

Connecticut (Colony) Charter

# CHARTER c 7

of the

## Colony of Connecticut

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1900

*Handwritten notes:*  
1662  
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## CHARTER OF 1662.

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[On the 14th of March, 1661, the General Court of Connecticut voted to petition the king for the continuance and confirmation of such privileges and liberties as were necessary for the comfortable and peaceable settlement of the Colony.

Governor Winthrop was requested to act as the agent for the Colony. He sailed from New York in July, 1661. The letter of credit for £500 sterling, which he took with him, may be seen in the State Library. The amount was paid in wheat and pease. He succeeded in procuring a very liberal charter, which bears date April 23d, 1662.

The charter was made in duplicate and sent in different ships. The duplicate probably arrived first, and was received in Connecticut in September, 1662. There are some trifling verbal differences between them, not, however, affecting the sense.

In 1687 it became evident that the Colony was likely to be deprived of the charter, and measures were taken accordingly. There is a very curious entry on the Colonial Records in June 1687, of the production of the (original) charter in court, and of its being left on the table with the key in the box at the adjournment of the Court, with no one responsible for its safety, the committee which had been appointed to keep it being discharged by their surrendry of it to the Court. Perhaps it was at this time that the charter was quietly taken by Nathaniel Stanly and John Talcott, and concealed in the famous oak.

On the 31st of October, 1687, Sir Edmund Andros came to Hartford to receive the surrender of the charter. The Assembly met and sat late at night. The duplicate charter was brought forth and placed on the table. Suddenly the lights were extinguished, and Captain Joseph Wadsworth carried off and concealed the duplicate, which he retained until 1715, when the Assembly made him a grant for his good service in the matter. The one more highly ornamented than the other, now hangs in the Secretary's office. What remains

of the second copy may be seen in the rooms of the Connecticut Historical Society at Hartford. How it was saved from being cut up to make the foundation of a bonnet is told in a note in Vol. 4 of the Colonial Records.

The charter continued to be the basis of our government until it was superseded by the constitution of 1818.—*C. J. Hoadly.*]

**Charles the Second, By the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender of the Faith, &c.; To all to whome this presents shall come, Greetinge: **W**hereas, by the severall Navigaçons, discoveries and successefull Plantaçons of diverse of our loveing Subjects of this our Realme of England, Severall Lands, Islands, Places, Colonies and Plantaçons have byn obtayned and setled in that parte of the Continent of America called New England, and thereby the Trade and Comerce there hath byn of late yeares much increased, **A**nd **w**hereas, wee have byn informed by the humble Petičon of our Trusty and welbeloved John Winthrop, John Mason, Samuell Willis, Henry Clerke, Mathew Allen, John Tappen, Nathan Gold, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Woolicott, John Talcott, Daniell Clerke, John Ogden, Thomas Wells, Obedias Brewen, John Clerke, Anthony Haukins, John Deming and Mathew Camfeild, being Persons Principally interested in our Colony or Plantaçon of Conecticut in New England, that the same Colony or the greatest parte thereof was purchased and obteyned for greate and valuable Consideraçons, And some other part thereof gained by Conquest and with much difficulty, and att**

the onely endeavours, expence and Charge of them and their Associates, and those vnder whome they Clayme, Subdued and improved, and thereby become a considerable enlargement and addiçon of our Dominions and interest there,— **Now Know yea**, that in consideraçon thereof, and in regard the said Colony is remote from other the English Plantaçons in the Places aforesaid, And to the end the Affaires and Bufines which shall from tyme to tyme happen or arise concerning the same may be duely Ordered and managed, **Wee have** thought fitt, and att the humble Petiçon of the Persons aforesaid, and are graciously pleased to Create and Make them a Body Pollitique and Corporate, with the powers and Priviledges herein after mençoned; And accordingly Our will and pleasure is, and of our especiall grace, certeine knowledge and meere moçon, **wee have** Ordeyned, Constituted and Declared, And by theis presents, for vs, our heires and Successors, **Doe** Ordeine, Constitute and Declare That they, the said John Winthrop, John Maçon, Samuel Willis, Henry Clerke, Mathew Allen, John Tappen, Nathan Gold, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Woolcot, John Talcot, Daniell Clerke, John Ogden, Thomas Wells, Obadiah Brewen, John Clerke, Anthony Hawkins, John Deming and Mathew Camfeild, and all such others as now are or hereafter shall be Admitted and made free of the Company and Society of our Collony of Connecticut in America, shall from tyme to tyme and for ever hereafter, be one Body Corporate and

