THE REVOLUTIONARY CAREER OF SILAS DEANE

By

Coy Hilton James

A THESIS

Submitted to the School for Advanced Graduate Studies of
Michigan State University of Agriculture and
Applied Science in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

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James, Coy Hilton

The reputation of Silas Deane, America's first diplomat, has been tarnished. Although he was charged with treason and various other unsavory transactions, his personal contribution went a long way toward determining the outcome of the struggle for independence. All concede him this place yet he paid a heavy price for his devotion to the Revolutionary cause. His success aroused envy and earned the hatred of some narrow-minded men who permitted vindictiveness and personal jealousies to blind a normal sense of decency.

From the beginning of the struggle with England Deane was a prominent figure. In the legislature of Connecticut and the Continental Congress he stood out as a champion of colonial rights and later accepted a mission to France without hesitation. Arriving in France in July of 1776 without friends, influence, or funds, he secured supplies which enabled the American forces to win the battle of Saratoga. In December of 1776 Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee joined him in a Commission to negotiate a treaty with France. This was accomplished just before Deane was recalled by Congress to report on American affairs in Europe.

Deane's recall marked a turning point in his Revolutionary career. Instead of a report, Congress demanded a financial accounting for which Deane was not prepared. From France Arthur Lee accused Deane of malfeasance

of office. In the war of words that followed Congress postponed a final decision by discharging Deane. He returned to France under the impression that an auditor would be appointed to settle his accounts.

When Deane returned to France for the second time his primary purpose was to re-coup his personal finances. Unfortunately his commercial enterprises failed and Congress refused to appoint an auditor to settle his accounts. Disgusted with Congress and disappointed by French apathy, Deane wrote a number of critical letters to America. Some of these letters were intercepted and published in the Tory press. At first they were assumed to be forgeries, but Deane later admitted writing them, and his enemies charged treason. The public accepted the charge.

When the war ended Deane went to England where he hoped to secure capital to re-enter trade. His enemies accused him of associating with Benedict Arnold and other pro-British Americans and held him responsible for the unpopular commercial clauses of the Treaty of 1783. During the years that Deane lived in England only the generosity of his friends saved him from dire poverty and from becoming an object of charity. After suffering many disappointments and worn out in body and mind, Deane decided to return to the United States. He sailed for America in 1789 but died some four hours out of port. The ship returned and Deane was buried in England.

Deane's death, like the last decade of his life, was of little interest to the people of America. Today Silas Deane sleeps in an unknown grave in England, but in 1842 Congress admitted that a former audit was "ex parte, erroneous, and a gross injustice to Silas Deane." Restitution was made to his heirs, a restitution which should have restored in some measure the reputation of Silas Deane. This it failed to do. The present work, therefore, is an attempt to place the career of Silas Deane in its proper perspective. Deane undoubtedly was indiscreet at times and made serious mistakes, but on the basis of the evidence now available, it would not appear that he was guilty of committing treason.

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PREFACE

Silas Deane's revolutionary career furnishes ample proof for those who maintain that a republic often repays service and self-sacrifice with ingratitude. In 1776, when Deane went to France on his first mission, he was a well-to-do colonial merchant, highly respected and financially independent in the colony of Connecticut. The accomplishment of his mission to France meant the difference between the success and failure of the Revolution. This is today acknowledged by all. His success aroused the envy and earned the hatred of some well-meaning, but narrow-minded men, who permitted vindictiveness, perhaps prompted by personal jealousies, to blind a normal sense of decency. As the object of political machinations Deane might have been able to emerge victorious but the unfortunate publication of some private letters ended any possibility of victory. In these letters, written to personal friends, Deane criticized the conduct of the war by Congress, doubted the wisdom of the French Alliance, and recommended careful consideration of the English offer of reconciliation. When the letters first appeared in the Tory press it was felt that the letters were forgeries. However when Deane admitted that they were authentic he immediately

was placed under a cloud of suspicion. He was branded a traitor by his enemies. The charge was never proved but his name was placed and has remained as a consequence under a dark cloud of suspicion. The fact that he was never indicted or tried by a court seemed to make little difference. The fact that he had rendered an invaluable service to the Revolution was overlooked. The accusation of desertion in itself could not be forgiven by many of his contemporaries.

For his services to the Revolution Deane paid a heavy price personally. Though Congress owed him a substantial sum of money, later acknowledged and paid to his heirs, Deane himself died a pauper after suffering dire want and poverty for many years. Silas Deane, America's first diplomat to France, died in ignominy and disgrace. How did this occur? What forces bore upon this complex situation to so poorly reward a deserving public servant?

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

Of the early part of Silas Deane's life, little is known. He was born December 24, 1737, in Groton, Connecticut. His father, Silas Deane, was a blacksmith. He had three sons and a daughter. Likewise little can be ascertained from available sources of his relations with his mother and father. His correspondence with his brothers and sister, however, would lead one to believe that the family was closely united. Throughout the lives of Silas, Barnabas, Simone, and Hannah their relations were friendly. All the brothers were merchants in Connecticut and highly respected by their neighbors. Hannah married Josiah Buck who was also a merchant in Connecticut. When in later life Silas passed through the trying years of the Revolution with aspersions on his steadfastness Barnabas, Simone, Josiah and Hannah Buck never doubted his loyalty. They always believed that in time he would prove his innocence of the charges brought against him.[1]

[1]Dictionary of American Biography, Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, ed., 34 vols. (New York,1930), V, 173-75; New England Historical and Genealogical Register, October, 1894, III, 383; "The Deane Papers: Correspondence Between Silas Deane His Brothers and Their Business and Political Associates, 1771-1795," Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, (Hartford,1930), XXIII.

Deane's education led him first into a professional life. He was graduated from Yale in 1758. This would indicate that his parents possessed sufficient resources to aid their children and that they had some ambitions for them. For a few years after he had been graduated Deane taught school by day and began the study of law at night. In 1761 he was admitted to the Connecticut bar. The same year he entered into law practice in Wethersfield, Connecticut, one of the three thriving commercial river towns of the colony.[2]

Deane was not destined to limit his activities to the practice of law alone but to enter commerce also. This was probably occasioned by his first marriage. On October 8, 1763, he married Mehitabel Webb, the widow of Joseph Webb, a merchant. She was five years Deane's senior, had five children, and owned a thriving general store. Deane threw himself into her business and soon became recognized as a man of enterprise, vigor and good judgement. He engaged in the West Indian trade and before long became well known in colonial mercantile circles. Deane's fortune prospered. In 1764 he built a "substantial" house. To this marriage, one child, Jesse, was born. The family correspondence

[2]Henry Reed Stiles, Ancient Wethersfield, 2 vols. (New York,1904), I, 490-92.

at that time reveals that Deane's family enjoyed a better than average standard of living. The serenity of the family was interrupted in 1767 by the death of his wife.

In accordance with the accepted custom of early remarriage, Deane soon married Elizabeth Saltonstall, daughter of Gordon Saltonstall of Norwich. This marriage introduced him into wider social and political circles. The second Mrs. Deane died when Deane was in France on his first mission.

Deane's family relations seem to have been excellent. As a husband Deane was a good provider. Letters show him as most tender and affectionate with each of his wives. No breath of scandal was ever to soil or stain the marital side of his life. His relations with his children, however, contain certain questions and omissions: certain procedures or rather lack of procedures on his part came to be interpreted as deliberate intent to defraud. Another point of view is that these seemingly questionable procedures were simply the result of circumstances. The problem arises from a settlement of the estate relating to his stepchildren.[3] Upon his marriage to Mehitabel Webb Deane had been appointed

[3] Family Letters of Samuel Blachley Webb, 1764-1807, Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed. (New York, 1912), pp. 13, 15-17.

the legal guardian of the five Webb children.[4] Later all these five were designated to share equally in his estate with his own son.[5] This would seem to indicate that Deane's affection for them was completely genuine.

With Samuel Blachley Webb, his eldest stepson, a strong bond of mutual affection and respect existed as long as Deane lived. When young Webb entered upon a commercial enterprise in 1773 Deane wrote him a long, warm letter full of fatherly advice and suggestions for conducting his business affairs in an efficient manner.[6] When Deane went to Congress in 1774 he was "attended" by Samuel B. Webb, and after the battle of Bunker Hill, he secured his stepson a position on Washington's staff. This son later rose to the rank of a general officer. In June of 1778 young Webb showed his reciprocal affection by telling Barnabas Deane, his uncle: "When you write our friend in France assure him of my warmest affection for him, and the little boy [Jesse- the half brother]."[7] This mutual feeling of respect and affection never wavered through

[4]The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut From October,1772, to April, 1775, Inclusive, Charles J. Hoadly, ed. (Hartford,1887), p. 285.

[5]Webb, Family Letters, p. 259.

[6]Correspondence and Journals of Samuel Blachley Webb, Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., 3 vols. (New York, 1938), I, 15.

[7]Webb, Family Letters, pp. 71-72.

all the years of trouble and disgrace. Until the end, much to the disgust of his brothers, Samuel Blachley Webb refused to embarrass Silas Deane by requesting a property settlement of his father's estate despite the pressure from the rest of the family.[8]

If Samuel B. Webb had an affectionate regard for his stepfather, the same cannot be said of John and Joseph Webb and John Simpson, the husband of Sara Webb, their sister. As early as March of 1775, Simpson was writing Samuel B. Webb: "I think that the conduct of Silas Deane is very extraordinary and derogatory to the character he has always enjoyed."[9] This reference is to Deane's failure to settle the Webb estate. Joseph Webb showed increasing irritation through the years with Deane's lack of an accouting.[10] Deane's letters evidence awareness of the active hostility against him. More than once he expressed hurt and resentment for what he felt was an unjustified and unnecessary criticism.[11] Because of his revolutionary activities Deane failed to settle the estate prior to his first mission to France and as he never returned to Wethersfield the estate was never settled in his lifetime. When the family learned

[8]Webb, Correspondence and Journals, III, 145.

[9]Webb, Family Letters, p. 13

[10]Ibid., pp. 289-91.

[11]Ibid., p. 411; Webb, Correspondence and Journals, III, 28.

of his death John Webb wrote: "The scene with Silas Deane is finished."[12] No charge was ever made that he was not a good father, and to the end Deane wrote and spoke of the family with great affection.

Whatever may have been Deane's later difficulties with his stepchildren, by 1768 he had established himself in law, in business, and in local politics. By this time he had also become active in the local civic life of Wethersfield and the political life of the Connecticut colony. In Wethersfield Deane was one of the leading citizens. He entered every phase of community life and consistently demonstrated his interest in civic affairs. He was active in and a generous contributor to the church.[13] He was also interested in the school and was instrumental in enlarging the facilities and enriching the course of study.[14] As a mark of appreciation for his ability and civic leadership his friends and neighbors elected him to serve as their representative in the Colonial Assembly of Connecticut. In fact he had become so politically minded that he had closed out his personal mercantile accounts and retired

[12]Webb, Family Letters, p. 411.

[13]Stiles, Ancient Wethersfield, I, 234-35.

[14]Ibid., pp. 364-66.

from active business life. His retirement was so complete that his son-in-law later asked, "What has he done since 1768?"[15]

When Deane entered the General Assembly in 1768 he soon became both active and prominent in the legislative council of the colony. Before the trouble with England claimed Deane's entire attention, he was appointed by the Governor of the colony to a Commission of Five to receive money "to be raised by lottery for erecting buoys and other monuments on the Saybrook Bar. . . ."[16] In 1774 he was appointed by the Lower House of the General Assembly of the colony to serve on a Joint Committee to consider a letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, British Secretary of State, complaining of the "dissension due to British aggression and the unlimited power claimed by Parliament which were driving the Americans to the border of despair."[17] This shows Deane's early concern for proper treatment of the colonies. He was also a member of a commission nominated by the Governor's Council and approved by the General Assembly of Connecticut "to assist Governor Trumbull, in stating and taking proper steps

[15]Webb, Family Letters, p. 259.

[16]Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut From October, 1772, to April, 1775, p. 94.

[17]Ibid., p. 140.

to preserve the claims of this colony to said Western Lands."[18] This commission was empowered to assert Connecticut's claims to certain lands along the Susquehanna River. In the work of this commission Deane earned the respect and commendation of Governor Trumbull in "collecting and preparing all exhibits and documents necessary to pursue and prosecute the claim and title."[19] For such faithful and meritorious service Deane was soon to be promoted to the national political scene.[20]

When the trouble with England emerged as the dominant issue of colonial politics, Deane early proved himself an ardent sympathizer with the growing resentment of the colonies against the British laws restricting the development of American commerce. When the nonimportation agreements were violated by the merchants of Newport, Connecticut merchants declared a nonintercourse agreement against them. Deane acted as the Connecticut clerk and as such signed their Circular Letter of February 10, 1774.[21] Again his zeal for the colonial cause was revealed when the residents of Wethersfield passed a resolution of sympathy for Boston because of the suffering caused by the closing of the Port of

[18] Ibid., p. 161.

[19] Ibid., p. 217.

[20] Ibid., p. 219.

[21] Stiles, Ancient Wethersfield, I, 490.

Boston in retaliation for the Boston Tea Party. A committee was appointed to receive contributions and forward them to Boston. The name of Silas Deane was the first on the list.[22] Deane was likewise Secretary of the Connecticut Committee of Correspondence and, because of his energy and willingness, was selected to represent the General Assembly of Connecticut at the Continental Congress of 1774 with Judge Roger Sherman and Colonel Eliphalet Dyer.[23]

When Deane first left Wethersfield for Congress on August 22, 1774, he was thirty-four years old. He enjoyed a wide acquaintance with the leading men of his own colony and in the neighboring colonies. A large number of the principal citizens of the town escorted him to Middletown on his departure. At New Haven, Deane and his party were joined by Colonel Dyer and at Fairfield by Judge Sherman.[24]

At Philadelphia, Deane was anxious to meet and judge the temper and caliber of his fellow delegates to Congress. The first night he dined with some delegates from Boston and two from South Carolina--many, like himself, gentlemen

[22] "Correspondence of Silas Deane, Delegate to the First and Second Congress at Philadelphia," Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society (Hartford, 1879), II, 135-36.

[23] American Archives, Peter Force, ed., 4th ser., 6 vols. (Washington, 1837-1846), I, 895.

[24] John Adams, The Works of John Adams, Charles Francis Adams, ed., 10 vols. (Boston, 1850-56), II, 145.

in the mercantile business. "The glass had circulated just long enough to raise the spirits of everyone to that nice point which is just above disguise or suspicion," Deane wrote. "Of consequence I saw that it was an excellent opportunity to know their real situation."[25] Deane was pleased with the delegates from Virginia and the other southern states. "They appear," he confided to his wife, "like men of importance- sociable, sensible, and spirited men." As a patriot he spoke of the "prospects of unanimity," as a statesman he recognized the "arduous task before us," and as a politician he noted: "The more I converse in the city the more I see and lament the virulence of party." So it was with open eyes that Deane prophesied the future greatness of Congress and publicly declared himself a secessionist. As a nationalist Deane recognized the supreme authority of Congress in the affairs of the United Colonies. He declared: "The Congress is the greatest and most important assembly ever held in America. . . . All America is entrusted to it and depends upon it. . . . The resolutions of Congress shall be the laws of the Medes and the Persians."[26] If Deane proved a poor prophet he, at least, placed himself on record as a strong advocate of the Union.

[25] Connecticut Historical Collections, II, 145.

[26] Edmund C. Burnett, The Continental Congress (New York, 1941), p. 24.

During the interlude between the meetings of the Continental Congress of 1774 and 1775, Deane showed himself busily occupied with forwarding the revolutionary cause. To Ebenezer Watson, editor of the Courant, he publicly stated his attitude regarding independence: "There is no alternative except submit or prepare to resist even unto blood."[27] Before the re-assembling of the Congress in 1775 Deane added to his reputation as a revolutionist. He not only signed a promissory note to help pay the cost of the expedition against Ticonderoga but shared in the stragetic plans for the expedition.[28] The attempt and capture of Ticonderoga was not an act of bravado but a cold and calculated military move. It was fortunate because it was the captured cannon from Ticonderoga that later forced the British to evacuate Boston. For his share in this success Silas Deane deserved well of his country-men. For a time he was nicknamed for the fort whose capture he had helped plan and underwrite.[29] Between sessions of the Continental Congress, Deane also wrote an agreement which was signed by one hundred young men who volunteered for the "Lexington Alarm" of 1775.

[27]Webb, Correspondence and Journals, I, 30-32.

[28]The Public Records of the State of Connecticut, From October, 1776, to February, 1778, Charles J. Hoadly, ed. (Hartford, 1894), p. 292.

[29]Connecticut Historical Collections, II, 266.

In this they pledged their services and also pledged to refrain from drunkenness, gaming and profanity.[30]

Deane retained the affection and respect of his constituents. This is shown by his re-election to the General Assembly and his continued re-appointment as a Justice of the Peace in Wethersfield.[31] Such were the feelings of his fellow townsmen in 1776 even though later he was to fall a victim of local politics in the state legislature.

When the Second Continental Congress met, Deane became actively engaged in the committee work of the Congress. The lines of division between revolutionists and loyalists were more sharply drawn than in the previous session. The determination to resist the mother country and her policies was by no means unanimous. Some members of the Congress debated with themselves, but Deane demonstrated his attitude by his committee work rather than by words on the floor of the Congress. With George Washington, Colonel Philip Schuyler of New York, and others he was appointed to consider means of procuring military supplies for the colonies,[32] and together with Washington to estimate the cost of equipping an army.[33] He helped formulate the rules of the

[30] Stiles, Ancient Wethersfield, I, 495; Connecticut Historical Collections, II, 215.

[31] Public Records of Connecticut, 1776-1778, pp. 40,223.

[32] Journals of the Continental Congress, Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., 34 vols. (Washington, 1905-37), II, 67.

[33] Ibid., p. 102.

navy and on October 15, 1775, selected and purchased the first vessel for the newly created navy.[34] On September 18, 1775, he was appointed a member of the Committee of Secrecy to purchase arms and ammunition in Europe.[35] With George Washington again he served on still another committee to draft rules and regulations for the army.[36] With John Adams and Benjamin Franklin he was appointed to make an inquiry, during the next recess of Congress, about virgin lead and leaden ore, and the best means of refining this mineral.[37] As a member of the Committee of Nine, he was appointed to consider the importation of 500 tons of powder and saltpetre and sulphur, 40 brass cannon, 20,000 musket locks, and 10,000 stands of good arms.[38] He was also appointed to a committee to consider the means of supplying the army with provisions.[39] These assignments certainly attest to willingness to serve and his prominence in congressional affairs at this time.

Mercantile experience gave Deane the background for definite opinions regarding the commercial policies intro-

[34] Ibid., III, 420.

[35] Ibid., p. 470.

[36] Ibid., II, 122.

[37] Ibid., p. 234.

[38] Ibid., III, 471.

[39] Ibid., pp. 257-58

duced for discussion in Congress. When the "State of Trade" was debated Deane declared, "We must have trade; I think we ought to apply abroad; we must have powder and goods; we can't keep our people easy without it."[40] Such words meant that he favored opening American ports to foreign ships. This had not been permitted under the English Navigation Acts, and his statement that "we ought to apply abroad" could only mean that foreign aid should be sought.

In a letter to his wife Deane summed up his own attitude in regard to his activities in Congress: ". . . This morning, Colonel Schuyler and I rode as far as the falls at Schuylkill; our ride was to consult a plan we are forming for another bold stroke like that of Ticonderoga (which is become my nickname at times). People here, members of Congress and others, have unhappily thought me a schemer; this has brought me rather more than my share of business in a committee way . . . . I find however, that he that has least to do in public affairs stand the fairest chance of happiness."[41] Deane assured his wife: "We meet at nine and sit until three, which leaves us little time for other activities."[42] This would assume his complete engrossment with the affairs at hand.

[40] Ibid., p. 492.

[41] "The Deane Papers," Collections of the New York Historical Society, 5 vols. (New York, 1886-1890), I, 61.

[42] Connecticut Historical Collections, II, 255,312.

There is ample evidence that a certain amount of sectional and group interest existed in Congress, but seemingly Deane failed to arouse the resentment of any member or members of Congress, with the possible exception of Samuel Adams who later was to recall that he had always been suspicious of Deane.[43] However, Deane soon did fail for reelection for Congress by the General Assembly of Connecticut. The reason for this failure is not clear, but Governor Trumbull, in a letter to Deane, attributed it to the malice and envy of freemen. "We have a strange people here as well as elsewhere," he wrote, "who say, 'It is dangerous to trust so great a power as you now have for a long time in the hands of one set of men, lest they grow too self-important, and [cause] a great deal of mischief in the end.'"[44]

Deane was hurt by the news that he had not been returned to Congress. He felt that his recall was a censure on his conduct and considered returning to Connecticut and demanding a public investigation.[45] But this he never did. To his wife he expressed no bitterness, regret, or self-pity but perhaps a tinge of self-righteousness. "My principles are (the eye of God knows them, and the most envious eye of man or the bitterest tongue of slander cannot find

[43] Samuel Adams, The Writings of Samuel Adams, Harry A. Cushing, ed., 4 vols. (New York, 1904-8), IV, 68.

[44] New York Historical Collections, I, 86-88.

[45] Connecticut Historical Collections, II, 339-40.

anything in my political conduct to contradict them) to sacrifice all lesser considerations to the service of the whole, and in this tempestuous season to throw cheerfully overboard private fortune, private emolument, even my life--if the ship, with the jewel of liberty, may be safe. This being my line of conduct, I have calmness of mind which more than balances my external troubles, of which I have not a few."[46] If action speaks louder than words Deane placed the colonial cause above self-interest, for in spite of his failure to be reelected he continued to serve.

One of the last acts of the Naval Committee of the Second Continental Congress was to direct Deane to go at once to New York, buy a ship to carry twenty nine-pounders, and a sloop of ten guns, fit them out and send them through the sound to New London for seamen and arms. Deane reported to his wife that "Colonel Dyer pleaded, scolded, fretted, even threatened me to set out for home with him," but Deane decided to remain and help with the naval preparation. Having selected his "line of conduct" he was determined to follow it.[47]

When Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced his famous resolution for independence of June 6, 1776, three avenues of resistance procedures were presented to the Congress. Al-

[46] Ibid., pp. 289-90.

[47] Ibid., pp. 349-50.

though all were interrelated, each could be pursued independently. He recommended working toward independence, foreign aid and alliances, and the opening of ports to foreign (non-British) commerce.[48]

The decision to seek foreign aid was agonizing for the colonists. The decision to declare for independence had been disruptive to their inherent loyalty. This further step seemed equally so. Some thought it would destroy all hope for reconcilation with the mother country, others thought it disgraceful, and a small minority felt it unnecessary. It took time and debate to make the decision to appoint a committee of five "for the sole purpose of corresponding with our friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world."[49]

A significant feature of this committee was its power to act on its own initiative. The only restriction was that the committee should lay its correspondence before Congress when so directed. Without stipulating any restraints Congress pledged itself to pay the committee's expenses. This included the payment of any agents that the committee might find it useful to employ. A sum of money was placed at the disposal of the committee. Its members were Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Johnson, John Dickinson, and John

[48] Journals of Congress, V, 425.

[49] Ibid.

Jay.[50] Two months later Robert Morris was added. Called first the Committee of Correspondence, the word "secret" was soon added and it was designated the Committee of Secret Correspondence until April 17, 1777, when Congress resolved that "for the future, it be styled the Committee For Foreign Affairs." This was actually the beginning of the Department of State.

To probe sentiment abroad and obtain other information useful in the coming struggle, the Committee of Secret Correspondence took a significant step toward foreign aid on December 13, 1775. It then made a specific request to Arthur Lee in London to learn the disposition of foreign powers toward the Americans. At the same time it warned him that "great circumspection and impenetrable secrecy" were essential.[51]

The country to which Congress naturally looked for help was France, the established rival of Great Britian. Through

[50]The first committee created by Congress, with broadly defined authority, was the Secret Committee. On July 5, 1776 it was renamed the Committee of Commerce. It had powers to let contracts for the importation of powder and munitions, and on October 6, 1776, was impowered to export produce in payment for its purchases. The membership of the two committees, the Committee of Commerce and the Secret Committee of Correspondence, was almost identical and some confusion resulted. Stourgh, Gerald, Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy. (Chicago, 1954), pp. 116-27.

[51]The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, Francis Wharton, ed., 6 vols. (Washington, 1889), II, 63.

a Frenchman, named Bonvouloir, "a traveler out of curiosity" who strongly denied any official status, the Committee learned that the French government would probably not put any obstacles in their way if they desired to obtain in France supplies of which the colonies were in so urgent need.[52] Early in January of 1776 two Frenchmen, Peney and Pliarne, after having approached General Washington, appeared in Philadelphia and entered into negotiations with the Committee to supply munitions of war and other goods, hinting that the French government would not be opposed to such commercial activities.[53] The Committee of Secret Correspondence and the Secret Committee both felt that the time had come to approach France directly and to see if supplies could be obtained.

The man selected by the Committee of Secret Correspondence for this delicate task was Silas Deane, "lame duck" from Connecticut. Why he was selected may be deduced from the fact that he had worked with the members of this committee on many other committee assignments, and they felt that he knew the needs of the country and especially those of the army and the navy. As he was available and willing to go, this fact may also have entered into the decision to select

[52] Josephine F. Pancheco, French Agents In America, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of Chicago, 1950.

[53] Burnett, The Continental Congress, p. 142.

him. Deane immediately accepted the commission. This does not necessarily mean that he was unaware of the difficulties he faced and the sacrifices he must make. His wife was in poor health, his son, Jesse, was at a tender age, and Deane had been away from home for a long time. In a letter to his wife he admitted that he knew he was needed at home: "I can but feel for the pain I must give you by this adventure, but on all occasions you will have this satisfaction, that let what will happen, you have in every situation discharged your duty as one of the best partners and wives, while on my part, by a peculiar fatality attending me from my first entrance into public life, I have ever been involved in one scheme and adventure after another, so as to keep my mind in constant agitation and my attention fixed on other objects than my own immediate interests."[54]

By the terms of his agreement with the second committee, the Commerce Committee, Deane was authorized to export from France certain articles suitable for the Indians. He was given specific instructions as to the variety and quality of merchandise he was to buy. He was also to receive a clear commission of five percent on the original cost of such remittances in Europe. The United Colonies were to bear the full cost, including insurance, and the risk of capture at sea. The agreement was signed by the entire committee.[55]

[54] Connecticut Historical Collections, II, 362.

[55] New York Historical Collections, I, 116.

At the same time he was commissioned by the Secret Committee of Correspondence to "go to France, there to transact such business, commercial and political, as we have committed to his care, in behalf and by authority of the Congress of the Thirteen United Colonies."[56] Such were the terms of Deane'e contracts.

Before leaving, Deane obtained from the committees contracts, instructions,[57] letters of introduction,[58] and a "Character Testimonial" which was signed by all the members in town except Bartlett of New Hampshire, the Adamses and Ward."[59] It seems that this would refute definitely any suggestions by his enemies that he had slipped out of the country without the knowledge of Congress. Deane wrote his wife: "And now, by Dear, are not the ways of providence dark and inscrutable to us shortsighted mortals. Surely they are. My enemies thou't to triumph over me and bring me down, yet all they did has been turned to the opening a door for the greatest and most extensive usefulness, if I succeed; but if I fail,--why then the Cause I am engaged in, and the important part I have undertaken, will justify my adventuring."[60]

[56] Ibid., p. 119

[57] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 78.

[58] New York Historical Collections, I, 127.

[59] Connecticut Historical Collections, II, 360.

[60] Ibid., p. 363.

By order of the President of the Continental Congress he was assigned an official guard of twenty troopers under a proper officer to escort him to the Capes--his point of departure.[61] Such was the civic and political background of Silas Deane, merchant of Connecticut, and his entrance upon the scene of international politics and the beginning of his great contribution to the Revolution.

[61]Force, American Archives, 4th ser., V, 774.

CHAPTER II

MISSION TO FRANCE: AGENT OF THE COMMITTEE

Deane's mission to France falls into two parts. During the first phase, from July, 1776, until December, 1776, Deane was the sole representative of the Committee of Secret Correspondence and served both as a diplomatic and a commercial agent. Later, from December of 1776 until his recall, Deane, Franklin, and Arthur Lee formed a commission authorized by Congress with a joint responsibility to negotiate an alliance with France.

Deane's instructions were contained in a letter from the Secret Committee of Correspondence of March 3, 1776. He then sailed for France in March of 1776 going first to the Bermudas and entering the Continent by the way of Spain. This was to reduce the danger of being captured by an English man-of-war. He made his way over the Pyrenees, visited several French cities and arrived in Paris in July. He was to pose as a merchant buying goods for the Indian trade. He was also, if possible, to secure supplies from the French government and to promote an alliance. In addition he was to defend the colonies against all "calumnies," contact C.W.F. Dumas, a colonial agent in Holland, arrange a meeting with Dr. Edward Bancroft of London, and correspond with Mr. Arthur Lee, an agent of the colonies in London.[1]

[1]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 78-79.

Deane entered upon his mission with caution and some embarrassment. He did not know the language or the customs of the land and, especially, was he ignorant of the etiquette of the French Court. For a "merchant from Connecticut" to be received by the French Ministers was more than he dared expect. In fact, he was warned in his instructions that the French Court might not like it to be publicly known that any agent of the colonies was in the country. Monsieur le Roy, at the Louvre, and Monsieur Barbeu du Bourg, he was told, "will introduce you to the friends of America."[2]

Deane's arrival in Paris introduced him into a new mode of life. He at first stayed in a very ordinary hotel and attempted to make himself inconspicuous by frequently changing his lodging place. His manner and mode of living were dictated partly by his limited finances. Throughout the first phase of his mission Deane was never free from financial worries. Ample evidence of this is to be found in both his private correspondence and official reports to the Committee of Secret Correspondence. On August 18, 1776, Deane wrote the Committee of Secret Correspondence: "I must again remind you of my situation here. The bills designed for my use are protested, and expenses rising fast in consequence of the business on my hands, which I may on no account neglect, and a small douceur, though I have been

[2]*Ibid.*, II, 79.

sparing in that way, is sometimes of the utmost importance. The quantity of stores to be shipped will amount to a large sum; the very charge of them will be great, for which I am the only responsible person."[3] To C.W.F. Dumas, the colonial agent in Holland, he depicted himself " . . . as a private gentleman; as such I am in Paris, and that character I shall keep, unless obliged to alter it. Parade and pomp have no charms in the eyes of a patriot, or even a man of common sense; but at the same time, I can never submit to the changing of my name, unless I am convinced that so humiliating a step will promote the service of my country."[4]

Deane was warned and was very conscious of being surrounded by British agents, and he knew every word uttered would be reported in most unpleasant light to the French Ministers. "My arrival here, my name, my lodging, and many other particulars have been reported to the British administration . . . the city swarms with Englishmen, and as money purchases everything in this country, I have had, and still have, a most difficult task to avoid their machinations. Not a coffee-house or theater or other place or public diversion but swarms with their emissaries . . . "[5] To prevent any embarrassing incidents Deane determined to avoid

[3]Ibid., II, 124.
[4]Ibid., p. 128.
[5]Ibid., p. 123.

meeting any English-speaking people in public. This caused Beaumarchais to remark: "If M. Deane does not open his mouth before the English speaking people he meets, he must be the most silent man in Paris for I defy him to say six consecutive words in French."[6]

In Paris Deane was warmly received. After his arrival he lost no time in presenting his letter of introduction to M. du Bourg, an influential scientist and friend of Benjamin Franklin. M. du Bourg, upon Deane's insistence, arranged an interview for him with M. de Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The interview was secret and was conducted through an interpreter. For two hours Vergennes sought to learn about the colonies and Deane sought to learn the possibilities of French aid and how the contemplated American Declaration of Independence would be received in Europe. Vergennes was careful to point out that any official aid given by France could disturb friendly relations with England. But at the same time he assured Deane that as a private citizen he was free to carry on any kind of commerce in the kingdom. Vergennes also remarked that the French army had recently adopted a number of new weapons and that the old models still remained in the arsenals. Deane was told that he should consider himself under

[6] Facsimiles of Manuscripts Relating to America in the Archives of Europe, 1773-1788, Benjamin Franklin Stevens, ed., 24 vols. (London, 1890), #889.

the protection of the French Court, and, though he would not be officially recognized, he could always reach M. de Vergennes through M. Gerard, head of the political section of the French Foreign Office. As the interview ended Vergennes assured Deane "that the people and their cause are very respectable in the eyes of disinterested persons."[7] Deane was pleased, and he had just cause to feel that he and the cause he represented had been well received.

Little did Deane know or realize that since 1763 France had been expecting and preparing for such an agent as he. In 1763 the Duc de Choiseul, Minister of Foreign Affairs, "scarcely before the ink was dry on the pen"[8] had originated the policy of preparing for the next round in the Anglo-French struggle. The files of the French Foreign Office already contained maps of the coast of England with designated landing areas, and through the years a variety of French agents had felt and reported the temper of Englishmen in North America.[9] Also the army and especially the navy had been systematically enlarged.[10] Perhaps the time had

[7]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 116.

[8]James Rockford to Lord Shelburne, January 7, 1767, Shelburne Papers, vol. 38: 94, Clements Library.

[9]Pacheco, French Agents in America, p. 45; James Breck Perkins, France in the American Revolution, (New York, 1911), p. 45, 48, 54, 62; Edwin S. Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, (Princeton, 1916), p. 73-4.

[10]New Materials For the History of the American Revolution, John Duran, ed. (New York, 1889), pp. 32-33.

come to re-open the struggle -- that was a decision that must be made by the ministers of France.

In 1776 the form of the despotic government of Louis XIV remained, but where Louis XIV had dominated his ministers, Louis XVI was dominated by his ministers. Louis XVI wished to serve France and considered its interests as primary but in the end was unable or unwilling to resist the pro-American views of his three principal advisers. They were Comte de Maurepas,[11] the King's principal advisor, an astute political observer; M. Sartine, Minister of Marine, an able administrator; and Comte de Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs, heir to Choiseul's policy of revenge and strong man of the government. M. Turgot, Controler of the Treasury, opposed any war because of the strain it would place on the French treasury. Turgot, had he remained, might have been ablt to influence Louis XVI from war, but his resignation in May of 1776 removed the last barrier to the pro-American policy. French intervention was only a question of "how" and "when". The question of "when" forced the French to adopt a policy of "watchful waiting," and the final decision was made when Vergennes felt that the tide of battle had definitely turned in favor of the Americans. The answer to the "how" was supplied by a most extraordinary person, M. Caron Beaumarchais.

[11]Madame Campan, Memories sur la vie privee Marie Antoinette, 3 vols. (Paris, 1822), I, 80.

The relationship between M. Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and M. Beaumarchais is a study in contrasting personalities working for a common goal. In 1776 M. de Vergennes was fifty-four years old. He had been trained from his youth in diplomacy and had served his apprenticeship in the principal courts of Europe. Grave, laborious, and methodical in manner, he could keep his own counsel until the time for action arrived. From the first he seems to have wished the Americans well if only in order to humble England, but he was determined to take no rash step that would embarrass France without the possibility of realizing French objectives. His political morals were certainly not inferior to those of the average diplomat of his day. It is a known fact that he was not above employing spies among his friends as well as among his enemies. It is questionable whether much transpired which was not known to him. The fact that he left office as a man of moderate means would suggest that he had been scrupulously honest as far as handling state finances was concerned. That he could and did deliberately deceive Lord Stormont, the British Ambassador, was considered a legitimate rule of statecraft.[12]

An early enthusiastic and vociferious convert to the American cause was M. Caron Beaumarchais, self-styled

[12]Adams, Works, I, 229; Perkins, France In the American Revolution, pp. 38-51; Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, pp. 3-9, 54-60.

"Watchmaker of the King," unsalaried music teacher of the King's daughters, Controller of the pantry, Secretary of the King (by right of purchase), author of the popular drama Le Mariage de Figaro, husband of a rich widow, and a man trusted by two kings on missions so delicate that they could not be handled through the regular diplomatic channels.[13]

It was in London while on a "delicate mission" that Beaumarchais met Arthur Lee, agent of the colonies, at the home of John Wilkes, the well known English radical. There is little doubt that Beaumarchais, whether from over-enthusiasm or some other design, promised Lee five million livres worth or arms and ammunition for the American cause, but there is positive proof that he was not authorized to commit the French government to one sou. With all the zeal he possessed, Beaumarchais launched a one man crusade to win official French support for the American cause. He bombarded Vergennes and the King with long memorials showing that it was to the advantage of France to support the cause of the rebels.[14] The proof of Vergenne's approval is adequately expressed in his gesture of forwarding to the king Beaumarchais' suggestions and recommendations for official aid to the revolting colonies. It was Beaumarchais

[13]Charles J. Stille, Beaumarchais and "the Lost Million", (Philadelphia, 1890); Laura Charlotte Sheldon, France and the American Revolution, (Ithaca, New York, 1900); Blanche E. Hazard, Beaumarchais and the American Revolution, (Boston, 1910).

[14]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1311, 1320, 1328.

who devised the plan whereby the French government could secretly aid the Americans, a plan which would also relieve the government of all responsibility -- namely a private corporation using official funds.[15]

If Beaumarchais was enthusiastic about his plans for aid to the Americans, Vergennes was no less calculating in evaluating the risks involved. For some time Vergennes had been reviewing the Anglo-French relations and explaining to Louis XVI and his colleagues the possible results for France of French aid to the colonies. His final decision was that aid might be secretly given but active intervention should at first be postponed, pending further developments.[16]

Deane's Commercial Activities

One of the factors that had determined the Secret Committee of Correspondence to select Deane for the Mission to France was his thorough knowledge of the needs of the American army. This he had acquired by his work with various congressional committees dealing with the Armed Services. His first interview with Vergennes had resulted in permission to trade freely and the information that the French army had been newly equipped. Vergennes was even

[15]Durand, New Materials For the History of the American Revolution, pp. 87-103.

[16]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1310, 1316, 1319, 1320.

thoughtful enough to suggest that Deane communicate with Beaumarchais and upon Deane's inquiry regarding Beaumarchais' financial standing, assured him that Beaumarchais was capable of fulfilling a large contract.[17] Deane acted promptly and when Beaumarchais, as head of the House of Roderique Hortalez and Company, offered to ship three million livres of goods on the credit of Congress, Deane, with Vergennes' approval, accepted.

Deane, in gratitude but at first with some bewilderment, wrote to the Secret Committee of Correspondence: "That a man (Beaumarchais) should, but a few months ago, confine himself from his creditors, and now on this occasion be able to advance half a million, is so extraordinary that it ceases to be a mystery."[18] Deane explained that "everything he says, writes or does, is in reality the action of the ministry."[19] But at the same time he was so pleased and gratified that he gave "all the business to Beaumarchais."[20]

Beaumarchais immediately requested Deane to bring him his lists of supplies and apologized that his resources were not as large as he desired. He also stated that it

[17] New York Historical Collections, I, 183; Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 117.

[18] New York Historical Collections, I, 217.

[19] Ibid., p. 217; Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 123.

[20] New York Historical Collections, I, 212-13.

would be necessary to have prompt returns in order to continue his advances. At the same time he assured Deane: "I desire to serve your country as if it were my own, and I hope to find in the friendship of a generous people the true reward of a labor that I consecrate to them."[21]

With such a common purpose the terms of a contract were soon agreed upon and the business of collecting and forwarding the supplies to America was soon under way. By the terms of the contract Beaumarchais was to procure the desired supplies and they were to be paid for by the proceeds of tobacco and other articles, which would be shipped by Congress as fast as the vessels could be provided.[22] Deane asked for no longer credit than twelve months and expressed the hope that considerable remittance would be made within six months.[23]

The terms of the contract made it clear that the supplies were to be paid for and were not a gift. The language is clear and specific. In his instructions from the Committee, Deane had been ordered to obtain clothing and arms for twenty-five thousand men. The committee had said: "We mean to pay for the same by remittances, while as to linnens, woolens and other merchandise they were to

[21] Ibid., p. 158.

[22] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 102.

