declared war on the French. He promised the board that Virginia would bear the cost of transporting the presents if the British authorities would divert part of the quitrent revenue to cover a £1,000 gift to the Indians. Furthermore, he suggested that the board seriously consider the construction of two forts in the Ohio Valley because the "Indians are fond and solicitous that we should build some forts on the Ohio."⁴¹

Halifax had acquired a reputation as an outspoken imperialist in 1752 when he advocated the demolition of the dangerous French fortress at Crown Point in northern New York. Similarly, he now sanctioned Dinwiddie's proposal to build small forts on the Ohio in order to protect the frontier. Reports from Dinwiddie, telling of the movement of a formidable body of French troops into the region south of Lake Erie, greatly disturbed Halifax. The French had sent those soldiers to garrison two forts, Fort Presqu'Isle and Fort Le Boeuf, which they had constructed near the headwaters of the Allegheny River. Moreover, the French and their Indian friends had plundered the goods of several English traders, whom they had then driven back over the mountains. Clearly the French had resolved to exclude the British from the Ohio Valley through violent measures. Alarmed by these reports, Halifax warned Robert D'Arcy, Earl of Holderness, the new secretary of state for the Southern Department, of the dangerous implications of unchecked French aggression to future western expansion by the British colonies: "We [the Board of Trade] cannot but express our fears and apprehensions that unless some measures be speedily taken to put a stop to these proceedings and encroachments of the French, any further attempts of His Majesty's subjects to make

⁴⁰ *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 316-18; Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts*, 114-16.

⁴¹ Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, Oct. 6, 1752, C.O. 5/1327, printed in Goodman, ed., *Journal of Trent*, 69-72; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, Dec. 10, 1752, C.O. 5/1327, 415-24, L.C. Tr.; Grant et al., eds., *Acts of Privy Council*, 4: 200-3. Dinwiddie had made a fair proposal, since transportation of presents was a major expense. The cost of presents was higher in the colonies than in England. Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts*, 62-63, 75. See also Lois Mulkearn, "The English Eye the French in North America," *Pennsylvania History* 21 (Oct. 1954): 333.

settlements in the interior part of America will be effectually prevented." Halifax also worried that further disruption of British trade with the tribesmen by the French would alienate the affections of the Indian allies of Britain and expose the colonies "to their ravages and incursions."⁴² Fully comprehending the importance of the Anglo-Miami alliance for the security of the colonies, he recommended the expenditure of £1,000 in presents for the Indians. At his suggestion the Privy Council ordered Dinwiddie on May 19, 1753, to take the amount from the revenue received by Virginia from the tax of two shillings per hogshead of tobacco exported. Acknowledging that "the friendship and affection of the Indians is certainly of the greatest importance to the security . . . of the colonies," Halifax declared that the most effective way of "gaining and preserving that affection is by making them presents . . . and [through] a fair and upright Conduct in all the Commercial dealings of those who traffick with them." Yet the board did not attempt to manage Indian affairs at this time. It left that service to the colonial legislatures.⁴³ Meanwhile, Holderness, a henchman of Newcastle, hesitated to take resolute action in the complicated and delicate matter of Anglo-French relations in the Ohio Valley.

On June 16 Dinwiddie alerted Halifax to an impending French invasion in the Ohio Valley and pleaded for action by the British cabinet. Details of the French incursion in that region reached Halifax on August 12. Only a few days earlier the board had decided to omit temporarily any specific orders from the draft of instructions that it had otherwise completed for the new governor of New York, Sir Danvers Osborn. The board received an additional report on the aggressive movements of the French from Clinton.⁴⁴ For Halifax the time had clearly come to force the pacific Newcastle into adopting a

⁴² Earl of Holderness to Newcastle, May 15, 1752, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32727, fol. 184; Holderness to Newcastle, May 26, 1752, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32836, fol. 300; Earl of Hardwicke to Newcastle, May 15, 1752, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32737, fol. 180; Board of Trade to Dinwiddie, Jan. 17, 1753, in Goodman, ed., *Journal of Trent*, 107-8; Board of Trade to Holderness, Mar. 16, 1753, *ibid.*, 109-11; Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson*, 93-95. Fort Presqu'Isle and Fort Le Boeuf are now Erie, Pennsylvania, and Waterford, Pennsylvania, respectively.

