An evolution of a ministerial crisis, 1754-1757: a study in the politics of the reign of George II

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AN EVOLUTION OF A MINISTERIAL CRISIS, 1754-1757:
A STUDY IN THE POLITICS OF THE
REIGN OF GEORGE II.

by
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B.A. in History, Southern Illinois University, 1967

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
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Faculty of History in the Graduate School
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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY THURMAN LEE SMITH ENTITLED "An Evolution of a Ministerial Crisis, 1754-1757: A Study in the Politics of the Reign of George II" BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY.

Thesis Director

Faculty Chairman
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3. The name “Broadbottom” applied to the Administration constructed by Pelham to oppose centers of the opposition by admitting a sufficient number of them to the Government.
INTRODUCTION

"Mr. Pelham is dead! All that calm, that supineness... is at an end!" remarked Horace Walpole. "I shall now have no more peace," lamented George II upon receiving news of Henry Pelham's death. Pelham's unexpected death on 6 March 1754 inaugurated a period of political instability analogous to that which followed Robert Walpole's resignation in February 1742, when England was beset by a period of ministerial instability, which not even the premiership of Pelham, Walpole's disciple, and the formation of the "Broadbottom Administration" were able to terminate in 1744. So long as the insidious influence of the royal...
favorite, Lord Granville,\(^4\) whose resignation the Old Whigs and the Opposition leaders together had forced in that year, continued to rule George II, Pelham’s influence in the House of Commons was undermined by lack of it in the Closet. Finally in February 1746 Pelham and virtually all the ministry resigned, but Granville was unable to form an alternative administration. With the subsequent recall of the Broadbottom, the King henceforth was compelled to confide in Pelham, who thereby finally consolidated his authority as premier. Between 1748 and 1751 there was restlessness and discontent, but Pelham, through political skill and acumen, managed to keep all malcontents conciliated. His task was made easier by the death in 1751 of the Prince of Wales and the consequent collapse of the opposition which he had sustained, so that the last years were the most untroubled of his premiership.

When Pelham died, the immediate and most difficult problem was his replacement with one such as he had been. A prime minister’s strength was not based solely on his being First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer but on royal favor, disposal of patronage, and sufficient skill in managing the House of Commons. Henry Pelham had fulfilled all these requirements. He had not

\(^4\)John Carteret, Earl Granville (1690-1763). Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 1721-1724; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1724-1730; Secretary of State for the Northern Department, 1742-1744; Secretary of State for both Southern and Northern Departments, 1746; Lord President of the Council, 1751-1763.
been a great statesman but an able debater and administrator. Although he was a Whig politician who had come up under the tutelage of Walpole and had been heir to the leadership of his party, the Old Corps of Whigs, he was not a minister of Walpole's stature. However, he had been an able student of Walpole in the handling of the country's finances; he reduced the annual expenditure and the national debt. Pelham also guided Parliament safely through the shoals of discord and faced little opposition, partly owing to his conciliatory influence on politics and realization that opposing politicians must be appeased and won over to the side of the Government. On his death all this political stability, and the loose inner bond which had held the Whig factions together, began to dissolve. From this time until the great Newcastle-Pitt coalition of June 1757, Britain lived in an atmosphere of political crisis and change. British politics were thrown into disarray at a time when the country was rapidly drifting toward war with France. The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 had proved little more than a truce; since 1751 the British and French East India Companies had been at war. Both powers were strengthening their defences in America where the first clash occurred in the Ohio Valley in May 1754.

The leading contenders for Pelham's position were the Duke of Newcastle, Henry Fox, and William Pitt.

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5 Coxe, Pelham Administration, II, pp. 301-06.
Newcastle's "prevailing passions" were "ambition, fear," and "jealousy." As Secretary of State, which he had been since 1724, he had been a thorn in the side of his brother, Pelham, constantly attempting to engross and monopolize all power and subordinate everyone to his whims. At first Newcastle was grief stricken over the loss of his brother and secluded himself, but he forgot about him "as soon as he had formed the plan of inheriting his power." Yet, although he commanded the largest following in the House of Commons, he could not succeed to the Premiership with the power Pelham had enjoyed. His peerage eliminated him from being leader of the House of Commons and spokesman for the Commons in the Closet. Therefore, if he succeeded his brother at the Treasury, his strength would depend on finding someone who was held in sufficient esteem by its members to manage the House of Commons. Two men stood head and shoulders above all as the possible successors for Pelham's place as leader of the House — Henry Fox and William Pitt.

Fox had been an intimate friend of Pelham, coveted the premiership, and had long been regarded by many,

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8Walpole, George II, I, p. 381.
including the King, as Pelham's successor. He was a trenchant debater and an able House of Commons man. His forte, like Pelham's, lay in finance. Since 1746 he had been Secretary at War but in the interim had become restless and desirous of power. Before Pelham's death, anticipating the future, he had built a strong following by cultivating the friendship and support of a number of politically influential people, among them the Dukes of Marlborough and Bedford, Lord Sandwich, the Duke of Richmond, Lord Hardwicke to Archbishop of Canterbury, 11 March 1754, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 216.

Charles Lennox, third Duke of Richmond (1735-1806). He followed a military career in the 1750's and was closely related to the Duke of Cumberland. He did not become politically active until the 1770's and 1780's.

John Russell, fourth Duke of Bedford (1710-1771). First Lord of the Admiralty, 1744-1748; Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 1748-1751; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1756-1761; Lord Privy Seal, 1761-1763; Lord President of the Council, 1763-1765. Bedford was not only one of the wealthiest men in England but led a small but important parliamentary party. He was also an intimate friend of Fox.

John Montagu, fourth Earl of Sandwich (1713-1792). One of the lords of the Admiralty, 1744-1748; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1748-1751, 1763, 1771-1781; Joint-Vice Treasurer of Ireland, 1755-1763; Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of Madrid, 1763; Secretary of State for the Northern Department, 1763-1765, 1770-1771; Postmaster-General, 1768-1770. He was a member of the Bedford faction.

Halifax, and Lord Hartington. Fox's position, moreover, was strengthened by his favor at Court and by the patronage of the Duke of Cumberland, George II's favorite son and Captain-General of the Army, with whom he was politically allied.

No sooner had Pelham drawn his last breath than Fox was soliciting support early the next morning. However, he did not have the support of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, whom the King had entrusted with negotiations for a new ministry. Hardwicke, for sundry reasons, was bent on

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14 George Montagu Dunk, second Earl of Halifax (1716-1771). Lord of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, 1744-1746; President of the Board of Trade, 1748-1756, 1757-1761; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1761-1763; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1762; Secretary of State for the Northern Department, 1762, 1771. Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 1763-1765; Lord Privy Seal, 1770. He was an intimate friend of Bedford.

15 William Cavendish, Lord Hartington (1720-1764). Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1754-1756; First Lord of the Treasury, Nov. 1756-June 1757; Lord Chamberlain, 1757-1762. He succeeded his father as the fourth Duke of Devonshire in 1755. See The Diary of the Late George Bubb Dodington, Baron of Melcombe Regis, from March 9, 1749, to February 6, 1761, with an Appendix, Containing Some Curious and Interesting Papers, Which Are Either Referred to, or Alluded to, in the Diary ed. by Henry Fenruddocke Wyndham (Salisbury: E. Easton, 1784), p. 183.


17 Philip Yorke, Earl of Hardwicke (1690-1764). Lord Chancellor, 1737-1756. He was a favorite of George II.
depriving Fox of the premiership, and if possible, any office of rank. Newcastle, the political rival of Fox and Pitt, was a personal friend of Hardwicke, and moreover, the Chancellor preferred Newcastle to either Fox or Pitt. Also Hardwicke feared that if Fox gained the premiership, Cumberland and he would combine "the Treasury, the House of Commons and the Sword" and thereby establish a military dictatorship. 18 Fox, moreover, had earned the intense dislike of Hardwicke by his opposition to the Lord Chancellor's Marriage Bill. 19 These disadvantages, however, did not discourage Fox in the least, for he boldly sent "no less than three very humiliating and apologizing messages" to Hardwicke, yet they were not enough to win his support. 20

Pitt coveted the Seals of the Secretary of State, but George II strongly disliked him. He possessed a charismatic personality and was a fiery and persuasive orator. His forte lay in foreign affairs, and he was inspired with the vision of Britain's greatness. Since 1746 Pitt had held the office of Paymaster-General under the Pelhams.


19 According to Hardwicke's Marriage Bill of 1753, all marriages were illegal unless performed by a clergyman of the Church of England, save for Jews and Quakers, and members of the royal family. Fox bitterly opposed the bill because he had eloped with a daughter of the Duke of Richmond.

"There he had remained, a dormant volcano, in an office of rank and emolument but not in the Cabinet and without any real share in the determination of policy."  

A decade before he had incurred the wrath and lost the favor of George II by his intemperate aspersions on the King's beloved Hanover and on the dynasty. According to Basil Williams, one of Pitt's biographers, his pretension to office could not be denied, and in joining the Pelhams and accepting the Paymastership, he had seen this as just a "stepping stone" to higher office and had been optimistic that the marks of royal disfavor would be removed in time. 

Pitt's was a small group indeed, consisting of his future brothers-in-law, George and Richard Grenville, Earl Temple, and a friend, Sir George Lyttelton. 


23 George Grenville (1712-1770), M.P. Buckingham, 1741-1770. One of the lords of the Admiralty, 1744-1747; lord of the Treasury, 1747-1754; Treasurer of the Navy, 1754-1755, 1756-1757, 1757-1762; Secretary of State for the Northern Department, 1762; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1762-1765; First Lord of the Treasury, 1765-1766. 


At the time of Pelham's death, Pitt was incapacitated with the gout at Bath, where he was taking the waters. His strategy as mapped out from there was repeatedly to admonish his friends to exhort "openly and explicitly to the ministers their support of the King in Government." Pitt, however, advised Temple to "look out and fish in troubled waters, and perhaps trouble them in order to fish the better..." but to proceed cautiously and without declaring opposition. By following such a course, Pitt believed he and his followers, owing to antagonism among those in favor at Court, would better their chances for preferment. Pitt also urged Temple to try to enlist the support of a number of members of Parliament. And Fox, according to Pitt, was "incompatible with the main part, and indeed of the whole, of this plan," because Fox, being Pelham's apparent successor and having the King's

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28 Among those people from whom Earl Temple was to solicit support were: Hans Stanley of Paultons, M.P. for Southampton; Sir Richard Lyttelton, M.P. for Brackley; the Yorkes--there were four sons of the Lord Chancellor, M.P.'s; any member of the Princess of Wales' Party, and John Pitt, M.P. for Dorchester. Ibid., I, pp. 113-14; Pitt to Temple, 11 March 1754, quoted in Rosebery, Chatham, pp. 337-39.

29 Pitt to Lyttelton, 10 March 1754, quoted in Ibid., p. 332.
favor, was not willing to wait in silence but moved immediately to claim the succession to which so many thought he was entitled.

Pitt, not unlike his rival Fox, sought to reconcile himself with Lord Hardwicke. He promised Hardwicke his support for whatever arrangement might be made and assured him that he had dissolved his former relationship with the Tories. Yet, although many thought Pitt to be a "frank, proud, romantic, reckless, and generous patriot," Hardwicke was suspicious and distrustful of his true intentions. For these reasons Pitt did not win the all important support of Hardwicke in his quest of the Seals.

To "deliberate upon the most proper and advisable method of filling up the vacancies" left by Pelham's death, the Cabinet Council met at Lord Chancellor Hardwicke's home on the evening of 12 March 1754. Hardwicke presented the King's sentiments for the reconstruction of the Administration. George II proposed to separate the two offices of

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30 Pitt to Lyttelton, 10 March 1754, Ostensible letter to Hardwicke, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 203; Rosebery, Chatham, pp. 335-36.

31 Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 189-90.

32 Those in attendance at the Cabinet Council meeting included: Earl Granville, the Lord President; Duke of Marlborough, Lord Steward; Duke of Grafton, Lord Chamberlain; Marquis of Hartington, Master of the Horse; Earl of Holderness, Secretary of State for the Southern Department; Lord Anson, First Lord of the Admiralty; Duke of Devonshire and the Duke of Argyll. Minutes of the Meeting at Lord Hardwicke's home, 12 March 1754, quoted in Ibid., p. 191.
the Treasury and the Exchequer and thought it best to ap­
point to the former a great peer in whom all the Whigs had
confidence and to the latter a man of finance. 33 The King,
moreover, believed these offices might be filled best by
the Duke of Newcastle and Henry Legge34 respectively. He
also thought of transferring the Earl of Holderness, 35
with whom he was well satisfied, from the Southern to the
Northern Department of State. Fox was given the royal nod
for the Southern Department. The Cabinet unanimously con­
sented to these proposals and thought them the "most pru­
dent and wise that could be found upon the present occa­
sion... ."36

After the meeting at Hardwicke's, Lord Hartington
informed Fox that Newcastle with the King's approval wished

33Ibid., p. 192; Add. MSS. 35270, quoted in Thad W.
Riker, Henry Fox, First Lord Holland: A Study of the Career
of an Eighteenth Century Politician (2 vols.; Oxford:

One of the lords of the Admiralty, 1745-1746; lord of the
Treasury, 1746-1749; Envoy to Prussia, 1748; Treasurer of
the Navy, 1749-1754; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1754-1755,
1756-1757, 1757-1761.

35Robert D'Arcy, fourth Earl of Holderness (1718-
1778). Ambassador to the Republic of Venice, 1744-1746;
Minister Plenipotentiary at The Hague, 1749-1751; Secretary
of State for the Southern Department, 1751-1754; Secretary
of State for the Northern Department, 1754-1757, 1757-1761.
He was a career diplomat and an intimate friend of the Duke
of Newcastle.

36Minutes of the Meeting at Lord Hardwicke's home,
12 March 1754, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 192.
him to be Secretary of State with the management of the House of Commons. Fox was delighted and accepted. The following day Fox met with Hardwicke and Newcastle at the latter's house, only to learn to his surprise and to the astonishment of Hartington that not he but Newcastle was to have the disposal of the Secret Service money, nor was he to be consulted in the matter. The Secret Service money formed only a small part of political patronage but was important to the management of the Commons. Newcastle claimed it had not been his intention to give Fox that much share of government and that he alone, like his brother before him, reserved the sole right of the disposal of the

37 Ilchester to Digby, 18 March 1754 and Fox to Marlborough, 22 March 1754, quoted in Earl of Ilchester, Henry Fox, First Lord Holland, His Family and Relations (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1920), I, pp. 203, 207-08; Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XX, p. 417; Walpole, George II, I, pp. 331-32; Walpole, Letters, III, pp. 219, 224; Carwell and Drazle, Political Journal of Dodington, p. 255; Bedford Correspondence, I, p. 185; Williams, Chatham, I, p. 227.