[23] New York Historical Collections, I, 153.

be settled at once on a cash basis."[24] Upon the basis of his instructions Deane informed the Committee that he was negotiating with Beaumarchais on the basis of eight months' credit from the time of delivery and that he had certified to the French merchants "that Congress would pay for whatever stores they would credit them with." He specifically warned Congress: "If I effect this, as I undoubtedly shall, I must rely on the remittances being made this fall and winter without fail, or the credit of the colonies must suffer."[25] Beaumarchais was equally explicit when he reported this transaction to the Secret Committee: "I request you, gentlemen, to send me next Spring, if it possible for you, ten or twelve thousand hogsheads, or more, if you can, tobacco from Virginia, of the best quality."[26] The Secret Committee of Correspondence never once sent a reply to his letters, and there were many to the committee, from Roderique Hortalez and Company. Perhaps Congress itself wondered why supplies continued to arrive while they continued to ignore the request for payment. Little did Deane or Beaumarchais realize that Arthur Lee, the man with whom Beaumarchais had discussed the possibilities of sending supplies, was frantically writing to his brothers and to

[24]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 79.

[25]Ibid., p. 120.

[26]Ibid., p. 130.

Congress that the French Government did not expect any pay, that Beaumarchais was not a merchant and that he (Lee) felt that what had been intended as a "gratuitous" gift had been turned into a commercial transaction -- for the benefit of Deane and Beaumarchais at the expense of Congress.[27]

Having made his contract, Beaumarchais undertook its execution with his usual zest and high spirits. He rented the Hôtel de Hollande, one time residence of the Dutch Ambassador, and there with a great force of clerks he disproved M. du Bourg's assertion that in France there was no one who would not hesitate to do business with him,[28] and with an energy that tended to offset his deficiencies in business methods and ignorance of commercial affairs. For as he wrote Congress: "I promise you, gentlemen, that my indefatigable zeal shall never be wanting to clear up difficulties, soften prohibition, and facilitate the operation of a commerce which your advantage, more than mine, had made me undertake."[29] It is to his credit that his performance almost equalled his flamboyant language, which indeed must have surprised, if not shocked, the homespun revolutionists of North America.

[27] Ibid., pp. 522-23.

[28] Stevens, Facsimiles, #881.

[29] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 131.

The selection, collection, and shipping of arms and munitions to the ports of France from their arsenals constitutes an amazing story -- how they avoided detection by British agents and cut French bureaucratic "red-tape,"[30] and and how the zeal and the untiring efforts of Deane and Beaumarchais levelled all obstacles.[31] When Vergennes indicated to Deane that it might be possible to receive military supplies from France, he did not say or even intimate that such a request had been anticipated. Such, however, had been the case, for in 1775 the French Minister of War, St. Germain, had ordered du Courday, an eminent French artillery officer, to visit French arsenals for the purpose of determining what munitions of war could be drawn from them for American purposes in case it should be determined to render aid to the colonies in America. Early in September, 1776, du Courday visited Strassbourg, Dijon, Metz, Besancon, and Charterville where he selected "two hundred four pounder field pieces, a hundred thousand balls, twenty-five thousand small arms with ammunition, and tents for twenty-five thousand men."[32] Thus we see that earlier preparations now permitted greater expediency. So under the cover of darkness, literally under the noses of British Intelligence, and in spite of

[30]Stevens, Facsimiles, #899.

[31]Ibid., #911.

[32]Friedrick Knapp, The Life of John Kalb (New York, 1884), p. 84.

"red tape," the supplies moved to the coasts. When Deane informed Beaumarchais that he could not provide American vessels, Beaumarchais supplied French ships and went in person to supervise the loading.[33]

Though Beaumarchais was indefatigable in his efforts he was not always equally judicious. When, for instance, Beaumarchais went to Le Havre to supervise the loading of the cargoes personally he took the name of Durant so that his presence would not be known.[34] However, as one of his comedies was being presented in the city and he did not hesitate to attend rehearsals and coach the actors, naturally his presence was not concealed from British agents. Through Lord Stormont, the British Ambassador in Paris, they protested vigorously. The protest was so strong and the evidence so irrefutable that finally Vergennes was forced to issue a restraining order. Before Vergennes officially ordered the operation to cease, however, the first vessel carrying munitions and cannons, the Amphitrite, sailed. Events caused it to return to port a few day later, much to the disgust of Deane and Beaumarchais. Two other vessels had been almost ready to leave, and Beaumarchais gave Vergennes no rest until the ban was lifted and the ships

[33]Stevens, Facsimiles, #912.

[34]Ibid., #911.

sailed for America.[35] So with the approval or at least with the secret connivance of the French government, secret aid continued to reach America.[36]

The badly-needed supplies reached America but neither Deane nor Beaumarchais received tobacco or instructions. Still Beaumarchais could write: "There is no news from America and no tobacco either. This is depressing, but depression is a long way from discouragement."[37] To Deane it was a period of great anxiety. In his letters to the Secret Committee of Correspondence runs the melancholy phrase "without intelligence" and I am "frantic with doubt and dispair."[38] On December 3, 1776, he wrote his friend John Jay: "If my letters arrive safe, they will give you some idea of my situation. Without intelligence, without orders, and without remittances, yet boldly plunging into contracts, engagements and negotiations, hourly hoping that something will arrive from America."[39]

In December of 1776 Deane's status changed. Benjamin Franklin arrived December 21, and with Arthur Lee, Deane

[35] Ibid., #618, 912-916; Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 153.

[36] Stevens, Facsimiles, #611, 612.

[37] New York Historical Collections, I, 318.

[38] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 120, 153, 173, 192; New York Historical Collections, I, 378.

[39] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 212.

became a member of a three man commission. But it was not until the 11th of January that Deane learned from Robert Morris, who was a member of the Secret Committee of Correspondence and often acted as the Committee secretary, that, "I have been long aware that you would suffer vexation from want of remittances . . . but such has been our situation and circumstances it was not possible to mend the matter."[40] He wrote of the capture of ships, ports blockaded and little to export from the Eastern States, but explained that the Committee was buying tobacco in Maryland and Virginia.[41]

That Deane and Beaumarchais were to suffer from charges and accusations made by enemies who later stated that they had turned a "gift into a commercial operation" cannot detract from the extent of their efforts nor from the fact that the supplies they sent were badly needed by the American army and were effectively used.

Deane's Relations With Other Americans

When Deane arrived in Europe he did not know a single individual. As instructed, he had early met Dr. du Bourg and Vergennes in France. Deane's instructions also had ordered him to write to a Dr. Edward Bancroft, an American

[40] New York Historical Collections, I, 456.

[41] Ibid., p. 456.

living in London. He had formerly been a student of Deane's in Connecticut. Bancroft supposedly had the means of supplying Deane with valuable political and commercial information. After a slight delay Bancroft came to Paris, at Deane's expense, and there he learned all the details of Deane's mission. Upon his return to London he made a "deal" with the British government. For £ 500 down and £ 400 per annum "Mr. Edwards" (Dr. Bancroft) engaged to correspond with a Mr. Wentworth and to communicate to him whatever might come to his knowledge of any of the following subjects. These included all of Deane's letters, the progress of any treaties, or any pertinent commercial or political news.[42] However it does not seem apparent that this perfidy was suspected at this time by any Americans. Bancroft served Deane as a confidential adviser and was later with Franklin as "semi-Secretary of Legation" at Passy. At all times he had access to private papers belonging to the commission and was even trusted with a key to them.[43]

Throughout the entire time that Deane was in Paris, Bancroft reported to the Foreign Office in London not only Deane's plans and dealing with Vergennes and Beaumarchais

[42]Edward Bancroft, A Narrative of the Objects and Proceedings of Silas Deane, as Commissioner of the United States to France; Made to the British Government in 1776, Paul L. Ford, ed. (Brooklyn, New York, 1891); Stevens, Facsimiles, #235.

[43]Ibid., #65, 151, 248, 273, 322; Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, 2 vols. (Boston, 1829), I, 367.

but also his private conversations and observations. This he did by letter, by courier, or by frequent trips to London.[44]

In addition to his political activities and scientific studies Bancroft was known to be a dabbler in English stocks. Because of his known financial operations he was never freely or fully trusted by the British ministers and, especially, by George III. However Deane, and later Franklin, trusted him completely, defended him against charges of disloyalty and dishonesty by Arthur Lee,[45] and praised him highly to the Secret Committee of Correspondence and Congress.[46]

That Bancroft was genuinely fond of Deane is demonstrated by his affection and care of him when Deane was ill and in disgrace in London. Such was Deane's best friend and adviser during the first part of his mission, a man fundamentally dishonest but warm to him personally and able to deceive him.

Shortly after Deane's arrival in Paris William Carmichael of Maryland, after an extended visit in England, stopped in Paris on his way home. He met Deane and decided

[44]Thomas Hutchinson, The Diary and Letters of His Excellency, Thomas Hutchinson, Peter Orlando Hutchinson, ed., 2 vols. (Boston, 1884), II, 141.

[45]Stevens, Facsimiles, #269, 286, 300.

[46]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 175.

to stay and act as his aid without pay for an unspecified time. Carmichael was of great assistance to Deane, acting as his "trouble-shooter" and "chief-inspector" of goods and ships. There is no evidence to support any later charges made by Arthur or William Lee questioning Carmichael's loyalty. That he was vain, glory-seeking, and a braggart who possessed great personal charm and some ability cannot be denied. His letters to his various women intimates in England were regularly intercepted by the General Post Office in London and provided some "spicy" reading for the censors.[47] Carmichael's frequent and loud declarations that his only desire was to serve his country and have "a little fun"[48] were accepted by Deane at face value. Deane praised him to Congress and used him advantageously in the work of the mission.[49] Later Carmichael was to give before Congress "his understanding" of what he thought was a private commercial transaction that was derogratory to Deane.

One of the great faults of Carmichael's character was that he soon felt that he should be permitted to direct the operation. Later John Jay, on his mission to Spain, was to discover that William Carmichael, his Secretary, must have the center of the stage or his interest soon wandered.

[47]Stevens, Facsimiles, #49.

[48]Ibid., #474.

[49]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 175.

Within six months after his arrival in France, Carmichael had become very critical of Deane and Franklin and disgusted with the French. "I must repeat again," reported a British agent to London, quoting Carmichael, "that Mr. Deane is too open in his transactions and exposes many things that might be kept secret, and swears by all that is sacred that they shall not have anything from him again."[50] The same agent reported that Carmichael was enraged at the French to the highest pitch imaginable. He, so the report reads, declared that the French could not be depended upon and if he had the management of affairs the French would not have the least idea of what they were about. Such was the devotion given by another of Deane's associates.

George Lupton, an early acquaintance of Deane's in Paris, though an American, was a paid agent of the British government, and reported directly to William Eden, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Lupton posed as an American businessman waiting for additional capital to invest in the American trade.[51] He was liked and trusted by Deane and seemingly they spent a great deal of time together. He reported on Deane's breakfast conversations with himself, Dr. Bancroft, and Carmichael.[52] He also noted and reported

[50]Stevens, Facsimiles, #168.

[51]Ibid., #173, 181, 187.

[52]Ibid., #147, 154, 179.

Carmichael's trips to Nantes, Bordeaux, and Dunkirk to inspect goods and ships being dispatched to America.[53] He discovered and reported that Deane received mail from England via Holland under the name of Monjeui Benson.[54] Once, when Deane left the room, Lupton slipped into his closet and read his letters and an unfinished dispatch to Congress.[55] He also reported that he had met John Nicholson, Captain of a continental ship, who was closely associated with Deane in privateering and highly esteemed by him: "I say I got on the blind side of him (Captain Nicholson) and discovered just what I wished for a man of his turn."[56]

George Lupton was in no way associated with Deane except as a "well wisher" and how long he would have been able to continue the deception will never be known as he was "betrayed by that girl"[57] and was dropped by the British from the lists of agents in France.

In his relations with other Americans we obtain some of the keenest insight into Deane's personal views on current politics and policies of the day and the results of his meditative thinking regarding what would now be considered

[53] Ibid., #204.

[54] Ibid., #162.

[55] Ibid., #162.

[56] Ibid., #187.

[57] Ibid., #265.

world politics and international relations. The Secret Committee of Correspondence which had instructed Deane to contact Dr. Edward Bancroft of London also suggested establishing relationships with Mr. Arthur Lee, representative of the Committee in London and C.W.F. Dumas, agent of the Committee in Holland. The first proved a traitor and the second Deane's worst enemy, but with Dumas the correspondence ripened into a life long friendship. In none of Deane's other correspondence, private or official, can one find such a variety of his political views.

Early in the correspondence with Dumas, Deane expressed his views regarding the cost of public sacrifice to an individual and his own willingness to assume this burden. "I ever keep in mind the motto, de republica nil desperandum," he wrote. "I counted the costs when I entered the list, and balanced private fortune, ease, leisure, the sweets of domestic society, and life itself in vain against the liberties of my country: the latter instantly predominated, and I have nothing to complain of, though much to grieve at, occasioned by the miscarriage of delay of my full power for open and public application."[58]

Again as a staunch patriot and a man confident in his vision of the future of America he wrote: "Be not discouraged, my dear friend, America must come off in the end triumphant,

[58]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 225.

and under new and unprecedented laws, liberty and commerce to be the happy asylum for the sons of men in future ages. Whatever disappointments I may meet with I never despair of my country, for which I shall count it my glory to suffer all things, if it receive any advantage therefrom, and if not, I shall at least enjoy the pleasure, the inalienable pleasure, resulting from a consciousness of having done all in my power for its happiness and connectedly for the happiness of mankind in general."[59]

As a merchant Deane was conscious of a necessity for, and to a degree apprehensive of the commercial future of, the United Colonies. He was fully cognizant of the various mercantile systems that existed in Europe. Like John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, Deane was fearful of "alliances" and would have preferred to have America remain free of all political entanglements, but for commerce he was eager. "The United Colonies only ask for what nature surely entitles all men to, a free and uninterrupted commerce and exchange of the superfluities of one country for those of another . . ." Though Deane would have preferred the colonies to remain free he did not feel that independence would be obtained without foreign intervention. This was the basis for his constant urging of Congress to be more pressing in its desire for an alliance with France.[60]

[59]Ibid., pp. 224-25.

[60]Ibid., p. 331.

The question of a possible reconcilation with Great Britain could not be ignored during the closing days of 1776 and throughout the year 1777. This possibility made the various negotiations more insecure and difficult for all the Americans abroad. Deane, however, felt it was an unnecessary apprehension and apropos, wrote that he had "long been convinced that no act is too actrocious for them (the British) to attempt, nor any report too ridiculous and improbable for them to propagate to serve their purpose." He admitted that reconcilation was possible but he stated that he would not be surprised if Congress decided to continue the war unsupported. "I know my countrymen perfectly, and the principles by which they are actuated, do not believe that they will ever accommodate on terms lower than independence; yet in the same situation, and with the same offer made them, I am certain any other people in the world would accommodate."[61] This conviction was not due to vanity. While denying any desire to place his countrymen above any other nation in the world he pointed out that the Americans were a new people possessing ideas that were new or at least long unpracticed. Therefore it would be difficult to compare them to other nations. That the Americans had dared to defy Great Britain was in itself a unique distinction.

[61] Ibid., p. 332.

Deane, experienced professionally in trade and the law, did not hesitate to point out that England had been the leading exponent of the balance of power theory and that while most of the politicians and statesmen of Europe still thought along these conventional lines he, Deane, saw a new universal monarchy on the political horizon. This was his prophesy: ". . . but I will venture to predict that if Great Britain, by forming an accommodation of friendship or an alliance with the United States, renders herself, as by nature she easily can, mistress of the world, by taking possession of the East Indies into her own hands, she will be in possession of exhaustless treasure, and in 1780 the charter of the East India Company expires when both the territory and commerce will be at her disposal. Add to that her strict and close alliance with Russia. I say that it is easy to forsee that Great Britain, America, and Russia united will command not barely Europe, but the whole world united."[62]

Deane felt that both the United Colonies and Russia would be dependent upon Great Britain for manufactured goods for a long time. Speaking of England he said: "Like a Colossus, with one foot in Russia and the East and the other in America, it will bestride as Shakespeare says, your poor European world, and the powers which now strut

[62]Ibid., p. 333.

and look big will creep about between its legs to find dishonorable graves." This was Deane's prophecy but he was willing to try to prevent it from happening. Not that he cared particularly for Europe "for it is my ultimate and early wish that America may forever be as unconnected with the politics or interest of Europe as it is by nature situated distant from it, and that the friendly ties arriving from a free, friendly and independent commerce may be the only ties between us."[63]

So it is apparent that Silas Deane was not only actively concerned in the practical areas of the revolutionary commerce and continuance for the moment, but in the far reaching implications of future and widespread economic and political theory. This interest he was to retain throughout his disgrace and until the time of his death.

Recruitment of French Officers: A Policy of State

In France the American Revolution produced mixed reactions but the predominating one was generally favorable to the revolting colonies. The French government was particularly interested in all that was occuring because of the potential harm to and its effects on the colonial and commercial power of England. The French intellectuals were intrigued and hopeful -- America now represented a practical experiment which was proceeding along lines

[63] Ibid., p. 333.

indicated by the 18th century political philosophers and the widely read writings of the Encyclopedists and Rousseau and Voltaire. To the professional soldiers of France any exploit offered the ever attractive possibility to army men of a fertile field to win glory and promotion.

A plan for sending officers to America was first suggested to Deane by Beaumarchais. The latter admitted that Arthur Lee had first mentioned it to him.[64] Deane was fully aware of the shortage of trained officers in the American army. He was also conscious that the sending of French officers had to be frowned upon officially by the French War Ministry as a matter of expediency and diplomatic policy, but that in the final analysis, most of the officers actually to be sent were "recommended by the ministry here, and at this instant are really in their army, but this must be kept a secret."[65]

The decision to enlist the aid of French officers in the American army, therefore, was not a matter of impulse or a hasty one with Deane. Early in December of 1776 he had been approached personally by a number of French officers offering their services to the colonists. Deane immediately reported their request to the Secret Committee of Correspondence and asked for instructions. The Committee failed

[64] New York Historical Collections, II, 399-400.

[65] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 214.

to give him the desired instructions, and so he decided to follow Beaumarchais' advice.

Once having opened the gate Deane soon discovered, and Franklin later verified, that the pressure to accept the services of more and more officers was almost unbearable.[66] Deane's wholesale grant of commissions (contracts) to foreign officers early in the was was a genuine source of discontent and a mixed advantage to the colonists. Some of the officers sent were good; some were bad; all occasioned some problem. The officers of the Continental army generally resented them. These frictions caused increasing embarrassment to Congress. That some of the foreign officers appointed did acquit themselves creditably and in many individual cases gained the gratitude of the colonies is attested by the many names of American counties and cities which stand as a tribute to the officers who served the American cause during the struggle for independence.

The contract that caused Congress the most embarrassment and Deane the most grief was the one from which he had expected the American army to derive the greatest benefit. Early in 1776 when the French government had anticipated a request from the Americans for arms and munitions, the French War Ministry had ordered M. du Courday, an experienced artillery officer, to inspect all French arsenals and select

[66] _Ibid._, pp. 411, 457.

materials that could be released for the American army. When du Courday offered to deliver the artillery, and with a corps of young officers properly to instruct the American army in its use, Deane felt that he had secured a good bargain. To the Secret Committee of Correspondence Deane reported that du Courday had been recommended as a good and faithful man by the minsters of the court. Deane admitted that it was too "tempting an object for me to hesitate about, though I owe there is a silence in instructions."[67] However, in spite of his previous service and good recommendations both Deane and Beaumarchais had cause to be disgusted with du Courday before he finally sailed for America. The General and his suite sailed from Le Havre on December 14, 1776, just in time to avoid the restraining order issued by the French government. In a few days the ship returned, much to the disgust of Deane and Beaumarchais. General du Courday had not liked either his quarters or the kind of provisions that had been put at his disposal. Deane and Beaumarchais were put to much personal inconvenience and worry to secure new clearance papers in spite of the restrainig orders. When the ship sailed again, the temperamental du Courday had arranged both the cargo and passenger list to his own satisfaction.

[67] Ibid., p. 127.

The enlisting of du Courday as an officer in the American Army eventually caused trouble for Deane in the United States. General du Courday and his party arrived in Philadelphia in June of 1777. When he applied to Congress for the rank of Major-General, assigned to him by Deane, with command of both engineers and artillery, there was both an immediate and violent reaction. Generals Greene, Knox and Sullivan all tendered their resignations which Congress did not accept. Courday was then offered by Congress and accepted the title of Inspector-General of Ordinance. On the eve of the battle of Brandywine he requested and Congress granted him permission to join the army as Captain of Engineers. His drowning while crossing the Schuykill on September 16, 1777, solved the problem for Congress but it did not lessen the resentment against Deane.[68]

According to the reports of British Intelligence over four hundred officers were permitted to serve in the American army. One, however, who did not come caused a great deal of embarrassment indeed. This was occasioned by the curious offer made by the Comte de Broglie.[69] Through his agent, Baron de Kalb, he suggested to Deane that "Congress should ask of the King of France someone who would become

[68]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 367-70, 388, 437-38; Burnett, Letters of Congress, II, 400, 403, 406, 417-421.

[69]Stevens, Facsimiles, #604.

their civil and military chief, the temporary generalissimo of the new republic."[70] Of course, the designated "chief" was assumed to be de Broglie. Uncertain as to the origin of the suggestion, Deane listened. He did not commit himself and after consulting Benjamin Franklin, who was now in France as one of the three newly appointed commissioners, he transmitted the request to the Secret Committee of Correspondence without personal comment. In relaying the request to the Committee he gave the name of the wrong man which must be taken as an indication of his lack of interest and involvement in the affair.[71] Franklin's thoughts and comments are likewise unknown. All parties were saved from making any final decision by the refusal of the French government to approve. It must have been painful to Deane even to transmit this request. His respect and affection for General Washington are too well known to assume that he was in agreement.[72]

From the correspondence of congressmen and the observations of foreign visitors the presence of the foreign officers caused the single greatest resentment against Deane and was

[70]New York Historical Collections, I, 427; Stevens, Facsimiles, #604.

[71]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 218.

[72]Charles J. Stille, "The Comte de Brogolie, Proposed Stadtholder of America," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XI (1887), 369-405.

the greatest single factor in his recall by Congress.[73] From the advantage of hindsight Deane seems to have used poor judgement in the selection of officers and the terms of their contracts. It is possible, of course, that Deane was playing for higher stakes than was ever appreciated by Congress. He was vitally concerned with public support in France. The French coterie of officers were an influential factor in society. Deane, and Franklin later, seems to have grasped the fact that in France where public meetings were prohibited public opinion was formed and expressed in social affairs. John Adams and Arthur Lee apparently never grasped this and as a result failed to understand many of Deane's motives and moves.

British Attempts to Discredit Deane as a Dangerous Agent

The activities of Silas Deane were watched by the British government with great care and interest. When the French government decided not to receive Deane officially, the British ambassador, Lord Stormont, was also then forced to "ignore him officially." He naturally watched every visitor, every word said, or every move made. Deane was aware that he was under constant surveillance and though he was under the protection of the French Court was in constant

[73]Theveneau de Francey, Letters of Theveneau de Francey, 1777-1780, John Bigelow, ed. (New York, 1870), p. 10.

fear of abduction by agents of the British Secret Service.

There is little doubt that as an agent of the rebels, Deane was a subject of interest to British Intelligence in France. In London they knew that he had been successful in securing secret aid from the French Court. He was outspoken in opposing any plan of reconcilation. He was suspected of making plans for weakening England's was effort by raids on the coasts of Scotland and England, by granting licenses himself to privateers to raid English commerce, and of making plans for stirring up revolts in various English possessions.[74] These were all means of preventing England from re-enforcing her armies and as a result may have caused the British ministers to seek ways of discrediting him with the people of England, with the French Court, and finally, perhaps may have been sufficiently influential by means of well placed reports of malfeasance in office to secure his recall by the Continental Congress.

Shortly after Deane's arrival in France a rope factory and the docks of Portsmouth, a commercial and shipping center in England, were burned. John Atkins, alias John the Painter, was arrested and accused of the crime. He admitted his guilt in open court and stated that he had been hired by Silas Deane, the rebel agent in Paris, to burn the

[74]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 167, 172; American Archives, Peter Force, ed., 5th ser. 3 vols. (Washington, 1848-53), I, 973.

city. The arrest and public trial for arson of John Atkins, as the agent of Silas Deane, representative of the rebels in Paris, was designed to enrage the people of England.[75]

There is some truth in Atkin's testimony.[76] He was correct when he stated that he had visited Deane in his rooms in Paris, but that he was hired by Deane is extremely doubtful. This was the opinion reported by a British agent in Paris who was well acquainted with Deane.[77]

The trial was given great publicity in London but if it was staged as a means of discrediting Deane in the eyes of his public in both England and France as a person using exceptionally distasteful methods, the attempt miscarried.

Another attempt was made later to discredit Deane with the French government. This occurred in the closing days of 1777. At the time the negotiations between the Commissioners and the French government were at a very delicate stage. M. Favier, a man well known to the Paris police, was requested to renew and report upon the activities of his former associate, Paul Wentworth. Wentworth was suspected, and rightly so, of being a British agent in Paris and M. de Vergennes was curious as to his activities.

[75]Stevens, Facsimiles, #664, 1487; William Bell Clark, "John the Painter," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 68, (1939), 1-23.

[76]New York Historical Collections, II, 4, 24, 30.

[77]Stevens, Facsimiles, #696.

Wentworth told M. Favier that he and Deane were old friends and often "supped together with a woman whom he believed to be his [Deane's] mistress" and also that Deane had willingly transferred money to Wentworth's relatives in America. He very casually mentioned that he had suggested several financial and commercial speculations to Deane but that "Deane, who refused it, . . . not out of scruple, but because he was engaged with Messrs. Grand, Beaumarchais and Panchaud who transacted business in the funds; and who had admitted him into their speculations and profits."[78] This attempt to discredit Deane makes Wentworth's motives apparent and it seems that M. Favier did not consider this tale as reliable. He knew what was going on in both commercial and political circles. To Vergennes he wrote: "If this tale about Mr. Deane is true, you are certainly aware of it" and if Vergennes did not know it was because the French Secret Agents were unaware of it. The latter is doubtful.

It is interesting to speculate whether such a story was originated and planted by British agents with the deliberate intention of circulating until it might reach the ears of Congress through Arthur Lee or some other American and thus dispose of the one man they considered the most dangerous. Lord Stormont in a report marked Confidential gave as his considered opinion that "Whatever his [Franklin's]

[78] Ibid., #1818.

talents may be, I am persuaded that he is a less dangerous instrument than Deane."[79]

If the British government of Intelligence had a hand in the recall of Deane by Congress it cannot or has not been as yet proved. That the British government had its agents in and around Congress may be accepted as a matter of standard operating procedure. In discussing Deane's recall, Ray de Chaumont observed to Vergennes: "If we compare dates, we find the recall of Mr. Deane coincides with the period when Lord North was able to intrigue in Congress, guided by what he had read in the despatches he had caused to be stolen. Mr. Deane's head was a good one for him to strike down . . . ."[80]

That some of Deane's contracts with foreign officers caused embarrassment and resentment in Congress is well known. It is not unreasonable to suppose that any intelligence service would fail to exploit an opportunity to remove its enemy's most effective agent. Such an idea may be a fancy but it is a fact that Deane's recall, the reason for it, and the name of his successor were the subject of official correspondence between the Foreign Office in London and the British Ambassador in Paris

[79]Lord Stormont to Lord Weymouth, December 25, 1776 cited in Edward E. Hale and Edward E. Hale, Jr., Franklin In France, 2 vol. (Boston, 1888) II, 421.

[80]Stevens, Facsimiles, #810.

before it was officially known by American Commissioners.[81]

[81] *Ibid.*, #199, 1890.

CHAPTER III

THE COMMISSION

In December of 1776 Deane's official status changed. At that time he became a member of a three-man commission with full diplomatic powers. The creation of the commission represented the determination of Congress to seek military aid from France in their war against England, and for this aid the Congress was willing to enter into a formal alliance. In the implementation of this policy Silas Deane was to play a vital if not conspicious role. The decision marked a turning point in Congressional policy.

The decision to seek foreign military aid had been forced upon Congress by the deteriorating military situation. During the latter half of the year 1776, while Deane was arranging for supplies in France, Congress had been debating the need for foreign intervention. However time and military reverses were required to crystallize congressional opinion. In Silas Deane's Instructions of March 3, 1776, he had been directed to test French reaction to the proposed Declaration of Independence and to the possibilities of an alliance with France. In his reports to the Secret Committee of Correspondence Deane had repeatedly urged permission to press for an alliance but both the Committee and Congress remained silent.[1]

[1]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 190.

Congressional fears and indicision are fully reflected in the thoughts and words of Benjamin Franklin and John Adams. Both were thoughtful men and while thinking of the present each already had considered the possible effects of each day's action on future events. As late as July, 1775, Franklin wrote to a friend in England that "we have not applied to any foreign power for assistance nor offered our commerce for this friendship."[2] But Franklin, statesman that he was, knew that war and independence meant leaving the British mercantile system. He was also fully aware that to carry on a successful war the colonists must have trade. It was with this in mind that on February 26, 1776, he introduced a resolution in Congress providing for the opening of American ports to "ships of all countries."[3] Congress resisted the resolution and its implications until April 6.[4]

In Common Sense published early in 1776 by Thomas Paine a political and commercial policy was presented to the colonists that brought a favorable response not only in Congress but with the country in general. Paine wrote: "Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us peace and friendship of all Europe; because it is

[2]Benjamin Franklin, The Writings of Benjamin Franklin, Albert H. Smyth, ed., 10 vols. (New York, 1907), VI, 409.

[3]Journals of Congress, IV, 63, 159n, 172.

[4]Ibid., p. 257.

to the interest of all Europe to have America a free port. Her trade will always be a protection . . . As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connections with any part of it. It is to the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she can never do, while, by her dependence of Britain, she is made the makeweight in the scale of British politics."[5]

John Adams, in weighing America's needs for assistance against the danger of entanglements, strongly advocated a simple commercial treaty.[6] When the time came to formulate a proposed treaty with France, Adams successfully defended his exclusively commercial position in committee and open debate in Congress.

Shortly after Richard Henry Lee's triple motion of June 7, 1776, for independence, for confederation, and for taking "the most effectual measures for forming foreign alliances,"[7] a committee was appointed to draft a proposed commercial treaty and submit it to Congress. As a member, John Adams repeatedly said in committee and in Congress that an alliance that would embarrass and conceivably involve the nation in future European wars should be avoided. He reasoned that a treaty of commerce would automatically

[5]Thomas Paine, The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, Philip S. Foner, ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1945), I, 20-21.

[6]Adams, Works, II, 488-489.

[7]Journals of Congress, V, 425.

repeal the Navigation Acts and bring France into equal participation of American commerce. He also stated that if France should become involved in a war for supplying the colonies with goods and recognizing their independence, the trade of the colonies would be ample compensation.[8] However, during the congressional debates, Adams said that he was opposed by his "own intimate friends, Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee." The latter thought there was not sufficient temptation for France to join the colonies and moved for cessions and concessions that implied "warranties and a political alliance" that Adams had sought so carefully to avoid.[9] Adams won a temporary victory and the instructions that Franklin carried to Paris with him authorized only a commercial alliance.

In October of 1776, Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee were able to convince Congress of the desirability of empowering the Commissioners in Paris to seek recognition from still other courts of Europe.[10] In December of the same year an additional victory was gained by them through securing the appointment of commissioners to the courts of Spain, Austria, Prussia and Tuscany.[11]

[8]Adams, Works, II, 516.

[9]Ibid., X, 269.

[10]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 172.

[11]Journals of Congress, VI, 1054-58.

The original members of the Commission to France consisted of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Silas Deane. Jefferson refused to accept the commission. As a consequence Arthur Lee, In London, was elected to assume the duties of the third member. Franklin was elected September 26, 1776, and sailed for France October 26 of the same year. He landed in France December 3. Having missed Vergennes' messenger warning him not to come to Paris, he arrived there December 21. He stayed at the Hotel d' Hambourg in the Rue de l'Universite. After a few weeks he moved to an "elegant hotel" in Passy, just outside of Paris, belonging to Monsieur Ray de Chaumont. As the house was offered rent free it was not hard to detect the fine hand of M. de Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs.[12]

The nerve center of all rebel activity in France was Franklin's headquarters in Passy. The house at Passy served as a chancery, offices, home, and a social center for Franklin and Deane. Arthur Lee preferred to maintain his own establishment. Franklin, by common consent, became the unofficial but recognized "Head of Mission." Lord Stormont, British Ambassador, referred to him as "chief of the rebels." From Passy Franklin directed and co-ordinated the work of the mission. Because of the failure of Congress to provide any administrative assistants, Deane and the

[12]John Bigelow, "Donaten Le Ray Chaumont," Century (March, 1888), pp. 250-65.

other Commissioners were handicapped in handling routine affairs. During the entire time Franklin's only personal assistant was his grandson, William Temple Franklin, a lad of sixteen years. Though a good copyist, he could not be entrusted with drafting any of the many papers that Franklin was forced to write. Dr. Edward Bancroft, the double spy, and Mr. William Carmichael, the ambitious young man from Maryland, and others were hired to do clerical work, but as they had no legal status they could not be regarded as part of the official family. Arthur Lee's opinion to the contrary, Franklin was a very able diplomat and a most casual examination of his reports to Congress shows that he was aware of the issues and kept fully informed. John Adams, no strong admirer of Franklin's, told Arthur Lee that ninety per cent of the letters that came to Passy were addressed to Franklin or required his attention. Such was Franklin's position in the American Commission.[13]

Benjamin Franklin's devotion to public duty was again ably demonstrated in 1778. He was seventy years old when he was selected one of the three commissioners to France. Unhesitatingly he accepted the commission without regard to health, physical discomfort, or financial loss. During the time he was in France, a total of nine years, he received only his salary and lived on it. During that time

[13]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 760.

he handled and was responsible for thousands of dollars but when his accounts were audited not one single instance of mismanagement of public money could be brought against him.[14]

Of all the men in public life Franklin was the most familiar with political conditions with which he had to deal when he came to France as envoy. As Postmaster-General he had traveled into every inhabited area of the colonies. For forty years he had been active in Pennsylvania politics. During this time he had been associated with several attempts to form an alliance or union among the colonies. He had been active in the wars against France in raising men and supplies. Nor were his political experiences limited to America. He had been an agent for Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Georgia in England for a number of years. Perhaps there was no living American so familiar with and observant of English politics as was Franklin at the time he had left England in 1775. France he had first encountered as an antagonist when America had supported England during the colonial wars.

In 1767 he visited Paris and made many friends. When he returned in 1776 he found himself treated as an honored and beloved guest. "Social France received him as an idol;

[14]Due to the influence of Arthur Lee and Ralph Izard a committee was appointed July 17, 1782, to audit Franklin's accounts.

philosophical France received him as a co-worker in a great work; military France greeted him as an ally against an old foe; commercial France at once set him down as a means of netting considerable sums and all alike welcomed him warmly."[15] His reception by the Ministers of France was cordial. During the year 1777, however, Franklin's diplomacy was primarily with the French people. In his dealings or relations with the French government he wrote: "I have never chang'd the opinion I had in Congress, that a Virgin State should preserve the Virgin Character, and not go suitoring for alliances, but wait with decent Dignity for the Applications of others."[16]

Arthur Lee, one of the three commissioners to the French Court, and later sole commissioner to the Court of Spain, was a native of Virginia. He was born December 20, 1740, and received his early formal education at Eton College, England. Later he studied medicine at Edinburgh and received the degree of doctor of medicine. After a period of travel on the continent he returned to Virginia to practice medicine. Being dissatisfied, he returned to

[15]Hale and Hale, Franklin in France, I, 77; Stevens, Facsimiles, #1402.

[16]Franklin, Works, VII, 35.

England and studied law at the Temple between 1766 and 1770.[17]

As a patriot Arthur Lee ranks second to none. This even his bitterest enemies, and there were many, were willing to concede but beyond this opinions vary greatly. Arthur Lee himself admitted: "Unhappily my fate has thrown me into public life, and the impatience of my nature makes me embark in it with an impetuousity and imprudence which increase the evils to which it is necessarily subject."[18] Even John Adams, himself inclined to suspicion, admitted that Arthur Lee "had confidence in no body, believed all men selfish, and no man honest or sincere."[19] Beaumarchais described Lee as an "insidious politician,"[20] Benjamin Franklin thought him half crazy, which Silas Deane thought more than generous.[21] That both Arthur Lee and William Lee learned their politics from John Wilkes may account for some of the use of invective and vituperative language found in their correspondence. Seemingly, however, there was an inherent quality of suspiciousness in Arthur Lee's character.

[17] Dictonary of National Biography, XI, p. 96-101; Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, I; Lyon G. Tyler, "Arthur Lee-A Neglected Statesman," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, No. 2(October, 1932), 198-216; Thomas P. Abernethy, "The Origin of the Franklin-Lee Imbroglio," North Carolina Historical Review, XV (1938), 41-52.

[18] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, I, 144.

[19] Adams, Works, III, 188.

[20] Stevens, Facsimiles, #1763.

[21] New York Historical Collections, II, 327.

When he encountered a person whom he could not dominate or bend to his way of thinking, he immediately convinced himself that some nefarious plot was afoot to destroy him. As neither Deane nor Franklin would yield to Arthur Lee's leadership or policies, according to Jared Sparks,

> the characteristic foible of Mr. Lee began to show itself. He conceived the notion that all the friends of Deane must be his enemies. Then came over his mind strange visions of plots and intrigues and combinations formed to mar his peace, defame his character, and injure his reputation. He believed it was a part of this knot of adversaries to write paragraphs to his discredit and procure their insertion in the European gazettes and to take care that they were repeated in the American papers. He conceived them to be busy also in writing letters of the same purport, and thus to be infusing poison not only into the public mind, but into the minds of individuals whose good opinion was important to his fame and success. At the head of this formidable league in his imagination was placed Mr. Deane, by whose arts and machinations it had been brought into being.[22]

As an individual Arthur Lee might have been unable to do little good or evil, but as a member of a powerful family with political and social connections he was a factor that could not be safely ignored. In a letter to George Washington dated April 26, 1779, John Jay traced the failure of the naval affairs of the colonies to the "family compact." The term "family compact," as later used by Jay, is explained by a statement in the Pennsylvania Packet of December, 1778, "that by four brothers of the Lee family

[22]Jared Sparks, "Review of the Life of Arthur Lee," North American Review, XXX (April 30, 1830), 495-525.

were held two seats in Congress, four foreign missions, the French Commercial Agency, and a London Aldermanship under Wilkes." But the real strength of the "compact" derived its strength from the devoted support of the New England delegates sympathizing with the views of Richard Henry and Arthur Lee. James Lovell, self-styled "Mr. Secretary" of the Foreign Relations Committee, was one of the most active in presenting and defending the views of the "compact." Samuel Adams was also a pillar of strength in supporting the Lees in general and Arthur Lee in particular during the controversy with Deane.

That any of the Lee brothers were ever guilty of disloyalty to the Revolutionary cause is extremely doubtful. However, such was their loyalty to each other that it ill served any man to oppose them. Beaumarchais, Silas Deane, and Benjamin Franklin all earned the hatred of Arthur Lee and thereby the enemity of the Lee brothers - Beaumarchais died a pauper, Deane in disgrace, and even Franklin was forced to appear before Congress on a formal charge of censure. Such as the nature of the Commission which was to replace Deane, then American agent, at the court of France.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

December, 1776, to March, 1778

The work of the American Commission in Paris ended in success but it was accompanied by strain and uncertainty punctuated by personal rivalry and jealousy. The failure of Congress to draw a clear line of demarcation separating their respective duties and responsibilites contributed much to the disharmony that permeated the work of the commission.

The organization of the American Commission in Paris was a simple and informal affair. With the arrival of Franklin from America and Arthur Lee from England on the 21st and 22nd of December, the commission was formally organized. Within a few days Franklin and his colleagues were received by Vergennes in a private but not a secret audience.[1] They presented their letter of credence, the draft of a proposed treaty of commerce, and a request for eight ships to convoy merchant ships to America. The request for eight ships was immediately denied.[2] Such an action would mean that France openly espoused the cause of the Americans and would immediately result in a war with

[1]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1400; Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 248-51.

