

[Cross]

One Cuartillo

[Stamp] Fourth Stamp, One Cuartillo

One Cuartillo Year of One Thousand Seven

[Stamp] Hundred Twenty-four.

Most Excellent Sir:

We, the prior and consules of the university of merchants of this New Spain and the warehouse keepers of this city, speaking [for themselves and] in behalf of the rest of the citizens and merchants, humbly make the following statement:

The news exhilarating to the spirits, which had been brought to these dominions by the advice boat was being uniformly celebrated with unusual rejoicing, [that is to say the news of] the prosperity of our Catholic rulers and the preliminary settlements concerning the government, which assured the greatest tranquility. [However] these rejoicings were cut short because of the preparation for the quick-silver ships [azogues] with which [people] were occupied the current year and because of the precautions with reference to the fleet [which] would follow the next [year].

Moreover the merchants by their clamors encourage the consulado to make a report to His Majesty with the most punctilious care to the end that they may escape the

calamities that the latter decision is going to cause. Inasmuch as the reasons in defense of their petition are so worthy of attention and [the reasons] for authorization [of their petition] by such a wise and lofty opinion [acuerdo] are so plain to Your Excellency's sense of justice, [therefore] the consulado is imploring the attention of His Majesty, and is giving authentic information with actual and undeniable facts as to the consequences [of said decision].

Excellent Sir, the trade of this kingdom is in the deplorable condition which we brought to the attention of Your Excellency's sense of justice and [likewise to the attention] of His Majesty--may God guard him--in a memorial on the question of the introduction of goods into the interior by the English, dated October the seventeenth of the past [pasado] year, seventeen hundred twenty-three. Not only [does the said deplorable condition obtain], but also each day the wealth of the merchants has continued to decrease, their [business] negotiations are suspended, ^{lv} //their funds dissipated and their businesses ruined. The principal and moving cause of these sad occurrences is the continuous introduction of merchandise in such abundance and plenty that with dispatches [of the fleet] coming one upon the other [atropellandose], the happening [hitherto] unheard of in these climes has come to pass: [namely], the total suspension of trade. There is none who sells, none who buys; nor is there anyone who lends money or

gives patronage. All the citizens of the kingdom have their warehouses full of goods sufficient for many years. Those who owe do not pay. Every day, more and more, do the calamities increase; the bankruptcies of the merchants are doubled; first some, then others, suffer. One beholds nothing but disaster, so that all are plunged into a state of consternation and each is in constant fear that his own ruin will come next.

On the arrival of the fleet which is now returning, and which brought not merely the three thousand toneladas of merchandise we mentioned in the cited memorial, but more than seven thousand--and of the seven thousand, the greater part high-priced goods--the tribulations of both merchant bodies continued.

As to much, or rather the greater part of the goods, from Spain, some being compelled to sell in accordance with the orders of the interested parties, sold what they could at prices so low that the item was probably rare on which the price was above the principal and expenses; and frequently the owners would scarcely recover their capital, thereby undoubtedly suffering considerable losses. Others remained in the kingdom, either because they were unable to sell by the time for the dispatch of the fleet, or because they were persuaded that in remaining they would never be overtaken by more adverse fortune than had already overtaken them. Furthermore, they would be freed from the

ruin [experienced by] those who left, of which--judging from the sales they made--they had no doubt.

It is certain that in order to sell even the proportion of [the cargo of] the fleet [that was sold], the greatest effort was expended on the part of all the inhabitants of these provinces. Such a great number as came in from the outside has scarcely been witnessed in the case of any other dispatches. They laid in at will a supply of everything they needed for many years. They found very suitable to their purposes the opportunity afforded them by the desire of the flotistas to sell; they used on their accounts not only their own funds--if there were any who possessed [funds]--but also the allowances [porciones] they had brought to pay those furnishing them supplies [aviadores], citizens of this city, who needed to be paid the debts that were due [de plazos cumplidos], and [who] because of these retentions in a time of such scarcity, found themselves staggering under their obligations. Many--as is well known--did fail entirely [to meet] the demands of their creditors [creditos], and thus, because of the ties binding merchants to each other, many suffered. Not even the [members] of the merchant body of Spain who obtained many of said allowances [porciones] were exempted from this ruin; [for] although the buyers have gone home //²fully supplied, neither for credit, nor for cash, nor in any manner whatsoever, is

there even the hope of selling at any price what they have on hand.

