



Why did people go to war in 1642?

Case study 1: 1637-39

The Civil War broke out in 1642, but there were many years of tension leading up to this event. How does this selection of sources from 1637-39 help us to understand why people went to war?



Order by Charles on playing cards & dice, 1638



Complaint about 'ship money', 1639



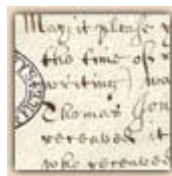
Picture of a protest in Edinburgh, 1637



Announcement from Charles to the Scots, 1639



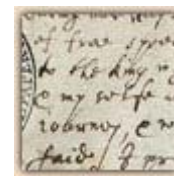
Letter from a man in the army against Scotland



A rude poem, May 1639



Informers' report to Archbishop Laud, 1639



Discussion on the situation with Parliament, 1639

Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 1

A proclamation by Charles I on playing cards and dice, 1638

(Catalogue ref: SP 45/10/212)

What is this source?

This is a royal proclamation (announcement or order) from 1638. Charles was effectively taking control of the trade in playing cards and dice.

The main purpose of a proclamation was to make people aware of a new law or rule. It would be read out in a public place, often the church on Sunday.

What's the background to this source?

Parliaments often gave the king the right to control certain trades. This was usually to make sure that products in a particular trade were safe. Goods that were approved were given the seal of approval. Most trades accepted that they should pay a small fee to get the seal of approval.

Parliament usually gave the king the right to control a trade for a certain number of years. However, the king always controlled some important trades (e.g. the salt trade). Charles took control of many trades during the 1630s. In many cases he sold the control of the trade to one merchant or company, giving them a monopoly (sole control of a trade). Not surprisingly, many other merchants who got left out were upset by Charles's actions.

It's worth knowing that ...

People accepted that kings would try to use regulations like this to raise money, but in the 1630s many people felt Charles was going too far. From 1629-40 he ruled without calling Parliament (the Personal Rule) and instead used measures like this to get the money he needed.

For example, he banned the growing of tobacco except on royal plantations in 1638. He brought in strict laws in 1635 that made people pay fines for swearing and cursing. Many MPs were concerned that Charles was trying to find ways to raise money so that he could rule without ever calling Parliament.