[2]Stevens, Facsimiles, #621.

England.[3] For such a war Vergennes indicated, but did not say, that the time was inopportune. The reception of the proposed treaty of commerce was also disappointing to the commissioners. Vergennes accepted a draft of the treaty and agreed to take it under advisement.

This step meant that France was not yet ready to recognize the independence of the United Colonies. American commerce was the only advantage or inducement the commissioners had to offer. Indeed, this was a doubtful gain to France as the maritime power of England dominated the three thousand miles of water between America and France. Neither was the military situation encouraging. The British army had taken New York. Shortly it would take Philadelphia and the rumor was strong in French official circles that Burgoyne was to start south from Canada. Early in 1777 the military situation was far from bright for the American cause. If the commissioners were expecting to negotiate an early treaty they were doomed to disappointment. Accepting the extended protection of the French Court, they retired to plan the next step and wait.

The instructions of the commissioners made them jointly responsible, but any two members were authorized to make an official agreement. All American affairs unless otherwise delegated by Congress to another party were placed under

[3]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 284-85.

their jurisdiction. With the exception of Franklin, the commission was without previous diplomatic experience or precedence to guide them, and without an adequate staff the commissioners faced their joint assignment.

Arthur Lee, conceiving that aid and recognition might be secured from other European courts, decided to visit the courts at Madrid, Vienna and Berlin.[4] Though Franklin did not approve he consented to these missions. Leaving Paris in February, 1777, Lee spent the remainder of the spring and summer months visiting Spain, Austria, and Berlin. He was not successful either in gaining recognition or obtaining significant aid.[5]

Franklin, remaining in Paris, carried on his diplomacy primarily through the medium of social intercourse. From Passy went a barrage of letters to persons of all classes and stations in French society. He dined out, he entertained, and he regularly attended the Academy of Science.[6] The people of Paris were always conscious that Franklin, the American, was in their midst. At the same time no major decision was or could be made without his advice or consent. When matters concerning a load or a gift from the French government required his presence he personally

[4]Ibid., p. 264.

[5]Paul Leland Haworth, "Frederick the Great and the American Revolution," American Historical Review IX (1904), 460-78.

[6]Stevens, Facsimiles, #486.

visited Versailles, usually late at night, to consult with Vergennes or Gerard. But normal routine matters, the liaison work, was left entirely to Silas Deane.

Deane continued in charge of the financial and commercial departments. Franklin refused to assume any responsibility for the continuance of any commitments resulting from Deane's arrangements or contracts. These Deane was left to conclude entirely on his own responsibility. Beaumarchais wrote to Deane respecting the new arrangements. On January 6, 1777, Deane replied: "In answer to yours of this morning, I have to inform you, the joint commission from Congress to my Colleagues and me does not supersede or interfere in the least with my former Commission and Instructions to purchase and send out Stores and Merchandise to America; and my Colleagues will not intermeddle in the Engagements taken by me previous to their arrival. The Whole, therefore, of this affair remains in the state it was at first, and it lyes solely on us to take the best measure in our power to get the Shipps to Sea with the Stores as soon as possible."[7]

The commissioners were forced to "solicit the court of France for an immediate supply of [war material] . . . . This application has now become the more necessary, as the private purchases made by Mr. Deane of those articles is

[7] New York Historical Collections, I, 449.

rendered ineffectual by an order forbidding their exportation."[8] However, any new contracts, or arrangements that were made from December of 1776 on were actually under Franklin's direction. Deane merely served as Franklin's detail and "leg" man. Deane accepted Franklin as "Chief of Mission" and the two worked in perfect harmony and understanding.

The relations of nations are based upon Public International Law. Its development has slowly evolved out of the experiences of nations. Then, as today, nations were inclined to accept or fail to observe those provisions of law that did not fit the desired objectives of their foreign policy.

Silas Deane, upon his arrival in France, as agent of the Secret Committee of Correspondence, had realized immediately the harm that privateers could do English commerce and that, in addition, privateering could also become a valuable source of revenue for the treasury of the United Colonies. Privateering was at that time, of course, an accepted practice. In his reports to the Committee he requested that Congress send him blank commissions that he authorize privateers to prey upon the English.[9] However, during Deane's tenure as Agent of the committee this phase

[8]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 245.

[9]Ibid., p. 249.

of his work was not a disturbing element with the Franch government.

When Franklin arrived in France he carried orders to buy eight ships of the line. Captain Wickes, who commanded the ship that had brought Franklin to France and who had captured two prizes on the trip and brought them to port, was designated by Franklin to investigate ships and make recommendations for the possible purchase to the Commissioners. Wickes did a thorough job and reported to Franklin on what he considered suitable for American waters. Even if and when they had the money to purchase ships the Commissioners soon found that purchase was only the beginning of their difficulties. The selection of officers to command, of sailors to make up the crews, of merchants to fit them out, or cannon and stores to be bought, and cruises to be made when the ships were ready was a complicated set of problems. None of the Commissioners was experienced in maritime affairs yet they were forced to act as a department of the navy. Deane, as a merchant, was best equipped to take charge and supervise this intricate operation. This he did with the support, if not the actual help, of Franklin.

The status of neutral nations under international custom, later dignified into public international law, did not seem to cause the Americans as much trouble as it did the French Government. Among the more complicated legal

problems the following seemed to disturb the British and embarrass the French the most. 1. Were American war ships and privateers to be allowed in French ports? 2. Could American privateers sail from neutral ports, take prizes and return to the same port? 3. Was it legal for English sailors captured at sea to be confined in French ports and later exchanged for American prisoners in England? In addition to or beyond the general principles of the law as mentioned above, France and England had definite treaty arrangements dealing with these particular points.[10] This was recognized by the French ministers,[11] and Lord Stormont's viewpoint was so clear and irrefutable that Vergennes was forced to delay rather than evade the issues of violation of French neutrality or rather France's violation of her own agreement.

The French were not neutral, however, and in spite of Lord Stormont's ability to cite chapter and verse of constant and repeated violation of the treaty of Utrecht, the French ministers were almost always tardy in taking action against the Americans. In fact, the handling of Lord Stormont's complaints[12] was almost reduced to a formula.[13]

[10]Treaty of Utrecht, Articles XV, XXXVI. Discussed in Hale and Hale, Franklin In Paris, I, p. 130-39.

[11]Stevens, Facsilliles, #1491.

[12]Ibid., #1483.

[13]Ibid., #1487.

Upon a complaint by Lord Stormont of activites of American privateers in French ports Vergennes would plead ignorance of the facts but would promise an immediate investigation. In due time he would request information from the Minister of Marine[14] who in turn would reply that he had no information but that he would inquire of the officials at the port in question.[15] By the time Vergennes would be in a position to give Lord Stormont an answer the ship would have finished refitting and left port. If the privateer should have been so slow or so unlucky as still to be in port, orders would be given that it must leave in twenty-four hours -- which simply meant transferring to another port.

The French ministers knew and deliberately winked at the constant violations.[16] Vergennes was willing to match wits with Lord Stormont but he was not yet ready to risk a war with England. From time to time he would write the Commissioners a severe reprimand for some particular act, but the reprimand was never followed by any drastic action. To the Commissioners he wrote:

> You cannot forget that at the first conversation I had with both of you I assured you that you should enjoy in France, with respect to your persons, every security and comfort which we showed to foreigners; and as to your commerce and navigation, we should grant every facility compatible with the exact observation of our

[14] Ibid., #1483, 1563.
[15] Ibid., #1565.
[16] Ibid., #1551, 1590.

treaties with England, which the King's principles would induce him religiously to fulfill. In order to prevent every doubt with respect to the vessels that may participate in the favors we grant in our ports to nations in amity, I pointed out to you the article in the treaty which forbids the power of allowing privateers free access in our ports, unless through pressing necessity, as also with respect to deposit and sale of their prizes. You promised, gentlemen, to conform thereto.

After so particular an explanation we did not press the departure of the ship Reprisal, which brought Mr. Franklin to France, because we were assured it was destined to return with merchandise. We had quite lost sight of this vessel, and imagined she was in the American seas, when, with great surprise, we understood that she had entered L'Orient, after taking several prizes. Orders were immediately given that she depart in twenty-four hours, and conduct her prizes to the only admiralities that were authorized to judge of their validity. Captain Wickes complained of a leak. Being visited by a proper officer, his allegation was found to be legal and admissible, the necessary repairs were permitted, and he was enjoined to put to sea again.

After such repeated advertisements, the motives of which you have been informed of, we had no reason to expect, gentlemen, that the said Mr. Wickes would prosecute his cruising in the European seas; and we could not be otherwise than greatly surprised that, after having associated with the privateers, the Lexington and the Dolphin, to infest the English coasts, they should all three of them come for refuge into our ports. You are too well informed, gentlemen, and too penetrating, not to see how this conduct effects the dignity of the King, my master, at the same time it offends the neutrality which His Majesty professes. I expect therefore, from your equity, that you will be the first to condemn a conduct so opposite to the duties of hospitality and decency. The King cannot dissemble it, and it is by his express order, gentlemen, that I acquaint you that orders have been sent to the ports in which the said privateers have entered, to sequester and detain them, until sufficient security can be oftained that they shall return directly to their country, and not expose themselves, by new acts of hostility, to the necessity of seeking an asylum in our ports.

> As to the prizes they may have taken, if they have brought them to our ports, they have orders to go out immediately, and the same conduct shall be observed towards any capture of any nation whatever. Such are the obligations of our treaties, which the King cannot by any means evade. It will be highly proper for you to make these intentions known, wherever you may think it most expedient, so that new privateers, from the example of misconduct of those against whom we are obliged to be vigorous, may not expose themselves to the like embarrassments.[17]

To this clear and explicit letter the Commissioners, rather lamely, replied that Captain Wickes and his companions had returned to L'Orient after their cruise because they had been chased by an English man-of-war. They added that Wickes had been already ordered to return to America -- which he later did. But the letter did not promise, nor did the Americans intend, to cease their illegal activities.[18] In time France did take semi-effective steps to curb her would-be allies but not until the English put her ports under an unofficial state of blockade.[19] Vergennes explained to M. Chaumont, in whose house Deane and Franklin lived: "I expect that they will not be pleased with the course we are taking with regard to their privateers -- it is indespensable at this moment, moreover there is no question of vexing anyone, only assuring ourselves that

[17]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 364-65.

[18]Ibid., p. 365; Ruth Y. Johnston, "American Privateers in French Ports, 1776-1778," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LIII (1929) 352-74.

[19]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1580.

they will not leave until we can be certain they will cease to infest our seas."[20]

In March of 1777, before the French Court was finally forced to take drastic action, Deane and William Hodge, a fellow American, conceived the idea of fitting out in the port of Dunkirk an American privateer which should make a prize of the Harwick packet. Arthur Lee was in Spain, and it is doubtful if Franklin had much to do with the affair. At least Deane's name is the only commissioner listed in the papers, and evidently he attended to all the details.

The scheme was not only a bold one-it was successful. Deane and Hodge purchased a lugger at Dover, through a Captain Cruise. The boat was taken to Dunkirk and there under Hodge's direction was secretly fitted out for the expedition. When the lugger put to sea she was under the command of Gustavus Conyngham who held a Continental commission as Captain.[21]

With ease Captain Conyngham not only captured the Harwick mail packet but also captured a brig. Then he brazenly returned to Dunkirk, his point of departure on his cruise, with his prizes. The affair caused great excitement in official circles in both England and France. Captain Conyngham was immediately arrested and the prizes confiscated.

[20] Ibid., #1579.

[21] "Narrative of Captain Gustavus Conyngham, U.S.N., While in Command of the 'Surprise' and 'Revenge' 1777-1779," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXII (1889), 479-90.

Much to the satisfaction of the English Court, France at once promised that Conyngham should be given up, the prizes restored, and nothing of this nature should be allowed again. When the packet boat and brig were returned to the English, Deane remarked that it "gave them a temporary triumph."[22]

That the Americans did not take the French threat of action against privateering seriously soon became evident.[23] Deane and Hodge immediately determined to seize the Harwick packet again. They purchased and fitted out another cutter with fourteen six pounders and twenty-two swivels. Upon representation that he was to sail directly to America, Captain Conyngham and his crew were released from prison. Mr. Hodge gave bond for his intentions to sail directly to America. To avoid any possibility of a mishap, the French government offered to buy the vessel but as the offer was refused the vessel sailed on "a trading voyage" as one of the Commissioners remarked. A mishap did occur for no sooner was the cutter out of port than Conyngham proceeded to make a prize of everything he met, even threatening to burn the English city of Linn.[24] As Conyngham did not

[22]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 380.

[23]Samuel F. Henkels, The Confidential Correspondence of Robert Morris, (Philadelphia, 1917), p. 62.

[24]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 379-81.

return to a French port, nothing was said directly to the Commissioners.[25] His surety, Mr. Hodge, was arrested and sent to the Bastille.[26] But he was discharged[27] when Deane, acting for the Commissioners, stated that he was a man of character and could not "conceive him capable of any willful offense against the laws of this nation."[28]

Similar incidents, many times multiplied, give ample evidence of the range of privateering activities carried on by the Americans and to which the French Ministers gave a semi-connivance. Rarely were there less than a dozen ships' captains receiving hospitality at the unofficial headquarters at Passy.[29] Arthur Lee, upon his return from Spain, was amazed and distressed at what he considered a most brazen display of nonchalance on the part of Deane and Franklin in the face of French hospitality and he believed this to be a serious threat to the development of amicable relations toward an eventual alliance.[30] In the later months, both Arthur and William Lee brought this episode forward as a

[25]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1655.

[26]Ibid., #1647.

[27]Ibid., #1694.

[28]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 375.

[29]Stevens, Facsimiles, #248.

[30]Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, I, 320-22.

detracting instance in their attempts to discredit Deane and Franklin.[31]

The failure of Congress to separate the commercial and diplomatic functions of the Commission became a source of much misunderstanding and bitterness. This over-lapping jurisdiction caused dissension among the Commissioners in Paris and in time the dispute invaded the halls of Congress.

Soon after Deane's arrival in Paris the Secret Committee of Correspondence appointed Thomas Morris, half brother of Robert Morris, as commercial agent at Nantes. He was also authorized to serve as agent for the firm of Willing and Morris, a commercial firm of Philadelphia. In that capacity he was independent of the Commissioners in Paris. However, Deane, supported by Franklin, drew a distinction between commercial and naval jurisdiction. Deane and Franklin, but not Arthur Lee, included privateering and the sale of prizes under the jurisdiction of the Commissioners in Paris.[32]

Thomas Morris proved to be a drunkard and completely incompetent both as a commercial and naval agent. Dean and later the Commissioners collectively informed Robert Morris[33]

[31]William Lee, Letters of William Lee, 1766-1783, Worthington C. Ford, ed., 3 vols. (Brooklyn, New York, 1891), I, 279-80.

[32]William Lee, Letters, I, 100.

[33]New York Historical Collection, II, 248.

and the Secret Committee of Correspondence of Thomas Morris' "irregularities" and recommended that he be replaced as commercial agent. One month later, while in Spain, Arthur Lee wrote to his brother, Richard Henry Lee, in Congress, "that the superintendent general of the commerce is immersed, and has been ever since his coming over, in the lowest debauchery and scottishness. Irrecoverably and notoriously so. Think then, how much your commercial interests must suffer in the hands of two such men. . . .The Alderman in London William Lee, [their brother] would be the best controller general of your commerce that could possibly be found."[34]

William Lee was a successful merchant in London. He was a staunch supporter of John Wilkes, of that city, and was elected Alderman with Wilkes' support and endorsement. He did not surrender this British Aldermanship until after American public opinion forced him to do so. If he failed to render a great service to the Revolution, it was not because he lacked offices with official status during that time. He was simultaneously Alderman of the city of London, Commercial Agent at Nantes, and the Commissioner for the courts of both Vienna and Berlin. However the services he performed were limited.

With or without the benefit of Arthur Lee's advice the Secret Committee of Correspondence informed Deane that William

[34] Ibid., p. 22.

Lee of London has been appointed joint-commercial agent at Nantes with Thomas Morris. As ordered, Deane, in the name of the Commission, wrote to Lee informing him of his appointment. Due to his personal affairs William Lee did not arrive in Paris until June, 1777. As no instructions had been forwarded to Paris or to William Lee personally, he decided to remain inactive pending the arrival of his commission from the Secret Committee of Correspondence. He soon clashed with Deane and Franklin over the commercial agency at Nantes. As he was not permitted to visit either Vienna or Berlin, his mission there must be considered a complete failure. Most of his time was spent in Paris complaining that he was not being consulted by the other Commissioners and writing to his brothers in Congress his opinions as to the proper administration of various and sundry congressional affairs which he felt would be better under his jurisdiction.[35] His central theme of complaint was that Deane and Franklin were guilty of exceeding their authority and were more interested in private than public business. However, William Lee's letters indicate that he retained a very active interest in stock jobbing[36] while at the same time drawing money from the American Treasury, certainly a questionable procedure

[35]William Lee, Letters, I, 262-63, 271, 279-80, 346-48.

[36]Ibid., pp. 284-85, 295, 300.

for one who was accusing others of being guilty of the same practice. William Lee remained in Paris from June until August waiting for a commercial commission that never came. Then he went to Nantes at the request of Deane and Franklin to see if he could bring order into the chaotic affairs of that important center of American commerce.[37]

In the meantime the affairs at the port of Nantes had become so critical that drastic action was required. The outfitting of privateers and the sale of prizes required the services of an intelligent and able man, an agent who must often anticipate and evade the orders of the port officials.[38]

From Philadelphia Robert Morris sent John Ross to investigate the affairs of Willing and Morris and Co. and if necessary to take charge. In May, Deane with Franklin's approval, asked Jonathan Williams to go to Nantes and take charge of the privateering business, in reality supplanting and superceding Thomas Morris. He was so satisfactory that Deane decided to retain him although he knew that William Lee expected to serve as co-agent of the public commercial business at Nantes. He confirmed his decision to Williams: "Mr. Lee's arrival would make no odds in this business, as it is distinct from anything contained in either of their

[37]Ibid., pp. 370-374.

[38]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 435.

appointments, and your appointment from us is the only one at present that can be of any force."[39]

The decision to suspend Morris was resented and protested by him upon the authority that his commission from the Committee of Secret Correspondence placed the sale of prizes under his jurisdiction. Deane, though quite worried,[40] did not alter his decision and as long as he remained in France the naval affairs of the port remained with Jonathan Williams. A new element was added when in July John Ross wrote Deane from Nantes: "Permit me to inform you, Mr. Morris is possessed of the Instruction to Mr. Lee, from Committee of Congress, of his being appointed Commercial agent here. . . .These instructions are contained in a letter addressed to Mr. Lee and Mr. Morris as Joint Agents, which is similar and of equal force with the separate powers on which Mr. Morris acted hitherto. I therefore take the liberty to recommend Mr. Lee's repairing hither immediately, to assume the Management, being certain Mr. Morris will possess him of this letter, so soon as they meet, tho' long kept back, probably from inattention."[41]

As this letter was received in July, Deane knew, but did not inform William Lee, that Thomas Morris had in his

[39] New York Historical Collections, II, 87.

[40] Stevens, Facsimiles, #198, 204.

[41] New York Historical Collections, II, 97.

possession Lee's instructions from the Committee. At this time and after his departure from Paris for Nantes, William Lee and Deane were on the best of terms. On August 12, William Lee wrote to Deane: "I will write you on the business as soon as those that have hitherto been concerned will permit me to enter on any, which has not been the case as yet, nor indeed have I been able to procure a sight of any letter, instructions or papers whatsoever relative to the business."[42] As long as Alderman Lee was in Nantes he found that neither his presence nor his advice was desired or followed. He soon returned to Paris. However, having learned of Thomas Morris' letter, he wrote to his brother, Richard Henry Lee, that he too had been suspended by Silas Deane, "though he knows perfectly well that the sale of prizes was expressly committed to Mr. Morris and myself by the Secret Committee."[43] To his brother, Francis Lightfoot Lee, William Lee complained: "In the first line I could and assuredly should have been of great [use] unto the public, as well as myself: especially if the Secret Committee would support their own authority and show an insolent meddler [Deane] here that we properly notice his presumption in taking on himself in many instances to contravene their appointments and orders."[44]

[42]William Lee, Letters, II, 215.

[43]Ibid., I, 271; New York Historical Collections, II, 235-40.

[44]New York Historical Collections, II, 213.

The battle of the commercial agency continued and to reassure Jonathan Williams of the legality of his position, Benjamin Franklin wrote: "You need have no concern as your orders being only from Mr. Deane . . . .but as he generally consulted with me and had by approbation in the orders he gave, and I know they were for the best aimed at the public good, I hereby certify you that I approve and join in these you have received from him, and desire you to proceed in the execution of the same."[45]

In September of 1777, Deane wrote Robert Morris a letter in which he spoke highly of Jonathan Williams and praised Williams as "generous and disinterested"--except in rendering service to the colonies.[46] However, to retain harmony, at least on the surface, Deane proposed and Franklin agreed that the entire commercial transactions and naval business should be returned to Thomas Morris and William Lee, but after the letter had been written, Arthur Lee not only refused to sign it but refused to permit the letter to be sent. His excuse or reason was that as William Lee had in the meantime been appointed Commissioner to the Courts of Berlin and Vienna, he would soon be leaving for this new post.[47]

Seemingly the "battle of the agents" was over when word came that Thomas Morris was dead. William Lee, upon the

[45]Franklin, Works, X, 343; New York Historical Collections, II, 282.

[46]New York Historical Collections, II, 159-60.

[47]Ibid., p. 329.

advice of the three commissioners, went to Nantes to prevent Morris' papers from being seized by the French Government. To Francis Lightfoot Lee, another brother in Congress, William Lee wrote that he was going to Nantes to take charge of the public papers of Mr. Morris and "to form some plan for conducting the public commercial business as I am immediately going on my Embassy in Germany."[48] Arriving in Nantes, William Lee secured control of Morris' paper without any difficulty.

The death of Thomas Morris, instead of solving the problem of the commercial agency, merely added fuel to the fire. Deane was informed by John Ross that William Lee had spent four days secretly going through the private and public papers of Thomas Morris and after that he had requested three American merchants in Nantes to certify that he had only selected the public papers. This the merchants refused to do, and, as Ross described the situation to Deane, "Our champion was so chagrined and mortified on receiving their answer, that his passion and dignity forced him to a declaration, that the papers (as they lay in the trunk) should be carried to Paris and put in the hands of the commissioners." In the same letter Ross also wrote that "a letter of yours selected with many others is said here to have made discoverys of great imposition on the public." Ross assured Deane that

[48]New York Historical Collection, II, 369.

Deane had his permission to use his name to refute any "strained construction and malicious insinuations" that might be made against Deane.[49]

With the death of Thomas Morris the affairs of the Nantes commercial agency passed under the control of William Lee. However, the naval affairs remained under Jonathan Williams' direction until after Deane sailed for America. William Lee, planning to leave for Germany, offered a partnership in the agency to Jonathan Williams, but upon Franklin's advice he declined. The Alderman then appointed William Schweighauser, a German merchant residing in Nantes, to be his sub-agent. His nephew, Thomas Lee, son of Richard Henry Lee, was appointed clerk of the new agency. When informed of this arrangement by William Lee, Deane wrote him: "I can have no objection to the person you propose appointing to act under you in the Commercial Agency, nor can I take any active part in that affair."[50] In the same letter Deane requested "that as it is probable that I shall return to America before you return to France, I conceive it but just and honorable in you to inform me previous to either of our leaving France of any imputations of this Nature which you have authorized against me."[51] In this Deane was disappointed. To John Ross he wrote: "I should be very happy could I bring

[49]New York Historical Collections, II, 385-89.

[50]Ibid., pp. 391-92.

[51]Ibid., p. 393.

my Enemies here into open day, and to lay their accusations and complaints against me formally, in which case I should know what I had to answer to; but this I despair of, for he only who made them can alter their dispositions; it is very hard to be obliged to combat such bush fighting Poltroons, against whom one can never be too much on one's Defence, and never sure for a moment, but I trust soon to Lug them all out into open day."[52]

When the Commission was formally organized in December 1776, it was only natural that Deane should retain control of the commercial and financial departments because of his previous experience and contacts. He was popular with the French ministers and had well established channels of communications.[53] He also enjoyed a wide circle of acquaintances in French mercantile circles.

While Deane was having difficulties with the commercial agency, his friend Beaumarchais was having trouble because of the failure of Congress to send remittances. Due to a restraining order, Beaumarchais found it increasingly difficult to forward supplies that he had contracted for with Deane. Because of the failure of Congress to send him remittances and the refusal of the French government to permit his ships to sail, Beaumarchais was soon reduced almost to the

[52] New York Historical Collections, II, 409.

[53] Stevens, Facsimiles,. #686.

point of bankruptcy.[54] After many passionate but unsuccessful appeals to Vergennes for financial relief he sent his nephew, De Francey, to America in September of 1777 to investigate the failure of Congress to send him remittances.[55] From America De Francey warned Beaumarchais that he would never be paid and urged him to "trim his financial sails." "There is no doubt that what you have done has been presented here in a false light. I expect to have many prejudices to destroy and many heads set right, for sending of several vessels without invoices (a thing which, to say the truth, is unprecedented), and the errors found in the bill of lading of the Amphitrite, especially, have caused it to be suspected that the shipments were not made by a merchant."[56] However, Beaumarchais, in spite of these dire warnings, negotiated a second contract with Congress. Though admitting the arrival of the goods Congress still did not choose to pay for the supplies received under the old contract with Deane. Congress apparently preferred to accept Arthur Lee's positive assurance that Beaumarchais was merely the agent of the King of France and that no remittances were expected for the supplies.

Deane continued to support Beaumarchais. In his report of September 7, 1777, he praised Beaumarchais' efforts in

[54] Ibid., #1830, 2008.

[55] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 392.

[56] Theveneau De Francey, Letters of Theveneau De Francey, p. 10.

sending supplies and urged prompt payment for the goods and services already received.[57] "Whatever this ship [Heureuse] may be loaded with, I pray the cargo may come to Messrs. Rodreque Hortalez and Co., as they have advanced for arms and other articles of this cargo over and above their other large advances."[58]

In December of 1777, when the Amphitrite arrived in France loaded with a cargo of rice, indigo, and tobacco, Beaumarchais demanded that the cargo be turned over to him. Arthur Lee immediately declared that he had never "heard of any agreement made with him" [Beaumarchais],[59] and Franklin expressed "surprise by which money was demanded of them for goods they never ordered" and "Mr. Deane seemed unacquainted with any agreement with him [Beaumarchais]."[60] In spite of their first reaction the Commissioners informed Congress that "Mr. De Beaumarchais having satisfied us that he had a prior claim upon the cargo of the Amphitrite, according to an agreement with Mr. Deane, surrendered the cargo to him."[61] The Commissioners later wrote Congress recommending that Beaumarchais' accounts be settled in France because of a

[57]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 387.

[58]Ibid., p. 387.

[59]Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, I, 459.

[60]Ibid., p. 373.

[61]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 459.

"mixture of public and private business."[62] Arthur Lee, while signing such recommendations to the Committee, continued to inform that body that France expected no pay for the supplies sent by Beaumarchais.[63] In reporting the affair of the Amphitrite to Vergennes, Beaumarchais spoke of that "honest deputy, Mr. Deane" and later repeated that "one of my greatest encouragements is the gratitude of that honest man, speaking for his nation."[64]

The insinuations that Deane engaged extensively in private business while serving as an agent of the Secret Committee of Correspondence and Commissioners of Congress in France was freely made by both Arthur and William Lee to their brothers and friends in Congress in the closing months of 1777 but without citing specific cases. In reviewing the state of his accounts, Deane wrote to John Ross March 23, 1778, on the eve of his departure for America, that

> As to Mr. Morris's affairs with me, they are in a very narrow compass. Mr. Delap fitted out a Brigantine, one third on his own, one third on Mr. Morris and one third on my account. This vessel was taken and Mr. Delap has charged each of us separately with one third loss. Mr. Chaumont equipped a large ship and cargo, in which I engaged jointed with Mr. Morris for 100,000 Livres. The Vessel arrived safe, and to a good market, but no returns are yet come to hand. I have on this paid Ten thousand Livres, and given

[62]Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, I, 395, II, 35-38; Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 496.

[63]Ibid., pp. 494-95.

[64]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1500.

> my note for the rest. The cargo is insured and a profit from this adventure is certain. These are all our adventures, except the unfortunate one with Captain Bell, the loss of which is to be equally shared between Mr. Beaumarchais, Morris and Company, Mr. Thomas Morris, Mr. Eyries of Havre, and myself. I advanced what money was advanced by a credit given me by Mons. Satelier, in consequence of 86 hhds of tobacco received by Plairne, Pennet and Co., who afterwards wickedly converted the avails of the Tobacco to their own use, and ordered Satelier to charge the money advanced to me to the Commissioners at large.[65]

These transactions were later included in Deane's oral and written report to Congress. William Lee in his complaints to his brothers was not objecting to Deane's business practices, but to the fact that the opportunity was denied him.[66] William Lee also failed to avail himself of Deane's invitation "to inform me previous to either of our leaving France of any imputations of this nature which you have authorized against me."[67]

To Benjamin Harrison, a personal friend, Deane wrote, October 5, 1777: "I have been, and still am, so engaged in procuring cloathing and other supplies for the public, the laborious part which has lain on me, that I have had no time to attend to any private concern, tho' my extensive acquaintance in the manufacturies and with the commercial people in Europe give me every advantage I could wish or desire."[68]

[65] New York Historical Collections, II, 422-23.

[66] Ibid., p. 214.

[67] Ibid., pp. 391-92.

[68] Ibid., pp. 172-73.

To Robert Morris, his accused partner in speculations, he explained: "While engaged in public affairs, I find it impossible to attend to any private adventures, our correspondence as Commissioners is very extensive, and application of one nature or another is very numerous," and he expressed the desire "to quite Politics . . . forever . . . and attend solely to my own affairs, which have been for several years neglected."[69] To C. W. F. Dumas, his correspondent in Holland, he wrote: " . . . for myself, I have really no leisure for several months to write a single letter, but what the instant necessity of time required."[70]

Deane's enemies frequently charged that he permitted inferior goods to be shipped to the Colonies and in general was very casual in dealing with the public business. But Deane was operating without adequate staff, from ports widely separated, and with many fields of interest. In addition, communication and transportation were poor, complaints from America were scarce and his accusers failed to produce proof for any of their charges.

Throughout his correspondence runs a stream of orders and warnings to his agents to use every care and precaution to protect the public interest. In early January of 1777 he wrote to Beaumarchais:

[69]*Ibid.*, pp. 307-08.

[70]*Ibid.*, p. 302.

> As we may probably in a short time send means to forward the Stores at Nantes and Havre, I can but mention to you a Circumstance which gives me some uneasiness, and which I conceive it may be your interest as well as mine to remove. Certain busy Persons have hinted that the arms and other Articles were not good nor well laid in. Now though I have no doubt of the Falsity of these Reports than I have of the ill designs of those who propagate them, yet to remove even the Shadow of Suspicion on this subject I propose the having an Inspection made in a way that will be at once satisfactory and without making the transaction public. To effect this I will, if agreeable to you, prevail with Mr. Carmichael, whom you know, to go to Havre, and with Mr. Williams, the Newphew of Docr. Franklin, who is a merchant, and whose Judgement full reliance may be placed, to Nantes, to examine personally into the State of the Arms and Stores, and to make their Report how they find them. I propose, farther, that Mr. Carmichael stay at Havre untill the Seine shall be dispatched, and Mr. Williams at Nantes untill the Stores from there can be got to Sea, if it can be effected in any Season. If this proposal is agreeable to you, the Gentlemen will wait on you to receive any orders you may have, and set out tomorrow, or the next Day at the farthest.[71]

Early in February of 1777, Beaumarchais wrote to Deane regarding a new order from the French Court: "All these examinations, these inquisitions and these inspections of arms and merchandise, Monsieur, have undoubtedly an object of great utility, since they have been thought indispensable. They have at least served to refute all the base suspicions which have been feigned as to the excellence of the articles furnished, that is to say, in plain French, as to the honesty of M. Hortalez. But was it worth the time that we have been forced to lose? And now that there can

[71] New York Historical Collections, I, 451-52.

be only commendation for me and that my cargoes are admitted to be of admirable quality, may I presume to ask you, Monsieur, with what right you show yourself so exacting as to the fulfillment of my engagements, when you have not, as yet, responded to any of your own toward me? Impress this consideration somewhat upon Messieurs, your colleagues, who are ready to criticise what they do not understand and who refuse the commonest forms of politeness to the most useful friend of your country."[72]

Other correspondence would also indicate that the allegation of Deane's lack of care in permitting inferior goods to be shipped to America were contrary to fact. For in considering his correspondence further it can be noted that Deane wrote to Sir George Grand, Banker for the Commissioners: "I will not accept inferior goods . . . nor if the price is too high,"[73] and to John Merckle, a contractor, Deane wrote that there was "no use using a menacing style. . . .We never were privy to any contract with you. . . ."[74] and he informed the same contractor that he "would not accept arms of inferior quality."[75] Jonathan Williams was warned that Deane had reason to be suspicious of some cloth that was soon to be delivered to Williams at

[72]Ibid., pp. 493-94.
[73]Ibid., II, 179.
[74]Ibid., p. 179.
[75]Ibid., pp. 221, 230.

Nantes for shipment to America. "I have only to caution you how to receive them, if they will not fully answer the comparison with those sent by Messrs. Holker and Co., were by contract to be standard."[76] Shortly before he returned to America he informed the firm of Geradot and Halber: "I must now add decisively that I cannot accept them, or suffer them to be accepted in any account."[77]

The Commissioners also acted as commercial attachés for the American business men in France. Upon an enquiry two American businessmen received the following reply written by Deane: "We are not ourselves concerned in commerce, but at the same time am desirous of giving our contrymen the best Intelligence that can be obtained on a subject of so much importance to them."[78] Such evidence is proof that Deane was an interested and devoted servant of the public doing the job to the best of his ability. Despite the insinuations there is no evidence of dissatisfaction in the armed services with the materials which Deane sent. One of the first to express his appreciation to Deane upon his return to the United States, in July, 1778, was General George Washington, who would have been aware of any inferiorities in the supplies sent.

[76] Ibid., p. 189.
[77] Ibid., pp. 310-11.
[78] Ibid., p. 231.

When Arthur Lee returned to Paris in the fall of 1777 after being rebuffed in his requests for aid and recognition by the Courts of Madrid, Vienna, and Berlin, differences of opinion among the commissioners soon appeared. According to their instructions the Commissioners were collectively responsible for decisions of the Commission, but each was individually accountable to the Congress for any financial transactions to which he was a party. Such a division of power permitted Deane and Franklin to prevent legally a settlement of accounts or an explanation for their individual accounts. Deane in his report to Congress maintained that Lee was informed and concurred in all contracts and expenditures of money while Lee constantly maintained that he was denied access to information and that everything was done to conceal all transactions from him. In an intercepted letter of October 4, 1777, Arthur Lee complained to his brother, Richard Henry Lee, that "Mr. Deane, Dr. Bancroft, and William Carmichael . . . have been practicing against me, and what I do not know is how far it may extend."[79] Such an arrangement and feeling may account for Arthur Lee's private letters to his brothers in Congress of charges and warnings that something should be done to protect the public interest. Such an explanation may be logical but it does not explain Arthur Lee's desire to acquire control of the Commission.

[79]Stevens, Facsimiles, #269; Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, II, 118-19.

Arthur Lee immediately charged his colleagues with failure to press the French for an Alliance, with endangering and violating French neutrality and hospitality with indiscriminate privateering and open and illegal sale of prizes in French ports, and with the mishandling of American affairs because of their greed, incompetence and indolence.[80] In these charges he was vigorously supported by William Lee, Alderman of London, Commercial agent at Nantes and Commissioner at the courts of Vienna and Berlin.[81]

Arthur Lee charged, and with some degree of truth, that the commissioners in Paris had failed to keep him informed of the progress of affairs during his journeys.[82] He was especially critical of the business of the privateers and charged that large sums of money had been spent without his knowledge and consent.[83] The difficulties of William Lee, his brother, about the commercial agency at Nantes did nothing to calm ruffled tempers and soothe the pride of the injured. Deane's midnight visits[84] to Versailles for conferences with Gerard and Vergennes added to Arthur Lee's suspicions that important matters were being concealed from him and that state secrets were being used for private commercial advantages.[85]

[80] Ibid., I, 100, 170-71, II, 114-16.

[81] William Lee, Letters, I, 279-80, 346-48.

[82] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 351.

[83] Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, I, 346.

[84] Stevens, Facsimiles, #259.

[85] Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, I, 346.

Such a state of affairs was too much for a man who ardently desired to accomplish great things for his country. Arthur Lee soon convinced himself that he was a victim of a cabal[86] engineered by Deane and abetted by Franklin to deprive him of the honor and credit to which he was entitled. To Theodoric Bland, his friend in America, he wrote: "It is not a little unpleasant to be deprived of that praise that constant toil and assiduity in the public service have deserved, and submit to be traduced by those who, instead of consulting the public interests when in office, have made immense fortunes for themselves and their dependents; who are occupied with two things only, their own gain and the abuse of everyone who will not sacrifice the public to theirs. Mr. _____ is generally understood to have made £ 60,000. . . .These things are notorious, and there is no visible source of their prosperity, but the public money and state secrets to trade upon. It may be useful to you to know these things as they concern the public."[87]

Discovering that neither Deane nor Franklin were inclined to accept his leadership or criticism, Arthur Lee conceived a plan whereby he could secure control of the Commission in Paris by a shift in the membership. On October 14, 1777, shortly after his return from Berlin, he wrote Samuel Adams, his friend and supporter in Congress, this

[86] Ibid., II, 118.
[87] Ibid., I, 161-62.

observation and suggestion: "I have with this been at the several courts of Spain, Vienna, and Berlin, and I find this of France the great wheel that moves them all. Here, therefore, the most activity is required, and if it should ever be a question in Congress about my destination, I should be much obliged to you for remembering that I should prefer being at the court of France."[88] On the same day, October 14, he wrote his brother, Richard Henry Lee: "My idea of adapting characters and places is this: Dr. Franklin to Vienna, as the first, most respectable, and quiet [place]; Mr. Deane to Holland; and the Alderman [William Lee] to Berlin, as the commercial department; Mr. Izard where he is; Mr. Jenning at Madrid, his reserve circumspection being excellently adapted to that court. France remains the center of political activity, and here, therefore, I should chose to be employed."[89]

Arthur Lee had worked out the above plan which would manipulate the characters involved and place himself in an advantageous position. This was not a momentary whim for again later in the year he lamented to Richard Henry Lee that: "Things go worse and worse everyday among ourselves, and my situation is more painful. I see in every department neglect, dissipation, and private schemes. Being in trust

[88] Ibid., II, 113.

[89] Ibid., pp. 114-16.

here, I am responsible for what I cannot prevent, and these very men will probably be the instruments of having me called to account one day for their misdeeds. There is but one way of redressing this and remedying the public evil, and that is the plan I sent you."[90] The plan of course refers to the one that would leave Arthur Lee in Paris and in control of the mission.

Mr. Lee's confidence in his ability to operate the "great wheel" in Paris was never in doubt, but the suspicions that he had of graft, corruption, and personal speculations were never specifically cited. That he "whispers in" Samuel Adams' ear of stock jobbing is not necessarily proof that it was so.[91]

In a letter intercepted by the General Post Office in London, William Carmichael, hated by the Lees and by November of 1777 at odds with Deane, described the suspicion of the Lee brothers in this manner: "The misfortune of these people is to believe that everybody is plotting against them, they therefore plot against everybody. They think me leagued with Mr. Deane and Dr. Franklin at the very time I really feel hurt at their public conduct and the private behavior of one to my self."[92]

[90] Ibid., pp. 127-28

[91] Ibid., pp. 124-25.

[92] Stevens, Facsimiles, #288.