The previously mentioned persons belonging to the fleet, who remained, affirm [the foregoing statement] to be an unquestionable fact. Likewise it is certain that at present the majority would like to sell their merchandise even at the prices current at the time of the dispatch [of the fleet]. However they do not get them because nothing is scarcer than pesos or more abundant than merchandise. Consequently, the spirits of the [merchants] of this kingdom are so sorrowful [compunjidos], and so wounded that they now lack energy either to go in debt themselves or to let anyone go in debt to them [contraer dependencias activas o pasivas].

The quicksilver ships are expected. [Furthermore], many, inasmuch as they have bought produce [which will be brought] on the fleet, are already contemplating the bankruptcy its arrival will make inevitable. Those having other kinds of merchandise [on it] foresee what will happen immediately thereafter since the intervening time is not sufficient for the consumption of [the merchandise] already on hand, even should [the time] be prolonged. [Therefore], all are trying to sell; there are no purchasers, while the opposite [is true] of venders. Debts and credits [dependencias] are in confusion [se atropellan]; and in avoiding

the rock, men are falling over the precipice.

C. L. W. H. 1

The mines produce silver, but they are not supplied with commodities except in exchange for the silver itself. [The silver for supplies, would be very greatly decreased, indeed, with the efforts made in behalf of the dispatches so close at hand, there is even a lack of money for the greatest necessities. [Consequently, the supplies furnished the miners by the merchants are insufficient in comparison with the stores they need, to such an extent that the number of miners is reduced. The sacas and the extractions of the silver and [other, metals are [therefore, meager; the number of, workmen and laborers is in proportion to the means of living; the consumption of goods is in the same proportion; and the immediate sequel is the great losses to His Majesty's treasuries, whose fifths and tenths are [as a result, much less than if the supplies were as liberal as they have been in the past, [the losses, being extended to all the other taxes paid by the merchants. Let all this be attested by the royal treasuries and their ministers, the Mint and all the other channels whereby are gathered the treasures of this America. [Let it likewise be attested, by the exigencies that crush Your Excellency's extremely careful plan [arbitrio, for payments to presidios and to the armada. [Furthermore, although this toil [pension, may be equally [incumbent, upon all, the merchant bodies are not exempted from the greater

part of the trouble, since everything depends upon their support.

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 The foregoing declarations are sufficient when examined in the light of a particular experience, for the belief that if the fleet should come in seventeen hundred twenty-five, with its coming would be enacted the last episode--the ruin of the inhabitants of these kingdoms. However the losses that threaten are even more extensive and in many cases irrecoverable; [for,] the navigators and merchants of Spain would likewise suffer, and the factories of their districts would be the most greatly ^{2v}//injured. Moreover, even in view of the low prices at which their goods are being, and [more,] especially have been, sold, should they be able to get rid of them, [still,] the foreign goods would not produce sufficient to pay cost. [Thus,] a chaos of irremediable confusion would result.

In view of all these things, which we believe were openly declared to His Majesty by the merchant body of Andalucia, we beg Your Excellency to be kind enough to report to His Majesty --may God guard him--with regard to the truthfulness of these facts whatever Your Excellency may deem proper.

[Moreover,] before His Royal Catholic Person we solemnly protest that we come imploring that orders be given postponing the departure of the fleet until seventeen hundred twenty-six in order that the merchant bodies may to some degree recover. This postponement should be solemnly affirmed by royal rescript

at the earliest opportunity, which rescript should be published. Even in this case, the agreement relative to the ship's burden of the future fleet, should reduce that burden, as compared with former fleets until the great stores of merchandise on hand can be disposed of. Expecting, as we do expect, to experience the continuation of the consequences of His Majesty's paternal kindness and likewise the consequences, of Your Excellency's sense of justice to which your natural inclination, favorable to the royal service and the good of the towns under your government, incites Your Excellency, we do swear that we are acting, from necessity, etc.

Francisco de Ugarte ^{co} Fran. Franco Sotto ^{co} Fran. de Fagoaga
 [Rubric] [Rubric] [Rubric]

Ju. Luis de Baeza ^o Dom. de la Canal ^o Juan Bap. de Arozqueta ^a
 [Rubric] [Rubric] [Rubric]

Nicolas de Eguira ^a
 [Rubric]

Ju. Ygnacio de la Vega y Ssotoma. ^{or} Fran. Antt. San. de Tagle ^{co} ^o ^{ez}
 [Rubric] [Rubric]

Gaspar Garzia de Riuro Miguel de Amassorrain
 [Rubric] [Rubric]

1724

^o
Ygn. de Merzero Yriarte Juan de Torres

{Rubric,}

{Rubric,}

Nicolas de Uria(s?) Fran. ^{co} Pablo Martz. fernz.