Pollitique in fact and name, by the Name of Governour and Company of the English Collony of Conecticut in New England in America; And that by the same name they and their Successors shall and may have perpetuall Succession, and shall and may bee Persons able and Capable in the law to Plead and bee Impleaded, to Answer and to bee Answered vnto, to Defend and bee Defended in all and singuler Suits, Causes, quarrelles, Matters, Accõs and things of what kind or nature soever, And alsoe to have, take, possesse, acquire and purchase lands, Tenements or hereditaments, or any goods or Chattells, and the same to Lease, Graunt, Demise, Alien, bargaine, Sell and dispose of, as other our leige People of this our Realme of England, or any other Corporaçon or Body Pollitique within the same may lawfully doe. **And further**, that the said Governour and Company, and their Successors shall and may for ever hereafter have a Comon Seale to serve and vse for all Causes, matters, things and affaires, whatsoever of them and their Successors, and the same Seale to alter, change, breake and make new from tyme to tyme att their wills and pleasures, as they shall thinke fitt. **And further**, wee will and Ordeine, and by theis presents for vs, our heires and Successors **Doe** Declare and appoint, that for the better ordering and manageing of the affaires and bufinesse of the said Company and their Successors, there shall bee one Governour, one Deputy Governour and Twelve Assistants, to bee from tyme to tyme Constituted, Elected

and Chosen out of the Freemen of the said Company for the tyme being, in such manner and forme as hereafter in these presents is expressed; which said Officers shall apply themselves to take care for the best disposing and Ordering of the Generall busines and affaires of and concerning the lands and hereditaments herein after menconed to bee graunted, and the Plantacon thereof and the Government of the People thereof. And for the better execucon of our Royall Pleasure herein, **wee doe** for vs, our heires and Successors, Assigne, name, Constitute and appoint the aforesaid John Winthrop to bee <sup>the</sup> first and present Governour of the said Company; And the said John Mason to bee <sup>the</sup> Deputy Governour; And the said Samuell Willis, Mathew Allen, Nathan Gold, Henry Clerke, Richard Treat, John Ogden, Thomas Tappen, John Talcott, Thomas Wells, Henry Woolcot, Richard Lord and Daniell Clerke to bee the Twelve present Assistants of the said Company; to contynue in the said severall Offices respectively, vntill the second Thursday which shall bee in the moneth of October now next comeing. **And** further, wee will, and by theis presents for vs, our heires and Successors, **Doe** Ordaine and Graunt that the Governour of the said Company for the tyme being, or, in his absence by occasion of sicknes, or otherwise by his leave or permission, the Deputy Governour for the tyme being, shall and may from tyme to tyme vpon all occasions give Order for the assembling or the said Company and calling them together to Consult

and advise of the buſineſſe and Affaires of the ſaid Company, And that for ever hereafter, Twice in every yeare, That is to ſay on every Second Thurſday in October and on every Second Thurſday in May, or oftener, in Caſe it ſhall bee requiſite, The Aſſiſtants and freemen of the ſaid Company, or ſuch of them, not exceeding twoe Perſons from each Place, Towne or Citty, whoe ſhall bee from tyme to tyme therevnto Elec̄ted or Deputed by the maior parte of the freemen of the reſpective Townes, Cittyes and Places for which they ſhall bee ſoe elec̄ted or Deputed, ſhall have a generall meeting or Affembly, then and their to Conſult and adviſe in and about the Affaires and buſineſſe of the ſaid Company; And that the Governour, or in his abſence the Deputy Governour of the ſaid Company for the tyme being, and ſuch of the Aſſiſtants and freemen of the ſaid Company as ſhall be ſoe Elec̄ted or Deputed and bee preſent att ſuch meeting or Affembly, or the greateſt number of them, whereof the Governour or Deputy Governour and Six of the Aſſiſtants at leaſt, to bee Seaven, ſhall bee called the Generall Affembly, and ſhall have full power and authority to alter and change their dayes and tymes of meeting or Generall Affemblies for Elec̄ting the Governour, Deputy Governour and Aſſiſtants or other Officers or any other Courts, Affemblies or meetings, and to Choofe, Nominate and appoint ſuch and ſoe many other Perſons as they ſhall thinke fitt and ſhall bee willing to accept the ſame, to be free of the ſaid Company and Body Politique, and

