

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

COMMUNICATING,

In compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the 27th of February last, a communication from the Secretary of War, together with the reports of the assistant commissioners of the Freedmen's Bureau made since December 1, 1865.

MARCH 6, 1866.—Read, referred to the Joint Committee to inquire into the condition of the States which formed the so-called Confederate States, and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate of the United States:

In compliance with the resolution of the Senate of the 27th ultimo, I transmit herewith a communication from the Secretary of War, together with the reports of the assistant commissioners of the Freedmen's Bureau made since December 1, 1865.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

WASHINGTON, *March 5, 1866.*

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, March 2, 1866.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have the honor to submit herewith the reports of the assistant commissioners of the Freedmen's Bureau made since December 1, 1865, called for by the Senate's resolution referred to this department, and herewith returned.

Your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

The PRESIDENT.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
February 27, 1866.

Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to communicate to the Senate, if not in his judgment inconsistent with the public interests, the reports of the assistant commissioners of the Freedmen's Bureau made since December 1, 1865.

Attest:

J. W. FORNEY, *Secretary.*

WAR DEPARTMENT,
BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Washington, March 1, 1866.

SIR: In reply to your indorsement of the 28th ultimo, referring to the "Senate resolution" of the 27th ultimo, requesting the reports of the assistant com-

missioners of this bureau received since December 1, 1865, I have the honor to transmit herewith the reports as called for. As these reports are withdrawn from the files of this office, I have the honor to request that they may be returned as soon as they have been used and printed by the Senate.

List of papers.

1. General C. B. Fisk, Assistant Commissioner, January 6, 1866, report of affairs in Kentucky.
2. General C. B. Fisk, Assistant Commissioner, January 23, 1866, report of affairs in Kentucky.
3. General C. B. Fisk, Assistant Commissioner, February 14, 1866, report of affairs in Kentucky.
4. General C. B. Fisk, Assistant Commissioner, February 14, 1866, report of affairs in Tennessee.
5. Colonel E. Whittlesey, Assistant Commissioner, January 15, 1866, report of affairs in North Carolina.
6. General R. Saxton, Assistant Commissioner, January 15, 1866, report of cruelties in South Carolina.
7. General R. K. Scott, Assistant Commissioner, February 21, 1866, report of affairs in South Carolina.
8. General J. W. Sprague, Assistant Commissioner, January 10, 1866, report of Missouri and Arkansas.
9. Colonel S. Thomas, Assistant Commissioner, December 28, 1865, forwards report of an outrage in Carroll County, Mississippi.
10. Colonel S. Thomas, Assistant Commissioner, January 10, 1866, report of affairs in Mississippi.
11. Colonel S. Thomas, Assistant Commissioner, February 6, 1866, report of lands in Mississippi.
12. Colonel S. Thomas, Assistant Commissioner, January 31, 1866, report of tour in Mississippi.
13. Colonel T. W. Osborne, Assistant Commissioner, December 31, 1865, report of affairs in Florida.
14. Colonel T. W. Osborne, Assistant Commissioner, February 5, 1866, report of affairs in Florida.
15. General Wager Swayne, Assistant Commissioner, January 31, 1866, report of affairs in Alabama.
16. General Wager Swayne, Assistant Commissioner, December 26, 1865, report of affairs in Alabama.
17. General Wager Swayne, Assistant Commissioner, January, 1866, report for last quarter 1865, in Alabama.
18. General Wager Swayne, Assistant Commissioner, February 7, 1866, report of Chap. Buckley's tour in Alabama.
19. General E. M. Gregory, Assistant Commissioner, January 31, 1866, report of affairs in Texas.
20. General W. E. Strong, Inspector General, January 1, 1866, inspection report, Texas.
21. General Davis Tillson, Assistant Commissioner, fifteen letters relating to the affairs of the bureau from December, 1865, to February 20, 1866.
22. J. W. Alvord, inspector of schools and finance report.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. O. HOWARD,
Major General, Commissioner.

Hon. E. M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

No. 1.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
 STATES OF KENTUCKY, TENNESSEE AND NOR. ALABAMA,
Assistant Commissioner's Office, Nashville, Tenn., Jan. 6, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report progress in Kentucky. My "circular" and "address to the freedmen" were both well received by a large majority of the people. There are some of the *meanest unsubjected and unreconstructed, rascally rebellious revolutionists* in Kentucky that curse the soil of the country. They now claim that although the amendment to the Constitution forever abolishing and prohibiting slavery has been ratified, and proclamation thereof duly made, yet Congress must legislate to carry the amendment into effect, and therefore slavery is not dead in Kentucky. Others cling to the old barbarism with tenacity, claiming that the government must pay Kentucky for her emancipated slaves. There are few public journals in the State which afford great comfort to the malcontents, but the majority of the people of Kentucky hail the dawn of universal liberty, and welcome the agency of the bureau in adjusting the new relations arising from the *total abolition of slavery*. I have succeeded in obtaining the services of many first-class judicious popular citizens to act as superintendents at the important points. The "Blue Grass" region is in the best of hands. General Hay, at Hopkinsville, was a *bad failure*. He has been removed. I have consulted General Palmer in the appointment of every agent. I return to Kentucky on the 10th instant, by invitation of the governor, and shall meet the principal planters of the State at Frankfort, in convention, on the 11th. I hope to do good unto them, and make the bureau a blessing to all Kentucky.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

CLINTON B. FISK,

Brevet Major General, Assistant Commissioner.

Major General HOWARD,

Commissioner, &c., Washington, D. C

[Circular No. 10.]

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
 STATES OF KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE,
Assistant Commissioner's Office, Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 26, 1865.

The ratification of the constitutional amendment forever abolishing and prohibiting slavery in the United States, having been officially announced to the country by proclamation of the Secretary of State, dated December 18, 1865, this bureau extends its supervision over persons recently held as slaves in Kentucky.

On the basis of impartial justice this bureau will promote industry, and aid in permanently establishing peace and securing prosperity in the State.

Agencies of the bureau will be established at points easy of access, and while superintendents will be cautioned against supervising too much, the fair adjustment of the labor question will receive their earnest attention. They will see that contracts are equitable and their inviolability enforced upon both parties.

No fixed rates of wages will be prescribed by the bureau, nor will any community or combination of people be permitted to fix rates. Labor must be free to compete with other commodities in an open market.

Parties can make any trade or agreement that is satisfactory to themselves; and so long as advantage is not taken of the ignorance of the freed people, to deprive them of a fair and reasonable compensation for their labor, either in stipulated wages or a share of the products, there will be no interference.

Until the enactment and enforcement of State laws guaranteeing to the freedmen ample protection in person and property, freedmen's courts will be established for the adjudication of cases in which they are involved.

The assistant commissioner earnestly invites the cordial and hearty cooperation of the civil authorities, and of all good citizens of Kentucky, in the important work of adjusting the new relations arising from the total abolition of slavery.

CLINTON B. FISK,
Brevet Major General, Assistant Commissioner.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE,
Louisville, December 27, 1865.

The foregoing circular of Brevet Major General C. B. Fisk, assistant commissioner, meets my cordial approval, both in its spirit and in its excellent suggestions.

JOHN M. PALMER,
Major General, Commanding.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
STATES OF KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE,
Assistant Commissioner's Office, Nashville, Tenn., December 26, 1865.

Freedmen of Kentucky :

The Constitution of the United States has been so amended that hereafter no one can be held as a slave anywhere in the country, except in punishment for crime. All the colored people, therefore, in the State of Kentucky, are free, and your friend, the assistant commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, desires to address you a few plain words :

1. First of all, you should be grateful to your Heavenly Father, who has broken your bonds and conferred upon you the inestimable boon of freedom.

2. You should recognize your high obligations to the federal government, which, in its mighty struggle with the great rebellion and in its triumph, has been true to the interests of freedom, and has fulfilled its pledges to the oppressed.

3. You should love Kentucky, for it is a noble old State—your native State, your home and the home of your children, and now a free State.

4. I advise you to remain in your old homes, and that you enter into good contracts with your former owners and masters. You have been associated with them for many years ; you are bound to the old home by many ties, and most of you I trust will be able to get on as well with your late masters as with any one else. If your former owners will not make good contracts with you—giving you good wages, or a share of the crop—you will have a perfect right to go where you can do better.

5. Let me warn you specially against flocking into the towns and cities. There are too many people in the towns and cities already. Hundreds, unless they speedily remove to the country, will, I fear, fall victims of pestilence. The small-pox is now prevalent, and in a few weeks the cholera may be among us. In the crowded cities you will wear your lives away in a constant struggle to pay high rent for miserable dwellings and scanty allowances of food. Many of your children, I greatly fear, will be found wandering through the streets as vagrants—plunging into the worst of vices, and filling the workhouses and jails. By all means seek healthy homes in the country.

6. Now that you are free and will enjoy the fruits of your own industry, enter upon your new life with a hearty will. You begin it with little besides

your hands, but by patient industry and economy you may soon earn and save enough money to purchase a home of your own, and to furnish it with many of the comforts of life.

7 Let each man turn his heart and his thoughts toward providing a good home for his wife and children, and to aid in the care of his aged and dependent parents; carefully guard and keep sacred the marriage relation; be lawfully wedded: "taking up with each other" is an abominable practice, and must perish with the institution which gave it birth.

8. Early attention should be given to the education of your children. Purchase books for them, and employ good teachers. You have numerous friends in the country who will aid you in the establishment of schools. Be resolved that all your children shall be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic.

9. Let the past be forgotten. Treat all men with respect; avoid disputes; demonstrate to Kentucky and to the world, by your faithful observance of the laws, by your sobriety and good morals, and by your thrift, that you are not only qualified for the precious blessing of freedom, but for the high and responsible duties of citizens of the Commonwealth.

10. Until the enactment and enforcement of State laws giving you full protection in person and property, impartial justice will be secured to you by the strong arm of the national government.

CLINTON B. FISK,
Brevet Major General, Assistant Commissioner.

No. 2.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
STATES OF KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE,
Assistant Commissioner's Office, Nashville, Tenn., January 23, 1866.

GENERAL: *Kentucky*.—I have the honor to report progress in the State of Kentucky, where, for the last two weeks, I have devoted myself to the establishment of agencies and an inspection of the condition of the freedmen. I spent five days at Frankfort, the State capital, where I mingled freely with the members of the legislature. On the 11th instant I was present at a convention of the most prominent agriculturists of the State. I declined taking any part, publicly, in said convention, but met the State agricultural board in private session. I had very satisfactory interviews with them and other leading planters in the State. I convened the freedmen in large numbers at Frankfort, Lexington, and other points, and enlightened them as well as I could in reference to their new relations, their duties, and obligations.

I have made forty-one (41) appointments in the State; all of them are citizens excepting three. I selected the best men I could find for the positions. I consulted the governor of the State, the department commander, senators, representatives, and the freedmen. In many instances our superintendent is the county judge. Hon. William P. Thomasson, our superintendent at Louisville, is an old citizen, of good solid character, age, experience, heart, conscience, faith, and courage. He was formerly in Congress, and is an able lawyer. He will, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, discharge his duty fearlessly.

On the part of many of the politicians in Kentucky there is a bitter opposition to the bureau. Governor Bramlette is most cordial in his expressed approval of my official action, and, I think, earnest in his desire that the assembly so legislate as to give to the freedmen impartial justice. A majority of the legislators officially denounce the bureau, and pronounce its presence in Kentucky a usurpation of power, and the act of Congress by which it was estab-

lished unconstitutional. Just now there is at Frankfort a heated canvass for a United States senatorship in progress. Candidates for the position vie with each other in denouncing the Freedmen's Bureau. Men who have fought gallantly for the honor of their country's flag are willing to purchase promotion to the United States Senate at the expense of justice to thirty thousand of their fellow-citizens and fellow-soldiers too. The legislature makes no progress in the enactment of laws applicable to the new condition of things, but lengthy resolutions denunciatory of the bureau, and requesting the President to immediately withdraw the odious institution from the State, are discussed in protracted debate, and voted upon affirmatively with astonishing unanimity. Neither myself nor any of my subordinates are accused of much wrong-doing. We are even complimented as being just and conservative gentlemen; but the Freedmen's Bureau and *every soldier* of the United States must be immediately removed from Kentucky to prevent *irritation*, &c. If all the States were to so solemnly protest against the presence of United States troops within their borders, and the country should think best to gratify the clamor for immediate and entire removal that we hear from so many States, the government would necessarily be compelled to rent a parcel of ground in Canada on which to erect barracks for the accommodation of its withdrawn troops.

I assure you that in no portion of the country is this bureau more a positive necessity than in many counties of Kentucky, and for the sake of the nation's pledged faith to her wards, the freedmen, and, in behalf of humanity and justice, I implore you and the President to listen to no request for its withdrawal from the State until the civil authorities in the enforcement of impartial laws shall amply protect the persons and property of those for whose protection and defence this bureau is set.

I saw with my own eyes our fellow-soldiers, yet clad in the uniform of their country's army, fresh from their muster out of service, who within the last ten days were the victims of fiendish atrocity from the hands of their former masters in Kentucky. These returned soldiers had been to their old homes for their wives and children, and had for this offence been knocked down, whipped, and horribly bruised, and threatened with *shooting*, should they ever dare to set their feet on the premises of the old master again and intimate that their families were free. On the very day last week that Garrett Davis was engaged in denouncing the Freedmen's Bureau in the United States Senate, his own neighbors, who had fought gallantly in the Union army, were pleading with myself for the protection which the civil authorities of Kentucky fail to afford. The civil law prohibits the colored man from bearing arms; returned soldiers are by the civil officers dispossessed of their arms, and fined for violation of the law.

I would not be understood as representing all Kentucky as in resistance to freedom and justice—by no means. A large majority of her citizens will *say* they disapprove of this outrageous conduct, but *they do* nothing towards bringing the perpetrators of the crimes of brutality to justice. The mass of the people are *passive* in the presence of these great wrongs.

The freedmen of Kentucky are desirous of remaining in the State if they are permitted to do so on just terms. They are staying at their old homes marvellously well; but few comparatively have removed to the cities and towns.

The colored refugee home at Camp Nelson is rapidly closing out. I have about four hundred persons on my hands at that point now, and they are a precious lot of octogenarians, cripples, orphans, &c. I have received requests from several officials to take *from* their counties and *provide* for all the aged, infirm, sick, and orphans. The bureau is a good thing when burdens are to be borne. It is odious when it enforces justice.

I shall continue to conduct the bureau's affairs in Kentucky with as much prudence as possible, and hope to make its presence a blessing to the State.

I enclose herewith copies of two letters just received from Meade county. Mr. Stewart is circuit judge. It would, I fear, do great harm were the bureau to be withdrawn from any portion of the country where slavery has ceased to exist, as the result of the war, until the people shall have had ample time under the guardianship of the government to adjust their new relations on the basis of *impartial justice* to all men.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CLINTON B. FISK,

Brevet Major General, Assistant Commissioner.

Major General HOWARD,

Commissioner, &c., Washington, D. C.

Memorandum of report of General Fisk of January 23, 1866.

Kentucky.—Has spent two weeks in examining affairs in this State, and mingled freely with the members of the legislature and the prominent planters, and convened the freedmen together at various places, when he addressed them in regard to their new relations. Has made forty-one appointments in the State; all citizens but three. Has consulted the governor, department commander, senators, representatives, and freedmen. Selected Mr. Thomasson, a firm, honest, capable man, for Louisville. Governor Bramlette is in favor of the bureau, but the mass are bitterly opposed to it and clamorous for its withdrawal, denouncing the act creating it as unconstitutional. This is probably caused by the fact that they are now canvassing for United States senatorship. If all the States were so clamorous for removal of United States troops, and their wishes gratified, ground would have to be rented in Canada for barracks.

In no portion of the country is the bureau more necessary than in some parts of Kentucky, and General Fisk implores the President and Commissioner to listen to no request for withdrawal till impartial laws are made. Soldiers of United States colored troops are beaten, whipped, &c., and threatened with *shooting* for going to their old homes for their families. On the day that Garrett Davis was pleading for the withdrawal of the bureau from Kentucky his neighbors, lately United States soldiers, were pleading with General Fisk for its continuance. By civil law they are deprived of their arms and fined for carrying them. Those citizens of Kentucky who are not openly against the bureau are passive, and allow outrages to go unpunished.

Camp Nelson is nearly closed. Has been requested by several county officials to provide for all their aged, cripples, sick, and orphans. The bureau is a good thing to bear burdens, but to enforce justice is *odious*.

Enclosed letters from J. Stewart and W. F. Denton relative to the riotous proceedings of the late rebels towards freedmen at Meadeville, Kentucky, where not even the former owners of negroes are allowed to hire them.

BRANDENBURGH, KY., *December 29, 1865.*

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that the freedmen of this county have been grossly imposed on by former rebel owners. Whether they are rebels at present is for you to judge upon the information given me by the freedmen. I will state one circumstance, given me by Mr. Patterson, a member of company K, 118th United States colored infantry. He was honorably discharged the service on the 15th day of September, 1865. He came to this place and sent to the country for his wife and children. Their former owner, Shacklett, of

rebel notoriety, refused to give them up to their father and husband, and notifies the soldier if he comes on his lands for the purpose of getting them he will *shoot him*. He has not got them yet. Please inform me what course should be pursued in regard to the freedmen. We have no agent for the Freedmen's Bureau at this place. The disposition of the *would-be rebels* is to persecute the freedmen to the utmost extent.

Sir, another thing I wish to call to your attention is the oppression of returned Union soldiers. On the 18th of December, 1865, a Union soldier, formerly of the 17th Kentucky cavalry, came to this place, and was grossly beaten by a former rebel soldier (*guerilla*) and his friends; reason, that he had set negroes across the Ohio river. He was beaten for obeying an order issued by you to his officer and by his captain to him. The civil authorities have taken no notice of the disgraceful riot on the Sabbath. Such things have occurred on several occasions. The civil law here is in the hands of the rebels.

For character I refer you to Colonel E. W. Crittenden, United States army; Colonel James T. Bramlette, inspector general of Kentucky.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. F. DENTON,

Former Lieut. 12th Kentucky cavalry.

Major General PALMER.

BRANDENBURGH, KY., *January 4, 1866.*

I wrote some sort of letter to General Palmer. I was up there, having just come out of a scrimmage. I now can state to you more circumstantially matters that lie within your jurisdiction. There is a place about nine miles from this called Meadeville, formerly a guerilla headquarters. At that place there has been a reign of terror for two weeks. The pretence of the rascals concerned in it is to expel all the freedmen. They have made the declaration that no one shall hire a negro, not even the former owners of them. One man's houses were burned some days ago on the faith of a rumor that he was about to hire his former slaves and put them there to live.

The family of a certain John Blant Shacklett, together with a Jesse Murray Shacklett and Bill Shacklett, attempted to carry out their purpose here day before yesterday. They, with cocked pistols, paraded several negroes about the street, and went in search of some who had been in the army, and would undoubtedly have killed them if they had been found. Some of us (very few) went into business about this point, and they were soon cleaned out, two being badly wounded.

I learn that yesterday they were assembled in force at Meadeville. No process of law can be served upon them. Now, what are we to do? I cannot undertake the business, for I have been thumped to death nearly heretofore.

Please inform me what may be looked for at once.

Obediently, &c.,

J. STEWART.

General Fisk.

I just hear that yesterday at Meadeville a certain Mayor Harrison proclaimed that any one who hired a negro deserved to hang, and should be hung. This is a fellow they had charged as a spy, and I unfortunately lent a hand in getting him clear. It is certain that he went to pilot Berry and his gang through here last fall, and ought to be had up for that.

No. 3.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
STATES OF KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE,
Assistant Commissioner's Office, Nashville, Tenn., February 14, 1866.

GENERAL: *Kentucky*.—I regret that I am unable to report the bureau affairs progressing as smoothly in Kentucky as in Tennessee.

The freedmen of the State are very generally disposed to enter into labor contracts for wages or a share of the crop, and most of them prefer remaining in their own State to emigration elsewhere. On the part of a large majority of the whites, I believe there is an honest desire to adjust on a fair basis the new relations arising from the abolition of slavery, but the bureau is not a popular institution with them. They regard its presence among them as unauthorized—denounce its officials as usurpers and despots, and clamor for its immediate removal from the State.

In obedience to orders, immediately upon the ratification of the constitutional amendment forever abolishing and prohibiting slavery, I extended over the more than two hundred thousand (200,000) freedmen of Kentucky the supervision of this bureau, and appointed agents in a few counties only. Superintendents were selected from the citizens, and appointed upon the recommendation of the best men I could consult. The Kentucky legislature has, by numerous resolutions, called upon government to remove the bureau from the State—propositions to forever disqualify any citizen from holding an office in the State who might act as an agent of this bureau, were introduced and discussed. The official State paper (Louisville Democrat) has declared that, by the ratification of the constitutional amendment, the slavery question has become more unsettled than ever, and many of its readers believing its doctrines, practice accordingly, and still hold freedmen *as slaves*. These influences in opposition to freedom have rendered it difficult to conduct the bureau affairs in Kentucky with that harmony and efficiency which have elsewhere produced good results.

More than twenty-five thousand colored men of Kentucky have been soldiers in the army of the Union. Many of them were enlisted against the wishes of their masters, and now, after having faithfully served their country, and been honorably mustered out of its service, and return to their old homes, they are not met with joyous welcome, and grateful words for their devotion to the Union, but in many instances are *scourged, beaten, shot at*, and driven from their homes and families. Their arms are taken from them by the civil authorities, and confiscated for the benefit of the Commonwealth. The Union soldier is *fined* for bearing arms. Thus the right of the people to keep and bear arms as provided in the Constitution is *infringed*, and the government for whose protection and preservation these soldiers have fought is denounced as meddlesome and despotic when through its agents it undertakes to protect its citizens in a *constitutional right*. Kentuckians who followed the fortunes of John Morgan, and did all in their power to destroy the nation, go loaded down with pistols and knives, and are selected as candidates for high positions of honor and trust in the State. The loyal soldier is arrested and punished for bringing into the State the arms he has borne in battle for his country.

That you may have a bird's-eye view of the protection afforded the freedmen of Kentucky by the civil law and authorities, I have the honor to invite your attention to the following extracts from communications received from our correspondents in that State.

C. P. Oyler, of Covington, writes as follows:

"Jordan Finney and family (freedmen) lived in Walton, Kentucky; they owned a comfortable home. Two of the daughters were wives of colored soldiers, and lived with him. Returned rebel soldiers hereinafter named com-

bined to drive this family from the State. They attacked the house three times, abused the women and children, destroyed all their clothing, bedding, and furniture to the value of five hundred dollars, (\$500,) and finally drove them from their homes. The names of the perpetrators, so far as known, are Allen Arnold, John Arnold, Franklin Yowell, Woodford Fry, L. Snow and Robert Edwards; all live in Walton, Kentucky. An attempt was made to bring these parties to justice, but it failed, as *colored testimony could not be received*. This same man Finney has a daughter held as a slave by Mr. Widen Sheet, of Boone county, whom he values at one thousand dollars (\$1,000.) Sixteen armed men resisted Mr. Finney and an expressman when they went for the girl, and beat them cruelly with clubs and stones."

"An old colored man, named Baxter, was shot and killed by James Roberts, for refusing to let Roberts in his house. The civil authorities will neither arrest nor punish said Roberts, as there is no testimony except of colored persons." (Reported by Thomas Rice, Richmond, Kentucky.)

"Lindsley Taylor, of Richmond, stabbed a negro on the 30th of January, for no cause save that the negro did not wish said Lindsley to search his house. The civil authorities tried Taylor and acquitted him." (Reported by Thomas Rice, superintendent.)

L. L. Pinkerton, superintendent of Fayette county, at Lexington, reports that, "in his and the opinion of all whom he has consulted, the freedmen cannot receive their just rights without a considerable military force."

C. P. Oylor Covington, writes: "The civil officers, after the late action of the Kentucky legislature in regard to the Freedmen's Bureau, refused to co-operate with me, and manifest a disposition to drive the bureau out of the State. It will be impossible to secure to freedmen their just rights without the aid of a military force. Colored people are driven from their homes and their houses burned."

William Goodloe writes: "The counties of Boyle, Lincoln, and Mercer are infested with guerilla bands. Outrages are mostly committed upon colored persons. The evidence of colored persons is not taken in court. I am powerless to accomplish anything without soldiers."

"Peter Branford, a returned colored soldier, in Mercer county, was shot by James Poore, a white man, without cause or provocation."

Judge Samuel A. Spencer, of Green county, writes: "A great many colored men are beaten, their lives threatened, and they refused the privilege of returning home *because they have been in the army*. I cannot accept the agency on account of the action of the Kentucky legislature."

E. P. Ashcraft, of Meade county, writes: "Richard, William, Jesse, and John Shacklett and Martin Taylor, returned rebel soldiers, have on different occasions attacked negroes with fire-arms, and say they intend no d—d niggers shall live on this side the Ohio." "The civil authorities are powerless."

R. W. Thing, of Warren county, writes: "An old negro was killed by gunshot while attempting to run from a white boy eighteen years of age, to escape a whipping."

"A freedman was attacked in his cabin and shot. He and his wife ran to the woods, with bullets flying thick and fast around them from five or six revolvers, the woman escaping with her life by tearing off her *chemise* while running, thereby presenting a darker-colored mark."

"A woman was stabbed by a white woman in the neck, the knife penetrating the windpipe, for giving water to a Union soldier in a tumbler."

"A woman and her son were horribly cut and mangled with the lash and then hung by the neck until so nearly dead that water had to be thrown in their faces to revive them to make them acknowledge that they had set a house on fire."

"A woman received a severe cut in the head from a club in the hands of a man, who drove her from her home because her husband had joined the army."

"There are several cases of robbery of colored persons by returned rebels in uniform, in Russellville, Kentucky. The town marshal takes all arms from returned colored soldiers, and is very prompt in shooting the blacks whenever an opportunity occurs."