{Rubric,}

{Rubric,}

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//Pedro de Carbajal Machado Josseph Antt. ^o de leyza

{Rubric,}

{Rubric,}

Josseph de Aguirre Domingo Matheos

{Rubric,}

{Rubric,}

^{do}
Ber. de Marriattegui

{Rubric,}

{D.S.,}

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One Cuartillo

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I, Manuel Ximenes Benjumea, notary of our lord the king, citizen of this city of Mexico and deputy of Don Luis Fernandez Mantilla, [the] secretary of His Majesty and chief clerk [escribano mayor] of the royal tribunal of the consulado of these kingdoms, do certify to, attest and affirm as the truth that His Excellency, the Marquis de Casafuerte, viceroy of this kingdom, was pleased to issue a decree on August the twenty-third of this year.

[In said decree, [His Excellency, stated that he had royal orders to remit to Havana funds and supplies to maintain eighteen warships and a force of three thousand men which His Majesty was pleased to command to be gathered together there in readiness to go wherever the English or other foreign power might attempt an operation in America. Furthermore the difficulty--due to the scarcity of funds in the royal treasury--in the way of giving prompt assistance with the necessary means to the afore-mentioned forces is well-known. However, despite [this difficulty, His Excellency was taking the most active measures to facilitate [the matter], it being his purpose to comply with His Majesty's command. Furthermore he was taking into consideration [the fact, that on the maintenance

of said ships and troops depended not only the security of America but the preservation of the wealth of the merchant bodies. Moreover, equally well-known are the straitened circumstances in which Spain found herself when threatened, as she, now, is, by an inopportune war. His Majesty, desiring to avoid war, and to appose the designs of the enemy so that he might give tranquility to his subjects and maintain an unembarrassed commerce with these dominions, gave command in a special order that without loss of a single instant His Excellency should remit to Spain one million pesos availing himself to that end of every means ad vitrios; arbitrios, conceivable.

Therefore, in view of this command, and in consideration of the merciful purpose of His Majesty, His Excellency, was ordering the sargento mayor, Don Juan Ygnacio de la Vega y Sotomaior, prior of the royal tribunal of the consulado of these kingdoms, and, Colonel Don Juan Gutierrez Rubin de Zelis of the order of ^{St. James} ~~Santiago~~ and Captain Don Gaspar Garcia del Rivero, consules of the consulado, as soon as they received said decree, to convoke a general junta of the merchant body; for His Excellency, bore in mind the loyalty, zeal and honor with which, as faithful subjects, the merchant body of this kingdom had given proof of itself in other ^{2v} like exigencies. It had, in those exigencies, come to the help of His Majesty in his very great need, and, he expected

that it would do so on the present occasion.

In attendance [upon this junta] would be Dr. Don Pedro Malo de Villaviscencio, knight of the Order of Calatrava, of the council of His Majesty, his judge in the royal audiencia of this court and at present, appellate judge of said royal tribunal. The purpose [of his attendance] would be to present in [the junta] the absolute necessity of said consulado's making the requisite arrangements for a loan of a million pesos from its merchants to send to His Majesty with the greatest promptitud and of depositing [said loan] in the royal treasuries without loss of time. This service would be very agreeable to His Majesty, as the trial [of it] would show, and it would bring glory to the consulado and the merchant body. Furthermore it was His Excellency's intention that prompt payment should not be delayed. He [therefore] confidently expected said merchant body, which was to furnish [the aforementioned service], to pay it through the aforesaid consulado by granting him for [that purpose] the annual revenue from the royal alcabalas which [the consulado] administers by lease.

When the said appellate judge had been informed of the contents of the foregoing decree, at eight o'clock in the morning on the twenty-ninth of said month and year, His Honor [su Señoría] proceeded to go to the hall of said royal tribunal. I, being there present, observed that the junta was made up of merchants and that to them by order of said judge,

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said decree was read aloud, clearly and distinctly by Diego Diaz de Rivera, royal notary public del numero; that thereupon //His Honor ³ [su Señoria] gave them a very wise exhortation that they might be incited to meet for the afore-mentioned service. [The proposition] was [then] placed before each person by said judge who made plain by the vigor of his words his desire that His Majesty should be served. To that end he urged in terms, courteous, moderate and attractive, that each one should strive to take the lead in [the matter] he was presenting. [This matter] cost the said gentleman excessive toil, not because the subjects of this kingdom, who humbly profess their loyalty, zeal and love, would oppose giving assistance with their persons and fortunes, but because--as they expressed it--they were short of cash [reales] on account of the dispatch of the merchant fleet which had arrived in charge of the Xefe(gefe) de escuadra, Don Antonio Serrano. Said judge in company with the prior and consules of said tribunal [of the consulado] remained in its hall the afore-mentioned day from the said hour of eight o'clock until past two in the afternoon in order to get through with all those who assembled. Moreover the said judge then continued the juntas from eight o'clock in the morning until twelve o'clock noon to further the effort. To this end he did not lose an instant either from exhortation of each one of those who assembled, or from taking every conceivable measure.

