

the support of my administration. There is a general confidence expressed in me, and it goes so far that the chief leaders of opposition,¹⁹ who have been strangers in their wishes to the measures of government, and my predecessors, have acquainted me that they have refused all opposition to me; that they are persuaded I shall do all my situation will allow to promote the interest of Ireland, and under that opinion will support me without any private views.

Lord Kildare is to be in opposition if he can persuade anybody to join him; hitherto he has done nothing.²⁰ He has acquainted me that he wishes well to Lord Hertford, but cannot see him²¹ as Lord Lieutenant, since the usage to him²² has been so bad for some years past that he will not attend the King in person.²³ His friends have remonstrated against his conduct, told him it was considered as disappointment, as peevish and against the inclination of the country, but his Lordship is firm and received the remonstrances with passion and ill temper. Mr Ponsonby behaves well and I dare say will not deceive me.²⁴ Upon the whole it requires great prudence, management and attention to conduct the affairs of this country, circumstanced as they are, and some few unavoidable difficulties may now and then occur; but I am persuaded upon the whole it will go well and that I have reason to expect some credit from my present employment.²⁵

Gaieties and diversions I have left behind me. You may be in possession of them at Paris. I am immersed in business, with my thoughts and time fully employed upon the King[']s service and the good of this country.

19. Except Lord Kildare, the most influential of all (see below); next in importance to him were Lord Shannon (*ante* 17 Nov. 1763) and John Ponsonby, speaker of the Irish House of Commons and Shannon's father-in-law (J. A. Froude, *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, 1887, ii. 50-2).

20. Hertford mentions an 'opposition of nine' in a letter acknowledged by Conway 7 Nov. (MS now wst.), while Hunt Walsh wrote to Lord Townshend from Dublin, 5 June 1766, that 'the patriots began the sessions with a minority of about ten' (Hist. MSS Comm., 11th Report, App. pt iv, *Townshend MSS*, 1887, p. 402).

21. Hertford.

22. Kildare.

23. In 1762 Kildare, Master-General of the Irish Ordnance, had been exasperated by the slowness of the government in reaching a decision on his plan to reorganize the Irish Ordnance along the lines of the English Ordnance, and in 1763 the government had rebuffed his application for a regiment; see Brian Fitzgerald, *Emily, Duchess of Leinster 1731-1814*, 1950, pp. 94, 99, 114. Kildare's rancour was soothed next year upon his being created Duke of Leinster.

24. However, see *post* 10, 21 May 1766.

25. However, as might be expected from the chronic unrest in Ireland, Hertford's hopes proved too sanguine; see subsequent letters and especially *post* 21 May 1766.