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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, November 21, 1864.—Laid on the table and ordered to be printed.

[By the CHAIR.]

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA., Nov. 21, 1864.

To the House of Representatives :

In response to your resolution of the 8th instant, I herewith transmit a communication from the Secretary of War which conveys the information requested, relative to the act of June 14, 1864, "to provide and organize a general staff."

The seventh section of the act invests the Executive with the discretion which has been exercised. The eighth section, by restricting appointments, indicates the course which has been pursued, in the attempt to ascertain, with accuracy, the number of officers in the several staff corps, so as to distribute them in accordance with the order from the Adjutant General's office, a copy of which is annexed, as well as to ascertain whether there are not supernumerary staff officers now in commission who should be discharged.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COMMUNICATION FROM SECRETARY OF WAR.

WAR DEPARTMENT, C. S. A., }
Richmond, Nov. 17, 1864. }

To the President of the Confederate States :

SIR : I have received a copy of the following resolution, adopted by the House of Representatives on the 8th instant, and referred by your Excellency to this Department.

“ *Resolved*, That the President be respectfully requested to inform the House, whether any appointments have been made under the act entitled ‘ An act to provide and organize a general staff for the armies in the field to serve during the war,’ approved June 14, 1864, and if not, why have not such appointments been made in pursuance of said act.”

In response, I have the honor to enclose herewith a letter from the Adjutant General, reporting that no appointments have been made under the act referred to. In addition to the explanation afforded by that report, showing the discretion vested in you by the act, and the adequacy of previous regulations to meet the necessity of a staff organization, it may not be improper to advert to the fact that, soon after the adjournment of Congress, your attention was called, by the chairman of the Military Committee of the Senate, to the serious inconveniences which might result from the promotion of certain officers of the staff, contemplated by that act, and the suggestion made that, in regard to them at least, it might be better not to enforce the law, as additional legislation would probably be attempted at the next session. This circumstance, it is believed, contributed to guide the discretion exercised under the act, in not enforcing the same, as inconveniences would naturally have resulted from giving the rank contemplated to some portion of the staff, and withholding it from others.

Very respectfully,

JAMES A. SEDDON,
Secretary of War.

LETTER FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
Richmond, Va., Nov. 15, 1864. }

HON. JAMES A. SEDDEN, *Secretary of War* :

SIR : I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of communication from his Excellency, the President, referred to me for report, containing copy of a resolution of the House of Representatives, dated the 8th instant, and in these words :

“ *Resolved*, That the President be respectfully requested to inform this House whether any appointments have been made under the act entitled, ‘ An act to provide and organize a general staff for the armies in the field to serve during the war,’ approved 14th June, 1864, and if not, why have not such appointments been made in pursuance of said act.”

In accordance with your instructions, I have the honor to report that no appointments have been made under the act above recited.

The seventh section of the act is in these words :

“ The President is hereby authorized to reduce the number of officers authorized by this act, to the staff of any general officer, or to increase the same when, in his opinion, the service will be benefitted thereby.”

On the 29th April, 1864, prior to the passage of the act, the President caused to be issued from this office, “ *General Orders No. 44.*” (a copy of which is enclosed,) prescribing the number of staff officers, not to exceed certain grades, which he deemed necessary to the several commands in the field. These orders have not been revoked, the President having, I presume, availed himself of the authority conferred in the seventh section of the act, not to increase the number and rank of staff officers beyond the provisions of the orders. To carry out these orders, the legislation prior to the act of the 14th June, is sufficient.

Permit me to add, that I have heard no complaint from any quarter that the number and rank of the staff officers, provided for by general orders, are not sufficient for all the purposes of commands in the field.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. COOPER,

Adjutant and Inspector General.

MR. SPARROW TO THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, June 15, 1864.

His Excellency, THE PRESIDENT :

DEAR SIR: In considering the recent acts of Congress, in regard to the Quartermaster and Commissary Departments and the General Staff Bill, I think it is to be regretted that it was not provided in both these measures that the President might, if he thought proper, make all appointments above the rank of major with temporary rank only.

The appointment of quartermasters with the rank of colonel, will, as the Department is now organized, cause them to rank every officer in the Department, except one or two. In the Commissary's Department they will rank all but one. This should be avoided, if possible, as it would be a great injustice to many valuably and meritorious officers.

I think we can remedy it at the next session of Congress, and I take the liberty of recommending that these appointments may be delayed until this fault in these measures can be corrected.