38 Secret Service money was used for a variety of purposes: financing parliamentary elections, pensions for Members of Parliament, and service pensions. The Secret Service money spent by the Duke of Newcastle during his tenure as First Lord of the Treasury, March 1754-November 1756 and June 1757-May 1762, amounted to approximately £231,000. The distribution of the money was as follows: £55,000 for elections, £50,000 for the aristocracy, £68,875 for pensions to Members of Parliament, £61,000 to the friends of friends and others, and £21,000 to Hanoverians. Sir Lewis Namier sums up the use of Secret Service money best by stating "on further inquiry it is found that there was more jobbery, stupidity, and human charity about it than bribery." Sir Lewis Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (London: Macmillan and Co., 1937), pp. 174-234.
Secret Service money. Fox retorted by declaring to Newcastle "that if he was keep [sic] in ignorance of that, he should not know how to talk to members of Parliament, when some might have received gratifications, others not." Yet Newcastle remained adamant in his refusal to allow Fox to partake in the disposal of the Secret Service money. The bewildered Fox sought Cumberland's advice. Cumberland urged him not to accept Newcastle's terms, and Fox, feeling insulted and humiliated, followed his patron's counsel and declined both the Seals and management of the Commons. Fox later claimed that he did not regret the stand he had taken in refusing the Seals, for he "thought it better to remain Secry-at-War, than to be Secry of State without, credit," although his disappointment cannot be denied.

40 Walpole, George II, I, p. 382.
41 Bedford Correspondence, II, p. 185.
42 Walpole, George II, I, p. 384.
43 Fox to Newcastle, 14 March 1754, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, pp. 206-07; Carswell and Drale, Political Journal of Poclington, p. 255; Bedford Correspondence, II, p. 185; Walpole, Letters, III, p. 220.
44 Fox to Lady Hervey, 23 March 1754, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, pp. 210-11.
45 Fox to Marlborough, 22 March 1754, quoted in Ibid., pp. 207-08.
Hardwicke and Newcastle were delighted with Fox's refusal. They had placed themselves in the right with the King by making the offer, while Fox had left himself open to the charge of having refused the royal command. On 16 March Fox had an audience with George II, who was "Civil, or rather patient, in hearing all he had to say." However, the King told Fox he had been too selfish in insisting on the disposal of the Secret Service money, for it had always been handled by the First Lord of the Treasury. George II, moreover, was most displeased with Fox because he had refused the Seals. Fox was not proscribed from Court as a result, but he suffered for the moment a diminution of royal favor.

Once the Duke of Newcastle had eliminated Fox, he set to work in late March putting the finishing touches to his Administration. The Southern Department and the Commons were given to Newcastle's puppet, Sir Thomas Robinson, "a dull, long winded diplomat," who was completely

46 Williams, Chatham, I, p. 227.
47 Ilchester to Digby, 18 March 1754, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, p. 203.
48 Walpole, George II, I, p. 336; Bedford Correspondence, II, p. 155.
49 Sir Thomas Robinson, Lord Grantham (1695-1770), Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Vienna, 1743; Joint Plenipotentiary with Lord Sandwich at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1749; Secretary of State for the Southern Department, 1754-1755. He was a friend of the Duke of Newcastle.
unfamiliar with his new role of spokesman in the House of Commons. Holdemesse was moved to the Northern Department of State. Fox remained Secretary at War and Pitt Paymaster of the Forces. Henry Legge accepted the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer. George Grenville was appointed Treasurer of the Navy, and Sir George Lyttelton was named Cofferer.

While arrangements for the reconstruction of the new Administration were being settled, Pitt had remained at Bath taking the cure. Upon receiving word in late March of the ministerial arrangements, he was angered over not receiving what he thought was his due. He might have accepted being passed over if Fox had been leader of the Commons, but to be passed over for a person of Robinson's ability was too much for him to suffer. Moreover, he felt offended at not being offered the Seals upon Fox's refusal of them. He felt more could have been done by Hardwicke and Newcastle in procuring a higher office for him than the one he held. Hardwicke assured Pitt there had been no "neglect" and "some impression had been made." Hardwicke hoped that Pitt might be mollified by Lyttelton and George Grenville's

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51 Pitt to Newcastle, 4 April 1754, quoted in Rosebery, Chatham, p. 347.
52 Grenville Papers, I, pp. 430-51; Williams, Chatham, I, p. 228.
Administration. The Government's leading spokesmen in
the Commons were Robinson and Murray. The former was unfa-
miliar with parliamentary protocol. The latter desired the
Chief-Justiceship more than any political preferment. The
times, however, demanded strong leadership. England faced
war with France, and clashes between the French and the
British in their fight for hegemony on the North American
continent could not be overlooked, for clamor from the
public was beginning to be raised. Disagreements between
members of the Cabinet halted much needed action. Nor until
the autumn of 1754 was any action taken, when two regiments
were sent to America under the command of General Braddock,
who was ordered to raise colonial troops. These measures
proved to be inadequate. Thus was launched the Newcastle
Administration, which was to rock back and forth for two
long precarious years before its collapse.

Alcohol Fox had moved immediately to claim the
premiership on Pelham's death and Pitt coveted the Scales,
both disavowed any intention of forming an opposition. They
remained silent waiting for the proper moment to grasp power
from Newcastle. The discontent and dissatisfaction of
those who had not benefited from the new ministerial

57 Williams, Whig Supremacy, pp. 325-27.
CHAPTER I

NEWCASTLE AND THE QUEST FOR MINISTERIAL STABILITY

In the troubled autumn of 1755, when Newcastle declared "If we don't fix such a system of administration as may carry things through, we shall have attacks of different kinds every day, all tending to the same end," he was correctly stating the precarious situation which his administration had faced from its formation in March 1754 until its eventual collapse in November 1756. During this time he was constantly searching for the certain combination of ministers which would have ensured stability. Although several changes were made, they were not sufficient and only deferred the inevitable collapse.

Although Fox had moved immediately to claim the premiership on Pelham's death and Pitt coveted the Seals, both disavowed any intention of forming an opposition. They remained silent waiting for the proper moment to grasp power from Newcastle. The discontent and dissatisfaction of those who had not benefited from the new ministerial arrangements, divisions in the Ministry, the ineptness of ministerial policies regarding the coming war with France, and the inept leadership of Pelham and Murray in the House of Commons soon led to a recrimination between Fox and Pitt. Newcastle had been optimistic of a quiet session beginning in November. But on the opening day of Parliament the two

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arrangements, divisions in the Ministry, the ineptness of ministerial policies regarding the coming war with France, and the inept leadership of Robinson and Murray in the House of Commons soon led to a rapprochement between Fox and Pitt. Newcastle had been optimistic of a quiet session beginning in November. But on the opening day of Parliament the two malcontents awaited him in opposition. Their strategy was to expose his weakness in the House by harassing the Ministry's spokesmen, Robinson and Murray, in hope of either wrecking the Administration or compelling Newcastle to come to terms with themselves.

Pitt launched the attack and was joined by Fox; for three days the two entertained the House at the Government's expense. Pitt's first assault occurred when the hapless Robinson mistakenly declared Lord Fane's petition contesting the Reading election a poor case. Pitt, in defending Fane, soundly censured Robinson. When he finished, Fox joined in and continued to bait the hapless Robinson.

2Dodington, Diary, p. 312.
3Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 31.
4Foord, His Majesty's Opposition, pp. 281-82.
5Charles Fane, second Viscount (ca. 1708-1766). M.P. Tavistock, 1734-1747; Reading, 1754-1761. He was a brother-in-law of Lord Sandwich and one of Bedford's most intimate friends.
Nugent, "a rough, bullying Irishman of no character," praised George II and his ministers and declared "there were no Jacobites in England," Pitt pounced on him and in refuting his statement caused Murray an hour's discomfiture.  

Nor was Newcastle spared. John Wilkes, a friend of Pitt, contested the Berwick election on the charge of bribery. John Delaval, the accused party, was amusing the House with a very humorous and witty speech, when Pitt, who had been sitting in the gallery, rose to his feet and "with the austerity of a Cato and the pathos of a prophet" reprimanded the members at what had been the occasion for their hilarity. He goaded Newcastle in warning the Commons that if they did not unite "to defend their attacked and expiring liberty," consequently, "they would degenerate into a little assembly, serving no other purpose than to register the arbitrary edicts of one too powerful subject." Pitt’s fiery oration left the members of the House spellbound and breathless, so much so, it was said, that if dropped, a pin could easily have been heard. Fox believed Pitt’s speech the finest of
his career. Murray was speechless, and Newcastle upon receiving the news was terrified.  

In badgering the Government's ministers, both Fox and Pitt had been careful to avoid any test of strength with the Administration. Their tactics had not reduced the Government's majority, for they remained as large as ever. But many of the Government's "steadiest voters were laughers at least, if not encouragers, on the other side of the question." It was soon evident that if the tactics employed by Fox and Pitt continued, ministerial strength would soon erode. Newcastle was panic stricken at the thought of losing power. Fox and Pitt had to be separated.  

Newcastle and Lord Chancellor Hardwicke preferred Pitt to Fox, the former being apprehensive of Fox's political attachment to the dreaded and ambitious Duke of Cumberland and the latter because of Fox's earlier condemnation of his Marriage Bill. There were both advantages and disadvantages to be considered. Pitt's enlistment, no doubt, would have pleased the Princess of Wales and her party, who detested Fox and Cumberland because of their opposition  

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10 Ibid., p. 32; Fox to Hartington, 28 November 1754, quoted in Ibid., p. 153; Walpole, Letters, III, p. 268.  

11 Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, Princess of Wales, was the widow of Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales and mother of the future George III.
to the Regency Act of 1751, naming the Dowager Princess as Regent in the event of a minority. But Pitt remained proscribed at Court and would have been dismissed in November had it not been for the influence of Hardwicke, while Fox enjoyed the favor of the King. Moreover, Newcastle and Hardwicke believed Fox's support could be gained for a lesser price than Pitt's. Pitt's history of frequent illness, which from time to time removed him from the political scene, and even more a reputation of inconstancy, probably were factors in preferring Fox. However, before either was approached with an offer, Newcastle blundered and eliminated any chances of gaining Pitt. In late November the First Minister held an interview with Pitt under the "seal of secrecy" to hear him out but immediately afterwards related

Newcastle to Hardwicke, 26 July 1755, Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 229-30; Walpole, George II, I, p. 417.

Ilchester, Fox, I, p. 231.
the entire content of their conversation to the King. Pitt considered his confidence betrayed and was furious. Seeing the Duke a few days later, Pitt stopped him short, and showing his disgust and anger, declared "Fewer words, my Lord, if you please, for your words have lost all weight with me." Realizing that any further talks with Pitt were impossible and having no other alternative, Newcastle turned toward Fox.

Since Newcastle obviously had no intention of resigning the Treasury and the King no intention of removing him, Fox for the time being had to forego his well known ambition in that quarter. He was optimistic of being made leader of the House. However, when summoned to Court in early December, though no offers were made to him, he was instructed to meet with the resolute Lord Waldegrave, to whom George II had once again entrusted the task of negotiating reconstruction of the administration. Fox immediately suggested to Waldegrave that some ostensible sign of real authority — the leadership of the House — was sine qua non. But on no account were George II and Newcastle prepared to

15 Walpole, George II, I, pp. 407-08; Williams, Chatham, I, p. 259.

16 James, second Earl Waldegrave (1715-1763). Lord of the Bedchamber, 1743-1765; Governor and Keeper of the Privy Purse to the Prince of Wales, 1752-1756. He was an intimate friend and adviser of George II but participated little in politics himself.
surrender so much power and prestige. Fox, however, by his very eagerness to profit from the political situation, by his fear of losing out again, this time perhaps to Pitt and of being eclipsed, played into Newcastle's hands. The wily Duke saw this only too well and merely offered him membership in the Cabinet, but without either a major policymaking office or leadership of the Commons, where Robinson was to continue as the Ministry's spokesman. Fox, consequently, found himself with only nominal powers. It was not a situation in which he could long be happy, but the misgivings which he unquestionably had he tried to disguise by claiming that he had taken the only honorable path. "But I would have no pecuniary advantage, lest it should be said that Fox was hired or bribed." In accepting the offer, Fox committed an act which proved fatal to his career. Cumberland advised him against such a move and most others would have done the same. If only he had remained in

17 Fox to Lady Caroline Fox, 2 December 1755, Add. MSS. 32737 and Waldegrave to Newcastle, 4 December 1755, Add. MSS. 32737, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, pp. 233-36.

18 Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XX, p. 461; Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 33; Walpole, George II, I, pp. 417-20; Walpole, Letters, III, pp. 271, 284; Add. MSS. 32995, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, p. 233.

19 Fox to Collinson, 22 December 1754, Add. MSS. 28727, quoted in Ibid., p. 239.

20 Ibid., p. 240; Walpole, George II, I, p. 419.
union with Pitt, the Administration would surely have collapsed. But Fox alienated many, especially Pelham's friends and Pitt, by showing himself too anxious and desirous of power. 21

The accommodation between Fox and Newcastle soon led to a split between Fox and Pitt. The breach came suddenly and publicly in the home of Lord Hillsborough in May 1755. Not knowing Fox was present, Pitt remarked to the host "that the ground was altered" between Fox and himself, and they were now "upon different lines not opposite, but converging." Fox entered the room and immediately a heated argument ensued. When he inquired as to what would place them on the same ground, Pitt sharply replied, "a winter in the Cabinet and summer's regency." 22 Pitt had been under the impression that once Fox and he had eliminated Newcastle, they would do battle for the coveted prize until one was triumphant. 23 Fox's motives had been too self-interested,


and Pitt found it unbearable to see his rival in a superior position. Not only had Fox been elevated to the Cabinet, but, in the spring, when the King was preparing for his trip to Hanover, Fox, along with his patron, Cumberland, had been promoted to the Regency, while Pitt received nothing and remained as Paymaster-General. Pitt's only recourse in overcoming his "disadvantageous, mortifying, and dangerous situation," as he described his position, was by renewing an old connection with the Princess Dowager of Wales, who had been extremely disturbed over the recent turn of events. The Princess had been furious at Fox's preference in December. Moreover, his elevation coupled with Cumberland's appointment to head the Regency and the latter's being Captain-General of the Army greatly alarmed her as being inconsistent with the Regency Act. Immediately she moved to recast and strengthen the Leicester House Party for the protection of her son, the future George III, in the

24 Walpole, George II, II, p. 37; Eyck, Pitt versus Fox, p. 63.


26 Dodington, Diary, p. 339; Walpole, George II, II, p. 39; Hardwicke to Newcastle, 29 September 1755, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 249; Eyck, Pitt versus Fox, p. 66.

