Collector's Office
District of Portland and Falmouth,
Portland, November 18th 1829.

Sir:

According to your request in yours of the 14th of September last, I have taken pains to ascertain as nearly as I can what will be the probable necessary expense to erect a Stone Light House and Dwelling House at West Quoddy Head, and a Dwelling House on Seguin Island, both in the State of Maine, and the lowest sums which I think ought to be asked for are, for the Light House and Dwelling House at West Quoddy Head, six thousand dollars, and for the Dwelling House at Seguin, twelve hundred dollars. Stone, fit for use will be difficult to be got at West Quoddy Head, and must be got at considerable expense; and the cellar difficult to be excavated at Seguin. If this can be done for a less sum the money will remain unexpended. I am fully satisfied that it is best to depend entirely on the Cellar as the deposit of the oil. It must be kept there in the winter in this cold climate. — And one great defect in building all the Light Houses, which have been erected in this State, for many years past, is, in building them too large at the bottom, as they must come to about ten feet at the top, the water rests so long on them that it will find its way through the

the walls, and in fact as they are generally built it will run through the walls of almost any of them. Some of them have been laid up with little Mortar in laying the Stone and pointed, and those which have had a sufficient quantity of mortar to lay the Stone in, it is done so late in the season that the mortar freezes before it dries, and entirely destroys all the adhesive quality of the mortar, so that the stones may be taken out of the building, as easy as if no mortar had been used about them. The Light Houses are generally built in situations where it is a great portion of the time damp or wet, and required a long time to dry. I hope hereafter that no Stone work of the kind will be done in this cold climate later than the middle of July, or August at the latest. The Light Houses which were built, a year or two since, on Cape Elizabeth never did dry. They were built so late in the season that the mortar froze, and whenever rain came, it run in amongst the stone and kept it continually wet. The one at Pond Island is worse still. I have been obliged to have considerable repairs made on

that, and more or less on almost the whole of them;
and this will have to be the case yearly, unless it can be
remied by cement. I have had one repaired with cement
to try the experiment: The truth is that the Light Houses
already built give strong evidence of the necessity of having
a man to superintend the building of the Light Houses, &c
who is a thorough workman, and a man of strict
integrity; but such a man cannot be got for the sum
which has been given to those who have been employed, and
it is difficult for the Superintendent of Light Houses to
decide after the work is done, pointed and whitewashed,
whether it ought to be accepted or not. This can only be
known as the work progresses from day to day. There
is also a difficulty in knowing from the Keepers of the
Lights, what repairs are necessary, from time to time, as all
of them are not good judges of what is necessary to be
done. Some of them, probably, from motives of economy, do
not state all that ought to be done, and being neglected
frequently require heavy repairs; others think more must
be done than is really necessary. It is very important

that they should be kept well painted, pointed and whitewashed. The iron rusts very fast, if not kept painted. I am not sure but what it would be economy to select a good judge of what would be necessary to be done, and send the Cutter with him to inspect the whole of the Light-Stations in the State, early in the Spring, and report what is necessary to be done to each establishment. I am not sanguine as to the propriety of the course I make the suggestion for your consideration.

With respect to the Light House to be built on Mount Desert Rock, since writing you on the 19th of October last, Capt. Drinkwater of the Revenue Cutter, has returned from the rock: He informed me that Smith the Contractor was laying up the Walls of the House, without any mortar, and where he had got the walls high enough in spots, was putting on the beams, although the cellar was not entirely excavated, nor the whole of the cellar wall laid up. The Contracts seems to pay no regard to the Contract in doing the work, and as I before stated to you, I do not believe it will be done by him so as to answer any purpose.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
very respectfully,
Your obedient Servant
John Chandler Collector and
Superintendent of Light Houses in Main

Stephen Pleasanton, Esq
5th Auditor of the
Treasury and Acting
Commissioner of the Revenue