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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA, Feb. 3, 1865.

To the House of Representatives :

In response to your Resolution of the 25th ult., I herewith transmit a communication from the Secretary of the Navy, covering copies of his correspondence with the Governor of North Carolina relative to "coals of the steamer 'Advance.'"

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COMMUNICATION OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA,)
Navy Department.)
Richmond, Jan. 31st, 1864.)

To the President : .

SIR:—In response to the following Resolution of the House of Representatives, viz :

"Resolved, That the President be respectfully requested to transmit to this House copies of the correspondence between the Secretary of the Navy and the Governor of North Carolina, touching the seizure of the coals of the steamer "Advance" by officers of the Navy Department," referred by you to this Department for attention, I have the honor to transmit herewith copies of my letters of the 28th of December last and 28th instant to Governor Vance and his reply of the 3d instant to the first named letter, with accompanying papers.

My last communication to Governor Vance was delayed by the causes therein stated.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

S: R. MALLORY,

Secretary of the Navy.

LETTER OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, }
Navy Department, }
 Richmond, Dec. 28th, 1864. }

His Excellency Z. B. VANCE, Governor
 of North Carolina, Raleigh N. C.

SIR:—Confident that you will be pleased to correct any error of statement into which you may have been inadvertently led, I beg leave to invite your attention to the following extracts from your recent message, and to the subjoined copies of official papers upon the subjects to which the extracts refer:

“After losses by detention, the surrender of cargo space, &c., of not less than two hundred thousand dollars in gold, I regret, also, to have to announce the loss of the steamer *Advance*, during the month of September. This noble vessel, the pride of the State and benefactor of our soldiers and people, was captured by the enemy, after she had successfully made her way through the blockade squadron, in consequence of the seizure of her coal for the use of the cruiser *Tallahassee*, compelling her to put to sea with North Carolina coal. This being unsuited to her furnaces and machinery rendered her incapable of making more than half her usual speed, and left behind her a dense volume of black smoke, by which she was followed and captured. So obviously is her loss attributable to the unwarranted seizure of her coal, that I trust you will memorialize for compensation. The unwise policy of making our only remaining sea-port a resort for our cruisers, cannot be too strongly condemned. It has doubled the stringency of the blockade, has already caused the loss of many valuable steamers, and will ultimately provoke the utmost efforts of the enemy to capture *Wilmington*. It is no exaggeration to say that the *Advance* alone, in solid benefits, has been worth more to our government than all the cruisers we have ever had afloat. Why it should be the policy of our government to compel the State to quit the importation of supplies for the common benefit, and then pursue a course with our armed vessels, so well calculated to crush all importations whatever, is to me inexplicably strange.”

Captain Pinkney, C. S. N., in command of Naval forces at *Wilmington*, and under whose directions coals were obtained for the *Tallahassee* and *Chickamauga*, forwards the following report on the subject:

Flag Officer R. F. PINKNEY, Commanding, &c. &c.,

“SIR:—In reply to your verbal enquiry in reference to the impressment of coal on this station, for the use of C. S. cruisers that have recently sailed from this port, I have the honor to state that not one particle of coal was taken from the steamer *Advance*, nor

one pound impressed to which the State, or any of the joint owners of that steamer had the slightest claim. When the steamers Let-Her-B and Floric were being fitted out, a portion of the coal necessary for the supply of those steamers was taken from the wharf of Messrs Power, Law & Co., the agents and part owners of the Advance; but I was distinctly informed by a member of that firm that this coal belonged to three different steamers, not then in port. To one of these steamers I had lent about twenty tons of N. C. coal to be returned in English coal, and the quantity taken from her just satisfied my claim. The other two steamers, as I have said, were not then in port, and the coal that belonged to them was laying there waiting their return. It is now alledged by the agents of the Advance that as they had control of this coal it might have been available for the Advance, if the government had not impressed it. This, however, is a mere probability, as other steamers belonging to this firm might, in the mean time, have come in short of fuel, to which this coal would have undoubtedly have been given. At any rate, it did not belong to the Advance, nor was it retained for her exclusive use, and its being appropriated to her use depended upon a mere contingency—namely, her not being preceded into port by other vessels with an insufficiency of coal for their outward voyage. It will, then, be seen that the extraordinary statement ventured upon by Governor Vance in his late annual message, that the loss of the Advance is attributable solely to the impressment of coal by the Confederate States Government has very little foundation in fact.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. A. WILLARD,
Naval Coal Agent.