The entire time that Deane had lived in France had been a period of high tension. It would have been unusual if he had not failed to control his temper or had not shown resentment for what he considered unfair and unjustified criticism. Deane was not insensitive to the charges and insinuations of mismanagement and private speculation. On December 13, 1777, he wrote a straightforward letter to Arthur Lee asking him to name the time and place for a meeting: "Mr. Deane cannot be insensible to the manner in which he has been treated in Mr. Lee's last two Billets, nor to the insinuations which have been for many months since made by Mr. Lee, respecting his conduct. This is not the time to resent either the one or the other. Mr. Deane wishes not ever to do it, but in the mean Time, and once for all, urges Mr. Lee to have the Candor to communicate to him in person the grounds for his uneasiness: in which case Mr. Deane pledges his honor that Nothing on his part shall be wanting to remove them. This is certainly a more honorable and just way, between equals at least, than Private insinuations and threatening Billets or Complaining ones."[93]

To this offer Mr. Lee did not answer. The negotiations with the French Court soon became the dominant concern of the Commissioners and new differences soon over-shadowed the ones of the past.

[93] New York Historical Collections, II, 272-73.

The signing of the treaty of Amity and Commerce and the treaty of Alliance in March of 1778 by France and the American Commissioners in Paris ended the French policy of "watchful waiting". Long before the arrival of Silan Deane in July of 1776, the French ministers had considered ways and means of sustaining the revolt of the American colonies without becoming directly involved in a war with England. This had been the basis for the policy of secret aid, now ended with the formal recognition of the American colonies as an independent state.

When the news of the victory at Saratoga reached the Chancery in Versailles, Vergennes realized that the moment of decision had arrived. He foresaw that England must now make a desperate and drastic effort for a reconcilation or face the prospect of a long, long war. France, he felt, "must now either support the colonies or abandon them. We must form the alliance before England offers independence or we will lose the benefit to be derived from America, and England will still control their commerce."[94]

Having reached a decision, Vergennes moved swiftly. He prepared a paper in which he outlined the policy required by the new developments. The paper was submitted to Maurepas, the chief minister, and through him Vergennes' new policy was presented to the king. After consideration by Louis XVI and a Council of State, the resolution to form an alliance with

[94]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1775.

the United States was unanimously adopted December 12, 1777. A courier was immediately dispatched to Spain with the news of Burgoyne's surrender and the decision of the French Court to make an alliance with the Americans because the French Ministers felt that the opportune time for such a move had arrived. The concurrence of the Spanish Court was requested and expected as provided for in the Family Compact. When the request was rejected by the Spanish Court, France decided to proceed alone.[95]

The news of Burgoyne's surrender brought rejoicing to the Americans at Passy. Franklin, if not his colleagues, knew that a crisis was at hand. He felt that America could now play England against France, and he was determined to make the most of the situation. Throughout the year 1777 Franklin's diplomacy had not been aggressive. He sincerely believed that it was in the true interest of France and her commerce to prevent the American colonies from being defeated. He reasoned that the loss to England of her American commercial monopoly would more than repay France for the cost of supporting American independence.[96] His refusal to "court"

[95]Edward S. Corwin, "The Treaty of Alliance and Outbreak of War," French Policy and the American Alliance, pp. 120-49; Claude S. VanTyne, "Influences Which Determined the French Government to Make a Treaty with America," American Historical Review, XXI (1916), 528-41; Edmund C. Burnett, "Notes on the American Negotiations for Commercial Treaties, 1776-1786," American Historical Review, XVI (1910), 579-87.

[96]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 388; Weldon A. Brown, Empire or Independence: A Study in Failure of Reconciliation, 1774-1783 (Baton Rogue, 1941).

France and his reluctance to "bind America beyond its true interests" had been reported to London and were a decisive factor in the British campaign for reconciliation.[97] William Carmichael, in a letter intercepted by the General Post Office in London, had expressed his opinion that Franklin actually trembled "for Fear his Propositions would be accepted [in France]. He wishes no European Connections. . . ."[98]

If the year 1777 was a year of military reverses for the Americans, and a year of "watchful waiting" for the French, until October 5, at least, it had been a year of golden hopes for the English. In fact, Lord North was already considering how to speak of America in the King's Speech to Parliament when it should reassemble. To William Eden, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he put the question: "How shall we mention America? Shall we be very stout? or shall we take advantage of the flourishing state of our affairs to get out of the d____d war, and hold a moderate language?"[99] Little did he know that his question had already been answered for him at a place called Saratoga, October 5, 1777.

[97]Stevens, Facsimiles, #277; David Jayne Hill, "Franklin and the French Alliance," Records of the Columbia Historical Society, XXX, (1930).

[98]Stevens, Facsimiles, #289.

[99]Lord North to William Eden, November 4, 1777, British Museum Additional Manuscripts 34414, pp 309-10, Clements Library; Alan Brown, William Eden and the American Revolution, unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Michigan, Film number 1537.

The news of Burgoyne's surrender arrived in England December 2, causing consternation in all British political circles. Lord Germain, Secretary of War, wrote to Eden that he could think of nothing but America, and asked if Eden had "thought of any Expedient for extracting this country out of its distress?"[100] Eden did think of something. With North's approval, but under Eden's immediate supervision, Paul Wentworth, former colonial agent and now a British agent, was dispatched two days later in an eleventh hour attempt to forestall any Franco-American Alliance which the British ministers now considered imminent. Wentworth was only one of a number of such agents who appeared independently and secretly to attempt liaison with Dr. Franklin.

Before Paul Wentworth left London on his mission to Paris to prevent the signing of a Franco-America alliance he received a letter from Eden which was to guide him in his negotiations. If necessary, Wentworth was authorized to permit the Americans to read it. The letter contained an appeal to the Commissioners to consider carefully all the issues and factors involved before making any decision that would prevent reconciliation from taking place of the basis of a common agreement. This was based on a common national pride, sentiment, and common interest and warned the Americans

[100]Lord Germain to William Eden, December 3, 1777, British Museum, Add. MSS 34414, p. 310.

against trusting an "alien nation." In his letter Eden listed a number of questions to serve as a basis of negotiation with the commissioners:

1. Would the colonies pay the expenses of their own government in lieu of taxes to England?

2. Upon the restoration of charters would the colonies restore all confiscated property?

3. Would the colonies be willing to pay for their own military protection?

4. Upon the re-opening of their ports would the colonies accept some sort of commercial regulations?

5. Would both countries exchange mutual guarantees of possessions and restore common citizenship?

Eden expressed the opinion that the Americans should not demand complete independence; with a system of "qualified controul" he felt that the war could be ended to the satisfaction and honor of all.[101]

It is not unlikely that Eden was guided by the sentiments expressed in another of William Carmichael's intercepted letters. In this letter Carmichael expressed the opinion, which was interpreted to be that of the commissioners, that "If we could on one side lose the idea of supremacy and on the other side that of independence we might be friends by Treaty never by Confederacy."[102]

[101]Stevens, Facsimiles, #483.

[102]Ibid., #288.

Before Wentworth left London he was not given any written instructions as to how he should implement his mission. However, it is not unlikely that Eden suggested that Deane would be a good contact. In July of 1777 George Lupton, British agent in Paris who was friendly with Deane, had reported to Eden: "I cannot help mentioning an observation or expression which Mr. Deane made to me and many others and which has startled me, the friend of America. I breakfasted with him on Monday last at which he observed that it was a pity that Great Britain did not bring about a reconciliation with the colonies, and jointly make war against France, but at the same time he observed twould be necessary to let them support their independence, however I imagine a reconciliation might be brought about on favorable terms."[103]

Wentworth left London on the 10th of December, arriving in Paris on the 12th. He immediately wrote to Deane requesting a private interview. He stated that he would wait for him in his coach the following morning near the barrier leading to Passy. Then he would attend an exhibition at the Luxemburg Gallery, and in the evening would go to the Pot de Vin Bathing House on the river, leaving a note with the number of the room engaged with the attendant. Wentworth informed Deane that "In the meeting the greatest secrecy and honour is expected."[104] In reply Deane stated that he would

[103] Ibid., #179.
[104] Ibid., #719.

see anyone who had business with him and that "Mr. Deane will always treat every subject and honour its merit."[105] In his reply Wentworth mentioned that he was on the point of returning to London "where you may have wishes to make me useful in which I shall be happy if they promote a peace." The two men met at dinner and after pledging themselves to "secrecy and the confidence of private gentlemen wishing well to both countries" they reviewed the antecedents of the conflict without arriving at a common view.[106]

Next morning Wentworth called for Deane at the Cafe St. Honore where he was having breakfast with Franklin and Arthur Lee. After the meal the two men went off together to continue discussion in which Wentworth reported that Deane displayed a great deal of Republican pride.

In their second meeting Wentworth outlined his plan of reconciliation, which was to be based on amnesty and a return to the status that existed at the time of the treaty of 1763. Under this plan the colonies were to be self-governing in their own affairs and Parliament was only to interpose in external affairs. He proposed an armistice by which British troops would be withdrawn except in New York and the neighboring islands. He also suggested that the American leaders would be entitled to such offices as Privy

[105] New York Historical Collections, II, 271.

[106] Paul Wentworth to William Eden, December 17, 1777, British Museum, Add. MSS. 34414, pp. 433-42.

Seals, Great Seals, local baronies, Knighthoods, and governor-generalships. To this he suggested a loan of thirty-million pounds for the benefit of agriculture and a sound currency.[107] It was a rosy picture, and it may be inferred that Deane showed interest.

Deane, pleading illness, failed to keep his next appointment with Wentworth. In reply to a note from Wentworth he arranged a meeting between Wentworth and Franklin. Franklin stipulated that no mention of personal rewards would be made and that the meeting would have to appear accidental. The stipulated condition reveals that Deane and Franklin had discussed the previous Deane-Wentworth conversations.

Arthur Lee learned about the Deane-Wentworth conversations indirectly. "In the evening Mr. Lee visited Mr. Commissioner Izard, who asked if he had heard anything of a proposal to the commissioners, within a few days, from England. Mr. Lee said, 'No'. He (Izard) replied, 'you are ill-treated, and you ought to call Mr. Deane to a severe account for his conduct'; for that Paul Wentworth had a meeting with Mr. Deane, to whom he made propositions, which Mr. Deane gave to the French ministry! Mr. Lee said that he had not heard one syllable of it; that he would enquire into it;

[107] Ibid.

but that being a public wrong, he could not resent it personally."[108] The next day "Mr. Lee went to Passy at 12 o'clock. . . .Lee asked Mr. Deane whether a Mr. Wentworth was in town, and whether he has seen him? Mr. Deane said that Mr. Wentworth had desired to see him, that he knew little of him, that he expressed a desire for accommodation, and upon what terms it could be obtained, for that he thought the ministry in England were disposed to it. This was all he communicated upon the subject."[109] With the exception of Arthur Lee's feelings the negotiations were a success. First Deane did the spade work and, having led Wentworth to expect success, quietly turned the affair over to Franklin. The French ministers were kept fully informed of each move and offer made by the British agent--not only by their own agents but by Franklin and Deane.

The meeting between Wentworth and Franklin took place as arranged. For two hours they talked, and Wentworth read parts of Eden's letter of December 6. Franklin was even more noncommittal than Deane. Then Wentworth proposed to send Deane and Franklin to England under a safe conduct to deal directly with the ministers. Franklin closed the conversation by stating that America would never consent to peace without independence and stated that he really had no power to deal with Great Britain on any basis.[110]

[108]Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, I, 366-67.

[109]Ibid., p. 367.

[110]Lewis Einstein, Divided Loyalties: Americans in England During the War of Independence, (London, 1938), p. 28.

In dispatches dated December 25, 1777, and January 1, 1778, Wentworth reported the results of his mission to Eden who forwarded them to Lord North. Lord North commented to Eden: "I was two hours reading Wentworth's dispatches last night. I do not know what to think of them, and I cannot pretend to judge whether there is, or is not any wish of peace in 51 [code name for Deane]."[111] The entire correspondence was transmitted to George III. North's comment to him was that: "This expedition of Mr. Wentworth's may very possibly end in nothing, but (as he speaks entirely for himself, Lord North hopes and believes that no mischief can arise from it), especially as he had the greatest confidence in the discretion and ability of Mr. Wentworth."[112] In his diagnosis and evaluation of Paul Wentworth's mission Lord North was wrong.

The astute Franklin sensed the advantage to be gained from each British offer of reconciliation. He seized every opportunity to increase his bargaining power by informing the French ministers of the offers and suggestions that were being made not only by Wentworth but by the various other agents who appeared independently of each other, but he was pointedly silent on the provisions or terms offered or suggested. In a conversation with Deane, Gerard noted and

[111]Lord North to William Eden, December 23, 1777, British Museum, Add. MSS. 34414, pp. 461-62.

[112]The Correspondence of George III with Lord North from 1768 to 1783, W. Bodham, ed., 2 vols. (London, 1867), II, 591.

reported to Vergennes that Deane "spoke to me with much uneasiness of the conduct of Mr. Hutton, and confessed that Dr. Franklin was very reticent in this matter."[113] Vergennes instructed Gerard to maintain close contact with Deane, because, he said: "I do not suspect that any reticence exists on the side of our friend." Wentworth was also placed under close observation, and each visitor and visit was noted and reported by agents of Vergennes.[114] In the meantime, while Deane and Franklin had been considering overtures from England, Gerard had been commissioned by Vergennes to open the preliminary negotiations with the three American Commissioners and obtain from them the conditions upon which an alliance could be made. The hour for which Franklin had waited had arrived.

In opening the formal negotiations with the American commissioners, Gerard's first step was to invite Deane to Versailles. In his report to Vergennes Gerard wrote: "I confided my plan to Mr. Deane that, having regard to our previous interviews, I might be commissioned to announce to him the execution of a treaty, but I begged him not to inform his colleagues. The confidence which this Deputy puts in me seemed to require this preliminary disclosure, and his conduct has justified it."[115] Deane, who refused to hear

[113]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1831; "Some Accounts of James Hutton's Visit to Franklin in France, in December of 1777," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXXII (1908), 223-32.

[114]Stevens, Facsimiles, #718.

[115]Ibid., #1831.

any proposals unless his colleagues were present, arranged for a meeting of the Commissioners with Gerard without disclosing the purpose of the Conference.

The three Commissioners did meet with Gerard. The primary subject was the extent of French aid required to secure American independence. Gerard opened the discussion by requesting each individual to pledge himself to secrecy both as to the meeting and the subjects discussed. After a slight hesitation Franklin broke the silence by saying, "I promise," followed by Lee and Deane. Gerard then asked two questions: "1. What would they, the Deputies, consider sufficient to reject all the proposals of England, which did not include recognition of full and absolute independence both in politics and trade? and 2. What would they consider equally necessary to produce the same effect on Congress and the American people?" Franklin immediately raised the question of France's entry into the war, but this Gerard pointed out was a question that he was not empowered to discuss. However, it stood to reason that war would soon follow, and he knew that the King was prepared to wage war, but he could say no more on this subject. Gerard, having side-stepped the issue of immediate war, wished to withdraw so that the deputies might consider their answer jointly and privately.

At the end of an hour Gerard returned and found Franklin writing a reply. At Deane's request Franklin read his answer

to the first question asked by the French Minister. In his statement Franklin reviewed the "fruitlessness of their proceedings and the difficulties they had experienced." Finally, Gerard reported, he read an article to the effect that the immediate conclusion of a treaty of commerce and alliance would induce the deputies to close their ears to any proposal which should not have as its basis entire liberty and independence, both political and commercial. At this point Gerard stopped him and stated that the king and his ministers "having presumed that such would be the desire of the deputies, I had been authorized to tell them that whenever they should judge that treaty necessary His Majesty was resolved to at once conclude it, and that it would be begun as soon as they wished." But Franklin again returned to France's entry into the war. Gerard hesitated, "but Mr. Deane encouraged me with a glance" and again being pressed by Franklin said that two treaties might be concluded--the first of peace, friendship, and commerce; the second, of eventual alliance. The first would recognize the independence of the United States and treat with her as an equal. Gerard explained that the value and the implementation of the alliance would depend upon events. The only definite stipulation that the King would make in an alliance was that the colonies should continue the war until the British were expelled from North America. In his final report of the meeting to Vergennes Gerard wrote: "I had dwelt

on the conquest of the whole continent because Deane had confided to me that this was according to the Doctor's way of thinking, and the most definite reason for forming ties with France, which he was inclined to think the United States could otherwise do without."[116] It was at this meeting that the Americans learned that Spain had declined to recognize the independence of the United States or join in the alliance. The disappointment of the Americans, especially Franklin, was acute. "The Doctor after some moments of silence, replied with some emotion: 'We have always been given to understand, and we have always thought that the resolves of France were common to Spain.'"[117]

On January 18, 1778, Gerard, who had been appointed the negotiator for Louis XVI, submitted to Franklin, Lee, and Deane tentative drafts of the two treaties. Two weeks were spent in agreeing on the details. In accordance with Gerard's former statement that the King of France was "too great, too just and too generous" to profit by the circumstances to gain any advantage from them, he counted "only on the advantages which would result from mutual interest." With regard to France's renunciation of commercial monopolies Gerard had stated and now proved that the King "was eager to give to all Europe as well as America on this occasion an example of disinterestedness, by asking of the

[116] Ibid., #1831.
[117] Ibid., #1831.

United States only such things as it might suit them to grant equally to any other power." Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, and John Adams would all be pleased with this commercial treaty which did not carry any involvements with it.

In the second treaty, The Treaty of Alliance, the Commissioners squarely faced "political entanglements." This treaty was to come into force only in case of an actual outbreak of hostilities between England and France (Article I). Article II declared: "The essential and direct End of the present defensive alliance is to maintain effectually the liberty, Sovereignty, and indenpence absolute and unlimited of the said united States, as well in Matters of Government as of commerce." Article VI dealt with territorial claims. "The most Christain King renounces forever the possession of the islands of Bermudas as well as any part of the continent of North america which before the treaty of Paris in 1763, or in virtue of that Treaty, were acknowledged to belong to the Crown of Great Britain, or the united states heretofore called British Colonies, or which are at this time or have been lately under the Power of the King and Crown of Great Britain."[118]

[117] Ibid., #1831.

[118] The Treaties of 1778 and Allied Documents, Gilbert Chinard, ed., (Baltimore, 1928), p. 52.

In accordance with the expressed wish of the King of France the treaty stated that "neither of the two Parties shall conclude either Truce or Peace with Great Britain, without the formal consent of the other first obtain'd; and they mutually engage not to lay down arms, until the Independence of the united States shall have been formally or tacitly assured by the Treaty or Treaties that shall terminate the war."[119]

The negotiation between the French and the Americans was concluded without any basic difference of opinion. However, clauses XI and XII of the Amnity and Commerce treaty related to a proposal by Gerard that France should agree to impose no export duty on molasses purchased by Americans in the French West Indies in return for which the United States should agree to place no export duty upon any American commodity purchased by Frenchmen. At first Arthur Lee approved, but later changed his mind, seemingly after consulting Ralph Izard of South Carolina, now in Paris serving as Commissioner to the Court of Tuscany.[120] Izard, Arthur Lee, and William Lee reached the conclusion that Silas Deane, with Franklin's acquiescence, was attempting to favor New England's commercial interests at the expense of southern agricultural interests.[121] Again Deane acted as Franklin's detail man in

[119] Ibid., 52-53.

[120] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 477.

[121] Ibid., 477; Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, I, 390-91.

ironing out difficulties that arose. After the formal sessions were over Deane often went to Versailles at night to confer with Gerard.[122] Finding that Arthur Lee was still dissatisfied with the XIth and XIIth articles of the Treaty of Commerce, Deane and Franklin reversed their position and agreed to support him.[123] In reply to their request Gerard informed them that the King had already given formal assent and any change would require a long delay. He informed the Commissioners that Congress, if they so desired, would be at liberty to strike out the two articles and that the French King would not object.[124]

The signing of the treaties occured February 6, 1778. With the exception of the differences over articles XI and XII, the three American Commissioners had worked together harmoniously--if not happily. Arthur Lee had proposed consulting William Lee and Ralph Izard, the Commissioners for Berlin-Vienna and Tuscany respectively but his proposal was rejected by Franklin and Deane on the grounds that these two Commissioners were not authorized to treat with France. This rejection from the deliberations of the Commission did not decrease the hatred or contempt for Deane but it did earn for Franklin the hatred of William Lee and Ralph Izard, a hatred that they would carry to the grave.

[122] Ibid., I, 372-73.

[123] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 482.

[124] Ibid., 485.

Franklin, Deane, and Lee were officially received by the King, civily if not enthusiastically, on May 20, 1778. The reception given to Franklin by the people of Paris and even in the palace demonstrated the effectiveness and success of his diplomacy. In the New York Journalthe reception was reported:

> When Dr. Franklin, Arthur Lee, and Silas Deane were introduced to the French King in the quality of Ambassadors from North America, they went in elegant coaches, attended by a suite. On their entrance into the court yard, martial music struck up, the soldiers were under arms, and the French flag was lowered in solemn salute, which all the officers accompanied.
>
> In the inner part of the palace they were received by les cent Suisses, the major of which announced 'Les Ambassaseurs des treize provinces unies,' i, e, The ambassadors from the 'Thirteen United Proviences.' When they were ushered into the royal presence, the college of Paris, the bishops, the nobility, ministers, foreign and domestic, and ladies arose and saluted them. Old Franklin was noticed to be weak, but the Count de Vergennes relieved the confusion of the philosopher, by waiving certain forms, and immediately presenting him to the king, who, a l' anglaise, viewing his credentials, entered directly into conversation.[125]

The great object of the mission was a reality--the United States of America had been recognized as a member of the family of nations. She had acquired an ally and no longer stood alone in her war with Great Britain. To Silas Deane, merchant from Connecticut, must go a large share of the credit for the success of the mission. Now he was going home to report to Congress upon America's affairs in Europe.

[125]Frank Moore, Diary of the American Revolution From Newspapers and Criginal Documents, 3 vols. (New York, 1859), II, 43.

CHAPTER V

DEANE'S RECALL

In compliance with an order from Congress Silas Deane left Paris April 1, 1778. After a residence of some twenty-two months in France he was going home. He suspected that there was more to his recall than merely to report to Congress. To John Ross, March 23, 1778, he expressed his irritation: "I wish to know what has been the complaints against me, for I have not received one word on the subject either from Congress or my particular friends."[1] Deane's first reaction had been to remain in France until Congress informed him of the reason for this censure--for such was his view of the recall. So now he was going home upon the advice of Franklin and the recommendations of Beaumarchais. He fully expected to demolish his enemies,[2] vindicate himself[3] and be back in France by autumn.[4] His departure coincided with a radical change in French foreign policy and an explosive eruption in the personal relationship of Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee--a break long smoldering but suddenly brought to a boiling point by the circumstances surrounding Deane's

[1] New York Historical Collections, II, 421-39.
[2] Ibid., p. 421-22.
[3] Ibid., p. 439.
[4] Ibid., p. 420.

departure. Deane was soon to become the center of two controversies raging on both sides of the Atlantic.

Normally the recalling of an agent by his government does not concern and certainly does not involve the government to which he is accredited. Deane's recall, however, proved an exception to this general rule. Vergennes and his colleagues chose to read into Deane's recall a victory for the anti-alliance party in the American Congress. Should the Americans reject the unratified treaties, recently signed by the Commissioners, France, now openly espousing the American cause and with the treaties known to the public, might be forced to meet England alone--a prospect that she certainly did not desire. Vergennes knew that the newly created Carlisle Commission in England would be empowered to make far-reaching concessions to the Americans to block the ratification of the treaties. He had long been aware of a strong anti-alliance sentiment in Congress. In a State Paper prepared for consideration by the King, January 7, 1778, Vergennes wrote: "We are informed that there is a numerous party in America which is endeavouring to fix as a basis of the political system of the new States that no engagement be contracted with the European powers. Doctor Franklin himself professes this dogma. Necessity alone has prevented its being established; but as soon as that ceases to exist, the insurgents, who will have asserted their independence without our help will think they do not need it in order to maintain their independence. Then we

shall be without any bond with them exposed to their avidity and perhaps their resentment."[5] Therefore if Deane's recall was a victory for the Anti-Alliance forces, Deane, the symbol of the solidarity of the Franco-American alliance, must be protected from their common enemy.

To show their displeasure with Congress in recalling Deane, the French ministers decided to bestow upon him the highest marks of esteem and affection. Again, as in 1776, it was Beaumarchais who recommended the policy adopted by Vergennes.

In a secret memoir dated March 14, 1778, ten days after the news of the recall reached France, Beaumarchais traced the blame to Arthur Lee. He noted that "Mr. Arthur Lee, from his character and his ambition, at first was jealous of Mr. Deane. He has ended by becoming his enemy, as always happens in little minds more concerned to supplant their rivals than to surpass them in merit." Beaumarchais reasoned that to accomplish this goal Lee had determined to render Deane "an object of suspicion to Congress." This had been accomplished by exploiting the unpopularity and resentment caused by Deane's contracts with Foreign officers, and by writing to his brothers that all supplies from Beaumarchais were a gift from the French government. "Thus it is clear, in my opinion," Beaumarchais wrote, "that while England sends Commissioners to America, and Mr. Lee's relatives

[5]Stevens, Facsimiles, #1824.

and friends exert themselves to render popular a reconciliation between the two countries, there is at the same time an attempt to destroy by slander the influence or the credit of Mr. Deane and myself--the men known to be the most attached to the policy of an alliance between France and America."[6]

To offset the success of the anti-alliance group in Congress Beaumarchais recommended, and Vergennes accepted, a plan whereby Deane should return to America reflecting the esteem, respect, and gratitude of his French colleagues, the King of France, Louis XVI, and Franklin. Vergennes, realizing that the center of diplomatic activity would soon shift to Philadelphia, decided to send a minister plenipotentiary to the United States. His purpose was to insure ratification of the recently signed treaties and to cement the alliance that, as yet, existed only on paper. For this most important mission he selected a man who knew and held Silas Deane in high regard--Conrad A. Gerard.

Deane was invited to accompany the newly appointed minister plenipotentiary on the flag ship of the French squadron of war ships on its way to American waters. According to Beaumarchais' plan, Deane was to return "loaded with personal honors."[7] In his dispatch case Deane carried a portrait of Louis XVI, set in diamonds, a letter from Benjamin

[6]New York Historical Collections, II, 401.

[7]Ibid., p. 404.

Franklin praising him as an "able, faithful, active and useful Servant of the Publick," and letters of commendation from the King's ministers, M. du Maurepas, M. du Sartine, and the Count Vergennes. The latter praised "the zeal, activity and intelligence with which he has conducted the interests of the United States, by which he has merited the esteem of the King, my master, and for which his Majesty has been pleased to give him marks of his satisfaction."[8]

To Beaumarchais was assigned the task of disillusioning Congress, if need be, that the supplies sent by Rodrigue Hortalez were not a gift from the French government but a legitimate commercial transaction. For the first time Beaumarchais informed Congress, officially, that Rodrigue Hortalez and Caron de Beaumarchais were one and the same. This statement must have caused little surprise. But the body of his letter was devoted to explaining the origin of secret aid and of exonerating Deane from any wrongs:

> Long before the arrival of Mr. Deane in France, I had conceived the plan of founding a business firm sufficiently strong and devoted to incur the risques of the sea and of a war, in carrying to you, as I was informed, for the equipment of your troops.
>
> I spoke to Mr. Arthur Lee at London, of this project, and not only asked whether he had any method of securing commercial intercourse between us, but I also wrote him from France that if he could assure me of the prompt arrival of returns, in the products of your country, to pay for my shipments and to furnish me anew with the means of serving you, I might perhaps arouse the interest of some exceedingly wealthy friends of mine and obtain their assistance.

[8]Ibid., p. 435.

> Mr. Lee replied that if I insisted upon prompt payments in tobacco, these operations would be considerably drawn out, and he besought me to continue sending stores and supplies in the interval. I answered that having applied to the authorities themselves for their clandestine support, in the shape of material advances, and having been refused, I should merely form a trading company to co-operate with me, in sending shipments, conditional upon the speediest possible returns from America.
>
> Since Mr. Lee did not reply to my letter, I was endeavoring alone to found this Company when Mr. Deane came to France. From the moment of his arrival, I corresponded with no one else.[9]

So Deane could depart, reassured by emphatically expressed approval from France, the government whose help he had come to secure.

One of the most unexpected results of Deane's recall was the personal explosion that occurred in the relationship of Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee.

The exact time that Arthur Lee learned of Deane's recall and what his immediate reaction may have been is not known. On March 18, Lee's friend, Count de Lauraguais, informed M. Maurepas, minister of Louis XVI, that Lee had told him of Deane's recall.[10] Lee did not learn that Deane had left the city until after he had gone. Nor did Lee learn of Gerard's appointment until a few hours before Gerard left Paris--then only because Gerard called at his house and told Lee of his appointment. How much did Lee actually know? His actual information and the use he planned to make of it cannot be ascertained. However, if Lee were looking for an opportunity to cast aspersions on Deane's public and personal honesty

[9] Ibid., p. 432.
[10] Stevens, Facsimiles, #802.

the situation was ready-made. It was suggested that Deane's hurry to leave France was a deliberate attempt to avoid settling his accounts. To the casual observer and many members of Congress the suggestion seemed plausible. That the contrary was the actual truth is revealed in Deane's letter to Beaumarchais dated March 29, 1778: "It is unhappy that the short time allowed me to prepare for my voyage will not admit of our making at least a general settlement of your accounts; but the absolute necessity of my setting out immediately, obliges me to leave my other transactions in the same unsettled state."[11]

Regardless of the motive, on March 31, the day Deane left Paris, Arthur Lee wrote a joint letter to Deane and Franklin: "The reports I hear of Mr. Deane's intending soon to leave Paris oblige me to repeat the request I long ago made and repeatedly made, that we should settle the public accounts relating to the expenditure of the money intrusted to us for the public. And this is the more absolutely necessary, as what vouchers there are to enable the commissioners to make out this account are in Mr. Deane's possession. I therefore wish that the earliest day may be appointed for the settlement of these accounts, which appear to me an indispensable part of our duty to the public and one another."[12]

[11] New York Historical Collections, II, 439.

[12] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 530.

Benjamin Franklin was, by nature, a mild, easy-going man inclined to see the best in every one. On March 31, he had written a highly complimentary letter to Congress regarding the conduct of Silas Deane. On April 1, he wrote his colleague, Arthur Lee. In this he revealed that when duly provoked he would use plain language in a non-complimentary way. To Lee he wrote:

> There is a style in some of your letters, I observe it particularly in the last, whereby superior merit is assumed to yourself in point of care and attention to business, and blame is insinuated on your colleagues without making yourself accountable, by a direct charge of negligence or unfaithfulness, which has the appearance of being as artful as it is unkind. In the present case I think the insinuation groundless.
>
> I do not know that either Mr. Deane or myself ever showed any unwillingness to settle the public accounts. The banker's book always contained the whole. You could at any time as easily have obtained the account from them as either of us and you had abundantly more leisure. If, on examining it, you had wanted an explanation of any article, you might have called for and had it. You never did either. As soon as I obtained the account, I put it in your hands, and desired you to look into it, and I have heard no more of it since till now, just as Mr. Deane was on the point of departing. Mr. Deane, however, left with me before the receipt of your letter both the public papers, and explications of the several articles in the account that came with his knowledge. With these materials, I suppose we can settle the account whenever you please. You have only to name the day and place, and I will attend the business with you.[13]

In reply to Arthur Lee's charge that Deane's departure had been deliberately kept a secret from him, Franklin replied: "Mr. Deane communicated to me his intention of

[13] Ibid., p. 530.

setting out for America immediately as a secret, which he desired I would mention to nobody. I complied with his request. If he did not think fit to communicate it to you also, it is from him you should demand his reasons."

When Arthur Lee charged that M. Gerard's appointment as minister had been made without consulting him, Franklin replied: "The measure of sending M. Gerard as a minister was resolved on without consulting me; but I think that it was a wise one, and, if I did not, I do not conceive that I had any right to find fault with it. France was not consulted when we were sent here. Your angry charge, therefore, of our 'making a party business of it' is groundless. We had no hand in the business. And as we neither 'acted nor advised' in it, which you suppose, your other high-sounding charge of our doing violence to the authority that constituted us and a great injury and injustice to you is equally without foundation."[14]

When Arthur Lee again reminded Franklin that his request to settle the public accounts before Deane left had been ignored, Franklin wrote:

> When this comes to be read in Committee, for whom it seems to be calculated rather than for me, who know the circumstances, what can they understand by it, but that you are the only careful, honest man of the three, and that we have some knavish reasons for keeping the accounts in the dark and you from seeing the vouchers? But the truth is, the papers naturally

[14] Ibid., p. 530.

> came into Mr. Deane's hands and mine; before either you or I came into France; next, as somebody must keep the papers, and you were either on long journeys to Spain, to Vienna, and Berlin, or had a commission to go and reside in Spain, which it was expected would soon be executed; whereas Mr. Deane and I lived almost constantly in the same house, either at Paris or Passy; you separate from us; and we did most of the business. Where, then, could the papers be so properly placed as with us, who had daily occasion to make use of them? I never knew that you desired to have the keeping of them. You never were refused a paper, or a copy of a paper, that you desire.

Franklin also told Lee that he had served many publics in his long life and "there is not a single instant of my ever being accused before of acting contrary to their interest or duty." And he also reminded Lee that he was accountable to Congress and not to Lee. "I saw your jealous, suspicious, malignant, and quarrelsome temper, which was daily manifesting itself against Mr. Deane and almost every other person you had any concern with. I therefore passed your affronts in silence, did not answer but burnt your angry letters, and received you when I next saw you, with the same civility as if you had never wrote them."[15] To Francis Hopkinson, Franklin wrote in a more characteristic vein: "At present I do not know of more than two such enemies that I enjoy, vie Lee and Izard. I deserve the enmity of the latter, because I might have avoided it by paying him a

[15] Ibid., p. 539.

compliment, which I neglected. That of the former I owe to the people of France, who happened to respect me too much and him too little--which I could bear, and he could not."[16]

Arthur Lee, not satisfied with Franklin's answer, continued to pour out his wrath, suspicion, and grievances into the ears of a Congress which "did not understand the circumstances." John Adams, Deane's replacement, soon found that it was impossible to maintain a neutral position in the Commission. He was accused of joining forces with Arthur Lee but this is untrue. The Lees in America had been instrumental in selecting John Adams with a definite plan in mind.[17] The Lees in France had been coached how to handle him.[18] However John Adams refused to become involved in a partisan struggle and said so. To William McCreavy he wrote on September 25, 1778: "If I had been strongly against Mr. Deane, I should certainly avow it and make no secret of it at all. I have never been used to disguise my sentiment of Men whom I have been against in public life, and I certainly should not begin with Mr. Deane, who is not and never was a man of Importance enough to make me deviate from a rule I have observed all my life, vizt., when obliged to be a Man's Enemy, to be openly and generously so."[19] To James Lovell, he

[16]Hale and Hale, Franklin in Paris, I, 459.

[17]Richard Henry Lee, The Letters of Richard Henry Lee, John C. Ballagh, ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1911-14), I, 352.

[18]William Lee, Letters, II, 418, 444-45.

[19]Hale and Hale, Franklin in Paris, I, 232.

stated quite bluntly: "Mr. Deane complains of ill treatment, and claims great merit for his services. I shall not add to the ill treatment, nor depreciate the merit. . . .I have heard a great deal concerning his conduct--great panegyrics and harsh censures. But I believe he has neither the merit that some persons ascribe to him, nor the gross faults to answer for which some others impute or suspect. I believe he was a deligent servant of the public, and rendered it useful services."[20]

To Richard Henry Lee, Adams on August 5, 1778, stated his respect for Arthur Lee. But he also said, rather pointedly: "I will have nothing to do with designs and endeavours to run down characters, to paint in odious colors in different action, to excite or propagate suspicions without evidence, or to foment or entertain prejudices of any kind, if I can possibly avoid it."[21]

Many of the Lee partisans constantly urged that John Adams could and should tell Congress the truth. If John Adams had anything to say he never said it which is a good reason to believe that he did not change the views he expressed to William McCreavy, James Lovell, and Richard Henry Lee.

For some time before his recall Deane had already expressed a desire to retire from public life. To Robert

[20]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 664.

[21]Ibid., p. 678.

Morris he confided that he had "no ambition for being at courts: I have seen enough of them to ease me of such passion. . . ." His private affairs had been neglected for several years and he planned to retire just as soon as the treaty with France was signed. "I shall ask Liberty to quit politics forever . . . and enjoy what of life may be left me."[22] This desire he had already expressed to friends in Congress, and "as I can now do it with a degree of honor which my Enemies never dreamt of, the Triumph will be mine not theirs. . . ."[23] Deane knew that he had friends in Congress as well as critics but as yet he was not aware of the number.[24]

The recall of Silas Deane by Congress was not done in a moment of irritation. Nor was it the apparent ripening of a well laid plot by his enemies. Inferences in the private correspondence of the Lee brothers and their associates indicate that they were not opposed but had actively cultivated congressional irritation against Deane. For example, Ralph Izard, American Commissioner to Tuscany, wrote to John Lloyd, an American merchant and a mutual friend of both Izard and the Lees: "I am confident your idea of the man [Deane] is just in every particular, but our opinions of and concerning him, as also other, it will be most prudent to reserve solely to ourselves, for reasons which are

[22]New York Historical Collections, II, 307.

[23]Ibid., p. 408.

[24]John Ruthledge to Robert Morris, January 23, 1777, A. L. S., Hubert S. Smith Collections, Clements Library.

sufficiently manifest."[25] In the same month Lloyd wrote to Izard: "I am told that the brothers of the gentlemen whom you have just mentioned are leading members of Congress, and they have in consequence great influence. If that is the case, I think Deane stands on very uncertain ground, as you may depend upon his conduct will not be presented in the most favourable point of view by them, which joined to Morris's inveteracy, will form a collective power that may throw him from his present exalted pinnacle to the dreadful abyss of native insignificance. From the intimations of a friend of Deane's I have some cause to believe that such an event would not be unexpected."[26]

Unlike their brother Arthur, William and Richard Henry Lee were too politically astute to make any rash charges against Deane. William counselled his brothers on both sides of the Atlantic to proceed with care. In early January of 1778 William Lee was writing Richard Henry Lee: "with respect to charges against Mr. Deane and Mr. Carmichael I think you should weigh the matter with Loudon [Francis Lightfoot] very cautiously and only move when you see the way very clear."[27] In April of the same

[25]Ralph Izard, Correspondence of Ralph Izard of South Carolina, from the year 1774 to 1804: With a Short Memoir, Anne Izard Deas, ed., (New York, 1884), p. 379.

[26]Ibid., 384.

[27]William Lee, Letters, I, 334.

year William Lee wrote Arthur Lee: "I think great caution ought to be used . . . with Deane . . . but if anything decisive can be got at, no time should be lost in conveying it."[28]

Rumors were so widespread that knowledge of Deane's pending recall was openly discussed on both sides of the Atlantic. George Lupton, a British spy in Paris, reported to London in September of 1777 that "Thomas Morris gives out that Deane is to be recalled" and "Carmichael informed me that he imagined that Deane would be removed from his present employment and appointed to one of less consequence."[29] Beaumarchais' agent in Philadelphia, de Francey, wrote in a letter dated December 16, 1777, that Deane had been recalled and that he was a very ill-used man.[30]

The influence on Deane's recall by Arthur and William Lee's letters to their brothers in Congress is hard to determine. It is true that Richard Henry Lee mentioned Deane's "distressing contracts" to Samuel Adams but it was the same Richard Henry Lee who, in Congress, moved for his recall because it "would have been out of character to continue him . . . "[31] Richard Henry Lee's unexplainable inconsistency

[28] Ibid., I, 418.
[29] Stevens, Facsimiles, #199
[30] de Francey, Letters, p. 10.
[31] Richard Henry Lee, Letters, I, 353.

of defending and condemning Deane's conduct almost simultaneously has a tinge of hypocrisy.

