

‘ represented to the Governor of Jucatan,  
 ‘ who, in all transactions, has ever behaved  
 ‘ with the utmost civility and justice to the  
 ‘ British subjects, and, as far as in his power,  
 ‘ discouraged the desertion of the slaves. His  
 ‘ answer to my letter on that subject I have  
 ‘ the honour to inclose for their Lordships’  
 ‘ perusal, and flatter myself they will ap-  
 ‘ prove of the steps I took in endeavouring,  
 ‘ all in my power, that the effects of the  
 ‘ Spanish ship might be restored to the pro-  
 ‘ prietors.’

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‘ TO PHILIP STEPHENS, ESQ.

‘ Jamaica, March 12, 1774.

‘ I cannot help taking notice to their Lord-  
 ‘ ships, from the many observations I have  
 ‘ made since my command on this station,  
 ‘ that however advantageous the three free  
 ‘ ports in this island may be thought, I am  
 ‘ sure the allowing French vessels to resort to  
 ‘ so many ports of this island has, in my opi-  
 ‘ nion, been extremely detrimental to the  
 ‘ public service. My reasons are as follow:

‘ Before the Act of Parliament passed for  
‘ making Kingston, St. Lucie, and Savannah  
‘ la Mer, free ports, this island had near one  
‘ hundred sail of sloops belonging thereto,  
‘ employed in carrying the manufactures of  
‘ Great Britain to the Spanish main, and to  
‘ the Spanish and French islands. Their re-  
‘ turn was generally silver and mules from  
‘ the Spaniards, and from the French cotton,  
‘ indigo, and gold. The consequence of this  
‘ commerce was, the employing a number of  
‘ English seamen and vessels, by which means  
‘ a great number of experienced pilots were  
‘ obtained, capable of conducting any enter-  
‘ prise that might be undertaken in this part  
‘ of the world. It is with infinite concern  
‘ that I must now acquaint their Lordships  
‘ that the commerce by British bottoms has  
‘ totally ceased, and not one single pilot can  
‘ now be obtained in Jamaica capable of con-  
‘ ducting any of his Majesty’s ships to any  
‘ part of the Spanish main, or to the Spanish  
‘ and French islands, the few pilots that are  
‘ now employed being the masters of the ships  
‘ of war that have been employed on this  
‘ station. Their Lordships will judge by this

‘ what difficulties a commanding officer here  
 ‘ will have to struggle with, in case of a future  
 ‘ war, and with what facility the French will  
 ‘ disturb the tranquillity of Jamaica, from  
 ‘ their being perfectly acquainted with every  
 ‘ creek and harbour thereof, and from the  
 ‘ number of their seamen employed in these  
 ‘ seas since the Free Port Act.

‘ The constant resort of French ships to  
 ‘ the coast of this island, under the pretence  
 ‘ of their being bound to one of the free ports,  
 ‘ gives them an opportunity of smuggling an  
 ‘ amazing quantity of the manufactures of  
 ‘ France, to the detriment of Great Britain,  
 ‘ particularly brandy, soaps, silks, wines,  
 ‘ stockings, hats, &c. &c. &c., which is too  
 ‘ much encouraged by the inhabitants on the  
 ‘ coast, and particularly by the Jews, who  
 ‘ carry on a most pernicious commerce, and  
 ‘ employ vessels which at St. Domingo are  
 ‘ French, at Jamaica English; and notwith-  
 ‘ standing, upon the application of the offi-  
 ‘ cers of his Majesty’s revenue here, I had  
 ‘ given orders to seize and deliver into the  
 ‘ custody of the collector of his Majesty’s  
 ‘ customs such vessels as should be detected

‘ in such illicit practices, and some having  
‘ been seized with contraband goods on board,  
‘ and delivered to the said collector, they have  
‘ made the pretence that sea-officers were not  
‘ properly authorised to make seizures, and in  
‘ order to save those officers from prosecution  
‘ the delinquents have escaped.

‘ I, therefore, humbly presume to recom-  
‘ mend to their Lordships’ consideration, whe-  
‘ ther it will not in a great measure prevent  
‘ the manufactures of France being run into  
‘ the island, if the officers of the squadron  
‘ here were allowed to have proper depu-  
‘ tations.

‘ I must now take notice to their Lordships,  
‘ that since the free port Act took place, few  
‘ Spaniards have taken the benefit thereof,  
‘ the court of Spain having given the strictest  
‘ orders to their governors in this part of the  
‘ world, to be more attentive, and to arm more  
‘ guardacostas than before that act passed ;  
‘ and I have it from the Spanish merchants  
‘ themselves, that it would be more for their  
‘ advantage if they were only permitted to  
‘ trade in the manner as practised formerly.  
‘ The public liberty given to all Spanish ves-

‘ vessels to trade to the three free ports in Ja-  
‘ maica, has been the means of lining the Spa-  
‘ nish coast with custom-house officers, which  
‘ practice will, in all probability, be continued  
‘ while that public act subsists. I do not pre-  
‘ tend to be a proper judge of the advantages  
‘ accruing from a free port. If such a mea-  
‘ sure is thought proper to be carried into  
‘ effect, the town of Kingston is, in my  
‘ opinion, best calculated for the purpose;  
‘ Savanna la Mer and St. Lucie being at the  
‘ lee end of the island, give frequent oppor-  
‘ tunities to the smugglers to land their car-  
‘ goes before they get the length of these  
‘ ports. Were the free port confined to  
‘ Kingston only, they could have no excuse for  
‘ being found on the north side or the lee end  
‘ of the island, and a cruiser being stationed  
‘ off the east end would prevent their landing  
‘ any part of their cargo before their arrival at  
‘ Kingston.

‘ If I am mistaken in my notions, I hope  
‘ their Lordships will attribute it to my eager  
‘ desire of promoting the trade and manufac-  
‘ tures of Great Britain, and my seeing with  
‘ concern the French employing so many

‘ small trading vessels in this part of the  
‘ world, whose seamen, in case of a war, when  
‘ employed in their small privateers, would  
‘ prove more detrimental to the commerce of  
‘ England than the whole fleet of France.’

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‘ TO THE EARL OF SANDWICH.

‘ Jamaica, June 28th, 1774.

‘ Yesterday Admiral Gayton arrived here, by  
‘ whom I was favoured with your Lordship’s  
‘ letter of the 24th of April, and I cannot suf-  
‘ ficiently express how much I feel the kind  
‘ part your Lordship has taken, that I might  
‘ succeed to some government. I have reason  
‘ to think, by a letter I have received from  
‘ Lord Dartmouth, that that event is far dis-  
‘ tant. Though his letter has no date, I con-  
‘ ceive that it was written in March. Inclosed  
‘ I have the honour to send you a copy  
‘ thereof, and to thank your Lordship for per-  
‘ mitting me to remain in this country, which  
‘ I can by no means think of doing, as none  
‘ of my friends have given me the least hint  
‘ by Admiral Gayton, that the government of