Forwarded by R. F. PINKNEY, Capt., &c."

You will perceive from this report that your statement as to coals taken from or belonging to the Advance was an error.

I deem it proper to advert particularly to the following paragraphs of your message: "These cruisers sally forth, with coal seized from steamers engaged in bringing supplies of vital importance, thus ensuring their capture, destroy a few insignificant smaeks, which only serve to irritate the enemy, and then steam back to Wilmington to seize more coal, bringing down upon the inlets a new swarm of the enemy's gunboats."

It is not my purpose to discuss questions of policy, but simply to correct errors of fact, and I deem it unnecessary here to express an opinion upon the views which your letter presents relative to the use made of the port of Wilmington by Confederate cruisers. Nor in reference to your remark as to the "course of the government with our armed vessels so well calculated to crush all importations whatsoever;" is it necessary to say more than that the number of vessels engaged in the blockade trade of Wilmington was never greater than at present.

It is proper to apprise you that no information of the loss of any steamer resulting from the impressment of her coals, other than that presented in your message has ever reached this Department, nor have I any reason to believe that any vessel was ever lost from the cause stated in the foregoing statement. Under the orders of this Department but one days' fuel could be taken from any steamer, and the North Carolina coal substituted for the quantity thus taken, could be burned at night without disadvantage or danger from its smoke.

To enable you to correct so much of your statements as limits the captures made by the Tallahassee and Chickamauga, from which you will perceive that those captures were not only more important than is consistent with your statement, but that nineteen out of the forty-six, were square-rigged vessels.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

S. R. MALLORY,

Secretary of the Navy.

LIST OF VESSELS CAPTURED by the Confederate States
Steamer Tallahasee, under command of Commander JOHN TAY-
LOR WOOD, C. S. Navy.

Date of Capture.	Names of Vessels.	Tonnage.	Disposition.
1864.			
August 11.	Schooner Sarah A. Bayce.	281 80-95	Scuttled.
" "	Pilot Boat Jas. Funk,	120 91-95	Burnt.
" "	Brig Carrie Estell,	248 75-95	"
" "	Barque Bay State,	199 47-95	"
" "	Brig A. Richards,	274 30-95	"
" "	Schooner Carrall,		Bonded.
" "	Pilot Boat Wm. Bell.		Burnt.
" 12	Schooner Atlantic,	156 27-95	"
" "	Ship Adrlatic,	989 22-95	"
" "	Barque Enliate,		Bonded.
" "	Schooner Spokane,	126 3-95	Burnt.
" "	Brig Billow,	173 31-95	Scuttled.
" "	Schooner Robt. E. Packer,	222	Bonded.
" 13	Barque Glenaron,	789 2-95	Scuttled.
" "	Schooner Lamot Dupont,	194 14-95	Burnt.
" 14	Ship Jas. Littlefield,	547	Scuttled.
" 15	Schooner Mary A. Hawes,	61	"
" "	" Howard,	147 69-95	"
" "	" Floral wreath,	54 11-95	"
" "	" Sarah B. Harris,		Bonded.
" "	" Restless,	49 15-95	Scuttled.
" "	" Etta Caroline,	39 23-95	"
" 16	Barque P. C. Alexander,	285	Burnt.
" "	Schooner Leopard,	78 92-95	"
" "	" Pearl,	41 66-95	"
" "	" Sarah Louisa.	81 3-95	"
" "	" Magnolia,	35 23-95	"
" 17	" North America,	82 47-95	Scuttled.
" "	Brig Neva,	286	Bonded.
" "	Schooner Achon,	123	Burnt.
" "	" Diadem,		Released.
" "	" D. Ellis,		"
" 20	Brig Roan,	127 47-95	Burnt.

RECAPITULATION.

Burnt.....	16
Scuttled,.....	10
Bonded,.....	5
Released,.....	2

LIST OF VESSELS CAPTURED by Confederate States steamer
Olustu, (Tallahasee) Lieut- commanding W. H. WARD.