The sending of French officers was definitely a great source of resentment against Deane. And in a letter of James Lovell, Secretary of the Secret Committee of Correspondence, the antagonism is readily apparent. In December of 1777 Franklin informed Lovell "that you have no conception of how we still are besieged . . . by personal application" from French officers. "I hope, therefore, that favorable allowance will be made to my worthy colleague on account of his situation at the time, as he has long since corrected that mistake and daily approves himself, to my certain knowledge, an able faithful, active and extremely useful servant of the public; a testimony I think it my duty to take this occasion to giving to his merit not unasked, as, considering my great age, I may probably not live to give it personally in Congress, and I perceive he has enemies."[32] In July Franklin assured Lovell that the Commissioners had never received any instructions regarding the employment of foreign officers. "You mention former letters of the committee, by which we might have seen the apprehensions of the resentment, etc. Those letters never came to hand. And we, on our part, are amazed to hear that the committee had had no line from us for near a year, during which we had

[32]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 458.

written, I believe, five or six long and particular letters . . ."[33] So it is possible that Deane may have been an innocent victim of Congressional disfavor because of the lack of communications. However the letters of James Lovell and other of the Lee supporters indicate that hints had been constantly placed with various influential people that Deane should be recalled.

James Lovell, however, chose to disregard Franklin's spirited defense of Deane's unpopular contracts with French officers. For example, in June of 1777 Lovell wrote to Joseph Trumbuss of Connecticut: "I have but a poor idea of that Gentleman's ability to guard against French finesse and flattery,"[34] and to General William Whipple in the same month that it "appears that Deane is only a child in the hands of du Coudray."[35] Eliphalet Dyer, Deane's former colleague from Connecticut in the First and Second Continental Congresses, wrote to Joseph Trumbull that "this is a most unhappy affair [du Coudray] and our old friend Deane has been in more Instances than one Imprudent to the last degree."[36] George Washington was informed by Lovell in July that as bad as du Cordray's contract was, Franklin had

[33] Ibid., p. 657.

[34] Burnett, Letters of Congress, II, 379.

[35] Ibid., p. 394.

[36] Ibid., p. 406.

been able to eliminate the worst features from the original one made by Deane.[37]

In July of 1777 the idea that a recall was absolutely necessary appeared in Lovell's extensive correspondence. To James Whipple he wrote: ". . . ought not this weal or rogueish man to be recalled; if as a corresponding agent [he] did thus, what will he think himself entitled to do as a commissioner?"[38] Henry Laurens, an honest man strongly devoted to the Lees, complained in August that the "late flood of French men rushed in upon us under agreements with Mr. Deane has reduced Congress to a painful dilemma"[39] and in the same month Laurens observed to John Rutledge that "one of our agents [obviously meaning Deane] has not discovered competency to the immense work in hand."[40] A more sinister note was injected by Lovell in August when he wrote to Oliver Wolcott: "Other causes have a more powerful influence. If Silas [Deane] and his york connections could have a good opening to transfer their whole property to the other side of the water it is not impossible that they would gladly do it."[41]

[37]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 366.

[38]Burnett, Letters of Congress, II, 431.

[39]Ibid., pp. 438-39.

[40]Ibid., pp. 445-48.

[41]Ibid., pp. 460-62.

On September 8, 1777, Congress formally repudiated Deane's contracts with all foreign officers on the grounds "that Mr. Deane had no authority to make such conventions, and that Congress therefore are not bound to ratify or fulfil them."[42] On November 21, 1777 Congress "resolved that Silas Deane, be recalled from the court of France." As William Williams described the vote to Jonanthan Trumbull, November 28, "the motion, made last July was revived for recalling Mr. Deane, was again taken up and carried without a dissenting Voice. He died at last very easie, tho there had been at sund. Times before, the most violent and convulsive throes and Exertions on the same question. A motion is also made that it be left to the remaining Commiss. to judge on the Spot, wethr Mr. Deane may not yet be employed at some other Court. The Motion dropd, and I trust will never be carried."[43]

The last chapter of the recall was described by Lovell in a letter to Richard Henry Lee: "The day after you left york, I moved Congress for an order in the following words. 'Whereas it is of the greatest importance that Congress should, at this critical conjuncture be well informed of the State of Affairs in Europe, and whereas Congress have resolved that the Honble. Silas Deane, Esqr. be

[42] Journals of Congress, VIII, 721.

[43] Burnett, Letters of Congress, II, 574.

recalled . . . and direct him to embrace the first opportunity of returning to America and upon his arrival to repair with all possible dispatch to Congress."[44] But on the same day, December 8, he wrote to Deane: "The order stands in need of no comment from the committee to elucidate it; and being drawn up in terms complimentary to your abilities of serving these United States . . ."[45]

The real reasons for Silas Deane's recall will probably never be known. Richard Henry Lee, the author for the motion of recall, insisted that the genuine ones be omitted from the Journals of Congress.[46] Congress had lacked the courage to tell Deane their reason. In fact it had, by its silence, completely misrepresented the purpose. Lovell, the Secretary of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, had deliberately lied to make the truth less obvious. According to James Lovell, Acting Secretary of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, "the order was complimentary to your abilities of serving these United States" and needed no further explanation.[47]

[44] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 444.
[45] Ibid., p. 44; Burnett, Letters of Congress, II, 582.
[46] New York Historical Collections, III, 336.
[47] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 444.

CHAPTER VI

DEANE AND CONGRESS

Great events had occurred in the United States during the twenty-two months that Silas Deane had been in France. Independence had been proclaimed, an entire British army had surrendered, and France had become the ally of the new nation. These accomplishments, tremendous as they were, were offset by a disastrous currency inflation, a general war weariness, and the return of many of the original congressional revolutionary leaders to positions in state government or other assignments. The loss of these men from the legislative council of the nation was accompanied by a decline in the prestige of Congress — a loss that the young nation could ill afford.[1]

During the early years of the Revolution, while the insurgent colonies were fighting with little success for what they deemed to be their rights, attempts were usually made to sidestep factional differences for the sake of the common cause. In 1777 the Conway Cabal brought personal ambitions and sectional differences into the open.[2] The effort of the Cabal to remove Washington from command was

[1]Thomas Perkins Abernethy, Western Lands and the American Revolution (London, 1937), pp. 205-16.

[2]John Fiske, "The French Alliance and the Conway Cabal," Atlantic, XXIV (1889), 220-39.

defeated but in the aftermath Congress suffered a loss of prestige from which it was slow to recover. The year 1778 was the nadir of Congressional unpopularity and partisan strife. The prevailing condition was described by Titus Hosmer in a report to Governor Jonathan Thrumbul of Connecticut dated August 31, 1778:

> Nine states make a Congress, some States have delegates so very negligent, so much immersed in the pursuit of pleasure or business that it is very rare that we can make a Congress before eleven o'clock, and then it seems incapable of a remedy as Congress has no mean to compel Gentlemen to attend, and those who occasion the delay are callous to admonition and reproof, which have been often tried in vain. When we are assembled several gentlemen have such a knack of starting questions of order, raising debates upon critical, captious, and trifling amendments, protracting them by long speeches, by postponing, calling for the previous question, and other arts, that it is almost impossible to get an important question decided at one sitting; and if it is put over to another day, the field is open to be gone over again, precious time is lost, and the public business left undone.
>
> I am sorry to add that the opposition between the States, and the old prejudices of North against South, and the South against North, seem to be reviving, and industriously heightened by some, who, I fear, would be too well pleased to see our union blasted and our independence broken and destroyed.[3]

The return of Silas Deane unintentionally revived the factional and sectional differences which were smouldering beneath the surface. The natural cleavage between the North and South was cut across and largely submerged by the alliance between the Virginia Lees and the Massachusetts Adameses in Congress. A personal element was involved in

[3]Burnett, Letters of Congress, III, 394.

this coalition, but it represented primarily an alliance of the predominantly agricultural forces as opposed to the commercial. Robert Morris was the leader of the Eastern mercantile interests,[4] and Richard Henry Lee and Samuel Adams directed the opposing faction.[5] Deane, in general, was supported by the mercantile interest and opposed by the agricultural group. The personal feud that existed between Arthur Lee and Deane only added fuel to the flame.

Deane's recall had been the work of Richard Henry Lee, but it is impossible to prove that a well laid plot existed to "get" Deane. It is true that Lee "rejoiced" when Deane was recalled and he assured his brother, Arthur Lee, that "Deane, as well as others, shall be attended to here."[6] The letters of William Lee to Richard Henry Lee contain the heart of a policy that was followed, namely, "not to let any of his accounts for the expenditure of public money finally pass without the most authentic vouchers."[7]

Deane was later to maintain that he had been told by a friend, not identified, soon after his arrival that it "was the design of those who wished to sacrifice me to the

[4]Abernethy, Western Lands, p. 205.

[5]Burton J. Hendrick, The Lees of Virginia: Biography of a Family (Boston, 1935), pp. 179-213; Lynn Monttoss, The Reluctant Rebels: The Story of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789 (New York, 1950), p. 268.

[6]Burnett, Letters of Congress, III, 231, 257.

[7]William Lee, Letters, II, 519-23.

family interests and emoluments of my enemies to wear me out by delays, and, without any direct charges, to ruin me in the opinion of my countrymen by insinuations, hints, and innuendos, that though I might with confidence rely on the justice of Congress, yet measures would be taken to delay it on one pretence or another, in a way that would prove prejudicial if not ruinous to me."[8] This controversy and suspicion, then, was the political climate in America when the French fleet dropped anchor July 9, 1778, in Delaware Bay.

The arrival of the French Minister Plenipotentiary marked another milestone in the history of the young nation. Deane immediately notified the president of Congress, Henry Laurens, of the arrival of the French fleet and the Minister Plenipotentiary.[9] On July 14, Gerard, accompanied by a congressional committee,[10] proceeded to Philadelphia where he was installed in the home of General Benedict Arnold, the Commandant of the city, until suitable quarters could be found.

Congress was now faced with the problem of determining the correct manner in which a Minister Plenipotentiary was to be received. After much debate devoted to the protocol

[8]New York Historical Collections, III, 457.

[9]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 643.

[10]Ibid., p. 644.

of the occasion Congress officially received the first accredited foreign representative.[11] In honor of the event each member of Congress was permitted to bring two non-member guests to the formal reception. The sentiments expressed by Gerard in his prepared address and the reply of President Laurens met with the approval of all.[12]

The big news event of the day had been the arrival and reception of the French Minister Plenipotentiary but the return of Silas Deane, late commissioner to the Court of France, had not passed without favorable comment by the press.[13] Due to a slight illness Deane had not accompanied Gerard to Philadelphia. Upon his arrival he had been warmly welcomed by old friends, and members of Congress had been cordial. During the reception for Gerard he had quietly waited for Congress to find the time to receive him. On July 28, twenty days after his return, he tactfully reminded President Laurens that he awaited the pleasure of Congress.[14]

Shortly after his arrival in Philadelphia Deane had received a letter from General George Washington in which the

[11] Ibid.

[12] Conrad Alexandre Gerard, Despatches and Instructions of Conrad Alexandre Gerard, 1778-1780, John J. Meng, ed., (Baltimore, 1939), #7; Almon's, Remembrancer, (1778) VII, pp. 5-8.

[13] Pennsylvania Packet, July 14, 1778.

[14] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 668.

General had expressed his personal appreciation for the service Deane had rendered to the revolutionary cause. On August 12, Deane replied, saying "how happy I am to find that my conduct has met with your approbation." He also mentioned that his friends had told him the reason why he had been recalled. The letter did not reveal any bitterness or resentment but pointed out that in his haste to comply with the orders of Congress he had left his affairs unsettled and must return to France in either a private or public capacity to attend to these affairs.[15]

When Deane was permitted to appear before Congress on August 15, 1778,[16] it soon became apparent that he had not been summoned home to report on European affairs. Such, however, had been clearly stated in James Lovell's letter accompanying the recall. The delaying tactics warrant the assumption that his enemies, having accomplished the recall, were willing to mark the case closed.

On the appointed day Deane presented himself at the bar of Congress. He was introduced and seated at a table on the President's right. He delivered two letters from Dr. Franklin and M. Beaumarchais that were read and tabled. Deane began his report only to be interrupted immediately by a motion that the report be given in writing. He

[15] Ibid., p. 681.

[16] Journals of Congress, XII, p. 799.

withdrew and after a lengthy debate the motion was lost. As the hour of adjournment was near he was ordered to appear next Monday to "give from memory, a general account of the whole transactions in France, from the time of his arrival, as well as a particular state of the funds of Congress, and the commercial transactions in Europe, especially with Mr. Beaumarchais, and to answer such questions as may be asked."[17] On August 17, Deane reported as ordered, and resumed his report. Having made "some progress he was ordered to withdraw" without any apparent reason. Five days later, August 21, he was permitted to finish his report and again was ordered to withdraw.[18]

His report finished, Deane again waited the pleasure of Congress. He expected, and rightly so, that Congress would inform him if further attendance was required. After waiting for eighteen days Deane wrote President Laurens requesting information as to the decision of Congress. Recognizing that Congress had many important matters to discuss he requested to be informed if "further attendance" was desired. On the eleventh of September Deane expressed his appreciation to the president for placing his letter before Congress. He also stated his intention of visiting friends prior to his return to France.[19]

[17] Ibid., XII, 920.
[18] New York Historical Collections, II, 480.
[19] Ibid., p. 481.

For two months (from July 15, on) Deane had complied with the requests of Congress without any sign of irritation or reproach. Now, however, a note of irritation appeared in his correspondence. On September 14, he wrote to his old friend, former President John Hancock, that his patience was wearing thin:

> The affairs with respect to me have dragged on so heavily that nothing decisive has been done, though I have been constantly applying, and my patience is really worn out, and I cannot and will not endure a treatment which carries with it marks of the deepest ingratitude; but if the Congress have not time to hear a man who they have sent for four thousand miles, soley under the pretense of receiving intelligence from him, it is time the good people of this continent should know the manner in which their representatives conduct the public business, and how they treat their fellow citizens, who have rendered their country the most important services. . . .A majority of Congress would do me justice, and complain of my being delayed in the manner I am from day to day and from week to week, but you know that in Congress a few men can put off the decision of any question by one means or another as long as they please, and you are not a stranger to what a certain triumvirate, who have been from the first members of Congress, are equal. The baseness and ingratitude of one of them you have sufficiently experienced in private life to know him capable of anything in public, and my old colleague, Roger the Jesuit, [Sherman] with his southern association, has been indefatigable ever since my arrival.[20]

Deane had written to Hancock on September 14, and two days later he was ordered to appear before Congress on September 18, "to answer such questions as the members may propose to him, for the better understanding of the state

[20]Silas Deane, "The Letters of Silas Deane," The Ferdinand J. D. Dreer Collection, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XI (1887), p. 205.

and progress of public affairs during his mission to France."[21] On the seventeenth, however, a committee reported on letters dated January 5, 6, and 31 from Arthur Lee and letters of January, 1778, from Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane. Richard Henry Lee then informed the Congress that he had information that William Carmichael, while in France, had publicly charged Silas Deane with misapplication of public money. Lee was ordered to submit the information in writing. The paper he submitted read:

> Richard Henry Lee is informed that Mr. Carmichael did some time in the last spring or winter, say in Nantes, that he knew Mr. Deane had misapplied the public money, and that Mr. Carmichael did in strong terms reprobate Mr. Deane's conduct, both in his public and private character; Mr. Carmichael said an open rupture had taken place between Mr. Arthur Lee and the gentlemen at Passy; that they had come to a resolution to do business without consulting Mr. Lee on any occasion, and that he (Carmichael) knows the excuse will be made to Congress that the French ministry have desired it, though he does not doubt that desire has arose from Mr. Deane's insinuations; Mr. Carmichael condemned Mr. Deane's conduct towards Mr. Lee, and was pointedly severe in reprobating the system and measures that he had pursued in his public character, and which he would fully unfold when he came to America.[22]

Having been denied access to Congress on September 18, the day he was scheduled to report, Deane wrote a letter to Congress reviewing the wording of the recall and stressing

[21] New York Historical Collections, II, 483.

[22] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 726; Journals of Congress, XII, 942.

the reason for his hasty departure from France without waiting to close his accounts and secure vouchers. Therefore, he said, he was unable to give a detailed report until all the accounts were closed. To close these accounts and secure the necessary vouchers was the reason for his haste to return to France. The letter was accompanied by two accounts from M. le Grand, the Paris banker of the Commissioners, which showed the expenditure of money up to the day of his departure from Paris.[23]

The charge made by Richard Henry Lee respecting the honesty of a public official was too serious to be avoided. Congress decided that William Carmichael should be examined "touching the said commissioners and the conduct of the said commissioners." Deane's letter of the twenty-second was postponed until the conclusion of Carmichael's examination.[24] On the same day Congress ordered that Deane be given copies of Ralph Izard's letters reflecting on his character and conduct while in the service of Congress. Deane was later granted a copy of Arthur Lee's letter of June 1, 1778. This was also derogatory to him.[25]

The examination of William Carmichael began on September 28 and continued through October 5. To those who expected sensational disclosures the examination was a

[23]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 737.

[24]New York Historical Collections, II, 486.

[25]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 758.

failure. It dealt with two incidents -- the fitting out of two privateers for a cruise in the Mediterranean Sea and the capture of the Harwick mail packet. The record shows that Mr. Carmichael's answers consisted of "I apprehend," "I thought" and "I assumed." The critical and last question of the first day dealt with the Mediterranean cruise. The question was: "Q. From the knowledge you had of Mr. Deane's transactions, do you recollect any instance which you apprehend to be a misapplication of the public money?" A. "I beg to know whether I am to answer from my knowledge, or suppositions, or opinions in my own mind?" By a 9-2 vote Congress decided that "hear say" evidence was admissible. This ended the first day of the examination.

When the hearing was resumed Carmichael was again asked if he knew or if he had heard of any misuse of public money.

"A. I do."

However, upon being pressed, Carmichael faltered.

"Q. Did you understand that Mr. Deane was to have been concerned in his private capacity?"

"A. I did not receive such information as to induce me to believe that Mr. Deane was concerned."

"Q. If you did not believe that Mr. Deane was concerned in his private capacity in those vessels what did you mean when you said that you apprehended the public money was applied to private instant?"

"A. I meant that I thought Mr. Deane had applied the public money to supply the deficiency of money that others were to have advanced, but did not, towards the purpose of fitting out these vessels."

The second incident dealt with Mr. Hodge and the capture of the Harwick packet.

"Q. Had you reason to suppose that Mr. Deane was concerned, or any of the Commissioners?"

"A. I did apprehend at that time that Mr. Deane was concerned in the first equipment."

"Q. What reasons induced you to apprehend that Mr. Deane was concerned in the first equipment?"

"A. I cannot recollect the reasons that induced that belief, but I know that I did at the time apprehend he was concerned."[26]

Deane, again not hearing from Congress, on October 7 requested an "audience" to answer Mr. Izard's charges as stated in his letter. Congress ordered that it lie on the table. On October 12, Deane repeated his request, adding that he planned to return to France the next month.[27] In a separate letter of the same date he answered Izard's charges. He divided them into one general charge and two specific

[26]Silas Deane, Papers in Relation to the Case of Silas Deane Now Published From the Original Manuscripts, Edward Ducan Ingraham, ed., (Philadelphia, 1885), p. 141.

[27]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 760.

ones. The general charge was "That if the whole world had been searched, it would have been impossible to have a person more unfit than I [Deane] was for the trust which Congress had honored me." To this Deane expressed the opinion that Congress and not Izard should "determine on my competency." The first specific charge was: 1. "The exercising of such a degree of hauteur and presumption as to give offence to every gentleman wich whom I transacted business." To this charge Deane replied, "I transacted none with Mr. Izard, and therefore must appeal from his opinion to the business I transacted, and the honorable persons with whom I transacted it, and who, from the first of my acquaintance with them to my leaving the Kingdom, honored me with their friendship and confidence." Izard's second charge was that Arthur Lee had assured him that his dispatches and even his private letters had been opened by Deane. Deane replied: "I am surprised Mr. Arthur Lee never intimated this to me. . . ."

The second group of charges by Izard were made against Deane and Franklin collectively. The charge was that opportunities for writing to Congress had been deliberately concealed from him [Izard]. Deane asked why Arthur Lee was not also included in this charge. Deane readily admitted that the Commissioners had not considered themselves free "to communicate the treaty or its contents, to anyone until the French Court should consent," and considered themselves

"in the same situation as to the appointment of Monsieur Gerard and the sailing of the Toulon fleet. As Mr. Lee sent letters by M. Gerard he must be guilty also."

Deane admitted that dissension existed among the commissioners but denied that the public interest suffered. The source of the hostility between the commissioners was the inclusion of the 11th and 12th articles of the commercial treaty. The two articles provided for the exchange of goods between the French West Indies and the United States. The proposal had originated with Gerard and had been accepted by all three commissioners.

Deane said that Arthur Lee changed his mind after a conference with his brother William Lee and Ralph Izard. At the conference it was decided that Deane and Franklin were attempting to favor the Northern commercial interests at the expense of the agricultural south. The matter was fianlly resolved by an agreement between the Commissioners to the Court of France and Gerard that the decision to accept or reject the two articles should be determined by Congress.

Deane recapitulated the entire William Lee - Thomas Morris story, explaining that the Commissioners had acted because of Thomas Morris' "irregularities," and ended by citing the fact that when Franklin and Deane offered to return the privateering business to William Lee it had been Commissioner Arthur Lee who had refused to sign the letter and who would not even agree to its being sent.

To Izard's complaint that Deane and Franklin "let Mons. Gerard go away, without giving him [Izard] the least intimation of it, was a very high insult to Congress," Deane observed that it was not in his power "to permit or prevent nor to communicate it to anyone."

To Izard's apprehension that Deane should return to Europe in some official capacity, Deane observed that he had never "solicited for any appointment" from Congress and had no intention of doing so.[28]

On the same day, October 12, 1778, Deane also replied by letter to Congress concerning charges made by Arthur Lee. Arthur Lee's charge was that Deane should have settled certain accounts before he left France. Deane's reply was that the contract dated back to September, 1777, and dealt with the delivery of goods to American ports. The affair was very involved due to orders from the French Court halting the shipment of supplies. He also pointed out that it was actually Mr. Arthur Lee who had held up the settlement of the contract. When the Commission was formed in December of 1776, Deane and Franklin had requested M. Chaumont to undertake the job of determining a fair settlement. At first M. Chaumont declined, saying that he "found Mr. Lee of so jealous and unquiet disposition, and so much disposed to abuse everyone that he had concerns with, that

[28] Ibid., pp. 762-68.

he had decided never again to have anything to do with the Commission as long as Mr. Lee remained a member." But he had agreed that if Mr. Lee desired him to undertake the task of determining a fair settlement he would. "This put off the settlement for the time."[29] Secondly, Mr. Lee had written that "it is this sort of neglect and studied confusion that has prevented Mr. Adams and myself, after a tedious examination of the papers left with Dr. Franklin, from getting any satisfaction as to the expenditure of the public money. All we can find is, that millions have been expended, and almost everything remains to be paid for." Citing the account of the banker, Mr. Grand, Deane wrote: "The amount of expenditures until the time of my leaving Paris, was 4,046,988.17 livres, and it appears well, from the nature of the accounts and the explanation in his hands up to the very day I set out from Paris. The particular application, indeed, of every part, could not be known until the several accounts should be given in. Mr. Lee himself signed the orders for much the greater part of the monies."

Thirdly, Mr. Arthur Lee had said that "almost everything remains to be paid for." Deane's answer was: "I really know not what he means. Things once paid for are not to be paid for a second time, and the payments stated above are proved

[29] New York Historical Collections, III, 14.

by Mr. Grand's account, to have been bona fide made." To the pointed allegation made by Lee that "you see my name is not to the contracts," Deane pointed out that at the time Lee was in Berlin. Deane also stated that far from having concealed matters from him, the reverse was the truth. Upon Lee's return from Berlin he "was made acquainted with the contracts; Messrs. Holker (now in Boston), Sabbatier and Desprez repeatedly conferred with Mr. Lee on the subject in my presence, and when they brought in their accounts, and signed with us the order for payment, as Mr. Grand's account and the orders and accounts themselves will show."[30]

Congress ordered Deane's letter of October 12 read and copies sent to Izard and Arthur Lee in Paris. On November 1, Deane sent Congress plans for an American Bank and an American fleet.[31] These communications Congress ordered read and laid on the table.[32]

On November 19, Deane wrote to Congress again. This time he made a frank plea: "Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to learn by what part of my public conduct I have merited the neglect which my letters and most respectful solicitations, for months past, to be heard from Congress have been treated?" This letter was received

[30]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 773-77.

[31]New York Historical Collections, III, 45.

[32]Journals of Congress, XII, 1091.

and read by Congress on November 20, without comment.[33]

Having exhausted his patience, Deane now considered a more radical move. To his brother, Barnabas, he confided that he had decided to "lay his case before the public." He was going to visit Bethlehem with M. Gerard and would start the publication of his case "next Thursday." "I have heretofore delayed it, hoping I should not be put to the disagreeable necessity, and knowing the effects it must have on public affairs, but the Law of self defense being the first of all I shall no longer be silent."[34]

Having written ten letters to which Congress had not replied, Deane, on November 30, wrote once more. This letter was read December 1, and Congress resolved: "That after tomorrow Congress will meet two hours at least each evening, beginning at six o'clock, Saturday evening excepted, until the present state of our foreign affairs shall be fully considered."[35]

President Laurens informed Deane on December 3 of Congress' determination to consider foreign affairs. The next day Deane expressed his appreciation to Laurens for informing him of Congress' decision. He called attention to the omission that Congress had not fixed the time for

[33]Ingraham, The Case of Silas Deane, p. 128.

[34]New York Historical Collections, III, 59-61.

[35]Journals of Congress, XII, 1181.

his attendance and that his detention is "extremely prejudicial to my private affairs."[36] The same day, December 3, the Address of Silas Deane to the Free and Virtuous Citizens of America appeared in the Pennsylvania Packet.

Silas Deane's appeal to the American people marked the beginning of a newspaper feud that was to rage fiercely for a few months and smolder for many years. The address contained a slashing attack on Arthur and William Lee in particular and reflections upon the Lee family.

In spite of his former admission to Barnabas of the necessity of self defense, Deane now stated that the reason for his appeal was for the public good. He was not willing to see an individual or a family "raised upon the ruins of the general weal." The appeal had been necessary because the ears of Congress "have been shut against me. While it was safe to be silent, my lips were closed."

The second part of the address was a review of the work of the commission in which he said "he had been honored with one colleague and saddled with another." Deane reviewed the travels of Arthur Lee in the spring and summer of 1777 and retold the story of the Nantes affair. However, a new note now appeared. Arthur Lee, the friend of Shelburne, had been suspected of revealing secrets to his one-time patron in England. "The suspicious, whether well or ill founded, were frequently related and urged to Dr. Franklin and

[36]Ingraham, The Case of Silas Deane, p. 131.

myself," Deane said, "and joined to his undisguised hatred of, and expressions of contempt for, the French nation in general, embarrassed us exceedingly, and was of no small prejudice to your affairs."

A more serious charge against Arthur Lee was his correspondence with Dr. Berkenhout, who "had the confidence of the British ministry." Deane accused Lee of giving Dr. Berkenhout a letter of introduction to Richard Henry Lee in America. The latter had sponsored him when he was in America as an agent of the British government.

Deane furthermore charged Arthur Lee with opposing the French treaty. Lee had been "dragged into the treaty with reluctance" and the "continued bickering" over the 11th and 12th articles had been to gain time -- time for a counter proposal by the British ministry.

The number of offices held by William Lee were enumerated, and it was intimated that William Lee, before Burgoyne's surrender, had been careful to do nothing that would prevent him from retaining his aldermanship in London.

Deane included an account of his recall. He related how he had "placed your papers and mine, in safety" and had returned to America with all possible haste and how Congress had delayed in hearing him. While denying "any pique" against any of the Lee brothers, he felt that he was justified in appealing to the people.

The publication of Deane's address produced an immediate reaction, both favorable and unfavorable. Deane wrote his brother, Barnabas, "that it has been proposed in the most respectable companies to have the public thanks of the citizens given me for my publication."[37] On the other hand, the reaction of the Lee family and supporters was prompt. Francis Lightfoot Lee published in the Pennsylvania Packet, December 8, 1778, a request that the public suspend judgement until the matter was fully investigated. The next day, December 10, Deane inserted a card in the Packet that as Congress had resolved to hear him he felt that he could not with propriety continue his narrative.

Deane's appeal to the people made Congress the center of a cyclonic storm. Deane's opponents denounced his publication as an insult to Congress, while his friends saw in his appeal only the effort of a much wronged man to defend his own character. Henry Laurens wrote to Raulins Lounder of South Carolina on December 7: "This appeal to the people, this rash unnecessary appeal I trust will this day be attended to in Congress, but as I am concerned in no intrigue or Cabal, I am consequently ignorant of the designs of my fellow labourers. The honor and interests of these United States call upon every delegate in Congress for support. If therefore other men are silent, I will

[37] New York Historical Collections, III, 76.

deliver my sentiments on this very extraordinary circumstance and I have in prospect the production of much good out of this evil."[38]

When Congress convened on Monday, Laurens laid before the House "information . . . from citizens of respectable characters -- that Deane's letter had created anxieties in the minds of good people of this city, and excited tumults among them." He himself had found the letter to contain articles "highly derogatory to the honor and interests of these United States," and he cited Deane's intimation that, following his appeal to the people, he designed "giving them a course of letters." He therefore deemed it "dishonorable to Congress" to hear Deane that evening as planned and accordingly moved for the appointment of a committee to report upon the contents of the letters. A motion that the letter to read in Congress was interjected but was defeated by a vote of six states to five. The reason stated was that it would be a waste of time as everyone had read the narrative. Lauren's motion, he later averred, was prevented by "spinning out time" until a certain order of the day was called for. All that was accomplished was an order that Deane should report to Congress in writing upon his agency in Europe.[39]

[38]Burnett, Letters of Congress, III, 520-21; John Ettwein, Contributor, "The Resignation of Henry Laurens, President of Congress," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XIII (1889), 232-36.

[39]Journals of Congress, XII, 1200.

Two days later, James Lovell wrote to Richard Henry Lee, bringing him up to date on the affairs of Congress, and, in commenting upon the Deane affair, he noted that Deane "had made himself a culprit before our bar, by refusing to answer any interrogations 'tending to criminate himself.' He was the cause of often delay."[40]

In Paris Arthur Lee, on December 13, long before he could have learned of Deane's public appeal of December 5, wrote to Theodoric Bland:

> I see by the public prints with you, that my quondam colleague [Deane] is assuming all the merit of what has been done here and I know he is forming a faction against your friend [me]. I should never have opened my lips upon the subject, did not their assuming merits which they do not deserve make it an act of justice to state the facts. So far, then, were my colleagues from having any peculiar merit in the treaties, that it was with the greatest difficulty I persuaded them to insist on the recognition of our sovereignty, and the knowledgement of our independence. They were proposed by our friend, evaded by his colleagues, and only admitted after being re-urged in a manner that made them apprehend the consequences of an opposition they could not justify. It was also in spite of the opinion, reasoning, and even remonstrance of your friend, that they would insert two articles in the treaty, which articles were unanimously condemned by Congress, and have been accepted here. After this, one would imagine they might have been content with equal share of praise, when in truth their conduct merited censure. They will force

[40]Lee, Life of Richard Henry Lee, II, 145.

> me one day or another to bring the proofs of these things before Congress and the public, when I am sure they will shed some of their plums. 'Mr. Deane is universally understood to have made 60,000 sterling while he was a commissioner![41]

The first writer to enter the lists who was not directly a party to the dispute was Senex.[42] In the Pennsylvania Packet of December 15, Senex stated that he was willing to follow Francis Lightfoot Lee's suggestion and to suspend judgement on Deane's publication. However, he had expected that some of Mr. Lee's friends or connections would have attempted to disprove some of the alleged facts. As they corresponded with both of the Lees abroad, "they must have it in their power to satisfy the public mind . . . without delay." Senex asked such questions as these: Was Arthur Lee Commissioner for both France and Spain? Was he intimately acquainted with Dr. Berkenhout and had he given him the letters of introduction to Richard Henry Lee?

[41] New York Historical Collections, III, 80-81.

[42] Senex is supposed to have been Robert Treat Paine, late one of the delegates to Congress from Massachusetts. Almon's Remembrancer, VII, 371. This identification is not positive, but as it was not denied it may be assumed to be correct.

Was William Lee Commissioner for both Vienna and Berlin, commercial agent for the Congress in Europe? Was he still Alderman of the city of London? Does William Lee charge a five per-cent commission while Mr. Williams formerly had charged two per-cent? These points Senex felt could and should be cleared up at once. He also felt that the Lee brothers held too many offices. "I do not pretend to enter into the merits of Messieurs Lees' character, or to peep behind the curtain: but surely it behooves us to guard against such dangerous precedents."

Senex then commented upon the general reaction to the publication of the Narrative. Personally he approved. He did not believe that Deane had intended, or that Congress interpreted it, as disrespectful. His own friends, in spite if his infirmities, had urged him "to go with them to find out Mr. Deane and express our thanks for his watchful care over the public weal." The public, in general, had approved.

A champion on the Lee side was Thomas Paine, author of Common Sense and now Secretary of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, whose reply to Silas Deane appeared in the Pennsylvania Packet December 15 under the name of Common Sense.

In the first paragraph Common Sense announced: "I am no stranger [sic] to, his negotiations and contracts in France, his difference with his colleagues, the reason of

his return to America, and the matters which have occurred since." He then chided Mr. Deane for alarming the public mind and declared that he was "particularly circumstanced" as "two of the gentlemen he so freely censures are three thousand miles off, and the other two he so freely affronts are members of Congress . . . and however painful may be their feelings, they must attend the progressive conduct of the hour."

Next, Common Sense pointed out that Deane should have known that his recall was a censure by a body too polite to say so. The phrase, "my papers and yours," merely emphasized "the intricacy of Mr. Deane's own official affairs," and he asked: "Why then does Mr. Deane endeavour to lead the attention of the public to a wrong object and to bury the real reasons, under a tumult of new and perhaps unnecessary suspicions?"

Common Sense ridiculed the statement that "their ears [Congress] were shut against me" as being absolutely untrue. Deane was also taken to task severly for publishing his address on Saturday after Congress had already decided to hear him on Monday.

Turning to Deane's account of activities of Arthur and William Lee which had been characterized as "stubborn and undesirable facts," Common Sense pointed out that "his [Deane's] deductions from them are hypothetical and inconclusive." Such charges against Mr. Arthur Lee, William Lee,

and Col. Richard Lee, "whom I have been well acquainted with for three years past, . . . are to me circumstantial evidences of Mr. Deane's unfittness for a public character . . ."

Turning to the Berkenhout story, Deane was first criticized for doing nothing and "then he likewise entertains us with a history of what passed" but "he [Berkenhout] got nothing here, and to send him back was both necessary and civil."

Common Sense commended Arthur Lee for contacts with the Whigs in England and felt that Mr. William Lee's retention of his office as Alderman was proof that the people of London were "very good Whigs." The entire appeal was characterized as "a barbarous, unmanly, and unsupported attack on absent characters . . . far superior to his own." Dr. Lee was too much of a gentleman to be uncivil to the French nation and "He [Arthur Lee] might with great justice complain against Mr. Deane's contracts."

In conclusion Common Sense wrote: "Upon the whole, I cannot help considering this publication as one of the most irrational performances I ever met with."[43]

Paine had meant his remark to apply to Deane's Address but there were those who felt that it should be applied to his own remarks. Paine was not only threatened but was actually whipped on the streets of Philadelphia by one of Deane's supporters.[44]

[43]The Pennsylvania Packet, December 15, 1778.

[44]Charles C. Sellers, Charles Wilson Peale, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1947), I, 200-21.

Two days later, December 17, a partisan who signed himself Plain Truth informed the public that he would prove that Common Sense was wrong. "Whether this proceeds from ignorance or a worse cause, the public will hereafter determine."[45] Plain Truth inserted in the December 19th issue of the Pennsylvania Packet this observation: "Nor shall any person holding any office of profit or trust under the United States, or any of them, accept any present, emolument, office or title of any kind whatsoever, from any King, Prince or foreign state." This, of course, was a direct jab at William Lee.

On December 18 Thomas Paine announced that he would shortly answer Plain Truth and that as Common Sense rested his proof on dates, resolutions and letters, "it is impossible to prove him wrong." Paine wrote that he was not personally concerned but "He believed the whole affair to be an inflammatory bubble, thrown among the public to answer both a mercantile and a private pique." He proposed to write one more article "which will be his last on this bubble of the day."[46]

In the Pennsylvania Packet of December 21, Matthew Clarkson (Plain Truth) printed his reply to Thomas Paine. Plain Truth observed that when Common Sense announced his intentions of entering the lists there had been two schools of thought: 1. That he would support Mr. Deane. 2. The

[45] Pennsylvania Packet, December 17, 1778.

[46] Ibid., December 21, 1778.

other, the better informed, that Paine would, by casting a cloud on Mr. Deane, support his friends who had put him in office.

The main body of the article was another recapitulation of Deane's affairs. Deane's trouble and accomplishments were defended. Even the sending of French officers was explained in such a way as to reflect honor and credit on both Deane and the services rendered by the foreign offices. The official recall and Lovell's accompanying letter were printed to show that Deane had no reason to believe that his recall was intended as a censure and a disgrace--in fact, the opposite. A postscript was added that Thomas Paine, like some zealots in religion, seemingly wished to have himself considered as threatened and persecuted for the sake of truth.[47]

On December 21 Deane informed Congress that he had committed his report to writing and requested that an early date be set for his report.[48] Congress set 6 P.M., December 22.[49] Because he did not finish, he was ordered to report at 10 o'clock the next day. As he was proceeding the next day he was ordered to withdraw. After prolonged debate and divisions Deane was ordered to attend December 28, but as a quorum was not present on that day the report could not be continued.[50]

[47] Ibid.
[48] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, II, 862.
[49] Journals of Congress, XII, 1239-40.
[50] Ibid., p. 1258.

The newspaper war continued. The discussion of issues faded in the heat of name calling and charges of "guilt by association". Thomas Paine (December 28) publicly demanded the name of Plain Truth. If it was not revealed, Paine threatened he would "order an Attorney to prosecute him, as a party concerned in publishing a false, malicious libel, tending to injure the reputation of the 'Secretaty for Foreign Affairs.'"[51] Plain Truth replied: "I laugh at the insolence of office and despise the threat."[52]

On December 31 Deane again was called before Congress where he requested that he be permitted to "communicate personally" parts of his narrative. This was denied, and it was decided that "Silas Deane's Narrative" should be read. The Narrativewas another recapitulation of both missions with one addition. The addition was an account of Arthur Lee's visit to Paris in 1776: "I was now in the midst of my affairs with Monsieur Beaumarchais, and was with him every day. My first interview with Mr. Arthur Lee was at the gentleman's house. I afterwards frequently met them together. Mr. Arthur Lee was every day at my lodgings, and I spent all the vacant time I had with him. I acquainted him with all my prospects of procuring supplies, and from whom; and he gave me the highest possible character of Mr. Beaumarchais for his abilities and address."[53]

[51] Pennsylvania Packet, December 29, 1778.
[52] Ibid., December 31, 1778.
[53] New York Historical Collections, III, 155.

The war of words saw the old year out and the new one in with a rehash of the same old charges and counter charges. Plain Truth and Common Sense continued to see virtue and evil in their respective heroes and villains.

On January 1, 1779 Richard Henry Lee blasted Deane in the columns of the Virginia Gazette for casting reflection upon the good name of his family, but as he had a "good conscience he was not disturbed."[54]

Silas Deane began the new year, 1779, by protesting to Congress that one Thomas Paine, "styling himself Secretary for Foreign Affairs" and pretending to address the public in his official capacity, had ventured to assure the public that the supplies which Deane had contracted for with M. Beaumarchais were a gift of the French government. All had been arranged by Arthur Lee before Deane arrived in France and Paine had in his possession full proof of this arrangement.[55]

A new factor was added in the dispute with the appearance of the new year. Conrad Alexandre Gerard, French Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, had watched the raging battle of words with apprehension. Regardless of his personal sympathies, he was a diplomat too well-trained to permit personal views to interfere with official business. Therefore, when Thomas Paine quoted Arthur Lee's reports from

[54]Reprinted in the Pennsylvania Packet, January 19, 1779.
[55]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 9-10.

the files of the Committee of Secret Correspondence to prove that Deane was not responsible for obtaining aid from France and that France had intended the assistance to be a gift, Gerard could not let it pass unchallenged. Gerard knew his government had supplied the arms and ammunition shipped to the Americans and he also knew that France could not admit that she had supplied aid to the rebels before recognizing them. The whole operation of secret aid had been invented to conceal this very fact. Paine's position, although it was the unimportant one of clerk of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, not Secretary of State, was official, and the only way in which this claim could be effectively combatted was by a specific denial of its truth by Congress itself. This Gerard demanded, calling to the attention of that body the impropriety of allowing a secretary, who was under oath to divulge nothing, to publish documents from secret committee files.[56] After considerable insistence by the Minister, Congress, after discussion and debate, acquiesced, categorically denied having received help from the French Government before the alliance, and relieved Paine from his employment.[57] Actually Paine resigned before he could be discharged.