"I have a case in hand to-day where a white man knocked down an old man eighty years of age, because he asked for and urged the necessity of his pay for cutting eight cords of wood."

"There has been a large number of cases of women and children being driven from home on account of their husbands enlisting."

"It is dangerous for colored people to go into Logan, Todd, Barren, and the north part of Warren counties, after their children."

"A freedman's wife left her former master and came to live with him, (her husband.) She was followed and shot at."

"A furloughed soldier of the 12th United States colored artillery was murdered at Auburn, Kentucky, while sitting on his bed. The civil authorities do nothing in the case."

"An old freedman in Allen county was shot and killed because he would not allow himself to be whipped by a young man."

"Major Lawrence, of the 17th Kentucky cavalry, reports that a negro was shot in one of the streets of Russellville last night. No cause whatever for it. Several negroes came to me to know what they should do, saying they had been robbed by a party of men wearing the Confederate States uniform. The judges and justices of the peace in almost every instance are rebels of very strong prejudices, who will not even take notice of the most *hideous outrages*, and if a case is turned over to them they will not administer justice. The action of the courts in southern Kentucky indicates that the day is *far distant* when a negro can secure justice at the hands of the civil law."

"In Grant county a band of outlaws, styling themselves 'moderators,' made an attack upon the colored citizens for the purpose of driving them from the State. They went late in the night to their homes, took them from their beds, stripped and whipped them until they were unable to walk."

Colonel William P. Thomasson, of Louisville, Kentucky, writes that "outrages and wrongs upon freedmen are numerous, especially upon returned colored soldiers. A few nights since a colored soldier just mustered out, with his money in his pocket and a new suit of clothes on his back, was waiting for the cars at Deposit station, a few miles from Louisville; four or five young rowdies of the place set upon him to rob him. He was a light-colored man, and one of the robbers said to his fellows, 'He is a *white* man; let him alone.' A dispute arose as to his color, and he was taken into a grocery, a lamp was lit, and the question of his color settled. He was then robbed of his money, arms, and clothing, was stripped to his shirt, and told to run. He did run, and was shot at while escaping, and the shot took effect in his hand."

I am in daily receipt of similar reports from our superintendents, judges, sheriffs, and military officers. Some of the writers dare not be known as giving this information, fearing assassination as the consequence.

For narrating at a freedmen's commission anniversary meeting in Cincinnati, on the 18th ultimo, what I had myself seen of brutalities in the "Blue Grass," I have been denounced in the Kentucky legislature as a liar and slanderer. A committee has been appointed to investigate the matter. I have furnished them the names of witnesses, and requested that their powers be enlarged, and they authorized to investigate the condition of the freedmen throughout the State; but I have good reason for believing that the committee will simply make a report that General Fisk is a great liar, and should be removed from office, &c. It is well to remember that a more select number of vindictive, pro-slavery, rebellious legislators cannot be found than the majority of the Kentucky legislature. The President of the United States was denounced in the senate as a

worse traitor than Jefferson Davis, and that, too, before the bureau tempest had reached them.

The entire opposition is political, a warfare waged against *loyalty, freedom, and justice*.

I have endeavored to administer the affairs of the bureau in Kentucky precisely as in Tennessee; have studied to be conciliatory in every particular and not to interfere in the least with the civil affairs of the State, except my duties and orders imperatively demanded it. As yet, the legislature have enacted no laws securing impartial liberty and right, and I very much fear they will not at this session. The late letter of Major General Palmer, on Kentucky affairs, is truthful and candid. I wish her good people would heed his counsel, and her lawmakers follow his wise suggestions.

There are many old, infirm, and sick, and orphans, in Kentucky, who have been thrown upon the government for support. Rations were issued to this class in December at a cost of four thousand nine hundred and ninety-three and fifty-six one-hundredths dollars (\$4,993 $\frac{56}{100}$)—eight-fold the cost of sustaining the same class of persons in Tennessee the same month. In the latter State the people have much more generously treated the unfortunate freedmen, especially the families of fallen soldiers, than have the Kentuckians; hence the cause of the increased expense to the government of providing for the destitute freedmen. Every effort is being made to secure homes for the widows and orphans in other States. A large number have been kindly received and provided for in Ohio and Indiana. The "Western Freedmen's Aid Commission" have rendered me valuable service in locating this class in comfortable permanent homes.

In making this extended report of Kentucky affairs I wish nothing to "extenuate or aught set down in malice" It is best that you understand the case fully. I rejoice that there are so many persons in the State who treat the freedmen justly and generously. Outlaws in different sections of the State, encouraged by the pro-slavery press, which daily denounces the government and its officials, make brutal attacks and raids upon the freedmen, who are defenceless, for the civil law-officers disarm the colored man and hand him over to armed marauders. In neither Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, nor Arkansas, where I have had an opportunity of observation, does there such a fiendish spirit prevail as in some portions of Kentucky. I trust that ere long the better portion of the people will rise in their indignation and demand that justice be done to all the citizens of the State.

It has fallen to my lot to officially stand by the death-bed of slavery in the United States. Kentucky's throes are but the aspiring agonies of the great barbarism.

I trust the government will insist upon strict justice for every man, woman, and child who through the Red sea of civil strife has marched from slavery to freedom.

I will try to do my whole duty regardless of denunciations, jeers, and threats of assassination. I will give cheerful heed to your admonitions and counsels.

While I remain in this position I desire the power to protect the poor, the weak, and the ignorant, who confidently look to this bureau for the protection which the State, made rich by their unrequited toil, yet fails to afford them.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CLINTON B. FISK,

Brevet Major General, and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General HOWARD,

Commissioner, &c., Washington, D. C.

No. 4.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
 STATES OF KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE,
Assistant Commissioner's Office, Nashville, Tenn., February 14, 1866.

GENERAL: *Tennessee*.—I have the honor to report continued improvement in our bureau affairs in Tennessee. In industry, education, good order, and justice, there is steady advancement. There are but few able-bodied idle freedmen in the State. The emigration from town and city to plantations in the country has been large. Our superintendents, chosen generally from the citizens, have earnestly and successfully labored to place the freedmen in good homes, at fair wages, or for a share of the crop raised.

There are in the State but few dependents, to whom government rations are issued. The cost of subsistence furnished by the government in the month of December to the aged, infirm, orphans, and sick in the entire State, was only six hundred and twenty dollars and twenty-eight cents (\$620 28.)

Organizations among the freedmen themselves, for the relief of their own poor, have rendered valuable service. The "Nashville Provident Association," a society conducted by the colored people of that city, has its coal and wood depots, soup-house, physician, &c. This society relieves the suffering poor without distinction of color, and its daily reports exhibit that a greater number of white than of colored persons are its beneficiaries; many widows and orphans whose husbands and fathers fell fighting to perpetuate slavery, have been fed and warmed through the kindly offices of the Freedmen's Association for the Relief of the Poor. Various benevolent societies of the northern States, through their agents and teachers, have contributed largely to the personal relief of the suffering. The legislature has, by recent enactment, admitted colored persons to the rights of suitor and witness in the courts of the State, and the law will become operative at an early date.

Through the rich agricultural districts preparations are being made for vigorous industry the present year; fences are being rebuilt, plantations stocked with teams, implements, and seeds, and a determination manifested generally to redeem the waste places, repair the desolations of war, and again place the Commonwealth on the high road to prosperity. It shall be my constant aim to so conduct the affairs of this bureau as to aid in the good work of complete restoration and substantial progress.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CLINTON B. FISK,

Brevet Major General, Assistant Commissioner.

Major General HOWARD,

Commissioner, &c., Washington, D. C.

No. 5.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Headquarters Ass't Com'r, State of North Carolina,
Raleigh, N. C., January 15, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to transmit herewith my report of the various operations of this bureau for the quarter ending December 31, 1865. The figures and facts speak so plainly for themselves that I need add but very few remarks. Defective as our organization is, in some respects, hampered by its dependence upon, and subjection to, other branches of the War Department; yet having got established and its machinery put in motion, it is doing its work with vigor and success. Many changes among my subordinate officers have

been caused by the muster out of their regiments, but the losses sustained have been partially compensated by details from the Veteran Reserve Corps. My efforts to secure the services of citizens as agents of the bureau have not met with success. Immediately after your visit here in October, I addressed a note to each member of the constitutional convention, requesting him to give me the name of some suitable person in his own county to be appointed to this office. But though so many promised to you their hearty co-operation in organizing this agency, not one replied to my request. I have, however, by other means, found a few who were willing to accept the position, and some of them have done good service; others have proved unfit for the duties required, not being able to comprehend that a negro can be a free man, or can have any rights which a white man is bound to respect. My experience so far is against the appointment of any other than military officers. Even these, after being mustered out, are not as efficient as when in the military service; they fail to command respect; they do not inspire the freedmen with confidence.

As the year has drawn to a close, all the officers of the bureau have been busy settling up claims for labor during the past season. The old story has been repeated thousands of times: no definite bargain made, no wages promised; but, "Massa said stay till the crop is made and he would do what was right;" on that point, "what is right," arises the dispute. But when the parties can be brought together and all the facts heard, it is in most cases easy to make a satisfactory decision. Captain Evans reported that as many as one hundred and fifty claims and difficulties of this kind were brought before him, in Warren county, at the close of the year. So long as these claims and questions of wages were unsettled, it was natural that the freedmen should refuse to enter into any new contracts for another year. They wanted a little experience to give them faith. And it gives me great pleasure to state that in a large majority of cases a fair settlement has been effected. I have put the question to officers in all parts of the State, "How large a proportion of the white people are willing to treat the negroes with fairness?" The answer is, "From three-fourths to four-fifths." The other fourth or fifth would oppress them and defraud them, if permitted; perhaps a larger proportion might show a disposition to do this were it not for the restraining presence of a military force. One sitting a few days in one of our offices and listening to complaints, from morning till night, might suppose that the whole laboring population was unsettled. But such is not the case; the great mass have made their bargains for the coming year, and trains are seen moving from the towns to the farming districts. So generally have the freedmen sought employment, and obtained it, that the demands for laborers cannot be easily supplied. If, in some instances, they leave their employers, it is no more than we should expect, and often it will not be difficult to discover a good reason. By an arrangement with L. B. Olds & Co., land agents, I have an intelligence office in nearly every county.

The expectation that lands would be granted by government—a hope first kindled by rebel politicians in their efforts "to fire the southern heart," and afterwards increased by the confiscation act—has now passed away. All officers of the bureau discountenanced such hopes, by public addresses and circulars, widely scattered; but so fixed had they become before the war closed, that it was not easy to eradicate them. When, however, Christmas actually passed, and the year ended without any gifts of the kind, it was admitted that we had told them the truth, and that they had been deceived by the talk of their former masters. So, also, on the other hand, have the idle and conscience-begotten fears of insurrection passed away; the holidays have gone by and no outbreaks have occurred. All admit that a more quiet and orderly Christmas has never been enjoyed in this region. The history of the world may be challenged for another instance of such good conduct, in similar circumstances, as the freedmen have thus far maintained.

During the quarter thirty-seven (37) cases of violent assault upon freedmen, or other criminal acts, have been reported to the military authorities for trial, or such action as might be deemed proper. Of these thirty-seven cases, the only ones brought to trial, so far as this bureau has information, are those of "Isaac and Wiley, freedmen, of the town of Salisbury, Rowan county," on the charge of "larceny," of which they were found "not guilty," and discharged. Several cases reported during the previous quarter have been tried; among them are—

1. Emanuel Baxter, (colored :) "Assault with intent to commit rape." Not guilty.

2. John W. Gorman, (white :) "Assault and battery." Guilty; fined \$50, and imprisoned thirty days. Fine remitted by reviewing officer.

3. Stephen C. Lee, (white :) "Murder." Found guilty, and sentenced to be hung. Sentence remitted by reviewing officer on the ground that malice was not proved.

4. Joseph Corpening, (white :) "Assault with intent to kill." Found guilty of "shooting with intent to maim." Sentence five hundred dollars' fine and ninety days' imprisonment.

5. George A. Pitts, J. A. Propst, William Ristler, Alfred Sitaker, Thomas Williford, Gibson Kline, and Dwight Russell, (white :) "Riot and assault and battery." Pitts, Propst, Ristler, Williford, and Sitaker found guilty, fined, and imprisoned; Kline and Russell acquitted

6. Shock, (colored :) "Rape on colored girl." Finding, guilty; sentenced to be hung. Sentence mitigated to one year's hard labor.

7. Monroe Davis, (white :) "Riot and assault and battery." Guilty, and imprisoned four months.

8. Privates Bloom, Shannon, and Lims, 128th Indiana volunteers: "Assault upon freedmen, &c." Guilty, and sentenced to loss of six months' pay.

9. Henry Brown, (colored :) "Theft." Guilty, and imprisoned two months.

10. Guion Earp, (white :) "Maltreatment of freedman, and assault and battery." Guilty; sentenced to hard labor on public works two years.

Some of the cases reported during the last quarter are as follows:

1. Willis P. Moore, charged with the murder of a colored man.

2. Reddick Kearney and others, Pitt county. Riot and murder of two freedmen.

3. Magistrates of Brunswick county sentenced two colored men to be sold into servitude for five years. This case was acted upon promptly by General Crook, and the freedmen released.

Contrary to my fears as expressed in a former report, there is no increase of dependents as winter advances. The rations issued have steadily diminished.

The demands for clothing have been great, but the supplies now on hand from the quartermaster's department are ample for men and boys. It is more difficult to furnish what is needed by women and children. There are many cases of great destitution among whites, which I should be glad to relieve; but as they are not "loyal refugees," they do not come within my jurisdiction.

While there has been a decrease of dependents there has been a gratifying increase of schools and of pupils attending them, as will be seen in the admirably prepared report of Mr. F. A. Fiske, superintendent of schools, showing that though the novelty of the privilege of learning is now gone, the interest of the people in the education of their children has not abated. In some instances planters have established schools for their employés, as a means of promoting good order and contentment. It is also very gratifying to see a few churches organizing Sabbath schools for colored children. The Baptist church in this city setting a noble example, has already a large freedmen's Sabbath school in successful operation.

By means of the apprenticeship system, comfortable homes have been provided for a large number of orphans and other destitute children. The system

is popular, but I am very suspicious of it. The practice of binding out children is dangerous, inasmuch as it fosters the old ideas of compulsory labor and dependence. Still, with proper safeguards, it may be useful as a temporary expedient.

Under the direction of Surgeon Hogan, the hospital department is now well organized. His report exhibits fully the sanitary condition of freedmen, and the means used for the relief of the sick.

In the land reports forwarded herewith will be found a complete list of all farms and town lots restored, with their estimated value, and another list of those remaining in the possession of the bureau. The lands remaining are of but little value, and will afford but small revenue. But the balance in the treasury will pay current expenses, until it shall be determined by Congress whether the bureau is to be continued or not; and if so, by what means it shall live.

For convenience of reference, I present the principal facts gathered from the reports of staff officers and superintendents of districts in the following tabular form :

Land report.

	No.	Aggregate No of acres.	Estimated value.
Farms or plantations restored during the six months ending December 31, 1865.....	149	70,000	\$693,920
Town lots restored during the six months ending December 31, 1865.....	422	.....	1,900,288
Farms or plantations remaining on hand January 1, 1866.....	87	13,650	108,200
Town lots remaining on hand January 1, 1866.....	33	.....	100,000

Statistics.

	Quarter ending Dec. 31, 1865.	Previous quarter, end- ing Sept. 30, 1865.
Contracts witnessed.....	327	257
Freedmen employed by contract.....	3,488	1,847
Schools established.....	86	63
Teachers employed.....	119	85
Scholars attending.....	8,506	5,624
Cases of difficulty reported in full.....	325	257
Cases of crime reported for trial.....	37	12
Cases not reported in writing.....	3,043	Several thousand.
Rations issued.....	333,834	508,924
Value of rations issued.....	\$73,443 48	\$106,865 11
Hospitals.....	12	14
Sick in hospital.....	3,132	5,441
Orphans apprenticed.....	393	42
Deaths in hospital.....	555	2,642

Financial report for the quarter ending December 31, 1865.

RECEIPTS.

Balance as per last quarterly report.....	\$11,001 48
For rents, &c., in October, 1865.....	1,241 38
For rents, &c., in November, 1865.....	2,074 85
For rents, &c., in December, 1865.....	863 88
	\$15,181 59

EXPENDITURES.

Current expenses in October, 1865.....	\$1,767 99	
Current expenses in November, 1865.....	2,131 38	
Current expenses in December, 1865.....	3,484 06	
		<u>\$7,383 43</u>
Balance on hand January 1, 1866.....		<u>7,798 16</u>

Very respectfully,
 Major General O. O. HOWARD, *Commissioner.*

E. WHITTLESEY,
Colonel and Assistant Commissioner.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, &C.,
 HEADQUARTERS ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
 Raleigh, N. C., December 31, 1865.

LIEUTENANT: I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of the medical department of the bureau for the three months ending on the 31st day of December, 1865.

On reporting as surgeon-in-chief of the district on September 1, I found that there were no medical officers on duty with the bureau. A request was immediately made to Surgeon Horner, chief of the medical department of the bureau at Washington, to have surgeons ordered here, none being obtainable in this State. While waiting the arrival of medical officers I made an inspection of the several camps of the eastern and southern districts.

The following acting assistant surgeons are employed under contract, and paid out of the funds of the bureau :

Assignment of medical officers.

Name.	Rank.	Assigned.	Station.
H. R. Curtis	A. A. Surgeon	Sept. 28, 1865	Beaufort.
J. E. Winants.....	A. A. Surgeon	Oct. 9, 1865	Wilmington.
Louis Masson	A. A. Surgeon	Oct. 14, 1865	Raleigh.
J. K. Fleming	A. A. Surgeon	Oct. 14, 1865	Newbern.
A. B. Chapin	A. A. Surgeon	Oct. 18, 1865	Roanoke island.
D. H. Abbott	A. A. Surgeon	Oct. 30, 1865	Charlotte.
S. A. Bell	A. A. Surgeon	Nov. 23, 1865	Greensboro.

The following regimental officers were detailed to attend the sick and wounded refugees and freedmen by the medical director of the department :

Name.	Rank.	Assigned.	Station.
M. F. R. Hoffman.....	Surg. 123th Indiana vols...	Nov. 4, 1865	Salisbury.
D. Salisbury.....	Asst. Surg. 128th Ind'a vols.	Dec. 18, 1865	Morganton.

Instructions were issued to each surgeon on his assignment to duty to immediately make a requisition for a three months' supply of medical and hospital stores for the number of persons under charge of the bureau at his post.

In obedience to these instructions medical stores have been drawn in accordance with Circular No. 5, Standard Supply Table for Refugees and Freedmen, Surgeon General's Office, Washington, August 3, 1865, for seven thousand (7,000) persons, and outfits drawn to establish hospitals for six hundred patients.

Hospitals are now in operation with accommodations for four hundred and sixty-five (465) patients.

Hospital outfit drawn.		Capacity of hospitals established.	
		Non-contagious diseases.	Small-pox.
	<i>Beds.</i>	<i>Beds.</i>	<i>Beds.</i>
Wilmington.....	100	50	25
Raleigh.....	100	75	40
Beaufort.....	100	50	25
Newbern.....	100	100	.....
Roanoke island.....	100	50	.....
Charlotte.....	25	.....	.....
Salisbury.....	25	25	.....
Greensboro'.....	25	25	.....
Morganton.....	25	.....	.....
Total.....	600	465	.....

At Wilmington we have had to use the buildings at Camp Jackson as a hospital until better could be obtained. Those buildings are too small and ill-proportioned, each 12 by 16 feet, to answer the proper requirements of a hospital. Frequent efforts have been made since last September to obtain the government buildings at Camp Lamb, (five buildings, each 100 by 25 feet,) to have them converted into a hospital. The bureau has lately got possession of them through the district commander at Wilmington, and they are now being fitted up for hospital purposes by Brevet Major Mann, assistant quartermaster. At Charlotte no hospital has as yet been established, owing to our inability to obtain buildings. An order issued some time ago by the department commander, transferring government buildings at that point to the bureau, will in a very short time enable us to open a hospital there. Application was made on the eleventh of the present month to the department commander for two of the buildings now used as a United States hospital at Morehead City for hospital purposes for freedmen. No reply has so far been made to the application.

DISPENSARIES.

Dispensaries have been established at Raleigh, Newbern, and Wilmington, from which large numbers of poor, both white and colored, receive medical aid.

REPORT OF SICK AND WOUNDED.

Tabular statement of sick and wounded from October 1 to December 31, 1865.

Date.	Remaining under treatment.	Gain during the month.	Total under treatment during the month.	Discharged during the month.	Died during the month.	Percentage of deaths during the month.	Remaining at end of the month.
October 1.....	299	1, 151	1, 450	612	274	19	564
November 1.....	564	911	1, 475	964	152	10	359
December 1.....	359	1, 070	1, 429	788	129	9	512
Total.....	.....	3, 132	.....	2, 364	555	.....	.....

Months.	Average No. of beds.		Average attendance.		Births.		No. vaccinations.
	Occupied.	Vacant.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	
October...	100	151	8	12	3	2	488
November.	155	182	10	22	5	6	511
December.	200	202	16	28	27	39	378

On examining the above table of sick and wounded it will be seen that there were sick, on October 1, two hundred and ninety-nine (299) cases. Taken sick and treated during the three months, 3,132; total number of cases treated, 3,431; discharged from treatment, 2,364; died, 555; remaining under treatment at date of this report, 512. Two hundred and thirty-four (234) of the above cases were small-pox.

I proposed, towards the end of last month, to the medical director of the department, Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Coolidge, United States army, that surgeons on duty with the bureau, when stationed where there were detachments of troops unprovided with medical officers, could be ordered to attend them; requesting at the same time that medical officers stationed with troops would, in return, be ordered to take care of freedmen. This Surgeon Coolidge readily assented to. As a consequence, the troops stationed on Roanoke island, at Charlotte, and at Greensboro', are attended by surgeons employed by the bureau. The freedmen at Salisbury and Morganton are taken care of by surgeons belonging to the army.

TRANSPORTATION.

Medical officers in some of the sub-districts have, from time to time, found it very difficult to obtain ambulances, or other transportation, for the use of the sick, from the quartermaster's department. To provide against a recurrence of this inconvenience in future, I would recommend that officers of the bureau who are qualified to hold such property be instructed to do so, when it is deemed necessary to the better working of the bureau, as authorized by General Orders No. 147, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, October 10, 1865.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. K. HOGAN,

Surgeon U. S. Volunteers, Surgeon-in-Chief.

FRED. H. BEECHER,

Lieutenant and Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

Official copy :

FRED. H. BEECHER,

Lieutenant and Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

[Extract.]

RALEIGH, February 26, 1866.

DEAR COLONEL: I have not had time to make a collection of papers for you. The enclosed are from the Raleigh Progress, the most loyal paper in this State, I think. There is no doubt in my mind about the sentiment of the people. All (with very few exceptions) hail the veto with delight, but when they find it does not suspend our operations, nor modify them, they will cool down. I am not at all disturbed by it, but go right on just as before.

* * * * *

Yours truly,

E. WHITTLESEY.

Colonel WOODHULL.

SPIRIT OF THE MORNING PRESS.

The Standard devotes nearly three columns to extracts from the northern press, and comments thereon, concerning the President's veto message, all of which only proves that what has been called the democratic or copperhead press supports the President, while the republican press has broken with him and adhere to their party and its principles.

Of the message vetoing the Freedmen's Bureau bill, the Standard says: "We have carefully read the late message of the President. We indorse every word of it. The President has taken a true position in relation to the constitutional power of the government on the subject, and so far as the operation of the measure vetoed is concerned, he has shown that it would have been a fruitful source of corruption, and that the patronage which such a measure would necessarily have carried with it would have been too great to be placed in the hands of one man. He is ready and willing to do anything reasonable, just, or proper to protect the free colored people of the south, but he could not give his assent to this bill. We believe the practical workings of the bill, instead of benefiting the colored race, would have resulted in their lasting injury.

"Nor is there anything in the veto message of which a Union man can justly complain. The President simply insists on the principle of his plan for restoring the States, and he urges the full admission at this time of no State except Tennessee, whose past action has been such as to justify the fullest confidence, and whose members elect to Congress can take the prescribed oath. All that part of the message relating to the admission of the States turns upon the necessity that the members of Congress presented by them for admission shall be unmistakably loyal men, or, in other words, 'representatives whose loyalty cannot be questioned under any existing constitutional or legal test.'

"We have frequently heard the question asked, Will Andrew Johnson stand firm? There need be no apprehension on this score. He will devote all his nerve and all his energies to the restoration of the Union on a just basis, and in doing this he will not desert the Union men of the south."

The Sentinel devotes much of its space to the banking question, which is rather too heavy for our columns. That paper indorses the veto message of the President in the warmest terms. The Sentinel says: "We appropriate considerable space to-day to the able message of President Johnson, on returning the Freedmen's Bureau bill without his signature. The document is so marked by sobriety, clearness of argument and justness of conclusion, and withal so fully accords with the teachings of the fathers of the republic, that one in reading it almost imagines he is listening to the messages of some of the earlier Presidents. If we do not wholly mistake the temper of the people of the north, the honest masses everywhere will indorse it. All honor to Andrew Johnson. The circumstances under which he takes the step eminently point to him as the man for the times—indicate a firmness of purpose seldom exhibited, and that he is to prove the breakwater against the radical waves which dash madly against the Constitution. Let the people everywhere sustain the President, by the most careful avoidance of everything which would weaken him before the masses of the north, and by the prompt adoption of a policy which will give him all the moral support possible. The message will bear re-reading and careful pondering."