Date.	Name.	Tonnage.	Disposition.
	Barque Empress Theresa,	312	Burnt.
	Schooner A. J. Bird,	182	Scuttled.
	“ E. F. Lewis,	119	“
	“ Napor,	312	“
	Brig L. D. Wagner,	390	“
	Ship Arcole.	663	“

LIST OF VESSELS CAPTURED by the Confederate States
Steamer Chickamauga, under command of Lieut. JOHN WILKINSON,
C. S. Navy.

Date of Capture.	Name of Vessels.	Tonnage.	Disposition.
1861.			
October 30.	Barque Mark L. Potter,	359	Burnt.
“ 31	“ Emma L. Hall,	492	“
“ 31	Ship Shooting Star,	917	“
“ 31	Barque Albion Lincoln,	237	Bonded.
Nov. 1	Schooner Godspeed,	283	Scuttled.
“ 1	“ Otter Rock,	91	“
“ 2	Barque Speotwell.	335	Bonded.

LETTER OF GOVERNOR VANCE.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

Executive Department,

Raleigh, Jan. 3d, 1865. }

Hon. S. R. MALLORY, Secretary of the Navy, Richmond, Va.,

SIR:—Your letter of the 28th ult., with enclosures, relative to the loss of the steamer *Advance*, has been received.

You do me no more than justice in expressing your confidence in my willingness to “correct any error of statement into which you (I) may have been inadvertently led.” It would afford me great pleasure to correct the supposed erroneous statement contained in my recent message, attributing the loss of the steamer *Advance* to the appropriation of her coals for the steamers of the government, were I conscious of any error. Even from the proofs submitted by Captain Pinkney’s letter, an extract from which you enclose, were I to retract my statement, I fancy I should be deliberately committing a greater error than the one which you were kind enough to attribute to inadvertence.

I made the statement of which you complain deliberately, and upon authority which I regard as reliable, and think I have been sustained by the facts. Power, Law & Co., were the part owners and agents of the vessel; it was their duty to accumulate coal for the use of our vessels by taking small quantities from each one which had a surplus for supplying those which were short. To this to common heap the *Advance* contributed as others and when she came sail this heap destined as well for her as the other vessels of the line, had been taken by the Navy Department and she had to go with North Carolina coal. The enclosed certificates of O’Kielly and Harris will show how much was taken, whom from, and that it was actually applied to the use of the *Tallahassee*, as I charge. The argument of Captain Pinkney to show that the *Advance* *might not* have got the coals and therefore could have no interest in a thing she might fail to get, is a subterfuge more becoming a lawyer than a gallant high minded sailor, as is his reputation. The coals were reserved for her or any other vessel of the firm that might come in short of enough to return with; they *were* taken by the Navy Department; the *Advance* failed to get, therefore, what she was entitled to by the action of the Confederate authorities, and hence her capture. I am willing that the public should judge of the error from these statements.

I beg leave further to call your attention to the certificate of Mr. Savage, collector at Wilmington, showing that there was no gold on the *Advance* when she was captured. I do this because of the appearance of an article in the *Richmond Sentinel* said to have been written under the auspices of the Navy Department, in which

it was alleged that there was a large amount of gold on this vessel, the non appearance of which was supposed to account in part for her capture. From this, it will be seen, that in order to convict me of "venturing upon an extraordinary statement," some parties connected with the Navy Department, have ventured upon a rather ordinary one.

Like you, sir, I do not desire to discuss the policy of the government in regard to our armed cruizers and blockade-running generally. If I did, I might well cite the recent formidable attack upon Wilmington, from which alone we were delivered, by the Providence of God, as a full confirmation of my opinions. And I might well ask if one of the three vessels which lately entered that port laden with bacon was not of greater benefit to the Confederacy, even though it was the enterprise of "gamblers," than the destruction of all the enemy's vessels at sea, mentioned in the list you enclose

My opposition to the policy of the government is not based upon any thing factious or any regard for the interest of men who have been making fortunes by running the blockade, whether native or foreign. I never made objection to their being placed under such restrictions as the government thought proper, but why a State, struggling for the common good, to clothe and provide for its troops in the public service, should meet with no more favor than a blockade gambler, passes my comprehension.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant.