On January 9, Robert Morris replied to what he felt was a direct charge from Thomas Paine. Common Sense had written

[56] Ibid.

[57] Journals of Congress, XIII, 32.

December 31, 1777, that "every state [should] enquire what mercantile connections any of the late or present delegates have had or now have, with Mr. Deane, and that a precedent might not be wanting, it is important that the state of Pennsylvania should begin." Morris answered: "I do not conceive that the state I live in has any right or inclination to enquire into what mercantile connections I have had or now have with Mr. Deane, or with any other person: if Mr. Deane had any commerce that was inconsistent with his public station, he must answer for it; as I did not, by becoming a Delegate from the state of Pennsylvania, relinquish my right of forming mercantile connections, I was at liberty to form such with Mr. Deane. My now giving the account this author desires, is not to gratify him or to resign the right I contend for but purely to remove the force of his insinuation on that subject; and to this effectually, I will candidly relate all the commercial concerns I have had with Mr. Deane."[58]

Three days later, January 12, Paine in a slashing attack replied that he did not think that anyone should have private interests while in public life. He expressed the opinion that neither Mr. Morris nor Mr. Deane was capable of judging each other when they were partners in the same business. He indicated his suspicion that Plain Truth and all of Deane's supporters had commercial connections. The column ended with

[58] Pennsylvania Packet, January 9, 1779.

the usual laudatory remarks to the Lees which again brought this protest down to the partisan level.[59]

In the same issue of the Pennsylvania Packet, January 12, Deane inserted a notice: "Nothing that Mr. Paine has published could have induced me to alter my resolution to remain silent, until the determination of Congress should be known, and had he not in his wanton madness for abuse, invective and misrepresentation, ventured to state the affairs of the supplies, which were returned by me in France, in manner totally contrary to the truth, and highly injurious to these States, as well as to the justice, honour, and dignity of the Court of France."[60]

During the month of January the battle of words continued unabated. Philadethes in a lengthy article listed twenty falsehoods in all of Common Sense's writings.[61] Deane again broke his self-enforced silence and replied to Richard Henry Lee's statement of January 1, 1779. He noted that Lee had written: " . . . had I winked at all the information of public abuse I do not think I would have incurred Mr. Deane's censure." To this Deane asked: "Have I been charged with the abuse of the public trust reposed in me, or with having misapplied public monies?"[62]

[59] Ibid., January 12, 1779.
[60] Ibid., January 14, 1779.
[61] Ibid., January 23, 1779.
[62] Ibid., January 26, 1779.

Congress refused either to charge Deane or release him and on March 15, Deane reminded the President of Congress that he had last written February 22, and was still without a reply. He stated that his situation "for eight months past had been peculiarly distressing," and he again entreated Congress to "inform me if they expect further information respecting their foreign or other affairs."[63] On March 29, Deane again wrote, adding: "The settlement of the commissioners' accounts and my own will show that I have received nothing therefore except money for my necessary expenses."[64] He also explained the reason for his silence in ignoring the attacks in the public prints: "From the moment that I was ordered by Congress to lay before them, in writing, a narraion of my public transactions I have considered myself as being before that tribunal and not at liberty to take notice of any publication."[65] In April for the first time, Deane mentioned his own financial interests. "My own family and private affairs, as well as those of one intrusted to my care, have long suffered by my absence; they must suffer to the last degree, if longer delayed."[66]

During the spring and summer months of 1779 Deane sent letter after letter to Congress explaining, refuting, and requesting to be heard in hiw own defense.[67] The newspaper

[63]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 79.
[64]Ibid., p. 104.
[65]Ibid., p. 106.
[66]Ibid., p. 109.
[67]New York Historical Collections, III, 412, 421, 428, 429, 430-37, 453-62.

war of words increased in intensity and vituperativeness. Candour, Plain Truth, Candid, Common Sense, Lysander, Luisitania, Philathes, and other pundits of the ancient and modern world continued to applaud and justify their heroes and depict their respective villains in pens freshly dipped in vitriol. Out of this potpourri two charges against Deane are conspicuous. He was "in trade," and his accounts were in a state of "studied confusion," to use the language of Arthur Lee. The public itself was interested and concerned.

Congress, just because it was Congress, was not immune from rebukes. The press of the day stated its views in unmistakable terms. Under the caption of "Affairs in Congress," dated June 24 and carried in the Baltimore Advertiserand reprinted in the Virginia Gazette, July 17, 1779, and the New York Packet, July 29, 1779, was the following extract from a letter from Philadelphia:

> Our situation is truly alarming and is briefly as follows: A Junto early formed in Congress, have, by some means or other, contrived to keep their principal leaders, either actually in the house, or in some of the most important departments; and by acting constantly in concert, have at last brought it about that a minority, and a small one too, can retard, delay, and even obstruct every proceeding. The foundation of this Junto was laid during the sitting of

> the first Congress. At that period there were many real grounds, as well as pretended ones, for suspecting New York, and one or two of the middle States. This naturally led the northern and southern ones to unit the more strictly in the measure then pursuing, to obtain the great objects in view. It is not my intention to give you the history of the Junto at present, but will inform you, that for upwards of twelve months past, a club has been formed of certain of the Delegates from New England, New Jersey, and this State, and of two or three members from the southward. They meet regularly, debate upon, and adjust the manner of their proceedings; and Congress, at all times, being a fluctuating and changing body, these men, acting in concert, are able to keep back or obstruct any measure whatever, until, by the absence of some members, and the division of others, they can, with a small majority, carry the vote as they please.

The action or the lack of action by Congress is very revealing and reflects no credit upon the national legislature. Congress was unable to rise above partisan strife and put its house in order.[68] An outstanding example of this pettiness occurred on June 10, 1779. A resolution was introduced by Thomas Burke and seconded by Henry Laurens "That Silas Deane, Esquire, be ordered not to depart the United States without the special permission of Congress;

[68]See letter of James Lovell to Samuel Adams, August 12, 1779, New York Historical Collections, IV, 59-61; James Lovell to Richard Henry Lee, August 17, 1779, Lee, Life of Richard Henry Lee, II, 146.

and that Arthur Lee, Esquire, be directed to repair forthwith to America, in order the better to enable Congress to inquire into the truth of the several allegations and suggestions made by the said Arthur Lee, in his correspondence with Congress against the said Silas Deane."[69] The motion actually originated with Henry Laurens and as he described the "droll scene," the purpose was to prevent Deane from leaving the country and if he did so without special permission from Congress he would be "pleading guilty."[70]

On August 6, 1779, Congress adopted a resolution that Silas Deane had long advocated. The measure read: "Resolved, That the several Commissioners, Commercial agents, and other in Europe, entrusted with public money, be directed to transmit, without delay, their accounts and vouchers, and also triplicate copies of the same to the Board of Treasury of these United States in order for settlement.

"Resolved, That a suitable person be appointed by Congress to examine the said accounts in Europe, and certify his opinion thereon previous to their being transmitted.

"Resolved, That the Board of Treasury be directed to report for Mr. Deane a reasonable allowance for his time and expenses from the expiration of three months after the notice of his recall to the present time."[71]

[69] Journals of Congress, XIII, 712.
[70] Ingraham, The Case of Silas Deane, p. 98.
[71] Journals of Congress, XIII, 927.

A motion was made by Samuel Hartington, and seconded by Mr. John Fell, that the "Honorable Silas Deane, Esquire, late one of the Commissioners at the Court of Versailles, and political and commercial agent be excused from any further attendance on Congress, in order that he may settle his accounts without delay, agreeable to the foregoing resolution. The last resolution was amended to read "Discharged" instead of "excused."[72] In this terse way Silas Deane was dismissed by Congress without either censure or approbation. He was, however, now under the obligation of finding some means to justify a claim against Congress for the remuneration of his services.

[72] Ibid., p. 929.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND MISSION TO FRANCE

A new chapter in the revolutionary career of Silas Deane began with the congressional resolution of August 5, 1779, which discharged him from further attendance after thirteen months of waiting. He was discharged so that he might settle his accounts in France without delay. The resolution squarely placed the responsibility for the settlement of the accounts upon Deane and at his own time and expense. Deane could have refused the obligation but to have done so would have been a forfeiture of his claim against the government of the United States and the acceptance of the stigma of the unproven accusation of his enemies. He refused because he was determined to clear his name and secure the money to which he was entitled.

One of the last things that Deane did before he left Philadelphia was to send a memorial (August 18) to Congress in which he reminded that body that he had been commissioned to go abroad by a Congressional Committee, ordered home by Congress, and as "there are no charges," he must assume that Congress approved on his conduct as its agent and commissioner. He requested that an auditor be appointed to examine the accounts in Europe before they were transmitted to America for final settlement by the Treasury Board.[1] This would

[1]Ingraham, The Case of Silas Deane, p. 77.

prevent error and save time. He frankly admitted that due to neglect of his private affairs and the depreciation of the currency, an extended period of waiting for a final settlement of his accounts would mean total ruin. Therefore he prayed that when the accounts were audited the examiner be empowered to make an advanced payment subject to the final audit by the Treasury Board. Congress ignored the memorial but on August 25 authorized the Treasury Board to issue a warrant to Mr. Deane "for ten thousand, five hundred dollars in full consideration for his time and expenses during his attendance on Congress from the 4th of June, 1778, until the 6th day of August, inst."[2] This was done in spite of the efforts of Henry Laurens who recounted the scene to Richard Henry Lee with glee.[3]

On November 16, 1779, Deane wrote his last letter to Congress before returning to France. In a dignified statement he returned the warrant for ten thousand, five hundred dollars explaining that in spite of his depleted private fortune he preferred to return to France and vindicate his conduct at his own expense. His refusal to accept the offered sum did not indicate "disrespect to that honorable body, nor do I feel the slightest emotions of resentment towards those men who opposed the grant even of that sum to me." He observed that as he had "received no answer to my memorial of

[2] Journals of Congress, XIV, 997.

[3] Lee, Life of Richard Henry Lee, II, 141.

August last, I conclude none will be given, and, consequently, that I am laid under the necessity of returning to Europe in the best manner I can, and at my own expense."[4]

From Philadelphia Deane went to Williamsburg, Virginia, to see his brother, Simeon Deane, before leaving for France. Before he left Philadelphia he had already determined his future line of conduct. He would avoid all political subjects, recoup his private fortune, and vindicate himself by settling his accounts to the satisfaction of every one concerned. These resolutions he found more difficult to keep than to make.[5]

From Williamsburg Deane attempted to rearrange his personal affairs. To his brother, Barnabas Deane, he committed the care of his only son, Jesse, should anything happen. "I feel much for him, my only hope, and almost the sole object I live for; my other family connections are dear to me but they are (thank God) capable of providing for themselves, and are in a good way. If any accident happens to me, my son must be yours, and our brother Simeon Deane's. I need not remind you of past occurrences in our lives, to urge you the most attentive and parental care of him; it would argue a doubt of your gratitude and fraternal affection. You

[4]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 411-12.

[5]New York Historical Collections, IV, 91; Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 142.

will think I write this in a gloomy, desponding turn of mind. I do not but I am not gay."[6]

Regarding his private affairs and personal papers, he informed Barnabas: "You will find among my papers inventories of all the estate of Mr. Webb, and accounts made out by Joyce under my direction, ready to settle. You will also find an inventory of the notes, &., payable to me; pray obtain and preserve them." He requested that a "table" be erected to the memory of his second wife "in the same fashion as the first" and requested the family to select the inscription as she "was equally dear to them as to me." His son, Jesse, who had accompanied John Adams to France, was according to Deane's plans to remain in Europe for four years to complete his education and then be placed "to that business which may best suit his inclination and improvement."[7]

There was one other family matter that required his attention--unpleasant as it was. Joseph Webb, his stepson, he gently reproached for his silence and failure to understand his present condition. "I must therefore plainly tell you that your rejecting my proposals, refusing the power I sent you, and dissatisfaction at my refusal to put everything in the world which was mine when I left Wethersfield unconditionally in your hands, make it appear that you are being used by my political enemies." Regarding the Webb estate he

[6]New York Historical Collections, IV, 130.
[7]Ibid., p. 131.

wrote:

> I am now under the necessity of going into a voluntary exile, without funds to support me, and wounded with the ingratitude of those whom I have not only served faithfully, but saved from destruction. Reflect a few moments, I pray you, on the past and present. I do not aim at moving your compassion, or at exciting your generosity, but surely you cannot still think that the pittance of estate which I have in Wethersfield, not amounting in the whole to fifteen hundred pounds sterling money, is exhorbitant for a man who spent more than ten years of the prime of his life, principally in taking care of your interests and of the education of your brethern. In the course of my management, had I attended strictly to keep only within the letter of the law, I must have made a very handsome fortune; what the consequence would have been, everyone acquainted with the circumstances of the estate at the time know [sic] little or nothing could have been left, if in reality the creditors would have been paid. I do not repent of the line of conduct I took up. On the contrary, I reflect on it with pleasure; and the many opportunities afforded me in reflection infinitely greater satisfaction than any which can result from the possession of wealth. But if our sentiments on this subject are as distant from each other as our persons are like to be for some time to come, at least let us part friends; or, rather, let us unite in trying to remove this only possible ground for the interruption of that good harmony which has subsisted between us from your infancy. To do this effectually, let judicious and disinterested men settle every thing betwixt us. I have often proposed and wished for it since I have been obliged to leave the country. I should, indeed, prefer a settlement between ourselves; that at present is impossible;

> and I wish that the men undertaking this may not come to it as to dispute between parties, but to assist to settle an account between two friends, one of whom cannot possibly attend to it himself. You have an inventory which will shew you the amount of sums received and paid out; you were privy to the keeping of this account; you have the account made out from the inventory the winter before my leaving Wethersfield, notes payable to me or my order, and ballances [sic] on book much more than sufficient to pay the ballances remaining. The landed estate left by your honored father has long since been divided, and in your possession; you know it never yielded me any profit at any time; the landed securities are in the same predicament, and you know well how much anxiety and vexation, as well as money, the obtaining and defending cost me, and that the income never ballanced a fifth part of my expenses on them; these facts being within your knowledge. I write freely to you, and your brethren ought not to be ignorant of them, for it will affect me sensibly to be thought, and perhaps represented by them as a defaulter, which I have done not simply legal justice towards them, but have treated them with parental kindness.[8]

Due to the severity of the winter the convoy, by which Deane planned to return to France, was unable to sail until June 20, 1780.[9] Deane spent the winter attempting to help his brother Simeon, who was also in bad financial straits, and gathering together the loose ends of his own affairs. While he was in Virginia, Deane

[8] Ibid., pp. 162-65.

[9] Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 152.

received letters from various friends which left no doubt that he possessed enemies but also reassured him that he possessed warm friends. From Robert Morris he received, in addition to a business offer, words that must have pleased him greatly. "Reflecting on the unrestricted abuse you have suffered, and not knowing whether you have any evidence with you to show that your particular friends were not infected with the pestilence of the times, I have suddenly and hastily scribbled a letter to Doctor Franklin. . . ."[10] True to his word Morris wrote Benjamin Franklin: "I consider Mr. Deane as a martyr in the cause of America. After rendering the most signal and Important Services, he had been reviled and traduced in the most shameful manner. But I have not a doubt the day will come when his merit shall be universally acknowledged, and the authors of these calumnies held in the detestation they deserve."[11]

[10] New York Historical Collections, IV, 117.

[11] Ibid., pp. 120-21. For a general discussion, see also Abernethy, Western Lands and the American Revolution, pp. 205-16.

The monotony of the forty-two day return voyage was broken by the capture of two prizes and the loss of a merchant ship in the convoy. By an accident of fate the convoy slipped by the British fleet blockading the port and landed at Bordeaux July 25, 1780. Deane was later to learn that they were fortunate as "few vessells [sic] escape" the blockading fleet.[12]

Upon arrival Deane immediately notifed Franklin that he was in France and that he was proceeding immediately to Paris. After a few days spent in recovering from the fatigue of the voyage he proceeded to Paris where he was cordially received. "I have taken my old lodging with Dr. Franklin," he said, "and do not find my character to have suffered here by the abuse I met with in America during my absence from France." He received a kind a hearty welcome from M. Chaumont and M. de Beaumarchais "and the rest of my good old friends here." Deane appreciated his reception, and it was "sufficient to make me forget in some degree what I met with from faction and cabal elsewhere." From Spain John Jay sent a belated but sincere letter expressing faith and confidence. Deane was grateful and appreciated very much the kind words and token of esteem, but he realized that his precarious financial condition would not permit any delay in accomplishing his mission.[13]

[12] Ibid., pp. 174-80.
[13] Ibid., pp. 190, 199, 214.

Before Deane left America for France he had several schemes in mind. His immediate object was the settling of his accounts, but he was also thinking and planning for the future. He intended to re-enter the mercantile business and felt that speculation in western land would be a profitable business with the return of peace.

As a former merchant Deane anticipated few difficulties in re-entering the mercantile business. Because of the demand for goods created by the war and the shortage of goods from England, he did not expect any great difficulty in re-establishing himself. He was widely known in French mercantile circles and had a private account with M. Grand, the Banker for the American Commission in Paris, with which he planned to finance his business ventures.[14] Unfortunately, perhaps because they planned to go in business together, he had given M. Chaumont power to draw on his funds.[15] To his surprise he soon found that his bills were being protested.[16] He had brought with him a number of loan office certificates, which he had expected to sell in France for a commission.[17] Because of the inflation and the attempted deflation of the American currency at a 40:1 ratio, French interest in American trade and investments was nil. Without capital and without credit Deane's prospects of financial rehabilitation in

[14] Ibid., p. 132.
[15] Ibid., p. 280.
[16] Ibid., pp. 234-35, 237.
[17] Ibid., pp. 188, 235.

in the mercantile business slowly faded. As he informed Isaac Moses: "I have not sent out a shilling on any account, owing to various and unexpected disappointments I have met with."[18]

Deane was greatly disappointed in the failure of his mercantile hopes, but the greatest blow was when a contract for masts failed to materialize. He was encouraged to secure a contract to supply the navies of both France and Spain with masts from America, but with the death of his Spanish contact, the hope of a contract with Spain evaporated and despite some encouragement from Versailles the French hope also faded.[19]

John Jay, who was pressing the contract at the Spanish court was not very hopeful. He wrote Deane: "The more I enquire and hear about your contract the more I am convinced it will never be ratified."[20] Finally Deane was forced to admit that the Spanish ministers were "disposed to know nothing of us in public or private."[21] Deane reported to James Wilson, his contact in America: "The contract with France is not in a much better situation. It was accepted of, but conditionally only. When I urge anything here it is naturally replied, that when the cargoes arrive and are approved of it will be time enough to finish the contract without convoy, and none can be obtained. No cargoes can be brought over, even if they can be procured in America. Thus, to all

[18] Ibid., p. 281.
[19] Ibid., p. 190.
[20] Ibid., p. 294.
[21] Ibid., p. 316.

appearance, this is like to be suspended during the war. The embarrassment in which I found a certain gentleman of whom I depended here, has hurt me in this affair, as well as in some others, exceedingly. In short I despair of doing anything in this matter, or in the land way, so long as the war continues. . . ."[22]

Deane, like many other Americans of his day, was interested in western lands. This interest he acquired early in life and retained as long as he lived.[23] After his discharge from Congress he planned to engage in large scale land speculations.[24] The necessity of his return to France to settle his accounts would force him to postpone his plan. However, while he was in Williamsburg waiting for the weather to permit the sailing of the convoy he received a proposition which would permit him to carry out his original idea on perhaps an even larger scale. Robert Morris suggested: "I would have you inform yourself whether it is practicable to make sale of vacant lands in America by sending our drafts or surveys, descriptions and certificates, to ascertain the situation, qualities of the land, title, etc., and in what part of the continent lands are most desired by such persons as

[22] Ibid., p. 316-17.

[23] Silas Deane to Patrick Henry, January 2, 1775, Miscellaneous Collection, Clements Library, ALS; Connecticut Historical Collections, II, 131-34.

[24] Silas Dean to Thomas Adams, June 25, 1779, Virginia Historical Magazine, VI (1889), 32.

would be inclined to speculate, for I am ready to join you in any operation of this kind that would turn advantageously to ourselves, as well as those who may purchase from us, and I would not wish to engage in it on any other terms."[25]

The operation was extended to include Joseph Wharton and James Wilson. The arrangement was that Deane would be the advance agent in Europe with one-fourth interest in the lands purchased. Wharton was to handle the business in Philadelphia, obtaining grants as fast as possible and sending copies to Deane with the best charts and descriptions available. Deane was empowered to sell in France or elsewhere in Europe on one-third, or one-half or more, as he thought best. Deane, and it is easy to see why, felt that it would be advisable to sell at least enough to regain the purchase price.[26]

Deane landed in France in July of 1780 and wrote James Wilson in August that he had not had time to enter upon the discussion of land speculations except in a general way.[27] He thought the prospects good. Gerard, the former French minister to the United States, was considered a likely representative to interest French speculators in American land.[28] To John Shee, who was not a member of the Philadelphia group,

[25] New York Historical Collections, IV, 117.
[26] Ibid., p. 147.
[27] Ibid., p. 167.
[28] Ibid., p. 197.

Deane wrote that he felt that he could do something with his shares of the Illinois and Wabash lands "but I fear your limits are higher than they will go at." However, he promised to keep Shee's lands in mind and to keep in touch with him.[29]

Deane continued in his attempts to interest French speculators in American land, but apparently the desire to sell was stronger in America than the desire to buy in France. In June of 1781 Robert Morris wrote, requesting information concerning the sales. According to Morris he had discussed the project with Robert R. Livingston, the future Secretary of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, who would write to Deane "respecting the sale of some of his own lands."[30]

The bright hopes of the would-be land speculators did not materialize. In September of 1781 Deane gave a discouraging report. To James Wilson he confessed: "No one will have anything to do at present with land adventures in America, and very few with any other. Its being known that a merchant has made, or is about to make, any considerable adventure in America, is of itself sufficient to hurt his credit in France at this time.[31] Thus ended another of Deane's hopes for financial success.

[29] Ibid., p. 220.
[30] Ibid., p. 401.
[31] Ibid., p. 465.

One by one Deane's hopes were fading. He had left America confident that in a short time he would be able to clear his name and regain his financial standing, but one disappointment followed another. To Barnabas Deane he wrote: "My patience is exhausted, and my affairs ruined by the unexampled conduct of Congress, who have detained me here--it is now more than a year--waiting for the appointment of an auditor to settle my accounts, which in reality I believe they never wish to have settled."[32] To James Wilson he confessed: "For myself, almost everything I depended on when I left America has failed. I built great hopes on the mast contract, and had good right to do so at the time. I presumed that something might be done with lands, and I flattered myself that our public credit was not so low in Europe, but that Loan Office Certificates would sell for at least what they cost in America; but in particular was I confident that Congress, after suffering me to be calumniated as a public defaulter, and in effect treating me as such themselves, would certainly have an auditor ready to meet me in the examination and settlement of my accounts, and that they would seek rather than avoid scrutiny; but I have not been less deceived in this than in my other expectations."[33]

Some of these disappointments were caused by the unsettled economic and political conditions of the times and

[32] Ibid., p. 464.
[33] Ibid., p. 466.

could not be attributed to any individual or individuals. The greatest single blow was the failure of Congress to settle his accounts. As a result, not only was he ruined financially, but the tactics and methods used to circumvent the settlement broke his spirit. The record shows that Congress fully intended to make a fair settlement with Deane after an audit of his accounts. Deane, by some indiscreet and injudicious words and letters, made it possible for his enemies to continue to blacken his name with charges of fraud and later treason, and impossible for his friends to defend either his conduct or to press for the settlement of his claims.

The settlement of the accounts of the Commissioners, for which Deane had primarily returned to France in July of 1780, had different values for the different individuals involved. To Silas Deane it meant financial independence, but to Benjamin Franklin it meant the end of a distasteful and involved piece of business. Later Franklin was to learn that it had been whispered that he was opposed to the settling of Deane's accounts. Naturally, he resented the charge and correctly attributed it to Arthur Lee and Ralph Izard.[34] Franklin also felt that Deane had rendered a great service to the Revolution and was entitled to a fair hearing and just compensation for his services. This he did not hesitate to say. In October of 1779 Franklin had been informed of the decision of Congress to have the accounts of all its Commissioners

[34]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 416.

audited. He had then immediately expressed his approval of the decision to James Lovell, the acting Secretary of the Committee for Foreign Affairs and an ardent champion of the Lee faction. He had likewise volunteered his opinion of Deane. "I had, and have still," he wrote, "a very good opinion of Mr. Deane for his zeal and activity in the service of his country . . . [and] I still think him innocent."[35] This opinion, of course, was one that was not shared or appreciated by Lovell who had continuously been in the background with a resolution or a suggestion when Congress had been considering any motion dealing with Silas Deane. This antagonism was one that did not abate at any time for a period of years.

The intention of Congress had been clearly revealed when, previous to Deane's arrival in France, it had appointed Joshua Johnson of Nantes to audit the accounts of the Commissioners. At first Johnson had refused to accept the assignment but consented when Franklin showed him a vote [order] of Congress. By mutual agreement the examination of Deane's accounts had been postponed until he might arrive from America.[36]

Franklin was anxious to finish the auditing job, and he expressed his appreciation to Johnson for his willingness to undertake it and his own impatience with Deane's tardy arrival.

[35] New York Historical Collections, IV, 109; Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, III, 384.

[36] Ibid., p. 536.

In June of 1780 Franklin informed Johnson that in a few days Deane was expected to arrive in France. "I grow more impatient to have these accounts settled; if, therefore, Mr. Deane should not arrive in the course of a month I must then desire you would come up. Bring with you, if you can, a good clerk that is an accountant, to copy, and let us do the business together as well as we can."[37] Unfortunately, Deane was still in America waiting for the weather to permit the sailing of the convoy, and Johnson reversed his decision and later refused to audit either Deane's personal or public accounts.

Before Deane sailed for France he had received information that gave him satisfaction and encouragement. The accounts of Mr. Williams and Mr. Monthieu and others on which the Lee faction had founded their principle charges, had been examined and settled, and a balance found in their favor by the referees, one of whom was Joshua Johnson. "This has, in a great measure done my business to hand,"[38] said Deane. He had been in France for several months before he learned that Johnson had refused to audit his accounts. No reason was given, and naturally he was disappointed by the delay. It was not a critical one however, as Congress had only to designate another auditor. Franklin had been greatly disappointed also by Deane's unexpected delay because it had retarded the settlement of the accounts of the joint commission. When he learned of Deane's

[37] Ibid., p. 809.
[38] New York Historical Collections, IV, 169.

arrival in France, he had immediately assured Congress that he would "endeavour to see the business completed with all possible expedition."[39]

When Deane landed in France he immediately began the process of closing his accounts. What he had expected to be a matter of a few months soon became a very tedious and perplexing affair.[40] In September of 1780 he had written to Robert Morris: "I am now engaging of a full settlement, or, rather, to state in a clear and simple point of view every transaction I have been concerned in Europe, and flatter myself that I shall get through in a few weeks, in a manner that will justify your good opinion of me; and the results I am confident will not cause you or any others to blush for having been my friend."[41] In the same month he wrote to John Jay, former president of Congress now on a mission in Spain, commenting on his progress and contrasting the treatment of the other Commissioners by Congress with his own: "I greatly wish to see you, but the settling the commissioners accounts must take up some time here. You know that the only objections against me in America were on the score of those accounts having been left unsettled; yet Mr. Adams returned to America without settling even his private accounts, though he had not any other business, nor did anything in Europe but spend money and keep the accounts. No fault was

[39] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 22.
[40] New York Historical Collections, IV, 252-53.
[41] Ibid., p. 216.

found with him and he was reappointed. Mr. [Arthur] Lee, who remained in France, more than a year after his recall, has not settled either his public or private accounts. Mr. Izard, Mr. William Lee are in the same predicament. These men have, each of them, as appear by the accounts, received more than twice the amount of public monies which I ever received, and have literally done worse than nothing."[42] His correspondence during the fall of 1780 consisted primarily of letters to merchants and to Joshua Johnson asking for explanations of certain items charged to him personally instead of the commissioners jointly. In November of 1780 Deane informed Johnson: "I have nearly closed the other accounts."[43] Deane had yet to learn that Johnson had refused to audit his accounts.

As the year 1780 drew to a close Deane had the courage to write John Paul Jones, who was also having his troubles with Arthur Lee: "Meantime I can only say that no man feels more sensibly than I do for the disappointments you have met with; every one who knows anything of my history will believe what I say, but I have never lost sight of the great object, or suffered my ardor to abate on account of anything I have met with, and I am confident that you are and will be animated with the same principle."[44] At the time Deane wrote these words he was living on money borrowed from Vergennes,

[42] Ibid., p. 230.
[43] Ibid., p. 260.
[44] Ibid., p. 261.

French minister of Foreign Affairs. In December of 1780 he expressed the belief that he would soon be able to repay the loan as "his accounts were almost finally and fully stated."[45]

The opening of the New Year, 1781, was not an auspicious one for Deane. He learned that Johnson had refused to audit his accounts and that Franklin was not authorized to advance him funds. On February 3, 1781, he summed up his position to John Jay: "I have nearly closed all my accounts, public as well as private, but Mr. Johnson, the auditor appointed by Congress refused to act, and Doctor Franklin says he cannot act, nor can he pay any part of the considerable sum due to me without orders from Congress. Thus, my Dear Sir, I have been abused in America as a defaulter, whilst a large sum was due to me, obliged to return to Europe at my own expense to settle the public accounts, and am now refused payment under pretense that the accounts and vouchers must first be examined and passed in Congress. I do not blame Doctor Franklin; he is sensible of my situation, and acts the friendly part, but his hands are tied by Congress."[46] To his friends and brothers in America he repeated the story of his predicament. To his brother Simeon he wrote: "I have thought of venturing once more to America with my accounts, but the uncertainty in which I am with respect to everything there deters me from resolving decisively."[47] Robert Morris learned that Deane

[45] Ibid., p. 268.
[46] Ibid., pp. 277-78.
[47] Ibid., pp. 282-84.

had settled "the public accounts of my fellow commissioners, as well as my own" and that by his account Congress owed him 300,000 livres. This sum was based on the time that Deane had served as agent for the Secret Committee of Correspondence. By the terms of his contract with the committee he was to receive a five percent commission on all goods sent to America. For his services as Commissioner, Deane charged only his personal living expenses.[48] In May of 1781 Deane wrote to James Wilson that his accounts had been ready for six months and that Congress had known for over a year that Johnson would not audit his accounts.[49] But Congress, as far as he knew, had failed to designate an auditor to settle the accounts. In all his letters now appear two phrases constantly: 1. his inability to collect one sou for his support, and 2. the failure of Congress to appoint an auditor. Deane, because Congress had failed to settle his accounts, was living on money borrowed from his friends. Only by practicing a most rigid economy was he able to exist.[50]

In May of 1781 Deane again appealed to Congress for relief. He re-told the old story of Johnson's refusal to accept the appointment to audit his accounts and the failure of Congress to designate another auditor. He publicly and frankly admitted his condition: "My necessities would have long since have justified my seizing on the public property

[48] Ibid., pp. 286-88.
[49] Ibid., p. 318.
[50] Ibid., p. 330.

here to the amount of the money due me; but I have withheld from doing it on account of my regard for the credit of my country, and have rather chosen to be obliged to strangers for money for my support."[51] To the charge that he had grown rich on the public money he pointed out that his situation and the state of his accounts gave the lie to every assertion or insinuation of this kind. All he requested was simple justice.[52]

Month by month Deane had lived in hope of "simple justice," and his faith that Congress would act in an honorable way stands as a tribute to his faith in the country and people he loved. When Robert Morris wrote to him that Arthur Lee's accounts had been accepted,[53] he reconsidered and later sent his own accounts to Philadelphia.[54] Hope was again revived when he learned in September of 1781 that Congress had ordered a vice-consul, Robert Barclay, to settle accounts in Europe. In fact, Congress ordered that a copy of the resolution be sent to Deane in France.[55]

In the early fall of 1781 Silas Deane moved to Ghent, Belgium. This was done because he could live more cheaply in Ghent than in Paris. When he received the resolution from Congress announcing the appointment of Robert Barclay to audit the accounts, he eagerly arranged a meeting. The meeting with Barclay produced an unexpected surprise. The vice-consul's

[51] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 415.
[52] Ibid.
[53] New York Historical Collections, IV, 452.
[54] Ibid., p. 516.
[55] Journals of Congress, XXI, 955.

instructions did not cover Deane's accounts.[56] At first Deane refused to believe Barclay and was convinced only after he had been shown a copy of his instructions.[57] Both he and Barclay agreed that such had not been the intention of Congress as expressed in the resolution of September 12, 1781. In view of the fact that Congress had ordered that Deane be sent a copy of the resolution, each felt that someone was playing a grim jest.

The story that Barclay told Deane bore the signs of deliberate chicanery. As Deane related the story to Barnabas Deane, what had happened became clear. "He [Barclay] even told me that, supposing a settlement with me would be one part of his instructions, he had applied for particular instructions on the subject, and had received for an answer that Congress did not mean that he should have anything to do in that affair. Enclosed you have the resolution of Congress, and I leave you to judge whether after such manoeuvres [sic] (I am not disposed to give them the name they merit) I can expect justice from the people at large, deceived and irritated by men capable of going to such lengths."[58]

The information that Barclay was not empowered to settle his accounts was a terrific blow to Deane's morale. In desperation he requested Barclay to write Congress for new instructions. He also attempted to secure money from the vice-consul by citing as a precedent the act of Congress in

[56] New York Historical Collections, IV, 552.
[57] Ibid., p. 554.
[58] Ibid., V, 22-39.

granting Beaumarchais an advance pending a final settlement of his accounts.[59] Barclay readily agreed to the first request, but declined the second on the grounds that he was not authorized to expend any money without a specific order from Congress. Barclay, who really sympathized with Deane, agreed to audit the accounts unofficially. This would prevent any delay should any change of orders come from Congress.[60] Deane also wrote to his brothers asking that they use their influence with members of Congress.

The last blow of 1782 came when Barclay informed Deane that his accounts were in the hands of a Congressional Committee and that the Secretary of the Committee of Foreign Affairs would notify him of the decision of the Committee. This information Deane received after he was in London.[61]

The action of Congress, however, is not difficult to explain. Almost immediately after his return to France, Deane had been extremely critical of certain Americans in France and the conduct of the war in America. These sentiments he had expressed freely and openly, and the report had long been circulated in America that he was anti-American and anti-French. The crowning blow was the publication of some personal letters in the Tory press of New York. The publication of these letters gave great joy to his enemies and forced his friends to abandon him or remain quiet.

[60] Ibid., p. 69.
[61] Ibid., p. 116.

Deane's letters were long political essays on the nature of government and the origin of the quarrel with Great Britain. In them Deane expressed regret for the outbreak of hostilities, questioned the sincerity of the French alliance, and urged careful consideration of the English terms of reconciliation.[62]

During his first mission in France, Deane had considered it a duty, and indeed it was, to report to the Secret Committee of Correspondence his observations on political and economic conditions in France and Europe. With Dumas, the Congressional agent in Holland, he had written freely and extensively. Upon his return to France he resumed the practice of writing to his friends--this time with disastrous results.

Silas Deane was basically an honest man and the views he expressed represented his evaluation of the times and were intended only for the information of his friends. In a sense, his honesty was the root of his troubles. In France he soon discovered Americans who seemingly felt that it was their duty to speak only of the good points of the American scene and to ignore, deny, or distort the undesirable features or conditions. This false sense of patriotism Deane could not tolerate and refused to ignore.

It was commonly asserted that Deane had made a fortune of £60,000 by speculation and private trade during his tour

[62]Silas Deane, Paris Letters or Mr. Silas Deane's Intercepted Letters, James Rivington, Printer, (New York, 1782).

of duty in France. The facts do not justify such a statement. Before he left on his return voyage to France he had admitted to Congress in his Memorial of August 18, 1779, his financial embarrassment. He estimated that the return voyage from France and the fourteen months waiting in Philadelphia had cost him fifty thousand dollars.[63] To say that Deane was without resentment before he left Philadelphia would be untrue, but to say that he hated Congress would not be true either. To an old friend, Philip Schuyler, he had written: "No man has a higher respect for the representative body of this country [America] than I have, at the same time, no one can have a worse opinion of those who, by their factious intrigues, brought that body into contempt in general, and endangered the very existence of those States as free and independent ones. In these greater mischiefs my lesser misfortunes are, in some degree, lost, and I now flatter myself that things will be managed in a different manner, and that our country will see better times."[64]

Deane had looked upon his return to Europe as a voluntary exile forced upon him by the ingratitude of those whom he had saved from destruction.[65] He was determined to fight his adversaries both in and out of Congress but in a manner that would not embarrass his friends.[66] It was Deane's determination to avoid all political discussions both public and

[63] New York Historical Collections, IV, 160-61.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., p. 163.
[66] Ibid., p. 177.

private--a resolution he found easier to form than to carry out.[67] Why? Because as he wrote his former colleague, Colonel Duer, from Connecticut, "I find such resolutions, taken in their fullest extent, inconsistent with the duty we owe our contry, as private citizens, and with what we owe ourselves."[68] He was also greatly disturbed by the change that had occurred in French public opinion regarding America and Americans. "The enthusiasm with which France embraced our cause and us at first, is gone," he wrote, "and the resolution of Congress of the 18th of March last, irretrevably [sic] damned our credit and honor. Add to this the success of England at sea, and the language held by Lee and especially Adams, who not only in private, but in letters to the minister, has asserted that America is not obligated to France, but the contrary, and that England will settle with us at any price."[69] Deane also "attentively" examined and reviewed the state of American affairs in Europe, and it was his considered opinion that "our affairs have never been in a more critical state than at this moment, and that nothing but a speedy peace can prevent the most ruinous Consequence."[70] In August, 1780, he reported these melancholy observations to his old neighbor in Connecticut, Thomas Mumford, who, he felt, would not "misuse" his confidence by making any part of it public.

[67] Ibid., p. 182.
[68] Ibid., p. 213.
[69] Ibid., p. 191.
[70] Ibid., p. 210.

Deane did not limit his observations to correspondents in America, but to John Jay in Spain he made some exceedingly derogatory comments. He deplored the loss of American credit and prestige in Europe. He lamented that "it is almost as great a disgrace to be known to be an American as it was two years since an honor."[71] He complained of the number of representatives, "almost thirteen", sent by Congress and the individual states "who are foolishly making a parade and bidding on each other." France was criticized for "spinning out the war" instead of making a decisive stroke. He felt that France, because of England's great resources, had underestimated the time required to defeat her and that in the meantime America would be ruined.[72] To the same correspondent he wrote: "My best wishes are for the Peace, Safety and Liberty of America. . . .But the situation of America wrings my very soul." He admitted that he distrusted France and feared that with 20,000 French troops in America the cause of independence was lost. "The only actual object is, if England or France and Spain shall in future give the law." He felt that it was "a dreadful alternative to be reduced to the choice of tyrants after having risked everything to conquer one."[73]

For Deane it was unfortunate that he did not limit his observations to his close friends and use more discretion in putting his remarks on paper. By December of 1780 his remarks

[71] Ibid., p. 127.
[72] Ibid., pp. 224-28.
[73] Ibid., p. 269.

and his circumstances led Beaumarchais to make certain pointed suggestions to Vergennes. Beaumarchais was unaware that Vergennes was already loaning money to Deane as a private individual. According to Beaumarchais, he "was the only person in whom he [Deane] has entirely confided, and he shows a bitterness that borders on something worse. I am myself so embarrassed that I can offer him only temporary assistance. . . .Mr. Deane is a partizan [sic] of France, and his devotion accounts for nearly all his enemies in America." Beaumarchais admitted that he "was uneasy, observing his profound emotion in talking with me of his country, himself, his son, who is in school in Paris, his present situation, and the ingratitude that has occasioned it." Beaumarchais' remedy was for France to advance a certain sum for Deane's support rather than permit a possible deflection--"a grate political error."[74]

Deane's public remarks had also been noticed by others who were not so concerned with either Deane's physical or political well-being. In December of 1780 William Lee informed Arthur Lee: "Your former minister, Mr. Silas Deane, we are told, since his return to France, has been continually employed in invectives against his country. According to him, America is ruined, and must be subjected by England; therefore, all the aid France gives is so much thrown away. We are surprised at this, as he lives at Passy with your minister, and seems to be his favorite and prime councillor.

