

Convicts they import from £8 to £20 S^s each, which People here think a pretty good Premium for their Passage, & hope M^r Steuart would have no cause to complain of a hard Bargain tho he was to receive none of the Bounty that is allowed by Act of Parliament for transporting Felons from England to these Plantations. In Pens^a & some of the Islands they imposed £5 p poll on them, & obliged the Purchasers to give Security for their good Behaviour; I shall be glad to hear therefore that M^r Steuart is content to pay £1 for four or five years, when the Act will expire, on Condition there be no additional Duty imposed on them. In fact the Twenty Shillings of which M^r Steuart complains is paid by the purchaser to whom the Contractor's Factors sell the Convicts accordingly; but if 'twould be more agreeable I imagine the Lower House might be prevailed on to take the Duty off the Importer & lay it on the purchaser. It is the Opinion of our Lawyers as it was the Intention of the Assembly that the Naval Officers are obliged by their Oath & the words of the Act to demand the Duty of Twenty Shillings on every Convict that is imported & sold as a Servant for Seven Years, & if you please to recur to the Account of Importations you will see that from that Duty will arise a great part of the money that is to sink the £6000. that was granted by that Act; so that if that part of the Act was to be rejected, the Ordinary Lycences will stand Mortgaged for 3 or 4 years longer than they are (if the Act stands as it is) at present engaged for. I have left Nothing undone to get the Mannours platted as you desire returned me, but have not been yet able to get them all, however I hope to have them soon when they shall be properly entered in one Book & transmitted by the first Opportunity. Your Scheme for collecting the Rents by the Sheriffs we are now putting in execution, I have engaged all the Sheriffs on this Side the Bay to farm at 10 p^r C^t & they are now executing proper Indentures for that purpose & Col^o Lloyd is doing the same on the Eastern Shore but as there are some Tracts of uncultivated Land in two or three Counties whose Owners are not in the Country, I hope His Ldp or You will not insist on the Sheriffs paying the Rents of them as they are not actually to be obtained. You shall receive a List of all such Lands by a speedy Conveyance & an Account how they are circumstanced, the Rents of them will not amount to any considerable Sum, but whatever it be, the Lands will be charged therewith in the Agents Books, that His Ldp might recover the Arrears when the Lands shall become occupied or are sold. The Disputes concerning the Divisional Lines between His Ldp's Province & the Delaware Counties as well as the Incorrectness of the Rent Roll has been the Occasion that long Arrears are due on some

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