27 Leicester House was the residence of the Princess of Wales and her family. The name, also, applied to the Opposition party led by the Princess of Wales and the Heir-apparent.
event of a minority. Pitt's being disgruntled over not being promoted and the Princess' consternation soon led to a political alliance between them.

Since April 1755 Pitt had been in secret communication with Lord Bute, the political adviser and favorite of the Princess. Not only had Pitt wished to ally with Leicester House, but Bute had desired his enlistment. And it was through Bute that the mutual discontent of both the Princess and Pitt was made known, which resulted in his receiving an invitation from the Dowager Princess to enter into "the closest engagement with Leicester House." However, the only way for Pitt to ingratiate himself and be acceptable to that party had been by severing relations with Fox, which he had proceeded to do. Undoubtedly, this


29 John Stuart, third Earl of Bute (1713-1792). One of the Lords of the Bedchamber to Frederick, Prince of Wales, 1737-1751; Groom of the Stole to George, Prince of Wales, 1756-1760; Secretary of State for the Northern Department, 1761-1762; First Lord of the Treasury, 1762-1763. He had been an intimate friend and political adviser to the late Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales, and continued in the same capacity for the Dowager Prince of Wales.

30 Sedgwick, Letters George III, p. xlvii; Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 38; Eyck, Pitt versus Fox, p. 64.

accounts in part for his sudden break with Fox in May. 32 Consequently, in exchange for creating and leading an opposition party and supporting the Princess against her brother-in-law, Pitt was to head the Government in the next reign, while Lord Bute was to have the Treasury. 33 The alliance proved as formidable and menacing as had the Fox-Pitt coalition, and Newcastle declared as much to George II: "It is my duty to tell you that I find more difficulty from the notion of Opposition from that quarter, which affects particularly all young men, than from all other causes whatsoever." 34 The Administration remained as weak and feeble as ever; Fox, whose thirst for power had not been satisfied, was growing restless again, desiring more, and Pitt, moreover, was bringing all the pressure possible to bear on Newcastle.

Since 1689 the traditional system of British foreign policy and the one desired by Newcastle, had been to isolate France on the continent by a system of alliances. Newcastle, however, by 1756 did not realize that the old political alignment of England, Austria, and Holland was no longer possible. The Dutch were no longer a formidable power and

32 Fox to Lord Hartington, 16 July 1755, quoted in Waldengrave, Memoirs, p. 161; Dodington, Diary, pp. 339-40; Sedgwick, Letters George III, p. xlviii.


34 Add. MSS. 32260, f. 16, quoted in Foord, His Majesty's Opposition, p. 283.
cared little for entangling alliances, and the Austrians' main adversary was no longer France but Frederick of Prussia. Because George II's beloved Hanover had been threatened by invasion from the French and Prussian armies in the war of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748, he was apprehensive about the precarious position of his electorate as war again approached. His and Newcastle's scheme was to buttress the 'Old System' by the use of new alliances and subsidies, thereby hoping to ensure the safety of Hanover. In the summer of 1755, the Government negotiated a subsidy treaty with Hesse for 6,000 troops and in early autumn concluded the great subsidy treaty with Russia. These measures were severely condemned in England because they were regarded as the sacrificing of English to Hanoverian interests. Moreover, during the summer, Pitt, who had returned to his old anti-Hanoverian policy, became the nucleus of a strong and menacing opposition to the Government's foreign policy. He seized upon every opportunity to exploit to the fullest the unpopularity of the subsidy treaties by publicly denouncing them and Newcastle's handling of foreign affairs, thereby exalting his own image in the eyes of the

35 According to the treaty, Russia was to maintain 55,000 troops on the Livonian border and from 40 to 50 galleys along the coast in the event England or her allies were attacked. Russia was to receive £100,000 a year in peacetime and £500,000 in time of war. The treaty never went into effect.
And if things were not volatile enough in England, Newcastle had only to look across the sea to America, where recent events were not at all encouraging. In July General Braddock, the British Commander-in-Chief, and most of his command had been massacred near Fort Duquesne by a combined force of French and Indians. Admiral Boscawen, who had been sent to America in April to intercept French reinforcements, had little success in an engagement off the mouth of the St. Lawrence where all but two ships of a French fleet escaped him in the fog. When news of this provocative action reached Paris, diplomatic relations were broken. Consequently, Newcastle was confronted with the awesome task of preparing for the coming war with France, securing the passage of the subsidy treaties against a hostile Parliament, and strengthening the Administration, all of which could be accomplished only by enlarging Fox's power or reaching an accommodation with Pitt.


Throughout the summer the Government tried for Pitt's support in hope of persuading him from opposing the subsidy treaties. In July Newcastle arranged for Charles Yorke, one of the Chancellor's sons, to confer with Pitt and determine on what ground he would support the Administration. The talks soon reached an impasse when Pitt made it clear that he would not join the Government for anything less than the Secretaryship as well as preferments for certain friends. Moreover, he peremptorily refused to deal with Newcastle or to owe him either favors or obligations; if an offer came, it would have to come from the King. But the First Minister needed Pitt as much as he disliked him. Newcastle and Hardwicke at this juncture saw one avenue yet untried.

In July the Duke wrote to Holderness, who was accompanying the King in Hanover, that the only solution to their problem was to offer Pitt a seat in the Cabinet Council. Also, Newcastle believed that if Leicester House were to be enlisted, the Princess' chief confidants would have to be preferred and suggested Sir George Lee as Chancellor of

38 Charles Yorke to Hardwicke, 7 July 1755, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 223; Carswell and Dralle, Political Journal of Dodington, p. 309; Williams, Chatham, I, p. 263; Dodington, Diary, pp. 340-41.

39 Add. MSS. 32356, f. 494, quoted in Williams, Chatham, I, p. 263; Newcastle to Holderness, 11 July 1755, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 223.

40 Sir George Lee (ca. 1700-1758). M.P. 1733-1758. He had been a follower of Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales, and on his death was created Treasurer to the Princess of Wales. He remained a favorite at Leicester House until 1757 when he broke with the Princess because of his jealousy over Bute and Pitt's rising influence there.
the Exchequer and Lord Egmont\footnote{John Perceval, second Earl of Egmont (1711-1770). Lord of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, 1748-1751; Junior Postmaster-General, 1762-1763; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1763-1766. He had been the chief adviser to Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales and was a prominent opponent of the Administration.} as a Vice-Treasurer of Ireland.\footnote{Add. MSS. 32857, ff. 37, 250, 262 and Add. MSS. 32858, ff. 130, 193, quoted in Namier and Brooke, House of Commons, III, pp. 267-68.} Of this the King reluctantly approved.\footnote{Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 196.} Newcastle proceeded at once to make Pitt an offer, but with the understanding that the Seals were not included; later possibly they would come, but not at this time.\footnote{Hardwicke to Newcastle, 9 August 1755, quoted in Ibid., pp. 230, 233; Williams, Chatham, I, p. 264.} Pitt neither rejected nor accepted the offer, and for a moment it seemed that a settlement was forthcoming. But in late August Henry Legge, Chancellor of the Exchequer, refused to sign the Treasury warrants for the Hessian treaty.\footnote{Walpole, Letters, III, p. 352; Hist. MSS. Coll., Hastings, III, p. 107; Bedford Correspondence, II, p. 166; Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XX, pp. 493, 503.} With this favorable sign, Pitt saw his stock soaring, and having his sights set on the Seals and the dethroning of the old monopolist, he was not to be won so easily; consequently, the preferments for Lee and Egmont never materialized.\footnote{Add. MSS. 32857, ff. 37, 250, 262 and Add. MSS. 32858, ff. 130, 193, quoted in Namier and Brooke, House of Commons, III, pp. 267-68.} Also, Newcastle and the Government were soon to
inherit another problem. Fox, who had grown increasingly dissatisfied during the summer, threatened to join the opposition unless he was given the leadership of the House. Realizing, however, that Pitt's enlistment would not likely occur, Fox, convinced that sooner or later Newcastle would be obliged to make an offer, which proved to be the case, decided to wait.

By early September 1755 Newcastle found himself in a dilemma and without a competent spokesman in the House to defend the Government's system. As the Administration then stood, it was evident that it could not open another session of Parliament, and the Duke seriously considered stepping down and turning the Treasury over to Fox, whose goal would have been fulfilled. Newcastle in order to save himself had to find a minister who could effectively manage the House of Commons and ensure safe passage of the subsidy treaties, whose failures meant incurring the enmity of the King and possible dismissal. At the mercy of Fox and

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47 Newcastle to Hardwicke, 22 August 1755 and Hardwicke to Newcastle, 23 August 1755, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 234-36; Richard Glover, Memoirs by a Celebrated Literary and Political Character, From the Resignation of Sir Robert Walpole, in 1742, to the Establishment of Lord Chatham's Second Administration, in 1757 (London: John Murray, 1814), pp. 67-68.


50 Ilchester, Fox, I, pp. 258-59.
Pitt, though not ready to admit defeat, the old monopolist, preferring Pitt, attempted yet another negotiation in hope of bringing the long awaited and needed stability to his Administration.

Pitt was approached again on 2 September with a similar offer of a Cabinet seat. Moreover, if he promised support of the treaties, Hardwicke assured him that should a vacancy occur, there was a good possibility of procuring the Seals for him. But Pitt's price had risen. Newcastle soon realized they had reached another impasse when the covetous Pitt demanded both the Secretaryship, an "office of advice, as well as execution," and the leadership of the Commons. George II and Newcastle had been willing to admit Pitt to the Cabinet, but never would they entrust him with so much power. Also, Pitt, who favored a maritime and colonial war, called for abandonment of Newcastle's plan for a Continental war and remained obdurate in opposing both the Hessian and Russian subsidy treaties. Newcastle had been optimistic of winning his support, but

51 Dodington, Diary, p. 366.
52 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 44; Newcastle to Hardwicke, 3 September 1755, Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 233-41.
54 Dodington, Diary, p. 365; Grenville Papers, I, pp. 138-39; Hardwicke to Newcastle, 3 September 1755, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 240-41.
after the conference with the obstinate Paymaster-General, he left disillusioned and disappointed, later declaring "there was such a firm resolution, so solemnly declared, both as to persons and things, that if complied with must produce a total change of the present system both as to measures and men." 55

When the talks with Pitt proved abortive, the only alternative was Fox, whose waiting was finally rewarded. He was approached about the middle of September by Lord Granville, whom Newcastle had entrusted with the preliminary negotiations. The Lord President assured Fox that if he were to defend the treaties, he would enjoy further preferment, though not naming any specific office. 56 When Fox met with Newcastle and Lord Waldegrave on 20 September, the Duke offered him the leadership of the House, thereby hoping to employ his talents to secure the passage of the treaties. Earlier Fox had desired the leadership, but now, seeing himself badly needed, he like Pitt, increased his demands. He called for some ostensible sign of favor from the King, which at this critical juncture meant the Secretaryship joined with the leadership of the House. 57

55 Add. MSS. 32358, quoted in Williams, Chatham, I, p. 266.
56 Ilchester, Fox, I, p. 265; Walpole, George II, II, pp. 41-44.
57 Fox to Welbore Ellis, 21 September 1755, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, pp. 266-67; Eyck, Pitt versus Fox, p. 67; Walpole, George II, II, pp. 40-43; Walpole, Letters, III, p. 349.
Newcastle was greatly disturbed by Fox’s demand and was in a frenzy at the thought of surrendering so much power. With his back to the wall, what other course was there for him? After fretting for a few days, he capitulated. Fox accepted the offer of the Seals and the leadership of the Commons on 24 September. Also, his request for preferments for certain friends was granted. However, his appointment to the Southern Department was delayed until the opening session of Parliament.

By breathing new life into the Administration, Fox had committed a second serious blunder and jeopardized his political career. Newcastle had no intention of sharing any more power with him than he could help. Fox could not make a decision in the House unless first conferring with Newcastle. And rarely did he have access to the King except when accompanied by Newcastle’s puppet, Holderness. Once again he found himself with only nominal powers. Moreover, he did himself harm by taking the Seals, because he was totally unfamiliar with foreign affairs. "He has an office which...he would do ill in" declared the King to Newcastle. If only he had declined the offer and waited, the Government would have fallen, and George II would have

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59 Ilchester, Fox, I, p. 271; Walpole, George II, II, pp. 41-44.

had no alternative but to hand over the reins of leadership either to himself or Pitt, or to them both jointly. Horace Walpole observed correctly when he declared that Fox would triumph over the Duke and become premier or be eclipsed. Moreover, Fox was faced with an almost insuperable task. Not only did he have to see through the passage of an unpopular foreign policy, but he had to establish confidence within the Administration for himself.

The most arduous task to which Fox addressed himself that autumn was securing sufficient support for the passage of the subsidy treaties. In late September it was extremely difficult to find a prominent member of Parliament who favored them. Fox, with little difficulty, obtained the backing of such eminent men as Lords Shelburne, Egremont, and the Duke of Bedford.

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60 Walpole, George II, II, p. 45; Grenville Papers, I, p. 145.
63 Fox to Hartington, 22 September 1755, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, p. 272.
64 John Petty, first Earl of Shelburne (1706-1761), M.P. Chipping Wycombe, 1754-1760. In the House of Commons, he allied himself with Fox.
65 Sir Charles Wyndham, second Earl of Egremont (1710-1763), Secretary of State for the Southern Department of State, 1761-1763. He was a close friend of Fox.
Sandwich, Sackville, and Hillsborough. The enticement of a peerage proved enough to gain Horace Walpole, who, in turn, assisted Hardwicke and Fox in dissuading the Duke of Devonshire from opposing the treaties. Lord Halifax, the President of the Board of Trade, strongly opposed the treaties. To win him over, Fox enlisted Cumberland and Newcastle. By the promise of preferments for Halifax's friends, Hillsborough and George Bubb Dodington, along with the suggestion of a seat in the Cabinet, which did not come for two years, they succeeded in silencing his opposition. Although Dodington had been assured of an office, he

66 Lord George Sackville, (afterwards Germain), (1716-1763). M.P. 1741-1762. Junior Vice-Treasurer, 1765-1766; First Lord of Trade, 1775-1779; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1775-1782. He backed Fox until Pitt's support of the subsidy for Frederick the Great in February 1757. Thereafter, he was more friendly to Pitt.