[74]*Ibid.*, p. 269.

Mr. Deane adds, also, that your grand congress is composed of fools and knaves; we hope he has not experienced them to be so."[75]

Francis Dana, an American visiting in Paris, reported to John Adams that Deane was critical of Congress and fearful of the military situation. Dana's remarks were based on a personal visit and a long conversation with Deane. According to Dana, Deane stated: 1. America was already conquered. 2. The power of Great Britain was steadily rising while that of her enemies was almost spent. 3. Holland would be defeated and the armed neutrality crushed. 4. In self interest Europe should support England rather than America. 5. Congress, a cipher, had long lost all of its influence everywhere in America. 6. He apologized for Arnold's desertion. Dana reported that he kept his temper and heard him out but "you may easily conjecture what my feelings were on such an occasion, and I manifested them in some parts of my replies."[76]

There were many in both Europe and America who were not ready to hear him out but who were ready to condemn. In Spain, John Jay learned from William Carmichael, Deane's one-time associate in France and now in Spain as Jay's Secretary, of the substance of statements attributed to Deane. Jay sharply warned Deane that such reports "will be no less prejudicial to you in America than in Europe."[77] Deane replied

[75]William Lee, Letters of William Lee, III, 835.
[76]John Adams, Works, VII, 350.
[77]New York Historical Collections, IV, 294.

that he could easily guess, but did not name, the source of Carmichael's information. Deane admitted that he expected to be called a Tory and an enemy to America. He explained that he was often called upon to justify certain acts of Congress, especially the Act of March 18th [1780], which reduced the value of currency by a ratio of 40 to 1. As he could not do it he "avoided going into company as far as I decently could." He expressed his bitterness and resentment against Americans who deliberately misrepresented the military and economic conditions in America. He related, in detail, the story of a Mr. Searle, a member of Congress, who arrived in Paris a few weeks after he did. Searle asserted that General Washington's army consisted of 20,000 effective men and that recruits were pressing to enlist; that America did not wish peace until "that old lion's claws should be cut and his teeth drawn;" that the United States could carry on the war alone; that commerce injured America; that American merchants were rogues and speculators; that the merchants of France who complained of the depreciation were speculators and peddlers and that the goods sent from France had done more harm than 40,000 Russians sent to fight against the States. If his assertions were doubted, so Deane told Jay, Searle would answer with an air of important contempt: "You will pardon me, good Sir, I am a member of Congress, the only man that ever came over to Europe in that character. I must know. I have been chairman of most of their Committees. I think

I ought at least to know."[78] Deane reported many such Americans in Paris who went almost as far as Searle in distorting conditions in America. Deane:

> could not agree with such men. I wished to remain silent, but, being called upon to give my opinion, and that in such a manner that neither gratitude or duty would admit a refusal, I did what I trust you and every other honest American would have done, I told the truth. I did not scruple to say that our circumstances were very different, and I gave my opinion as early as November last to the minister, thro' our mutual friend, that nothing short of money or supplies for our army and a superior fleet could save America, and without these the American war would soon be brought to a close or a dangerous crisis; for that our finances were totally deranged, our commerce nearly ruined, our naval forces next to nothing, and our army suffered from want of pay and clothing, and that instant relief was absolutely necessary.[79]

Deane was not unaware that Dana and Searle had reported him to America as an enemy and that their reports would do him harm with Congress. However, he maintained that he had the best interest of America in mind. To Jay, Deane put this question: "Was it inimical for me to declare the same thing five months since, and do everything a private individual could to persuade the minister of the real wants

[78] Ibid., p. 299.
[79] Ibid., p. 301

and dangerous situation of America?"[80] John Jay, honest man that he was, approved of Deane's honest statement to the ministers of France but warned: "How far it was necessary or proper to mention the same things in conversation is less clear, and if that was the case I think it was not prudent."[81] The advice was good and well-intended, but it came too late for Silas Deane to profit by it.

The stress and strain of a Revolution places all men in three camps. Those who favor the Revolution are called patriots or traitors; and those who oppose it are called loyalists or traitors. Those who attempt to be neutral become objects of contempt and are called traitors by their countrymen, but in time they fade into obscurity and are forgotten. The patriot, however, who supports the cause and later recants becomes an object of hatred. The apostasy of the turncoat is perpetuated in the annals of the State, and his name becomes a curse in the language of the nation. Such was the fate of Benedict Arnold whose apostasy was acknowledged and whose name has become a synonym for traitor. Silas Deane was accused and condemned by the revolutionary generation, but his guilt was never proved in a court of law and the evidence was primarily circumstantial.

Silas Deane was accused by his former associates of betraying the Revolution for "thirty pieces of silver." It is well known that Deane was in need of funds during the last

[80] Ibid., p. 300.
[81] Ibid., p. 438.

ten years of his life. He was accused of receiving financial assistance from the British but this cannot be proved. That British Intelligence was aware of his plight and attempted to exploit his position is not unlikely. The correspondence between King George III and his Prime Minister, Lord North, clearly reveals that an attempt was contemplated or was actually made to make use of Deane. It is not likely that anything so crude as a direct approach was made, and the correspondence so indicates. In March of 1781 George III informed Lord North: "I think it perfectly right that Mr. Deane should be so far trusted as to have three thousand pounds; but the giving him particular instruction would be liable to much hazard. ... ."[82] The first part of the sentence implies that the offer could or should be made. The second part indicates that George III did not deem it wise that Deane should be given instructions that might lead him to believe that the offer of financial assistance came from a British agent or government. The adventure, if the offer was actually made, came to nothing as it is not mentioned in Deane's papers or again in the George III-North correspondence.

The first indication that the public in America knew of Deane's rumored defection from the revolutionary cause was the publication of some letters in the Tory newspaper, the Royal Gazette of New York City, purported to have been

[82] The Correspondence of King George III with Lord North from 1768 to 1783, W. Bodham Donne, ed., 2 vols. (London, 1867), II, #669.

written by Deane. The printer, James Rivington, later issued the letters in book form.

The first reaction to the publication of the letters was mixed, but it was generally believed that they were forgeries. The letters were written in May and June of 1781 and were supposed to have been taken from an American ship captured by the British navy. They were then sent to London and from there sent to the Commanding General of the British Forces in America, Sir Henry Clinton, by Lord North. Lord North's covering letter explained that the letters were selected from a number of intercepted letters. The British Prime Minister expressed the hope that the letters would have some "utility," and that Sir Henry should use them as he saw fit. Lord North refused to disclose the source of the letters, saying that it would be better for the "reader to guess the sources of the letters."[83]

In the George III--North correspondence the discussion of the "Intercepted Letters" is contradictory. The assumption seems to be that the letters had been bought but were too pro-British to be satisfactory. In the same correspondence both George III and Lord North mention and even quote from other letters that had been intercepted at the same time. Yet on July 19, 1781, George III wrote Lord North: "I have received Lord North's boxes containing the intercepted letters from Mr. Deane for America. I have only read two of

[83]Lord North to Sir Henry Clinton, August 3, 1781, Clinton Papers, Clements Library, A L S.

them, in which I form the same opinion of too much appearance of being connected with this country and therefore not likely to have the effect as if they bore another aspect."[84] Lord North also thought "them too strong in our favour to bear the spontaneous opinions, but that, if supposed to be authentick [sic], they will see they have by concert fallen into our hands."[85] It would seem that these letters between the King and his Prime Minister offers conclusive proof that Deane had been bought to write them. But why should the King pay for and send something to America that neither he nor his First Minister approved? It would seem that if Deane had agreed to sell out he would write or permit the British Foreign Office to write letters which would please the King. Yet there is no mention of returning the letters and asking that they be re-written. There is also evidence in the King's letter of July 19 that the letters were intercepted. In this letter the King wrote North: "The extract from Franklin is very material; should France not supply America amply I think that it has the appearance that this long contest will end as it ought, by the colonies returning to the mother country; and I confess I will never put my hand to any other conclusion of the business."[86] As British Intelligence was skilled in the acquisition of letters without their owner's permission, the securing of Deane's and Franklin's letters would be a

[84]Donne, Correspondence of George III, II, #380.
[85]Ibid., #391.
[86]Ibid., #381.

minor detail in the day's work of any skillful agent.[87]

Deane first learned of the publication of his letters from Thomas Barclay, the vice-consul whom he thought Congress had appointed to settle his accounts. In fact he wrote his brother, Barnabas, that he was not sorry they had been published: "Disagreeable as this circumstances must be to me, I shall not be sorry to have all America informed of my sentiments, and the grounds on which they are founded. I have seen nothing since to alter my way of thinking, but on the contrary much to confirm me in it."[88] Not having seen the New York publication Deane was not certain that his letters had not been "doctored". He admitted that he did not "know what Rivington may have published, but I well know what I wrote. I have carefully examined the copies of my letters, and I find nothing in them but what any free subject has a right to say or write or publish in the most open manner to the world, without being liable to be censured less to be punished therefore."[89] He ridiculed the charge of having been privy to Arnold's treachery as too ridiculous and absurd to merit one moment's attention. "My opinion of his conduct is the same at this time which it has ever been from my first hearing of his defection, and it is, that after those who, by their ingratitude and abuse toward him, pushed him on to these desperate measures have taken on

[87]Samuel F. Bemis, "British Secret Service and the Franco-American Alliance," American Historical Review, XXIX (1924), 474-95.

[88]New York Historical Collections, IV, 506.

[89]Ibid., V, 23.

themselves their full share of the guilt of one half of his treachery, there will still remain enough to render him criminal in the eyes of honest men."[90]

Deane denied that he had sold out to the British and felt that he was a victim of the intolerance of the day for daring to speak and write honestly and frankly as a private citizen:

> I cannot be charged with the betraying of any public trust, for I had none committed to me. What, then, must be the chain of positions and arguments by which I have been condemned? They appear to me to be nearly the following: Everyone who doubts whether independent sovereignty, in the hands of a democracy, is the best of all possible civil constitutions for America, is an enemy; the man who questioned the sincerity and present disinterestedness of France in her treaties and declarations respecting America, is an enemy to both countries, to France as well as America. . . .And he who, claiming the rights of private judgements, ventures to censure any part of the proceedings of Congress, to entertain apprehensions of the designs of France or to doubt whether the absolute and despotic King of France is the great and magnanimous defender of the rights of mankind is not only an enemy, but a traitor to France and America. . . .If this, as it appears to be, is part of the political creed of America at this time, the greatest of all the evils which I apprehended and predicted is already arrived, and a tyranny established. . . . I cannot help reflecting that if the temper of the times and government in America is such as to proscribe and condemn the man who ventures to write the truth to his friends, their calamities and those of our country must already be too great to admit of any addition from anything which a poor persecuted exile can say or do; but it is suggested, and even asserted by many, that I am in the pay of the British government, and have been bribed by the court to write those letters. On this point alone can there be any just ground to charge me with any, even the least degree, of criminality? I have asserted nothing in my letters which is not notoriously true. . . .If I had been bribed to write the truth, this would not have invalidated what I wrote, though it would justly reflect on me for having acted from mercenary and base motives; but who knows or examines but for a moment my situation, and the circumstances which have attended me, and my conduct for four

[90] Ibid., p. 31

years past, can give the least credit to such idle and abusive insinuations?[91]

Another argument used by Deane which contained a great deal of logic was that he, as much as anyone in America, had much to gain by the successful outcome of the Revolution. His fortune, 300,000 livres, was in the hands of Congress and it was unlikely that he would endeavor to bring about "the destruction of that body." He asked, "What inducement could a British minister have to purchase me?" He answered his own question by pointing out that he had neither trust nor employment and was too unpopular in America ever to expect any. He had been persecuted and, in effect, exiled by the intrigues of the prevailing party in power. His last hope rested on pecuniary justice from Congress. "In such a situation, is it possible that any man of common reflection can conceive me to be a subject of importance to the British ministry? If I had the forces or the finance of my country or any important negociation [sic] committed to my direction the case would be different; but as ministers of state, any more than other men, give money without some object in view, equal at least to the advances made, the question occurs, what object could they have in advancing money to me?"[92]

The charge was frequently made and widely believed that Deane had changed sides for money. But, as he pointed out:

[91] Ibid., pp. 32-33.
[92] Ibid., p. 34.

"my distressed situation at Paris, and at this moment [Ghent], January 31, 1782 on account of money for my support, sufficiently proves that if I sold myself to the British government, I forgot the most essential article in the bargain, and received nothing in exchange. I am at this moment indebted to Doctor Franklin and others at Paris for sums borrowed for my support, and, being unable to pay, am obliged to their kindness even for my personal liberty."[93] Such was Deane's justification and explanation for his conduct. It was, of course, based upon his honest convictions and justified by virtue of his status as a free and independent citizen.

Men who make revolutions have too much at stake to be judicious in weighing and judging those who are accused of deviating from the revolutionary line. Silas Deane in all honesty might protest his right to express honest opinions to his friends, but his countrymen reserved the right to pass judgment upon his remarks and draw their own conclusions. His friends had remained loyal to him when it was reported that he was making remarks derogatory to Congress, the conduct of the war, and the duplicity of France. The publication of his "Intercepted Letters" raised some doubts, but when their authenticity was acknowledged, his friends could no longer champion his cause. Many, no doubt for self-protection, joined in the hue and cry that was immediately raised against him; others chose to remain silent.

[93] Ibid.

In official and semi-official circles the rumor of Deane's defection was handled very cautiously. Robert R. Livingston, the Secretary of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, warned John Jay against any communications with Deane "as I know you once had confidence in him."[94] Thomas Paine, Deane's original antagonist, wrote to Robert Morris: "I hope this man's knack of creating confusion is at an end. Whether the letters be genuine or not I do not undertake to give judgment upon, but his language in France is equally strange as anything contained in these publications."[95] James Madison commented to Edmund Pendleton: "The genuineness of some of these letters is upon good ground questioned, but more of them contain marks of authenticity which denounce him to be an apostate and consign his character to the same infamy with that of his friend Arnold. This sentence is delivered against him with less hesitation because a prior and indubitable [sic] evidence of his degeneracy had been received through another channel. Whether this deflection has proceeded, from a mercenary contract with the enemy, from a view of obtaining such a one, or from a chagrin at the obstacle which his country has by a total prohibition of intercourse with the enemy opposed to the commercial projects he went to Europe to execute is as yet matter of speculation."[96]

[94] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 814.

[95] New York Historical Collections, IV, 525.

[96] James Madison, "The Writings of James Madison, Gaillard Hunt, ed., 9 vols. (New York, 1900) I, 161; Burnett, Letters Of Congress, VI, 262.

On December 11, 1781, Madison informed Pendleton that "on which ever side Mr. Deane's letters are viewed they present mysteries."[97] Pendleton's verdict: "I have long given up Deane as an unworthy man whom I thought much otherwise when I served with in Congress."[98] In January of 1782 Oliver Wolcott told a friend that "the letters of Deane are here generally believed to be genuine."[99] "Mr. Deane has fully proved himself to be a traytor [sic] to his country. . . .The ministry of Great Britain have certainly f[ound] his price and given it to him," was the opinion of Nicholas Eveleigh of New York.[100]

In Congress no official notice was taken regarding the commonly accepted apostasy of its former commissioner. But at the suggestion of James Lovell, the Secretary of Congress, Charles Thomas informed Robert Morris, both old friends of Deane, that "although Congress think it beneath their dignity to pass an express resolution for changing the name of the Deane, a U.S. vessel of war, yet another name will be more agreeable to them, and you will be justified in making the change." The change was suggested by Mr. Lovell because "the person after whom she was named has by his perfidy and defection forfeited all title to every mark of honor or respect. . . ."[101]

[97]Madison, Writings, I, 166.

[98]"Unpublished Letters of Edmund Pendleton," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 2 series XIX (1905), VI, 284.

[99]Burnett, Letters of Congress, VI, 284.

[100]Ibid., p. 296.

[101]Ibid., p. 364.

The reaction of Arthur Lee to the publication of the "Intercepted Letters" was both curious and typical. To James Warren, Lee complained that "the defection of Mr. Deane seems not to have drawn any punishment nor even odium upon his one time friends and associates."[102] But later he became convinced that "If my action against Deane is brought on now, I think a Jury will give me swinging damage. It will give me great pleasure to see Payne's observations on his letters."[103]

George Washington, who had approved Deane's conduct in July of 1778, now declared: "I wish never to hear or see anything more of so infamous a character."[104] Washington also wrote to the Governor of Connecticut, Jonathan Trumbull, expressing his satisfaction for his letter in which Trumbull had expressed not only his own reply but also "the Sense of the Legislative body of your State."[105]

Joseph Reed, one-time friend of Deane, wrote to General Greene that he rejoiced that the schemes of Deane had been detected but felt that it was unfortunate that his "friends, partners, supporters, and abettors, appear in public, unblushing, join in the cry of infamy as cordially as if they had neither been in the counsel, or participated in the profits of iniquity."[106] Benjamin Tallmadge bluntly informed Deane

[102] Ibid., p. 326.

[103] Ibid., p. 277.

[104] George Washington, The Writings of George Washington From The Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799, John Fitzpatrick, ed., 39 vols. (Washington, 1931-44), XIV, 259.

[105] Ibid., p. 300.

[106] William B. Reed, Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1847), II, 373-74.

that the "epithet of Traitor is freely bestowed on you."[107] David Watson, after an interview with Deane in Ghent, concluded that "Mr. Deane must be regarded as an enemy alike to France and America."[108] Robert Livingston confirmed to John Jay: "No doubt is entertained here of his [Deane's] apostasy, or of his endeavour to weaken the efforts of the United States, and to traduce the character of the people and their rulers, both in Europe and America."[109]

Benjamin Franklin also conceded that a change had occurred in Deane. Franklin had praised Deane highly in 1778 when he had been recalled and had welcomed him at Passy in 1780 when he returned to France. He had heard but refused to believe that Deane had repudiated the principles of the Revolution. However, in March of 1782 he admitted to Robert R. Livingston that Deane had changed:

> There is no doubt of their [the letters] being all genuine. His conversation since his return from America has, as I have been informed, gone gradually more and more into that style, and at length come to an open vindication of Arnold's conduct: and with these few days he has sent me a letter of twenty full pages, recapitulating those letters

[107] New York Historical Collections, IV, 558.

[108] Elkanan Watson, Men and Times of the Revolution: or, Memoirs of Elkanan Watson, Including his Journals of Travel in Europe and America, From the Year 1777 to 1842, Winslow C. Watson, ed. (New York, 1861), p. 216.

[109] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, V, 146.

> and threatening to write and publish an account of the treatment he has received from Congress, &. He resides at Ghent, is distressed both in mind and circumstances, raves and writes in abundance, and I imagine it will end in his going over to his friend Arnold in England. I had an exceeding good opinion of him when he acted with me, and I believe he was sincere and hearty in our cause; but he is changed, and his character ruined in his own country and in this, so that I see no other way but England to which he can now retire.[110]

The evidence is conclusive that many people were convinced that Deane had betrayed the Revolution. The evidence is also conclusive and time would reveal that his brothers and many other friends did not then or ever believe that he had committed treason by either word or deed. Barnabas feared that the publication of his letters would ruin him "although they may contain only the truth." Barnabas admitted: "For my part, I am more surprised at his imprudence in writing so freely than at any action in his life."[111] Simeon wrote Silas that to report the coffee house talk was needless "but they suspect treason." He expressed resentment against the unjust treatment Deane had received from Congress and closed with a declaration of faith: "I trust, my dear brother, that you are sure that I bear you the most affectionate regard, and would risque [sic] my life most freely where it might be of service to your just reputation; but at present what can

[110] Ibid., p. 216.
[111] New York Historical Collections, IV, 531.

be done? To oppose a torrent is madness; to sit quiet, impossible."[112]

This second mission to France--this time a personal one--was a series of disappointments. Deane's attempts to regain financial independence by various business enterprises came to nothing. He also made no progress in settling his accounts with Congress. When he left America to return to France his enemies had insinuated that he was a profiteer. The critical tone of Deane's letters regarding the prosecution of the war by Congress and also highly critical of the apathy of France plus his approval of England's offer of conciliation all gave his enemies the opportunity to change the charge of profiteering to that of treason.

[112] Ibid., p. 535.

CHAPTER VIII

DEANE IN ENGLAND

The fighting in the War for American Independence came to an end with the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown on November 18, 1781. Independence was recognized by the provisional articles of peace that were signed November 30, 1782, and the formal separation occurred with the signing of the Peace Treaty on September 3, 1783. Silas Deane had been wrong in his analysis and prophecy regarding the outcome of the conflict. France had continued to support the Revolution with men and materials and England had lost the war. The peace for which Deane had yearned so long and so ardently was now a reality, but for him, as he was soon to discover, there was no peace.

Now that the war was over, Deane felt that "peace will calm men's minds."[1] He did not believe that "an individual will be regarded as an enemy because, in the hour of despondency, and apprehension for his country, he imprudently attempted to warn his countrymen of what he thought their danger. . . .It is true that I wrote them [letters] to my private friends, for their information; it is equally true that some of those letters were basely betrayed, and that others were intercepted and published in New York, not to

[1]New York Historical Collections, V, 134.

serve Great Britain so much as to injure me; and for that purpose some of them altered in many places, and the whole placed in the most unfavorable light. Though I am ready to acknowledge that I was misinformed and mislead in some, and even in many, things, and that I was imprudent to write or speak at all on the subject, yet, as a free citizen, I had a right to do both; nor will I ever part with that right of speaking and writing my sentiments on the state and the management of the public affairs of my country; but I shall, from what has past, be more on my guard in the future."[2]

The end of the war found Deane in a very precarious position. For the past eighteen months he had been living in Ghent, suffering from physical distress and mental anguish. "For almost eighteen months past I have lived in lodgings barely decent, without a servant, and dined at an ordinary, a stile of living which you well know I am neither accustomed nor inclined to, and to which necessity alone could ever reduce me--a hard necessity, indeed for without this rigid economy I must, with an only son, for whom I had a right to promise quite the reverse, have been reduced to extreme want; and what has imbittered even this scanty subsistence (as if I had not already a sufficient portion of gall in my cup), I have owed the greatest part of it to a friend in Paris, who generously lent me money, and whose bills drawn on me, not, indeed, in his distress, but in his want of money, I was

[2] Ibid.

obliged to protest; and they still remain unpaid, though I was long since informed of the suspicion you mention of my being in the British interest."[3]

Many individuals were aware that Deane was enduring physical hardships in Ghent, and those who knew him best feared for his sanity. As early as December of 1780 Beaumarchais had reported to Vergennes his uneasiness after observing Deane's "profound emotion," and of a "bitterness that borders on something worse."[4] By 1782 Franklin was describing Deane as "being distressed in mind and circumstances, raves, and writes in abundance."[5]

Again referring to Deane, Franklin said that "He continues to sit croaking at Ghent, chagrined, discontented and dispirited."[6] Deane himself wrote to Governor Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut admitting that it was not "Improbable that my private losses, and the ingratitude and injustice which I had met with, too forcibly affected a mind, unfortunately for me, not gay and volatile, but rather serious and gloomy; and that at the time when I wrote. . . .I viewed things through a dark and discoloured mediam, which often magnifies shadows and annihilates realities."[7]

[3] Ibid., p. 137.
[4] Ibid., IV, 266.
[5] Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, V, 279.
[6] New York Historical Collections, V, 70.
[7] Ibid., p. 104.

With the end of hostilities in America Deane felt that normal trade between Great Britain and North America would be resumed. He had an unsettled account in London which he felt he could settle if he were there. He wrote to John Jay telling him of the account and explaining that he hoped "for some advantage from being among the first in sending out goods to America."[8] Deane asked Jay for his opinion because he had been "told it would be taken ill by my countrymen should I go to London, though hostilities are suspended, and everyone at liberty to go there when they please."[9] In reply Jay advised Deane that such a move would be imprudent. As Deane was suspected of being in the British interest such a step would strengthen the suspicion.[10]

In spite of his urgent need to go to London where he hoped to secure capital to re-enter the mercantile business, Deane did not leave Ghent until the American Commissioners in Paris had "no objections."[11] He arrived in London the last of March, 1783, and took a room at 135 Fleet Street.[12]

The appearance of Silas Deane in London immediately started a new series of rumors that merely confirmed what his enemies claimed was true and his friends could not deny.

[8] Ibid., p. 123.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., p. 146.
[12] Ibid., p. 155.

Deane's primary interest continued to be the settlement of his accounts, and he retained contact with Barclay, in hope that the vice-consul would receive new instructions which would make the settlement of the accounts feasible.[13] In April of 1783 Barclay informed Deane that Congress had sent his new instructions and that he would show them to Deane when they met.

The instructions, so long looked for, proved to be a new source of disappointment. Barclay was ordered immediately to refer any questionable item to Congress for settlement and he was not authorized to advance any balance that was due on any account.[14] Congress, by these instructions, reserved the right to approve the time and manner of making the final settlement.

In April of 1784 Deane confided to Beaumarchais that he was almost convinced that Congress had no intention of settling the accounts. He explained:

> Mr. Barclay has been with me to examine my accounts. But his instructions from Congress are such that it is impossible to settle with him. I can but tell you freely that I think them drawn up in that manner with design. Men who have no disposition to pay are often ingenious at putting off a settlement. He, Barclay, has orders to pass no articles of account without the most explicit vouchers; to pay

[13] Ibid., p. 154.
[14] Ibid., p. 232.

> no regard to any settlement already made without examining of it himself; and for merchandize and stores shipped to America, he is ordered to enquire if they were of a good quality, if they were charged at a just price, by whom they were shipped, etc, etc. Thus cloathing [sic] of their army, furnished by you seven years since, and still unpaided for; the canon, fusees [sic], and powder, etc., sent out to them by your exertions, and by my unceasing promises and encouragements to you. Yes, Sir, the quality, price, and quantity of those very arms and stores which enables their army to triumph over General Burgoyne, and decided the fate of the United States, are now minutely inquired into, and you are to receive no money until the result of the inquiry shall be approved by Congress.[15]

In June of 1784 Barclay transmitted to Robert Morris, Superintendent of Finance, a copy of Deane's accounts "as settled by himself, to which I have added some remarks, none of which seem to be of much consequence."[16] In the same month, June, Barclay informed Deane that he had sent several copies of his accounts to the Superintendent of Finance. He also enclosed a copy of his remarks covering the accounts. In September 1784 Robert Morris forwarded the accounts with Barclay's statement to the President of Congress for congressional action.[17] Everything that could

[15] Ibid., p. 285.
[16] Ibid., p. 300.
[17] Ibid., p. 323.

be done in Europe had been done and now the next move rested with Congress.

By order of Congress the accounts had been minutely audited and now the auditor's report awaited final approval before being sent to the Treasury Board for final action. Congress did not choose to act and the accounts remained in a suspended state. Deane, at the end of his financial and physical resources, at last abandoned hope and ceased pressing the matter with Congress. In June of 1789 he made one final and last appeal to John Jay and George Washington, requesting them to urge congressional action: "I am extremely solicitious to have my accounts, which lay for so many years unnoticed by the late Congress, examined and settled. Not that I ever expect to receive the balance due me--this I have long despaired of--but that it may be fully known and ascertained, for the satisfaction of the public at large and of my own friends and family in particular, if I have just merited the treatment I have met with, or any part of it."[18] During the past ten years Silas Deane had written many letters to Congress requesting a settlement of his accounts but this was his last appeal, an appeal that was never answered.

The failure of Congress to settle his accounts was denounced by Deane as an injustice. To his personal and political enemies he was a man who had been caught attempting

[18] Ibid., pp. 524-26.

to convert an intended gift into a commercial transaction. During the ten years that Deane attempted to convince Congress that the charges against him were not true his enemies were ever vigilant in their campaign to blacken his name and lost no opportunity in exploiting the many rumors that reached America of Deane's continued anti-American activities. In this cloud of suspicion and distrust is to be found the key for Congressional inaction.

Deane was not unaware of the prevailing atmosphere and its consequence to him. To Benjamin Franklin he sadly commented in October of 1783: "I have found by experience that from the moment a man becomes unpopular every report which any way tends to his prejudice is but too readily credited without the least examination or proof, and that for him to attempt to contradict them in public is like an attack on the hydra; for every falsehood detected and calumy obviated several new ones of the same family come forward."[19]

While Deane was still living in Ghent, there appeared in the <u>London Chronicle</u>, November 12-14, 1782, a lurid account of Deane and his commercial transactions in France. It was boldly asserted that he was living in Ghent because his dishonesty had been discovered and he had been literally expelled from France. Deane immediately attempted to locate the origin of the story but without success.[20] Upon Deane's

[19]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 212.
[20]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 117.

request Benjamin Franklin sent him a certificate saying: "I think it my duty, in compliance with his request, to certify and declare that the paragraphs in question, according to my best knowledge and belief, are entirely false, and that I have never known or suspected any cause to charge the said Silas Deane with any want of probity, in any purchase, or bargain, whatever, made by him for the use or account of the United States."[21] Thus Deane in his exile was again brought to the attention of the public in both Europe and America and not without repercussions.

At this time there were many Americans in Europe and such news would be read and reported in America. William Lee was quick to note and to take offense at the statement issued by Franklin. He wrote that "The Doctor . . . can't be bro't to justice he has too deeply merited" and he was sure that the "old connection between S. Deane and his former associates and correspondents was not broken off."[22]

From other sources the news of Franklin's continued support of Deane's honesty was carried to America. Arthur Lee wrote to his friend William Gordon in America expressing indignation that Franklin had given testimony "in behalf of the said Deane's honesty in his mercantile transactions for Congress."[23] In July of 1783 Henry Laurens wrote to Robert Livingston that he had heard and would soon verify

[21] Ibid.
[22] William Lee, Letters, III, 915.
[23] Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, II, 290.

that Silas Deane "had been an active hand in chalking out a treaty of commerce for us."[24] From the Hague John Adams reported: "My advices from England are that Lord Sheffield, with his friends Deane, Arnold, Skeane, and P. Wentworth, are making a party unfriendly to us; that the Ministry adopt their sentiments and measures."[25] The European Magazine and London Review in October of 1783 devoted several pages to the career of Silas Deane. The remarks were no doubt intended to be complimentary but they revived memories of the war and the part that Silas Deane had played in that conflict, memories that were not likely to win him either friends or supporters in America.[26]

Deane was aware of these criticisms and did not hesitate (categorically) to deny them. In July of 1783 he wrote to James Wilson, an old business associate of better days, that "certain persons, mischievously disposed, to keep alive prejudices against me in the United States, have inserted in all the public papers here that I attend the levee of ministers, and am intimate with them, and their adviser in their measures respecting our commerce. . . .I can with the greatest truth and sincerity, assure you that from the time I parted with you in Philadelphia until my arrival in this city, in March last, I never saw or corresponded with any of the ministers, or with any one in their service or confidence

[24]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, VI, 555.
[25]Ibid., p. 630.
[26]New York Historical Collections, V, 194.

except by accident and in company. During the sitting of Parliament, I was only once in the Callery of the House of Commons, and once to hear an interesting debate in the House of Lords. My curiosity would, indeed, have carried me there often, but as it was each time inserted in all the morning papers, with comments on it, I declined going again."[27]

In the same vein Deane did not hesitate to refute what he considered to be inaccurate press reports. To Robert Morris he wrote: "The newspaper writers of this country are as mischievously busy as those of ours. Since my arrival I have been made by them to visit the Duke of Portland, Lord North, Mr. Fox, and to be intimate with General Arnold, to have furnished Lord Sheffield with materials for a pamphlet on American commerce. I can only assure you, that I have no interest to deceive you, that there is not the least foundation in truth for any of these reports, but that I have lived since my being in London in such obscurity that I have no acquaintance in it, except of some private individuals."[28]

One of the most devastating rumors was that of Deane's association with General Benedict Arnold. The rumor was circulated shortly after his return to France that he had publicly defended Arnold's treason. Deane's own account of the affair in Paris was that while he held no brief for Arnold's

[27] Ibid., p. 166.
[28] Ibid., p. 205.

conduct, he had roundly denounced Arnold's enemies whom he felt had "improved every circumstance and accident to push him into desperate measures."[29]

When Deane went to London, Arnold, for reasons best known to himself, attempted to renew their old relationship. His advances caused a great deal of embarrassment for Deane and the loss of the friendship of John Jay. Deane's former friendship with Arnold in America as well as his misrepresented remarks in Paris were recalled, and his meetings with Arnold were accepted as proof of his apostasy.

Deane's own account of his meetings with Arnold vary somewhat from the accounts that circulated in America. Deane's version was as follows:

> The next day after my being in London, when I had no reason to suspect that anyone knew anything of me save those to whom I had sent notice of my being in town, and of my lodging, I was surprised to find General Arnold introduced into my chamber without being announced by my landlord until he opened the door (my circumstances do not permit me to keep a servant). Several gentlemen were with me, and among others Mr. Hodge of Philadelphia. I can most sincerely say that I was never more sincerely embarrassed; and after a few questions on either part, and as cold a civility as I could use consistent with a common decency,

[29] Ibid., p. 494.

> he took his leave. You well know that he is one who never wanted for assurance or address, and, as if we had been on our former footing, he urged me, at parting, to dine with him, which I civilly declined. The next day I changed my lodging, and received from him repeatedly cards of invitation to his house, which I declined accepting, and in a few days he again called on me, at my new lodging, in the same unceremonious manner as before. A gentleman from America was then with me, and remained in my chamber until he left. On my parting with him on the stairs, I told him freely that his visits were disagreeable to me, and could be of no service to him; that I could not return them, except that I might call with Mr. Sebor some evening to pay our respects to Mrs. Arnold, from whom I had received so many civilities in Philadelphia. This we did a few evenings after, and from that time, now more than five months since, I have not seen him, except in his carriage, passing me in the street.[30]

There is no reason to doubt the validity of Deane's statement, but it was generally believed that he and Arnold continued to be friends. These reports were accepted as true by John Jay and as a result Jay completely repudiated Deane. When Deane called on Jay in London he was out, and when he returned he did not bother to answer Deane's card. However, from Chaillot, France, Jay expressed his feelings in no uncertain terms: "You are either exceedingly injured or you are no friend of America; and while doubts remain on that point, all connexion between us must be suspended. . . .

[30] Ibid., p. 213.

I was told by more than one, on whose information I thought I could rely, that you received visits from, and was on terms of familiarity with General Arnold. Every American who gives his hand to that man, in my opinion pollutes it."[31] Thus, in January of 1784 ended a friendship that had existed since the days of the First Continental Congress. Only once, in June of 1789, Deane wrote to Jay requesting him to use his influence to settle his accounts. He had dared to make the request because "Mr. Sayre told that you enquired after me and expressed a wish for my return."[32] The letter was not answered.

One of the most damaging reports circulated in America was a rumor that Deane was in the confidence of the ministry and was serving as a ministerial advisor on American affairs. This was denied by Deane, and his denial is supported by uncontested evidence. When Deane was in Belgium he had met Andre Allen, a friend of Lord Shelburne. Allen had been impressed by Deane's knowledge of American affairs and his desire to re-establish Anglo-American trade on a satisfactory basis.[33] Allen recommended Deane to Lord Shelburne, and Shelburne's correspondence indicates that Allen's suggestion

[31]Wharton, Diplomatic Correspondence, I, 570; Jay, Life of John Jay, II, 143-44.

[32]New York Historical Collections, V, 526.

[33]Andrew Allen to Lord Shelburne, October 17, 1782, Vol. 89: 119 ALS; Silas Deane to Andrew Allen, December 25, 1782, Shelburne Papers, Vol. 87: 249 ALS.

was at first accepted. But upon more mature reflection Lord Shelburne decided that because of Deane's unpopularity in America his presence would be more of a liability than an asset in the negotiations.[34] Rumors to the contrary, Deane played no part in the settlement of 1783.

Almost from the time of his arrival in London the rumors began that Deane was urging an anti-American commercial policy to the British ministers. The basis for this rumor was the publication of a pamphlet by Lord Sheffield. This pamphlet was based upon a series of conversations that Deane had with Lord Sheffield, and Deane maintained that the views stated in the publication were the exact opposite of those he expressed. Deane gave this account of the incident:

> I accidentally became acquainted with Lord Sheffield a few days after my being in London. I had no previous knowledge of his political character, nor was I interested to enquire what it was. I had no knowledge of his intention, if in reality he then had any, of writing on American commerce, and I answered his queries on the subject without reference; there could be no ground for any, for the answers I gave afforded no kind of information not to be had from thousands of persons as well or better informed on the subject, or even from the Custom House books. I had but little acquaintance with anyone in London, and his lordship's polite attention to me, a stranger, naturally lead me to visit him often, and without ceremony, and to form an intimate acquaintance in his family. When he informed me of his design of writing on the subject, we had many conversations on it, and in the presence of persons of note, particularly of Sir Robert Herries, who, with his lordship, can testify what my sentiments and mode of reasoning was, and that I differed materially from those contained in the pamphlet. Yet such has been my fate, that simply from my acquaintance and

[34]Andrew Allen to Lord Shelburne, January 10, 1783, Shelburne Papers, Vol. 87: 247 ALS.

> known intimacy with his lordship, I have had those arguments and principles which I opposed attributed to me. His object is to secure to this country the carrying trade, and to preserve the Navigation Act from being in any way altered. My arguments have been to show that the carrying trade, beyond a certain degree, cannot be retained by this country. That it is, in fact, already in great part irrecoverably gone into other hands, and that the Navigation Act, though wisely formed for the period when it passed, wants many alterations to adapt it to the present times; and like all other acts which respect commerce, that it ought to be made conformable to the present circumstances. This, sir, is the true state of everything that gives the least foundation for those reports.[35]

In spite of his most positive assertions to the contrary Deane also received credit for the undesirable commercial clauses in the treaty of 1783. To his brother Simeon he wrote:

> I find my name again taken up, and from being a poor, distressed, and even despised exile, I have influenced the councils of nations, and directed the late Ministers in their measures respecting our commerce. Every American in Europe professes to believe this fully. . . . It would be of no purpose to authorize you, or any other friend of mine, to contradict those reports. For though I sent you proofs of the falsity of those reports strong as those from holy writ or mathematical demonstration, it would avail nothing in the present temper of times. . . .The general belief among my countrymen here is that but for the advice and information I gave, on my first arrival in the country, we should have been

[35] New York Historical Collections, V, 214-15.

> admitted by treaty and by acts of Parliament to a free commerce with the British West Indies and with every other part of the British dominions, on the same terms as before our separation from, and independence on, this nation.[36]

Deane maintained that with the exception of Mr. Fox he was not acquainted with any of the British ministers. On one occasion he had sought and received an interview with Fox and had discussed with him "a plan for accommodating the affair of our commerce and intercourse with the British West-Indies, and to give him my reasons in support of it."[37] Fox listened to his plan and arguments and assured him that he would introduce a bill along the ideas Deane had presented and that he felt that commerce would be established to the mutual benefit of all.

Deane believe that the chief source of resentment against him could be traced to the publication of Lord Sheffield's pamphlet. Yet, as he pointed out: "the act of Parliament and the king's proclamation. . . .confining the West-India commerce to British ships are dated and were issued previous to the first publication of that pamphlet."[38] Regardless of the consequences of the publication of the pamphlet in America, Lord Sheffield proved to be one of the few friends that Deane made in England.