⁴³ Grant et al., eds., *Acts of Privy Council*, 4: 200-3; Board of Trade report to Privy Council, Mar. 16, 1753, C.O. 5/1367, 25, L.C. Tr.; Order in Council, May 10, 1753, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32371, fol. 430; Board of Trade to Dinwiddie, Nov. 29, 1752, C.O. 5/1366, fol. 258, P.R.O.

⁴⁴ Dinwiddie to Holderness, Mar. 12, 1754, Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*, 1: 94; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, June 16, 1753, 5/1327, 639-40, L.C. Tr.; Board of Trade to Holderness, Aug. 9, 1753, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 793; Clinton to Board of Trade, June 30, 1753, *ibid.*, 778.

mere belligerent attitude toward the French. In a long memorandum to Newcastle on August 15, Halifax argued that French penetration of the Ohio was the beginning of a wholehearted campaign against all English possessions in America. Warning the elder Pelham that the French threatened to encircle the British in America, Halifax expressed his concern that the French might complete "their favorite plan" and seize control of nearly "two thirds of the very best unsettled land on this side of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence." Consequently, Britain would lose not only half of the territory to which it "is indisputably entitled," but Halifax feared that the British would find it "extremely difficult" to retain "the other half" in the event of a "future Rupture" between the two nations. He extended the title of the Six Nations to all the territory of the Great Lakes that the Iroquois had ceded to the English in 1701.⁴⁵

On the following day, Halifax sent another memorandum to Holderness for the perusal of the entire cabinet. Intent on stampeding the other ministers into adopting an aggressive policy toward the French, he slyly embellished his report with fictitious and ambiguous details in order to goad them into action. Claiming the Ohio flowed through Virginia, Halifax said that the French had invaded that colony "not more than 200 or 250 miles from the Sea Coast," driving British subjects from "their Settlements in a great Panick." He had no basis other than the Virginia charter of 1609 for contending that the Ohio River went through the colony. Furthermore, had the French moved within two hundred miles of the Atlantic Ocean, they would have been situated on the eastern slopes of the Alleghenies. But the enemies of Britain had not crossed the mountains, nor had the English settlers abandoned any settlements on the eastern end of the Ohio Valley. As of August 1753 no such settlements existed. Halifax simply wanted to frighten the cabinet into adopting measures to combat the French. If the French ever succeeded in their invasion of the Ohio, he predicted that they would construct a chain of forts extending from Quebec to New Orleans so that "in Case of Rupture with [France] the lives

⁴⁵ Halifax to Newcastle [?], Aug. 12, 1753, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32732, fol. 450; Halifax to Newcastle, Aug. 15, 1753, Br. Lib. Add Mss 33029, fols. 96-111. One historian incorrectly cites this memorandum as having been sent to the King in Council, rather than to Newcastle. Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The British Empire Before the American Revolution* (New York, 1966), 4: 289. Patrice Louis-René Higonnet maintains that Dunk Halifax and the Earl of Halifax were two different men — an inexcusable error. See Dunk Halifax to Earl of Halifax, Aug. 12, 1753, C.O. 5/1344, P.R.O., in Patrice Louis-René Higonnet, "The Origins of the Seven Years' War," *Journal of Modern History* 90 (Mar. 1968): 63-64. Halifax and Dunk Halifax were the same man. Thus the letter must have been written by Halifax to his cousin, Newcastle.

and possessions of Your Majesty's subjects, Inhabitants of the Provinces of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania will be exposed to imminent Danger from the Incursions of the Enemy." ⁴⁶