them into the same to Admitt and to Elect, and Constitute such Officers as they shall thinke fitt and requisite for the Ordering, mannaeing and disposing of the Affaires of the said Governour and Company and their Successors. **And wee doe** hereby for vs, our heires and Successors, Establish and Ordeine, that once in the yeare for ever hereafter, namely, the said Second Thursday in May, the Governour, Deputy Governour, and Assistants of the said Company and other Officers of the said Company, or such of them as the said Generall Assembly shall thinke fitt, shall bee in the said Generall Court and Assembly to bee held from that day or tyme newly Chosen for the yeare ensuing, by such greater part of the said Company for the tyme being then and there present. And if the Governour, Deputy Governour and Assistants by these presents appointed, or such as hereafter bee newly Chosen into their Roomes, or any of them, or any other the Officers to bee appointed for the said Company shall dye or bee removed from his or their severall Offices or Places before the said Generall day of Eleccon, whome wee doe hereby Declare for any misdemeanour or default to bee removeable by the Governour, Assistants and Company, or such greater part of them in any of the said publique Courts to bee Asssembled as is aforesaid, That then and in every such Case itt shall and may bee lawfull to and for the Governour, Deputy Governour and Assistants and Company aforesaid, or such greater parte of them soe to bee Asssembled as is aforesaid in any of their Assemblies



to Proceede to a New Elecçon of one or more of their Company in the Roome or place, Roomes or Places of such Governour, Deputy Governour, Assifstant or other Officer or Officers soe dyeing or removed, according to their discretions; and immediately vpon and after such Elecçon or Elecçons made of such Governour, Deputy Governour, Assifstant or Assifstants, or any other Officer of the said Company in manner and forme aforefaid, The Authority, Office and Power before given to the former Governour, Deputy Governour or other Officer and Officers soe removed, in whose stead and Place new shall be chosen, shall as to him and them and every of them respectively cease and determine. **Provided**, alsoe, and our will and pleasure is, That as well such as are by theis presents appointed to bee the present Governour, Deputy Governour and Assifstants of the said Company as those that <sup>shall</sup> succeed them, and all other Officers to bee appointed and Chosen as aforefaid, shall, before they vndertake the Execuçon of their said Offices and Places respectively, take their severall and respective Corporall Oathes for the due and faithfull performance of their duties in their severall Offices and Places, before such Person or Persons as are by these Presents hereafter appoynted to take and receive the same; That is to say, the said John Winthrop, whoe is herein before nominated and appointed the present Governour of the said Company, shall take the said Oath before one or more of the Masters of our Court of Chancery for the tyme being,

vnto which Master of Chancery wee doe, by theis presents, give full power and authority to Administer the said Oath to the said John Winthrop accordingly. And the said John Mason, whoe is herein before nominated and duely appointed the present Deputy Governour of the said Company, shall take the said Oath before the said John Winthrop, or any twoe of the Assistants of the said Company, vnto whome wee doe by these presents, give full power and authority to Administer the said Oath to the said John Mason accordingly. And the said Samuell Willis, Henry Clerke, Mathew Allen, John Tappen, Nathan Gold, Richard Treat, Richard Lord, Henry Woolcott, John Talcott, Daniell Clerke, John Ogden and Thomas Welles, whoe are herein before Nominated and appointed the present Assistants of the said Company, shall take the Oath before <sup>the</sup> said John Winthrop and John Mason, or one of them, to whome wee doe hereby give full power and authority to Administer the same accordingly. And our further will and pleasure is, that all and every Governour or Deputy Governour to bee Elected and Chosen by vertue of theis presents, shall take the said Oath before two or more of the Assistants of the said Company for the tyme being, vnto whom wee doe, by theis presents, give full power and authority to give and Administer the said Oath accordingly. And the said Assistants and every of them, and all and every other Officer or Officers to bee hereafter Chosen from tyme to tyme, to take the said Oath before the Governour or