67 William Wills, second Viscount Hillsborough (1713-1793). M.P. Warwick, 1741-1756. Comptroller of the Household, 1754-1755; Treasurer of the Chamber, 1755-1756; Joint Registrar in Chancery, 1759-1793; First Lord of Trade, 1763-1765, 1766, 1769-1772; Joint Postmaster-General, 1766-1768; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1768-1772.

68 Horace Walpole, fourth Earl of Orford (1717-1797). He was the third son of Sir Robert Walpole. Although an M.P. for years, he was best known as a man of letters. His closest political ties before 1760 were with Fox and Richard Rigby.

69 George Bubb Dodington, Baron Melcombe (1691-1762). M.P. 1715-1761. Envoy Extraordinary to Spain, 1715-1717; lord lieutenant of Somerset, 1721-1744; lord of the Treasury, 1724-1740; Treasurer of the Navy, 1744-1749, 1755-1756; Treasurer of the Chamber to the Prince of Wales, 1749-1751. He had been an ally of Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales, and continued in the service of Leicester House until November 1755 when he joined Newcastle and Fox.
remained allied to Leicester House and opposed the subsidies. Winning him proved a difficult task. Fox, by working on Dodington's notoriety for place-hunting, succeeded after three weeks of negotiations and the promises of offices for friends. When the changes in the Administration were made at the end of the year, Dodington received the lucrative office of Treasurer of the Navy.\textsuperscript{70}

In Fox's bid to strengthen the Government and demonstrate his authority, the Duke of Bedford and his followers were a much coveted prize. Bedford's political influence derived from his excessive wealth and rank as one of the great Whig magnates. He was also a known adversary of Newcastle, and Fox hoped to use the Duke to offset the influence of Newcastle.\textsuperscript{71} When Bedford was offered the Privy Seal, which Fox had induced his friend, the Duke of Marlborough, to resign, he refused it.\textsuperscript{72} He liked Fox and held him in high esteem, but he would never join an Administration of which Newcastle was at the helm. He also realized that acceptance would indicate his approval of the subsidy treaties, which he strongly opposed.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{70}Ilchester, Fox, I, pp. 275-78.
\textsuperscript{72}Bedford Correspondence, II, pp. 169-69, 188; Walpole, George II, II, pp. 46-47.
Not only was Fox seeking Bedford's support, but Thomas Potter, an intimate friend of Pitt and the Grenvilles, attempted to sway Bedford from Fox's influence in hope of arranging a union of Bedford and Pitt. Bedford and Pitt's views concerning a Continental war were as much in accord now as when the two were brought together a decade earlier. And Bedford most assuredly declared to Potter that "The only war we can carry on is a sea war, and American one." Potter was so successful in his interview with Bedford that he drew from him a private declaration in which the Duke assured Pitt of "all his support in such measures as he Mr. P. should think fit for the extirpation of the common enemy and for the support of himself [Pitt], who he was sure was the only man who had virtue and abilities enough to retrieve the affairs of the country." As yet, however, Bedford had not made up his mind whether to support or oppose the treaties in Parliament. His decision was of great importance to Pitt and his adherents as it was to Fox. After meeting with the Duke, Potter believed him "to be a man of honour, and sense, and even dignity." But Lord Temple, who wielded considerable influence over his brother-in-law Pitt, doubted Bedford's sincerity. Moreover, Bedford's association with Cumberland prevented any alliance

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74 Thomas Potter (ca. 1718-1759). M.P. 1747-1759. He was the son of Archbishop Potter of Canterbury. As a deputy lieutenant in Bedfordshire, he knew Bedford quite well.
between himself and Pitt's friends at Leicester House. Also, the self-reliant Pitt desired union with no one, and no further effort was made to create one.75

Meanwhile, Fox had not given up hope of gaining Bedford. He met with him on 31 October for almost three hours. After the interview, he saw little chance of enlisting his support. However, since Fox's most urgent objective was seeing the treaties through Parliament, he had something in his favor, because on that subject, Bedford as yet was still undecided.76 To win Bedford, Fox engaged the help of the ambitious Duchess of Bedford, along with the Duke's friends, who were eager for places. They exerted great pressure on the Duke to join the Government or at least to support it. The Duchess and Richard Rigby, who was Bedford's 'man of business' made every possible effort to isolate the Duke, who was at his country seat at Woburn Abbey, from having any interviews with Pitt, with whom he had wanted to confer, or any others who might have the weight to prevail on him to oppose the subsidy treaties. However, all attempts to win him over proved futile. Finally, Fox and Lord Sandwich employed the latter's brother-in-law, Lord Fane, whom Bedford "esteemed as the honestest


76Fox to Newcastle, 1 November 1755, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, p. 279.
man in the world" to write advising Bedford to support and vote for the treaties. Bedford softened and then yielded. But as Horace Walpole observed, "they drew tears from him before they could draw compliance." The evening before Parliament convened Bedford sent his followers to the meeting of the Government supporters at the Cockpit. And when the treaties were vehemently debated the following day, Bedford upheld them in the Lords and his followers voted for them in the House of Commons.

Remaining apprehensive of the coming head-on collision with the opposition, Newcastle continued efforts to strengthen his forces. Not only did he have Pitt to worry about, but Pitt's ally, Leicester House. The Princess and her party had to be neutralized at least. But Newcastle's hope of accomplishing anything in that quarter vanished in the early autumn, when George II, being charmed by Sophia Caroline, the eldest daughter of the Princess of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, arranged for a marriage between her and the young Prince of Wales. The Dowager Princess was furious at

77 Walpole, George II, II, pp. 46-47; Bedford Correspondence, II, pp. 168-70.

78 Fox to Newcastle, 12 November 1755, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, p. 279.

the thought of such a match. The incident only widened the existing gap between the Government and the Princess and further sealed the bond between Leicester House and Pitt. It also added to the already volatile situation facing Newcastle.

The political alignments which had been developing throughout the summer of 1755 had taken their final form by 14 November, the opening day of Parliament. Pitt, the Grenvilles, and Legge, although still in office, led the "Opposition in Administration" and were assisted by their political ally, Leicester House. The Opposition was not large in number but vociferous and in open and declared opposition to Newcastle and Fox. Immediately the Administration's strength was tested. The occasion was over the Addresses of both Houses. It lasted until almost five in the morning on the memorable day in the annals of English history. "The clouds that only overcast the House of Lords, were a tempest in the Commons." Pitt did not speak until after midnight and then delivered his famous Rhone and Saone speech. "His eloquence, like a torrent long

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80 Newcastle to Hardwicke, 23 September 1755, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 249; Walpole, George II, II, pp. 36-37; Dodington, Diary, 354-55.

81 Ibid., p. 355.

82 Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XX, pp. 509-10; Walpole, Letters, III, pp. 370-71.
obstructed, burst forth with more commanding impetuousity" as he declared:

but there are parts of this address that do not seem to come from the same quarter with the rest -- I cannot unravel this mystery -- yes, cried he, clapping his hand suddenly to his forehead, I too am inspired now! -- I remember at Lyons to have been carried to see the conflux of the Rhône [sic] and Saone; this a gentle, feeble, languid stream, and though languid, of no depth -- the other, a boisterous and impetuous torrent -- but they meet at last; and long may they continue united to the comfort of each other, and to the glory, honour, and security of this nation!

Immediately after Pitt's oration, the inquisitive Fox asked him "Who is the Rhone?" Pitt replied, "is that a fair question?" "Why" declared Fox, "you have said so much that I did not desire to hear, you may tell one thing that I would hear; am I the Rhône, or Lord Granville?" Pitt replied, "you are Granville." No one doubted that Newcastle was the Saone.83 And when the vote was taken on acceptance of the Address, Pitt and company suffered a serious defeat by the sizable margin of 311 to 105.84 Their defeat signalized, as it had been assumed for some time, that

83 Walpole, George II, II, pp. 49, 55-58, 62.
Pitt, the Grenvilles, and Legge would be dismissed as they were on 20 November.\(^\text{35}\)

Following the opening session, there was a reshuffling of offices in the Administration. As arranged earlier, Fox received the Seals for the Southern on 15 November, and Lord Barrington replaced him in the War Office. Robinson, who had been succeeded by Fox, returned to his former position as Master of the Wardrobe and was pensioned.\(^\text{36}\)

The Ministry had to be strengthened by rewarding as many of its supporters as possible. But there were more office-seekers than places, of which only a half dozen had been vacated as a result of dismissals and resignations. It was necessary therefore, to displace some officeholders and compensate them with pensions amounting to the sum of £8,000 per annum. Newcastle and Fox distributed the vacancies among their loyal followers.\(^\text{37}\) However, there


\(^{36}\) William Wildman, second Viscount Barrington (1717-1793). One of the lords of the Admiralty, 1746-1754; Master of the Great Wardrobe, 1754-1755; Secretary at War, 1755-1761; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1761-1762; Treasurer of the Navy, 1762-1765; Secretary at War, 1765-1773. He was an ardent supporter of Newcastle and a fairly distinguished speaker in the House of Commons.

\(^{37}\) Dodington, Diary, p. 378; Lewis, Walpole’s Correspondence, XX, pp. 497, 502-03; Walpole, Letters, III, p. 352.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., pp. 377-81; The Gentleman’s Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, XXV, No. 12 (December, 1755), p. 572; Ibid., XXVI (January, 1756), p. 43.
were only two changes of any real importance. Sir George Lyttelton replaced Legge at the Exchequer, and thereby incurred the enmity of Pitt and the Grenvilles whose ally he had been. Marlborough obligingly surrendered the Privy Seal and was created Master of the Ordnance, thereby making room for the Duke of Bedford's brother-in-law, Lord Gower, as Lord Privy Seal. Though Bedford's support had been gained, he refused to take office. However, some other means had been necessary to cement his support of the Administration. For this reason Fox had insisted that the Privy Seal, which was of Cabinet rank, should be Gower's. Newcastle was opposed because he feared Fox's gaining too many friends. Yet Fox prevailed by reminding Newcastle that "If you give Lord Gower a Cabinet Councillor's place, you oblige both him and the D. of Bedford. If a less, you oblige Lord Gower, but obliging him separately from the D. of Bedford is not obliging him effectually." Moreover, Fox insisted that if Bedford were to be kept pacified, room had to be found for Rigby. Again Newcastle was adverse, but Fox prevailed, and Rigby was created a lord of trade.

The reconstructed Administration was not in harmony; there was constant antagonism between Fox and Newcastle.

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90 Welbore Ellis to Devonshire, 3 February 1755 and Fox to Newcastle, 12 December 1755, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, I, pp. 297-98; Walpole, Letters, III, p. 380.
Fox's powers were curtailed by the masterful Newcastle. As Horace Walpole wrote, Fox had "no power, no confidence, no favor, (all entirely engrossed by the old monopolist). . . ." Pitt continued to harass the Government's ministers in leading the Opposition, and his popularity grew in leaps and bounds. Moreover, the dismissals, resignations, and displacements at the end of 1755 did not give Newcastle the preponderance of power he had hoped to attain. The apparent stability which at last seemed assured, proved short-lived; the changes only delayed the ministerial crisis which had been evolving since Pelham's death.

For he was soon beset by a host of unforeseen and insurmountable problems — the loss of Minorca, Surrey's leaving the Government, Fox's resignation, and Pitt's incessant badgering — all of which fatigued and exhausted him. Therefore, in November 1755, after two and a half years of unsuccessful attempts to consolidate his power and with no alternatives, he turned over the reins of leadership.

From the beginning of 1756 Newcastle and his ministers were occupied with foreign affairs. While the subsidy treaty with Spain had not gone into effect, it set into motion the so-called Empire crisis for England. The idea of Russian troops marching across France brought with it such alarm that Frederick the Great, who earlier had refused to enter into discussions with England, made an about-face and declared "The English dowager."
CHAPTER II

THE END COMES FOR THE OLD MONOPOLIST

The Duke of Newcastle survived a serious challenge by Pitt and his friends in November 1755, which could easily have produced a ministerial crisis had it not been for his overwhelming victory in the Commons on the passage of the subsidy treaties. As a result, the apparent stability which he believed had come at last proved short-lived. For he was soon beset by a host of unforeseen and intractable problems — the loss of Minorca, Murray's leaving the Government, Fox's resignation, and Pitt's incessant badgering — all of which fatigued and exhausted him. Therefore, in November 1756, after two and a half years of unsuccessful attempts to consolidate his power and with no alternatives, he turned over the reins of leadership.

From the beginning of 1756 Newcastle and his ministers were occupied with foreign affairs. While the subsidy treaty with Russia had not gone into effect, it set into motion the so-called renversement des alliances. The idea of Russian troops marching across Prussia brought with it such alarm that Frederick the Great, who earlier had refused to enter into discussions with England, made an about-face and accepted the English proposal for the mutual protection
England and Prussia signed the Convention of Westminster, thereby agreeing to oppose by concerted action any foreign armies marching into Germany. The compact, however, triggered a reaction in Vienna and Paris. Shortly before England declared war on France in May, a treaty of neutrality and defence was completed between Austria and France, thus concluding the "Diplomatic Revolution." This reversal of alliances brought an end to the old system upon which England since 1639 had predicated its foreign policy and one which Newcastle had never abandoned and had worked ceaselessly to repair after the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748.

Marshall Belleisle's plan for an invasion of England accompanied by a diversionary invasion of Minorca fell into

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1 In the War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748, England and Austria were pitted against Prussia and France. However, between 1748 and 1756 there occurred a turnover of political alignments. Consequently, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, England and Prussia were aligned against Austria and France, who were supported by Russia, Saxony, and Sweden, the former two having been allied to Austria and the latter attached to France by a subsidy treaty. Williams, Whig Supremacy, p. 351.