(Signed)

Z. B. VANCE.

WILMINGTON, N. C. Dec. 6, 1864.

I, J. T. O'Keilly, having charge of Messrs. Power, Law & Co's. wharf and warehouse, do certify that on the 9th of July last, the Navy Department took from said wharf 1170 barrows of Welsh coal being by weights $179 \frac{60}{200}$ tons, which were placed on board steamship "Let-Her-B," said ship having hauled to the wharf for that purpose.

I further certify that no coals have ever been returned in place of those taken, as above described, by said or any other Department of the Confederate States.

(Signed)

J. T. O'KEILLY.

WILMINGTON, N. C., Dec. 6, 1864.

I certify that on the afternoon of 28th or 29th ult., I was present at a conversation between Mr. J. A. Willard, Navy agent, and Eli Murray, Esq., Agent of State of North Carolina, at this place. I asked Mr. Willard the question what became of the coal taken from Messrs. Power, Law & Co., and others which he alleged had been placed on board the steamers "Floride" and "Let-Her-B," after the expedition upon which these vessels were destined

had been abandoned, he replied, "what had not been consumed in going up and down the river, had been transferred to the steamer 'Tallahassee.'" "

(Signed)

GEO. HARRIS.

CONFEDERATE STATES DEPOSITORY,
Wilmington, N. C., Dec. 6, 1864. }

E. MURRAY, Esq., Wilmington, N. C.,

SIR:—Your letter of this date, stating that a rumor exists that the "Advance" was captured, had on freight a large amount of specie, and asking if I can give any light on the subject, is to hand.

In reply I beg to state that I do not know that the "Advance" had any specie or freight when she was captured. I did not ship any on her that trip.

Very respectfully,

(Signed)

HENRY SAVAGE.

Depository C. S.

LETTER OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, }
Navy Department, }
Richmond, Va., Jan. 28, 1865. }

His Excellency Z. B. VANCE, Governor
of North Carolina, Raleigh, N. C.,

SIR:—I regret that the pressure of public business and my serious indisposition have delayed a response to your letter of the 3d inst.

The distinct question at issue between us was raised by the statement of your message in reference to the Advance, "that the seizure of her foreign coals for the Tallahassee, compelling her to put to sea with North Carolina coals," was the cause of her loss.

This question I distinctly met in my previous communication and I desire to adhere to it. You will pardon me, therefore, for declining the discussion upon other points which you raise as to whether the Advance had gold on freight, &c., and which are unnecessary to the determination of the single question of fact.

In reference to your allusions to an anonymous article published in the Sentinel "said to have been written under the auspices of the Navy Department," and to your statement that "from this it will seem that in order to convict me (you) of venturing upon an extraordinary statement, some parties connected with the Navy Department have ventured upon a rather ordinary one," it is only necessary to say that they are not only irrelevant but erroneous and that the article in question was neither written under the auspices nor with the knowledge of this Department.

The policy of the government in regard to its cruisers and the commerce of Wilmington, the influence of this policy upon the enemy to attack Fort Fisher, and the comparative value of a single cargo of bacon and a certain number of the enemy's ships destroyed at sea, all touched upon in your letter, invite discussion, but as their investigation would throw no light whatever upon the questions of fact at issue I refrain from further reference to them.

Your statement was: "This noble vessel, the pride of the State and benefactor of our soldiers and people, was captured by the enemy after she had successfully made her way through the blockading squadron, in consequence of the seizure of her foreign coals for the use of the cruiser Tallahassee, compelling her to proceed to sea with North Carolina coal."

The obvious inference from this language is, that not only were coals taken from the Advance for the Tallahassee, but that they were so taken when the Advance was about to "put to sea," compelling her to proceed to sea with North Carolina coal; and it was to correct a statement which I supposed had been entered upon unadvisedly that I furnished you with the formal report of the Coal Agent of this department at Wilmington made to Capt. Pinkney, the chief Naval officer in command there, that not only had no coal been taken from the Advance for the Tallahassee, but that when coals were taken for the Florie and Let-Her-B, a portion of which as alleged by Mr. Harris, was subsequently transferred to the Tallahassee, and to which coals your statement refers, the Advance was not in the port of Wilmington. The coal agent says, "that not one particle of coal was taken from the steamer Advance nor one pound impressed to which the State, or any of the joint owners of that steamer, had the slightest claim."