We have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that the vetoing of the Freedmen's Bureau bill will delay the admission of members of Congress from the southern States, and render more distant the day of final, satisfactory restoration. With 30 to 18 in the Senate, and 109 to 40 in the House of Repre-

sentatives, against the President, he cannot expect his policy, when in antagonism to that of the majority of Congress, to succeed. The Executive may counsel and advise, but cannot expect to control the legislative department of the government.

We fear that the union of these States is much further from being accomplished than many persons imagine, and that we are nearer to the beginning of another revolution than the most reflecting are willing to admit. The scenes recently enacted at the capital of Kentucky, and the blood-heat excitement prevailing at Washington, bode no good. The staid and steady *National Intelligencer*, the reputed organ of the President, speaks of the majority of Congress as a "revolutionary cabal;" and several members of the Kentucky legislature have expressed their readiness to take up arms again against the government.

The generals and their brave followers of the great national armies have done their work well, and as far as arms could go crushed the rebellion and restored the peace of the country; but there is evidently a want of patriotism and statesmanship both at Washington and the State capitals. The end of our troubles is not yet.

The President's policy.—The people must come up to the support of the President. However we may differ on minor points, or on some that are important, we cannot afford to permit those differences to cause us to hesitate one moment in yielding to him, in the coming struggle with the radical majority in Congress, an unswerving support. We are powerless to do more than to give the mere support of our approval. We have no votes in Congress to rally around the small band of his supporters, and swell their numbers, but the united sentiment of a people so intelligent as those of the southern States must carry with it a tremendous power.

Since writing the above, we have received despatches from Washington city announcing that the President has vetoed the amendment to the bill for the increase of the power of the Freedmen's Bureau. Here the issue between the radicals and the President is fairly joined.

Let the south as one man sustain the Executive. Before this decisive step on the part of the President was taken, the people of Virginia had begun to assemble in mass meetings to approve the policy of reconstruction. Let the people of North Carolina in like manner move. Shall an initiatory move be made in Wayne county during the present court week?

What say the people?—*Goldboro' News.*

No. 6.

HEADQUARTERS ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, BUREAU REFUGEES,
FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS, SOUTH CAROLINA,
Charleston, South Carolina, January 15, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to herein submit a brief made up from reports received from the A. S. A. commissioners and agents of the bureau in South Carolina during the month of December, 1865. It shows, as far as can be ascertained, the state of affairs as existing during that month in the several districts of the State.

Anderson District.—Here, in July last, a planter proposed to his hands that they should sign a contract to work for him during their lifetime. They refusing, the planter drove them away without food or compensation for labor done. Four (4) of them, three (3) men and one (1) woman, went towards Columbia, but

before reaching there they were overtaken by two (2) white men, mounted and armed, whom the planter had sent in pursuit, asking the freedmen where they were going; and being told, they seized them, and taking them to the adjacent woods, tied two (2) of the men by their hands and feet to trees, leaving the third man to hold their horses. The whites then each fired a shot at each of their two victims, killing them instantly. The third escaped by running to and jumping into a creek near by, the whites firing at but not hitting him. They then stripped the woman naked, gave her fifty (50) lashes on the bare back, and compelled her to walk back to the plantation. She was then put at the plough by day and confined by night for a week without anything to eat. At this time an officer happened at the place to whom the woman told her situation. The officer took her and her children to the place where her husband and the other man had been killed, found remnants of the bodies and buried them, then sent the woman and her children to Charleston. On her arrival she gave birth to a dead infant; her sickness preventing her from telling her story until this time. The planter paid the two murderers for their services with twenty (20) yards of cloth, three (3) bushels of rice, two (2) bushels of salt, and a government wagon. The case has been referred to the department commander with the request that the murderers be brought to justice.

Beaufort District.—Agent on St. Helena island reports two decisions of provost court. In the first case, a freedman was found guilty of ordering the former owner off the place, and threatening to shoot him if he did not leave. He was sentenced to two months' imprisonment and to pay a fine of one hundred dollars (\$100) and costs, ten dollars, (\$10.) In the second case, two white men went to the place they formerly owned. They were charged by the freedmen with threatening their lives unless they left the place. They turned out one man, threatening to shoot him if he came back. Notwithstanding strong evidence against them, they were acquitted, but advised to be more careful in future. The inference is, that the color of the parties affected the decision of the court. Large numbers of the old and infirm, utterly destitute, are coming into the district from the upper country.

Charleston District.—A freedman reports that his employer beat him violently, and then, being irritated against the freedman because the court decreed seventy-five dollars (\$75) damages for the assault, refused to give him any portion of the crop. The owner was in the rebel army and returned to the place some months after the working of the crop had been commenced by the freedmen. In another part of the district a young woman, big with child, was, without any provocation thereto, tied up by the thumbs, and while in that position was brutally kicked by the overseer, the family of the woman being then all ordered off the place. From another part of the district a planter took his old hands into North Carolina, and after working them nearly all the year, sent them with little or no compensation to make their way to their old home as best they might. On another place two of the hands (a man and woman) were stripped naked and brutally whipped; and another who left on that account was deprived of a horse (his personal property) and refused any share of the crop. In another part a planter had one hundred (100) people on his place who have made for him a good crop, of which he refuses to give them any part, even for their immediate use and support.

Columbia District.—The officer reports alarming destitution. Numbers of aged and infirm are coming in. There have not been as many complaints as formerly of brutal treatment. He thinks many contracts will be made for 1866, as both planters and freedmen seem disposed to come to terms, and a better feeling and understanding has arisen between employers and employés. Schools are flourishing and the number of scholars is increasing.

Georgetown District.—Here the number of applicants for support is increasing as the cold weather comes on and the slender crops of the freedmen

become exhausted. No more rations are issued, however, than is actually necessary. Every contract made in 1865 has been broken by the freedmen, the crops raised being barely sufficient to keep them from starving. No contracts have been made for 1866, though the planters generally are anxious to agree to any reasonable terms, and the officers try to induce the freedmen to contract. The idea that they are to receive lands still prevails, in the face of orders and verbal explanations to the contrary. The officer thinks they may contract on finding that they are to receive no lands; reports that many freedmen are supporting themselves by shooting game, and that stealing is becoming prevalent; states that the whites apprehended an outbreak during the holidays, and that proper precautions were accordingly taken, but that such caution was quite unnecessary, as the freedmen were perfectly quiet. They have no confidence in the planters' word, and the presence of an officer is imperative in every transaction. Small-pox still prevails to a considerable extent.

Orangeburg District.—All here is very quiet. No disturbances of any kind are reported. Crops are being satisfactorily divided, but are generally very small. Few contracts are being made for 1866. Some freedmen are desirous of contracting, but receive little or no encouragement from the planter. Some planters refuse to contract because they fear orders from the bureau conflicting with State legislation on the subject. They desire, in fact, and are working for the abolishment of the bureau, as they want to manage the freedmen without its assistance; but it is doubtful whether their management would be a judicious one. The freedmen have no faith in their late masters, but rest it solely in the bureau. Much difficulty and distress is anticipated in consequence of the planters' disposition to drive away the aged and infirm on account of their inability to work. Schools are doing well. Many utterly destitute refugees are in the district.

Besides those cases specified in the report, where freedmen have been driven away by their employers without pay for labor done, a report has been received from one of the agents on the coast, giving a list of seven planters who have thus defrauded their employes out of pay to the amount of over seventeen hundred dollars, (\$1,700.)

I am, general, with high respect, your obedient servant,

R. SAXTON,

Brevet Major General, Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

*Commissioner Bureau Refugees, Freedmen,
and Abandoned Lands, Washington City.*

Memorandum of report of cruelties in the several districts of South Carolina.

Anderson District.—In July last, a planter proposed to his hands that they should contract to work for him during their lifetime; they refusing, he drove them away without food or pay. Three men and one woman went towards Columbia; they were overtaken by two white men, who shot and killed two of the men; the third escaped; they then stripped the woman naked and gave her fifty lashes, and compelled her to return to the plantation, where she was put at the plough by day and confined at night for a week without food, until an officer happened that way, to whom she told her situation; he took her and her children to the place where her husband and the other man had been killed, found remnants of the bodies and buried them, then sent the woman and children to Charleston, where on her arrival she gave birth to a dead infant, her sickness preventing her from telling her story until this time. The planter paid the mur-

derers 20 yards cloth, 3 bushels rice, 2 bushels salt, and a government wagon for their services; case referred to department commander with request that the murderers be brought to justice.

Beaufort District.—Agent on St. Helena island reports two decisions of provost court: 1st, a freedman was guilty of ordering the former owner off the place and threatening to shoot him if he did not leave; sentenced to two months' imprisonment and fined \$100 and costs, \$10. 2d, two white men went to the place they formerly owned; they were charged by the freedmen with threatening their lives if they did not leave the place; they turned out one man, threatening to shoot him if he came back; notwithstanding strong evidence against them, they were acquitted, but advised to be more careful in future.

Charleston District.—A freedman reports that his employer beat him violently, and then, being irritated because the court decreed \$75 damages for the assault, refused to give the freedman any portion of the crop. He was in the rebel army, and returned to the place some months after the working of the crop had been commenced by the freedmen. In another part of the district a young woman, big with child, was tied up by the thumbs and brutally kicked by the overseer, and the family of the woman were ordered off the place. From another part, a planter took his old hands into North Carolina, and after working them nearly all the year, sent them back with little or no compensation. On another place, a man and woman were stripped naked and brutally whipped, and another who left on that account was deprived of a horse (his personal property) and refused any share of the crop. In another part, a planter had 100 people on his place, who made for him a good crop, of which he refuses to give them any part, even for their immediate support.

Columbia District.—The officer reports alarming destitution; numbers of aged and infirm are coming in. There have not been as many complaints as formerly of brutal treatment. Many contracts will be made for 1866, as both planters and freedmen seem disposed to come to terms, and a better feeling and understanding has arisen between employers and employés.

Georgetown District.—The number of applicants for support is increasing as the cold weather comes on and the slender crops of the freedmen become exhausted. Every contract made in 1865 has been broken by the freedmen, the crops raised being barely sufficient to keep them from starving. No contracts have been made for 1866, though the planters are anxious to agree upon any reasonable terms, and the officers try to induce the freedmen to contract. The idea that they are to receive lands still prevails, notwithstanding contrary orders and explanations. Many freedmen are supporting themselves by shooting game; stealing is becoming prevalent. The whites apprehended an outbreak during holidays and proper precautions were taken, but the freedmen were perfectly quiet. They have no confidence in the planters' word, and the presence of an officer is imperative in every transaction. Small-pox prevails to a considerable extent.

Orangeburg District.—Is very quiet, no disturbances reported; crops are being satisfactorily divided, but are generally small. Few contracts are being made for 1866; some freedmen are desirous of contracting, but receive little or no encouragement from the planters, who fear orders from the bureau conflicting with State legislation on the subject. They desire and are working for the abolishment of the bureau, as they wish to manage the freedmen without its assistance. The freedmen have no faith in their late masters, but rely solely upon the bureau. Much difficulty and distress is anticipated in consequence of the planters' disposition to drive away the aged and infirm who are unable to work.

Besides cases specified above, a report has been received from an agent on the coast, giving a list of seven planters who have defrauded their employés out of pay to the amount of over \$1,700.

No. 7.

HEADQUARTERS ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, BUREAU REFUGEES,
FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS, SOUTH CAROLINA,
Charleston, South Carolina, February 21, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to herein submit a brief made up from reports received from the A. S. A. commissioners and agents of the bureau in South Carolina during the month of January, 1866. It shows, as far as can be ascertained, the state of affairs as existing during that month in the several districts of the State.

Beaufort District.—The officer in this district, who has charge of the South Carolina side of the Savannah river, reports that as yet it has not been necessary to issue either rations or clothing to the freedmen, and that there are no refugees. The question of land grants to the freedmen is a great difficulty there, as it is in many other places, and prevents in a great measure contracts being made. As usual, the freedmen have no confidence in their former owners and prefer to work for strangers, which disposition on their part disturbs in a great degree the system of labor.

Charleston District.—Here the planters generally are desirous of making fair contracts with the freedmen, but the latter in several instances have the impression that if they sign the contracts it will bind them again as slaves. In one case, the freedmen, though willing to work, refused to sign the contract, they having been told by some persons that if they did, they would be bound as slaves seven years. This unwillingness to sign papers of any description, in which their former masters are in any way concerned, is quite common among the freedmen. The officer in charge believes that some unprincipled men are exciting hostility on the part of the negroes against the planters, or persuading them not to make contracts, on the ground that they will either receive land from or be fed by the government, doing this with a view to preventing the freedmen from working until late in the season, when these men will themselves employ the freedmen at a low rate. Every endeavor is made to induce the people to go to work and earn money to buy land, instead of waiting for it to be given to them.

In many cases good feeling is established between planters and freedmen, and they have gone to work on fair contracts. Many planters are in want of provisions, and fear to make contracts, lest they should not be able to keep their laborers supplied till the crop is harvested. Should the plan of furnishing rations to needy planters (taking a lien on their crops) be carried out, many will be enabled to plant who otherwise cannot. The Cooper river is infested with a class of roving traders who sell liquor and other useless articles to and cheat the freedmen out of their crops. Measures are being taken to break up these gangs. Difficulty is experienced in obtaining medical attendance for the freedmen, as the country is thinly settled, and the people much scattered. In making contracts, the employer is held responsible that medical attendance is furnished the employé, who is, however, required to pay the cost thereof. On plantations where the planter has left without making provision for the freedmen, one man is selected to manage the place, and the people told to work, with the understanding that if the owner returns they are to make a reasonable contract with him. In St. Stephen's parish there are a large number of freedmen on vacant plantations, who as yet refuse to work, but efforts are being made to reduce their number.

Colleton District.—The officer in charge here has visited several plantations where there was no agent or owner, organized the people for work, putting a foreman over them till an authorized person should present himself to offer contract, the government, in the mean time, furnishing the people with rations. On

five plantations the freedmen declined contracting with the planter at any price, certain parties having assured them that the planter would be obliged to lease his land to them. As the contracts offered are reasonable ones, those who refuse to contract are ordered to leave the place. It is thought that in view of this alternative about half of them will change their minds and go to work under the contracts. The officer believes there is a combination along the Combahee river to refuse to work at any price.

Chesterfield, Darlington, Kershaw, and Marlboro' Districts.—General Richardson reports a favorable state of affairs. Freedmen are entering into contracts as rapidly as it is possible to do, and are receiving almost universally much better wages than any one expected would be offered. The planters generally are hopeful, and are exerting themselves earnestly in establishing between them and the colored people, by just and even generous treatment, mutual relations of confidence and respect. Cotton will be cultivated to an equal if not greater extent than at any former period, and there is every reason to believe with equal or increased success. The only apparent impediment to complete success is the want of sufficient capital by many of the land-owners to plant as extensively as they otherwise would. The propriety and necessity of educating the colored children is felt and expressed by all. It is believed the people will, whenever permitted, give such attention to this matter as they should. The quiet and orderly conduct of the people in the absence of the usual restraints of civil law is truly astonishing. The roads are as safe by night or day as in any other part of the country, north and south. There is little destitution existing.

The officer forwards a letter from a planter in Marlboro' district, who states that everything is working to their entire satisfaction; that the negroes are not only working, but working better than when they were slaves, and are as respectful and deferential as ever; that he is agreeably surprised at the success of the experiment as far as it has gone; that this is not only his own experience, but that of all without exception with whom he has conversed. One of the largest slaveholders remarks, that he is so well pleased with the freedmen that he would not have them slaves again if he could, and that similar remarks had been made by other, though smaller, slaveholders.

I give a full brief of this letter as coming from a southern man of calm, unprejudiced judgment, who, as he himself says, has yet misgivings on the subject of free labor, and is opposed to the social equality of the races.

Edgefield District.—Quite a number of affidavits in regard to outrages and unjust acts occurring in Edgefield district during the months of November and December, 1865, were received after the December report had been forwarded; but matters are now more quiet and orderly. Two officers have just been sent to that district that good order may be maintained and the system of labor properly carried out.

Orangeburg District.—Here it is stated that the disposition of the white people who have education is to let the negro take care of himself. They take delight in seeing him suffer, because it is a reflection on the government which has liberated him. If he dies they are still better pleased. Some poor white and black people need and get aid; but less is heard of colored than of white poor. All well freed people are at work for the year. Small-pox appears in every part of the district. It is believed that the freedmen work well and faithfully, and are honest wherever they are kindly treated. The emigration to the coast from the interior has been in a measure prevented by refusing transportation, although many have gone down paying their own way. Some have broken their contracts for the purpose of going to the islands. Two teachers and one hundred and forty scholars are at Orangeburg, and one teacher at Barnwell, both schools doing very well. Division of last year's crop is nearly completed, and the officers are occupied in the revision and approval of con-

tracts, the number of which is very large. The officer has ordered his subordinates to take up colored vagrants and put them at work on the roads. All is quiet and orderly. A few entirely destitute refugees are having rations issued to them.

Richland District.—Here also a favorable state of affairs is reported. Most of the planters have made contracts with the freedmen on favorable terms, and a general satisfaction seems to prevail. The only difficulty is to provide for those that cannot earn a living, and have no one to care for them. Two plantations have been established for people who cannot find homes elsewhere, and the officer has been furnished with some tools for their use, it being believed that this course will be cheaper for the government in the end than simply giving them rations without their working. Great interest is manifested by even the planters on the subject of education of the colored children, and the prospect in regard to schools is improving. Two hundred and seven contracts, including one thousand four hundred and twelve freed persons, have been made.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. K. SCOTT,

Brigadier General Volunteers, Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner of Refugees, Freedmen, &c., Washington City.

No. 8.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN AND ABANDONED LANDS,
FOR MISSOURI AND ARKANSAS,
Little Rock, Arkansas, January 10, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit the following report for the quarter ending December 31, 1865.

Circular 16, from these headquarters, dated October 26, 1865, approved by Major General J. J. Reynolds, commanding department, and by his excellency Isaac Murphy, governor of the State, provides for the appointment of civilians as superintendents for this bureau. This provision became a necessity, as it was found to be impossible to obtain a requisite number of officers of the army to supply the demand for superintendents, and which were necessary to discharge the duties devolved upon this bureau. Numerous applications from all parts of the State have been received, asking for the appointment of agents of this bureau. In most of these applications a decided preference is expressed that *officers of the army* be selected to fill these positions, showing clearly that the purposes and intentions of the bureau are now better understood by the people than formerly.

For obvious reasons it was necessary to proceed with caution in the appointment of civilians to discharge the responsible and delicate duties devolving upon the superintendents, for, under the present laws of the State, the prejudices and unsettled condition of the people, both white and black, very much depends upon the action of the superintendent in the preservation of order, bringing into harmony the different classes, and making it possible that the industrial interests of the State can be resumed.

There are now on duty as superintendents in this State (9) nine officers of the army and (16) sixteen civilians. Some of these have served in and received honorable discharge from the United States army; these officers generally have discharged their duties in a satisfactory manner.

The want of means of communication with the interior portions of this State

has been from the first a source of embarrassment. In the southern portion of the State, and particularly the southwestern part, the sentiment of the people towards the government has not been and is not now such as we should desire. Where our armies did not penetrate before the "surrender," very many people in their ignorance seem to have even yet lingering doubts about the suppression of the rebellion. The Hon. E. W. Gantt, a prominent and well-known citizen of Hempstead county, once a bitter rebel, but who long since repented and has "shown works meet for repentance," and now entertains enlarged and liberal views with regard to the policy of the general government, has consented to act as an officer of this bureau without salary. He is by my orders exercising a general supervision over the southwestern portion of the State. Being deeply interested in the welfare of that portion of the State, and, indeed, the whole State, he is by his address and good management doing much to remove the bitterness and disorder that have reigned there. The freedmen regard him as a friend on whom they can rely, and he has been able to give them such assurances of protection as have removed their apprehension, and consequently they are making contracts and commencing their labor for another year, *feeling* they are *free* and will be protected in their freedom. Thus the best interests of *all* are promoted.

Mr. Gantt, in his report just received, says: "I am pressing the point vigorously upon our people that *bodily coercion* fell as an incident of slavery. Many of our best farmers confess that I am right; others growl and wish to be allowed to *enforce* their contracts, the simple English of which is to '*whip the nigger*,' and that I tell them they can't do. * * * * *

"I see by the act of Congress organizing the bureau that its existence is limited to one year after the war. If it should not be extended, there is no hope for the freedmen of Arkansas, Texas, and that portion of the south remote from railroads and telegraphs. They will be starved, murdered, or forced into a condition more horrible than the worst stages of slavery. Our people's wrath over defeat would be poured upon the heads of the helpless ones once their slaves. I say this sorrowfully of our people, yet I know it is but too true—their prejudices give way slowly. By extending the existence of the bureau, what education and thought failed to do might be supplied by an influx of liberal-minded people."

This is the language of a citizen whose intelligence and opportunities for judging entitle his statements to consideration. His statements are corroborated by all the testimony that reaches me from other parts of the State, and what is said of the southwestern portion is in the main true of the whole State. I give it as my deliberate opinion that if the military was withdrawn from the State not a school for colored children would be allowed within its borders, and I doubt if an outspoken Union man would be allowed to remain. In this sparsely settled and isolated country the process of "reconstruction" will necessarily be slow, and I am sorry to add that the influence and example of some of the men who have received special pardon was much better before their pardon than since; yet there is a perceptible improvement in the temper and sentiment of the people at large.

Laborers are in great demand, and good wages are offered. First-class hands readily obtain twenty dollars per month and board, cabins, fuel, medicine, and medical attendance. The freedmen being advised to give preference to those employers and localities where their children can attend schools, many of the planters have thus been compelled to give them these privileges on the plantations; some do it willingly and some grudgingly. The freedmen are able and willing to pay the expenses of schools, but cannot establish them without the approval of their employers. Many schools are being opened in this way on plantations, but we shall not be able to get returns from but a few, consequently our school report will not show anything like the number really in operation.

Circular No. 22, dated December 22, 1865, has been received and cheerfully complied with. I have from the first been governed by the spirit of its instructions. So far as I know, all my official acts have met the approval and sanction of the department commanders. Major General Pope, commanding department of Missouri, and Major General Reynolds, commanding department of Arkansas, have both afforded me every facility in their power to aid me in the discharge of my duties. I have, when possible, advised with them freely, and have been sustained by them and by all officers serving under them; I have not regarded the bureau as in any sense "independent of the military establishment."

By the report of schools forwarded herewith, it will be seen that there are in this State eighteen (18) schools, with nineteen (19) teachers, and fifteen hundred and sixty-nine (1,569) scholars. This is exclusive of schools on plantations. Many such have already been established, and many more will be as soon as teachers can be obtained. This is a favorable and encouraging feature, and gives promise of a permanent system by which the children of freedmen can be educated. When the negro will seek to obtain labor *only* where his children can have the privilege of attending school, such privileges will be provided on every plantation.

During the quarter just passed there has been no disturbance of note throughout the State. There have been a number of communications received, some of them numerously signed, representing that the negroes were organizing for insurrection, &c., and in some cases it was represented that the whites were greatly alarmed. Officers were sent where there seemed to be some little probability that there was cause for such reports, but in every case it was found that such representations were without *excuse* or *foundation*—simply fabrications for some base purpose.

The number of individual outrages is growing less, and it is believed that better order is maintained throughout the State than at any former period.

At this time (15th of January,) the freedmen are contracting to labor for the coming year freely; they are leaving the towns and going on to plantations, under contract, of their own accord; no compulsion, or even threat of compulsion, has been permitted.

There is great destitution and some actual suffering, mostly among the refugees and resident whites in the western part of the State. I am putting a liberal construction on the term "*refugee*," and as far as possible relieving the distress of helpless women and children. The issue of rations in that part of the State will of necessity show an increase. The monthly issues of rations to refugees and freedmen, respectively, during the quarter have been as follows:

	No. of refugees.	No. rations to refugees.	No. of freedmen.	No. rations to freedmen.
October.....	1, 593	12, 658	1, 517	26, 583
November.....	869	11, 935	1, 227	25, 173
December.....	1, 356	19, 352	714	15, 850
Total.....	3, 815	43, 945	3, 458	67, 606

Owing to the absence of Captain Skinner, assistant quartermaster, who is at Pine Bluff on duty, the financial report for December is unavoidably delayed for a few days.

J. W. SPRAGUE,

Brigadier General, Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner, &c., Washington, D. C.

No. 9.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMM'R NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISS.,
Jackson, Mississippi, December 26, 1865.

LIEUTENANT: I would respectfully state that information was received at this office, on the evening of the 19th instant, of a horrible outrage having been perpetrated upon some freedmen at Shongalo, Carroll county, in this district, whereupon Chaplain Smith was ordered to the place to investigate the matter and report to this office. A copy of his report is herewith enclosed, which exhibits a spirit of fiendishness on the part of the perpetrators that is almost without parallel, even among savages; and his Satanic Majesty could scarcely ask for more accomplished villains than those who perpetrated the outrage upon the boy at the hotel.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. S. DONALDSON,

Lieut. Col., Acting Ass't Commissioner.

Lieutenant STUART ELDRIDGE,
Act'g Ass't Adj't General, Vicksburg, Miss.

Official:

STUART ELDRIDGE, *Lt., A. A. A. G.*

OFFICE ASS'T COMM'R FREEDMEN'S BUREAU, STATE OF MISS.,
Vicksburg, Mississippi, December 28, 1865.

Respectfully forwarded to Major General O. O. Howard for his information.

SAM'L THOMAS,

Col. and Ass't Comm'r, Freedmen's Bureau, State of Miss.

Memorandum of report of Colonel Thomas for December, 1865.