2 Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, IV, p. 535. Marshall Belleisle, the French Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic from Dunkirk to Bayonne, was responsible for the plan which bears his name. The plan called for 100,000 troops to be stationed along the French coast, from Cherbourg to Dunkirk, from whence was to be launched an invasion of England. The French soldiers were to be transported in small craft or bateaux plats, each carrying approximately 100 men. Moreover, there were to be three simultaneous invasions of Ireland, Scotland, and England. While the former two, like the Minorca expedition, were to serve as diversionary movements, the real objective was to
Newcastle's hands in February 1756. Knowing how unprepared England's defences were, Newcastle and the Cabinet were thrown into a panic. The Duke immediately took steps to meet the crisis, at the expense and humiliation of the English nation, by calling forth the assistance of Hessian and Hanoverian troops. The French invasion never materialized; the diversionary attack on Minorca did, however. After receiving news in April that a French fleet had left Toulon for Minorca, Newcastle dispatched Admiral Byng, an inept officer known for his hesitancy, with a squadron of ten ships to relieve the island. He did not reach Gibraltar until May. There, having received news that the French had laid siege to the British bastion of St. Philips a fortnight before, he remained a week before proceeding to Minorca. After an inconclusive encounter with the French

be England, with the brunt of the invasion coming between Cornwall and Canterbury. Although the plan may now seem absurd, it was not, considering its objective. Belleisle did not plan to conquer England with one decisive blow but to inflict such a wound that France, he hoped, would be able to obtain immediate yet favorable peace instead of a long and costly war. See Julian S. Corbett, *England in the Seven Years' War: A Study of Combined Strategy* (2 vols.; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907), I, pp. 88-96.


4Lewis, *Walpole's Correspondence*, XX, p. 550; Glover, *Memoirs*, p. 80. 6,000 Hessians arrived at Southampton on 15 May 1756, and between 8,000 and 9,000 Hanoverians landed at Chatham on 20 May 1756.
f onset of Minorca, he returned to Gibraltar. No further effort was made to relieve the besieged fortress, which after seventy days capitulated. Not only did England suffer a humiliating setback in the Mediterranean but in India and America as well. News reached London in July of the infamous "Black Hole of Calcutta," in which 143 Englishmen met a terrible death. Nor was the news more favorable from America where Fort Oswego and its garrison of 1600 had surrendered to a superior French force. The military and naval reverses of the early phases of the Seven Years' War, above all the tragic loss of Minorca, added to mounting unrest caused by a corn shortage during the summer of 1756, inflamed public opinion to fever pitch.

The loss of Minorca contributed as much as any single event to a growing distrust of the management of the Government and to the further weakening of Newcastle's position. Scorn and indignation were leveled not only against the hapless Byng, who was burned in effigy in all of the major cities in England, but also against Newcastle.

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5Williams, Whig Supremacy, p. 352.

6Since the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, there had been constant rivalry in India between the French and British East India Companies. In the summer of 1756 Surahah Dowlah, the viceroy of Bengal and one of the most powerful Indian princes, at the instigation of the French, marched on Calcutta. After capturing the city and the British garrison, he had 146 English prisoners thrown into the Black Hole, a prison cell only eighteen feet by twenty-three feet, of which only twenty-three survived. Lecky, History of England, II, p. 367.

7Williams, Chatham, I, p. 281.
and Lord Anson, the First Lord of the Admiralty. It was not uncommon at Westminster to hear singing to the tune of "to the block with Newcastle, and the yard-arm with Byng." Nor was the King immune from such intemperate sallies; while passing through Greenwich dirt and rocks were thrown at his carriage. Newcastle, along with the King, Cumberland, Anson, and Fox, all fearing that their heads would be demanded by an outraged public and eager to place the blame elsewhere, instructed Hardwicke to order the "immediate trial and condemnation of Byng." But, by the time the Admiral was tried the following January, Newcastle had already fallen from power. Because of a recent change in the Articles of War, the court martial had no choice but to sentence Byng to death, but with a strong recommendation to the King for clemency. Pitt, then Secretary of State, and Lord Temple, the First Lord of the Admiralty, supported the plea for mercy, with considerable loss of popularity as a result, for the public was still outraged by the incident.


But all was to no avail; George II remained adamant, and
Byng was executed in March 1757. 10

Not only was Newcastle plagued that summer by mili-
tary and naval reverses but by serious ministerial problems.
One such problem was occasioned by the sudden death on 25
May of Sir Dudley Ryder, the Chief-Justice of the Court of
the King’s Bench. The man most qualified to succeed as
Chief-Justice was William Murray, the Attorney-General, and
one of the Ministry’s leading spokesmen in the Commons.
Murray claimed the vacancy because it was agreeable "to his
constant asseverations that he meant to rise by his profes-
sion, not by the House of Commons." 11

Newcastle, who
realized that ministerial strength was beginning to wane,
reasoned, and rightly so, that Murray's loss would further
weaken the Ministry. He tried earnestly throughout the
summer to persuade him to remain in the House, and as a
further enticement, offered him a sum comparable to the
Chief-Justice’s salary, £6,000 per annum, in the form of
"permanent places and pensions." 12

10 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 91; Bedford Correspondence,
II, pp. 227–29; Minutes of Meeting at Devonshire’s House,
26 February 1757, Add. MSS. 32997, f. 127, quoted in Riker,
Fox, I, pp. 67–70; Glover, Memoirs, pp. 119–121; Lecky,
History of England, II, p. 375; Williams, Whig Supremacy,
p. 352.


12 Glover, Memoirs, p. 82; Namier and Brooke, House
of Commons, III, p. 189; Walpole, George II, II, p. 227.
handwriting on the wall for an Administration about to be overturned and wanting no part of it, yet determined to see his ambition fulfilled, remained firm. In late October, he had his way and was appointed Chief-Justice and created Baron Mansfield. Newcastle, in his bid to retain him and strengthen a precarious Administration, had been dealt another reverse. Murray was no House of Commons man, but he had been a loyal and unquestionable supporter of the Duke.

Murray was not the only loss in the House. Henry Fox, Newcastle's competent leader of the Commons, held an audience with the King on 15 October and requested permission to resign the Seals and be relieved of managing the Commons. The King was beside himself with rage and accused Fox of "insatiable ambition," as indeed it must have seemed to many. Since joining the Administration, Fox had been disgruntled over the ill-treatment received from Newcastle, who had engrossed all power. Throughout the summer of 1756, he, like Murray, had discerned a steady deterioration of the Government's strength and realized how untenable his

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13 Glover, Memoirs, p. 82.
14 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 56; Glover, Memoirs, p. 82; Murray was replaced as Attorney-General by Robert Henley (1708-1772). M.P. for Bath, 1747-1757; Lord Chancellor, 1761-1766; and afterwards Earl of Northington.
15 Bedford Correspondence, II, pp. 199-202; Waldegrave, Memoirs, pp. 82-83; Carswell and Dralle, Political Journal of Dodington, p. 342.
position had come to be. As early as August, he had told Newcastle that Pitt was essential to a stable Ministry. He, moreover, would willingly resign the Seals whenever Pitt should be appointed Secretary of State. But Newcastle, knowing of Fox’s dissatisfaction and desire to leave the Government, did himself injury by waiting until Fox’s resignation before searching for a leader of the House. Save for Fox, however, the only one capable of providing the needed leadership in the House was Pitt. But would he serve with Newcastle?

Pitt stood unrivaled in the House of Commons. Since late spring his popularity had been on the ascendant. He further fanned the flames of public unrest and exalted his own image by continually attacking Newcastle’s foreign policy. He even compared the Duke "to a child in a go-cart upon the brink of a precipice, and that it was but common humanity to stop it...." Yet despite Pitt’s

16 Lewis, Walpole’s Correspondence, XXI, p. 6; Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 82; Glover, Memoirs, p. 82.
17 Newcastle to Hardwicke, 13 October 1756, Fox to George II, 13 October 1756, and Fox to Hardwicke, 18 October 1756, and Fox to Hardwicke, 18 October 1756, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 318-19, 326; Grenville Papers, I, p. 174.
18 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 83.
19 Newcastle to Hardwicke, 8 May 1756, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 239; Carswell and Dralle, Political Journal of Dodgington, p. 341.
20 John Yorke to Lord Royston, 13 May 1756, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 290.
ridicule, Newcastle was optimistic of forming a coalition with him. The King was reluctant, however, and complained to the Duke that "Mr. Pitt won't do my German business." George II, while quite angry and displeased with Fox, still preferred him to Pitt and thought possibly by enlarging his power, he could be persuaded to remain. Feeling betrayed by Fox at such a critical juncture, Newcastle and Hardwicke strongly protested his re-entry. And they were successful in pointing out to the King that a viable ministry could be gained by enlisting Pitt, something which the King also desired. Lord Chancellor Hardwicke was deputed to approach Pitt with an offer of the Seals and leadership of the House. But the intransigent Pitt peremptorily refused and demanded the proscription of Newcastle. The Duke was bewildered. Not ready to admit defeat, he offered the Seals to Lord Halifax and the leadership of the House to Lord Egmont. The former refused and the latter desired a

21 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 83.


23 Newcastle to Hardwicke, 15 October 1756, Hardwicke to Newcastle, 16 October 1756, Hardwicke to Newcastle, 19 October 1756, Hardwicke to Lord Hoyston, 21 October 1756, and Hardwicke to Col. Yorke, 31 October 1756, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 323-324, 325, 328; Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 83; Fox to Onslow, 22 October 1756, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, II, p. 1; Grenville Papers, I, p. 178; Glover, Memoirs, p. 83; Carswell and Drille, Political Journal of Dodington, p. 350.
British peerage, which would have removed him to the House of Lords. In a last desperate attempt, he offered to exchange with Lord Granville the Treasury for the Presidency of the Council in the hope that the old Earl could repair his loss and save the Administration. But Granville was not willing to return to the political arena, and politely refused. With a dwindling majority in Parliament, the loss of Murray and Fox, his two most competent spokesmen in the Commons, a foreign policy which lay in ruin, his proscription by Pitt, and condemned by a hostile public, along with the disasters of the war, Newcastle saw the power he had monopolized and cherished for so many years rapidly slipping away. Reluctant to part with the power he loved and with deepest regret, he agreed to resign. He had been the victim not so much of the Opposition’s harassment but of a multitude of problems for which he was not directly responsible and moreover was unable to deal with satisfactorily because of their unruly nature and his own unsureness.

Newcastle’s resignation was the occasion of which Fox had long dreamed. He had been confident that Pitt

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25 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 84.
26 Ibid., p. 61.
would not serve with Newcastle, because Pitt would be second to no one. Therefore, reasoned Fox, the King would have no alternative but to make him an offer. He had been preparing for such a moment. A few days after he submitted his resignation to the King, he conferred at Bath with his friends Bedford and Rigby, and then with Cumberland at Windsor. Fox's reasoning proved correct. Needing a capable spokesman and minister and having lost enough antipathy toward Fox, the King summoned him on 27 October and asked him to form a ministry. Fox agreed. He told the King he would consult with the Dukes of Bedford, Devonshire, and Marlborough, and all those who had supported the Government the last session of Parliament. The King also wished him to try for Pitt's support, to which Fox readily consented. Co-operation with Pitt was something he had never abandoned, and such an arrangement was bound to ensure tranquility and success. Moreover, it was the belief of those great magnates, Bedford, Devonshire, and Marlborough, that such a union was essential. Fox approached Pitt optimistically, but the latter refused to join him.

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28 Digby to Ilchester, 28 October 1756, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, II, pp. 2-3; Dodington, Diary, p. 389; Carswell and Dalle, Political Journal of Dodington, p. 350.
30 Walpole, George II, II, p. 262-63; Dodington, Diary, p. 389; Hardwicke to J. Yorke, 31 October 1756,
When Fox's effort was frustrated, the King turned to the Duke of Devonshire, who was not only a friend of Fox but agreeable to Pitt. But Pitt remained firm in his refusal to serve with Fox. To make matters worse, Pitt demanded the Seals and requested that Legge be appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer. He insisted that Temple had to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, which Devonshire finally reduced to First Lord of the Admiralty. Also, James and George Grenville and all his other adherents, few though they were, were to receive places. Pitt's demands were exorbitant and without a doubt would have offended members of both Houses of Parliament. Moreover, they only heightened George II's dislike for him, which had become more intense after his proscription of Fox.

Fox, not having lost hope, moved swiftly to profit from these circumstances. When he, Bedford, Devonshire, Marlborough, and Rigby met on the evening of 1 November, all were in accord concerning "the impracticability of Mr. Pitt, who...seemed determined to place himself and family sole governors of everything..." Since there was no alternative to Pitt, they agreed, a way had to be found to

quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 333; J. West to Newcastle, 23 October 1756, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, II, pp. 2-3; Glover, Memoirs, p. 95.

31 Walpole, George II, II, pp. 266-68; Grenville Papers, I, p. 179.

32 Bedford Correspondence, II, pp. 207-08.
limit his power. Although the Duke of Newcastle had long been known for his intrigues, Fox had also mastered the art. Fox devised a plan which would place Pitt in such a position that if he did accept an offer his power would be reduced, and that a refusal would cost him support and popularity; it would convince many that he intended to be sole minister. To activate this scheme, Fox was to persuade the King to comply with Pitt's demands save for Legge's preferment to the Exchequer, thereby keeping Pitt's influence from the Treasury. Moreover, Fox and his friends knew that Pitt would never consent to such a proposal. Except for Pitt and his adherents, Legge's proscription would not offend many because Legge throughout his political career had earned the enmity of former friends by his excessive ambition. George II, Lord Granville, and Bedford detested him. Legge at one time had cultivated the friendship of Bedford, but when Sandwich was dismissed in 1751, it was he who was "the indecent messenger of Lord Sandwich's disgrace. The Duke met him on the steps of Bedford-house. ...and would scarce give him audience."  


Devonshire also had a strong dislike for Legge and vowed that he would not serve with him. The following morning Fox, Devonshire, Bedford, and Granville presented their plan to the King, which was to yield to all of Pitt's demands save for Legge. The King was pleased, and approved. The offer to be made Pitt, wrote Bedford later, was "such... as he cannot reasonably refuse, but such as if he does (which I make no doubt he will), must put him in the wrong in the opinion of reasonable men, and enable us to weather the storm of opposition, should they be so rash as to undertake it."  

Pitt hoped to create a party on an unprecedented basis -- the "support of the country gentlemen, the independent Members of Parliament."  