In response to his warning the cabinet met on August 21 and decided that the British colonial governors should prevent the French from encroaching on the Ohio. Therefore, the cabinet authorized Holderness to send a circular letter to all the colonial governors, directing them "to repel Force by Force" and to maintain a correspondence with each other so that they might provide mutual assistance in case of attack. But Holderness also cautioned them to remain strictly on the defensive. In a separate letter, he enjoined Dinwiddie "not to make use of armed Force under your Direction excepting within the undoubted limits of His Majesty's Dominions." The British government empowered Dinwiddie to build two forts on the Ohio "for the security and protection of our Subjects, and of the Indians in alliance with us." Although the crown lent £10,000 to Dinwiddie for the defense of his colony, Whitehall expected Virginia to repay it from the tobacco tax fund of the colony. Moreover, the British authorities still insisted that the lower house bear any further cost of maintaining the forts. Since Holderness did not specify what the "undoubted limits" of the British possessions were, Dinwiddie could use the theory of Indian sovereignty, which he and Halifax espoused, to challenge French claims not previously recognized by the Treaty of Utrecht. Thus Dinwiddie could construe theoretically any French incursion on the lands between the Great Lakes and Louisiana as an act of aggression by the French upon British soil. If the French "do still endeavour to carry on any such unlawful and unjustifiable proceedings," including the building of a fort on British territory, Holderness explained to Dinwiddie, "we do hereby strictly charge and command you to drive them off by force of Arms." At the urging of Halifax, the British government had thus accepted the concerns of the Ohio Company as its own. Dinwiddie assured Halifax that he would, however, use his newly invested powers "with Caution and Circumspection." ⁴⁷

As the French became more aggressive, the Six Nations moved toward neutrality. Early in the autumn of 1753 the board learned that the Mohawks, a leading nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, had broken

⁴⁶ Board of Trade to King in Council, Aug. 16, 1753, C.O. 5/1367, P.R.O.

⁴⁷ Holderness to Newcastle, Aug. 27, 1753, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32732, fols. 556-57; Holderness to Colonial Governors (Circular Letter), Aug. 28, 1753, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 794-95; Holderness to Dinwiddie, Aug. 28, 1753, C.O. 5/1344, P.R.O.; Dinwiddie to Halifax, Nov. 17, 1753, C.O. 5/1344, P.R.O.; John R. Alden, *Robert Dinwiddie, Servant of the Crown* (Charlottesville, Va., 1973), 43-44.

the "Covenant Chain" in anger over illegal seizures of their lands and excessive sales of rum to their people. Clinton had failed miserably in an attempt to conciliate them at a conference in June 1753. Consequently, the Indians had departed, complaining bitterly of mistreatment and declaring that "the alliance between them and the Province of New York [was] dissolved." Even Johnson, their old friend, could not completely pacify them. The Indians expressed doubts about the military value of their alliance with the British. Since each colony acted for itself in regard to defense, the British lacked a unified Indian policy and could reach no general agreement with the tribesmen on the important issues of defense, trade, and lands. These glaring defects in the British colonial system had been apparent to Halifax since his first days at the board. He knew that the French operated under one unified command in Canada and possessed a potent ally in the wilderness that separated their settlements from the British colonies. Alarmed by the threat of the Mohawks to defect from their alliance with the English, Halifax indicated to Holderness on September 18, 1753, that "this affair appears to us [the Board of Trade] to be of a very serious nature and may be attended with very bad consequences at this conjuncture."⁴⁸

Halifax also notified Holderness that earlier in the day the board had sent Osborn, the new governor of New York, a letter expressing displeasure and surprise "that the Province of New York should have been so inattentive to the General Interest of His Majesty's Subjects in America, as well as to their own particular security" as to permit a serious misunderstanding to arise between the British and the Mohawks. In order "to wipe away all Remembrance of that neglect" of which the Indians complained, Halifax ordered Osborn, his brother-in-law, to persuade the council and assembly of New York to provide presents for the Iroquois. Stressing the importance of taking immediate steps "to preserve the Friendship and Affection of the Indians," Halifax instructed him to summon the Six Nations to an intercolonial conference for the purpose of "burying the Hatchet and renewing the Covenant Chain." Halifax required that, in order to convince the Mohawks of British sincerity, his relative examine the complaints of the Indians regarding land frauds and "take all proper and legal Methods" to redress their grievances. Furthermore, he recommended

⁴⁸ "Conference between Governor Clinton and Indians," June 12, 1753, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 781-88; Board of Trade to Holderness, Sept. 18, 1753, *ibid.*, 799; Thomas Pownall to Board of Trade, Oct. 30, 1753, *ibid.*, 804-5; "Conference between Mohawks and Colonel Johnson," July 26, 1753, *ibid.*, 810, 813; Lieutenant Governor James DeLancey to Board of Trade, Nov. 2, 1753, *ibid.*, 806-7; Hamilton, *Sir William Johnson*, 100.