Deputy Governour for the tyme being, vnto which said Governour or Deputy Governour wee doe, by theis presents, give full power and authority to Administer the same accordingly. **And further**, of our more ample grace, certeine knowledge and meere moçon **wee have** given and Graunted, and by theis presents, for vs, our heires and Successors, **Doe** give and Graunt vnto the said Governour and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut in New England in America, and to every Inhabitant there, and to every Person and Persons Trading thither, And to every such Person and Persons as are or shall bee free of the said Collony, full power and authority from tyme to tyme and att all tymes hereafter, to take, Ship, Transport and Carry away, for and towards the Plantaçon and defence of the said Collony such of our loveing Subjects and Strangers as shall or will willingly accompany them in and to their said Collony and Plantaçon; (Except such Person and Persons as are or shall bee therein restrayned by vs, our heires and Successors;) And alsoe to Ship and Transport all and all manner of goods, Chattells, Merchandizes and other things whatsoever that are or shall bee vsefull or necessary for the Inhabitants of the said Collony and may lawfully bee Transported thither; Neverthelesse, not to bee discharged of payment to vs, our heires and Successors, of the Dutyes, Customes and Subsidies which are or ought to bee paid or payable for the same. **And further**, Our will and pleasure is, and **wee doe** for vs, our heires and Successors, Ordeyne, De-

clare and Graunt vnto the faid Governor and Company and their Successors, That all and every the Subiects of vs, our heires or Successors which shall goe to Inhabite within the said Colony, and every of their Children which shall happen to bee borne there or on the Sea in going thither or returneing from thence, shall have and enioye all liberties and Immunities of free and naturall Subiects within any the Dominions of vs, our heires or Successors, to all intents, Construcçons and purposes whatsoever, as if they and every of them were borne within the Realme of England. **And wee doe** authorise and impower the Governour, or in his absence the Deputy Governor for the tyme being, to appointe two or more of the faid assistants att any of their Courts or Asssemblies to bee held as aforesaid, to have power and authority to Administer the Oath of Supremacy and obedience to all and every Person and Persons which shall att any tyme or tymes hereafter goe or passe into the faid Colony of Connecticut, vnto which faid Assistants soe to bee appointed as aforesaid, **wee doe**, by these presents, give full power and authority to Administer the faid Oath accordingly. **And wee doe furtber**, of our especiall grace, certeine knowledge and meere moçon, give and Graunt vnto the faid Governor and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut in New England in America, and their Successors, that itt shall and may bee lawfull to and for the Governor or Deputy Governor and such of the Assistants of the faid Company for the tyme being as shall bee

Asssembled in any of the General Courts aforesaid, or in any Courts to bee especially Sumoned or Asssembled for that purpose, or the greater parte of them, whereof the Governor or Deputy Governor and Six of the Assistants, (to be all wayes Seaven,) to Erect and make such Judicatories for the hearing and Determining of all Accõns, Causes, matters and thinges happening within the said Colony or Plantaçõn and which shall bee in dispute and depending there, as they shall thinke fitt and convenient; And alsoe from tyme to tyme to Make, Ordaine and Establish All manner of wholsome and reasonable Lawes, Statutes, Ordinances, Direcçons and Instruccõns, not contrary to the lawes of this Realme of England, aswell for fetling the formes and Ceremonies of Government and Magestracy fitt and necessary for the said Plantaçõn and the Inhabitants there as for nameing and Stileing all sorts of Officers, both superior and inferior, which they shall find needfull for the Governement and Plantaçõn of the said Colony, and the distinguishing and setting forth of the severall Dutyes, Powers and Lymitts of every such Office and Place, and the formes of such Oaths, not being contrary to the Lawes and Statutes of this our Realme of England, to bee Administrted for the Execuçõn of the said severall Offices and Places; As alsoe for the disposing and Ordering of the Elecçõn of such of the said Officers as are to bee Annually Chosen, and of such others as shall succeed in case of death or removall, and Administrting the said Oath to the new Eleçted Officers, and