Having given the organization and manner of conducting the bureau in previous reports, states that there are many complaints made that the freedmen failed to work well last year, and are unreliable as laborers. The freedmen complain of the planters failing to pay, as per contracts, and abusing them as in days of slavery. Time alone will teach the negro his duty and the capitalist his true interest. Encloses General Order 16 and Circular 2 in address to freedmen. The labor question is a constant topic, but it is hard to convince the people that the laboring force has decreased. Has been attempting to remedy this by transporting freedmen from the poorer portions of the State to the Mississippi bottoms. His order for transportation would not cover this, but after consultation with Major General Wood, commanding department, decided to follow this course rather than allow them to suffer. Business in the courts is increasing. Has employed Mr. James W. Davis, a northern lawyer of ability, to protect the freedmen. Has sworn out 17 writs of habeas corpus for the release of freedmen. This writ is now as necessary for the safety of the freedman as the white.

There is a disposition to prosecute government lessees for using property that has been restored, and the feeling against them is very bitter.

The Davis Bend Colony, after covering expenses, has balance in hands of colonists \$159,200; this without any white people or government officials handling the money. The Home Farm, worked by transient settlers, produced, over expenses, \$25,929 80; 5,000 bushels of corn from this farm fed to government stock. Will still retain the Davis plantations and lease them this year at a moderate rent. Gives Chaplain Hawley's report of conduct of Camp Hawley. The DeSoto Colony, broken up by the flood of the river, by garden products has been self-supporting. 68 teachers and 5,271 scholars are enrolled, but in

many places prejudice was so great that schools were not started. Sometimes funds were advanced to teachers on their regular pay, owing to neglect of societies to pay them.

Three hospitals and eight surgeons, and during past year treated 5,716 patients; 283 deaths. Is trying to organize a large hospital at Lauderdale Springs, and being aided in this by the Society of Friends.

Has restored 90 plantations (about 45,000 acres) and 100 houses and lots. Still has 35,000 acres and 42 pieces of city property. Ration decrease of 1,250 persons, and about 23,000 less rations. Support of refugees practically stopped. Appends financial report.

Forwards report of G. Gordon Adams, regarding the alleged shipment of freedmen into Cuba. Thinks the attempt has been made, but that the project cannot be carried out from Mississippi.

Believes the bureau to be working in perfect harmony with State government and department commander; not that the present situation of affairs is the best possible for the black man, yet it is better than was expected.

That affairs are progressing in spite of discouraging legislation, and the bureau *has* accomplished something. Has all assistance he can wish from the military. State officials have been courteous.

OFFICE ACTING ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FREEDMEN'S
BUREAU FOR NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI,
Jackson, Miss., December 25, 1865.

In compliance with an order from Lieutenant Colonel R. S. Donaldson, acting assistant commissioner, dated December 19, 1865, directing me to accompany Captain Reed, 50th United States colored infantry, to Shongalo, for the purpose of inquiring into an alleged outrage committed by the citizens on freedmen at that place, I now respectfully present the following

REPORT.

We left Jackson at 7 o'clock p. m. on the 20th, and arrived at Vaiden about 5 p. m. on the 21st instant. Vaiden is situated on the Mississippi Central railroad, fifty-four miles north of Canton, and about one mile east of Shongalo. On the evening of our arrival at Vaiden we ascertained, in an indirect manner, that an outrage had been committed on freedmen at Shongalo, but differing somewhat in result from the report as published in some newspapers.

On the following morning we made known our business, and began to make direct inquiries concerning the matter. We were told by persons residing at Vaiden that certain buildings inhabited by colored people had been burned; that one colored man had been killed; that the civil officers had taken cognizance of the affair; that a coroner's inquest had been held over the remains of the deceased, whose verdict was that "the deceased came to his death in an unknown manner." After the coroner's jury was dismissed another jury was summoned to hear evidence and decide, according thereto, upon the guilt or innocence of five white men accused of participating in the outrage.

The jury spent part of two days in listening to the testimony of upwards of twenty witnesses, but during the whole time nothing was elicited from any, which, in the judgment of the jury, was sufficient to convict any of the accused. The examination was conducted before Mr. E. B. Gordon, magistrate, residing in Vaiden. Their written proceedings in the case have been forwarded by him to an officer at Carrollton, the county seat of Carroll county.

We visited Shongalo, accompanied by Mr. E. B. Gordon; we saw where the buildings burned had stood; we asked questions of several persons. The result

of our visit and inquiries enable us to say, that upon a certain lot in Shongalo there stood an old dwelling-house, containing four or five rooms; also, upon the same lot, were two other smaller buildings. The property belonged to a Mr. Binford, of Vaiden. Several months ago Mr. Binford rented to a colored family one room in the dwelling-house, and subsequently, at different times, had rented other rooms to other colored families. Also the other two buildings were rented to colored families for dwellings. Some of those who had rented rooms had taken in with them other families, so that at the time of the fire there were nine or ten different families occupying the buildings. The colored people had paid rent from time to time. Mr. Binford had never desired them to quit his premises; had never expressed dissatisfaction with them as tenants. On the evening of November 25 the colored people were having a party; first they had a quilting, then a dancing party; about ten or eleven o'clock, while (according to their statement) the people were enjoying themselves very pleasantly, a company of white men, supposed to number about twenty, came up suddenly, set fire to all the buildings, then, surrounding them, began, and for some time continued, to discharge fire-arms, also refusing to let the people come out at the doors. Great consternation prevailed. A few persons escaped through the doors, the rest through the windows, taking with them such things as they were able to carry. The white men drove the colored people away, and went round picking up bundles and other articles of property, throwing them all into the fire. They caught the poultry and threw them all into the fire. Then went to a hog-pen and shot one of several fat hogs in the pen. It was said that one man, a stranger in the place, on his way to Holly Springs on business for his employer, and who had stopped in the neighborhood for the night, hearing of the party, had gone to it, and when about to make his escape, spoke to a woman near to him, saying, "Come on, follow me; there is no danger out here," when some one replied to him, saying, "D—n you; I'll show you whether there's danger or not;" then several shots were fired at him; he fell, and his body was lifted up and thrown into the fire; was burned so, that when the inquest was held the jury was unable to distinguish either the race or sex, and called in a surgeon to decide those points.

The poor people were thus, at this unseasonable hour, scattered adrift without shelter, without clothing or other property, except what was on their persons.

Part of the above may not appear in the testimony given before the magistrate.

The colored people say that they were afraid to tell all that they knew about the matter; they were afraid they might be killed if they did.

About half a mile north of that place there stood an old abandoned meeting house, in which some colored families were living, and on the night of the 27th of November that building was burned. Other houses inhabited by colored people at other points have also been burned.

From all the information that we were able to collect, I am of the opinion that the outrage was premeditated, and generally acquiesced in. Some of my reasons for so thinking are as follows:

1. Threats of burning out the colored people had been made at different times by the white people. The reason they assigned was that they would break up the free niggers.

2. At a party of white people, held in Vaiden on or about the 22d of November, the subject of burning out these people was spoken of in the presence of their colored servants, who immediately communicated the information, upon the hearing of which, two or three persons left the place.

3. Rumors had also been heard that a company of white men were going to purchase the buildings, and then burn them.

4. One of the neighbors says that, one week before the fire occurred, several shots were fired over in that direction; the hearing of which alarmed him so much that he took his gun and went out to see what was the matter. On the

night of the fire he heard the shooting, went to the door and saw the building in flames, but still remained so composed that he went into his house and went to bed, but did not go near the scene of conflagration until the next morning. On the next morning he went over and found the charred remains of the man who had been shot and burned.

It may not be improper for me here to speak of an act of barbarity which has since been perpetrated in Vaiden. On or about the 15th day of December, 1865, a party was being held at the hotel. A certain Captain Mattox was present, who had brought with him a favorite servant boy, one whom he had formerly owned. In the course of the evening, while the boy was in the discharge of his duty, he was seized in the hall by two white men, who attempted to cut his throat. The boy was severely and dangerously wounded; but, receiving prompt surgical aid and subsequent careful attention, he is, at the present time, in a state of recovery.

In travelling through this country, we cannot fail to observe the existence of a very unhappy, hostile, and bitter feeling towards both the general government and the freed people.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOMAS SMITH,
Chaplain and Sub-Comm'r Freedmen's Bureau.

Official :

STUART ELDRIDGE,
Lieut. and Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

Captain BAMBERGER,
Acting Assistant Adjutant General Freedmen's Bureau.

Memorandum of report of Chaplain Smith concerning outrages committed on freedmen at Shongalo, Carroll county, Mississippi.

Left Jackson on the 20th, and arrived at Vaiden 21st. Next morning began to make inquiries, and were told that certain buildings inhabited by colored people had been burned; that one colored man had been killed, a coroner's inquest had been held over the deceased, and their verdict was that "the deceased came to his death in an unknown manner." After the coroner's jury was dismissed, another jury was called to hear evidence and decide upon the guilt or innocence of five white men accused of participating in the outrage. This jury examined twenty witnesses, but nothing was elicited which, in their judgment, was sufficient to convict any of the accused. Examination was conducted before Mr. E. B. Gordon, magistrate, residing at Vaiden. The written proceedings in the case have been forwarded by him to an officer at Carrollton, county seat of Carroll county. Visited Shongalo, accompanied by Mr. Gordon; saw where the buildings burned had stood, asked questions of several persons, and learned as follows :

That upon a certain lot in Shongalo there stood an old dwelling-house, containing four or five rooms; also two smaller buildings, the property belonging to a Mr. Binford, who had at different times rented the whole to colored families for dwellings; and at the time of the fire there were nine or ten different families occupying the buildings, and paying rent from time to time. Mr. Binford had never desired them to quit his premises, or expressed dissatisfaction with them as tenants. On the evening of November 25th the colored people were having a party, and about 11 o'clock, while they were enjoying themselves very pleasantly, a company of about twenty white men came up suddenly, set fire to all the buildings, and surrounding them, began to discharge fire-arms; also refusing to let the people come out at the doors; a few escaped through the doors, the rest through the windows, taking such things as they were able to carry. The whites drove the colored people away, and went round picking up

bundles and other articles of property, throwing them all into the fire; they caught the poultry, and threw them into the fire; they also shot a hog in the pen. One man, a stranger in the place, stopping in the neighborhood that night, hearing of the party, had gone to it, and when about to make his escape, spoke to a woman near him, saying, "Come on—follow me; there is no danger out here;" when some one replied to him, saying, "D—n you, I'll show you whether there's danger or not;" then several shots were fired at him; he fell, and his body was lifted up and thrown into the fire, and was burned so that, when the inquest was held, the jury was unable to distinguish either the race or sex, and called in a surgeon to decide. The colored people say they were afraid to tell all they knew about the matter before the magistrate for fear of being killed.

An old abandoned meeting-house, a half mile north of this place, in which colored families were living, was burned on the night of November 27; other houses occupied by colored people have also been burned. Thinks these outrages were premeditated, and generally acquiesced in.

No. 10.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,
Vicksburg, Mississippi, January 10, 1866.

GENERAL: In accordance with orders and the act of Congress organizing the bureau, I have the honor to submit the following report for the quarter ending December 31, 1865:

The organization of the bureau, the distribution of officers, plan of conducting business, &c., have been fully described in previous reports. I have aimed to keep you fully informed about the transfer of our judicial powers, and the effect on both classes of people. The difficulties we have encountered, and the feelings of the southern people and the freedmen on all the questions that relate to their welfare, have been reported to you.

Many complaints reach me that the negroes failed to work well last year, and were unreliable as laborers. The freedmen complain that the whites fail to pay according to contracts, and abuse them as in days of slavery. There are many reasons for this state of affairs, which I have tried to show in my former reports, and will not repeat here. Time alone will teach the negro his duty and the capitalist his true interest.

No regulations have been adopted with reference to labor, yet I have thought proper to issue the following orders with reference to contracts, putting in force the State law on this subject:

[General Orders No. 16.]

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,
Vicksburg, Mississippi, December 31, 1865.

The time has arrived when it is important that the freedmen of this State should make contracts for labor during the coming year, in order that a crop may be secured.

Some regulations must govern all classes, in order to secure to the freedmen the payment of wages and to planters the labor for which they agree to pay.

It is important that the freedmen should feel their obligations to society and civil government, as the time will come when their interests must be committed to the State, with no other agency to care for them. There can be no better time for the freedmen to familiarize themselves with business life and common forms of law, under civil government, than at a time when officers of the general government are here whose duty it is to see that their rights are respected.

In fact, we will fail in the discharge of our whole duty to them if we do not take every means within our power to instil into their minds respect for the civil law and the sacredness of all contracts and obligations. There can be no better time for the citizens of the State who have not thoroughly recognized the present status of the freedmen to accustom themselves, as officers of the State government, to lay aside their prejudices, grant the freedmen the rights to which they as free men are entitled, and protect them by just administration of law. The sooner they are protected by the power that must eventually be charged with the security for their persons and property the better for both classes.

It is therefore ordered that no rules or regulations will be issued by officers of this bureau with reference to the freedmen contracting. As the following clause of the State law is substantially what has heretofore been the regulation of this department of the general government, the attention of officers, planters, and freedmen is invited to its requirements :

“SECTION 6. *Be it further enacted,* That all contracts for labor made with freedmen, free negroes, and mulattoes for a longer period than one month shall be in writing and in duplicate, attested and read to said freedman, free negro, or mulatto by a beat, city or county officer, or two disinterested white persons of the county in which the labor is to be performed, of which each party shall have one, and said contracts shall be taken and held as entire contracts, and if the laborer shall quit the service of the employer, before expiration of his term of service, without good cause, he shall forfeit his wages for that year up to the time of quitting.”

It will be seen that magistrates register contracts, and that the parties who contract are left to regulate the conditions, wages, &c.

It will be the duty of officers of this bureau to see that the freedmen are properly contracted with ; while they have no power to interfere with the action of the magistrate, or the administration of the State law, they will on all occasions act as the next friend of the freedmen, give them proper advice in all matters pertaining to contracts ; and on complaint being made that the colored people are not being allowed to exercise all their privileges as freedmen, or that their ignorance is being taken advantage of in any way so as to inveigle them into oppressive contracts, a full statement of the matter will be forwarded to this office that the proper action may be taken for their protection.

Officers of the bureau must not relax their vigilance in watching the exercise of authority by the State officials, and should be prompt in reporting all cases that need the interference of higher authority.

It is to be hoped that the civil officers to whom this is committed will be actuated by a spirit of justice and equity, and that they will take into account on all occasions the extreme ignorance of the freedmen in all business or legal matters, and explain in a spirit of kindness all the obligations that may come before them for approval.

By order of Colonel Samuel Thomas, assistant commissioner for State of Mississippi :

STUART ELDRIDGE,

Lieutenant and Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI,

Vicksburg, Mississippi, January 6, 1866.

Approved :

TH. J. WOOD,

Major General Vols., Commanding.

Official :

STUART ELDRIDGE,

Lieutenant and Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

[Circular No. 2.]

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,
Vicksburg, Mississippi, January 2, 1866.

To the colored people of Mississippi :

Having been charged with the affairs of the Freedmen's Bureau in Mississippi, I am your lawful protector and adviser, and to some extent am held responsible for your conduct. If you suffer, or become idle or vicious, blame is attached to me or my officers, even when the fault is not ours.

With the end of 1865 your contracts expired. My officers approved the contracts, and did all they could to compel both you and your employers to live up to them. In many places these contracts did not secure you more than food and clothes, because you contracted so late that it was impossible to raise a crop.

Many complaints are made that you did not regard a contract as sacred ; that you failed to work as you had agreed, acted as you pleased, and visited at a distance, deserting the crop when you knew that your employer would lose all by your failure to keep your contract. On the other hand, it is said by you that the planters have failed to pay and treat you as agreed upon.

This is all wrong. Your contracts were explained to you, and their sacredness impressed upon you, again and again. You know that when you make a contract you are bound to give all the labor for which your employer agrees to pay. Efforts have been made by my officers to compel you to perform labor according to agreements, that employers might have no excuse for failing to do their part.

The time has arrived for you to contract for another year's labor. I wish to impress upon you the importance of doing this at once. You know that if a crop of cotton is raised, the work must be begun soon and the hands employed for the year. If you do not contract with the men who wish to employ you, what do you propose to do? You cannot live without work of some kind. Your houses and lands belong to the white people, and you cannot expect that they will allow you to live on them in idleness. It would be wrong for them to do so, and no officer of the government will protect you in it. If you stay on the plantations where you are, you must agree to work for the owners of them. If not, move out of the way, and give place to more faithful laborers.

I hope you are all convinced that you are not to receive property of any kind from the government, and that you must labor for what you get, like other people. I often hear that you are crowding into towns, refuse to hire out, and are waiting to see what the government will do for you. As the representative of the government I tell you that, is very foolish, and your refusal to work is used by your enemies to your injury. I know you can get good wages with considerate employers, who will treat you well and pay for all you do. Everything possible shall be done to secure you good treatment. Make contracts for the year and go to work, and you will secure homes. The government hopes you will do your duty, and in return will secure you all the rights of freemen. The season in which planters will think it worth while to employ you will soon be passed, and if then you are found idle you may be taken up and set to work where you will not like it. The State cannot and ought not to let any man lie about idle, without property, doing mischief. A vagrant law is right in principle. I cannot ask the civil officers to leave you idle, to beg or steal. If they find any of you without business and means of living, they will do right if they treat you as bad persons and take away your misused liberty.

Some of you have the absurd notion that if you put your hands to a contract you will somehow be made slaves. This is all nonsense, made up by some

foolish or wicked person. There is no danger of this kind to fear; nor will you be branded when you get on a plantation. Any white man treating you so would be punished. Your danger lies exactly in the other direction. If you do not have some occupation you will be treated as vagrants, and made to labor on public works.

Do not believe all the bad stories you hear. Malicious persons take pleasure in making you afraid. Do not listen to them. All their croaking certainly does you no good. Do they tell you how to get food and clothes without work?

You must be obedient to the law. I do not think the people of Mississippi have made all laws that relate to you as they ought to have done. But even if there be some things denied to you as yet, which you wish to gain, you cannot get them by disobedience and idleness. You cannot make people treat you well by showing that you do not deserve it. If you wish for rights, do right yourselves. If you desire privileges, show that they may be safely intrusted to you. Such a course, with patience, will make you happy and prosperous.

I hope that a sense of justice, benevolence, and enlightened self-interest will lead the white people to set you a good example of faithfulness and honor in observing contracts.

SAMUEL THOMAS,

Assistant Commissioner State of Mississippi

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI,

Vicksburg, Mississippi, January 2, 1866.

I cordially approve this excellent circular.

TH. J. WOOD,

Major General of Volunteers, Commanding.

Official:

STUART ELDRIDGE,

Lieutenant and Acting Assistant Adjutant General.

The labor question is one of the greatest importance to the people of our State at this time. All are depending on this year's crop to recuperate their fortunes, and upon the negro to do the work. It is discussed constantly on the street-corners and in the papers. It is hard to make the people understand that the laboring force of the country has decreased, and that there are not near as many hands to labor as there used to be. This scarcity insures the freedmen a good price for all they do, and makes them quite independent.

I have been trying to meet this demand for labor in the Mississippi bottoms by transporting laborers from the interior and poorer parts of the State. Many thousands will change their homes in this manner. My order for granting transportation does not meet this case; but, after consulting with Major General Wood, commanding the department, and gaining his approbation, I have transported large numbers to the rich lands, where they will be well treated, fed, and paid by kind employers. It is a fact that if they are not provided for in this way, they will be in danger of suffering in the future. It has been my design to secure for the freedmen during the coming year steady employment, and to promote harmony of feeling between whites and blacks by every means in my power.

Our business in the courts of the State is constantly increasing. In order to protect the freedmen at this place I employed James W. Davis, a lawyer of ability from the north, thoroughly imbued with correct ideas on the subject of freedmen and their rights, who was admitted to the courts, and defended all freedmen who were from any cause unable to obtain counsel.

His report shows nineteen (19) cases defended by him, twelve (12) of whom were convicted, and seven (7) acquitted. Of the courts and juries, he says:

"I cannot say that the juries would knowingly convict an innocent black man, as my observation leads me to a different conclusion. I can say that the color of his skin materially affects his evidence as a witness, and any slight discrepancies in his testimony would materially invalidate it. I am satisfied of the judicial integrity of the judges."

Experience in admitting negroes before the courts will lessen all prejudices. With the advice of this solicitor, I have, at various times, sworn out seventeen (17) writs of *habeas corpus* for the release of freedmen improperly imprisoned. They were all discharged after an examination before the proper judicial authority. This writ is now as necessary to the safety of the freedmen as to that of the white men.

There is a disposition to prosecute government lessees for using property that has been restored. Suits for damages are being instituted in all the courts, and the feeling against them very bitter.

I wish to present a complete statement of the workings of the Davis's Bend colony for the year.

The land was divided and leased, houses built, and a system of government organized as reported to you in previous communications. The people worked well, and have shown by their industry, perseverance, and management, that they are capable of doing business for themselves, and will do best where the greatest encouragement is held out of future reward.

There were on the Bend one hundred and eighty-one companies or partnerships who received land. These comprised thirteen hundred adults and four hundred and fifty children. About five thousand acres of land were divided among them. These people were left free to manage their own affairs; not even officers of the bureau were allowed to meddle with the pecuniary or domestic affairs. They have produced—

12,000 bushels of corn, worth at least.....	\$12, 000
Vegetables, potatoes, melons, &c., sold.....	38, 500
1,736 bales of cotton.....	347, 200
<hr/>	
Total amount of receipts.....	397, 700
Paid for expenses.....	\$160, 000
Paid to white partners for stock, supplies, &c.....	60, 000
Paid receiving and disbursing officer Freedmen's Bureau, for rations drawn.....	18, 500
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Total disbursements.....	238, 500
<hr/>	
Balance in hands of colonists.....	159, 200
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The people have raised their own crops, made their own sales, and put the money in their pockets; none of it passed through the hands of white people or officers of the government of any department. The only opportunity there has been for any cheating has been in the settlement made with white parties who furnished supplies. We have guarded this in every way possible, and demanded that settlements should be made before our bureau officers.

The home-farm of five hundred acres was cultivated by transient people thrown upon our hands, and by those who were, from any cause, unable to procure land.

Receipts from home-farm, for 234 bales of cotton.....	\$48, 859 80
Paid to freed people for work by superintendents during the year.....	\$6, 850
Paid to superintendents on all the plantations on the Bend, year's work.....	5, 995

Paid for ginning, baling, and picking.....	\$4, 675
Paid for freight, commissions, repacking, &c.....	5, 410
	<hr/>
Total expenses.....	\$22, 930 00
	<hr/>
Amount turned over to receiving and disbursing officer.....	25, 929 80
If to this amount we add amount received by said officer for rations issued colored planters.....	18, 500 00
	<hr/>
It will show the total amount received by the bureau from the home-farm and the colonists.....	44, 429 80
	<hr/> <hr/>

Five thousand bushels of corn were raised on the home-farm and fed to government stock, which was in use for the benefit of the people.

The experiment has been a grand success, and proves what the people can do. I regret that they cannot have the opportunity of cultivating the same lands this season. Four of the plantations have been returned to the owners; the organization of the colony is broken up, and the people advised to seek employment and business elsewhere. I still retain the Davis plantations and will lease them this year, but will charge the people a moderate rent, and not allow them to have the land free, as was done during 1865.

The following is a copy of Chaplain James A. Hawley's report of the manner in which the work in his colony has been conducted, with its results :

VICKSBURG, MISS., *December 8, 1865.*

COLONEL: I respectfully submit the following report of the operations of the past year in the colony under my supervision :

In September, 1864, many people were just outside our lines and in a suffering condition, at which time I, under your orders, made an inspection with reference to the relief of their pressing necessities. As a result, they were, to some extent, supplied with rations and clothing and encouraged to shelter themselves. With this assistance, they got through the winter.

With the hope of rendering this body of destitutes (some three or four hundred) self-sustaining, an effort was made to secure land from the treasury land office, unsuccessfully. A military order, however, was issued, granting such land as was needed for their use. The people were organized into squads or companies, and land given them according to their working power. Some discouragements met them. Parties hostile to the enterprise were ready to predict no benefit to them. They lacked capital, and it was thought best to allow them to associate themselves with white capitalists. C. Stoddard & Co., of Memphis, agreed to furnish the means, sharing the profits of the crop. They have thus been supplied with the necessaries for life and labor.

Prior to this, small garden patches had been assigned to them and seeds distributed, the produce of which enabled them materially to live in comfort. Plantation work proper was not begun till March 20, owing to various delays. This prevented the cultivation of much land that might have been cleared, and exposed the late-maturing crop to the ravages of the caterpillar. The overflow of the river also did some damage. Nevertheless some 700 acres of cotton were planted, and the prospect at one time was of a fair crop. Through outside and vicious influences the crop was neglected at a critical time, and when the people saw their mistake it was too late to repair it.

The amount of ginned cotton raised was 93,125 pounds, or 233 bales, which was sold by sample, realizing an average price of 38½ cents per pound. Gross amount receipts, \$35,875 58. Amount expenses—stock, tools, and rations, \$29,902 60. Of this, (deducting stock returned to Stoddard & Co.,) \$19,940 25

was for rations and stock lost, and \$2,922 for extra rations, clothing, tobacco, &c.; \$3,038 was for ginning, baling, &c., and \$3,042 67 was paid the people as their share of the net proceeds, the contract having been that the negroes were to retain the stock and implements, delivering the crop in packages for market, and receiving a moiety of the net profits. Largest crop raised by any squad, 41 bales; second, 38; least, 3. Largest sum received by any one man, \$225 74. Had all squads worked as faithfully as did one, the amount of profits to divide would have been six times as great as it was. There was no squad but had too many hands for the work or land cultivated. Six of the thirteen squads came out in debt to Stoddard & Co., this mostly due to indulgence in extras.

The results of the enterprise may be summed up as follows: It has saved \$75 per day in rations to the government; it has given the people a lesson in independent labor, and, being undertaken at a time when labor was a drug in the market, thus giving employment to those who would otherwise have been idle, and comfortably maintaining them till now.

