

to Mr Pitt,⁸ who has declared himself so warmly for the question on the dismissal of officers, that that motion waits for his recovery.⁹ A call of the House is appointed for next Wednesday,¹⁰ but as he has had a relapse, the motion will probably be deferred. I should be very glad if it was to be dropped entirely for this session,¹¹ but the young men are warm and not easily bridled.

If it was not too long to transcribe, I would send you an entertaining petition of the periwig-makers to the King, in which they complain that men will wear their own hair.¹² Should one almost wonder if carpenters were to remonstrate, that since the Peace their trade decays, and that there is no demand for wooden legs?¹³ Apropos, my Lady Hertford's friend, Lady Harriot Vernon, has quarrelled with me for smiling at the enormous headgear of her daughter, Lady Grosvenor.¹⁴ She came one night to Northumberland House with

8. Who was suffering from the gout (*ante* 20 Jan. 1765).

9. This is what HW wanted the ministry and the public at large to believe. However, in *Mem. Geo. III* he reveals that Pitt, still obstinately aloof from the Opposition, was by no means so warm for the question as he would have Hertford believe here—Pitt 'feared too many negatives on that question would authorise the Court to dismiss officers' (ii. 48). Pitt's luke-warmness on the question underscored HW's own reservations; consequently, HW advised Lord John Cavendish that he delay the motion and 'give out that it was in compliment to Mr Pitt, which would do credit to our cause,' while his primary purpose in advising the delay was ultimately to avoid the question altogether (*ibid.*; see n. 11 below). Later on Pitt was even less eager for the question, which was dropped; see *Mem. Geo. III* ii. 61 and *post* 18 April 1765.

10. 20 Feb.

11. The various objections of HW and others to the question are summarized in *Mem. Geo. III* ii. 47. Conway wrote to Hertford 31 Jan.: 'There is so much fear and caution and indeed I think very poor timidity in so many quarters, that a vast number of those who think the . . . [dismissal of officers] wrong are afraid to take any manly part in declaring so for fear of future consequences which goes so far that I now question if the thing will

be moved at all. *Personally* I am much better pleased than if it was; *politically* I think it shameful' (MS now wsl). HW wrote in *Mem. Geo. III*, *loc. cit.*, that 'Conway himself, aware that he should be deserted by his brethren, the officers, was by no means eager for bringing on the question'; the officers 'were . . . little desirous of seeing a topic agitated, which would have obliged them to approve the practice, or exposed them to the resentment of the Crown.'

12. 'Monday 11 [Feb.] . . . A petition of the master peruke-makers was presented to his Majesty, setting forth the distresses of themselves, and an incredible number of others dependent upon them from the almost universal decline of the trade, occasioned by the present mode of men in all stations wearing their own hair' (GM 1765, xxxv. 95). The petition is printed in the *London Chronicle* 12–14 Feb., xvii. 154.

13. 'In ridicule of the barbers, a petition from the company of body carpenters, as they are called, was ludicrously framed, imploring his Majesty to wear a wooden leg himself, and to enjoin his servants to appear in the royal presence with the same badge of honour, etc.' (GM *loc. cit.*). Croker suggests that 'this *jeu d'esprit* was from the pen of Mr Walpole' (*Works* ix. 189); see Hazen, *Bibl. of HW* 178.

14. Henrietta Vernon (d. 1828), m. 1