Subsequent to the date of my former communication, the following dispatch was received from Capt. Pinkney:

"WILMINGTON, Dec. 29, 1864.

Hon. S. R. MALLORY:

No coal was taken from the Advance, nor any belonging to her for the Tallahassee or any other vessel. I sent a report to this effect from the coal agent some time ago.

(Signed)

R. F. PINKNEY,
Commanding, &c. &c."

I regarded this report as conclusive and doubted not that you would so regard it, for I could not have supposed that these agents could have seized the coals of the Advance and compelled her to "put to sea with North Carolina coal," without being aware of the fact. Your letter of the 3d, however, not only reiterates the message, but it presents the following certificate in support of it.

WILMINGTON, N. C. Dec. 6, 1864.

I, J. T. O'Keilly, having charge of Messrs. Power, Low & Co's. wharf and warehouse, do certify that on the 9th of July last, the Navy Department took from said wharf 1170 barrows of Welsh coal being by weights $179 \frac{60}{2000}$ tons, which were placed on board steamship "Let-Her-B," said ship having hauled to the wharf for that purpose.

I further certify that no coals have ever been returned in place of those taken, as above described, by said or any other Department of the Confederate States.

(Signed)

J. T. O'KEILLY.

This certificate, that in July last coals were taken by the Navy Department from the wharf of Messrs. Power, Low & Co., for the steamer Let Her-B. is produced in proof of the statement that the loss of the Advance was in consequence of the seizure of foreign coal for the cruiser Tallahassee, compelling her to put to sea. &c.

The following is the second certificate.

WILMINGTON, N. C., Dec. 6, 1864.

I certify that on the afternoon of 28th or 29th ult. I was present at a conversation between Mr. J. A. Willard, Navy agent, and Eli Murray, Esq., Agent of State of North Carolina, at this place. I asked Mr. Willard the question what became of the coal taken from Messrs. Power, Low & Co., and others which he alleged had been placed on board the steamers "Florie" and "Let-Her-B," after the expedition upon which these vessels were destined had been abandoned, he replied, "what had not been consumed in going up and down the river had been transferred to the steamer Tallahassee."

(Signed)

GEO. HARRIS.

This certificate shows that Mr. Willard, the Naval Coal Agent, stated that the coal taken in July last from Power, Low & Co., and referred to by Mr. O'Keilly, were used for the steamers Florie and Let-Her-B, and that after the abandonment of the expedition for which they were designed, what had not been consumed in going up and down the river had been transferred to the Tallahassee.

In addition to the evidence of these certificates in support of the statement made, you inform me that Power, Low & Co. were part owners and agents of the vessel. It was their duty to accumulate coal for the use of our vessels by taking small quantities from each one which had a surplus for supplying those which were short. To this common heap the Advance contributed as others, and when she came to sail, this heap, destined as well for her and the others of the line, had been taken by the Navy Department, &c.

Thus it appears that the Navy Department neither took coal from

the Advance, nor any coal belonging to her or designed for her exclusive use; but that the coal which it took from Power, Low & Co. for the Let-Her-B in July last, might possibly have been used for the Advance in the following September, if other vessels equally entitled to it had not, in the meantime, consumed it.

With all respect for your own convictions upon the subject, I am unable to perceive that the charge advanced in your message is sustained by the certificates or by the foregoing explanations now presented.

In my previous communication I adverted to that statement in your message in which the captures made by our cruisers out of Wilmington, were characterized as "a few insignificant smacks;" and presuming that so strange an error of fact, and one so unjust to the officers and men of these cruisers, could only have found a place in your message from want of information upon the subject, and that its correction would promptly follow a presentation of the facts, I invited your attention to it and submitted a schedule of the captures in question, numbering forty-six, (46) and embracing nineteen (19) square rigged vessels. I regret that while your derisive reference to a few insignificant smacks is being circulated throughout the country, its correction, with the facts before you, has escaped your attention.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

S. R. MALLORY,
Secretary of the Navy.

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