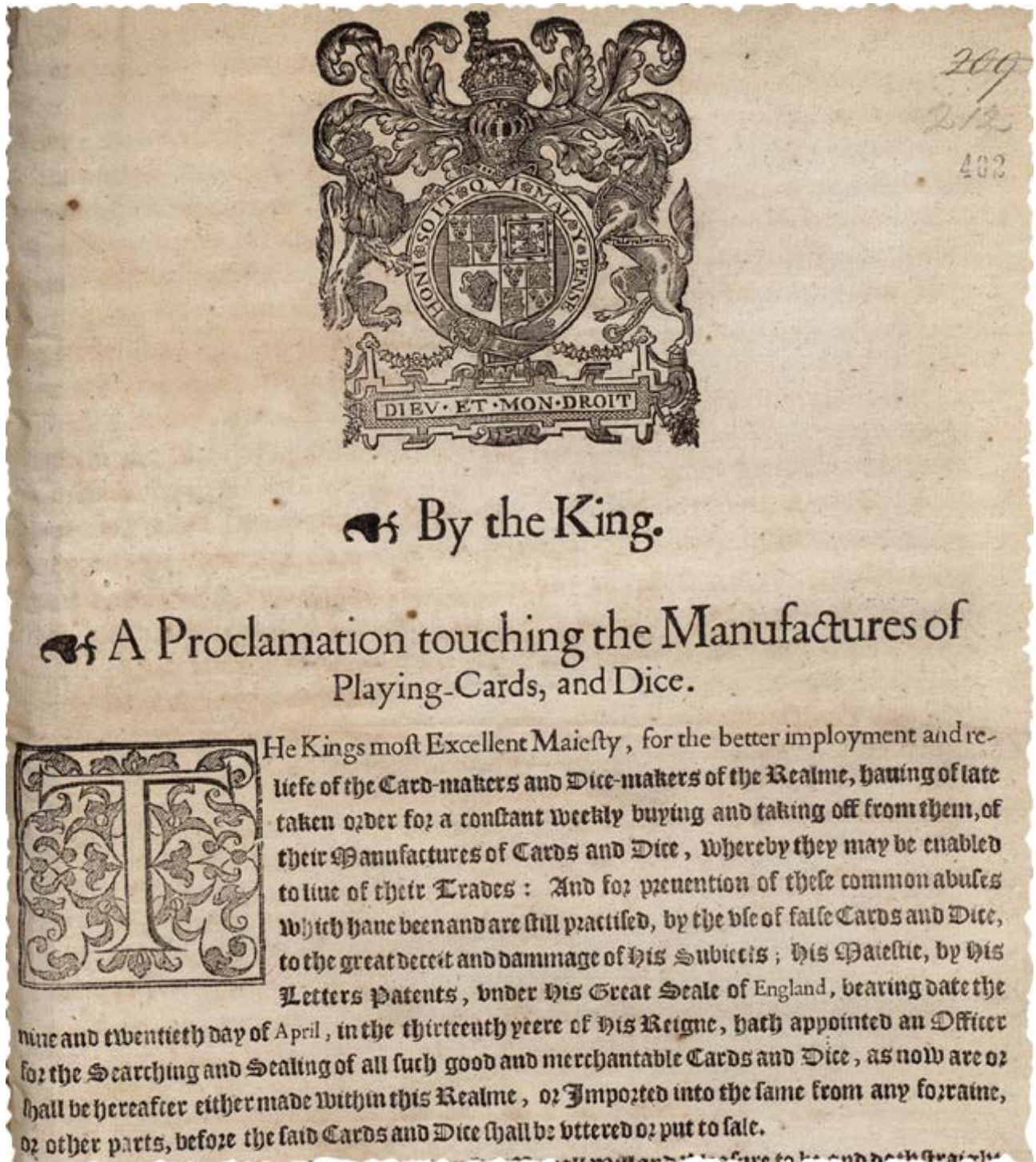


Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. How do we know that this is a genuine royal proclamation?
2. Study source 1a. The king claimed that this regulation was to protect the public from poor quality dice and cards. Do you think the public were really worried about poor quality dice or cards?
3. Study source 1b. What do makers or sellers of cards or dice now have to do?
4. Will it cost them money?
5. People today often complain about having to pay taxes on too many things. Do you think this proclamation would have led to complaints?
6. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 1a





Source 1b

His Maiesty therefore doth hereby declare His Royall Will and Pleasure to be, and doth straightly Charge and Command, That all person or persons whatsoever, aswell Makers of Cards and Dice within the Realme, as Merchants or others, who shall import the same from Forrain or other parts, do from henceforth from time to time, bring the same Cards and Dice to His Maiesties Officer, or his Deputies in London, and other remote places, to be there viewed, examined, and sealed, if they shall be found good and merchantable; paying to His Maiesties said Officer, or his Deputies, vpon the sealing thereof, such allowance and Fee, as by His Maiesties said Letters Patents is appointed in that behalfe.

Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 2

A legal complaint made by Sir Richard Strode about ‘ship money’, August 1639

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/427/32)

What is this source?

This is part of a letter written by Sir Richard Strode. He claimed that ship money (a kind of tax) and other taxes which Charles I raised in the 1630s were illegal.

The letter is one of several documents in the State Papers that complain about ship money. Richard Strode was certainly not alone in his complaint. About 30% of the ship money charged was unpaid by the people.

What’s the background to this source?

Charles I ruled from 1629-40 without calling Parliament. This period was known as the Personal Rule. Kings could not normally go this long without talking to Parliament. They usually ran short of money and new taxes had to be approved by Parliament. However, Charles hated working with MPs. He tried to get the money he needed by collecting taxes like ship money and tallage (a tax on landowners).