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Furthermore at whatever hours he was sought, he was in readiness. I so assert, for I sought the said gentleman at the very inconvenient hour of eight in the evening. He was then taking the most vigorous measures for the collection of said million [pesos], soliciting not only in this city, but outside it, from private individuals and likewise from convents, brotherhoods [cofradías] and royal depositories. Upon this [latter matter] he bestowed all care, attention and assiduity, seeking out the parties [who had the cash] and places where cash [reales efectivos] could be found, so that ^{with} it, under the security [offered for it], they might come together to [make] the loan. Thus //the collection was made by virtue of the solicitude, the activity and concern of said judge. I so certify, for I was present to execute whatever he was pleased to command.

In virtue thereof and in virtue of his petition I do give this present in the City of Mexico on the eighth day of October in the year seventeen hundred twenty-six. Witnesses present are Don Antonio Fernandez de Gusman, Joseph Chavero and Pedro de Aguilera.

I made my signo [signo] as witness to the truth thereof.

¹
Man. Ximenez de Benjumea

Ex officio

[Rubric (Benjumea's)]

no
SS. R.
Royal Notary
[Rubric]

[A.D.S.]

We do certify that Manuel Ximenez Benjumea whose signo and signature are affixed to the attestation [found], in these two folios is a royal notary public, as his title indicates, faithful, legally [constituted], and worthy of all confidence; [that], to all the proceedings which have come before the afore-mentioned [notary], and do come before him, [both], judicially and extrajudicially, have always been accorded, full trust and confidence; and that it may be so certified to whom it may concern, we give this present in the City of Mexico on this the eighth day of October in the year seventeen hundred twenty-six.

I make my signo [signo]

[cross]

Juan Man.^l Hidalgo

SS^{no} Rl
Royal Notary
[Rubric]

I make my signo [signo]

[cross]

Miguel Antonio Canttu

SS^{no} R^l y Nott. App^o
Royal and Public Notary
[Rubric]

I make my signo [signo]

Di^o Diaz de Riu^a

SS^{no} R^l y Pu^o
Royal and Public Notary
[Rubric]

[A. D. S.]

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One Quartillo

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Most Excellent Sir:

Dr. Don Pedro Malo de Villaviscencio, knight of the Order of Calatrava, of the Council of His Majesty [and] His [Majesty's] judge of this Royal Audiencia, makes the [following] statement:

Your Excellency has been pleased to appoint [Dr. Don Pedro Malo de Villaviscencio] to assist as appellate ^{judge} in the royal tribunal of the consulado for the junta of the merchant body that had to be formed in order to locate, collect and deposit in the royal treasury of this court, the million [pesos] which His Majesty charged Your Excellency to remit to Spain for the supplies for the war which he fears. Moreover in case [the million] was not in the treasuries, it was to be sought out and solicited, being supplied, as Your Excellency requested, by the aforesaid royal tribunal and its merchant body. Furthermore in order that the latter might collect [the million pesos] quickly, Don Pedro ^{lv} plan//ned the most efficacious means for securing it. [These means were disclosed] in the opinions

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given Your Excellency and this royal audiencia and in the steps he took in the ecclesiastical courts to the end that the deposits of funds which might be in litigation should be transferred to whatever [person] the royal tribunal of the consulado might agree upon, [the consulado] giving at the same time a suitable guaranty and debenture in favor of the interested parties for the revenues [reditos].

[Thus] the end of collecting the said million [pesos] and providing it for His Majesty was attained--as is certified by the enclosed document--by virtue of the zeal, diligence and great care and attention which [Don Pedro] effectively brought to bear. This [fact] is commonly known and [even] better [is it] known to Your Excellency who saw the exactitude with which Don Pedro desired to discharge the confidence Your Excellency reposed in his attention to the excellent performance of [the matter] and to merit the honor of His Majesty's knowing that [it was] Don Pedro [who] performed this service.

[Therefore, Don Pedro] begs Your Excellency graciously to bring [this matter] to His [Majesty's] royal attention. This is the sole reward he asks for the great care and attention [he exercised]; for it is the highest praise that His [Majesty's]

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faithful ministers can desire [as the reward] of
merit and is the favor that he hopes for from Your
Excellency.

or
D. Pedro Malo de Villaviscencio

[Rubric]

[L.S. with A.D.S., 10-8-1726]

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