that in the future the New York governor permit no more purchases of land from the Indians by private individuals. If the Indians expressed a willingness to sell any of their lands, however, Halifax wanted the colonial government to buy them for the crown, "at the Publick Charge."⁴⁹

Convinced that the "weaving Disposition" of the Iroquois seriously affected the security of several other colonies, Halifax informed Osborn that the board had invited the governors of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and New Jersey to send commissioners to the joint conference with the Six Nations. Because Halifax believed that "the Practice of each Province making a Separate Treaty for itself in its own Name is very improper and may be attended with great inconvenience to his Majesties Service," the board expected the colonies to sign "(if practicable) . . . one General Treaty in his Majesties name." On that very day Halifax dispatched urgent orders to the aforementioned colonial executives to prevail upon their assemblies to appropriate funds for Indian presents. Although the board observed that Onondaga seemed a proper place to conduct the conference, Halifax left the time and place of the meeting to the discretion of the governor of New York.⁵⁰ By the time the instructions from the board arrived in New York, however, Osborn had committed suicide, and James DeLancey had assumed executive duties in that colony. In that capacity he dutifully followed the orders of Halifax concerning the proposed Indian conference.⁵¹

Unlike Newcastle, Halifax had favored some form of colonial union as early as March 1752, when he had suggested the appointment of William, Viscount Barrington, as governor-general of all the colonies in North America. Halifax realized that the British sorely needed a unified system of defense and better management of Indian affairs. He claimed that, otherwise, the French with their centralized authority in Canada would overrun the British colonies.⁵²

49 Board of Trade to Holderness, Sept. 18, 1753, *ibid.*, 799; Board of Trade to Governor Sir Danvers Osborn, Sept. 18, 1753, *ibid.*, 800-1.

50 The Board of Trade did not officially invite Rhode Island and Connecticut because it believed that those colonies were in no immediate danger of attack. But Governor Thomas Fitch of Connecticut received the circular letter anyway. Board of Trade to Osborn, Sept. 18, 1753, *ibid.*, 801; Board of Trade to Colonial Governors (Circular Letter), Sept. 18, 1753, *ibid.*, 802; Albert C. Bates, ed., *The Fitch Papers: Correspondence and Documents During Thomas Fitch's Governorship of the Colony of Connecticut, 1754-1766* (Connecticut Historical Society, Collections, 17-18 [Hartford, Conn., 1918]), 1: 31-32.

51 Thomas Pownall to Board of Trade, Oct. 14, 1753, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 802-3; DeLancey to Board of Trade, Oct. 15, 1753, *ibid.*, 803-4.

52 Halifax to Newcastle, Mar. 2, 1752, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32726, fol. 207; "Lord Barrington's Paper," Mar. 6, 1752, Br. Lib. Add Mss 32726, fols. 229-30.

The idea that the colonies cooperate for purposes of defense also appealed to a few influential colonial officials. During the middle of February 1754 Shirley urged his colleagues to form a colonial union empowered to control Indian relations and to fix quotas for the expenses of defense and the construction of frontier forts. Although he regarded Newcastle as his patron, Shirley had, since late 1752, relied heavily on Halifax for support in London. He apparently was counting on Halifax to approve his proposal at Whitehall, since Shirley had already encountered the opposition of DeLancey, who merely agreed that the colonies should share in the expense of building and maintaining a system of forts across the northern frontier. Otherwise, DeLancey emphasized that the crown wanted the colonies to unite only in one general treaty with the Indians. Deciding to hold the conference at Albany on June 14, DeLancey acceded to the wishes of Shirley by inviting Rhode Island and Connecticut to send commissioners. Shirley, hoping that the meeting would unify the colonies, wanted as many of them represented as possible. He wrote his fellow colonial executives, asking them to instruct their commissioners to work for union.⁵³

Dinwiddie did not oppose a confederation of colonies. Because he believed that "the affairs of each district" would be "more concisely enquired into, and easier regulated" by two councils, however, he recommended to Halifax in 1753 a scheme for the creation of two confederacies, one northern and one southern. Partly because of this proposal, Dinwiddie never actively participated in the promotion of the Albany Congress. The board had ordered him to persuade the Virginia lower house to send commissioners to Albany. Dinwiddie, however, declared that his colony could not afford the expense of sending delegates to New York because of a projected conference with the Ohio Indians at Winchester in May 1754. There he intended to reconcile the differences between the northern and southern tribes, only to have his dreams of building a mighty Indian auxiliary force