Ship money was supposed to be paid by counties near the coast. It was supposed to be paid in times of emergency to raise money for the navy to protect the country. However, from 1635 Charles I started collecting ship money every year. He also started collecting it from all counties, not just coastal counties.

It’s worth knowing that ...

There was a lot of opposition to ship money and other taxes. Richard Strode was a long-term opponent of the tax. He appears in government records in 1631, 1635, 1637 and 1639 complaining about ship money.

Opponents of Charles’s taxes had three main complaints:

They did not like paying the taxes!

They felt Charles was acting illegally by collecting taxes without the approval of Parliament.



They objected to the punishments and fines that were used against Charles's opponents. In most cases, opponents were punished without a trial.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What happened to Richard Strode's cow?
2. Why was Strode upset about it?
3. What is his attitude to being forced to pay the king 'ship money'?
4. Do you think Strode was more concerned about his cow or about the king ignoring Parliament and acting outside the law?
5. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?

Source 2a

...the Paper...
...that whereas it is
enacted 34. Ed. 1. That we take
our oaths shall be layd, or Levyd
by the King, or his Heire, with
out the good will, and assent
of the Lord, and Commony etc.
And whereas 25. Ed. 3. its enacted
that from thenceforth none shall
be compelled to make any Loan
to the King agt his will,



Learning Curve

Civil War



Civil War > Why did people go to war in 1642? > 1637-39

Source 2b

yet notwithstanding con-
 trary to the Law, and Liberty,
 and Row, worth 4. 10. 0. be-
 ing the good of Mr Richard Strode
 of Exmouth in the County of Devon
 full, and unreasonable rates made
 by the Col of the said County
 by Thomas Row a Douglas
 of the said County taken, and
 sold for the Kings Majesty's service
 on 23. Martij last at New-
 ington in the said County
 rates made for the setting
 forth of shipping without con-
 sent in Parliament.
 Rich. Strode

Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 3

An engraving of a protest in Edinburgh in 1637

(By permission of [The British Library](#), E.365 (6))

What is this source?

This picture describes events that happened in Edinburgh in 1637. It shows the reaction of Scottish Protestants when the head of the church in Scotland tried to use a new prayer book for church services.

The picture appeared in a book called 'The sight of ye transactions of these latter years' by John Vicars. The book was a description of what was happening at the time. Today a TV documentary would probably do the job of a book like this.

What's the background to this source?

Throughout the 1630s Charles and his Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, brought changes to the organisation of the church and also to the way people worshipped in church. The Scots did not like Laud's new prayer book or his other ideas. They also disliked an Englishman making decisions about the church in Scotland.

Religion was very important to everyone. In the 1500s England and Scotland had broken away from the Roman Catholic Church and become Protestant countries. In the 1600s there was still a lot of suspicion about Catholics trying to undermine the country. Some hard-line Protestants accused Charles and Laud of making the Church of England too much like the Catholic Church. Some of these hard-line Protestants, known as Puritans in England, had a lot of sympathy for the Scots.

It's worth knowing that ...

In February 1638 Scottish rebels formed themselves into a National Assembly. They signed a Covenant (agreement) banning the new prayer book.

The Covenanters (the rebels who supported the Covenant) then got rid of other changes brought in by Laud. In November they got rid of bishops altogether. Charles would not put up with this challenge to his authority. He took an army to Scotland to crush the rebels.



Unfortunately, he could not beat them. His fight with the Scots dragged on until October 1640.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. Describe the scene as though you were reporting it for a radio broadcast.
2. What is happening?
3. How would you describe the feelings of the crowd?
4. Do you think this was simply a small number of people causing the trouble?
5. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?

Source 3



Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 4

An announcement from Charles to the people of Scotland, May 1639

(Catalogue ref: SP 45/10/225)

What is this source?