Lord Sheffield and his family were sincere in their affection for Deane. During the entire time that Deane was

[36] Ibid., p. 290.
[37] Ibid., p. 299.
[38] Ibid.

in England he was a frequent and welcomed guest in the London home of the Sheffield family.[39] In August of 1785 his Lordship wrote to Deane complaining of neglect and expressing the hope that he would soon make his promised visit to Sheffield Place.[40] Due to frequent ilness this visit never took place.[41] The correspondence between the two men reveal a mutual regard and admiration based on a common interest though conflicting views.[42] There is little doubt that during Deane's last illness Lord Sheffield contributed to his support and offered to pay his passage to America should he care to return to his homeland.

In the fall of 1787 Silas Deane gained a new lease on life. In September of that year he submitted to Lord Dorchester, Governor-General of Canada,[43] a plan for a "canal from Lake Champlain around the rapids of St. John, into the river St. Lawrence of a certain burthen." Lord Dorchester was impressed and told Lord Sydney, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that "as far as a cursory view of the country can justify an opinion, this object appears to be practicable and useful, both in a commercial view, provided the conditions of exouting the same be not objectionable."[44]

[39] Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 177.
[40] Ibid., p. 209.
[41] New York Historical Collections, V, 463.
[42] Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 210, 228.
[43] Ibid., p. 218.
[44] New York Historical Collections, V, 465-70, 476-81.

Deane submitted the plan to Lord Sydney and for a time had great hopes that the government would support it. Deane proposed that the canal be constructed with government funds and then a toll be charged for ships using the new passageway. If the minister approved, Deane planned to go to Canada "to arrange and prepare what is necessary for the execution of my plan." The idea of again doing something excited him. If it failed he would "be in no worse shape than at present" and "it relieves my mind by a prospect of success in a great and important undertaking." To the great disappointment of Deane the project was never approved. It was just as well because he was unable to undertake the mission to Canada.[45] This failure of his one last hope may account for his last and most severe illness.

The last ten years of Silas Deane's life were a decade of disappointment. It was a period when one by one he saw each plan for relief and recovery fade and wither away. These years of frustration and privation had taken their toll upon his body and spirit. During these years his brothers and friends had constantly worried about the reports of "the distressed state of his mind."

In 1783 he recorded his condition as follows: "My circumstances from 1780 to this hour shew that I have been in distress, which everyone who knows me knows that I never was before. Doctor Franklin, Mr. Beaumarchais, Mons. Monthieu,

[45] Ibid., p. 476.

and others, know what my funds have been, and whence obtained for my support, on the very small remains of which subsisting, not living. I have not kept a servant or ventured into a hackney coach, except in a storm, since I have been in this country; such is the economy to which I am forced by my misfortunes."[46]

In 1788 a glimpse of Deane's life may be gleaned from his letter to Lord Sheffield. In this letter he apologized for his failure to write:

> My distressed state, both body and mind, have prevented my writing and acknowledging the receipt of yours of the 18th. I have every day resolved to write, but found myself too weak, and too much affected, when I took up my pen to proceed. I have wished and hoped from day to day to find myself more at ease in mind, and for some relaxation of my disorders. . . .My fever has been almost constant and increasing, and my strength leaving me, until I am just able to walk my room [sic]. Three days since I walked as far as the Bird Cage Walk, and accidently met with Mr. Irwin, who relieved my then extreme want; for the rest Mr. Wilkerson has chiefly assisted me. As to pecuniary matters, my friend Bancroft is in distress, and involved in vexatious lawsuits with men who depend principally on this circumstance for success against him. He has, besides this, a family

[46] Ibid., pp. 203-04. With the exception of Deane's letters little is known of this phase of Deane's life.

> to support; yet such is his friendship, that he has repeatedly assisted me with a part of what he had. This, my lord, is a brief state of my situation as to money matters. I get little rest at night; for my coughing is almost incessant, and my night sweats, which but lately affected me, are profuse, so that I have scarcely a thread of my linen dry in the morning. My appetite is gone; I have not ate anything solid for more than ten days. Fruit, a poached egg, or an egg beat up in milk, warm from the cow, with sugar, nutmeg, and some spirit in it, have been my sole nourishment; nor has my stomach at all times been able to bear even these; and I have frequently cold and anguish turns of shivering.[47]

One of Deane's doctors, Dr. Jefferies, recommended a sea voyage which Deane felt that under the circumstances would not be wise. He knew from experience that during the voyage he would be without fruit, milk or vegetables, subject to the heat and calms of the passage and violent equinoctial gales--conditions severe enough for a man in good health. He reasoned that as his body was racked with pain and his mind "distracted with reflections on the past, present, and probable future," he would not survive the voyage. "But my physician is in favor of the voyage. My lord, when a physician has a patient whose disorders baffles [sic] him, he recommends to him a short voyage to sea or to watering places, or, in short, anywhere, to get him out of the way and off his hands." From his past experiences Deane knew that a sea voyage

[47] Ibid., p. 482.

was out of the question, a decision that both Lord Sheffield and Dr. Bancroft shared with him.[48]

In his letter to Lord Sheffield Deane had described his physical condition in detail but to his brother, Barnabas, he related an incident in which American officials became involved: "I have been confined for the greater part of time, ever since December last to my chamber, by a complication of disorders, occasioned in part, and greatly increased, by the distressed state of my circumstances, which have at times drove me to a state of almost absolute distraction. The assistance of Dr. Bancroft and of two other friends, have kept me from perishing, as great part of the time I have scarcely been able to recollect one day what had passed the preceeding. In this state advantage was taken, and I was plundered of almost the whole of my cloathe [sic], and many papers of importance."[49]

The man who stole Deane's papers went to Paris and offered them to Thomas Jefferson, the American ambassador, for one hundred and twenty guineas. He informed Jefferson that he had "laid hands" on them because Deane had owed him one hundred and twenty guineas and he could have them for the same price or he would offer them to the British government. Jefferson requested and obtained twenty four hours to examine the books and determine the value of the volumes. Jefferson

[48] Ibid., p. 489.
[49] Ibid.

reported to John Jay that "one contained all of his accounts with the United States, from his first coming to Europe to January 10, 1781. Presuming that the Treasury Board was in possession of this account till his arrival in Philadelphia, August, 1778, and that he had never given in the subsequent part, I had that subsequent part copied from the book and now enclose it, as it may on some occasion or other, perhaps, be useful in the Treasury office. The other volume contained all his correspondence from March 29th to August 23rd, 1777. I had a list of the letters taken, by their dates and address, which will enable you to form a general idea of the collection. On the perusal of them, I thought it desirable that they should not come to the hands of the British minister, and, from an expression dropped by the possessor of them, I believe he would have fallen 50 or 60 guineas." Jefferson requested authority to buy them as he thought the material worth the price. "Indeed, I would have given that sum to cut out a single sentence which contained evidence of a fact not proper to be committed to the hands of enemies."

At the end of the twenty-four period the man returned and Jefferson surrendered the books saying that he must wait for orders from his government. According to Jefferson the owner returned to London "without making any promise that he would await the event of the orders you might think proper to give."[50]

[50]Department of State, Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, 1783-1789, 7 vols. (Washington, 1833-34), III, 428-32.

In his reply to Jefferson's request for authorization to buy Deane's Account and Letter Books Jay wrote: "I wish you had purchased them. On this subject I cannot, indeed, give you any instructions or authority, but I will venture to advise you, in express terms, to make the purchase."[51]

The next episode in the drama of Deane's stolen papers occurred in March of 1789. Jefferson wrote to Edward Bancroft saying that he had purchased two volumes of Deane's accounts and correspondence. But as the seller had hinted that Deane still had "six or eight volumes more, and being to return soon to London, he will try to get them also, in order to make us pay high for them." Jefferson proposed to Bancroft that he purchase all of the remaining volumes. "I think you might venture as far as fifty guineas, and proportionably for fewer. . . .I suppose his distresses and his crapulous habits will not render him difficult on this head."[52]

Bancroft's reaction to this letter is unknown and it is doubtful if he took the matter up with Deane, but he did answer Jefferson's letter. In March of 1789 Jefferson informed Jay that he hoped the business was finished. After some bargaining he reported that he had been able to purchase the two volumes for 25 louis instead of the original one hundred and

[51] Ibid., p. 441.

[52] Thomas Jefferson, The Writings of Thomas Jefferson: being his autobiography, correspondence, reports, Messages, Addresses, and Other Writings, Official and Private, H. A. Washington, ed., 9 vols. (Washington, 1853), II, 578.

twenty. He was also pleased to report that he had been informed that Deane had no other volumes in his possession.[53] The tone of the Jefferson-Jay correspondence indicates that they were pleased to acquire Deane's books.

For a number of years Deane had toyed with the idea of returning to the United States. Each time the uncertainty of his reception had caused him to postpone the decision. As early as 1783 he had written to his brother, Simeon: "I am at present in a most isolated state. Calumniated and persecuted in America, in effect proscribed in France, and without friends or patrons in this country, and what is worse, without funds to procure them or to enable me to enter on any business of consequence, I have entertained thoughts of returning to Virginia, and to prosecute a plan which I have mentioned to you in several of my letters, of saw mills and of the manufacture of tobacco on a large scale; but the climate deters me, and my ignorance of the times respecting me makes me pause. I can by no means think of returning to a country, however dear to me, in which I may be subject to insult or contumely."[54]

From Edward Langworthy in June of 1783 Deane also received an unvarnished statement of his unpopularity in America. "It is painful for me to mention, & even beyond your imagination to conceive, how much wicked & malicious Men have

[53]Department of State, Diplomatic Correspondence, IV, 77.
[54]New York Historical Collections, V, 183.

endeavored to blacken your character with your countrymen. their [sic] persecution has been detestable, & cruel; but as I am confident of your Innocence, & know the Ingratitute, that has been the reward of your Labors, it has had no influence on my mind, but rather encreased [sic] my esteem & affection for you. I was lately in Philadelphia, & was pleased, in a conversation with your old Friend Pelatiah to find that he still retained his Esteem for you & spoke kindly of you."[55]

The idea of returning to America was not forgotten, and in 1785 Robert Morris, in an answer to a query from Deane, wrote:

> What reception you might meet in this country is very difficult to determine. You cannot be ignorant that a great flame was kindled by the publication of your letters. . . .and in the ferment of opinions on that subject your enemies would probably direct the public odium against you on your arrival in America. This is one side of the picture. You will find on the other, that the resentment against our disaffected daily subsides. Being convinced, on all hands, that the power of Great Britain can never be established in the United States, they are content to become good citizens thereof, and the people in general seem disposed to receive them. It might therefore, be supposed that your wish to return would not be very strenuously opposed. If you should return, you will naturally expect, and not be disappointed, should you meet with a cold reception from those with whom you were once on terms of intimacy. Many will persist in attributing your conduct to bad motives, and will not believe in the assurances you give to the contrary. Others (if convinced) will not avow that conviction, nor act in conformity to it. Those, therefore, (and they are but few), who charged your errors to be imprudence, not wickedness, being unable to stem the torrents, must

[55] Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 181.

give way to it. From the hand of time alone can you expect that the impression against you will be obliterated.[56]

Not all the reactions that Deane received were unfavorable. In July 1785 Deane heard from Jacob Sebor of New London, Connecticut: "It gives me great pleasure to hear you enjoy your health and I had flattered myself you would have taken a passage for America this Spring. Your friends in this state often enquire [sic] after you, and would be very happy to see you and I can assure you they are not a very few."[57]

In September of 1788, Barnabas, Deane's brother, expressed the fear that he had died because he had not written for so long. Barnabas told of the reports he had received of Deane's poor health and financial circumstances. "Let me intreat [sic] you to return to this country again [sic] you have friends that will keep you from want. You can Compound with your Creditors, they have already taken all the property you have in this country; they can get no more."[58]

After Deane's severe illness in 1788 Lord Sheffield offered to pay his passage to America. Deane, for reasons of health, refused. In November of the same year he received from Winthrop Saltonstall a remonstrance for Deane's failure to write and expressing alarm at a "late hint of your scanty situation. . . .I am exceeding glad at the suggestion of your

[56] New York Historical Collections, V, 471.
[57] Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 213.
[58] Ibid., p. 229.

intention to revisit America; no one will be happier in embracing you in this part of the world than I shall. When at New London I shall be very happy in receiving you into my family, and though not with that elegance you have been used to, you can no where receive a more sincere and hearty welcome."[59] In December of the same year Barnabas urged more strongly: "Yours of August 10th is just come to hand and the contents gives me pain Altho from Reports it was not long unexpected, I just beg of you to leave London, what can you Expect by Staying there but Beggery and Distress, I have not the least Expectation of you Ever doing any kind of Business Again, I Judge from what is Past, I will willingly find a home for you if you will come to this place where I have a good House partly Built, your Creditors will not find it worth their Attention to put you in Goal."[60]

In England Deane lived the life of an exile. During this time he had experienced severe financial, physical and mental anguish. Periodically he had toyed with the idea of returning to America. Repeatedly he postponed this decision because of the reception he might receive. So for ten years he remained abroad, apart from his family, friends and those who might have been willing to assist him in a reestablishment of his good name.

In August of 1789 Silas Deane finally did decide to return home. The time and cause of his decision are unknown

[59] New York Historical Collections, V, 501-03.
[60] Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 235.

but the reaction was both varied and definite. From his post in Paris Thomas Jefferson wrote James Madison: "Silas Deane is coming over to finish his days in America, not having one sou to subsist on elsewhere. He is a wretched monument of the consequence of a departure from right."[61] However, from London in the same month, August, Samuel Peters wrote to Deane:

> Permit me to wish you a Safe and Speedy Passage from London to your Native Country, and a happy meeting with your friends and countrymen, who owe their present Liberties to your Sagacious and Patriotic Spirit and Prudence at the court of France. I sincerely hope your Zeal, Wisdom, and Labours may find a proper reward in the Gratitude and Justice of Congress and of the American citizens at large; but should Southern policy prevail against Northern Integrity, and your merit go on neglected, you will enjoy the Consolation of having been the Saviour of the Rights and Liberties of America, and thereby proved yourself a true Son of your pious and patriotic Ancestor, who fought every danger to avoid Persecution, and to turn a Savage World into an Asylum for Religious Virtue and Liberty.[62]

These conflicting sentiments of Jefferson and Peters, the first representing the view of the majority of Americans and the latter the minority, could have aptly been inscribed on Deane's tombstone. Silas Deane died September 23, 1789, after an illness of four hours, on board a Boston Packet bound for his native country. The vessel, some four hours out, returned to Deal and Deane was buried in St. George's burial ground. Silas Deane after a decade of frustration had met his last disappointment. He was fifty-four years old at the time of his death.

[61]Thomas Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson In Twelve Volumes, Paul Leicester Ford, ed., 12 vols. (New York, 1905), V, 494.

[62]Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 245-46.

In England Deane's death was noted in the newspapers. His obituary notices were, in the main, fair, factual and from the English point of view complimentary. The Gentlemen's Magazine observed: "He was second to very few politicians in knowledge, plans, designs, and execution; deficient only in placing confidence in his compatriots and doing them service before he had got his compensation, of which no well-bred politican was before him ever guilty." The American Mercury, in a reprint from a London paper, noted: "Having . . . been accused of embezzling large sums of money intrusted to his care for the purchase of arms and ammunition, Mr. Silas Deane sought asylum in this country, where his habits of life, at first economical, and afterwards penurious in the extreme, amply refute the malevolence of his enemies."

The death of Silas Deane, like the last ten years of his life, was of little interest to the majority of the people in America. No flags flew at half-mast by presidential order, Congress did not pause in a moment of silence in honor of their former colleague, nor did any orator deem it fitting and proper to recall his contribution to the Revolution or even note his passing.

The reaction of Deane's immediate family was mixed. That the family sincerely mourned his passing is not to be doubted but that they did not regret his death is not unlikely. Simeon, who had declared himself ready to give his life for Deane, was

dead. Barnabas, with whom Deane planned to make his home, expressed the proper appreciation to Deane's friends in England and "paid the ballance of the funeral charges."[63] Jesse, the beloved son, found it necessary to sell his father's gold snuff box "after the picture is taken out, which I would have sent here."[64] The sentiments of John Beachley Webb, a stepson, if recorded have not been preserved but another stepson, John, upon hearing the news of his stepfather's demise angrily and bitterly exclaimed: "The Scene with S[ilas] D[eane] is closed."[65] Dr. Edward Bancroft, the man who had betrayed Deane in 1776-78 but who had befriended him in England, characterized him as a Christian gentleman and "esteemed his memory."[66]

The death of Silas Deane could be ignored but his unsettled accounts always stood as a reminder that he could not be forgotten. More than half of a century ensued before Congress consented to settle this unfinished business of the Revolution. In 1840 Deane's heirs presented a petition for compensation. On February 17, 1841, the Senate Committee on Revolutionary Claims reported favorably on the petition. On February 3, 1842, the Senate Committee again reported in favor of the petitioneers and on July 27, 1842, the Claims Committee of the House of Representatives concurred. Congress

[63] New York Historical Collection, V, 532.
[64] Connecticut Historical Collections, XXIII, 247.
[65] Webb, Family Letters, p. 411.
[66] New York Historical Collections, V, 533.

then granted a claim of $37,000 to Deane's heirs on the ground that a former audit was "ex parte, erroneous, and a gross injustice to Silas Deane."[67] At last the "simple justice" which Silas Deane had requested sixty-four years before had been done.

[67] Ibid., I, 13; G. L. Clark, Silas Deane, A Connecticut Leader in the American Revolution, (New York, 1913), pp. 257-60.

BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

I. Historical Guides and Biographical Aids.

A number of historical guides and well-known biographical aids were consulted in compiling an original working bibliography. In the field of diplomacy Samuel F. Bemis and Grace G. Griffen, ed., Guide to the Diplomatic History of the United States, 1775-1921 (Washington, 1935), is superior to any other publication in this field.

In the more specialized area of Revolutionary history, William Mathews, Compiler, American Diaries Written Prior to the Year 1861 (Berkeley, California, 1945); Clarence L. Brigham, History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820, 2 vols. (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1947); and Ruth Lapham, ed., Check List of American Revolutionary War Pamphlets in the Newberry Library (Chicago, 1922), offered valuable leads. Howard S. Peckham, Guide to the Manuscripts Collections in the William L. Clements Library (Ann Arbor, Michigan), was essential in using manuscript collections of Revolutionary War material.

Justin Winsor, Calendar of Arthur Lee Manuscripts In the Library of Harvard University (Cambridge, 1882); Francis L. Berkeley, "MSS Pertaining to Arthur Lee in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Alderman Library," Charlottesville, Virginia; and Justin Winsor, "Manuscript Sources of American History; The Conspicuous Collections

Extant," Magazine of American History, XVIII (1887), 20-34 were invaluable in locating and checking original sources against printed material.

Though not classified as guides, Justin Winsor, Narrative and Critical History of America, 8 vols. (New York, 1888-89), contains valuable biographical aids. Volume VII contains many critical essays and editorial notes. The bibliography is full but not discriminating. John Richard Alden, The American Revolution, 1775-1783 (New York, 1954), and John C. Miller, Triumph of Freedom, 1775-1783 (New York, 1948), are readable accounts of the Revolution but each has an outstanding bibliography. Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, 22 vols. (New York, 1928-44), constitutes a ready and available source for general biographical material on the leading men of the Revolutionary generation.

II. Manuscript Collections.

The Manuscript Division of the William L. Clements Library contains the private and official papers of men who participated on both sides of the American Revolution. The papers of Sir Henry Clinton, Commanding General of the British Forces in North America, 1778-1782, and the papers of Lord George Germain, British Secretary of State, deal primarily with military operations. However, the few scattered reports and observations on diplomatic and

political events are rewarding. The Shelburne Papers, the Holker Papers, and a Miscellaneous Collection aided greatly in supplying information on disputed points in Deane's career. As Lord Auckland was director of British Intelligence in France, the Auckland Papers were of great value. These are found in British Museum Additional Manuscripts (Microfilm) #29475, 34412-34417, Papers and correspondence of William Eden, first Lord Auckland, under-secretary of state and peace commissioner to America. These papers contain the record of the activities and observations of British agents in Paris who reported directly to Eden in London.

III. Public Documents.

Among the basic printed collections of public documents Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress, 8 vols. (Washington, 1921-36), is a convenient compilation of both diaries and letters written by the delegates. C. G. Chinard, The Treaties of 1778 and Allied Documents (Baltimore, 1928), and David Hunter Miller, Treaties and other International Acts of the United States of America, 8 vols. (Washington, 1931-48), are standard collections. Peter Force, ed., American Archives..., Fourth Series, 6 vols. (Washington, 1837-46), and Fifth Series, 3 vols. (Washington, 1848-53), contain a vast quantity of documents gathered from many sources and dealing with almost every phase of the Revolution during the years 1774-76.

These volumes have a few letters to and from Silas Deane while he was in Congress.

Worthington C. Ford, ed., The Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, 34 vols. (Washington, 1904-37), is indispensable for the activities of the American central government. Jared Sparks, The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution, 12 vols. (Boston, 1829-30), has largely been replaced by Francis Wharton, The Revolutionary Correspondence, 6 vols. (Washington, 1889), and is now accepted as the standard work. Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, 1783-1799, 7 vols. (Washington, 1833-34), lies largely outside the area of this study but was valuable because of Jefferson's attempts to secure Deane's papers when he was in London. "Revolutionary Debts," 15th Congress, 1st Session, House Document, Serial 9, No. 111; 20th Congress, 1st Session, Serial 128, No. 220, are committee reports dealing with Beaumarchais' accounts. Deane is not directly involved but is mentioned as a party to the contracts.

Benjamin Franklin Stevens, ed., Facsimiles of Manuscripts in European Archives Relating to America, 1773-1783, 26 vols. (London, 1889-95), offers a wide variety of documents taken from the Auckland Manuscripts, British Records Office and the French Archives. This is the best printed source for Deane's first mission to France. John Durand, ed., New Materials For the History of the American Revolution: taken from Documents in the French Archives (New York, 1889), makes a valuable

supplement to Steven's work. Henri Doniol's, Historie de la Participation de la France a L'Etablissement des Etats-Unis et Documents, 5 vols. (Paris, 1890), is listed as a source. This publication embodies four types of text: 1. the author's narrative which is frequently a running paraphrase of documentary material; 2. documentary material set in the narrative; 3. footnotes containing additional documentary material and reference to the archives; 4. documentary appendices to the individual chapters. This work was used for background material only.

IV. Printed Sources.

The published papers of American and British leaders dealing with the American Revolution are both extensive and revealing. John Adams, The Works of John Adams. . . , Charles Francis Adams, ed., 10 vols. (Boston, 1856), is valuable because of Adam's habit of recording his observations and view on the events of the day. Samuel Adams, The Writings of Samuel Adams, Harry A. Cushing ed., 4 vols. (New York, 1904-08), reveals that Samuel Adams conceived a dislike for Deane in the First Continental Congress. This personal dislike led to a political dislike during the Deane-Lee feud.

Many of the states have published extensive records of their early history. The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut From October, 1772, to June, 1776, Inclusive Charles J. Hoadley, ed., 2 vols. (Hartford, Connecticut,

1887-90); The Public Records of the State of Connecticut From October, 1776, through October, 1797 ed., Charles J. Hoadley, Leonard Woods, Labree, and Albert E. Van Dusen, 9 vols. (Hartford, 1894-1953), shows that Deane was a man of prominence before the Revolution. These were extremely helpful for the personal rather than political life. Silas Deane, "Correspondence of Silas Deane, Delegate to the First and Second Congress at Philadelphia, 1774-1776," Collections of Connecticut Historical Society, Vol. II, J. Hammond Trumbull, ed. (Hartford, 1870), is limited to Deane's political activities through his term of service and appointment as agent of the Secret Committee. Included are a collection of letters to and from his wife, brothers, and personal and political friends in Connecticut detailing his work, views and opinions on issues and personalities. Silas Deane, The Deane Papers; Collections of New York Historical Society, Charles Isham, ed., 5 vols. (New York, 1886-1890), contains the great bulk of the published and unpublished Deane papers. This collection includes family letters and official and business correspondence. The principle unpublished papers were secured from Mrs. Isabella Thomas of Norwich, Connecticut, granddaughter of Silas Deane, papers from the Connecticut Historical Society, and the Sparks and Lee Manuscripts in the Library of Harvard University. It is without editorial comment. Silas Deane, The Papers Relating to the Case of Silas Deane, Edward D. Ingraham, ed. (Philadelphia, 1885),

did not meet expectations because of the unexpected death of the editor. However, as a supplementary source it is of some value. Silas Deane, The Deane Papers: Correspondence Between Silas Deane, His Brothers and Their Business and Political Associates, 1771-1795, Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, Albert C. Bates, ed., vol. XXIII (Hartford, 1930), consists of the correspondence between Deane, his brothers and their business associates. This volume affords ample evidence of the affection and regard which the Deane brothers felt for each other. Letters from former business associates bear testimony that some, if not many, did not regard Silas Deane as a traitor. A valuable source of Deane's early activities in Paris is the report of the double spy, Mr. Edwards, who, as Edward Bancroft, informed the British government in A Narrative of the Objects and Proceedings of Silas Deane as Commissioner of the United States to France; made to the British Government in 1776, Paul Leicester Ford, ed. (Brooklyn, New York, 1891). The discovery and identification of Mr. Edwards explains how the British ministers were so well informed as to Deane's reception and activities in Paris. Deane's views on American affairs during his second mission to Paris are set forth in Silas Deane, The Paris Papers: or Mr. Silas Deane's Late Intercepted Letters to his Brothers, and Other Intimate Friends in America, reprinted by James Rivington (New York, 1782). These are the so-called "Intercepted

Letters" which Deane did not deny writing but expressed the fear that they may have been "doctored" before publication. Silas Deane, An Address to the United States of North America (London, 1784), is merely a restatement of his case asking that "simple justice" be done.

Theveneau de Francey was sent on a mission to Philadelphia by his uncle Caron de Beaumarchais. In his letters he tells of Deane's unpopularity with Congress and of his pending recall. Theveneau de Francey, Letters of Theveneau de Francey, 1777-1780, John Bigelow, ed. (New York, 1870), reflects the political atmosphere that existed in Congress on the eve of Deane's recall in 1778. In his despatches, Conrad Alexander Gerard, Despatches and Instructions of Conrad Alexander Gerard, 1778-1780, John J. Meng, ed. (Baltimore, 1939), reported to Vergennes on political trends and existing factions in the Congress of the United States. It should be noted that Gerard was pro-Deane.

Other observations and opinions of Silas Deane were made by George III, The Correspondence of George III with Lord North, 1768-83, 2 vols, W. Bodham, ed. (London, 1867); The Correspondence of King George III from 1780 to December, 1783, Sir John Fortescue, ed., 6 vols. (London, 1783).

One of Silas Deane's most distinguished associates was Benjamin Franklin. There are two collections of Franklin's works, The Writings of Benjamin Franklin, Albert H. Smyth, ed., 10 vols. (New York, 1905-07); and The Works of Benjamin Franklin,

John Bigelow, ed., 12 vols. (New York, 1904). Due to their close association the view of this distinguished American are of great value. Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence, and Speeches, William Wirt, ed., 3 vols. (New York, 1891) shows that Henry and Silas Deane had a common interest in western land.

There were other Americans closely associated with Deane who did not regard him so highly and who did not hesitate to express their opinions. Some of these are to be found in Ralph Izard, The Correspondence of Mr. Ralph Izard of South Carolina From the Years 1774 to 1804: With a Short Memoir, Anne Izard Deas, ed. (New York, 1884). However, it seems that Izard hated Franklin and possessed only a contempt for Deane.

A former colonial governor, Thomas Hutchinson, was living in London in 1776 and his The Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson, Peter Orlando Hutchinson, ed., 2 vols. (London, 1884), contain material of interest regarding the activities of Deane in Paris.

One of Silas Deane's closest friends was John Jay, whose works, The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay, Henry P. Johnston, ed., 4 vols. (New York, 1890-93), is valuable because of his friendship with Deane. Jay's repudiation of Deane may serve as an index to the reaction of the general public in America. Thomas Jefferson, The Papers of Thomas

Jefferson, Julian P. Boyd, et al eds., 10 vols. (Princeton, 1950-); The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes, Paul Leicester Ford, ed., 12 vols. (New York, 1905); and The Writings of Thomas Jefferson. . ., H. A. Washington, ed., 10 vols. (Washington, 1853), reveal Deane's plight in London.

The letters of the Lee brothers' are not only an important source for the politics of the Revolution but also reveal the close family tie that existed between the brothers. Richard Henry Lee, The Life of Arthur Lee. . . , 2 vols. (Boston, 1829); and Richard Henry Lee, Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee. . . , 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1825), are without value except for the diary, documents and letters contained in the four volumes. Charles Lee, The Lee Papers, in Collections Of the New York Historical Society, 4 vols. (New York, 1871-75), consists primarily of the papers of General Charles Lee. They contain several biting comments by a soldier on politics and politicians. Richard Henry Lee, Letters of Richard Henry Lee, James C. Ballagh, ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1911-14); William Lee, Letters of William Lee, Worthington C. Ford, ed., 3 vols. (Brooklyn, 1891); William Lee, Reply of William Lee to Charges of Silas Deane, 1779, Worthington C. Ford. ed. (Brooklyn, New York, 1891), give the Lee point of view on what American diplomatic and commercial policy should have been and how it should have been conducted. Franklin, not Deane, is the evil genius of American diplomacy.

James Madison, The Writings of James Madison, Gillard Hunt, ed., 9 vols. (New York, 1906), reflects the temper of the American people to Deane's apostasy. Robert Morris, The Confidential Correspondence of Robert Morris, Stanley V. Henkels, Publisher (Philadelphia, 1917); and "Revolutionary Papers, Letters of Robert Morris; Papers of Charles Thomas," Collections of New York Historical Society (New York, 1878), reflect the plight of Deane's friends after he was accused of treason. Thomas Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, Moncure D. Conway, ed., 3 vols. (New York, 1894); and The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, Philip S. Foner, ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1945), demonstrate that Paine did not carry his war with Deane into his private correspondence.

Edmund Pendleton, "Unpublished Letters of Edmund Pendleton," Proceedings of Massachusetts Historical Society, 2d Series, XIX (Boston, 1903), 107-167, and William B. Reed, Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1847), are works of men who were personal friends of Silas Deane and both confirm the general unfavorable reaction of the public to the publication of Deane's letters.

Samuel Bleachley Webb, Correspondence and Journals of Samuel Bleachley Webb, Worthington C. Ford. ed., 3 vols.(New York, 1893); Family Letters of Samuel Bleachley Webb, Worthington C. Ford. ed. (Boston, 1913); and Some Social Notes Addressed to Samuel Bleachley Webb, 1776-1791, Worthington C. Ford, ed. (Boston, 1911), are valuable in establishing family relations.

Silas Deane had the greatest respect and admiration for George Washington, whose views are to be found in the Writings of George Washington From the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1793, John Fitzpatrick, ed., 39 vols. (Washington, 1931-44). Washington once called Deane "friend" and thanked him for his services to the cause. Later Washington refused to answer his letter.

V. Secondary Works.

The secondary works that reveal any knowledge of the Revolutionary career of Silas Deane are few. This leads to speculation as to why biographies of prominent figures of that day generally omit references to Deane. Was his part so unimportant? Were his activities so mistrusted that compromising correspondence with him may have been destroyed? Perhaps his activities were limited to such a narrow phase of the Revolution that larger events of a later period obscured their importance? With one exception Deane is a secondary figure in all the accounts that are listed.

Thomas Perkins Abernethy, Western Lands and the American Revolution (New York, 1937), deals indirectly with Deane and his activities. The account is unfavorable. John Richard Alden, The American Revolution, 1775-1783 (New York, 1954), refers to the well known treason of Silas Deane in a footnote. Helen Augur, The Secret War of Independence (New York, 1955), makes Benjamin Franklin the central point of interest to the point of ignoring Silas Deane and Arthur Lee. John

Bigelow, The Life of Benjamin Franklin, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1875), is a standard work of the great American.

The well-known histories of Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People. 3rd. ed. (New York, 1946), and Samuel F. Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution (New York, 1936), are standard texts in American diplomatic history.

Roger Sherman Boardman, Roger Sherman, Signer and Statesman (Philadelphia, 1938), mentions Deane as Sherman's colleague in Congress from Connecticut. Alan Brown, "William Eden and the American Revolution", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Film #1537, has a good account of Deane in Paris in 1778. Weldon A. Brown, Empire or Independence: A Study in Failure of Reconciliation, 1774-1783 (Baton Rouge, 1941), makes Franklin the central figure of the diplomatic game in Paris.

Edmund C. Burnett, The Continental Congress (New York, 1941), shows that Deane was a hard-working committee member when he was a member of that body. Madam Campan, Memoires sur la vie privee de Marie Antoinette, 3 vols. (Paris, 1822), gives some insight into French political life. George L. Clark, Silas Deane: A Connecticut Leader In the American Revolution, the only full length biography of the rebel from Connecticut is readable but lacks bibliography and footnotes. Edward S. Corwin, French Policy and the Alliance of 1778 (Princeton, 1916), is one of the older but more reliable books in this area.

Works which give an insight into the Revolutionary period but which almost ignore Silas Deane are William Penn Cresson, Francis Dana: A Puritan Diplomat at the Court of Catherine the Great (New York, 1930); Anna DeKoven, The Life and Letters of John Paul Jones, 2 vols. (New York, 1913); Edward S. Delaplaine, The Life of Thomas Johnson: Member of the Continental Congress, First Governor of Maryland, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court (New York, 1927); and Robert A. East, Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era.

Lewis Einstein, Divided Loyalties: Americans in England During the War of Independence (London, 1938), is useful as background for the secret service activities that were carried on in France during Deane's first mission. Edward E. Hale and Edward E. Hale, Jr., Franklin in France From Original Documents. 2 vols. (Boston, 1888), is one of the best sources of the relationship that existed between Deane and Franklin. Blanche E. Hazard, Beaumarchais and the American Revolution (Boston, 1910), adds nothing new to the Beaumarchais story. Burton J. Hendrick, The Lees of Virginia: Biography of a Family (Boston, 1935), has a chapter dealing with Arthur Lee which is favorable to the Lee's in the Deane-Lee feud.

Gaillard Hunt, The Department of State of the United States: Its History and Function (New Haven, 1914), is necessary to an understanding of some of the problems facing our early statesmen in the field of diplomacy. Gillard Hunt, ed., Fragments of Revolutionary History (Brooklyn, 1892), consists

of excerpts from the newspapers of the day arranged chronologically. William Jay, The Life of John Jay: With Selections from his Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers, 2 vols. (New York, 1833), is an older but still standard biography of Deane's early friend. Merrill Jensen, The New Nation: A History of the United States During the Confederation 1781-1789 (New York, 1950), contains information pertaining to Robert Morris as Superintendent of Finance. Frederick Kapp, The Life of Frederick von Stuben (New York, 1859); Frederick Kapp, The Life of John Kalb (New York, 1884); and Arnold Kinsey King, Thomas Paine in America, 1774-1787 (Chicago, 1951), add nothing new to the Deane story.

George Lemaitre, Beaumarchais (New York, 1949) is neither exciting nor informative. Benson J. Lossing, The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution or Illustrations, by Pen and Pencil, of History, Biography, Scenery, Relics and Traditions of the War for Independence, 3 vols. (New York, 1859), is interesting and contains good background material.

John Chester Miller, Triumph of Freedom, 1775-1783 (Boston, 1948), has an excellent bibliography for the period. Montross Lyons, The Reluctant Rebels: the Story of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789 (New York, 1950), is a readable account of the Continental Congress based primarily on the Journals. Louis de Lomenie, Beaumarchais and His Times, H. S. Edward, trans. (New York, 1857), is considered the best account of the man and his times. Jules Mason, Beaumarchais, et les

affaires d' Amerique lettres inidities (Paris, 1919), adds little as a source for Beaumarchais' commercial activities. Frank Monaghan, John Jay: Defender of Liberty (Indianapolis, 1935), presents a readable account of Jay's life but does not improve on the older accounts. Ellis Paxson, Robert Morris: Patriot and Financier (New York, 1903), attempts to explain and defend Morris' financial operations.

Josephine F. Pacheco, "French Secret Agents in America" unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1950, shows the extent of French interest in American affairs long before 1776. James Parton, Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin, 2 vols. (New York, 1864), is both readable and colorful but is almost out of date. James Breck Perkins, France in the American Revolution (Boston, 1911), contains the best description of Franco-American relations and is based largely on French sources.

Charles R. Ritcheson, British Politics and the American Revolution (Norman, Oklahoma, 1954), is good for the political struggle that was taking place in England at the time of the Revolution. Kenneth R. Rossman, Thomas Mifflin and the Politics of the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1952), is disappointing in that the Deane-Lee feud is largely ignored. Kate Mason Rowland, The Life of Charles Carrol of Carrollton, 1737-1832, 2 vols. (New York, 1898), and Kate Mason Rowland, The Life of George Mason, 2 vols. (New York, 1892), comments upon politics and politicians. Lorenzo Sabine, Biographical

Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution, 2 vols. (Boston, 1864), lists Deane as a Loyalist. Charles Coleman Sellers, Charles Wilson Peale (Philadelphia, 1947), comments upon Deane and his reception by Congress. Laura Charlotte, France and the American Revolution, 1763-1778 (Ithaca, New York, 1900), adds nothing new. M. M. Spector, The American Department of the British Government, 1868-82 (New York, 1942), is helpful in understanding the operations of the British government in the time of the Revolution. Willis Steel, Benjamin Franklin of Paris, 1776-1785 (New York, 1923), is a colorful account of Franklin's activities in Paris. Henry R. Stiles, The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut, 3 vols. (New York, 1903), is a gold mine for local color and history. Charles J. Stille, Beaumarchais and "the Lost Million"(Philadelphia, 1890), is another attempt to explain Beaumarchais' financial operations. Gerald Stourzh, Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy (Chicago, 1954), includes Deane's views on foreign policy, treats the Paris Commissioners fairly, and presents a good account of the treaty negotiations.

Isaac W. Stuart, Life of John Trumbull, Senator, Governor of Connecticut (Boston, 1859), W. G. Sumner, The Financier and Finances of the American Revolution, 2 vols. (New York, 1891), Charlesmagne Tower, The Marquis de LaFayette in the American Revolution with Some Account of the Attitude of France Toward the War of Independence, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1895),

and John Trumbull, Jonathan Trumbull: Governor of Connecticut, 1769-1784 (Boston, 1919), are valuable for the Revolution but add little to the Deane story.

Claude H. VanTyne, The War of Independence (New York, 1929), is a standard work on the Revolution. This volume is an exception in that it is fair in its treatment of Deane. Carl C. Van Doren, Secret History of American Revolution (New York, 1941), accepts Deane as a traitor. Carl C. Van Doren, Benjamin Franklin (New York, 1938), is considered the outstanding one volume work on Franklin. David A. Wallace, The Life of Henry Laurens (New York, 1915), portrays the life of a well-meaning but self-righteous individual. Mercy Warren, History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution, 3 vols. (Boston, 1805), reflects the view of the Revolutionary generation. Winslow C. Watson, ed., Men and Times of the Revolution, or Memoirs of Elkanah Watson (New York, 1856), gives a first hand account of an interview with Deane in Paris during the Second Mission. William Wirt, The Life and Character of Patrick Henry, 2 vols. (New York, 1833), fails to mention Deane. George C. Wood, Congressional Control of Foreign Relations During the American Revolution, 1774-1789 (Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1918), is an account of the struggle between the agricultural and commercial factions in Congress to dominate the foreign policy of the United States during the Revolution.

VI. Newspapers

1. The Pennsylvania Packet

2. The Virginia Gazette

3. The Remembrancer: or Impartial Repository of Public Events for the years 1776-1780. Printed by John Almon, London.

4. Gentleman's Magazine, 1776-1783.

5. Rivington's Royal Gazette, 1777-1782.

6. The London Chronicle.

7. New-York Gazette and Weekly Mercury. 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783.

8. London Gazette.

9. Connecticut Courant

VII. Magazine Articles

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