53 Shirley to Newcastle, Nov. 23, 1752, C. H. Lincoln, ed., *Correspondence of William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts, and Military Commander in America, 1731-1760* (New York, 1912), 2: 1-4; Shirley to Newcastle, Jan. 23, 1753, *ibid.*, 4-6; DeLancey to Board of Trade, Nov. 29, 1753, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 815-16; DeLancey to Lieutenant Governor Horatio Sharpe, Dec. 11, 1755, J. Hall Pleasants, ed., *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland, 1752-1761* (Maryland Historical Society, *Archives of Maryland*, 50, 52, 55-56 [Baltimore, 1933]), 1: 411 (hereafter cited as Pleasants, ed., *Acts of Md. Assembly*); DeLancey to Board of Trade, Dec. 24, 1753, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 817-19; DeLancey to Board of Trade, Jan. 3, 1754, *ibid.*, 819-21; DeLancey to Board of Trade, Apr. 22, 1754, *ibid.*, 833-34; Shirley to Holderness, Jan. 7, 1754, *ibid.*, 822.

shattered at Winchester when the Indians did not appear. Halifax also deprecated his failure to obey royal instructions and reprimanded him for his lack of zeal in the Albany endeavor.⁵⁴

In the spring of 1754 Halifax learned from Dinwiddie about the French intention to erect a fort at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, a strategically important location. Since the French refused to heed his formal request, Dinwiddie resolved to obey the royal command "to drive them off by force of Arms." Therefore, he commissioned William Trent, an employee of the Ohio Company, to establish a fort at the forks of the Ohio and ordered George Washington, an adjutant of the Virginia militia, to accompany Trent with a force of one hundred men "to protect and assist them already there in building the Fort." At the same time, Dinwiddie asked the governors of neighboring colonies to have their assemblies supply him immediately with men and money.⁵⁵

But Dinwiddie discovered that his authority within his own colony was greatly limited by his financial dependence upon the Virginia House of Burgesses. Even after Washington confirmed the French presence on the Ohio, many Virginians doubted the seriousness of the threat to their colony. Therefore, when Dinwiddie recalled the assembly in February 1754 to obtain money "to take more vigorous measures" against the intruders, the Burgesses refused to vote money for an expedition against the French unless they could appoint a legislative committee to supervise the expenditures of the appropriation. Dinwiddie grudgingly consented to cooperate with the legislative committee, even though he thus violated his royal instructions. For

54 Dinwiddie to James Abercromby, Aug. 15, 1754, Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*, 1: 284-87; Dinwiddie to Halifax, Nov. 16, 1754, *ibid.*, 405-7; Dinwiddie to Catawba Indians, [n.d.], *ibid.*, 60-61; Dinwiddie to Hamilton, Feb. 23, 1754, *ibid.*, 81; Dinwiddie to Halifax, Mar. 12, 1754, *ibid.*, 100-1; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, Nov. 17, 1753, C.O. 5/1328, P.R.O. The May 1754 meeting at Winchester should not be confused with another conference at Winchester in September 1753 among William Fairfax, William Trent, George Croghan, Andrew Montour, and the Ohio Indians. Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts*, 124-29. See also Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, Mar. 12, 1754, Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*, 1: 98-99; Dinwiddie to Sir Thomas Robinson, June 18, 1754, *ibid.*, 205-7; Dinwiddie to "King Headmen and Warriors of the Catawbias," Apr. 19, 1754, *ibid.*, 131-32; Dinwiddie to the "Emperor King of Chote and the Warriors of the Great Nation of Cherokees," Apr. 19, 1754, *ibid.*, 132; Dinwiddie to Warriors of the Cherokees, [n.d.], *ibid.*, 133; Dinwiddie to Glen, Aug. 5, 1754, *ibid.*, 272-76; Dinwiddie to Glen, Oct. 25, 1754, *ibid.*, 377-79; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, Jan. [?], 1755, *ibid.*, 384.