This is an extract from a proclamation (announcement or order) made by Charles at Newcastle on 14 May 1639 telling people in Scotland what he wanted them to do. He was trying to end rebellion in Scotland.

Charles was king of England and Scotland. He wanted the English and the Scots to obey the same laws and he wanted the English and Scottish churches to be run the same way.

What's the background to this source?

Charles had been facing rebellion from his subjects in Scotland since 1637. The Scots refused to accept changes that Charles wanted to make to the church in Scotland.

- Throughout the 1630s Charles and his Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, brought changes to the organisation of the church and also to the way people worshipped in church. Charles and Laud wanted to make the clergy, especially bishops, more important and powerful. Many Protestants in England and Scotland disliked these changes.
- In 1637 Charles and Laud tried to force the Scots to accept a new prayer book. The Scots refused. (Religion was a very important issue to everyone in Scotland and England.)
- In February 1638 the Scottish rebels formed themselves into a National Assembly. They signed a Covenant (agreement) banning the new prayer book.
- The Covenanters (rebels who supported the Covenant) then went on to get rid of other changes brought in by Laud. In November they abolished bishops altogether.
- Charles would not put up with this challenge to his authority. In November 1638 Charles raised an army and tried to crush the Scots, but he failed.



It's worth knowing that ...

Charles raised an army to fight the Scots in 1638. By May 1639, when this proclamation was made, Charles did not have enough money to continue the fight. This meant he had to try and reach an agreement with the Scottish rebels.

Although Charles threatened to invade Scotland, he did not have a good enough army to do this. He did not have enough money for a large, well-equipped army. To get the money he needed, he would have to ask his Parliament. However, Charles did not like working with Parliament. He ruled without it from 1629-40. By the time he did call Parliament in 1640, many MPs were anxious to tell the king why they were unhappy about many aspects of his rule. Plus his conflict with the Scots dragged on until October 1640.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What did the king offer the Scots?
2. What did the Scots have to promise in return?
3. How would you describe Charles's attitude towards the Scots?
4. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?
5. Study the notes that support this source.
6. What problems caused the rebellion in Scotland?
7. What other problems did the Scottish rebellion cause for Charles?



Source 4

By the King.



CHARLES by the grace of God, King of ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, FRANCE, and IRELAND, Defender of the Faith, &c.

To all Our loving Subjects whom it shall or may concerne, Greeting. Whereas We are thus farre advanced in Our Royall Person with Our Armie, and the attendance of Our Nobilitie and Sentry of this Kingdome, and intend to be shortly at Our good Towne of Barwicke, with purpose to give Our good people of Scotland all just satisfaction in Parliament, as soone as the present disorders, and tumultuous proceedings of some there, are quieted; and will leave Us a faire way of coming like a gracious King to declare Our good meaning to them. But finding some cause of Impediment, and that this Nation doth apprehend (that contrarie to their professions) there is an intention to invade this Our Kingdome of England. We doe therefore to cleare all doubts, that may breed scruples in the mindes of Our good Subjects of either Kingdome, reiterate this Our just and reall Protestation: That if all civill and tempozall obedience be effectually and timely given and shew unto Us, We doe not intend to invade them with any hostility. But if they shall without Our especiall Authoritie and Command raise any armed Troups, and draw them downe within ten miles of Our Border of England, We shall then interpret that as an Invasion of Our said Kingdome of England, and in that case doe expressly command the Generall of Our Army, and Our superiour Officers of the same, respectibely to proceede against them as Rebels, and Invaders of this Our Kingdome of England, and to the utmost of their power to set upon them and destroy them, In which they shall doe a singular service, both to Our honour and safety.

Given at Our Court at Newcastle the fourteenth day of May, in the fifteenth yeer of Our Reign.

God save the King.



Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 5

Letter from a gentleman called Edward Norgate with Charles's army against Scotland, 4 May 1639

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/420/45)

What is this source?

This is an extract from a letter by Edward Norgate to a friend back in London called Robert Read. Norgate was part of Charles's army against Scotland when he wrote this letter.

