Portsmouth N. Hampshire Aug. 3. 1830

Sir,

Your letter of 13th ult. enclosing my account against the United States for disbursments in erecting the foundation of the Light House on the Whale Back, is recived, in which you observe that the 100 dollars charged for copper bolts cannot be allowed, and refer to my letter of 28th of Nov. last, wherein I state that I had "caused the Contractors to bolt every stone with large copper bolts secured with wedges at their own expense"; If you will please again refer to my letter, I think you will see that the bolting to be done at the expense of the Contractors, was in lieu of stone dowels provided for in the Contract - which expense amounting to several hundred dollars they paid. - The Copper bolts for which I charge $100 - were used in securing the lower tier of large stone to the Ledge, for which no provision was made in the Contract - When I first viewed the exposed situation of the Rock on which the Light House was to be erected, and refered to the Contract, (which was prepared by my predecessor,) I was perfectly satisfied that the plan was defective in many respects, particularly in not providing for securing the bottom tier of stone to the ledge - and for the use of stone dowels to connect the remainder of the stone of the foundation together, (which would have been worse than nothing.) - The Contractors were also convinced that it would not answer to follow the Contract in these particulars, and were finally induced to use copper bolts instead of the stone dowels, (and at a greater expence,) provided the Government would secure the lower tier of stone to the ledge in a substantial manner, in the first place - This was done, with extra large & long copper bolts at an expence exceeding 100 dolls, but in settling with the Contractors for the foundation, I finally agreed to allow, and did allow them $100 - This extra expence was incurred for the

safety of the building, and it is the opinion of every person capable of judging, and who witnessed the tremendous Gales of November and March last, (when the sea broke from fifty to sixty feet above the top of the foundation) - that the whole superstructure would have gone away, had it not been for the copper bolts and particularly those used in fastening the large bottom stone to the ledge - You will observe on referring to the contract, that if "the proposed plan should be found defective or insufficient for the purpose intended, the Contractors are to make such additions or alterations as may be required on receiving therefor a reasonable compensation not exceeding the actual expence" - I flatter myself Sir, that on receiving this explanation you will be of opinion that I ought not to lose the $ 100 - but that it is a proper charge to the Government.

In regard to the thirty dollars charged for my expence at sundry times in visiting the Whale Back &c - will only observe that I had an Idea the Commission was compensation for my personal services, and not for expences actually incurred - My frequent personal attendance was required during the erection of the foundation - I could not go five or six miles out to sea, to this Ledge alone, nor without incuring some expence, tis true we had a revenue boat, but no boatmen is attached to her only on special occasions - it was impossible to take vouchers for every shilling I spend - I therefor kept a memo: of expences amounting to the sum charged, and believe on considering the circumstances you will be induced to allow it - When the Light House on White Island was erected, Mr Upham, my predecessor, charged & was allowed for his expences &c in visiting the island to inspect the work. - I herewith enclose a copy of the Contract for erecting a Light House on the Whale Back

I am very respectfully, Your Obt. Servt

John P Decatur

Stephen Pleasonton Esqr
Fifth Auditor Treasury
Commissioner of the Revenue
Washington