55 Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, Nov. 17, 1753, C.O. 5/1328, P.R.O.; Dinwiddie to French commandant, Oct. 31, 1753, C.O. 5/1328, P.R.O.; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade (two letters), Jan. 29, 1754, C.O. 5/1328, fols. 41-43, P.R.O.; Board of Trade to DeLancey, Feb. 26, 1754, *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 828-29; Board of Trade to Thomas Pownall, Feb. 26, 1754, *ibid.*, 830.

this he apologized to Halifax but absolved himself by claiming that the colony desperately needed money to combat the French. Halifax deplored the existence of the legislative committee. He objected in July 1754 "that the Assembly should have availed themselves of such exigency to have proposed the Bill in a manner inconsistent with His Majesty's Rights and Authority, and the method which he has prescribed for raising money for publick Service."⁵⁶

Nor could Dinwiddie overcome the jealousy and rivalry that existed among the colonies. As other governors struggled with their assemblies for primacy in colonial affairs, disunity among the colonies created problems of defense. Although Dinwiddie implored the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, the Carolinas, and New Jersey to assist Virginia against the French, he received little aid from them. Governor James Glen of South Carolina had summarized the position of the lower houses in all the southern royal colonies as early as July 1753, when he explained to Halifax that the South Carolina Commons would never "be prevailed upon . . . to assent to the Governor's power of carrying the Militia out of the Province."⁵⁷

No wonder Dinwiddie doubted that he could block French offensive movements in the Ohio region. Vowing to Halifax that he would "do every thing in my Power to execute" his expedition to build two

⁵⁶ McIlwaine and Kennedy, eds., *JHB of Va.*, 8: 112-18, 328, 363, 374, 381; Colonel George Washington to Earl of Loudoun, Jan. [?], 1757, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799* (Washington, D.C., 1931), 2: 7; William Waller Hening, ed., *Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia* . . . (New York, 1823), 6: 350, 435-38, 452-61, 521-30; *ibid.*, 7: 9-25, 69-87; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, Mar. 12, 1754, Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*, 1: 98-99; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, May 10, 1754, *ibid.*, 160-62; Dinwiddie to Hanbury, Mar. 12, 1754, *ibid.*, 101-4; Dinwiddie to Halifax, Oct. 25, 1754, *ibid.*, 366-69; Board of Trade to Dinwiddie, July 4, 1754, C.O. 5/1367, 103-9, L.C. Tr.; Jack P. Greene, *The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies, 1689-1776* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1963), 104, 304-5.

⁵⁷ Glen to Board of Trade, July 20, 1753, C.O. 5/374, fols. 187-219, P.R.O.; House of Delegates to Sharpe, Mar. 5, 1754, Pleasants, ed., *Acts of M.D. Assembly*, 1: 430; William Whitehead et al., eds., *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey* (*The New Jersey Archives*, 1st ser., 1-42 [Newark, N.J., 1883-1885]), 8: Pt. 1, 195-96; W. L. Saunders and Walter Clark, eds., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1886-1890), 5: 108-9 (hereafter cited as Saunders and Clark, eds., *Col. Recs. of N.C.*); Dinwiddie to Halifax, May 10, 1754, Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*, 1: 162-63; Glen to Dinwiddie, Mar. 15, 1754, quoted in George Louis Beer, *British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765* (New York, 1907), 17; Benjamin Franklin to Richard Partridge, May 8, 1754, quoted in *ibid.*, 17-18n. By late in August 400 North Carolinians had joined the colonial forces in Virginia. But the North Carolina troops refused to serve under Virginia officers and deserted as soon as their military fund ran out. Matthew Rowan to Board of Trade, Aug. 29, 1754, Saunders and Clark, eds., *Col. Recs. of N.C.*, 5: 137.

forts on the Ohio River "with all possible Dispatch," Dinwiddie regretted that he had "[no] more regulars" to augment his "little Force" and to assure success. Late in April he observed to Halifax that "the Tardiness of our neighbouring Colonies is a great Obstruction to the Expedition." Dinwiddie did not yet know that the French invasion had already taken place. He had hoped to have forces from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina situated at Will's Creek in western Maryland by April to support Trent, who in March had begun to construct a fort at the forks of the Ohio. But a large force of about six hundred French and Indians, led by Pierre Claude de Contrecoeur, had moved quickly, capturing the half-built fort and its small garrison on April 17, 1754. The French commander proceeded immediately to replace it with a formidable fortification, which he called Fort Duquesne.⁵⁸

