

Precis of what passed, relative to
Dunkirk at Versailles June 7th 1763.

Versailles, June 7th 1763.

The Duke of Bedford told the Duc de Praslin, that he was sorry, that in the last Conference between them, he should be obliged to enter upon any matter of complaint and difficulty. But as Colonel Desmarcets had reported to the Earl of Egremont, that M.^o de Ramsault had no orders from Versailles to demolish any other Works at Dunkirk, than the Cquette and the Forts and Batteries on the side of the Sea; He, as Ambassador, must by order of his Court insist on the first part of the 13th Article of the definitive Treaty, as well as on the second, and therefore expected, that M.^o de Ramsault should be soon authorized to proceed to the execution of the whole.

The Duc de Praslin said, that it was impossible, Dunkirk ever could become a Port de Guerre; the only question then, was, whether it were to be a Port Marchand, or reduced to a little fishing Place. That, he was persuaded, the former would be most for our interest, as otherwise there would be no Free Port for us, in this part of France. But, that this must be the case, should the whole of this Article be executed according ^{to} the letter. However, at all Events, if the King insisted upon it, the whole should be executed, that, it was not an Object to dispute about, nor would it be a matter of great consequence. Si l'on devoit faire passer la Charrue par les rues de la Ville.

The Duke of Bedford went afterwards to the Duc de Choiseul, to whom he held the same language, and from whom he received the same Answer. The Duc de Choiseul added, that Dunkirk had been the cause of an immense expence to them,

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and had been of very little service, that he had had frequent remonstrances from the Fermiers Generaux upon the injury the Customs have received from it, that probably another Place might be found near it, which would better answer every advantage, and be free from every disadvantage, but that the King his Master, would never consent to make it a free Port. He therefore desired, that H. Maj.^{ty} would be pleased, to have this matter very maturely weighed, and that Sea Officers, Engineers, Merchants or any other Persons, the King should be pleased to appoint, should be welcome to inspect, in order to report to H. Maj.^{ty} whether Dunkirk, when the Works now demolishing shall be destroyed, can possibly give any reasonable Umbrage to England. He added, that if the draining off the Water, l'Ecoulement des Eaux, was to be immediately stopt, by destroying the Canal of Bergues, before another were found, near 20 Leagues of Country, would be inevitably, in every wet Season, laid under Water, which he was sure the King's humanity would never permit him to desire. That this Ecoulement must in this case be effected, at a most immense Expence to them, by Mardyk, which was stopt up, at the instances of the Court of England, during the ^{French} King's minority, by order of the late Regent.