Norgate was also a close friend of Charles I.

What's the background to this source?

In 1639 Charles was facing a major rebellion in Scotland. The rebels had signed a Covenant (an agreement) banning the new prayer book brought in by William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. Charles could not put up with this challenge to his authority and had tried to crush the rebellion in 1638, but had failed.

Charles was obsessed by the idea of order and unity. He wanted England and Scotland to be ruled under the same laws. He wanted the English and Scottish churches to be organised the same way and worship the same way. The Scots were not pleased. In 1637 they rejected the new prayer book that Archbishop Laud and Charles wanted them to use. Rebel leaders formed a Scottish National Assembly and signed a Covenant banning Laud's prayer book. Charles first tried to crush the Covenanters. However, by May 1639 he was trying to reach a deal with them.

It's worth knowing that ...

Religion was very important to everyone in the 1600s. The church was a big employer. It was also the centre of social life. Above all, most people wanted to please God and go to Heaven, so they had strong views on how they should worship God.

Both England and Scotland broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and became Protestant in the 1500s. Throughout Europe in the 1600



there were still bloody wars taking place between Catholics and Protestants. Religion was seen as something worth fighting for.

There were also different types of Protestants. Many of the Covenanters were Presbyterians (who were similar to English Puritans).

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What does this source tell us about the relationship between Charles and the Scots in 1639?
2. What did Norgate think of the Scots?
3. According to this letter, which side was being more reasonable?
4. Do you accept this viewpoint?
5. Does this source tell you whether the majority of people in England supported Charles against the Scots?
6. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 5

The King hath bene pleased to send a most gracious
proclamation to the Countenances, containing an abolition
of all, with full pardon due to the greatest delinquent,
so they come in within 10 days, with other particulars
needles to repeat to you that know it better than I.
If there be found but one ounce of honesty, allegiance or
religion in this Shandy, then I doubt not but we
may hope one day to look home wards again, and to
recomend to Lost felicitie.

If yet

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their people remain obstinate, it will be
Patritia Lasa, and Dr. Buferkins with in bred
For never was so good a Souveraign cast away
upon so ill subjects

Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 6

A rude poem sent to Sir John Coke, 4 May 1639

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/420/48)

What is this source?

This report was sent to Sir John Coke in May 1639 by a local judge. Coke was Secretary of State to Charles I.

Judges often sent reports to the king's top officials. In the 1630s the reports were mainly concerned with discovering any evidence of opposition to the king.

What's the background to this source?

In 1639 Charles I's kingdoms were very tense. Charles was facing a major rebellion in Scotland. There was also tension in England. One of the biggest concerns was religion. The Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, was bringing in changes to the English church that some people were against.

During the 1630s Charles and William Laud brought in new types of church services. Charles also gave greater power and wealth to the church. To some Protestants (especially hard-line Protestants, called Puritans), his actions seemed to be making the Church of England more like the Roman Catholic Church. They began to be against Charles.

It's worth knowing that ...

Charles had no time for opponents of his policies.

Charles ordered his officials to look out for people who might oppose him. The person being reported in this source was probably a Puritan who was against the changes that Charles and William Laud were bringing into the church.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What is the judge sending to Coke?



2. Do you think the alehouse keeper and his wife really found the poem in the road?
3. Try to guess - what does this poem mean when it talks about bishops? Which bishop might it be referring to?
4. What does this poem mean when it says: 'we are of great might, we mean to make you a bloody fight'? Who will fight whom?
5. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?

