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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA., Dec. 15, 1864.

To the Senate and House of Representatives :

I herewith transmit for your consideration a communication from the Secretary of War, relative to the increase of the amount to be appropriated for a purpose for which he has already submitted an estimate.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

LETTER OF SECRETARY OF WAR.

WAR DEPARTMENT, C. S. A., }
Richmond, Dec. 13, 1864. }

To the President of the Confederate States :

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, a letter from the Quartermaster General, requesting that the amount estimated by him as required to pay for horses of volunteers killed in action, under Act No. 48, sec. 7, be increased to four millions of dollars.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES A SEDDON,
Secretary of War.

LETTER OF QUARTERMASTER GENERAL.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Quartermaster General's Office,
Richmond, Dec. 10th, 1864. }

SIR: On the 8th October last, I had the honor to submit an estimate for the probable amount that would be required for the service of the Quartermaster's Department for the half-year ending June 30th, 1865.

In that estimate, I submitted an item of \$2,000,000 for pay for horses of volunteer's killed in action, under Act No. 48, sec. 7.

From a communication received from General Lee since that estimate was submitted, I am of opinion that the amount asked for, will not be sufficient to meet the heavy demands accruing under that head. I have therefore to request, that the sum thus asked be increased to \$4,000,000.

In submitting this additional call for funds for the purpose above indicated, it may be well to remark, that the law making payment for horses killed in action, is, by the 2d Auditor, construed as "entrusted by law to him for settlement; and that officers of the Quartermaster's Department cannot settle such claims without previous action on his part;" and in whose office, I understand, there is at this time a large number of such claims awaiting decision.

Without undertaking to discuss the question as to the Auditor's construction, I remark that the object of the law evidently was intended to ensure and keep up the efficiency of that arm of the public service, by promptly paying the value of horses killed in action, and thereby enabling the men to re-mount themselves. If so, is it not worthy of consideration whether some method may not be adopted with advantage, whereby the present delay in the prompt settlement of such claims may be facilitated, and much inconvenience to the men avoided, and the public service benefitted?

I am, sir,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. R. LAWTON,
Quartermaster General.

HON. JAMES A. SEDDON, Secretary of War, Richmond, Va.

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