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William Panton

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THE PANTON, LESLIE PAPERS
(*William Panton to Governor Folch*)

Pensacola 8th October 1797.

SIR

With a note which I had the honour to receive from You last night dated the 3rd instant You sent me a copy of what the Countadore of this place wrote You the 18th of August, by which I am sorry to observe an effort made to set aside the Rules at first established by the Government of the Provinces, respecting the importation & distribution of the goods which this House imports, and the exports of effects taken in payment, & to substitute other Regulations, which if they were to be established would operate unjustly, & be at the same time oppressive & unnecessary- Unjust because it would be breaking through a fair bargain, made between the Government & ourselves which fixed the mode & stipulated that no duties should hereafter be demanded, & that this House should remain under the same Regulations that then took place & which has existed ever since, as well during the administration of Governor Miro & Governor O'Niell, as under that of The Baron de Carondelet, Mr. Rendon & Governor White, and without the least deviation therefrom-It was also stipulated by said agreement that twelve months previous Notice should be given us to Retire, before any alterations should take place or duties be imposed and it would be acting unjustly to depart from said agreement without allowing us that previous Notice.

It would operate as a tax & be oppressive because it would force us to build a new Magazine & to keep it empty for the accomodation of the Contador & his deputys to Range in every time we have occasion

to pack up a package for Mobile Appalchy or Margot & perhaps every time that Our Indian Factors & Traders have occasion to make up their Packs for the Indian Nation, for there may be no limits to his encroachments if he be permitted to set aside an established Rule; It would give him the Power to open every package on their importation for inspection, and as there is many articles, particularly Woolens, which are liable to be damaged if left long open it would be necessary that we should pack them up fresh and again to open them for his inspection, when wanted at Appalchy & Mobile or Margot and again to pack them before they are shipped All which would necessarily increase the number of our clerks & other dependants and put us to an expense which this Trade cannot support. It is unnecessary to make the proposed Regulations because after all the inconvenience & expense which his plan would occasion to us he could not acquire a more correct account of our foreign importations & exportations than we have Constantly Rendered to him, And what he insinuates to the Contrary is not only illiberal, but ill founded-What we send to Mobille Appalchy & Margot is generally shipt in the same packages, as imported-& on their arrival at those places the officer of the Hasienda examines them to see that the numbers of the Packages are the same as is expressed in the Guia which the Contador Remits along with the goods, & gets a Note of the Contents from our Agent at those places-& as there is no duty payable either here or there, any additional Ceremony would be burthensome & unnecessary.-I therefore solicit with all due respect, that You will take this matter again under Your Consideration & order the Contadore to follow the same Rules as has been practiced heretofore or if You have not

faculty to do this of Yourself I beg of You to Remit a Copy to the Governor Genl. Don Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, & another to Don Juan Ventura Morales the Intendant General in order that they may Consult together on the propriety of consenting to my Request until His Majesty shall order it otherwise to whom I have already passed a Memorial stating, the Misfortunes & inconveniencys which this House labours under & Requiring Relief & if none can be granted I have Resigned the business & as His Majesty's Resolution on this subject will very soon be known those Gentlemen I trust will do me the Justice to let things Continue as before until His Royal pleasure is made publick. You very well know how slender the foundation is for making those alterations-No greater than the simple omission in the Manifest of three pipes of Taffia & a few carrots of Tobacco which went by the Kings Schooner to Appalachy! that, & a Bale of Strouds which at another time had been, through the hurry of business for got to be shipped is all the mistakes which has happened during a Residence of Twelve Years.

You may attach to this Refusal & Correctness of our Manifests What ever Responsibility You please, for I do not suspect that any advantage can be taken of an undesigned Error in making out a Manifest-but I Require to be Relieved from the Molestation of Marines Plan which no Consideration will induce me to submit to-This answers Yours of the 3rd Instant & 17th August & wishing God to preserve You in His Holy Keeping.

I Remain

Sir

Your most Obed. Servt.

WILLIAM PANTON.

draught of my Letter to
Mr. Folch of the 8th of October 1797
being an answer to His Offices of 3d Oct.
