

[Gov. Johnson to Laurens.]

C. C.

Baltimore 19th Jan^y 1778.

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Sir.

Your Favor of the 12th Ins^t was delivered to me last Friday, I received a Letter also at the same Time, from Mess^{rs} Samuel & Robert Purveyance informing me that they had good Reason to believe that M^r Governere of Curasoa was part Owner of the Sloop & Cargoe, and that the Captain was retailing the Salt in very small Quantities at £15 p^r Bushel and would not sell it to Ingrossers. Before the Receipt of your Letter, I had been advised by M^r Van Bibber, of the Arrival of this Vessel, that this was her third Voyage and that the Captain, in a former one, refused to sell in Gross and had retailed his Salt at a lower Price than he had been offered for it in large Quantities. The Council and myself thought it best that Enquiry should be made, as to the Property of the Vessel and Cargoe and that, unless the Owners were real Enemies, a Purchase would be much more eligible than a Seizure, especially, as the Scarcity of Salt is not now so great as the Congress seems to have apprehended and I willingly, came here with that View. The inclosed Affidavit and correspondent verbal Information from several of the trading Gentlemen in Town is the Result of my Enquiry. M^r Beakman is known to some of the trading Men here, and has, as I am informed by them and others, been always esteemed, not only a firm but a suffering Whig; what Connexions he has had here, seems to have been with those who are Whigs. The Captain says, that he was employed in the Service of the Congress from New York to Curasoa with a Cargoe, in this Vessel, to make Remittance for Powder sent to New York by M^r Governere, and that M^r Beakman offered her Cargoe of Salt last year to M^r P. Levingston for the Use of the Congress, at two thirds the Price it was sold for at Egg Harbour. Seeing no Circumstance against M^r Beakman but what ought to be equally decisive against every Body else now in Philadelphia, I have forbore to make any Seizure of the Salt, on an Assurance, which I have no Doubt will be kept, that the Congress may have it, if they please, at the common selling Price, which is now 15[£] a Bushel, 1000 Bushels at least, will be reserved for an Answer. One M^r John Davis since I began this Letter came in and offered me 200 Bushels, just brought up at £14 a Bushel. M^r William Lux & others have a late Arrival at South Key North Carolina and will engage to deliver 1000 Bushels here as soon as possible, they expect one Half of it within a Fortnight at 13[£] p^r Bushel. There have been several late Arrivals in North Carolina, Virginia, and in the Inlets on the Eastern Shore, amongst the latter