Many made some little money from their gardens and outside labor. Most appear well clothed, and some have a little money to begin the new year with.

Believing the experiment on the whole a success, and thanking you for courtesies and support, I am, colonel, very respectfully,

J. A. HAWLEY,

*Chaplain, Sub-commissioner Bureau of Refugees,
Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.*

Col. SAMUEL THOMAS,

Assistant Commissioner Bureau of R., F. and A. L.

Official:

STUART ELDRIDGE, *Lt. A. A. A. G.*

The organization of the De Soto colony in Louisiana was broken up by the flood in the Mississippi river last spring. It was impossible for the people to recover from the effects of it, yet they made fine gardens and did not ask for assistance from the government. This, under the circumstances, was all that I expected.

This closes my report of the working colonies under my charge during the last year.

With this report I forward that of my able and efficient superintendent of education, Chaplain Joseph Warren, D. D.

Sixty-eight (68) teachers are on duty, and five thousand two hundred and seventy-one (5,271) scholars enrolled. The prejudice against negro schools in some parts of the State is so strong that we have been deterred from making the experiment in such localities. There is generally less manifested opposition to them now than there was some time ago. Our schools are in a flourishing condition and increasing, although we have some difficulties not found in other States. We have been compelled to pay high rents for quarters and rooms for school purposes, and in some cases have advanced money to teachers on their regular pay, owing to the neglect of their societies to furnish them needful funds.

A complete report of medical matters, from Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Thomas B. Hood, surgeon-in-chief, has been forwarded. There are three hospitals and eight surgeons on duty. There have been treated during the past year, under this supervision, 5,716 patients, of whom 283 died. All expenses of this department have been paid by the bureau. Owing to the want of buildings and the operation of orders restoring property, I have been compelled to reduce my hospital accommodations continually and to discharge some surgeons. We are now making exertions to establish a large institution at Lauderdale Springs,

where buildings can be procured and the locality is healthy. If we succeed in getting possession of the property, we will try to employ more physicians, and in various ways make the sick, infirm, and aged more comfortable. We are being aided by the society of Friends in this enterprise.

Our hospitals are in good condition, and the officers in charge are efficient men as a general thing. For a complete report of what this department of the bureau has done, the difficulties encountered, &c., I would refer you to Surgeon Hood's report.

Our property report is still large, although I have restored 90 plantations, containing about 45,000 acres, and 100 houses and lots. I still have on my papers about 35,000 acres of land and 42 pieces of city property. Many of the plantations on my papers are reoccupied by their owners, who have failed to make applications for restorations, which they think unnecessary as long as they are allowed to return and reoccupy.

The following is a hurried resumé of the ration reports for November and December. If there is any suffering among whites or blacks in this State I do not hear of it. Only about six hundred persons (including government employés) were fed by the bureau during December :

Number of freedmen fed in November.....	1,787
Number of freedmen fed in December.....	570
Decrease	1,217
Number of refugees fed in November, about	70
Number of refugees fed in December, about	20
Decrease, about	50
Total number of persons fed in November.....	1,857
Total number of persons fed in December.....	590
Decrease	1,267
Number of rations issued to refugees in November.....	2,467
Number of rations issued to refugees in December	651
Decrease	1,816
Number of rations issued to freedmen in November	33,693
Number of rations issued to freedmen in December	12,532
Decrease	21,161
Total number of rations issued in November.....	36,160
Total number of rations issued in December	13,183
Decrease	22,977

Showing a decrease of more than 1,250 persons fed and about 23,000 less rations issued. Most of the dependants are sick people and orphan children. The support of refugees is practically stopped.

I append hereto a financial statement for the seven months ending December 31, 1865, showing gross amount of receipts and disbursements for each month and the amount on hand December 31, 1865.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS.

Statement showing amount of money received and disbursed in the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands for the State of Mississippi, at Vicksburg, from June 1 to December 31, 1865.

DISBURSED :

1865.		
June.	Expenditures for month of June	\$2, 576 71
	Balance to July	4, 243 86
		<hr/> <hr/>
July.	Expended in July	\$4, 245 69
	Balance to August	4, 216 17
		<hr/> <hr/>
		8, 461 86
		<hr/> <hr/>
August.	Expended in August	\$4, 599 08
	Balance to September	5, 480 46
		<hr/> <hr/>
		10, 079 54
		<hr/> <hr/>
Sept'r.	Expended in September	\$5, 179 42
	Balance to October	8, 572 74
		<hr/> <hr/>
		13, 752 16
		<hr/> <hr/>
October.	Expended in October	\$4, 284 52
	Balance to November	10, 547 47
		<hr/> <hr/>
		6, 223 25
		<hr/> <hr/>
Nov'r.	Expended in November	\$3, 328 25
	Balance to December	7, 423 22
		<hr/> <hr/>
		10, 751 47
		<hr/> <hr/>
Dec'r.	Expended in December	\$5, 055 64½
	Vouchers due and remaining unpaid	2, 115 49
	Balance due Freedmen's Bureau	53, 496 92½
		<hr/> <hr/>
		60, 668 06
		<hr/> <hr/>

RECEIVED :

1865.		
June.	Amount on hand last statement	\$966 22
	Amount received during month	5, 854 35
		<hr/> <hr/>
July.	Amount from June 30	\$4, 243 86
	Amount received during month	4, 218 00
		<hr/> <hr/>
	Error in bringing forward balance	8, 461 86
		<hr/> <hr/>

August.	Amount from July	\$4, 216 17
	Amount received during month.....	5, 863 37
		<u>10, 079 54</u>
Sept'r.	Amount from August	\$5, 480 46
	Amount received during month.....	8, 271 70
		<u>13, 752 16</u>
October.	Amount from September	\$8, 572 74
	Amount received during month	6, 223 25
		<u>14, 796 99</u>
Nov'r.	Amount from October.....	\$10, 547 47
	Amount received during month.....	204 00
		<u>10, 751 47</u>
Dec'r.	Amount from November.....	\$7, 423 22
	Amount received during month.....	53, 244 84
		<u>60, 668 06</u>

RECAPITULATION.

Amount on hand June 30, 1865.....	\$966 22
Amount received from all sources.....	83, 879 51
	<u>84, 845 73</u>
Total receipts	84, 845 73
Total expenditures.....	31, 348 80½
	<u>53, 496 92½</u>
Remaining in hands of receiving and disbursing officer	53, 496 92½

I forward the report of Mr. G. Gordon Adam, a detective sent by me to the southern coast of this State to investigate the alleged shipment of freedmen into foreign slavery. He says that he has no doubt that the attempt has been made, and that at this time there are many persons discussing the feasibility of such a project, and anxious to carry it out if practicable. He thinks the report will not be made from this State, but from Alabama. I have made great exertions to ferret out this matter, and believe the project cannot be carried out from this State.

I have tried to close up the year by giving you a correct idea of the results of our labor. I believe the bureau is now working in perfect harmony with the State government and the department commander. I do not think the situation of affairs the best possible for the interests of the black man; yet, on the whole, it is surprising he is so well treated, and has his freedom so generally recognized by the people.

The freedmen are well informed as to what their duties are, and will in a short time become contented and useful laborers.

The favorable change in the feelings of the white people towards the freedmen can be recognized, in many parts of the State, by the willingness of the negroes to go there and labor.

I believe the reported cases of outrage and abuse are decreasing and that the condition of both classes is improving, notwithstanding all discouraging

legislation. I am satisfied the colored people are orderly, and not disposed to commit crimes in any excessive degree.

That the bureau has accomplished something in this State towards solving the great problem committed to its officers last May, cannot be denied. My officers and assistants have performed their whole duty.

Military commanders give me all the assistance I could wish, and I am glad to say our relations have been friendly and cordial. State officials have treated me with courtesy, and have in many cases aided me in the discharge of delicate duties.

I am, general, very respectfully,

SAMUEL THOMAS,

Colonel and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Com'r Bureau of Refugees, &c., Washington, D. C.

No. 11.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,
Vicksburg, Miss., February 6, 1866.

GENERAL: In compliance with your request, I have the honor to forward the following statement with reference to the public lands in this State.

There was sold during the war, under an act of the confederate congress, lands amounting to \$54,109 39—the number of acres not stated. 3,595,229 acres of land were returned as belonging to the United States by the auditor of public accounts in his last statement, November 2, 1863, divided among the counties as follows:

	Acres.
Amite county	60, 070
Carroll county	35, 213
Choctaw county	72, 578
Claiborne county	1, 458
Clarke county	251, 740
Coahoma county	20, 280
Copiah county	12, 540
Covington county	223, 333
Franklin county	81, 894
Harrison county	63, 987
Holmes county	8, 264
Issaquena county	21, 744
Jackson county	273, 170
Jasper county	65, 703
Jones county	304, 148
Kemper county	100, 300
Lauderdale county	233, 321
Lawrence county	162, 810
Madison county	2, 080
Marion county	755, 086
Monroe county	7, 196
Neshoba county	50, 751
Newton county	85, 050
Oktibbeha county	4, 000
Panola county	39
Perry county	238, 817
Pike county	121, 490
Scott county	61, 128
Simpson county	130, 700

	Acres.
Tallahatchie county	19, 595
Tunica county	160
Warren county	37, 553
Washington county	5, 479
Winston county	43, 616
Yallahusha county	36, 066
Yazoo county	3, 870
Total.....	3, 595, 229

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

SAMUEL THOMAS,

Colonel and Ass't Commissioner, State of Mississippi.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Freedmen's Bureau.

No. 12.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN AND ABANDONED LANDS. *
OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,
Vicksburg, Miss., January 31, 1866.

GENERAL: In accordance with a plan approved by Major General Wood, commanding this department, I have the honor to report that I made a tour through a portion of Mississippi for the purpose of finding out what the freedmen were doing, how they were being treated by the white people, and the general effect of the return to civil laws. I visited Jackson, Meridian, Lauderdale, Macon, Columbus, Aberdeen, Okalona, Corinth, Holly Springs, Grenada, and Canton. I made it my object to stay at each place long enough to see the mayors, magistrates, and other civil officers, the most influential citizens, and the better class of freedmen. It would take too much time to give a description of all I saw, or to write all that was said. As you are more interested in the conclusions I arrived at, I will proceed at once to give you my thoughts respecting the condition of things in the country through which I travelled.

The freedmen have all gone to work; they have mostly contracted with their old masters, and manifest a disposition to live up to their agreements. Not a planter would say that he had any doubt of the fulfilment of their obligations. Everywhere the negroes were praised for their readiness to work, and their general good conduct; no crimes, greater than what are called petit larcenies in the north, are complained of.

The freedmen who have been so long congregated about the cities in small huts, living on what they could derive from irregular labor, have gone to the plantations; no complaints are made respecting their willingness to do; and the number still remaining around the towns is not excessive. The vagrant law has not been enforced in any of the towns I visited, as the authorities informed me it was not necessary; the freedmen were disposed to do all they could ask. The foolish stories that seemed to distract the State so long, are no longer heard, and a spirit of earnestness and a determination to work have seized the negroes, which augurs well for the future. *

In many of the towns I visited there was a call for laborers to do city work, as so many of the freedmen had gone away. The demand for labor cannot be satisfied at present, and people are beginning to realize that there are not near enough negroes to perform the work that is required in the State.

For some time the citizens were disposed to blame the colored people, and to

say they would not work. Now they admit that the freedmen are all employed, and working well, yet the demand is not half satisfied.

It is generally remarked that the feelings of the people toward the freedmen are improving. They are now disposed to grant them justice, and cases of abuse are becoming less frequent. Three months ago hardly a citizen of the State was in favor of colored schools; now, many talk of them favorably, and in no case would the better class of people oppose their introduction. At Aberdeen, the city authorities passed a resolution to aid the benevolent societies of the north in the establishment of schools.

For some time after the surrender, the people of the State assumed that the negro was worthless, and would not make any attempt to employ him. It is different now; they are beginning to see that it is to their interest to protect and foster the labor of the south. I can see no reason why there should not be a large crop raised in the State during the coming season. It is surprising, but certainly gratifying that freedmen are in this condition.

The condition of the white people is not so encouraging. I cannot explain the seeming contradiction, yet the feeling against all "Yankees," and the general government, is stronger than ever before. It was impossible for me to expose my uniform to view anywhere, on the cars or on the street, without hearing such remarks as "that's a damned Yankee;" "what does he want here?" "he had better not stay long," &c., &c. They are not disposed to treat any persons representing the government, who is unsupported by a military force, with any respect or even common decency. Of course, it is the lowest class of the community who talk in this way, and swagger around in such a style; yet it is a bad state of society in which such an element is so much on the surface as to seem to rule the whole. White men are murdered by this class, and no notice taken of it; robbing and plundering are of nightly occurrence in most of the towns in the State; yet the citizens and the authorities seem powerless to arrest it. There is a lack of efficiency in the State government everywhere; it is not vigorous, and does not secure the lives and property of the citizens.

Too many scoundrels and desperadoes are in office, who refuse to take a bold and upright stand against crime of all kinds; order and peace cannot be restored during the continuance of such a state of things; the citizens are the sufferers by it; but it is not a military matter, and if the people wish to live in such a lawless manner, they ought to be gratified.

I append a few slips from newspapers met on my tour, indicating some of the above points, for the information of the commissioners. Similar statements have been made in papers published at Holly Springs, Corinth, Grenada, and Jackson:

"Encouraging.—As an indication of the change in the feeling of the people of Mississippi, the following is good: The mayor and council of Aberdeen, Miss., have passed a resolution, saying that they will aid the benevolent associations of the north in their efforts to establish schools for the education of destitute white and black children. The *Sunny South* of the 20th indorses the resolution, and calls upon all good citizens to assist the mayor and council in their efforts."

"Freedmen doing well.—Lieutenant Garret, of the Freedmen's Bureau, has lately returned from a trip in the country, and reports the free labor system working well. Employés and employees are getting along harmoniously and pleasantly."

"'Freedmen' labor, &c.—Accounts in the Louisiana country paper represent that the freedmen are indisposed to make any contracts for labor. They refuse to make any agreements whatever with the planters, unless they can be employed near the large towns. They are expecting something extraordinary to turn up. In the parish of St. James, since the 1st instant, on several large plantations, they have stopped work entirely from this cause. The same complaint

is made in other parishes. A number of the principal planters of the Attakapas emigrated a few days since hence to Belize, Honduras.'"

"So we learn from the New Orleans papers. We regret that our neighbors have found difficulty in hiring labor. With us everything has gone off well enough. It is true that many of our friends have not been able to procure as many hands as they wished, but in the main the blacks hereabouts have displayed a commendable degree of interest in procuring employment. There are few idlers to be seen on the streets, and everything has settled down into quiet. This result is in a great measure attributable to the course pursued by the officers of this post. Heretofore we have had men to come among us, to promise fair, and at the outset to keep their promises, who after a while seemed to lose all interest in the conduct of their troops. The officers now stationed here seem to be untiring in their efforts to keep order, and the troops are certainly the best behaved and gentlemanly that have ever been in Columbus. Instead of proving hurtful to the labor interest of the country, they promptly obey all orders calculated to advance it."

*"Matters in Mississippi.—Condition of the freedmen—A hopeful state of affairs.—*Below we give an extract from the *Aberdeen Sunny South*, of the 18th instant, concerning the industrial condition of Monroe county, and giving a more hopeful view of affairs than the public have been led to apprehend. We understand, from reliable authority, that there is not, or need not be, a single freedman out of employment for a day, and that, too, at fair wages. Fifty thousand more laborers could be profitably employed in the State were they obtainable.

'How are you getting along with your freedmen?' is the invariable question that we put to each farmer that enters our office, and with singular unanimity they have for the last twelve or fifteen days given hopeful and cheerful responses. The negroes of old Monroe have gone to work almost *en masse*, and there will probably be no necessity for the enforcement of the vagrant law in this section of country.

The best of feeling seems to exist between the laborer and employer. The freedmen of Monroe, confident that the southerners who were raised with them, and thoroughly understand and appreciate their natures, are their best friends, are endeavoring, by faithful fulfillment of contracts, to merit and retain their good opinion and support; and the planters are determined to deal with them honestly and justly.

A careful perusal of our many exchanges leads us to think that a better state of affairs exists here than anywhere else in the south, and we attribute it to the absence of troops. We have had no garrison for months, and the result is that things are working harmoniously and smoothly. The painful fact, however, becomes daily more apparent that the supply of laborers is not nearly equal to the demand. Surely there are not more acres under cultivation now than before the war, yet there seems to be a demand equal to at least thirty per cent. of the old working force. How is this to be accounted for? Have the freedmen emigrated? No. The loss by emigration can be accurately estimated, and will not amount to a tithe of the deficit, whereas, many hands, new to the country, are at work upon our farms. It is a sad thing to say, yet we fear the only truthful solution of the problem is to be found in the cemeteries.

Freedom came upon them rather like a tempest than a sunshower—rather like a curse than a blessing. The shackles fell off at the margin of the grave. Had their emancipation been gradual it would have been better for the industrial interests of the country—immeasurably better for the recipients of freedom. The work that was butchered in a moment could have been well done in a year. Hundreds of thousands of God's creatures would have been saved for lives of usefulness. However, there is no more thankless journey than a voyage of retrospection. The laborers that we have are doing well. Their number is insufficient. The void can be easily filled with whites who only await the summons of the planter to put their strong hands to the plough and restore the south to its former agricultural prosperity."

I believe that the above is a fair description of the state of society and feeling in the State, and have the honor to subscribe myself,

Very respectfully,

SAMUEL THOMAS,

Colonel, and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau R. F. and A. L., Washington, D. C.

No. 13.

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, BUREAU
 REFUGEES, FREEDMEN AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Tallahassee, December 31, 1865.

GENERAL: I have the honor to make the following report of the affairs of this bureau, in this State, for the month of December, 1865.

The general condition of the affairs of the bureau is favorable, and the official relations between the military commanders and the provisional governor of the State, and myself, have been pleasant.

The gathering in of the crops for the year has been pretty much accomplished, and the division of the crops between planters and laborers, or the payment of the laborers in money, is progressing well. The final settlements between these parties will soon have been accomplished, and in most cases satisfactory to both. The most of the laborers either prefer to receive their pay in money, or immediately sell a large proportion of the crops which fall to their share to the planters for the money, and by this means the greater proportion of the able-bodied freedmen will have from twenty-five to a hundred dollars each, while nearly all of the freedmen have been supported on the plantations.

The belief among the colored people that lands and stock were to be divided among them by the government has been gradually giving way, though reluctantly, the final disappointment to them will not be very great. Yet they have generally declined to make contracts for the ensuing year till after New Year's. I learn that in the last few days many have made contracts, and the prospects are favorable for the future. The high price of cotton is inducing planters to offer good wages for the next year's labor. Average wages will be twelve dollars a month for first-class hands, and these graded according to the capacity of the employés for labor. I have reason to believe that comparatively few freed people will be on public charity next year.

Self-interest among the planters is doing much for these laborers. The people at large show a spirit of dislike or hatred to the freedmen that is hard to account for. The feeling among the little planters, lawyers, the members of the present legislature, the croakers and other small fry, is contemptible. While the substantial planters have a degree of consideration for the former slaves that could hardly be expected. They are paying quite well for this year, and offering good wages, quarters, and rations for the next, with the privilege of the laborer to keep his family with him at little expense. The little men quite generally attempt to hire single men, or reject those who have families from the plantation. The competition for labor in this State will compel these matters to remedy themselves.

A large number of freedmen are coming into the State to find labor from Georgia, saying the planters are unwilling or unable to hire because of the restrictions in that State on the labor system.

The great majority of the members of the legislature, now in session, are opposed to the equal or semi-equal rights of the freedmen. The proposed bills I have already forwarded to you, together with the letters to Governor Marvin, are a pretty good index of the feelings of the members.

The system inaugurated by the prescriptions of circular No. 9 is working well. So far as I have been able to learn, all the judges of probate, and when authorized, the justices of the peace, have entered upon the duties in good faith. I have not yet heard from some of the southern counties. The general disposition of these officers is to deal justly with all parties. Whenever they have asked instructions or advice, I have corresponded freely with them, and whenever I thought it necessary, I have sent an agent to correct any errors. I do not think I could have adopted a better system to meet the necessities of the occasion,

while there are so few troops in the State. There have been cases of partiality in the division of crops, and there are men who, by one species of dishonesty or another, have failed to pay their hands, but these are exceptional cases, and those cases which it is hard to reach. All is done that can be to remedy these cases.

Immediately after the promulgation of circular No. 9, I instituted a system of inspection by agents of the bureau, whose duty it was to visit each county and consult with the officers in charge of the affairs of the freedmen, and explain to them the objects and requirements of the bureau. The State for this purpose was divided into five districts. Two of the agents have finished their tour and reported. The one for the southern district reported by letter from Tampa, after having accomplished half his labor. The reports of these officers are favorable, excepting in lower or southern Florida, where the agent, Captain Thompson, reports very unfavorably of the white citizens. These agents think there will be very little suffering among the freedmen this winter, and where they have received reasonable treatment this year they will be willing to work next, and *vice versa*.

Whenever proper application has been made for property in the possession of the bureau, it has been returned to the former owners.

No rations have been issued this month excepting at the hospital at Jacksonville and the asylum at Fernandina. No suffering has resulted yet. I have, by thus stopping the issue, been able to learn who the needy were, and have again ordered the issue to those absolutely unable to provide for themselves. In my instructions to stop the issue of rations, the orphan asylum was inadvertently included. The mistake was remedied as soon as my attention was called to it. The following is the best summary I could procure of the rations issued since June in the State:

Jacksonville.....	33, 614
Fernandina.....	26, 447
St. Augustine.....	19, 187
Tallahassee.....	227
Total.....	79, 475

The schools of the State are in a flourishing condition. There was some opposition to opening schools at Lake City and Gainesville, but these difficulties were overcome. We could have employed more teachers well if they had been sent to us. The following is a list of the schools: Fernandina, 2 schools, 330 pupils, 5 teachers; St. Augustine, 2 schools, 250 pupils, 4 teachers; Jacksonville, 3 schools, 530 scholars, 6 teachers; Lake City, 1 school, 310 scholars, 2 teachers; Gainesville, 1 school, 290 scholars, 2 teachers; Tallahassee, 1 school, 208 scholars, 2 teachers. Total, 10 schools, 1,918 scholars, 21 teachers.

At Fernandina the ladies conduct a sewing school. The orphan asylum at Fernandina contains about fifty-five inmates. Flourishing Sunday schools are connected with all the schools, and are mostly taught by the ladies.

During this month I have called upon General Foster for very little aid, Lieutenant Colonel Apthorp and Chaplain Moore being the only assistance I have had from the department, with three or four orderlies. I have had no difficulty yet, but am sorely in need of officers to take the place of the civilian agents to visit the counties of the State; if these officers can be furnished by you, I hope you will send them to me. General Foster tells me he has no officers to furnish. The pay of civilians being moderate, and not being allowed mileage, their pay will not support them.

Captain W. H. Barlow, assistant quartermaster, has been to Apalachicola to

look after the property interest there; but he has lately been relieved and ordered to Fort Garland, Colorado.

Major Joseph F. Denniston, commissary of subsistence, has thoroughly inspected his department in East Florida, and reported upon the necessity of issuing rations.

Major L. L. McHenry, assistant adjutant general, and Surgeon J. W. Applegate, have visited Key West, Tampa, and Cedar Keys, to look after the interests of the bureau in their respective capacities. These officers all report well concerning the general interests of the bureau.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

T. W. OSBORN, *Colonel,*

Assistant Commissioner Bureau R., F. & A. L., Florida.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Comm'r Bureau R., F. & A. L., Washington, D. C.

No. 14.

OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Tallahassee, February 5, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report the operation and conduct of affairs of this bureau for January. I have deferred making this report since the 1st instant to receive some of the reports of the inspectors and subordinate officers, copies of which I will enclose.

The difficult labor of getting everywhere a division of the crops between the planter and his laborers, or seeing that the laborers were paid a fair remuneration in money for the labor of 1865, has been accomplished, and in nearly all cases satisfactorily to the parties.

Where the freedmen have worked well, the wages they received have been good; and where they for any cause worked badly, the wages have been small; but the freedmen universally accept the result as the natural consequence of a summer of idleness, and commence this year with a determination of procuring better pay by doing more work. I do not see but they reason up cause and effect with as much good sense as any other class of people.

Since my arrival in the State I have held firmly to the principle that all classes of people were citizens, and equally entitled to all the rights and benefits of American citizens, and as such were equally liable to punishment for crime, and to the responsibilities of citizens of the United States in all respects. I have held, too, in my official capacity, that every person should labor in some capacity to earn his bread and support his family, and that it was detrimental to any able-bodied person, white or colored, to be supported by the government, while every inducement was held out to him to labor for good wages. The old and decrepit are furnished with a house, and the indigent when necessary with rations. I also believe in the broad principle that demand and supply should in every community govern the price of labor, or, in other words, that labor is a commodity in the market, and that the possessor of it is entitled to the highest market value, and that any restrictions on the price of labor beyond this has a tendency to injure the best interests of the employer and employé alike. And as laborers by the laws of this State have the first lien upon a crop raised or labor done, further bonding of the employers for the payment of their employés would be rather injurious than otherwise, excepting to retain the present organization of the bureau to enforce the legal claims of the laborers when the civil authorities might fail to do it. I have, too, everywhere, where the influence of this bureau was brought to bear directly upon the freedmen, endeavored to treat them as men endowed with common sense; for I believe that

Providence has endowed them with as large an allowance of that special element of manhood as He has any other uneducated class of the human family. With these views of my duties and of right, I have endeavored to stand in the gap made by a lifetime's education of one party under the prejudices engendered in a slaveholding community, and the ignorance naturally resulting from the condition of slaves in the other party; and then, from this position I hold, to see justice impartially administered. Experience has further shown me that all the freed people require at the hands of the government, or at the hands of the people at large, is justice, and under a wholesome administration of it they will advance the best interest of the country, their own interest, and advance rapidly in all those branches of education which make a community of good citizens and reputable people.