When news reached Virginia that Trent had capitulated to the French, Dinwiddie resolved to "collect all the Forces I can" in order to "dislodge them [French]" from the fort at the forks. In describing to Halifax the setback the Virginia forces had suffered in the Ohio Valley, Dinwiddie lamented, "it will grieve me to allow the French a Quiet Settle[men]t on the Ohio, as I foresee the Inconveniency, and . . . ruin to all His M[ajest]y's Colonies on this Cont[inen]t . . . and also they will get our friendly Ind[ian]s from Us." Within a few weeks came the historic encounters at Little Meadows and Great Meadows in which men from both sides met their deaths.⁵⁹

With the spilling of English and French blood in the Ohio Valley, an undeclared war began in the wilderness west of the Alleghenies. Although both nations had hoped to avoid war in America, the aggressiveness of Dinwiddie and the French in the Ohio region helped make conflict inevitable. The English advance forces had been thoroughly routed and ousted from the Ohio Valley.

During this period, Dinwiddie confided solely in Halifax about policy on the frontier. The rest of the board received only general information concerning developments in the Ohio region. Dinwiddie

58 Dinwiddie to Halifax, Mar. 12, 1754, Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*, 1: 100-1; Dinwiddie to Halifax, Apr. 27, 1754, *ibid.*, 134-35; Marquis de Duquesne to Pierre Claude de Contrecoeur, Jan. 27, 1754, Fernand Grenier, ed., *Papiers Contrecoeur et autres documents concernant le conflit anglo-français sur l'Ohio de 1754 a 1756* (Quebec, 1952), 93; Alden, *Robert Dinwiddie*, 45.

59 Dinwiddie to Halifax, May 10, 1754, Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*, 1: 162-63; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, May 10, 1754, C.O. 5/1328, fols. 211-14, P.R.O. For firsthand reports on the battle at Great Meadows see J. C. Harrington, *New Light on Washington's Fort Necessity* (Richmond, Va., 1957), 123-32.

dared to be "free and open" about "the interior Parts of this Cont[inen]t" only with a man whom he trusted implicitly. He also preferred to receive the opinion of a personal friend who wielded "greater influence" in "Affairs of that kind" at Whitehall than anyone else.⁶⁰

As the struggle between the English and French for control of the Ohio Valley region reached a climax in the crucial decade of the 1750s, colonial administrative problems gave way to more pressing concerns of defense. The related issue of management of Indian affairs also demanded attention. As a result, Halifax and the board devised plans to unite the colonial forces for defense and to centralize the supervision of Indian affairs. Since the entire defense effort required financial support, Halifax also worked closely with colonial officials to develop a taxation program that would enable the colonies to pay a greater share of the cost of their own defense and would bring Parliament more directly into the business of imperial administration. Upon the formal declaration of war against France in 1756, he laid aside his other elaborate schemes to increase the power of the royal prerogative and to improve the efficiency of colonial administration in America. He hoped to renew them at a more convenient time. In the midst of a struggle for the North American continent, the British ministry recognized the necessity of cooperation with the colonial assemblies in order to defeat the French.

Halifax had set in motion the events that led to bloodshed in North America when he persuaded the Pelhams to support the formation of the Ohio Company. His policy of territorial imperialism compelled him to select the fiery Dinwiddie for the strategic post in Virginia. In 1753 he not only forced Whitehall to adopt a more belligerent posture against the French in the Ohio Valley, but he also instigated action that would lead to the Albany Congress. With war appearing imminent by the spring of 1754, Halifax and the Board of Trade pursued two objectives — vigorous military action, largely financed by the colonies, and a plan of colonial military federation. Both proved to be elusive during the French and Indian War.

⁶⁰ Washington to Dinwiddie, May 29, 1754, Brock, ed., *Dinwiddie Papers*, 1: 179-82; Washington to Dinwiddie, June 3, 1754, *ibid.*, 191-93; Dinwiddie to Halifax, Mar. 12, 1754, *ibid.*, 100-1; Dinwiddie to Hanbury, Mar. 12, 1754, *ibid.*, 101-2; Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts*, 130-33.