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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA., February 12, 1864.

To the House of Representatives :

In response to your resolution of the 21st ultimo, I herewith transmit, for your information, a communication from the Secretary of War, relative to the delivery of the "tax in kind" at the Government depots by the producers.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COMMUNICATION OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, }
War Department, }
Richmond, Feb. 4, 1864. }

To the President of the Confederate States :

SIR: Your letter of the 30th ultimo, referring a resolution of inquiry of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the Confederate States, requesting information as to the legislation necessary to save the productive power of the planting interest from the damages which may ensue from the enforcement of the clause of the act in relation to the tax in kind, which requires planters, within a certain distance of the railroad; to deliver the tax in kind to Government depots, has been received, and was referred to the Quartermaster General, in charge of the collection of that tax. His endorsement on the resolution contains a full answer to the inquiry proposed, and a copy is Respectfully submitted.

JAMES A. SEDDON,
Secretary of War.

A. Q. M. GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
February 3, 1864. }

The clause of the act to which this resolution is supposed to refer, appears in the eleventh section, wherein it is provided that producers shall be required to deliver their tithes "at some *depot* not more than eight miles from the place of production." This does not refer specially to railroad *depots*, nor is there anything in the act requiring delivery on railroads, as the resolution seems to imply. Delivery is to be made at quartermasters' depots, (which may be on railroads,) and within the established range of distance. It is not perceived how this provision interferes with the "productive power of the planting interest." The use, for a short time, of the means of transportation necessary to deliver the tithe, does not seem injuriously to withdraw it from farming purposes, ample time being allowed for the selection of a convenient period of delivery. Where delivery is made at a depot more than eight miles from the place of production, it is *voluntary*, and the excess of transportation beyond eight miles is *paid for*.

It has been recommended by this office that the range of delivery be enlarged to fifteen miles, the farmer to be paid for transportation the whole distance. This is calculated as a day's journey for the teams of the farmer, and it is not supposed that this increase will materially affect the planting interest, by thus employing, for so short a time, at a convenient period, (ample time for the selection of which is afforded,) such means of transportation as may be necessary for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War.

LARKIN SMITH,

Assistant Quartermaster General.

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