

I assume from  
Contexts yours 22<sup>nd</sup>. that  
you meant of for my eye only.  
I don't like any concealments from Lewis  
about this business but will not show any -  
- me the letter, without your concurrence.  
J.H.

Confidential

Devonport W.

Sunday Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>. 1897.

My Dear Mr. Clark.

Desiring that you should have my  
answer to yours of 22<sup>nd</sup> inst. <sup>early</sup> I dashed off a hastily  
reply by Saturday's mail, my time was so very limited  
that I fear I failed to say all I should have said, so  
in the quiet of Sunday, am dropping you this.

It was very natural, from our conversation in your  
house on Thursday last, that you should <sup>conclude</sup> that I was  
prepared to fall in with what I call Lewis' pro-  
-gramme, which left him out, & put me into a  
Coalition ministry. But you may recollect, that  
while placing the programme before you as from  
Lewis, I conveyed to you that it was no idea or  
wish of mine. It was merely a possibility; and  
the fear that you might think that I was aiming  
at, or deliberately scheming for the position, led  
me to write you from Parattah, in the very  
emphatic way in which I did, begging you to  
leave me out of any combination. Lewis & myself  
were only desirous of securing a strong Government  
and checking the malcontents, neither of us had

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any personal aims to serve. Only, we saw, as party men, that unless there was a Coalition, we must hold our seats on the Opposition benches. He very generously said provided certain of his party were in the new Govt. he would stand out and follow the new team. I for my part, had no sacrifice to make, as I had declared, that I would not take office, even if the Opposition were, unless under very exceptional and improbable conditions, that is, unless my friends urged me on the plea that my presence was necessary in they could or would form a Government. This month ago, before the present complication, my mind is now finally made up to a particular course for such time as I may remain in our Parliament, and that is, never again under any circumstances whatever to take office. This may surprise you. I have reached that decision since I came home, and I am as confident as I am living, that it is unalterable. My chief reason is a family one, which I am sure you would approve, but one, that I decline naming outside my inner circle. I think I will be more useful in our

House and in the Country, when it is known, that I don't seek office, my opinions will not be subject to the suspicion that they are dictated by a desire for my own political advancement, and as a consequence, will, if sound, be more likely to be adopted. There is just one contingency that could remove this bar to my taking office, but life will have lost its savour for me, when that contingency arises if in my life time.

Since receipt of your letter I have been thinking out the political situation so far as I could. The possibility of Braddon resigning and allowing you to form a ministry, appears to me improbable, if I understand the man. The position would be too humiliating, and would be abandoning his honor, according to his own showing, unless you gave in on the question that has wrecked his government. Either course seems to me improbable, to use a mild word. He won't yield, and you can't. I think that he must fight out Miles amendment, and if beaten, the interesting question is - "who will he advise the Governor to send for?" as you have been the



real cause of the downfall of his Government. He  
won't entertain any friendly feeling for you, or make  
your path easy by advising that you be sent for,  
altho you are the only man in the House I think  
who could secure a majority. If not you, it  
would lie between Miles and Lewis. Miles as  
Premier could - not I should say form a govt.  
and it is doubtful as to Braddon doing that,  
advising that Miles be sent for. If Lewis is  
sent for, he could easily form a government from  
the opposition and cross benches, but I question  
very much if he could command anything  
approaching a majority in the House, and  
I am confident that he would not attempt  
it, unless you joined in a coalition team.  
If you declined to do so, Lewis would throw  
up the task, and it would then fall to you.  
This is all speculation, but reasonable stuff  
I think, and when this reaches you affairs  
at your end may so have ripened as to  
make these all nought. I will wait with much  
interest the development of events next week  
or rather this week, I had overlooked that this  
was the first day

If you take the helm, I trust that you will amend the taxing proposals of Treasurer and enter on progressive policy by connecting our own railway system on the west, with the valuable mines there, and in opening Macquarie harbor to larger vessels, & thus support our own railways against all comers. I must be loyal to Lewis, while I sit with him, yet I trust that I will never be obstructive to you, while I can conscientiously approve of any of your proposals. I shall continue to wage with all the force I can, whatever I think is best for Tassy, and smite wrong doing, no matter by whom. wherever I see it. There is so much sympathy between you and myself, on the larger political questions especially, that I think it highly probable, that you will find me a useful supporter whenever I can with any present political ties aid you.

I saw some of Murray's supporters at his late  
their show is on Wednesday & take Thursday. Mr. M  
usually stays for that. He may do this time.

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The Hon A. J. Clark

Yours faithfully  
Ed Burke