Source 6a

May it please y^e to be advertised that this inclosed note (having the time of receipt indorsed upon it of mine owne hand writing) was deliued to me at Shrewsbury by one Mr. Thomas Jones a young utter barrister living there who receaved it that day of one Tong an Alehouse keeper who receaved it of his wife who upon her examination alledgeth she found it in a common road leading towards Shrewsbury the writer is not yet to be distroubled nor any abbetter thereof Now S^r I being a Justice of peace in the towne and County of Salop and obforbing towards the end of his Ma^ts proclamation against the Scotts that things of that nature are to be sent to one of his Ma^ts Secretaries have according to my duty sent it to y^e hon^{or} and will y^e be willing doe my best endeavor to distroube the Order



Source 6b



Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 7

Report to Archbishop Laud from informers, 31 May 1639

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/422/113)

What is this source?

This is a report to William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, from some of his informers.

Laud had a network across the country that sent him regular reports about what people were saying.

What's the background to this source?

Throughout the 1630s Charles I and William Laud tried to bring changes to the organisation of the church and to the way people worshipped in church. As a result, Laud made many enemies.

Laud punished some of his critics harshly. For example, in 1637 William Prynne, Henry Burton and John Bastwick printed pamphlets attacking Laud. All three men were Puritans. They believed that Laud's changes were making the Protestant Church of England too much like the Catholic Church of Rome. Laud had their ears cut off and their faces branded with a hot iron.

It's worth knowing that ...

Laud and Charles tried to increase the power of the church in England and Scotland. They also wanted everyone to worship in the same way. Both of these things alarmed many Protestants, particularly the hard-line Protestants known as Puritans. On the other hand, many approved of Laud's policies. They just disliked the way he clamped down on free speech and treated his critics badly.

Both England and Scotland split from the Roman Catholic Church in the 1500s and became Protestant. In the 1600s the Protestants were still very suspicious of any changes to their church in case the Protestant Church became too much like the Catholic Church.



Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 8

Report of a discussion between Charles I and Sir Thomas Wilford on the situation with Parliament, 28 May 1639

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/422/65)

What is this source?

This report in the State Papers must have been written by a person at Charles's court in Newcastle, probably a noble loyal to Charles.

The State Papers (now in The National Archives) contain many reports of discussions between the king and his subjects.

What's the background to this source?

In 1639 Charles I was in the north of England facing a major rebellion in Scotland. Wars were very expensive, so Charles was forced to call a Parliament in April 1640 to ask them for money.

British monarchs called Parliament into session. Parliament could agree to taxes to pay for wars. In return, Parliament usually demanded some say in how the war was fought and often brought up other issues as well. However, Charles hated working with Parliament. From 1629-40 he ruled without calling it once. This period was known as the Personal Rule.

It's worth knowing that ...

Although many MPs criticised Charles's policies in the 1630s, many other MPs remained loyal to him. Some stayed neutral if they could, taking neither side (we do not really know exact numbers on each side). Charles didn't like the criticism, so he ended the Parliament in 1640 after a few weeks.

Many MPs, though unhappy about Charles's policies, continued to support him. This was partly out of loyalty. It was partly because they disliked Charles's main critics, the Puritans. It was partly because they believed in Divine Right – that the king was appointed by God.



Learning Curve

Civil War



Civil War > Why did people go to war in 1642? > 1637-39

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. Why do you think Sir Thomas Wilford brought men and horses to Charles I?
2. What was the attitude of Wilford towards Charles?
3. Was he afraid to criticise Charles?
4. What was his advice to Charles?
5. What was his attitude to the MPs who opposed Charles?
6. How useful is this source in telling us how much support Charles had?
7. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?

Source 8

During our stay at Newcastl^e there came to Court one of the same
 the King might please to tell him (in the hearing of divers of his W^{or}ships)
 & my wife among the rest that he had come out of Kent a long journey
 & told him how many men & horses he had brought him, and
 said I pray God we will do well in his business, but said hereof
 like not the beginning, the King asked him why he had chosen
 you go by wrong way to work, the King smiled & asked him what was the right
 way, he answered If you think to make a war, you must see for
 you desire yet false by only way to prosper is to go back and call
 a Parliament & so should hee have no more enough, & do your business handfastly.
 The King replied by your words in the last Parliament all that
 Thomas) but there was no more to be said.