

C. W. V. W.

SENATE, Jan. 9, 1864.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

[Presented by Mr. LYONS.]

LETTER FROM GEN. WISE.

HEADQUARTERS 6TH MILITARY DISTRICT,
Department South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, }
 January 3, 1864.

TO HON. JAS. LYONS, JOHN R. CHAMBLISS AND OTHERS,
Of the Virginia Delegation in Congress :

Gentlemen—I respectfully ask you to represent me as endorsing, without reserve, the memorial of Generals Hardee, Stevenson and other officers, dated December 17th, 1863, from the "Army of Tennessee," respecting the army. A copy is enclosed.

From nearly three years experience in the army, I can cordially unite in the policy they so wisely recommend. I respectfully protest against any reorganization of the army by *re-elections*. The elective system has proved bad. Not that any better officers have been *appointed* than elected; but I aver that the *same* officer *elected* is not, in many respects, as well *able to command* as *himself if appointed*. *Election*, and *electioneering* destroy the efficiency of command, and the power of discipline to a great extent. They were bad at first and would be ten-fold worse now. The reorganization, at the critical juncture of the spring of 1862, in its bad effects, was enough to account for many of our delays and disasters. So far as I am informed and believe, the officers and men of my brigade, with but few exceptions, desire *no re-organization* and especially none by election. What they want most is a thorough *reform* of the army from its departments down to its pickets, and especially in its quartermaster's, commissary's, ordnance officers and medical departments.

Please have this presented and referred; and believe me, with the highest respect,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY A WISE,
Brig. Gen. Commanding, &c.

To the Congress of the Confederate States :

In the existing condition of affairs, it is hoped your honorable bodies will pardon the variance from custom, of addressing you from the army. It is done in no spirit of dictation, but under the conscientious conviction that the necessities of the country demand the voice and labors of all, and that delay, even for thirty days, in enacting proper measures, may make present disorders incurable and the dangers of the moment omnipotent for our destruction.

In our opinion, it is essential to retain, for the term of during the war, without re-organization, the troops now in service; to place in service immediately, for the same term, all other white males, between eighteen and fifty years of age, able to perform *any* military duty; to provide for placing in service, at the discretion of the President, for the same term, all white males between fifteen and eighteen, and between fifty and sixty years of age; to prohibit substitution; to prohibit exemptions, except for the necessary civil offices and employments of the Confederate States and the several States; to prohibit details except for limited periods, and for carrying on works essential to the army; to prohibit discharges except in cases of permanent disability from all duty; to prohibit leaves and furloughs, except under uniform rules of universal application, based, as far as practicable, on length of service and meritorious conduct; to prohibit, to the greatest possible extent, the detail of able-bodied officers and men to post, hospital, or other interior duty; and to place in service, as cooks, laborers, teamsters and hospital attendants, with the army and elsewhere, able-bodied negroes and mulattoes, bond and free.

These measures, we think, if promptly enacted as laws, so as to give time for organizing and disciplining the new material, would make our armies invincible at the opening of the campaign of next year, and enable us to win back our lost territory and conquer a peace before that campaign shall be ended.

We beg further to suggest that, in our opinion, the dissatisfactions, apprehended or existing, from short rations, depreciated currency, and the retention of old soldiers in the service, might be obviated by allowing bounties, with discriminations in favor of the retained troops, an increase of pay, the commutation to enlisted men of rations not issued, and rations, or the value thereof, to officers.

We have the honor to be, very respectfully,
Your obedient servants,

W. J. HARDEE, Lieutenant General.
C. L. STEVENSON, Major General.
B. F. CHEATHAM, Major General.
JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE, Major General.
JOHN C. BROWN, Brigadier General.
EDMUND W. PETTUS, Brigadier General.
A. W. REYNOLDS, Brigadier General.
JOHN K. JACKSON, Brigadier General.