Graunting necessary Comissions, and for imposiçon of lawfull Fines, Mulçts, Imprisonment or other Punishment vpon Offenders and Delinquents, according to the Courſe of other Corporaçons within this our Kingdome of England, and the ſame Lawes, fines, Mulçts and Execuçons to alter, change, revoke, adnull, releafe or Pardon, vnder their Comon Seale, As by the ſaid Generall Aſſembly or the maior part of them ſhall bee thought fitt; And for the directing, ruleing and diſpoſeing of all other matters and things whereby our ſaid people, Inhabitants there, may bee ſoe religiously, peaceably and civilly Governed as their good life and orderly Converſaçon may wynn and invite the Natives of the Country to the knowledge and obedience of the onely true God and Saviour of mankind and the Chriſtian faith, which in our Royall intençons and the Adventurers free profeſſion is the onely and principall end of this Plantaçon; **Williug**, Commanding and requireing, and by theſe preſents, for vs, our heires and Succeſſors, Ordaineing and appointeing That all ſuch Lawes, Statutes and Ordinances, Inſtrucçons, Imposiçons, and Direcçons as ſhall bee ſoe made by the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Aſſiſtants, as aforeſaid, and publiſhed in writeing vnder their Comon Seale, ſhall carefully and duely bee obſerved, kept, performed and putt in execuçon, according to the true intent and meaning of the ſame. **And** theſe our letters Patent, or the Duplicate or Exemplancaçon thereof, ſhall bee to all and every ſuch Officers, Superiors and inferiors, from tyme to tyme for

the Putting of the same Orders, Lawes, Statutes, Ordinances, Instrucçons and Direcçons in due Execuçon, against vs, our heires and Successors, a sufficient warrant and discharge. **And wee doe further,** for vs, our heires and Successors, give and Graunt vnto the said Governor and Company and their Successors, by these presents, That itt shall and may bee lawfull to and for the Cheife Commanders, Góvernors and Officers of the said Company for the tyme being whoe shall bee resident in the parts of New England hereafter mençoned, and others inhabiting there by their leave, admittance, appointment or direcçon, from tyme to tyme and att all tymes hereafter, for their speciall defence and safety, to Assemble, Martiall, Array, and putt in Warlike posture the Inhabitants of the said Colony, and to Commiffionate, Impower and authorise such Person or Persons as they shall thinke fitt to lead and Conduct the said Inhabitants, and to encounter, expulſe, repell and resist by force of Armes, as well by Sea as by land, And alsoe to kill, Slay and destroy, by all fitting wayes, enterprizes and meanes whatsoever, all and every such Person or Persons as shall att any tyme hereafter Attempt or enterprize the destrucçon, invasión, detriment or annoyance of the said Inhabitants or Plantaçon, And to vse and exercise the Law Martiall in such Cafes onely as occassion shall require, And to take or surprize by all wayes and meanes whatsoever, all and every such Person and Persons, with their Shippes, Armour, Ammuñon, and other goods of such as shall in such hostile

manner invade or attempt the defeating of the said Plantacon or the hurt of the said Company and Inhabitants; and vpon iust Causes to invade and destroy the Natives or other Enemyes of the said Colony. **Revertbelesse,** Our Will and pleasure is, And **wee doe** hereby Declare vnto all Christian Kings, Princes and States, That if any Persons which shall hereafter bee of the said Company or Plantacon, or any other, by appointment of the said Governour and Company for the tyme being, shall att any tyme or tymes hereafter Robb or Spoile by Sea or by land, and doe any hurt, violence or vnlawfull hostility to any of the Subiects of vs, our heires or Successors, or any of the Subiects of any Prince or State beinge then in league with vs, our heires or Successors, vpon Complaint of such iniury done to any such Prince or State, or their Subiects, **wee,** our heires and Successors, will make open Proclamacon within any parts of our Realme of England fitt for that purpose, That the Person or Persons committing any such Robbery or Spoile, shall within the tyme lymitted by such Proclamacon, make full restitucon or satisfacccon of all such iniuries done or committed, Soe as the said Prince or others soe complayneing may bee fully satisfified and contented. And if the said Person or Persons whoe shall committ any such Robbery or Spoile shall not make satisfacccon accordingly, within such tyme soe to bee limited, That then itt shall and may bee lawfull for vs, our heires and Successors, to putt such Person or Persons out of our Allegiance and Proteccon. And



