

ers to relieve themselves from it. By the Laws of this Province all Vessels owned by & properly belonging to Residents are exempted from the payment thereof & the Naval Officers are also forbid to take more than half Fees on such Vessels, the Petitioners may if they please find enough of these at their Service. Our mariners will be then employed, our Provisions vended, & the Province might receive some Benefit from this Trade tho the Lord Proprietary & his Governor should not. But not to dwell on this the last Clause of the Petition does itself suggest the strongest Argument not only agst our lightening their Burthens with regard to this Commodity but really for encreasing them: It seems that great Part of the Pig Iron made in this Province is exported from & our Bar Iron sold in Virg^a & the Petitioners tell us that their Officers of the Customs never demand Tonnage on any Vessel that is employed in bringing thither such Iron from Maryland. whether the Maryland Vessels that are engaged in that Service are excused paying any Duty there is nothing to the Ld Baltimore or his Gover^r but to pass over that, & to consider what they alledge as an Indulgence to this Province. What do these Gentlemen ask in Return for the favour. No less than this, that since they do not charge Us for our manufactured Goods which they cannot do without & which would cost them more in proportion to the Imposition that should be laid thereon We will not charge them for our unmanufactured Goods which they want to manufacture to our Prejudice. The Reason why we send our Pig Iron to Virg^a for Exportation to Great Britain is that we have not Shipping enough amongst Ourselves to take it away & if the Petitioners & other Adventurers in Virg^a should by our Indulgence be enabled to supply the Virg^a Ships with as much Pig Iron as they may want for Ballast what Channel shall we find to convey all ours home, at present we can freight it by the Way of Virg^a almost as cheap as from this Province but if the Petitioners were to succeed we should soon find the Case altered. With respect to what they advance about the Virginians purchasing their Bar Iron at this time from Maryland I shall only say that from their doing so Maryland receives great Advantage, the greater their Demand is the greater will be our Gain, but the more they are enabled to make themselves the less shall we sell them. It is therefore our Interest to discourage their present Manufactory rather than to encrease it, & I am accordingly of opinion that the Petition should be rejected. If His Ldp thinks otherwise or shall be inclined to favour the Gentlemen's Request be pleased to advise me thereof that I may signify His Ldp's Pleasure to the Naval Officers, till I receive your Letter the Petition will lye & I shall avoid giving any answer to the Person by whom it was presented &c.

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