

Thomas Jefferson to Jean Baptist Ternant, August 22, 1792 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE FRENCH MINISTER J. MSS. (JEAN BAPTISTE TERNANT)

Oct. 23, 1792.

Th: Jefferson presents his respectful compliments to Mr. de Ternant—He has examined again with care the commission of M. de la Forest, and finds it impossible to consider it as anything more than a Commission of Consul General for N. York, Jersey, Pensylva, & Delaware. If any thing more has been intended, the error has been in those who drew the commission, and this error we are not authorised to correct. Being corrected by a new commission, we shall be very happy to render the Exequatur conformable to that, as the one now inclosed is to the present commission. M. de Ternant will see on the next page an analysis of the present commission & some observations on it.¹

¹ “Observations—The first clause to this commission, specifies the jurisdiction of Mr. de la Forest as *Consul general for New York, Jersey, Pensva & Delaware*. All the subsequent clauses use the restrictive words *la dite charge, la dite qualité*, referring clearly to the description in the first clause, except the last one, *le dit Sr. la Forest de la charge*, not repeating the word *dite* before *charge*, yet it is impossible to understand it but as referring to the preceeding *charge*. To consider the body of the commission as a commission of Consul general for N. Y. Jers. Pens. & Del. and the clause of *Nous Prions, &c.* as another commission to be Consul general over all the U. S. would be against every rule of construction. The king cannot be supposed to pray us to receive him as Consul general

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over all the U. S. He had not established him in the preceeding part but as Consul genl. of N. Y. Jers. Pens. & Del."