The freed people of Florida need no sympathy above other people, but they require justice at the hands of the people and of the government.

I am highly gratified to be able to report that throughout the State the freed people have procured employment at remunerative wages, and I have never seen less idlers in any community than are to be found here among that class of people. With my acquaintance with the people of the northern States, I have never seen a larger percentage of the laboring people employed than we have here with the freed people. The average wages paid is \$140 to \$150 per year for first-class hands; \$120 to \$130 for second-class, or from one-fourth to one-third the entire crop raised, the planters finding everything, provisions included. The laborers generally prefer to have an interest in the crop, and the demand for labor has been so great that the planters have almost universally yielded to the demands of the laborers.

The average price for labor in the lumber business is from \$25 to \$30 per month. Double the wages I have mentioned are frequently given, and in some cases even much more than that for extra hands or "head men." Scarcely one planter out of a dozen will say in so many words that he has confidence in the negro as a free man, and yet all classes of the people are in excellent spirits at the prospects for the present year.

The State requires quite one-fourth more labor than can be procured in it this year. Three planters out of each four wish more hands than they have. I have made every effort to procure hands to supply in a measure this demand from points where it was reported there was an accumulation of vagrants, and the result shows there are no people without employment. To illustrate this point: A respectable planter within the last week offered to take all the negroes confined in the jail at Tallahassee, pay any charges that may be against them, regardless of the offences they had committed, and work them on his plantation, and pay good wages. In fact, several have been released on these conditions.

A very unexpected difficulty arose early in the month by a class of planters going among the laborers hired by their neighbors and inducing them by some representation to leave the planters with whom they had contracted. This practice became so prevalent and so great a nuisance, that not an hour of a day would pass but planters came to me to solicit my interference to prevent it, or prevent their hands from leaving them. I hesitated, because I knew I could not reach the most guilty parties, who of course were the white men holding out inducements to the negroes to break their contracts. The planters urged the matter on the ground that the negroes did not appreciate the binding force of a contract, and they believed they were at liberty to work for the men who offered the highest wages, regardless of having entered into a contract previously, but if I would officially say otherwise every freedman in the State would believe me. The result fulfilled their expectation, and not a single complaint came to me after the order was first published in the papers, and the conditions of the circular have resulted in doing much good. Very little,

if any, harshness has been resorted to. It further had the good effect of inducing planters to enter into written agreements. The circular also had a good effect in inducing people to refrain from this disreputable method of procuring hands, by an intimation that a person who would practice it "forfeits the reputation of a gentleman, and that he is an unsafe man to trust as an employer." I would have preferred not to have been morally compelled to issue this circular No. 1, as the conditions of it bear more heavily on one class than another; but the results derived from it have reconciled me to its conditions. Circular No. 2 is merely explanatory of one clause of circular No. 1.

In reference to General Order No. 4, headquarters department of Florida, in which punishments by stripes or the pillory are prohibited, I will only say here that the good will and kind feeling between Governor Walker, General Foster and myself, in our official capacity, has in no way been moved. The correspondence on the part of each has been kind and courteous, and looking to what each considered the best interest of the people. The entire correspondence, general orders, proclamation, laws, and explanations, have already been laid before you.

The provisions of circular No. 9, paragraph I, series 1865, from this office, have been modified, and agents are being appointed by special orders from this office to transact the duties of the bureau within special limits. The knowledge obtained of the civil officers in the different counties from their transactions under the provisions of this circular gives me an excellent criterion by which to judge of their merits to carry out the duties of this bureau. The circular was issued in accordance with the instructions of the Commissioner as nearly as I could understand them from information at my hand when it was published. It also accorded at the time with my own views, and the operations of the bureau under its provisions have in the main been successful and satisfactory. I watched the officers designated as agents very closely by a system of inspection. I made some removals and countermanded some of the agents' orders. The time has, however, come when it may with much propriety be modified, and special appointments made. In making these special appointments I shall take every precaution possible to select the best men for the position.

Four (4) officers of the Veteran Reserve Corps have reported to me and have been assigned to duty as supervising officers of specified districts; the different headquarters being located at Jacksonville, Gainesville, Lake City, and Marianna. I expect good results from the assistance these officers will give me in enforcing the regulations prescribed from this office for protecting the rights of the freed people.

All the available force I could spare has been employed in visiting different sections of the country, conversing with the civil officers and planters, and talking to the freed people. From these officers I have derived much valuable information. Four are now absent on this duty. Great good has also been accomplished by these officers visiting remote portions of the State, by giving assurance to the freedmen, and reconciling the planters to make a fair and thorough trial of free labor.

The commissary department has not been greatly taxed the last month. Rations are issued to the orphan asylum at Fernandina, to the hospital at Jacksonville, and to a few infirm or indigent people at Fernandina, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine. No people are suffering.

In the quartermaster's department we do not have a large amount of property or make large requisitions. Major J. F. Denniston, commissary of subsistence, is acting as quartermaster and disbursing officer.

I have been actively engaged in transferring the real estate received from the United States officers, in whose possession it was when I came to the State, to the original owners as fast as they make their application for it and comply with the orders regulating the restoration of property.

I directed F. W. Webster, agent, &c., to visit Pensacola, in January, and receive the property there now in the hands of J. W. Ricks, special treasury agent, which should be transferred to this bureau in compliance with the executive order of June 2, 1865. The agent was absent from Pensacola, and possession of the property was not obtained. This is the third time I have endeavored to get possession of the abandoned property at Pensacola, according to my instructions; but under one plea or another Mr. Ricks has refused to turn over the property. At Apalachicola the property has been nearly all returned. I also directed S. Conant, agent, &c., to visit East Florida and obtain all the information possible concerning property purchased by the United States at tax sales. A list was obtained, but as Judge L. D. Stickney, treasury agent, was absent, a transfer could not be made.

The schools of the State are prosperous and in fine condition. The building now occupied by teachers and for schools will be retained for their present use. Chaplain H. H. Moore reports twenty-one (21) schools, twenty-nine (29) teachers, and one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight (1,868) scholars. The orphan asylum at Fernandina, under the supervision of Miss Chloe Merrick, has no material changes since my last report. It has fifty (50) inmates and five (5) attendants.

Surgeon J. W. Applegate reports favorably of his department. The hospital at Jacksonville is well organized and provided for. Where it has been necessary, regimental surgeons have cared for the freed people. The small-pox has broken out in a few places, but not enough to attract attention seriously. Not more than fifty cases have been reported in the State, five or six of which have proved fatal.

The mail facilities are still in a very disorganized condition, and I am compelled to despatch officers or agents for any information that is required off of the lines of railroad, which have communication with but a small portion of the State.

There has been some suffering in Manatee and Hillsboro' counties among the families of United States soldiers, (white,) enlisted from Florida. The only assistance furnished them in January was to transport corn to them at United States expense.

The United States flag was not raised over the capitol during the session of the legislature.

I am well aware that there have been cases of ill-treatment and dishonest dealing on the part of the planters with freedmen; while we also find noble treatment on the part of others with them. For instance, Colonel R. H. Gamble and Colonel J. J. Williams each employed a hundred and twenty-five hands last year. Colonel Gamble has paid his hands upwards of \$12,000 for their labor, and is still indebted to them; while Colonel Williams, aside from what he has paid, now holds \$10,000 in cash, subject to the order of his laborers. But these extremes are exceptional. The aggregate condition of the freed people in the State is good and highly encouraging for the future.

I have the honor to be, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

T. W. OSBORN,

*Colonel, Ass't Commissioner Bureau Refugees, Freedmen,
and Abandoned Lands, State of Florida.*

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Com'r Bureau Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.

FERNANDINA, FLA., *January 25, 1866.*

SIR: I have the honor to report the following number of inmates and attendants at the asylum under my charge at Fernandina for the month ending January 21, 1866: Number of inmates, 50; number of attendants, 5.

I am, sir, yours, respectfully,

C. MERRICK.

Col. T. W. OSBORN, *Assistant Commissioner, &c.*

OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,

* BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Tallahassee, Fla., February 7, 1866.

COLONEL: In relation to the present condition of the medical department of the bureau for this district, I have the honor to submit the following report:

There are four (4) medical officers on duty in the district; three (3) regimental surgeons, and one acting assistant surgeon, employed by the bureau.

The regimental officers attend to refugees and freedmen, in addition to their other duties. The number of freedmen who apply to these officers for assistance is quite small. No refugees have been reported as attended by them. Acting Assistant Surgeon H. C. Vaughan has charge of the post hospital for freedmen at Jacksonville. The number of inmates in this hospital is nineteen (19.) Most of them are old and infirm persons, and some of them are afflicted with chronic diseases of long standing. The number of attendants in this hospital is three (3.)

This hospital (or more properly asylum) is intended as a receptacle for all of the old and indigent freed people in the State, or for those who, from any cause, are not able to labor for their own subsistence. There is no other class of persons who require assistance from the medical department of this bureau, as all others who are able-bodied can readily obtain employment, and are thus able to provide their own medical attendance.

The entire number sick at the date of the last weekly report was thirty-five, (35.)

Small-pox has prevailed to a very limited extent throughout the State; not more than one hundred cases have occurred. On the plantations, where the disease has made its appearance, the freed people have been cared for by their employers. In all the towns and villages the municipal authorities have provided pest-houses, and have taken steps to prevent the spread of the disease. Vaccine matter has been furnished by the bureau, whenever required. No serious trouble need be apprehended on account of this disease.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. W. APPLGATE,

Surgeon U. S. V., Surgeon-in-chief D. F.

Col. T. W. OSBORN,

Assistant Commissioner, District of Florida.

OFFICE COMMISSARY OF SUBSISTENCE AND A. A. QUARTERMASTER,
BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Tallahassee, Fla., February 8, 1866.

COLONEL: In regard to the condition of the subsistence and quartermaster's departments of this bureau for the State of Florida, I have the honor to submit the following report:

On the 3d of January, by your direction, I authorized the commandants of military posts in the State to order the issue of rations to those freedmen who were in absolute need, having previously ascertained that some few were suffering for want of food. At the same time I requested such commandants to require their issuing commissaries to forward a report of the number of rations

issued, and the money value of the same, at the end of each month. Up to the present time I have failed to receive any report of rations issued at the different posts, although I have learned (unofficially) that such issues have been made. For this reason I am unable to make any statistical report on the subject; but I am assured that the issues have been quite small, and confined to the posts of Jacksonville, Fernandina, and St. Augustine. The only authorized issues that are now being regularly made under the auspices of the bureau, in this State, are those made to the orphan asylum at Fernandina, and the hospital at Jacksonville, under charge of Dr. Applegate.

In regard to the quartermaster's department of the bureau, I would respectfully report, that I find considerable difficulty in procuring such articles as are furnished by this department of the army.

I have succeeded in obtaining five horses and three mules for the use of the officers and agents, who are required to be mounted. These I have drawn on memorandum receipts, pending the approval of a requisition by the Commissioner and the Secretary of War, forwarded to Major General Howard about the 1st of December, 1865; the Commissioner's approval, and that of the Secretary of War, being required by General Orders No. 49, Quartermaster General's office, August 26, 1865.

But little transportation has been used by the bureau during the past month, outside the requisite amount used by officers and agents, when travelling on duty—none except by sick and infirm persons on their way to the hospital at Jacksonville.

As disbursing officer, I have received during the month \$3,194 82, and disbursed \$1,344 50, leaving a balance on hand of \$1,850 32. Some debts remain unpaid; but the bills not yet being rendered, I cannot give the exact amount.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. F. DENNISTON,

Bvt Maj., C. S. V. and A. A. Q. M., Bur. R. F. and A. L., Florida.

Brevet Colonel T. W. OSBORN,

Ass't Com'r Bureau R. F. and A. L., Florida.

GAINESVILLE, FLA., *January 20, 1866.*

SIR: Extract from Special Orders No. 9, office assistant commissioner, relieving A. J. Cassidy, acting judge of probate for the county of Sumter, from duty as agent of the bureau, and appointing J. C. Lee, justice of the peace, as agent, together with orders in cases of field girls illegally bound to labor, are this day received. I shall forward them, with letter, to Lieutenant Hezlip by next courier. I had already heard that affairs were in an unsatisfactory condition in the lower counties. I am anxious to go through them as soon as possible. The affairs of the bureau in Alachua county are in much better condition than I had expected. The freedmen have, with very rare exceptions, gone to work in earnest. I have confidence to believe, if justice is done them, but little trouble will arise in this county. The school is in active operation, with about seventy-five scholars. Most of the adults who were attending school have entered into contracts. The ladies report very favorably of the progress of the colored children with their studies. I hope to make a complete report when I have made tour of my district. Can you inform me whether contracts, specifying a given amount of wages, legally require revenue stamps to be placed upon them? The matter has suggested itself to me, but I have not thought it proper to broach it.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. H. DURKEE,

Capt. and Sub-Ass't Com'r, Bur. R. F. and A. L., Dist. South Fla.

Colonel T. W. OSBORN,

Ass't Com'r Bureau R. F. and A. L.

MARIANNA, FLORIDA, *February 3, 1866.*

COLONEL: You will not expect a report from me at this time, but at the end of this month. Sooner, if possible, I hope to lay before you an official report of each county in the district of West Florida

Arrived here on the 29th ultimo, I find that the agents in Jackson county and other counties have approved contracts in which but three pounds of bacon are provided? They have no printed forms of contracts.

Good hands command one hundred and forty and one hundred and fifty dollars for the season. But few freedmen are employed in Marianna; A number of them have settled on government lands in the pine woods.

It shall be my endeavor to have a uniformity of contracts. Shall I annul contracts in which the stipulated four pounds of bacon are not provided. I have just received the message, &c.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

C. M. HAMILTON,
Bvt. Capt. V. R. C., &c.

Colonel T. W. OSBORN, *Commissioner.*

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, *January 31, 1866.*

COLONEL: In compliance with your telegraphic despatch of the 30th instant, I have the honor to report that having been here but a short time, and not having an opportunity of meeting many of the planters, I only judge from what I hear, and learn upon inquiry. I should therefore think that everything works smoothly in this district, and that the freedmen, as a general thing, are at work, and doing well.

I have just returned from St. Augustine, where I have been for ten days; there I find that matters are working finely.

I have not as yet secured an office, but hope to in a few days. The quartermaster at this place (Lieutenant Logan) has promised to turn over one to me when he removes from his present location, which he thinks will be in a few days.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. ARTHUR,
*Captain Second Regiment Veteran Reserve Corps,
Brevet Major U. S. Volunteers.*

Colonel T. W. OSBORN,

Ass't Com'r Bureau of F., R. and A. L., Tallahassee, Fla.

OFFICE SUPERINTENDENT EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT FLORIDA,

Jacksonville, January 28, 1866.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following as my school report for the current month:

We have in St. Augustine: schools, 2; teachers, 4; pupils, 150. Fernandina: schools, 3; teachers, 6; pupils, 280. Jacksonville: schools, 3; teachers, 6; pupils, 240. Colony: school, 1; teacher, 1; pupils, 28. Lake City: school, 1; teachers, 2; pupils, 300. Gainesville: school, 1; teachers, 2; pupils, 280. Pilatka: school, 1; teacher, 1; pupils, 85. Tallahassee: schools, 3; teachers, 5; pupils, 240. Marianna: school, 1; teacher, 1; pupils, 80. Pensacola: school, 1; teacher, 1; pupils, 75. Lieutenant Cessna's school: teacher, 1;

pupils, 20. Bell Air: school, 1; teacher, (colored,) 1; pupils, 40. Midway: school, 1; teacher, 1; pupils, 20. Plantation near Tallahassee: school, 1; teacher, 1; pupils, 30. Making a total of: schools, 21; teachers, 29; pupils, 1,868.

Just at present, the small-pox prevails among the colored people in Jacksonville, which reduces somewhat the attendance at schools.

In other places the work is going on vigorously. Our teachers, as yet, find but little sympathy among the people of the State. There is quite a demand for teachers on large plantations, but under such circumstances that it would not be proper to supply them with ladies.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. H. MOORE,

Chaplain and Superintendent Education, Department Florida.

Colonel T. W. OSBORN,

*Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Refugees,
Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.*

LAKE CITY, FLA., *January 30, 1866.*

SIR: In compliance with instructions, I have the honor to report, that in the month of January, 1866, one hundred contracts were made in this town between the planters and freedmen.

All those contracts were made according to instructions from the bureau. They embrace nearly six hundred persons. Most of them are heads of families. In most cases, those contracts have been made for wages ranging from ten to fifteen dollars per month. Many are made for portions of the crops. All of the contracts are very just and fair. A great many men are employed on the railroad, at good wages. I am very happy to state, so far as I am able to obtain information, that the system of free labor is working well. In my district here, the people seem desirous of treating the colored men and women, in all their contracts, just and fair. I have not heard of one instance of cruel or unjust treatment towards the freedmen. One great mistake has been made by the planters; that is, in binding several persons in one contract, all said persons being adults. In my opinion, those contracts are illegal, and I have instructed the judge of probate of this county to cancel all such agreements, and have separate contracts made for each person, except heads of families, who are the proper guardians of their sons and daughters who may be minors, and have a right to contract for them. All this has been complied with very cheerfully by Mr. Smithson, judge of probate for this county. This gentleman is very much interested in behalf of the freedmen. I have had many orphan children bound as apprentices, during their minority, to good and kind guardians. I have also visited the school of the colored children at this place, and I find it conducted in the most admirable manner. The lady teachers are kind and attentive, and their pupils are making great progress in their studies. I have not been able to visit the other counties of my district as yet. I will occupy my office on the 1st of February, and will then take proper steps to establish an "intelligence office," according to instructions. You will please inform me if there is any certain form in which you desire these reports to be made.

I am, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

ANDREW MAHONY,

Captain 14th V. R. C.

T. W. OSBORN,

*Colonel and Assistant Commissioner,
Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.*

TALLAHASSEE, FLA., *January 31, 1866.*

SIR: In obedience to orders, I proceeded to Apalachicola and Pensacola, to obtain an account of abandoned and confiscated property, and have the honor to report. On my way to Pensacola, I stopped a few hours at Apalachicola, where I gave notice, through the judge of probate of Franklin county, that I should return in a week, and should then be prepared to receive and act upon applications for restoration, (under orders of the assistant commissioner.)

Arriving at Pensacola, I found that the acting special agent Treasury Department, who had charge of abandoned property in that place and vicinity, was absent. His chief clerk and representative, upon reading my orders, gave me access to all books and papers which could be of service to me, but declined to take any action in reference to a transfer of the property. I made a list, (herewith submitted,) and left in the office of the treasury agent duplicate receipts of property which was paying rent to the government, and placed it in the hands of the judge of probate of Escambia county, with instructions (by written orders) to collect rents as they became due, and hold the same subject to the orders of the assistant commissioner Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. The rents heretofore collected have been returned to the Treasury Department.

On my return to Apalachicola, I was informed by the judge of probate that no applications for restoration of property had been made during my absence, the claimants of property being content with its present status, since, in addition to the order of General Howard, by which a general restoration was made, special orders, chiefly Captain Childs's, late commander of the post and agent of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, have restored nearly if not all the property which had been reported abandoned. I could find no papers nor records of any kind, nor any information from which a reliable list of property not restored could be divided. From papers obtained at the office of the bureau in Tallahassee, and from verbal statements (from memory) of officers formerly stationed at Apalachicola, I made out a list (herewith submitted) as accurate as it was possible to obtain. The difficulty of this task was increased by the fact that a large number of the orders for restoration (copies of which all are on file) described the property restored so indefinitely, or in terms so differently from the list in my hands, that it was impossible to identify it. There is probably very little if any property in Apalachicola, reported abandoned, which has not been formally and specially restored to its former owners. The last rents collected for the bureau on property in Apalachicola were paid in by Mr. Kingston.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

FRANK W. WEBSTER,
*Special Agent Bureau of Refugees,
Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.*

No. 15.

OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Montgomery, Alabama, January 31, 1866.

GENERAL: A number of matters of engrossing interest, coupled with physical disability, have occasioned an unpleasant interval in this series of reports. During this interval our force has been materially strengthened by the arrival of officers from the Veteran Reserve Corps, whose respective assignments are

shown by the roster transmitted to-day. These will relieve us in great measure from the evils of frequent changes, and when those arrive who are named in the additional detail, we shall be enabled to make the bureau more effective at a less expense for civilian employes. For the present I have abstained from any marked extension of the agency system, until a definite basis should be furnished by legislation and the adjustment of military force. The foreshadowings of both these I have studied with much care, to be ready to meet them when they shall occur.

During the month past considerable proceedings have been had under the executive order of 10th November last.

The Selma iron-works presented a claim to Major General Thomas for part of the property sold at that place by the treasury agent, of which mention is made in my last report. General Thomas directed General Woods to restrain the delivery of the property in dispute. General Woods, knowing nothing of the particulars, restrained the whole. He was absent immediately after, but measures have been taken to have the discrepancy corrected and the claim decided on. I have preferred referring all such claims to him to deciding them myself, as I desire to keep the bureau free from all property entanglements; indeed, I only regard this kind of revenue as a *dernier resort*.

Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Wright, paymaster and disbursing officer, was sent out early in the month to visit and dispose of the Briarfield iron-works, touching which I have received some instructions from you. On the 9th instant he sold the works at public sale to F. J. Lyon and associates for forty-five thousand dollars, (\$45,000.) This price was, in some respects, low, yet it was about five thousand dollars more than I thought the works would bring. No money was exacted at the time of sale, which is not altogether satisfactory, but the conditions of the whole matter made this the best that could be done. I append a copy of Colonel Wright's report. A communication received yesterday from Mr. Lyon states that he has the purchase money nearly all ready, and, from the high character of the parties, I presume we shall in a day or two be in receipt of it. It was ordered by Colonel Wright, with my sanction, that all the other property sold by the Treasury Department should be regularly accounted for to the collector at Mobile, leaving that officer to settle with his own agents, and pay over the net proceeds to the bureau. But the Briarfield fund, a single large item, we thought best to secure without deduction, leaving the attendant expenses to be paid by the collector, by whose order they were incurred.

Upon receipt of the order which kindly secured to us the three vessels known as the "blockade runners," I directed Captain Kerr to proceed to Mobile, receive and dispose of them, under the advice of the general commanding department. The vessels and some other property have been received and advertised. Here also we encountered a claim to one of them which I referred to the commanding general for adjudication. General Woods is also kind enough to procure a naval appraisal, so that we shall know before the sale what they are worth. It is conjectured they will net about fifty thousand dollars. The largest cannot be brought out of the Tombigbee, where she has been a long time aground, until the river rises.

There are also some frame buildings about the State, which will be looked up and disposed of by an officer designated for that purpose by the department quartermaster. Delay in all these matters has arisen from the frequent changes in which everything is involved here.

We have, however, already received as the first fruits of the order about eight thousand dollars, which has been a great assistance.

Early in the month two persons were arrested by the provost guard, charged with plundering negroes on the highway. I caused them to be tried by a military commission. The testimony did not make a good case, and they were released on bail, pending the decision of the approving officer at department

headquarters. Two others were arrested on suspicion of belonging to a marauding gang. Although they were finally discharged for want of proof, yet as they were men of some prominence the arrest had an excellent effect in their county.

On the 15th instant the legislature reassembled. The palpable failure, when it last adjourned, of the attempt to depart from the standard of "equal rights before the laws," so long established here, and the wonderful abatement of doubt and dread which the freedmen themselves effected during the holidays by going quietly to work, had wrought a marked change in the public mind. The governor had no hesitation in vetoing the objectionable measures, declaring that he would set his seal to no bill which did not deal alike with all men whose circumstances were the same. The vetoes were sustained in both houses. A bill has been introduced, and will pass, applying this qualification to all laws in force, and repealing all inconsistent with it; and as the legislature long ago directed the governor to appoint a commission to codify the criminal laws, it is supposed their report, which is next week to be presented, will be in consonance with this view. Indeed, I trust the extended discussion this proposition has had in this State has given it such a footing that it can never be lodged.

One of the governor's veto messages, however, requires especial notice. In returning the labor contract bill, he states that in his opinion no remedy is necessary for violation of contracts beyond that of damages, which the common law affords. As to freedmen this is practically no remedy at all, except where unpaid wages have accrued. Indeed, it points to an abandonment of the contract system.

This statement is worthy of profound consideration. It did not emanate from me, yet I may now say that I concur in it. I found the contract system established here, practically and in orders. The planters liked it, and so vigorously demanded contracts that there was danger they would not undertake to plant at all without them. Idleness was extremely prevalent, and contracts might answer to restrain this disposition. "Labor regulations" were therefore issued from this office. But it has all the while been my opinion that the freedmen would be found to be best governed by the same measures as are most effectual with ourselves, and only injured by artificial regulations. The true *incentives to labor* in the free States are hunger and cold, and it was only injurious expectations of parcelling out at Christmas that made freedmen evade these, in some measure, until Christmas came. This artificial barrier removed, normal relations were immediately established. The true *security of labor*, also, in the free States, is that whenever the laborer finds himself ill treated, or his wages insufficient or unsafe, he can quit without having to account to anybody. This is more and better than all laws. And the demand for labor will, I think, keep the freedman secure here in this particular. It certainly makes him so now.

Contracts imply bargaining and litigation, and at neither of these is the freedman a match for his employer; nor do I think he can be made so, except through an ever-present competition, to which he can appeal. Undoubtedly his credulity will be somewhat used to victimize him just now; but, besides the statement that he who has but one thing to dispose of soon learns to do it to the best advantage, and that even ourselves were obliged to meet this same experience in our boyhood, certain untilled plantations on all sides give emphatic warning that Nemesis does not overlook the matter.

