Boston October 14th 1840—

Sir,

Your Letter to me under date of August 12th stated that you had authorized, Mr Bancroft to put a New Lantern on Scituate Light house & fit it up with New Lamps & Reflectors & also to put New Lanterns, on the Thacher's island Light houses & fit them up with New Lamps & Reflectors, & had directed him to call on me for proposals, as well as upon Hooper & Co.— September 6th, 24 days after the date of your Letter I received the following.— Sir,

By directions of the Department at Washington I hereby invite you to make proposals to this Office, for furnishing Parabolic Reflectors, of sixteen inch diameter, each to be plated with 12 ounces pure Silver & fourteen inch diameter plated with 9 ounces; finished in a Workmanlike Manner & Made on a Die,— proposals will also be received for furnishing 20 Parabolic Reflectors, 21 inch diameter for Thacher's island Light house, with 14 ounces pure Silver on each; all the Reflectors subject to inspection. — — — — — — — — — — Signed— G. Bancroft.

You will observe, that Mr Bancroft says nothing about Lanterns or Lamps, on the 8th September I gave in my proposals as follows; for the 21 inch Reflector & Lamp $75. 16 inch Reflector $37. 14 inch $30. 14 days after I gave in my terms I called at the Custom House & was informed by Mr Wellman, that my prices were much lower than Mr Hooper's but, that Mr Bancroft had not decided on the proposals; since that, I have heard nothing farther on the subject; I do not know that I ought to have troubled you with this Letter, but there is something mysterious in this business that I cannot solve,— as the season has so far advanced, I conclude nothing will

be done to those Light houses, until next Spring, it is too late to put on New Lanterns & the 21 inch Reflectors cannot be put into the present Lanterns, to any advantage.

It is the first instance in the experience of 29 years that I ever knew, where proposals were invited, that the lowest offer was not at once accepted, where the Competency of the person, making the offer could not be questioned, if Mr Bancroft has come to the Conclusion, not to have the work done to those Light houses until next Spring, common courtesy ought to have induced him to, so inform me, as I felt myself bound to comply with my proposals, without delay.

I have treated Mr Bancroft with respect, since he has been in Office, freely gave him any & every information, relating to Light houses, when he asked it, when he gave all the Light house work to others without asking for my terms, I did not complain, I had no right to, that, was an affair between him & the Department, to whom he is accountable, but in this affair where my proposals had been officially invited & after being informed they were the lowest, then to have no notice taken of them, I must consider myself trifled with & have just cause of complaint, but I will say no more on the subject.

On the 28th September my proposals for fitting up the Light house at White island was accepted by Mr Drown the Superintendent, on the 5th October I wrote him a few lines, stating some of the difficulties, that would occur in fitting up the Light house with 21 inch Reflectors in a Lantern of so limited capacity, on the 8th he wrote me to discontinue farther operations until I heard farther from him, on the 10th I wrote him, a copy of which letter I here enclose.

Since I have been at

leisure, I have been engaged, through the ingenuity of one of my workmen in making an improvement in our Light house Lamps- which I think you will approve, they consume no more Oil than those we have always used & cost but a trifle more, one of which will be sent you, when I send the Reflector back, that I am now making a standard for. I calculate to visit Washington next month after examining the Piers at Port Penn.

I have fully ascertained from experiments I have recently made that the flame of the Lamp extending up beyond the focus of the Reflector does not increase the power of Light produced by the Reflector — the Oil consumed will be in ratio to the length of the blaze; a Carcel Lamp put into a Reflector with a flame four inches high, will not produce a greater light, than the common Light house Lamps with a blaze two inches high but will consume double the quantity of Oil. I am of an opinion that we have a test of this in the Light recently fitted up on Cape Cod with 21 inch Reflectors, the Keeper says, they consume at the rate of 66 Gallons pr year, pr Lamp — the Light proves that it cannot be seen any farther than the common Light house Lamp, put into the same sized Reflector which has here to fore Consumed 30 Gallons pr year; the Lamps at Cape Cod I presume are made with a draft on the Carcel Lamp principle, (but I never saw them) I have made the above remarks to show that the Carcel Lamp is not adapted to the Parabolic Reflectors.

I have the honor to be Sir,
Very Respectfully
Your Obt Servt
Winslow Lewis

Stephen Pleasonton Esqr
Fifth Auditor & Acting
Commissioner of the Revenue
Washington.