

(From the Royal Gazette, October 13.)

TO THE

FREED MEN AND WOMEN OF THE 1ST AUGUST!

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I have been watching your conduct for the last two months. I have received reports from the Stipendiary Magistrate of every District. Some are favorable to you as laborers; all give testimonials of your peaceable conduct; but I am sorry to say, you do not all prove yourselves worthy of the name of Free People—nor do you all respond to the expectations I had formed of you, which were, that, after a short relaxation, natural and allowable, in your new state, you would see the necessity of providing a surplus for yourselves and families, by the full labour of your hands, and thence endeavour to raise yourselves in your grades of society, by the savings of your wages.

I hear that some of you, contrary to your duty, content yourselves with irregular labour—that your Masters cannot depend on your contracts of monthly hiring—that you go into the Field one day and abstain from it the next—that when you have earned sufficient to fill your bellies, like the wild beasts, after satisfying their hunger, you lie down to sleep, or idle your time—that when in the field many of you do not work a quarter of your specified task, and then pretend to wonder that you are not paid a full rate of wages. Are you aware to what this leads? the abandonment of Estates! and your own degradation! Can you expect that owners of estates will supply you with houses and other advantages, or be content with the labour you choose to give in return? can you suppose they will allow you to have your own whims about work, or your own disposal of time?

Can they afford to pay the interest of the first cost of their estates, of the buildings, and constant expenditure to keep the buildings and lands in a state to receive your labour, if they are not assured of a fair portion of your labour?

I hear of ill-disposed people, who circulate false reports amongst you, who encourage you to think that you are not sufficiently paid—that you are overworked. Do not believe them, they are your enemies.

If you do not give a fair portion of your labour to the estates, your places will soon be supplied; when so long as you have money, you may afford to be idle, but your own sense must tell you that money, not encreased by additional earnings, will soon be exhausted, and your idleness must bring many of you to trouble. I exhort you not to disappoint the hopes of those who have been so desirous of hastening your emancipation, having thought you worthy of it.

I believe there have been very few instances of severity towards you, and you must be aware of the great forbearance of the greater number of your employers. I am taking every means in my power to secure to you kind treatment and justice; but I warn you, for your own sakes, that if you do not give a fair portion of your labor to the estates on which you are located, the proprietors will drive you from them, for they must have industrious laborers, or they will be ruined, and you along with them.

Though additional supplies of Labourers will soon arrive from other Colonies, yet your masters can find work for them as well as for yourselves, but they will not employ you if you do not show you are worthy to be retained on the estates—they will prefer old Servants to new ones—but if the old are idle, the new will assume their place.

I address this to the idle. I have had pleasure in knowing that many of you have not disappointed the expectations I formed of you, and therefore, to such persons, this address does not apply.