Preparations for the journey

This is a letter written by Duncan Campbell, overseer of the convicts on the River Thames.

Mincing-lane
30 Nov 1784

Sir,

I think it my duty to acquaint you for the information of my Lords of the Treasury that I have this day received His Majesty’s commands and instructions touching the employment of the convicts for transportation which have been removed from the several gaols on board the Censor Hulk; which instructions I will with all possible dispatch carry into execution; but to do this with effect, it will be necessary to have an additional number of Lighters, Boats and Guards to attend while the convicts are working in the Lighters or on shore. These, with the clothing and provision which His Majesty is pleased to direct may be in the same proportion as given to those who are ordered to hard labour, will of course increase the present expense of that ship The Censor is calculated for the accommodation and safe custody of 240 convicts and upwards. For that number certain I am willing to engage, and to find ship, officers and crew, four lighters, or more if necessary, sufficient boats and guards, and to find medicines and surgeon, as has been hitherto done for the convicts at hard labour on the Thames. And this I will agree to do for one year to commence 12th October last for the nett sum of £6,500 to be paid quarterly. If my Lords have no objection I should wish likewise to enter into a contract for those on board the Justicia viz 250 certain, for one year at the rate allowed me for last instalment 12th October.

I pray you Sir to lay this before the Board and to take their Lordships pleasure thereupon

Signed Duncan Campbell

NB The difference that will appear between the expenses of the two ships arises from the hospital and receiving vessels which, with their Lordship’s permission, I can make to serve both hulks.