It had been for this reason that Fox gained the support of such important magnates as Bedford, Marlborough, and Devonshire rather than for motives of faction. As the structure of politics then existed, it was Pitt, due to his desire to be sole minister of an administration made up of only family and friends, who was guilty of faction. The great peers on whom Fox based his strength wanted to maintain the accustomed form...
of government based on the co-operation of the great Whig families. This was one of the pillars on which Walpole had based his political system. 38 The idea of government by a prime minister or sole minister was unacceptable not only to Bedford, Marlborough, and Devonshire but to the constitution as well. 39

Fox's plan did not crystallize. News of Legge's proscription leaked out. Horace Walpole persuaded Devonshire to see the evil consequences for the country if Pitt refused the offer. Devonshire quickly lost his dislike for Legge, and on 3 November he saw the King early in the morning and accepted the Treasury with no restrictions. 40 When the King revealed to Bedford and Fox, who were waiting in the Closet, of Devonshire's abandonment of their scheme, Bedford angrily remarked he would have nothing to do with the new Ministry and then set out in a fit of rage for Woburn, 41 while Fox consented with good sense. 42


41 Fox's "Narrative for Lord Kildare," quoted in Ilchester, Fox, II, p. 11.

42 Bedford Correspondence, II, pp. 209-10.
Devonshire was beset with only one major obstacle in completing arrangements for the new Administration, the obstinacy of Pitt. Pitt demanded the exclusion of Lord Holdernesse, a favorite of the King, from the Northern Department, which he coveted for himself. After holding out for three weeks in an effort to have his way, he yielded to the King's wish and on 4 December accepted the Southern Department of State. Because the Devonshire-Pitt Administration was without a solid basis of power, no one expected it to last longer than six months. Even Pitt shared this view. Since Pitt brought only a meager handful of family and friends into the Administration, there was an insufficient number to fill the vacancies. He therefore had to use many incumbents, who were by no means well-wishers. Moreover, in attempting to be sole minister,

43 Ibid., p. 211; Grenville Papers, I, p. 186; Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XXI, p. 22; Walpole, Letters, IV, p. 17. Devonshire succeeded Newcastle as the First Lord of the Treasury. Pitt followed Fox as Secretary of State for the Southern Department. Legge became Chancellor of the Exchequer in place of Lyttelton, and Temple replaced Anson as First Lord of the Admiralty. George Grenville succeeded George Bubb Dodington as Treasurer of the Navy. When Lord Chancellor Hardwicke resigned the Great Seal, it was put in commission.

44 Walpole, Letters, IV, p. 12; Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XXI, p. 17; Hardwicke to Newcastle, 6 December, 1756, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 377.

45 Foord, His Majesty's Opposition, p. 289.
he weakened the Government by excluding the two most powerful leaders in Parliament — Newcastle and Fox. And Devonshire was not the man for whom the time and situation demanded. The lack of favor and support in the Closet further weakened what little strength the Administration had.

The events leading to the dismissal of Pitt and the formation of the Newcastle-Pitt Administration, which terminated the ministerial crisis of April-June 1767, is as complex and detailed as it is full of political intrigue and chicanery. No sooner had Pitt and his friends taken office in December 1766, than the King began searching for a plan which would enable him to remove them. In George II's personal vendetta with Pitt and Temple, 

1 Henry Fox eagerly offered assistance. He was not actuated by any sincere desire to deliver the King from the yoke of those "poodles" but by a thirst for power and office. He was bent on wresting power from Pitt and his adherents and never ceased to intrigue against them. 2

1 Since Pitt's bitter attacks on Hanover in the 1740's, George II had treated him with contempt. By being politically allied to Pitt, Temple was also considered an enemy. After they forced themselves on the King in November, neither one attempted to better his standing with him. Their fulminations against the Lords' Address thanking George II for the use of his Electoral troops in early December and their defence of Grey in February further disaffected him. See Glover, Memoirs, pp. 109-0, 109-10; Breville, Memoirs, I, pp. 103, 109; Salisbury, Memoirs, p. 89; Hardwicke to Newcastle, 6 December 1766, quoted in Yorkes, Hardwicke, II, p. 233; Glover, Memoirs, pp. 89-92, 109-10, 115; Newcastle to Hardwicke, 1 January 1767, quoted in Yorkes, Hardwicke.
CHAPTER III

THE MINISTERIAL CRISIS OF APRIL-JUNE 1757

The events leading to the dismissal of Pitt and the formation of the Newcastle-Pitt Administration, which terminated the ministerial crisis of April-June 1757, is as complex and detailed as it is full of political intrigue and chicanery. No sooner had Pitt and his friends taken office in December 1756, than the King began searching for a plan which would enable him to remove them. In George II's personal vendetta with Pitt and Temple, Henry Fox eagerly offered assistance. He was not actuated by any sincere desire to deliver the King from the yoke of these "scoundrels" but by a thirst for power and office. He was bent on wresting power from Pitt and his adherents and never ceased to intrigue against them. And in January he

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2Glover, Memoirs, pp. 98-99, 109-10, 115; Newcastle to Hardwicke, 4 January 1757, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke,
told the King "whenever it was proper to drive out these gentlemen, there should neither be wanting expedients or courage to support his affairs." His representations proved so successful that George II informed Holderness that "If the Duke of Newcastle thinks of coming in again, he must join with Mr. Fox."  

By February the King could no longer tolerate Pitt and Temple's behavior in the Closet; the former's speeches were long and tiring, and the latter had personally offended the King by his defence of Admiral Byng. Although having earlier confided in Fox, the King had misgivings as to his success in fashioning a stable ministry. He therefore instructed Waldegrave to approach Newcastle with an offer to form an administration and take the Treasury. Newcastle

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3 Ibid., p. 380.

4 Newcastle to Hardwicke, 9 January 1757, quoted in Ibid., p. 384.

5 In defending Byng, Temple angered the King on two occasions. At an audience in February, George II told Temple "he thought him [Byng] guilty of cowardice in the action." According to Richard Rigby, who was present, Temple "walked up to his [George II's] nose, and sans autre ceremonies, said, what shall you think if he dies courageously? His Majesty stifled the anger, and made no reply." Bedford Correspondence, II, p. 233. Another incident between George II and Temple has been recorded by Horace Walpole, in which Temple piqued the King by suggesting some similarities between the Admiral and him. Walpole, George II, II, p. 103. See also Lecky, History of England, II, p. 374; Waldegrave, Memoirs, pp. 90, 93-95.
declined. He did not believe it was the proper moment for a change in the Government with so much business to be acted upon in Parliament. His apprehensions of returning to power in the midst of an unsuccessful war cannot be discounted either. Waldegrave angled for Fox, who was not only eager but confident that he could form an administration.

Without delay, Fox consulted his supporters and others whom he hoped would take office in the projected Administration: the Dukes of Bedford and Devonshire, Lord Halifax, Charles Townshend, George Bubb Dodington, Lords Egmont and George Sackville, and the Duke of Newcastle. Newcastle was to be reinstated as First Lord of the Treasury. Fox agreed to take any office, even the Paymastership, except that if Newcastle declined he would take the Exchequer. Newcastle did refuse to co-operate with Fox and opposed the dismissals of Pitt and his followers, with whom he hoped to join forces at a later date. In his refusal, he was supported by his friends. Mansfield warned him that

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6 Ibid., pp. 96-98; Newcastle’s Memorandum to the King, 1 March 1757, Add. MSS. 32870, quoted in Owen A. Sherrard, Lord Chatham, Pitt and the Seven Years’ War (London: The Garden City Press Limited, 1955), pp. 191-92.
7 Waldegrave, Memoirs, pp. 102-05.
his joining Fox would be "laying his head down upon a table to be struck at." Halifax believed it "the wildest scheme imaginable." Newcastle, moreover, with the support of Hardwicke, Archbishop Stone (the Primate of Ireland), and Mansfield recommended to the King that should Pitt and his friends resign or be dismissed, their offices should remain vacant until Parliament rose for the summer recess in the hope that a solution to the impasse could be reached during the interim.

Fox not only met with a rebuff from Newcastle, but the support of those on whom he had counted proved most discouraging. Lord George Sackville, from whom he had earlier elicited support and whom he now offered to make a Secretary of State, leaned instead in the direction of Pitt and Leicester House. Egmont, who was considered for the other Department of State, complained of ill-health and in any case was more interested in a British peerage than

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8 Newcastle to Hardwicke, 5 March 1757, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 397.

10 Newcastle to Hardwicke, 13 March 1757, Add. MSS. 32870, quoted in Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years' War, p. 192.

11 Memorandum for the King, 25 March 1757, Add. MSS. 32870, quoted in Ibid., p. 195.

in a political office. Halifax, who had questioned the practicability of the scheme from the beginning, refused to serve unless Newcastle took the Treasury. Charles Townshend, with whom Fox had been on cordial terms of late and whom he hoped to make Secretary of War, was too cautious to turn his back on Pitt, even though he detested him. George Bubb Dodington, the proposed Treasurer of the Navy, though eager and willing to accept office, was dubious of the scheme's success. Besides Fox himself, only Bedford showed any real enthusiasm, determination, and confidence.

Even the King had doubts as to the success of such an Administration. Yet he had no better plan. Apparently as a result of Fox's continued reassurances that he could form a viable government and Cumberland's pressure to dismiss Pitt and Temple, the King took the unpopular move

16 Ibid., p. 105.
18 Cumberland even resorted to coercion; he told his father that unless Pitt and Temple were dismissed, he would not assume command of the Army of Observation in Germany. Waldegrave, Memoirs, pp. 98-99; Glover, Memoirs, p. 123; Hardwicke to Anson, 9 April 1757, Add. MSS. 15956, quoted in Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years' War, p. 194.
of dismissing Temple on 4 April and Pitt on 6 April. Henry Legge, George and James Grenville resigned a few days afterwards. Save for Admiral Boscawen, the entire Admiralty Board was turned out; the vacancies, however, were immediately filled, Lord Winchelsea succeeding Temple as First Lord. Fox now was given his chance. Many believed, however, that any administration he headed would be no more than a disguise for a military dictatorship by Cumberland. Vociferous outcries were heard from the City of London "against Mr. Fox and his military Administration." Such unpopularity did not augur well. The King soon realized moreover that Fox could not manage alone, something he had long suspected. He appreciated Fox's great skill as a debater and parliamentary manager; he wanted him above all;
but he also knew how essential Newcastle was to any stable ministry. Yet the Duke would not serve with Fox. George II therefore decided against Fox's scheme in favor of Newcastle's earlier advice to leave the offices vacant. Newcastle's refusal to take the Treasury, Fox's failure to form an administration, along with the King's dismissal of Pitt and his followers without a plan for an alternative administration, resulted in a serious ministerial crisis which beset England for the next two and a half months. Only a caretaker government was left to manage the affairs of state. Devonshire agreed to remain at the Treasury only until a replacement could be found or until Parliament adjourned. Holderness continued at the Northern Department of State, but the Southern was vacant. Lord Mansfield, in addition to his legal and judicial duties, handled the Exchequer.

The preceding events, however, were only a natural result of the endless, at times fierce, three-cornered struggle for power between Newcastle, Fox, and Pitt, which had been developing since Pelham's death and which had


23 Grenville Papers, I, pp. 191-94; Waldegrave, Memoirs, pp. 100, 107; Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XXI, pp. 73-75; Hist. MSS. Hist. Various Coll., VI, pp. 38, 40; Dodington's Political Journal, p. 360; Walpole, George II, III, pp. 1-3. During a vacancy of the Exchequer, the Chief Justice of the Court of the King's Bench was ex officio Chancellor.
nearly produced ministerial crises in November 1755 and 1756. What now followed was amazing. While Britain was engaged to a major European and Colonial war and in desperate need of leadership, Newcastle, Fox, and Pitt, during the ministerial interregnum, refused to sink their differences and co-operate.

Newcastle, following the dismissal of Pitt, was in the best position to put together an administration. He had the King's support as well as a loyal following in Parliament, and there was no real reason why he should not have taken the Treasury and formed an administration. But he lacked self-confidence and courage. The indignation of the people over the loss of Minorca frightened him. Only Pitt could have supplied the strength which he himself lacked; only Pitt could have managed the war effort. But he still would not join forces with Newcastle, and Newcastle would not join with Fox.

Fox had been certain of success at the time of Pitt's dismissal. His hopes, however, soon disappeared when the King decided to leave the offices vacant. Yet Fox had offered his assistance; he would have taken the Treasury, the Exchequer, even the Pay Office. He would have willingly served with either Newcastle or Pitt, but they had proscribed him. Besides, the King was tiring of

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24 Waldegrave, Memoirs, pp. 96-98; Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years' War, p. 191.
him. Not only had Fox suffered a loss of confidence in the Closet, but in the House of Commons and in the eyes of the public. He therefore decided to remain silent and await the first opportunity to aggrandize himself with an office of rank.

Pitt had been followed into the wilderness by Legge, Temple, and George and James Grenville. His dismissal had been unpopular, and the popularity he lost in the defence of Byng was soon restored. The people called for him. He and Legge received the freedom of the City of London in gold boxes. A stable administration was not only improbable but nearly impossible without Pitt. Yet he was banished from Court. He, moreover, added to the confusion by his refusal to serve with either Newcastle or Fox. The intransigent Pitt knew that sooner or later one of his political rivals, probably Newcastle, who was anxious to return to office and whom he preferred, would make him an acceptable offer.

To resolve this entangled political impasse and bring stability to the Government, a new plan was set afoot in early April. The "prime mover" was Henry Legge, seconded by Thomas Potter and Temple. Actuated by an

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25 Ibid., p. 196.

26 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 61; According to Horace Walpole, "for some weeks it rained gold boxes." Walpole, George II, III, p. 6; Walpole, Letters, IV, p. 47.
insatiable thirst for power, which could only be satisfied by office, these men sought to bring about a Newcastle-Pitt rapprochement. The problem was twofold. Legge first had to seek Newcastle out and weigh his readiness to join Pitt. Secondly, if the Duke proved willing, he had to convince Pitt of the advantages to be gained from such a union. Achieving the first was difficult. But the determined Legge, through an extensive and exhaustive series of consultations with Newcastle’s friends, succeeded in arranging a secret meeting with the Duke shortly before Easter in the home of Lord Duplin. "The meeting pass’d in the assurances of good-will to each other, and went no further." Newcastle, while willing to talk, would make no premature commitments, perhaps because the inquiries into the loss of Minorca were forthcoming. Besides, any further thoughts he had of discussing the possibility of a coalition with Pitt were quickly dampened by a rebuke from the King for having met with Legge. It piqued the King to think that the Duke would discuss such a proposition behind

27 Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years’ War, pp. 196-97.

