Answered

Portsmouth Janʸ 31ˢᵗ 1793

Dear Sir

In my last I mentioned to you the petition of the Merchants for a New Lighthouse, which is indeed greatly wanted, as the present one though in good repair is insufficient in the height, size of the Lanthorn & construction ever to be very useful. I have often well examined & find it cannot be built upon, & by that means increase the height of Lanthorn — a new one built 20 to 30 feet higher would be seen over Fishers Island & a properly constructed Lanthorn would be seen 16 leagues whereas it is not now seen half that distance. —

This petition I find has been drafted and managed principally by (Ja. S.) a very great antirevenue man — It was strangely and secretly conducted in procuring the Signers — & though I have been recommending this measure (petitioning) for 2 years past — it was with difficulty that I could get sight of it, just at the moment it was inclosing to send on. — The apparent object of this petition, a New Lighthouse, was desireable to every Signer, who put his name to it probably in most instances without reading —

but

but I found in the cursory view I had of it, that the draftsman had also for his object — to reflect on the Superintendancy, and to disconnect it from the Custom House (which accounts for the silent manner in which it was conducted) Although I do not wish to manage it, as it is both a trouble & expence to me — yet I shall always insist that situated as it is, and overlooking every movement in the Harbour, it is proper and necessary it should be connected with the Import Revenue & that the Officer there should be an Officer of the Customs when the establishment is perfected. —

I have been the more particular to you, that you might know the truth in order to prevent any unjust blame resting on, & being imputed to me as Superintendent of this establishment, which seems to have been a principal view of the draftsman of this petition; for which purpose he has introduced things that are not true. — The Light House is in good repair & it has been as well kept since under my care as it was 5 years before & it has had my carefull attention. — The Construction of the Lanthorn will not admit of its being better till some alterations shall be made and the measures now taking for collecting descriptions of the best and

every

every Lighthouse in the United States as well as in Europe will lead to such improvements as will be proper and best to be adopted. — I have the honor to be

My dear Sir, with great truth

Your friend & Mr. & Bt. Servant

S. Whipple

The Hon.ble John Langdon Esquire