Hence, while as an agent of the bureau I have faithfully tried to carry out its policy, I do not regret that I have occasion to express my views on this subject. And I have never felt authorized to infringe the liberty of even a freedman by compelling him to contract, but have simply told planters that where there was no contract approved by this bureau, *when they came to settle I should exact payment at the highest current rates, if complaint was made, and there*

was evidence of imposition. And I hope this rule will prevail when the present crop is being gathered in.

These views, general, are hastily expressed in transient correspondence; but they have some maturity of thought. You will not understand me to propose the subversion of an established guarantee; only that, as fast as the custom of money wages obtains its usual prevalence, both parties reserve the right to quit at pleasure. I have no further fear of the wandering propensities of the negro. The removal of forced restraint was naturally followed by a jubilee; but that is over now. He was brought up to work, and he will not depart from it. We can get along in this State without a contract law of any kind, and it is proposed to try it.

I am looking to the new Code also for relief from an outrageous law, a relic of the anarchy of rebeldom, which allows the jury to affix the penalty of death for horse-stealing. It makes no distinction of color; but the only two convicts I ever knew were negroes. The governor was kind enough to commute the sentence of one on the application of his former owner and the judge. I made application for the other, and obtained a reprieve, which is still pending, and will, I trust, be final. And I have little fear that the law will be continued.

Copies of the veto messages above mentioned have been sent you from time to time. You will remember that just after the election I assured you that Governor Patton would not be found wanting in sympathy or co-operation with the bureau, and I trust you will receive these as indications that I was correct; and he is a man not to be driven from a position once assumed.

The reassembling of the legislature brought also a vast mass of evidence of destitution, which was already indicated and confirmed by reports of officers and others, several of which I send you with this paper. The estimates sent in for the month were promptly met, and we have been able to supply partial relief as fast as the details of issue were perfected. Mr. M. H. Cruikshanks, the State commissioner, spent the first half of the month in north Alabama, making arrangements for the fourteen counties in Huntsville district, including those most in need of immediate help. He will next visit the counties to be supplied from Selma, Talladega and Tuscaloosa. He is vigorous and careful, and I am pleased with his operations. From the State estimate which I send you, you will see that the authenticated report is enormous, reaching 52,000 white persons. Yet the estimate sent in by me, for this month, does not exceed the maximum of *fifteen thousand* (15,000) mentioned in my last report. For there are already indications of abuse in some quarters, and I see no way but to fix for each county a limit, of no more than we are sure is needed, that they may be themselves interested to detect and prevent imposition. Indeed, the whole system is only excusable as transient. The State, however, has given conclusive evidence of the necessity by appropriating a million of dollars if it can be raised, which, however, I suppose is mainly designed for the very large class of persons who are in no sense paupers, but simply poor people who want credit for something for themselves and their animals to eat while they make their little crops.

The commissary ordered by General Woods to report to me has failed to do so for some reason unknown to me. His absence has caused me severe inconvenience and uncertainty, and steps have been taken to hold him to a strict accountability. The want has been supplied by the detail of an officer now here, who will report to-morrow. By the close of next month I trust that the ration business will be at least so systematized that we can give a full and specific account of it. I felt very much obliged to you for the detail made in anticipation of my request.

During the month also we have come, though not exactly into collision, yet into very direct contact with the militia system of this State.

As this system had in Mississippi received the peremptory sanction of the President, I have heretofore been reticent in regard to it. Indeed, before the holidays, though one utterly disbelieved the rumors of approaching insurrection, it was improper to forbid all measures of defence. But even then the creation of whole squads of special constables, with arbitrary powers, did not fail to attract such lawless characters as here abound, and to bear its natural fruits. These I then bore with because they were inseparable from the system. But *now*, when a statement of apprehensions is a *prima facie* falsehood, and *here*, where it is the rule to carry arms, the weaker party should not be forbidden to do so, nor systematic plunder carried on if I could help it. So I wrote a short letter, a copy of which I sent you, which produced infinite growling, but has in several respects given the right some strength. The members from the county where the trouble occurred at once called and pledged themselves that if the garrison was withheld, the freedmen should not be interfered with; on which I put them on probation.

Some time since, on an intimation from Major General Woods, commanding department, I filed with him my emphatic protest against the removal of the troops, feeling sure that their presence is as yet indispensable to the comfort and security, not only of the freedmen, but of other parties who naturally confide first in the general government. In this connexion I may properly recall the early and persistent application for cavalry in this State which was made by myself, and seconded by Governor Parsons. Reasons of the same nature still exist, though not of the same urgency. It is not the *resistance* of lawless characters and rebels we have to contend with; the difficulty is to *catch* them. Infantry in masses, perhaps, creates as much lawlessness as it prevents, but I am and have been confident that a few companies of cavalry, so stationed that the radii of their operations would reach the whole State, would be of great service both as a police force and for the moral effect.

The universal commingling of the freedmen during the holidays has caused a spread of contagious disease, and during the month we have been much concerned at the prevalence of small-pox. The labors of Surgeon Kipp have been very useful in this regard. He had organized a number of small-pox hospitals about the State, the charge of which has been assumed by the local authorities. We have, however, been doing all we could to help them with provisions and clothing for those who have recovered; and in this place, about four-fifths of the patients being freedmen, we made a single contribution of fuel. Free distribution of vaccine matter has also been made, as we could spare it, and I do not think the disease is now on the increase. Undoubtedly we should have had much more suffering, of this as of all other kinds, but for the very open and mild winter we have been blessed with thus far.

In the matter of schools we are still only at the threshold. Rev. John B. Taylor, formerly State superintendent of common schools, of whom I wrote you that I would like to get him into the bureau, has intimated his willingness to accept, but has been all the month confined to his bed. The visit of Mr. Mellen was encouraging, and I hope a school may come of it. We are renewing our correspondence, and other measures, to get the ball in motion and give it respectable dimensions.

This report is transmitted to you by the hand of Lieutenant Colonel Wright, who has, during the past week, been relieved by Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Beecher. I much regret the necessity that removes Colonel Wright, on every ground. I have talked more intimately with him than with any one here, and he can fully supplement this report, written by snatches. What I have seen of Colonel Beecher gives promise that the relations which we have enjoyed with Colonel Wright will soon be established with him.

For a concluding observation, I think the State is quieting down, and that while there may not be any decided growth of what we want, there is yet a gradual abatement of what we feel bound to repress.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WAGER SWAYNE,

Brevet Major General and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, Freedmen, &c.

Memoranda enclosed.

Encloses report of tour of inspection in Lowndes county, by C. W. Buckley, inspector. Also, report of tour of inspection in eastern Alabama, by C. W. Buckley, and letter from R. F. Smith relative to destitution in Randolph county.

Memoranda.—Report of General Swayne of January 31, 1866.

Numerous matters of interest, with physical disability, caused the lull in the reports. Number of officers on duty has been strengthened by accessions of officers of the Veteran Reserve Corps. These officers will relieve the bureau from the evils of frequent changes, and make the bureau more effective at less expense. Has abstained from any marked extension of the agency system, until definite basis is furnished by legislation and adjustment of military force.

The Selma iron-works presented a claim to Major General Thomas for part of property sold there by the treasury agent. General Thomas directed General Woods to restrain the delivery of the property in dispute. General Woods restrained the whole, and was absent immediately thereafter. Measures have been taken to have the discrepancy corrected. Has referred all claims of this character to the military commander, preferring to keep the bureau clear from all property entanglements, regarding this revenue as a *dernier resort*.

Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Wright was sent out early in the month to visit and dispose of the Briarfield iron works. Sold them on the 9th instant for \$45,000, being \$5,000 more than was expected for them. No money was exacted at the time of sale, which is not altogether satisfactory. It was ordered by Colonel Wright that all the other property sold by the Treasury Department should be regularly accounted for to the collector at Mobile, leaving that officer to settle with his agents and pay the net proceeds over to the bureau. The Briarfield fund, being a large item, it was thought best to secure without deduction. Upon receipt of the order securing the "blockade-runners," directed Captain Kerr to proceed to Mobile, receive and dispose of them, under the advice of the department commander. They and some other property have been received and advertised. Encountered a claim to one of them; referred it to commanding general. General Woods, by a naval appraisal before sale, will inform the bureau of their worth. Several frame buildings in the State will be looked up and disposed of by the department quartermaster. Has received about \$8,000 as a first-fruits of the executive order. Four arrests have been made for plundering negroes, &c., and have had a good effect.

The failure of the attempt to depart from the standard of "equal rights before the law" made by the legislature, and the freedmen during the holidays going quietly to work, made a marked change in the minds of the people. The vetoing of the objectionable measures and sustenance by both houses seems to have given the proposition a footing from which it cannot be dislodged.

Deems that the freedmen will be best governed by the same measures as are most effective with ourselves, and only injured by artificial regulations. The true *incentives to labor* are hunger and cold; the true *security of labor* in the

free States is, when the laborer finds himself ill-treated, or his wages insufficient or unsafe, he can quit without having to account to anybody. The demand for labor keeps the freedmen secure in Alabama now.

Contracts imply bargaining and litigation, at which the freedman is no match for his white employer. Did not wish to infringe the liberty of the freedman by compelling him to contract, but have simply told the planters that when there was no contract approved by the bureau, "*when they came to settle I should exact payment at the highest current rates,*" if complaint was made, and there was evidence of imposition. Wishes to be understood only that as fast as the custom of money wages obtains its usual prevalence both parties reserve the right to quit at pleasure. Can get along in Alabama without any contract law, and propose to try it.

Looks to the new Code for relief from the law affixing death penalty for horse-stealing. The only two convicts he knew are negroes; one is commuted, and a reprieve is pending on the other. Copies of the veto messages have been forwarded. Hopes they will prove Governor Patton to be in sympathy with the bureau.

The reassembling of the legislature brought a vast mass of evidence of destitution. Authentic report reaches 52,000 whites, while his estimate for this month does not exceed 15,000. Are indications of abuse in some quarters. The State has appropriated a million dollars, if it can raise it, for their relief.

The commissary ordered by General Woods to report has not done so. His absence caused some inconvenience and uncertainty. Has taken steps to hold him to a strict accountability. During the month, has come, though not exactly into collision, into direct contact with the militia system of the State. Although disbelieving the insurrectionary rumor, it was improper to forbid all measures of defence; but now that had died away, the weaker portion of the community should not be forbid to carry arms, when the stronger do as a rule of custom.

Filed with General Woods an emphatic protest against the removal of the troops. Deems the presence of masses of infantry an evil, and unwieldy for the service required, and that a few bodies of cavalry would have a salutary effect.

Does not consider the small-pox as now on the increase. Four-fifths of the patients being freedmen, aided the hospitals by furnishing fuel.

The matter of schools is still on the threshold.

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, *January 5, 1866.*

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit for your information a report of my recent tour of inspection in Lowndes county, in this State. In the production of its soil and the number of its colored population, this county ranks third in the State. In it are living many large planters who owned a large number of slaves. It was natural, then, in a county so densely populated with blacks, to expect vast confusion when the time arrived for them to seek homes for themselves and families for the coming year. This bewilderment was augmented many fold from the fact that the county has been without an agent of the bureau for the past year; no troops have been quartered within its borders; a large portion of the county is remote from the river, and also from any railroad communication, and the information which usually spreads along such thoroughfares has had but slight influence in the county. Hence, many of the colored people must, of necessity, be grossly ignorant of their true position, and at a loss to know what is for their best interest. Many of the planters also, in the more secluded portions of the county, have clung more closely to their old prejudices than in sections where there has been greater freedom in the exchange of thought and opinion.

I started for this county on the 27th ultimo, accompanied by an orderly, with the view of ascertaining the true condition of the freedmen, and imparting to them

such information as might be of service to them in securing homes and employment. I labored for one object; I had but one aim—to bring the planters and the freedmen into such harmonious relations as to insure an organized and efficient system of labor for the present year. I felt confident, moreover, that my efforts would not be wholly lost with the freedmen, for I have always found them tractable and eager to receive instructions. After getting some distance from Montgomery, I found in some sections a timidity which seemed unnatural, a shyness among the freedmen which was very apparent. The few whom I met on the public roads, as I drew near them, would leave the roads, and pass around me through the fields or woods. Far the greater portion remained timidly near their cabins in doubt and suspense. At length I found the cause of this wonderful timidity in these sections. It seems, in certain neighborhoods, a company of men, on the night before Christmas, under alleged orders from the colonel of the county militia, went from place to place, broke open negro houses and searched their trunks, boxes, &c., under pretence of taking away fire-arms, fearing, as they said, an insurrection. Strange to say, that these so-called militiamen took the darkest nights for their purpose; often demanded money of the negroes, and took not only fire-arms, but whatever their fancy or avarice desired. In two instances negroes were taken as guides from one plantation to another and when the party reached the woods the guides were most cruelly beaten.

I really believe the true object of these nightly raids was, not the fear of an insurrection, but to intimidate and compel the blacks to enter into contract. For this same purpose, I found men who drove the freedmen from their houses on Christmas day, because they would not contract, thinking they would prefer to remain on any terms than to be driven out, with their wives and little children, into the storm to seek new homes. Some planters attempted to make it as difficult as possible for freedmen to change their homes, by declaring that a negro should not hire again within ten miles of his former home. I have the best of reason for saying all such attempts most signally failed, and men who treated the negroes thus are the ones who have been left without laborers to cultivate their fertile fields. Such was the demand for negro laborers even in this county, so densely populated with them, that any combination to abridge their freedom in seeking and changing homes, or to control the price of labor, failed most utterly. One man whom I met and talked freely with went to the county jail and bailed out four negroes and gave them high wages, that he might have hands to make his crop.

Another fact of which I was convinced, and am most happy to report, is this: The growing confidence of planters in their ability to make a crop with free labor. This idea has gained ground rapidly in a few weeks past. Of all the men, on my recent trip to whom I put the question, "Do you think you can raise a crop with free negroes?" I have not found one who doubts the result. Men who told me last May and June that free negroes will not work without compulsion, have told me this week that their negroes never worked better than they are now doing.

I cannot fail in this report to speak also of the prevailing good behavior of the freedmen during the holidays. An old citizen of Hayneville told me that he had never seen the town so orderly or the public square so free from idle negroes as during the holidays just passed. When we take into consideration the great ignorance of the blacks, their inexperience in providing homes for themselves, (this being the first time in their history,) and then compelled to make the change in mid-winter, during a severe storm of a week's continuance; when we take into consideration also the impatience of planters, and the irritation naturally caused by this great change and breaking up of a past labor system, we may safely say that we have passed smoothly over one of the most trying periods in the history of the colored race. Henceforth our feet tread on firmer ground. There is wrong and suffering, to be sure, everywhere; how

great and how much no one on earth will know. There are fugitives from justice who never will appear before an earthly tribunal. There are criminals whose guilt will never be atoned for in time, yet much has been accomplished. Much has been done by the fostering care and protection of the bureau. Much is due to the vigilance of military power. Much is due to a generous government and the beneficence of a Christian nation. But all this is as nothing compared with what God is doing for the race. Stubborn and persistent has been the reluctance of the negroes to contract; so stubborn, that the entreaties of friends were powerless; so persistent, that the intimidation of foes was of no avail; so widespread, that it reached from Virginia to Texas. We deprecated it; we strove against it; and yet it was God's method of teaching eight millions of people their dependence upon the despised freedmen, and the most arrogant and haughty would not learn the lesson until the holidays left them without laborers to eat their bread by the sweat of their brow. How comprehensive are these lessons which God would teach us. How powerful and all-pervading are the secret laws by which a just God governs the affairs of men. How difficult for human agency to seek out and suppress the wrongs of a single State. How impossible almost for human charity to relieve the sufferings of society. And yet how easy it is for God to do it by the very elements of society themselves. These things He is doing day by day for the colored race. *He is ordering that the self-interest of the former master shall be the protection of the late slave.* Where all other laws fail, this is effective; where other agencies never go, this is present to raise up friends for the helpless and ignorant, and to open the prison door to the bound. The present, then, I regard as the most favorable period for striving after a permanent reconciliation between the former master and slave. Now is the full-tide time of effort. The very forces of society are aiding to solve the problem.

I have the honor to be, general, with much respect, your obedient servant,
C. W. BUCKLEY, *District Inspector.*

Brevet Major General W. SWAYNE,
Assistant Commissioner, State of Alabama.

A true copy :

C. CADLE, JR.,
Brevet Colonel and A. A. G.

No. 16.

OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Montgomery, Ala., December 26, 1865.

GENERAL: My usual weekly report was not forwarded last week in consequence of my feeling it necessary to go to Mobile immediately upon the adjournment of the legislature. I, however, telegraphed you a summary of the action of that body, and requested Colonel Cadle to send you copies of the bills with an apology for myself. I returned from Mobile on Saturday, having been four days *en route* in consequence of attempting to come up the river in a boat which met with an accident. I send you enclosed two slips from the Mobile Register and Advertiser, containing letters to that paper, which give the best account I have seen of the legislative action last week. It is proper, however, to observe that I have studiously avoided interfering with that body, and have not been in either house except on occasion of the inauguration. On Friday the governor sent for me. I found in the executive office Governor Patton, Governor Parsons, the president of the senate, and other gentlemen. They submitted to me three bills, the approval of which was under consideration: 1st. The apprentice bill, which I could only pronounce the revival of slavery, so far as concerned

persons under age. 2d. The contract bill, which I was obliged to pronounce the revival of slavery for all others, except as to sale of persons. 3d. A bill to revive those parts of the slave code which refer to free negroes. I simply opened the statute-book and pointed out provisions which required all free negroes to leave the State within thirty days, and others of the same or worse tenor. I moreover advised them that the fact that 10,000 copies of all these bills had been ordered "for immediate distribution," showed that the status of the courts here was not understood, and that I had been obliged to issue my circular No. 3, which has been sent you.

Thereupon, Mr. Crenshaw, the president of the senate, drew the bill which was presented, to abolish the distinction of color in the administration of the laws. It was a time of profound feeling, but I am assured that the bill will pass next month. Meanwhile I hope and trust Congress will save them the trouble. From first to last I have asserted with deepening conviction, that on this condition, and this only, is it just, or wise, or safe, to allow civil justice to have exclusive power among this people, and from this condition, while I have the power, I will not swerve an inch. But there will be a continual fight about it until they see the line of strict equality laid down by Congress.

Arrived here, I found awaiting me your circulars Nos. 19, 20, and 21. The first of these refers to the matter of rations, which I have not entered upon heretofore, because everything seemed so uncertain I knew not what to say.

From the time I first came here, Governor Parsons, and many gentlemen I met, were full of most sincere apprehension as to the horrors of this winter. They pointed to the number fed last year, and alleged good reasons why the number of needy should be much greater this year.

I could not help feeling that this was true, and on my visit to Washington, and elsewhere, I indorsed the statements of the governor in this regard.

On the assembling of the legislature, the governor recommended that a large appropriation be made to purchase food, and that a commissioner be appointed to co-operate with me in the work of distribution. Such an officer has been appointed, but has not yet reported.

Committees on "destitution and supplies" were also appointed; and that of the house proceeded at once to gather data as to the probable extent of destitution in the State. They were not very energetic, nor had they reports from all the counties; yet the chairman gave me a memorandum, stating that he estimated that there were 130,000 destitute persons *among the whites alone*.

At this juncture I received your letter, reminding me of my statement, that the issue would have to be about 40,000. In the light I then had, I felt bound to give my opinion that it ought not to be less; but, meanwhile it was actually being made smaller, by the withdrawal of the troops and consequent reduction of supplies. I went to Mobile partly to correct this. I obtained from General Woods the enclosed circular, No. 4, and notified the commissary who sends supplies to all points accessible from there, that I should ask for the issue of from 12,000 to 15,000 rations daily, divided between Mobile, Selma, Montgomery, Talladega, and Tuscaloosa. It was my design to ask that 5,000 more be sent from Nashville to north Alabama; and these estimates will go in as soon as I have finished this. You will understand that so far I am acting on information, considering that if I am allowed to have the stores at all, it is not too much to *provide* for a number from both classes, only equal to one-seventh of those said to be destitute in one class.

But when it comes to *issuing*, I am disposed to rigid scrutiny. While I think it right, as I have said, *to provide*, yet, *before issuing*, I propose to make careful scrutiny of each district. I have never issued rations except where destitution was asserted under oath and I propose also to keep this up. The State commissioner is a clear-headed, vigorous man, and he must help in this. And just here I must say, that the apparent want is not so great as I appre-

hended. Two months ago women and children and broken-down men came thirty and forty miles in wagons to beg a little food. There is not so much of this now; and I felt this so strongly that I went this morning to talk it over confidentially with Governor Patton. He is a practical, conscientious, economical old merchant, who, I thought, would neither deceive nor be deceived. He said, however, that he knew there could be no mistake as to the mountain counties, and told me of some sad incidents. He felt assured that 5,000 rations for Huntsville district would not go beyond the strict requirements of humanity; I shall accordingly ask for that number, but shall try to go up there next week. But as to the portion of the State originally under my jurisdiction, I shall proceed more slowly; and I think that here I shall be able, outside the cities, to restrict the issue mainly to helpless colored persons. I hope the issue in the State will, in no case, exceed 15,000 rations; and I give you the earliest possible notice of this that you may use your judgment in relation to it.

Upon receipt of the executive order directing a transfer of property to me, my idea was, not to encumber the bureau with the custody of any property except such as it required for use; and, as to the rest, to have Mr. Montague, who had been assigned to that duty by the Secretary of the Treasury, dispose of it, settle with his agents according to outstanding agreements, and transfer net proceeds to Colonel Wright. But last week I received notice from the Secretary and from Mr. Mellen, the supervising agent, that this would not be permitted. I saw Mr. Mellen at Mobile, and learned that this action was based upon the fact that Mr. Montague was not in favor with his superiors. I at once applied to General Woods for some officer in whom he had confidence, and am in hopes in a few days to relieve Mr. Montague with an excellent officer of the quartermaster's department.

Meanwhile the property at Selma had already been brought to my notice. The personalty there had been offered for sale, and some large brick stacks and furnaces. These I struck from the list, as they plainly belonged to the realty, which had not been advertised. The rest, which had no such connexion, I permitted to be sold, and enclose you Mr. Montague's account of it.

The plan of the sale at Briarfield was not satisfactory to me. It was proposed to sell all that could be removed from a large iron works, without any reference to the realty. I at once directed this sale to be postponed, and notice given that, in the meanwhile, bids would be received for the realty. Mr. Lyon, whose application to you had been referred to me, was specially advised of this. I send you a copy of the notice.

I have also an application from General Croxton to purchase the works at Blue Mountain. I enclose you copies of his letters. I did not think it advisable to lease the property. I have no knowledge as yet of its real value. I should be glad to have instructions in this matter.

There are a number of loose buildings about the State which I am trying to turn in, several of them are still occupied by troops; and these I have not interfered with.

You will observe that one-half of the very large estimate, forwarded this week, is for two contracts made before I came here. Both of these have been examined on the ground by Colonel Wright, and are believed just claims, though it is thought the larger one can be compromised. It seems to me unwise for the government to undertake the business of farming in this manner. As orders were already received to pay the claim of Mr. Alcorn, (and it was supposed the other would be disposed of in the same way,) it was thought best to put them both in the estimate, and get authority to pay what is found to be necessary, with a view to getting them out of the way as soon as possible.

As we get in a little money, uses for it multiply. It is hoped that before long a direct act of Congress will measurably remove the struggle between humanity and discretion, by laying down a precise line of expenditure, with

definite means. Some items in the estimate sent this week will explain what I mean. Except that for a hospital at Talladega, which is mainly the forwarding of an application, all are believed to be founded on strict necessity or past expenditures. The price of rents here is enormous, \$1,500 to \$3,000 for dwellings, \$2,000 to \$7,000 for stores, and everything else is in proportion. Corn is \$2 25 per bushel—an important factor in the problem of destitution.

I am in receipt of Colonel Woodhull's letter of December 19, by your order, referring to the Monroe County Agricultural Association. The question of the right of the freed people to hold real estate did not escape me, but I did not think it worth while to raise it. Even before the war, free negroes had the same right here as white persons in this respect, and it has never been denied them since. They constantly exercise it under our system here, which administers the laws in this, as in all other respects, *without distinction on account of color*, and I have taken it for granted that these people would never be abandoned by the general government till this, with other rights, was secured to them in perpetuity. I am satisfied no bill to deprive freedmen of this particular right can become a law in this State.

Meanwhile, this plan is taking root. Having been advised of a meeting in Conecuh county, I sent the officer who met you at Jackson to attend it. They adopted the Monroe articles word for word. Chaplain Buckley was pleased with what he saw, and recommended the man elected president. I have learned of similar meetings held, or about to be held, in Clarke or Wilcox counties, and I suppose the results will be before me when the legislature meets.

I wrote you some time since that I was not satisfied with the working of the courts here, and that the difficulty arose not so much from a denial of justice as from failure to use its ordinary means. Several cases of outrages have come to my knowledge, perpetrated by men in *disguise*, and in the night. I have thought much how to correct this evil, and I am disposed to try the means used elsewhere to stimulate justice, i. e. *rewards*. Thus, with your approval, I should like to advertise pretty widely that I will give a reward of \$1,000 for the apprehension *and conviction* of the parties who, in Mobile, have burned three churches within six months. And there are two other cases in other parts of the State where smaller rewards would answer an excellent purpose. People would at least be careful of new crimes. As I said, uses for money multiply. I do not want to be extravagant, yet I feel bound to make to you suggestions which I think for the good of the work.

Christmas has passed without the slightest difficulty being reported so far. And so far no helpless freedmen have been reported to me as having been turned out homeless, though I have occasional applications to take charge of such. There may be more at New Year's, but the negroes seem generally willing to stay on the old home places and to care for their own helpless among themselves. We shall open no new colonies, unless perhaps one near Huntsville, and we are making some progress in inducing county commissioners to take those we have.

