

**Addressed to:** Mr Joshua Johnston, Stromness

**From:** Robert Laing Esq<sup>r</sup>, Kirk<sup>ll</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> 1769

Kirkwall 1<sup>st</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> 1769

Dear Sir,

When you get down to Coubister, I'll expect to hear from you as I would wish to spend an evening with M<sup>r</sup> Halcrow & you at M<sup>r</sup> Moncreif's in order to enquire of Malcolm. At same time should be glad to know whether Mr Halcrow intends to sell his estate or not as I have some money that I would not oy<sup>r</sup> ways dispose of if he sells, but if he intends not to sell I have an opportunity today if out to advantage by what I had last year from a certain person. I take it the free rent of his estate is not above £650 Scots (?) p<sup>r</sup> annum, kelp shores included at £10 p<sup>r</sup> year. I dare say the debts including the provisions for his sisters will not be much short of £500 Scots (?), the intrest of w<sup>c</sup> is £25 annually, his moth<sup>r</sup>'s (???) as shall not provided about £20 yearly, so that by this state of M<sup>r</sup> Halcrow's affairs he will not have above £20 Scots (?) p<sup>r</sup> annum free for himself. Besides if he brings his family over from Jamaica builds or squairs (?) a house here with furniture will not stand him much below £200 Scots. The question then will be whether it is Mr Halcrow's interest to settle upon his estate under these incumbrances or to dispose of it with the burden of his moy<sup>r</sup>'s life rent & after paying all debts to carry out a sum of money the very intrest of which may be three times as much as all the present remission (?) he can sett down. Upon this is what occurs to me in his present situation but you'l be better able to inform him of his affairs when you consult with his tenants & make up assentall (?) of his estate & a state of the debts & oy<sup>r</sup> burdens affecting it. I'll expect to hear from you by the bearer & let me know when you intend to go to Orphir so that I may not be off the Town when you send me a boy from thence. My best respects to M<sup>rs</sup> Johnston & I am

Dear Sir

Your most obd<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

Robert Laing