that it shall and may bee lawfull and free for all Princes or others to Profecute with hostility such Offenders and every of them, their and every of their Procurers, ayders, Abettors and Councillors in that behalfe. **Provided**, alsoe, and our expresse will and pleasure is, **And wee doe** by these presents for vs, our heires and Successors, Ordeyne and appointe that these presents shall not in any manner hinder any of our loveing Subiects whatsoever to vse and exercise the Trade of Fishing vpon the Coast of New England in America, but they and every or any of them shall have full and free power and liberty to contynue and vse the said Trade of Fishing vpon the said Coast, in any of the Seas therevnto adioyning, or any Armes of the Seas or Salt Water Rivers where they have byn accustomed to Fish, And to build and sett vpon the wast land belonging to the said Colony of Cone&icutt, such Wharfes, Stages and workehouses as shall bee necessary for the Salting, dryeing and keepeing of their Fish to bee taken or gotten vpon that Coast,—any thinge in these presents conteyned to the contrary notwithstanding. **And knowe yee further**, That Wee, of our more abundant grace, certaine knowledge and meere mo&con **have** given, Graunted and Confirmed, And by theis presents, for vs, our heires and Successors, **Doe** give, Graunt and Confirme vnto the said Governor and Company and their Successors, **All** that parte of our Dominions in Newe England in America bounded on the East by Norrogancett River, comonly called Norrogancett Bay, where the said

River falleth into the Sea, and on the North by the lyne of the Maffachusetts Plantacon, and on the South by the Sea, and in longitude as the lyne of the Maffachusetts Colony, runinge from East to West; that is to say, from the said Narragancett Bay on the East to the South Sea on the West parte, with the Islands therevnto adioyneinge, Together with all firme lands, Soyles, Grounds, Havens, Ports, Rivers, Waters, Fishings, Mynes, Myneralls, Precious Stones, Quarries, and all and singuler other Comodities, Iurisdiccons, Royalties, Priviledges, Francheses, Preheminences, and hereditaments whatsoever within the said Tract, Bounds, lands and Islands aforesaid, or to them or any of them belonging, **To have and to hold** the same vnto the said Governor and Company, their Successors and Assignes, for ever vpon Trust and for the vse and benefitt of themselves and their Associates, freemen of the said Colony, their heires and Assignes, **To bee bolden** of vs, our heires and Successors, as of our Manor of East Greenwich, in Free and Comon Soccage, and not in Capite nor by Knights Service, **Yeilding and Payinge** therefore to vs, our heires and Successors, onely the Fifth parte of all the Oare of Gold and Silver which from tyme to tyme and att all tymes hereafter shall bee there gotten, had or obteyned, in lieu of all Services, Dutyes and Demaunds whatsoever, to bee to vs, our heires or Successors, therefore or thereout rendered, made or paid. **And lastly,** Wee doe for vs, our heires, and Successors, Graunt to the said Governor and Company and their Successors, by these

presents, that these our Letters Patent shall bee firme,  
 good and effectually in the lawe to all intents, Construcōns  
 and purposes whatsoever, accordinge to our true intent  
 and meaneing herein before Declared, as shall bee Con-  
 strued, reputed and adiudged most favourable on the  
 behalfe and for the best benefitt and behoofe of the said  
 Governor and Company and their Successors, **Although**  
**expresse mention** of the true yearely value of certeinly  
 of the premises, or of any of them, or of any other Guifts  
 or Graunts by vs or by any of our Progenitors or Pred-  
 ecessors heretofore made to the said Governor and Com-  
 pany of the English Colony of Conecticut in New Eng-  
 land in America aforefaid in theis presents is not made,  
 or <sup>any</sup> Statute, Act, Ordinance, Provision, Proclamaçon or  
 Restricçon heretofore had, made, Enacted, Ordeyned or  
 Provided, or any other matter, Cause or thinge whatso-  
 ever to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.  
**In witness** whereof, we have caused these our Letters to  
 bee made Patent: **witness** our Selfe, att Westminster, the  
 three and Twentieth day of Aprill, in the Fowerteenth  
 yeare of our Reigne.

By writt of Privy Seale.

**Howard.**

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