28 For a detailed account of Legge’s efforts to approach Newcastle, see Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years’ War, p. 196. Also consult Hardwicke to Newcastle, 9 April 1757, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 391-92.

his back and after having already been offered the Treas-
ury. Approaching Pitt was an easier task. There can be no doubt that Pitt had given thought to joining with New-
castle. A few days after his dismissal, in a conversation with Richard Glover, a poet and man of letters, he set forth the terms on which he would join Newcastle.

Do not imagine that I [Pitt] can be induced to unite with him, unless sure of power; I mean power over public measures: the disposition of offices, except the few efficient ones of Administration, the creating Deans, Bishops, and every placemen besides, is quite out of my plan, and which I willingly relinquish to the Duke of Newcastle.\textsuperscript{31}

But when Pitt learned that Legge had offered to serve with Newcastle even if he himself would not, Pitt and his Leicester House allies turned a deaf ear to him. Consequently, Legge's plan, which had been stamped by failure from the beginning, never materialized. George II, Newcastle, and Pitt were as yet unwilling to make any sacri-
fices, and the first attempt to break the political deadlock had ended in complete failure.

All the backstairs maneuvering and efforts to re-
solve the crisis were momentarily halted in late April. Between 19 April and 2 May all attention was focused upon the long awaited inquiries into the loss of Minorca. Pitt, who had vehemently attacked Newcastle and his ministers for

\textsuperscript{30} Newcastle to Hardwicke, 8 April 1757, quoted in \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 398-39.

\textsuperscript{31} Glover, \textit{Memoirs}, pp. 127-23.
the loss of the island and who was as responsible as anyone for bringing about the inquiries, now had second thoughts about pressing them. He needed Newcastle and hoped to form a coalition with him in the future. But he knew if he pushed the investigation with his customary fire and venom, he would certainly drive a further wedge between the Duke and himself and thereby injure any chance for a coalition. What he feared even more was that Newcastle would cross over into Fox's camp. Yet he had to fulfill his promise to the people that justice would be done. He had no choice but to participate. His attendance in the House of Commons was less than assiduous, however, and his speeches rather "gentle and civil to politeness." Thus he avoided alienating Newcastle any further, while at the same time keeping his promise about Minorca and in that way his popular support as well. The final resolutions passed in Parliament exonerating the late Newcastle Administration of negligence were a personal defeat for Pitt. Yet no one was really hurt, and more important, everyone was satisfied.

33Hardwicke to Newcastle, 6 December 1756, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 376.
34Ibid., p. 376; Glover, Memoirs, pp. 130-31.
35Fox to Devonshire, 26 April 1757, quoted in Ilchester, Fox, II, p. 32.
36Williams, Chatham, II, pp. 316-19; Riker, Fox, II, p. 70.
The completion of the inquiries in early May yielded an atmosphere full of promise. George II decided to remove his proscription of Pitt and asked Newcastle to form an administration. Newcastle offered Pitt the Southern Department of State "with full power in his Department such as must be accompanied with," leadership of the House, and a free hand in conducting the war. But this did not satisfy Pitt. He believed that he and his followers had been sent into the wilderness unjustly and now sought full restitution. Pitt demanded that Barrington be replaced as Secretary at War by one of his own friends, although he specified no one. His anger with Legge was apparently short-lived, for he recommended that he be made a peer and First Lord of the Admiralty. George Grenville was to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. This last demand disturbed Newcastle most of all because he considered the Exchequer his bailiwick and wanted it for one of his own friends. Equally alarming was Pitt's insistence that he himself should nominate the junior lords of the Admiralty, for this...
would undermine Newcastle's main source of strength, the control of patronage. Pitt's terms may have been unreasonable, even outrageous, yet he was indispensable; Newcastle could not do without him, for Pitt and Legge were "not only the most, but perhaps the only two popular men now in the Kingdom." Distasteful though Newcastle found the prospect of sharing power with Pitt, the alternative was government by Fox and Cumberland, which was more disquieting by far. He decided therefore to yield to Pitt's terms. But the King, his dislike of Pitt and Temple unabated, rejected Pitt's terms as being too high. He was, moreover, displeased that Fox had been proscribed.

Newcastle, to prevent Fox from gaining the premiership, quickly presented the King with an alternative plan. Pitt and his friends would be excluded. To satisfy the King's requirement that Fox be provided for, Newcastle recommended him for the Pay Office, which was not of Cabinet rank and would give him little influence. Sir George Lee would be Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir

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40 Memorandum for the King, 12 May 1757, Add. MSS. 32871, quoted in Ibid., pp. 206-07.
42 Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XXI, p. 91.
43 Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years' War, p. 207
44 Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XXI, p. 87.
Thomas Robinson would return to the Southern Department of State. So that Newcastle might confer with his friends and make certain of the necessary arrangements, he delayed a few days before executing the plan. As a result, news of the projected Administration and the proscription of Pitt reached Leicester House. Fox's admittance to Newcastle's Government without Pitt as a counterbalance frightened the Princess of Wales, who saw the insidious figure of Cumberland lurking in the background. Should he return victorious from Germany, the Princess feared that his influence at Court would be unconquerable. He might persuade the King to enlarge Fox's power, perhaps give him the Exchequer or the Treasury, or both. Then Cumberland and Fox together would control both the Army and the Government. In order to frustrate this rather improbable scheme, she instructed Lord Bute to intervene. Bute was to persuade Pitt to reduce his terms and so facilitate a Newcastle-Pitt coalition, one which would be powerful enough to withstand any sinister plan Fox and Cumberland might concoct.

To carry out this difficult task, Bute called on Lord Chesterfield to intercede and persuade Newcastle to

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46 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 110.
47 Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years' War, p. 204.
48 Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773).
meet with Pitt once more before implementing his plan. Chesterfield agreed. By reminding Newcastle of the dire consequences for an administration which did not include Pitt or have the support of Leicester House, he succeeded not only in arranging a meeting between Newcastle and Pitt but between Newcastle, Hardwicke, Pitt, and Bute. After a series of conferences, a plan of government was agreed upon and presented to the King. Upon examination George II found the plan unacceptable. Pitt still proscribed Fox; Winchelsea was to be removed from the Admiralty and replaced by one of Pitt's friends; Temple, whom George II loathed, was to be admitted to the Cabinet. The King, however, was still optimistic that the impasse could be resolved without Pitt. Newcastle, moreover, had promised that if he failed to enlist Pitt, he would follow through without him. Had it not been for Hardwicke, he would have done so, for he fairly panted to return to office.

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But Hardwicke's warning, that "you [Newcastle] will set out in a new Administration lame and maimed, which, instead of the solid and stable Administration talked of, will be looked upon by all the world as the weakest possible," proved enough to sway the mind of the timorous Duke. 52

Newcastle confirmed his betrayal to the King a few days later, lamenting "I can't come without bringing my enemy... I can’t come in alone." 53 Negotiations therefore broke down in early June over the question of ministerial personnel.

By then the situation was indeed critical. For two months the country had been without a workable government. At this juncture, Fox and those who had supported his abortive attempts in November 1756 and April 1757 to execute a plan of administration, decided that if ever their administration were to be effected, now was the time. Bedford was as optimistic as ever. Granville had lost none of his eagerness. Pitt's obstinacy had convinced Devonshire that Fox was the only choice. According to their plan of administration, Fox would be Chancellor of the Exchequer and and Lord Egremont Secretary of State for the Southern

52 Hardwicke to Newcastle, 1 June 1757, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 396-97.

53 Memorandum for the King, 6 June 1757, Add. MSS. 32871, quoted in Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years' War, p. 207.
But what of the Treasury? Among Fox’s many friends and loyal supporters—Bedford, Granville, Devonshire, and Marlborough—each for one reason or another was unwilling to accept the responsibilities of the Treasury. Needing someone to fill the Treasury, Fox turned to a confidant of the King, Lord Waldegrave. It was only natural that he be considered now. Since February, he had been the King’s chief negotiator in the attempt to form an administration. It had been Waldegrave to whom the King had offered the Treasury when Newcastle refused it in April.

Newcastle met with the King on the morning of Tuesday, 7 June and reiterated his position not to serve without Pitt. Immediately following his departure, Bedford, Devonshire, and Granville had individual audiences with the King, at which time they presented their plan of administration. They not only convinced the King of the soundness of the projected Administration but assured him their plan would terminate the ministerial crisis. After the meeting, the three called on Waldegrave and conveyed their wish along with the King’s that he accept the Treasury and form an administration. He consented.

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54 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 120; Walpole, Letters, IV, p. 61.
56 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 100; Walpole, Letters, IV, p. 61.
57 Waldegrave, Memoirs, pp. 114-17.
Although Waldegrave had been deputed to form the Administration, the real task went to Fox. He spent all day Wednesday attempting to win support from leading members of the Commons. To his chagrin, however, he found many members of the House not so willing to promise their support as he had hoped. Equally discouraging was his conversation with the King, who treated him rather coolly. When Waldegrave and Bedford met him that evening, they found him "much changed since morning, more apprehensive of danger, more doubtful of success." Yet the principal offices were agreed upon. Only the minor offices were unfilled. But on Thursday morning, unexpectedly Holdernesse resigned the Seals of the Northern Department of State. There was immediate fear of further resignations. Holdernesse's resignation was undoubtedly the work of Newcastle, who hoped thereby to check any shift of support to Fox and so force the King to turn over the formation of the Administration to himself. The King would not yield to such low tactics. He knew that Fox stood little chance of succeeding, but he was determined to see the plan through and, hopefully, end the crisis. Waldegrave was therefore instructed to hold a second meeting that evening and to enlist the


59 Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XXI, p. 98.
support of Granville and Winchelsea. By then, however, Fox had lost all hope. The newcomers, Granville and Winchelsea, on the other hand, displayed much enthusiasm, which, added to Bedford’s confidence, injected a fresh spirit into the meeting, so that when the group adjourned, the atmosphere was not as despondent as when it had convened. 60

Waldegrave visited the King on Friday morning and found that he had abandoned all hope of Fox’s success. The King was certain of more resignations and complained to Waldegrave that "almost everybody had abandoned him." Yet he ordered Waldegrave and Fox to call a third meeting. All those who had promised to take office — Fox, Waldegrave, Devonshire, Granville, Bedford, Gower, and Winchelsea — were to attend. Emotions not only ran high but were mixed. Fox was no more optimistic than before and continuously complained of the hardships that lay ahead. Devonshire displayed neither spirit nor enthusiasm. Nor was Waldegrave much more hopeful, yet he argued that they should not abandon the King but must proceed according to plan. In this way, he believed they might compel Pitt to reduce his exorbitant demands, so that his influence would be lessened when he did take office. Amidst this despondency, Bedford remained optimistic. "He insisted that our administration would be infinitely the strongest that had ever been known in this country: and was almost in a passion against

60 Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 122.
Fox. . . ." The possibility of more resignations did not discourage him as it had the others. Let them resign, he declared, so their offices can be filled by loyal supporters.

At Bedford's suggestion, Lord Gower, the Lord Privy Seal, agreed to take the Northern Department of State. Bedford also drew on the support of Granville and Winchelsea, both of whom had been enthusiastic from the start. Although Fox, Waldegrave, and Devonshire did not share this attitude, they agreed with the others to see the King the next morning and take office. By the end of the meeting, however, Bedford had come to realize the hopelessness of it all. As he left, he whispered to Waldegrave that "we could not possibly go on without a principal actor in the House of Commons, and that Fox had not the spirit to undertake it." 61

On Saturday morning the would-be ministers of the projected Fox-Waldegrave Administration waited upon the King at Kensington. Mansfield, who was summoned to attend the ceremonies and surrender the Exchequer Seal to Fox, held an audience with George II earlier in the morning. He found the King much troubled and despairing over the "present melancholy situation," whereupon he told him that the Administration was not only impossible without Newcastle and Pitt but would be routed when Parliament reassembled in the

61Ibid., pp. 122-23.
autumn. The King had long thought as much. Newcastle's majority in the House and Pitt's popularity pointed to it. The King therefore ordered Mansfield to reopen negotiations with them, and Mansfield left the Closet with the Exchequer Seal still in his possession. When the King informed those waiting to take office of the change of plan, all save Bedford were struck dumb with surprise. But it was not the King against whom Bedford directed his wrath but Fox, whose lack of determination and spirit, he charged, were the reasons for their failure. It was November 1756 and April 1757 all over again. Fox had failed to form an administration for the third and last time.

Had the Fox-Waldegrave Administration materialized, it would have proved a fiasco. It had been impossible from the beginning. Only the enthusiasm and determination of Bedford and Granville, supported by Winchelsea and Gower, had sustained the idea of it. Bedford, contrary to his political nature, had taken the initiative instead of being led and used as a tool by those seeking their political fortunes. Although Granville was old and his influence at Court had diminished, he still was adept at backstairs maneuvers. Bedford and Granville, seconded by Marlborough

62Ibid., pp. 128-32; Hardwicke to Hoyston, 12 June 1757 and Mansfield to Hardwicke, 11 June 1757, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 399-400; Duplin to Duchess of Newcastle, 13 June 1757, Add. MSS. 32371, f. 298, quoted in Riker, Fox, II, p. 141; Bedford Correspondence, II, pp. 245-46.

and Devonshire had supported Fox for the same reason as in
November 1756; the idea of government by a sole minister, in
this case Pitt, was repugnant to them. They believed in
government as a co-operative enterprise of the great Whig
magnates, all equal in power, supported by their political
dependents. And Bedford's statement that Fox's Administra-
tion would be "the strongest that ever was, so many Lords,
supporting Mr. Fox"\(^6^4\) testifies to his belief in that system
of government. Bedford and Granville's optimism had been
unwarranted, yet their motives had been highly patriotic.
But they should have realized that any administration which
excluded Newcastle and his parliamentary myrmidons, and
Pitt as well, could not succeed.

