

Hd Qrs Army N. Va.

6<sup>th</sup> Nov 1862

H. E. President Davis,

Richmond,

Mr. President,

In compliance with the telegraphic request received during last night from the Honorable Secretary of War, I have directed Gen. Evan's Brigade to repair to Weldon, N. Carolina. The brigade is now ready to move, but the trains for conveyance will not be here until half past three this afternoon. It will then go. I have also ordered Col S.D. Lee to report in Richmond tomorrow, and as soon as I can relieve Gen. Walker, he will also be ordered to report to the Ad J Gen'l in Richmond. I feel that I am much weakened by the loss of these two officers, as well as by the departure of Brig. Gen'l W H C Whiting, but I hope the general service will be benifitted. I find on my arrival that Gen'l Featherston has returned to his Brigade. As I do not know what disposition to make of him, I shall have to withhold the commision of Col. Posey, unless he can be placed on service in Mississippi. The promotion also of Colonel Colquitt before my arrival in Richmond and whose commission had been forwarded to my Hd Qrs, oblige me to retain that of Col. Gordon, appointed for the same Brigade.

The promotion of Col Perry for the command of the three Florida Reg'ts, breaks up Gen Pryor's Brigade. I thought it possible that the latter might be assigned duty south of the James River, a country with which he is acquainted, and where he would probably like to serve.

From the advice received from Generals Jackson and Stuart, the enemy are advancing steadily from the Potomac, their right moving along the base of the Blue Ridge, and their left resting on the Orange and Alexandria Rail Road. They occupy the gaps in the mountains as they progress, and have already reached Manassas Gap, which at last account yesterday was held by our pickets. They have not yet taken possession of Warrenton which is still held by Col Payne. Gen Jackson's corps is in the valley, his advance being at Front Royal. I do not think they will advance very far, while he is in position to threaten their flank. Should they however continue their forward movement, Gen Jackson is directed to ascend the Valley, and should they cross the Rappahannock, Gen Longstreet's corps will retire through Madison where forage can be obtained, and the two corps unite through Swift Run Gap. No opposition has yet been offered to their advance except the resistance of our cavalry and pickets. I have not yet

been able to ascertain the strength of the enemy, but presume it is the whole of McClellan's army, as I learn that his whole force from Harpers Ferry to Hagerstown has been withdrawn from Maryland, leaving only pickets at the fords, and but few troops at Harpers Ferry. He is also moving more rapidly than usual, and it looks like a real advance. I am therefore inclined to think that the operations south of the James River for the present, are intended to divert and distract us, and I would not have detached Evans' Brigade as yet, but for the urgent call of the Department, as it is possible that the whole force of this army may yet be needed in this section. I request that every exertion may be made to reinforce our troops south of the James River by the regiments of North Carolina, so as to keep the enemy at bay in that quarter as long as possible.

The troops are supplied with flour from the mills in this region, without as yet trenching upon the grain collected by the commissary Department to transport to Richmond, and some meat on the hoof has also been purchased,

I am with high respect,

Your obt. Servt.

R. E. Lee

Gen'l.