As you are authorized to assign officers to these positions, I cannot see that the public interest can suffer by adopting this course.

Very respectfully, your friend,

EDWARD SPARROW.

ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE, }
Appointment Bureau, Nov. 12, 1863. }

Official copy :

ED. A. PALFREY,
Lieutenant Colonel and A. A. General.

On the above were the following endorsements :

Secretary of War for attention and remarks.

J. D.

Respectfully returned to the President. The suggestion of Mr. Sparrow, especially in view of his position as chairman of the Military Committee of the Senate, are entitled to weight. Some grave inconveniences will certainly result from the increase in rank, required by the Staff Bill, and if assurance can be felt that the amendment proposed will meet the approval of the Congress at its next session,

it would be expedient to fill the positions for the present by assignment, and abstain from increasing rank permanently as proposed by the act.

June 23, 1864.

J. A. SEDDON, *Secretary.*

Adjutant General for future reference, etc., etc.

June 25, 1864.

J. D.

File for future reference, and keeping the subject in mind, with the understanding that no action will be taken on the General Staff Bill of June 14, 1864, without special instructions.

June 28, 1864.

S. C.

This copy of original paper, on file in this office, is respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War, in connection with communication of this date, in relation to the General Staff Act of June 14, 1864.

S. COOPER,

November 15, 1864.

Adjutant and Inspector General.

GENERAL ORDERS, }
No. 44. }

I. The number of general staff officers, and the grade of each, allowed to the several commands in the field, are established as follows :

1. To an army composed of two or more corps—A senior assistant adjutant and inspector general, and an assistant adjutant and inspector general, not to exceed the grade of colonel, each of whom may have two assistant adjutant and inspector generals—one not to exceed the grade of lieutenant colonel, and the other of major. One of the assistants to the senior assistant adjutant and inspector general, selected with a view to his special qualifications for the duty, will be charged with the examination of court martial records. A surgeon as medical director, who may be assisted by one other surgeon. A surgeon as medical inspector.

2. To an army corps—A senior assistant adjutant and inspector general, and an assistant adjutant and inspector general, not to exceed the grade of lieutenant colonel, each of whom may have one assistant adjutant and inspector general, not to exceed the grade of major. A surgeon as medical director and inspector.

3. To a division—A senior assistant adjutant and inspector general, and an assistant adjutant and inspector general, not to exceed the grade of major. A surgeon as chief surgeon and inspector, who will also have charge of the field infirmary.

4. To a brigade—An assistant adjutant and inspector general, of the grade of captain. A brigade quartermaster and a brigade commissary, each of the grade of major, as now authorized by law. The senior surgeon will act as brigade surgeon and inspector. He will also have charge of the field infirmary, and perform, at the same time, his duties as regimental surgeon.

5. Each general officer will have the aids-de-camp allowed by law—one for a brigadier general and two for all other general officers.

6. Cavalry divisions and brigades may each have an assistant adjutant and inspector general, not to exceed the grade of major, in addition to the number allowed infantry divisions and brigades.

II. Senior assistant adjutant and inspector generals and assistant adjutant and inspector generals may be required to alternate their duties.

III. The number and grade of the preceding general staff officers attached to the headquarters of a military department, will be assimilated, according to the above scale, to the number of troops constituting the military force in the department. Special assignments, in addition, may be made by the War Department, when the extent of country and nature and scope of duties may require it.

IV. The assistant adjutant and inspector generals will not be of higher grade than is herein designated. Should the General prefer an

officer having a lower grade, he may be assigned to duty with the command.

V. General officers will report to the Adjutant and Inspector General all officers of the several staff departments, now serving in their respective commands, and will, at the same time, recommend for reassignment such as may be required under the provisions of this order.

VI. All assignments of general staff officers will be made by order from this office, and they will not be changed except by like authority.

VII. Commands will not be allowed a greater number of staff officers than is herein established; nor will officers of the line be assigned to staff duty without special authority. Should it be deemed insufficient for the transmission of orders on the battle-field, couriers and guides (authorized in General Orders, No. 17, last series) will be employed by general officers, who will announce them in orders as persons accredited to convey their instructions and other communications.

VIII. Vacancies will be filled by selection from the officers of the department in which they occur.

IX. These orders being confined to the general staff proper, the organization of the other departments will not be effected by them.

X. Promotions in the general staff of the army will be by selection and not by seniority, except in cases of known competency for higher grade.

By order.

S. COOPER,
Adjutant and Inspector General.

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