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[SECRET]

SENATE, December 17, 1864. — Ordered to be printed.

RESPONSE OF SECRETARY OF WAR,

To the Resolutions of the Senate, adopted December 5th, 1864, respecting operations under the act of 6th February, 1864.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, }
WAR DEPARTMENT, }
Richmond, December 10, 1864. }

To the President :

I have the honor to submit my answer to the enclosed resolutions of the Senate, transmitted by you to me. (Resolutions adopted on the 5th inst., in relation to the act of 6th February, 1864.)

1. The tenth clause of the regulations established under the act of February 6th, 1864, is as follows:

“ Nothing in these regulations shall be so construed as to conflict with the proviso of the law which declares ‘ that nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit the Confederate States, or any of them, from exporting any of the articles herein enumerated on their own account, nor shall a bond be required of a State in any case.’ ”

In executing this clause no restriction has been imposed upon any State, and no State has been asked to give a bond, as required of all private owners. All vessels, except those owned exclusively by States, are subjected to the “ Regulations,” and compelled to carry out cotton and bring in supplies for the C. S. Government. If a State should be a subscriber to one of the joint stock companies for running the blockade, or in partnership with private individuals in a vessel, such vessel would be held as subject to the “ Regulations,” but all vessels and cargoes belonging to States are held to be entirely exempt and no restriction attaches to them.

2. The number of vessels engaged in running the blockade has steadily increased since the establishment of the “ Regulations,” and is now larger than at any time before. Many new steamers are understood to be on the way to engage in the business; this too, though the stringency of the blockade is supposed to have been constantly augmenting.

3. The “ Regulations” have been beneficial to the C. S. Government in furnishing the means abroad to purchase supplies and munitions of war, and the tonnage required to transport them to our ports. Prior to the passage of the Act, owners of steamers, upon application of the Secretary of War, conceded to the C. S. Govern-

ment a portion of their tonnage for outward and inward cargoes, but the Act of Congress, and the "Regulations" under it, were necessary to secure uniformity, and to compel such persons as were reluctant to make the concession. The annexed statement, showing: (1) quantity of cotton exported for the C. S. Government and its estimated value; (2) the leading articles imported, exhibits some of the substantial advantages that have accrued to the C. S. Government.

Our agents abroad represent that the Act and "Regulations" have been in the highest degree beneficial in appreciating the public credit, and enabling them to procure additional supplies at reduced rates

4. It would be exceedingly inexpedient to repeal the Act, and experience has not suggested to me any modification or amendment as necessary. On the contrary, the Act and "Regulations" are fast becoming well understood, and the C. S. Government is appreciating more and more the benefits resulting from them.

The duty attaches peculiarly to the C. S. Government to provide supplies and munitions of war for the public defence; and it is better, in every respect, that this duty should be wholly performed by the C. S. Government, especially when in devolving any portion of it upon the states, the means, to that extent, are withdrawn from the C. S. Government. If a concession is made for the states to charter vessels, and if such vessels be exempted from the operations of the "Regulations," each state becomes a competitor with every other state and the C. S. Government. The uniformity contemplated by the Act of Congress will be destroyed. Competitive charters will be made, not only to secure ships, but to secure the entry to particular ports. If one state undertakes to supply its troops, every other state will be compelled to undertake the same duty. Unequal provision for the soldiers of different states will create jealousy and dissatisfaction among them, and ultimately the C. S. Government will have to reimburse the states. The competition of the states with each other, and with the Confederate States, would, I fear, extend to transportation over the railroads, where it was inadequate to the delivery at the seaports of cargoes for all vessels partially owned or chartered by them. Agencies at home and abroad would be largely multiplied, which would aggravate this competition in every form. It may be safely assumed that all vessels will run under the "Regulations," carrying out cotton and bringing in supplies, for the C. S. Government, unless they can make more advantageous arrangements with particular states. Whatever, therefore, is gained by such arrangements will accrue to individuals, and will be so much subtracted from the C. S. Government.

The resolutions are general in their character, and seem to justify, indeed to call for, the expression of these views.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES A SEDDON,
Secretary of War.

SHIPMENTS of Cotton since 1st March, 1864.

Account Nitre and Mining Bureau,	873
“ Medical Department,	328
“ Engineer Department,	57
“ Commissary Department,	1,248
“ Quartermaster's Department,	1,829
“ Ordnance Department,	1,776
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To say War Department,	6,111
“ Navy Department,	4,861
“ Treasury Department, 12,840 and one-half of Contract steamers, 6,974— 3,487,	16,327
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Bales :	27,299
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Bales, 27,299 at £40 average; value £1,091,960 at \$4 85,	\$5,296,006
Equal in currency at 25 to 1.	\$132,400,150.

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