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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA., Jan. 5, 1865.

To the House of Representatives :

In response to your resolution of the 30th ult., I herewith transmit a communication from the Secretary of the Navy, which conveys the information that "no coals were taken from the steamer 'Advance,' in October last, or at any other time, for the naval service."

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COMMUNICATION OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, }
NAVY DEPARTMENT, }
Richmond, January 4, 1865. }

The President :

SIR:—I have the honor to state, in response to the following resolution of the House of Representatives of the 30th ultimo :

"*Resolved*, That the President be requested to inform this House whether coals were taken from the steamer *Advance* for the naval service, in October last, and if so, what quantity was taken, and the circumstances under which the same was taken,"

That no coals were taken from the steamer *Advance* in October last, or at any other time, for the naval service, as appears from the following reports :

"WILMINGTON, N. C., Nov. 28, 1864.

"Flag Officer, R. F. PINKNEY, Comd'g, &c.,

"SIR:—In reply to your verbal enquiry in reference to the impressment of coal on this station, for the use of the 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 *Florie* were being fitted out, a portion of the coal necessary for the supply of those steamers was taken from the wharf of Messrs. Power, Low & Co., the agents and past 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 lying there waiting their return. It is now alleged by the agents of the *Advance* that, as they had the 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 the other steamers belonging to this firm might in the meantime have come in short of fuel, to which this coal would 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 be seen then that the extraordinary statement ventured upon by Gov. Vance, in his late annual message, that the loss of the Advance is attributable solely to the impressment of coal by the C. S. 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., &c."

" 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 local agent here some time ago.

R. F. PINKNEY,
Comd'g, &c., &c."

I am respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. R. MALLORY,
Secretary of the Navy.

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