Although Mansfield had been delegated to reopen
talks with Newcastle and Pitt, he was soon replaced. The
nearly insuperable task of forming an administration
devolved on former Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. When he met
with the King on 15 June to discuss the desperate situation,
he found him despondent and dispirited. Deserting Cumber-
land and Fox for Leicester House and Pitt was a bitter pill
to take. Yet the King had no alternative but to accept a
Newcastle-Pitt coalition.\(^6^5\) Such a government, however,

\(^6^4\)Newcastle to Hardwicke, 8 April 1757, quoted in
Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 339; See Haas, "Rise of the Bed-

\(^6^5\)Devonshire to Hardwicke, 14 June 1757 and Hard-
wicke to Anson, 18 June 1757, quoted in Ibid., pp. 400,
403; Lewis, Walpole's Correspondence, XXI, p. 99; Walde-
grave, Memoirs, p. 133.
promised the King not only ministerial stability but provided a way to limit Pitt's power. To ensure the latter, a number of restrictions were placed upon Hardwicke's negotiations. Fox was to be Paymaster-General, Winchelsea was to remain First Lord of the Admiralty, and Barrington was to be Secretary at War. The haughty and antagonistic Temple was to have an office in which he would not come into contact with the King. Legge was not to have his peerage, which Pitt had demanded, nor was he to be First Lord of the Admiralty.

Bringing Newcastle and Pitt together under such restrictions was indeed a difficult accomplishment. Hardwicke found Newcastle reluctant to share the power to which he had so long been accustomed, yet he was willing, he had to, yield. Pitt was anything but flexible and exhibited his customary obstinacy. If anyone other than Pitt's intimates could reason with him, it was Hardwicke. He knew Pitt well and was on friendly terms with him. He knew also that Pitt was easier to manage in the company of others, and for this reason, he invited Newcastle and Bute to a meeting with Pitt and himself on 16 June.


67 Devonshire to Hardwicke, 15 June 1757 and Hardwicke to Anson, 18 June 1757, quoted in Ibid., pp. 401, 403; Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years' War, pp. 208-09.

68 Ibid., pp. 209-10; Hardwicke to Pitt, 16 June 1757 and Hardwicke to Anson, 18 June 1757, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, pp. 402-04.
The attendance of all "four plenipotentiaries" at this meeting guaranteed the representation of all contenders who had been jockeying for leadership of the Government since Pelham's death. Although Fox was not invited, his interests were represented, if only nominally, by Hardwicke, who as the King's agent was to ensure that he was not proscribed. Newcastle represented the Pelhamite party, Pitt his immediate followers and, along with Bute, Leicester House as well. Although it had been decided earlier that Newcastle would have the Treasury, Pitt the Southern Department of State, and Fox the Pay Office, this meeting and the subsequent meetings might have produced no way out of the impasse because of the rather narrow restrictions placed upon Hardwicke by the King. But now an unexpected opportunity appeared which Hardwicke quickly grasped. The break-through came on the morning of 18 June when Winchelsea resigned the Admiralty and declared he would never serve with Newcastle or Pitt. Hardwicke, who desired that his son-in-law, Lord Anson, be reinstated as First Lord of the Admiralty, immediately put forth his name. George II replied, "I shall like it extremely." When told by Hardwicke of the news that evening, Newcastle was pleased, Bute agreed, and Pitt, who earlier had demanded the office for Legge, consented. Hardwicke seized upon the cordial

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69 Ibid., p. 403; Newcastle to Devonshire, 23 May 1757, quoted in Hiker, Fox, II, p. 131.
atmosphere to further negotiations. He suggested Legge be returned to the Exchequer. Pitt, however, voiced disapproval; he had promised the Exchequer to George Grenville. Bute intervened, and Pitt, as a result, turned the entire matter over to Newcastle, who did not hesitate to agree to Legge. Yet Pitt had not mellowed so much that he would forego his demand that Lord George Sackville replace Barrington as Secretary at War. Again Bute intervened. This time, however, it was Sackville to whom he turned and persuaded to decline the office. Pitt now had no choice but to accept the King's wish. Although Pitt had given up three of his four demands, he managed to salvage one, the restoration of the Board of Admiralty which had followed him into the wilderness. With all of George II's requirements met and Holderness's decision to return to the Northern Department, which completed the filling of all major offices, Hardwicke presented the plan to the King. George II was elated and with relief remarked, "Then this is done, and my Lord, I thank you heartily."70 But not all was finished. Although the major offices were agreed upon, the projected Administration did not take office until 29 June. The reason for the delay was disagreement between Hardwicke and Pitt in selecting an Attorney-General. Pitt,
who had proved rather pliable in the preceding talks, refused to take office unless Charles Pratt was given the office. As for the displaced Attorney-General, Robert Henley, he insisted on the Lord Chancellorship, which Hardwicke wanted for his son Charles Yorke. However, rather than dismantle his masterpiece, he made a personal sacrifice and yielded to Pitt's demands. Thus the serious ministerial crisis which had beset England for two and a half months and the preceding three years of ministerial instability were at last terminated by the formation of the great national government of Newcastle and Pitt, which represented the "culmination of the 'broad bottom'." "Not every one had his pretensions satisfied — there were not places enough... Yet no one faction was altogether


72 Newcastle to Hardwicke, June 1757, quoted in Yorke, Hardwicke, II, p. 402; Bedford Correspondence, II, p. 258.


74 Hardwicke to Lord Lyttelton, 4 July 1757, quoted in Ibid., p. 410; Waldegrave, Memoirs, pp. 154-55; Bedford Correspondence, II, p. 255.

75 Poord, His Majesty's Opposition, p. 293. The formation of the Newcastle-Pitt Administration generated bitter and long lasting animosities. Not only did there exist bad blood between those who received preferments and those who did not, but between those fortunate ones who found places and the Closet. The "ridiculous & dishonest Arrange- ments of Men which is [sic] now to take place" (Hist. MSS.
proscribed. All factions -- Newcastle, Fox and Cumberland, Pitt and Leicester House, and the Bedfords 76 -- had a share. Nothing was left from which a formal opposition could be

Coll., Townshend, p. 393.) was the angry reaction of George and Charles Townshend. When Pitt reconstructed his Government in November 1756, Charles had expected high office but received an insignificant sinecure, the Treasurer of the Chamber. And when Pitt reappointed him to the same office in June 1757, he was furious, so much so, that when the new ministers took office, he did not attend ceremonies at Court. Instead he went into the country with his brother George, who was equally piqued over the treatment given Charles. (Bedford Correspondence, II, pp. 251-52; Sherrard, Pitt and the Seven Years' War, p. 213.) Pitt, moreover, alienated many of the country gentlemen or independents in the House by making common cause with the factions to fulfill his pretensions. It had been from this group that he had earlier drawn support in his Opposition. (Glover, Memoirs, pp. 150-51.) George Grenville, who had given his support to Pitt's cause, was sacrificed for one not so faithful Legge. Legge received the Exchequer which Pitt had promised Grenville, who returned to his position as Treasurer of the Navy, no doubt disgruntled. Fox was not altogether pleased with his office of emolument, yet it was better than no office. Newcastle and Pitt, although their pretensions had been answered, were jealous of each's power and distrustful of the other's intentions. Nor was either a favorite at Court. When Pitt and his friends took office, their unwelcome was evidenced by the King's brief audiences, some were "not in the Closet long enough for the door to be shut." Pitt's audience lasted but five minutes. (Bedford Correspondence, II, p. 251.) Newcastle's reception was not unlike that of his rival. (Waldegrave, Memoirs, p. 133.) Notwithstanding the jealousies and animosities, the coalition not only brought stability to the Government but guided England through the Seven Years' War, which resulted in her winning an Empire.

The Bedford faction, which had supported Fox, suffered no substantial losses. Bedford continued as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Rigby as a Lord of Trade. Gower relinquished the Privy Seal but was compensated with the Mastership of the Horse. Only Carysfort lost his seat on the Admiralty Board.
formed, so that remaining years of George II's reign were carried on without any formidable opposition to the Government. 77

The period of ministerial instability following Pelham's death and the ministerial crisis of 1757 were the result of the three cornered struggle for power between Newcastle, Fox, and Pitt. This tug-of-war was marked by personal jealousies and animosities as each claimant schemed and plotted against the other. It was not uncommon to see the contestants lay aside their differences and join forces in hope of eliminating their rival so they in turn could duel for the reins of leadership, and, often deserting one another in the process.

Newcastle's inability to find a competent manager of the House of Commons upon succeeding his brother, Pelham, as premier in 1754 proved to be a regrettable mistake in his reconstruction of the Administration. Fox had coveted the leadership of the House along with the Treasury and the Exchequer. Although Pitt had sought the Seals, he was most angered by not receiving the leadership when Fox refused and was replaced by Murray and Robinson, men less qualified than himself. The mutual dissatisfaction of Fox and Pitt soon led to an alliance between them. It was Newcastle's incompetent spokesmen in the Commons on whom they centered

77Foord, His Majesty's Opposition, pp. 292-93, 296.
their opposition by goading and harassment. To separate Fox and Pitt, Newcastle played on Fox's weakness, an insatiable thirst for power. For a seat in the Cabinet, Fox wantonly deserted his ally Pitt. This was a fatal error. If he had remained with Pitt, Newcastle could not have withstood their devastating attack and would have eventually surrendered. Fox and Pitt would then have had either of two choices. They could have shared power, each having his own province, Fox First Lord of the Treasury and leader of the House of Commons and Pitt Secretary of State for the Southern Department. Or they could have done battle for the sole leadership of the Government. Fox might very well have fared the better, owing to his favor at Court and Pitt's proscription there. Instead, he quickly found himself powerless and ever discontented. Yet his ambition was partially fulfilled in the autumn of 1755 when he was given the Southern Department of State and leadership of the Commons. However, Newcastle's decision to share some of his power was not the result of benevolence or generosity, but a calculated move not only to crush Pitt's opposition to the subsidies but to further consolidate his power. Again Fox had played into Newcastle's hands by letting the Duke use him to defeat Pitt. But the wheel of fortune turned in favor of Pitt. Had it not been for the Seven Years' War, the coalition of Newcastle and Fox might have continued despite their jealousies, and Pitt might
have remained in the wilderness. But the military reverses in the early years of the war, added to Pitt's fulminations against Newcastle's foreign policy, so weakened the Duke in the Commons that he resigned along with Hardwicke and Fox in November 1756.

Newcastle's resignation and Pitt's entrance into the Administration are noteworthy. The bases of a premier's power rested on royal confidence, control of patronage, and maintaining parliamentary majorities. All these Newcastle had, but his majority was endangered and he quitted office. Pitt, who succeeded him, had neither the confidence of the King nor a parliamentary majority; he was, moreover, indifferent to the manipulation of patronage, on which parliamentary majorities so largely depended. Yet Newcastle must be viewed as a victim of circumstance and not so much a victim of Opposition. The disasters of the Seven Years' War, the losses of Minorca and Fort Oswego and the infamous Black Hole of Calcutta, along with Murray's leaving the House to claim the Chief Justiceship upon Sir Dudley Ryder's unexpected death were events which he had not foreseen, and moreover, was unable to deal with satisfactorily owing to his lack of self-confidence. But Pitt's ability to exploit these circumstances by publicly decrying Newcastle's foreign policy and appealing to the public for support, demonstrates how a small but vociferous group led by a brilliant orator could force its way into office against
the King's will. Four months later Pitt learned the impossibility of remaining in power without confidence in the Closet and a majority in the House.

The factional rivalry was magnified and became more bitter and intense during the three months of crisis following Pitt's dismissal in April 1757. Although Newcastle, Fox, and Pitt must share responsibility for the crisis, George II has to shoulder some of the guilt. Not only did he plot with Fox against Pitt but dismissed Pitt without a viable plan of government. He further complicated matters by requiring that Fox, whom Newcastle and Pitt had proscribed, have an office in any administration. Only when the King realized that Fox could not himself form an administration and that Newcastle and Pitt were indispensable was the crisis terminated. Newcastle and Pitt, moreover, could not have succeeded without the other. Although Pitt was the man of ideas and the driving force, Newcastle's ability to put majorities together in Parliament was a necessary prerequisite for maintaining their power.

The study of the development of a ministerial crisis exhibits some features common to eighteenth century politics. It was still very much a part of the royal prerogative to choose ministers. However, there were practical limitations. The circle from which ministers were selected

Ibid., p. 292.
normally was very small, as evidenced by the ministerial instability of 1754-1757. Only Newcastle, Fox, and Pitt could have provided George II with the necessary leadership for running the country. But so long as they continued their jockeying for power, stability had remained impossible. The King, in hope of restoring stability, tried other men. Robinson was given the Seals and with Murray was Newcastle's spokesman in the House of Commons. Devonshire and Waldegrave tried the Treasury. But none of these men was of the rank and caliber of Newcastle, Fox, and Pitt, and for that reason failed miserably.

In the eighteenth century, administrations were not replaced by new ones but only reconstructed, with one or two major policy-making offices, along with a few offices of lesser rank, changing hands. For the most part, however, there was ministerial continuity. Continuity was interrupted only when the Treasury, the Exchequer, and the two Departments of State fell vacant. Only on two occasions, 1746, when the Pelham Ministry resigned, and 1765, when the Grenville Ministry was dismissed, did this happen. Although the years 1754 to 1757 were checkered with ministerial changes and were ministerially unstable, there remained ministerial continuity. Yet in November 1756 and April-June 1757 there was very little continuity, in fact there was a kind of breakdown. When Newcastle resigned along with Lyttelton and Fox in November 1756, the reconstruction was more extensive and complicated, for the
Treasury, the Exchequer, and the Southern Department of State fell vacant. Save for Holderness's remaining at the Northern Department of State, there was a complete break in ministerial continuity. During April–June 1757 two and later three offices were vacated. In April Pitt and Legge were turned out of the Southern Department of State and Exchequer respectively. Holderness's resignation in early June left both Departments of State open. However, Devonshire's continuing at the Treasury, if only a favor to the King, along with Chief-Justice Mansfield taking over the Exchequer prevented a total collapse of ministerial continuity. Yet, because of the tenuous continuity and the great length of time it took to fill the vacancies and restore stability, set against England's losses in the early phases of the Seven Years' War, the Government was beset by a most serious ministerial crisis.

The "general attitude" to the ministerial instability which beset England from 1754 through 1757 was that it "was unusual but not unnatural." There were other such periods of instability, notably 1742-1746 and 1782-1784. Moreover, those responsible, Newcastle, Fox, and Pitt were not atypical but typical politicians of the eighteenth century, actuated by a desire for power and office. Each claimant ridiculed and denounced the other, and each in turn had received the King's wrath, yet the political world was not startled by their factional rivalry which had deprived
England of much needed leadership while committed to the Seven Years' War. Their integrity, patriotism, and loyalty were never doubted. They were not attempting to overthrow the Constitution; their struggle was within the framework of the Constitution. 79

79 Ibid., pp. 292-93, 468.
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