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Title: Letter from James Buchanan to David Myerle

Date: September 2, 1850

Location: MC 1998.10, B2, F25

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Wheatland, near Lancaster, 2 September 1850.

Dear Sir /

I have received your favor of the 26th ultimo, together with the reports of the Naval Committee of the House recommending an appropriation of \$30,000 in your favor.

I have retired from public life, probably forever; & feel a natural reticence to the utterance of my opinions upon Congress in regard to any questions pending before them. I cannot doubt, however, that they will do you justice.

Whilst I was a member of the House of Representatives, (the year I do not recollect,) deeply impressed with the importance of having a ^{domestic} supply of water rotted hemp for our Navy & Commercial Marine, I induced a respectable farmer in this County, to undertake the task of water rotting a ton of the article. This was done; & it was forwarded to the Navy agent at Philadelphia by the late Mr. Southard then ^{then} direction of the Secretary of the Navy. After its quality had been fully tested, it was pronounced equal to the best Russian hemp & the owner was paid for it at this rate by the Department. The experiment fully ascertained that the American was equal to the foreign article; but there it ended. The farmers of this County could not be prevailed upon to adopt or continue the practice of water rotting.

When you undertook the task of instructing the hemp-growers
in the West the art of water-rolling hemp in such a manner
as to render it a healthy employment & had entered into a
contract with the Secretary of the Navy to furnish the Department
with a quantity of this article, I felt a lively interest in your
success. This induced ^{me} to watch your progress with much
solicitude. I had many conversations with you on the subject.
The result of your labors has been a great benefit to the Country.
We now have an ample supply of an article necessary for
self defence; whilst its cultivation has been ^{& will continue to be} a source of
profit to many of our agriculturists.

Without your agency, the object would doubtless have
been eventually accomplished; but your efforts have hastened
the time & thus have greatly benefited the Country.

David Myrtle Esquire

Yours very respectfully,
James Buchanan

Wheatland, near Lancaster, 2 September 1850.

Dear Sir/

I have received yours ~~favor~~ of the 26th. ultimo, together with the report of the Naval Committee of the House, recommending an appropriation of \$30.000 in your favor.

I have retired from public life, probably forever; & feel a natural reluctance to the obtrusion of my opinions upon Congress in regard to many questions pending before them. I cannot doubt, however, that they will do you justice.

Whilst I was a member of the House of Representatives, (the year I do not recollect,) deeply impressed with the importance of having a domestic supply of water rolled hemp for our navy & commercial marine, I induced a respectable farmer in this County to undertake the task of water rolling a ton of the article. This was done; and forwarded to the Navy agent at Philadelphia by direction of the late Mr. Southard then the Secretary of the Navy. After its quality had been fully tested, it was pronounced equal to the best Russia hemp & the owner was paid for it at this rate by the Department. The experiment fully ascertained that the American was equal the foreign article; but there it ended. The farmers of this County could not be prevailed upon the adopt or continue the practice of water rolling.

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When you undertook the task of instructing the hemp growers in the West the art of water-rolling hemp in such a manner as to render it a healthy employment & had entered into a contract with the Secretary of the Navy to furnish the Department with a quantity of the article, I felt a lively interest in your success. This induced me to watch your progress with much solicitude. I had many conversations with you on the subject. The result of your labors has been a great benefit to the Country. We now have an ample supply of an article necessary for self defence; whilst its cultivation has been & will continue to be a source of profit to many of our agriculturalists.

Without your agency, the object would doubtless have been eventually accomplished, but your efforts have hastened the time & thus greatly benefited the Country.

Yours very respectfully
James Buchanan

David Myerle Esquire