We get no response to our applications to benevolent societies at the north for teachers. We have several places where we could place northern male teachers to advantage, and many more where we could use teachers selected here.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WAGER SWAYNE,

Brevet Major General and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner of Bureau of Refugees, &c.

No. 17.

OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Montgomery, Alabama, January —, 1866.

GENERAL: I forwarded to you last week my usual weekly report by mail. I then wrote you that Christmas had passed without any apparent disturbance. None has since been reported, and the same may now be said of New Year's day. There was quite generally a changing of places, a good deal of confusion, and undoubtedly some suffering, but no such consequences as were apprehended on both sides. In Lowndes county, near here, the planters made a strong combination to hire no negro away from home. The freedmen stood it out until the planters gave way, and they finally hired at random, at a little higher wages than were generally paid elsewhere. Fewer cases are reported of helpless ones turned out of doors than I anticipated. On the other hand, it is like moving a mountain to get these county commissioners to do anything towards providing a poor-house. As soon as the legislature meets, I shall again attempt to compel them by law to do it. Such a bill was introduced a few weeks since, but was finally laid on the table.

Mr. M. H. Cruikshank, the commissioner appointed by the State, has reported and entered upon his duties, going first to Huntsville, whence he will explore north Alabama, and arrange the distribution of supplies to the really needy. He will also have in view and advance the other objects of the bureau. He is an active, and, apparently, an excellent man. His salary and travelling expenses are paid by the State. To be sure, to be on the safe side, the estimates sent in were finally reduced to thirteen thousand five hundred in all.

I have about given up the hope of receiving any accession of teachers from northern benevolence, though we shall still press our application. Meanwhile I shall try what can be done among the Christian denominations of the State, nearly all of whom have pledged themselves by resolution to aid the education of the negroes. To this end I have tendered an appointment as superintendent of schools to Rev. John B. Taylor, a Baptist minister, whose life has been mainly devoted to education, and who was doing what he could to promote schools among the negroes even before I came here. He is well known throughout the State, having been formerly State superintendent of schools, and came within a few votes of the same position a month ago. He has my proposal under advisement. If he accepts, I will send him out over the State to see what he can do, and shall hope for good results.

Two men were arrested near here one day last week, who were robbing and disarming negroes upon the highway. The arrests were made by the provost marshal's forces. The men represented themselves as in the military service, and acting by my order. They afterwards stated, what was probably true, that they belonged to the Macon county militia. I have procured a military commission, and shall proceed to try them, making the first charge the unlawful assumption of authority. A *habeas corpus* will be sued out and taken to the President. I am sorry to give you this trouble, but I must enforce upon this people my original proposition, that if they don't do justice, it will be done for them. And it is further desired to convince the local militia that stealing clothing, pistols, and money, under guise of "disarming the negroes," or stealing pistols only, is robbery, and will be so dealt with, according to the means we have. There must be "no distinction of color" in the right to carry arms, any more than in any other right. When the writ of *habeas corpus* is served, a special communication will be forwarded for presentation to the officer to whom the prisoners' application is referred.

We are in receipt of an order detailing several officers of the Veteran Reserve

Corps to report here, and two of the officers have arrived. The re-enforcement is very welcome, and especially needed just at this time, when we are losing some of our best officers by muster-out. Lieutenant Colonel John B. Callis, who arrived to-day, will be sent to relieve Chaplain Goodfellow, at Huntsville, mustered out of service. He is an excellent officer, who will not stay as a civilian, and with whom I am very sorry to part.

In this connexion I am in receipt of Chaplain Goodfellow's report upon the application of W. T. Clarke, late of General Fisk's staff, returned with your indorsement for my action. In the absence of countervailing proof, the facts stated show that this was in fact a purchase of government property by an officer in the service. But as General Fisk seems disposed to make a personal matter of it, I think the government would probably lose less by the transaction than by a quarrel in the service, and shall accordingly confirm the sale. The technical question of jurisdiction I of course care nothing about. We are also in receipt of your telegram of date December 28, 1865, calling for an estimate of quartermasters' stores for the next six months. It has been prepared and goes forward immediately.

From Colonel Woodhull, also, we have a memorandum of forty cases of clothing and supplies, sent by R. B. Minturn and other gentlemen of New York city. I have addressed a note to Mr. Minturn, and shall further acknowledge the receipt and distribution of the stores.

I have, also, from Colonel Woodhull, a circular of the American Freedmen's Aid Society, calling for a variety of information; the circular indorsed with a statement of the hold which the society has upon the bureau. This fact is recognized, and we shall furnish such information as we can. Before receiving your indorsement I felt a little hurt at the fact that not one teacher has arrived and reported to me since I came here. I felt at liberty to treat the project as I, in fact, regarded it, as a ponderous and expensive diversion from the proper work of the commission.

During the holiday season contracts have been made on every hand, and are still making. The general average of payment is, besides food and quarters and medical attendance for the entire family, ten dollars a month for men and eight for women. I have not thought it best to interfere with the laws of supply and demand any further than simply to secure to the helpless ones the necessaries of life. So far as I can learn, the demand for labor exceeds the supply in all portions of the State. We estimate that there are now probably as many as five thousand northern men in the State, and the freedmen show them a marked preference. There is another gratifying feature: those men who used their freedmen badly last year, find proportionate difficulty this year, and some of them have had to give it up. We have also received and read with much interest your first annual report. I beg to thank you for so much of it as refers kindly to myself. I hope and trust the work here may show that the foundations are well laid. The result, of course, must come from the Divine blessing.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WAGER SWAYNE,

Brevet Major General and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.

Memoranda.—Report of Brevet Major General Swayne, January, 1866.

Wrote in last weekly report that Christmas had passed without any apparent disturbance. New Year's day passed the same. Was quite generally a changing of places, a good deal of confusion, and undoubtedly some suffering, but not so

much as was apprehended. Some concluded to hire no negro away from home. The negroes stood out, so the planters gave way and hired at increase of wages. Fewer cases of helpless ones turned out than was anticipated. As soon as the legislature meets, will attempt to compel the county commissioners to provide poor-houses. A bill was introduced but laid on the table. Mr. H. K. Cruikshank, the commissioner appointed by the State, has reported and entered on his duties. Has about given up all hopes of an accession of teachers from northern benevolence. Has tendered the appointment of superintendent of schools to Reverend John B. Taylor, a Baptist minister. If he accepts, will send him over the State to see what he can do. Two men were arrested for disarming negroes. Represented themselves as acting under General Swayne's orders. Has procured a military commission to try them, and convince the people that "disarming negroes" is robbery. A writ of *habeas corpus* will be sued out and taken to the President. When served, a special communication will be forwarded for presentation to the officer to whom the prisoners' application is referred. An order assigning veteran reserve officers has been received. They are now much needed. As General Fisk was disposed to make a personal matter of the application of W. T. Clarke, late of the general's staff, it will be better to drop the subject than cause a quarrel in the service. Has received from Colonel Woodhull a memorandum of forty cases of clothing and supplies from R. B. Minturn and other gentlemen of New York city. Has addressed a note to Mr. Minturn, and shall further acknowledge receipt and distribution of the stores. Has received a circular of the American Freedmen's Aid Society, calling for information, indorsed with statement of the hold the society has upon the bureau. Contracts are still being made at rate of \$10 for men and \$8 for women per month. The demand for labor exceeds supply, and the freedmen show preference for northern men. Has received and read the first annual report. Thanks for so much as refers to his action.

MONTGOMERY, ALA., January 6, 1866.

SIR: I beg leave to bring to your notice the needs of the destitute people of Randolph county, in this State. The report made by the probate judge of the county shows that fifteen hundred families, embracing more than five thousand persons, are in need of immediate aid.

Randolph county was devoted to the Union, and to keep the people in subjection to the confederacy it was thought necessary to maintain a rebel cavalry force there all through the war. Such a force was kept there up to the time of the general surrender, and the commanders always discriminated in their foraging against the Union people. The fact that a man was away in the service of the United States, or was opposed to the rebellion, was deemed a sufficient warrant for taking the last piece of meat from his smoke-house, and the last ear of corn or bundle of fodder from his barn, leaving his family to starve, or live on the charity of neighbors, frequently but little better off than themselves.

Randolph county furnished nearly five hundred men who actually took up arms in the service of the United States, enlisting in whatever organizations they found convenient, as they made their escape from the rebel conscripting officers into our lines. They were to be found in regiments from Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio—in fact, in every command that I visited in a pretty extended range during the war. I found some of my friends and neighbors from Randolph county. Very many of these men never came back. They went out to fight. In every battle they felt that they were fighting, not only for the cause of their country, but directly for their homes and their families, for wives and children left in the hands of relentless enemies, for homes which they might never see again, but which, if they ever did repossess them, they would hold

under the protection of the Union and the general government. They were not men to skulk from danger. Their graves on every battle-field attest their bravery, their patriotism, and their sacrifices. The relief of their suffering families should now be particularly the care of the government.

Besides those who were in arms for the Union, lists were commonly furnished to successive rebel commanders of those who were refugees because of their opposition to the rebellion, and of others suspected of loyalty to the general government, and the property of these men was wantonly destroyed in scores of instances, when it was not even needed for the subsistence of the soldiers stationed in the county.

There are also many poor families of those who were not so fortunate as to escape into our lines, but were driven at the sword's point by conscript officers into the rebel ranks, compelled to risk and often lose their lives in the service of traitors whom they abhorred.

Much destitution also exists among the families of the late rebels, for the soldiery, who had come in the beginning partly at their instance, consumed their substance when the means of the Union people were all exhausted. Like Actæon, they were eaten up by their own dogs. The general destitution has rendered many kindly disposed people unable to do anything for the negroes who were formerly their slaves, and who might be supposed to have some claims upon them for temporary assistance on that account, and there is much suffering among the aged and infirm, the sick and the helpless, of this class of people.

I assure you, sir, that it is a common, an every-day sight in Randolph county, that of women and children, most of whom were formerly in good circumstances, begging for bread from door to door. Meat of any kind has been a stranger to many of their mouths for months. The drought cut off what little crops they hoped to save, and they must have immediate help or perish.

I know that you are doing all in your power to meet the wants of the poor and distressed all over the State. I have written this letter in no spirit of bitterness, with no desire to call up the remembrance of past wrongs, but simply to state the facts which account for the extreme and widespread destitution existing in that particular county. In conclusion allow me to say that I will cheerfully aid you to the fullest extent of my ability, if you think I can be of any service to you in your good work.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. T. SMITH.

Brevet Major General WAGER SWAYNE,

*Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Refugees,
Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.*

A true copy :

C. CADLE, JR.,

Brevet Colonel and A. A. G.

SENATE CHAMBER,

Montgomery, Alabama, January 15, 1865.

DEAR SIR : I desire to bring to your notice the condition of a large portion of the people of Coosa county in regard to provisions, and to represent, as nearly as possible, the character and extent of the destitution which prevails. There are several classes of this, to wit :

Old persons, whose decline in years disables them for labor, and who have no relations able to assist them ;

Widows and orphans, made so mostly by the events of the war ;

Persons who were forced, by the danger of losing their lives, to remove during the war within the federal lines, and whose property was mainly destroyed ;

Families, where the head had been engaged in the military service and returned home last summer too late to make a crop.

The extent of this destitution is general. In some portions of the county it is restricted comparatively to a few; in other portions it embraces a majority of persons in the precincts, particularly where there was but little labor to expend in planting, and the season proved unfavorable for maturing even what was planted, in consequence of the destructive drought that prevailed over most of the county. The colored population has much less of destitution to suffer than the white. They generally remained last season with their former owners, and in almost every instance took a portion of the crop, which had been already pitched, a great deal of it, in the best lands. Their portion of the crops has been generally well taken care of, affording many the food necessary for a good part of the year. They have exhibited a praiseworthy concern in the matter of retaining their old or procuring new homes, and very few that cannot get at least their food, clothing, and lodging for their services. The ability to feed themselves has given them the advantage in hiring for the year over white persons, who possessed no means in this respect; and this may be set down as one of the reasons why so many white laborers are unemployed and not furnished with food. Unless it may be about the town of Wetumpka, I do not think there will be much want in Coosa county among the freedmen.

The number of whites cannot be estimated with anything like certainty. Some families have provisions to do them for a longer or shorter period; while many, I am sure, are now absolutely destitute, and are fed for the time by the strained contributions of their neighbors, who are themselves barely able to live. Even this scant supply must cease soon.

I am at some loss as to the best mode of ascertaining the condition in detail of these people, so as to provide for cases that are truly meritorious, and guard against impositions; and, too, as to the best mode of making distribution, so that the needy may receive the liberal and timely assistance of the government. The designation of proper persons in different localities, who, prompted by a humane, honest purpose to carry out in good faith the purposes of this distribution, it seems to me, would be a good plan, under the adoption of such rules as you may deem best to meet the cases of the different classes mentioned in the first part of this communication. I believe that suitable men could be procured in the different convenient localities, and thus relieve the system of supply of much uncertainty; at the same time that it would protect the department against imposition.

As the senator from this county, (of Coosa,) I have submitted this statement, and beg your attention to it, with a view of meeting the conditions of destitution, assuring you of my readiness to aid in so far as I can in carrying out this praiseworthy purpose of the government.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. GARRETT.

General WAGER SWAYNE.

PROBATE OFFICE,
Talladega, Alabama, October 4, 1865.

GENTLEMEN: You are hereby respectfully requested to inquire into and report to me, on or before the next regular term of the commissioner's court, to be held in this county on the first Monday and the 6th day of November next—

1. The number of indigent families in your district.
2. The number of persons in each family.
3. The extent of their destitution.
4. The estimated amount required for their support per month.

5. State the number of males and females in each family, and their ages.

6. State the cause of their destitution.

I hope you will proceed at once to take the necessary steps to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing request, as it is of vital importance to the interest of our county and the destitute.

By request of Governor L. E. Parsons.

Respectfully,

WILLIAM H. THORNTON,
Judge of Probate.

JOHN H. HURST and A. B. STRICKLAND, Esqs:

Names.	No. in family.	Extent of destitution.	No. of males and ages.	No. of females and ages.	Am't requir'd per month.	Cause of destitut'n.
Phoebe Clark	3	Wholly	2, 6 to 8		\$6 00	Widow.
Mrs. McCleas	3	Wholly			4 00	Widow.
Martha Parker	6	Wholly		6, oldest 10	8 00	Widow.
Catharine Bullard	7	Wholly	5, 3 to 12		10 00	Widow.
E. Carter	6	Partly	3, 8 to 17	3, 6 to 16	8 00	Widow.
Katy Clark	5	Wholly	2, 4 to 8	2, 3 to 5	8 00	
Eather Rice	5	Wholly		5, 5 to 12	6 00	
S. Steed	5	Wholly	1, 6	3, 10 to 17	6 00	Widow.
Mary Henry	4	Wholly	2, 2 to 6	1, 2	5 00	Widow.
Malhda Walker	3	Wholly	1, 6	2, 18	5 00	Widow.
F. Burnett	2	Partly	1, 8	1, 35	3 00	Widow.
L. E. Burnett	2	Partly		2, 24	3 00	Widow.
J. H. Dyer	6	Partly	4, 1 to 8	2, 25	8 00	
D. R. Johnstener	3	Wholly	1, 25	2, 3 to 19	3 00	
Jamima New	2	Partly	1, 15	1, 30	3 00	Widow.
Nancy Heurn	8	Partly	2, 2 to 14	6, 6 to 16	10 00	Widow.
E. Arnold	3	Partly	1, 4	2, 4 to 25	4 00	Widow.
C. Whatly	2	Wholly		2, 2 to 25	5 00	Widow.
P. Heuth	4	Wholly	3, 2 to 6	1, 28	7 00	Widow.
R. L. Mason and two widows.	* 8	Partly	1, 70	3,	10 00	
Emily Hufnall	† 5	Wholly			7 00	Widow.
A. Haynes	‡ 5	Partly			6 00	
Aley Ellard	§ 3	Wholly			5 00	Widow.
Francis Ellard	|| 3	Wholly			5 00	Widow.
L. Corley	¶ 4				5 00	
Martha Davis		Partly			3 00	Widow.
John Donohon	** 2				3 00	
Elizabeth Watts	†† 5	Partly			5 00	Widow.
E. Shirah	‡‡ 5	Partly			5 00	Widow.
Sarah Pannell	§§ 2	Partly			3 00	Widow.
Mary Clark	||| 3	Partly			4 00	Widow.

* Helpless old man, two widows, and children.
 † All under ten years old but one boy, fourteen years.
 ‡ All girls but the old man and lady; he blind.
 § Old lady; two boys under ten years old.
 || Widow, with two little boys under eight years old.
 ¶ Old man about seventy years old, little boy, and two girls.

** Old man, helpless, or nearly so, and daughter.
 †† Widow, with four children; oldest, fourteen years old.
 ‡‡ Widow, with children; oldest, about fourteen years old.
 §§ Widow, with one little boy, five years old.
 ||| Widow, with two little children.

We have made out our report as well as we could with the lights before us. After looking round we may be able to find others that are needy, that ought to be reported, and at the proper time we will look after others that may present themselves.

Respectfully, yours, &c.,

JOHN H. HURST.
A. B. STRICKLAND.

W. H. THORNTON.

No. 18.

OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
Montgomery, Ala., January 16, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit the following report of my recent tour to Talladega, Alabama, in which I shall endeavor to lay before you not only

the condition of affairs in Talladega, but also in the adjacent counties of Bibb, Shelby, Jefferson, and Calhoun.

On the 9th instant I received Special Orders No. 7, directing me to proceed to Talladega, Alabama, to ascertain the condition of the freedmen of that section, and to find out the amount of destitution among the whites, and organize, if possible, some systematic way of relieving it. With this object distinctly in view, I started on the evening of the 10th instant for Selma, and on the morning of the 12th instant I took the cars for Talladega. On the cars I met with citizens from different parts of the district I was sent to visit. From them I learned of the general prevalence of destitution in the counties above named. I was convinced, from inquiries made, and from my conversation with these citizens, that the time had come for immediate action, and that supplies ought to be sent to these counties at once for distribution. I then made known to them my business, and invited their earnest co-operation.

As there is no military post in Bibb county, I thought the distribution of supplies must necessarily fall into the hands of reliable citizens. I acted on this supposition, and shaped my course accordingly. Messrs. James Latham and Hughson, of the town of Randolph, Bibb county, were recommended to me as men of high standing in the county, and being old citizens, of large hearts and kind sympathies, they were acquainted with the needy of the county. Both these men I met on my way up, and solicited their help. They promised to aid in the matter, though Mr. Latham, I am sorry to say, will not remain long in the county. Before my return a few citizens held a meeting, and the action of that meeting will be forwarded to this office in a few days. I would suggest that the supplies for this county be sent from Selma to Randolph, making the latter a depot of supply. I requested that the county choose some thoroughly reliable man to act as agent of distribution, and forward his name to this office, with an estimate of the number of rations required for next month.

At Montevallo, Shelby county, is a military post, commanded by Captain H. Reade, 34th regiment New Jersey volunteers, an energetic officer and an excellent man. Captain Reade will take charge of all rations required in his company, and will give his personal attention to their distribution. He will draw his supplies, upon proper returns, from Captain Taylor, of Talladega. Feeling that an officer, whose time is engrossed by other duties and cares, would require the aid of well-disposed and kind-hearted citizens, I arranged with William T. Brown, of Montevallo—a gentleman of intelligence and good reputation in the county—for a meeting of the citizens to determine upon some method of aiding Captain Reade. A meeting was held on Saturday, 13th instant. The annexed resolutions will indicate the method agreed upon.

Captain Reade assured me that Jefferson county was very destitute in certain portions. He has frequent applications for relief from that county. As the direct route to this county lies through Montevallo, I would recommend, if it be found necessary to send supplies there—and I doubt not it will—that they be sent to Captain Reade, to be transferred as necessity may require.

On arriving at Talladega, I first investigated the condition of freedmen affairs. Here I found Captain Taylor, 34th New Jersey volunteers, acting as assistant superintendent. Captain Taylor had been but recently assigned to that position. The frequent changes in the office of assistant superintendent had caused great confusion in the affairs of the office, which, combined with the inexperience of the present occupant and the inefficiency of the surgeon, compelled me to think that little has been done of late either to better the condition of the freedmen or relieve the appalling destitution of the poor whites. Captain Taylor was spoken of in high terms by the commanding general, and will, I think, by the aid of such information as he can gather from orders and circulars published by the assistant commissioner, with instructions directly given to him, make a good officer for the place.

For the tardiness and negligence of the surgeon there is no palliation. I found him without a hospital or any adequate accommodations for the sick. He complained that he had no building or hospital supplies. I am happy to state that while at Talladega supplies arrived sufficient to fit up fifty beds. The next step was to get a building for a hospital. I waited upon the mayor, and endeavored to obtain the co-operation of the city authorities. I requested that the city build a hospital for the accommodation of both white and black. Then I promised, on the part of the assistant commissioner, to furnish hospital and medical supplies, rations, and medical attendance, in part, at least. The mayor assured me that he would urge the acceptance of my proposition by the common council. We shall know the result in a short time. Should this plan fail, a building will be rented or built immediately. I think we may look for a better state of things in future.

There are but a few freedmen at this place—about sixty, who are dependent upon the government for support. They are quite comfortably provided for. By far the greater suffering exists among the whites. Their scanty supplies have been exhausted, and now they look to government alone for support. Some are without homes of any description. This seems strange, and almost unaccountable. Yet, on one road leading to Talladega I visited four families, within fifteen minutes' ride of town, who were living in the woods, with no shelter but pine boughs, and this in mid-winter. Captain Dean, who accompanied me, assured me that upon the other roads leading into town were other families similarly situated. These people have no homes. They were widows, with large families of small children. Other families, as their provisions fail, will wander in for supplies, and I am fearful the result will be a camp of widows and orphans. If possible, it should be prevented; and yet I saw about thirty persons for whom shelter must be provided, or death will speedily follow their present exposure and suffering.

The subjoined report, made by the magistrates of district No. 17, to the probate judge of Talladega county, will show the cause of this widespread destitution. W. H. Thornton, judge of probate, a most excellent man, promised every assistance in relieving this destitution.

Before I returned Captain Taylor received a supply of rations, and will extend his investigations to Calhoun county.

I requested that an estimate of the amount of supplies required for next month be forwarded as soon as it can be correctly ascertained.

Hoping that my action may meet with your approval, I have the honor to be, with much respect, your obedient servant,

C. W. BUCKLEY,

Chaplain 47th Regt. U. S. Col. Inf., Dist. Inspector.

Brevet Major General WAGER SWAYNE,

Assistant Commissioner State of Alabama.

No. 19.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
STATE OF TEXAS, *Galveston, January 31, 1866.*

GENERAL: I have the honor to report that, since the 10th of December last, I have visited the Lower Brazos, Oyster Creek, Old Caney, and Colorado districts. These lands comprise the most productive and influential cotton and sugar-growing sections in the State. They are bottom lands, of exhaustless fertility, and were formerly crowded with slaves.

I found that the planters, under the stimulus of high prices, were desirous of tilling their fields, and anxious to obtain the labor.

The blacks were willing to work, asking only that the fulfilment of the promises made them by the planters should be enforced by the government.

Under these conditions, contracts were freely made with the freedmen on liberal terms, and approved by the bureau. There is a great variety of contracts between them and their employers, and much vagueness in terms.

When money-wages are paid, the rates range from eight to fifteen dollars a month in specie, besides, for the most part, including quarters, food, fuel, medical attendance, and clothing.

In many instances, instead of wages, a portion of the crop, ranging from one-quarter to one-half, according to the special conditions of each case, is pledged to the laborers, and the instances are not unfrequent where, in addition to this high percentage of the expected crop, the planter boards and lodges his workmen gratis.

It is believed that the history of modern times cannot furnish a parallel to the high inducements held out in this State to labor.

As a result, in the more orderly portion of the State, theft, idleness and vagrancy have almost become things of the past. At least nine-tenths of the former slave population of Texas are under contract for a year, and working soberly and steadily in the fields. Of the remaining fraction who still hold aloof, from a deeply grounded want of confidence in the planter's promises, the number is daily dwindling to a handful.

In the whole State, and out of more than four hundred thousand freedmen, only about sixty-seven are now receiving government-support.

I am pleased to note, in this connexion, that the power and influence of that class who deny to the black man his rights and liberties, and seek to obtain his services without compensation, is small and growing less. The immense profits realized at present prices, from the production of cotton and sugar, have caused a competition for labor which, in many localities, has become a scramble; and as the amount and quality of work to be obtained from the negro depend very much on the kind of treatment he receives, the self-interest of the landowner combines with the higher and humaner motives that sway the general government, to induce fair and just conduct towards him.

Thus the distrust manifested by the negro towards his former owner, and the antipathy of the planter towards the rise and progress of his recent chattel, are lessening, and the concord between the labor and the capital of the State growing more complete.

To the attainment of this end all my efforts are directed.

From the reports of agents and land-owners, and the statements of the Texas press, it is evident that, during the month of January just closed, there has been more agricultural labor performed, and more ample preparation made for a coming harvest, than ever before during the same time in the State.

This, be it remembered, happens in the first year of free labor here. The labor of the State is, indeed, so inadequate to the demand, that from twenty to fifty thousand additional plantation hands could be at once absorbed. All those who are represented in other departments of the south to be unemployed and starving, could at once find work, bread, and wages on the rich bottoms and fair uplands of Texas.

I can also report that instances of shooting, cruel abuse, and violent assaults upon freedmen are perceptibly on the decline, though still not unfrequent, especially in the less accessible portions of the State; for the wrongs increase just in proportion to their distance from the United States authorities.

No instance of this kind, coming to the attention of this bureau, is permitted to pass without trial and punishment. These cases almost defy any attempt to

record them, and are reckoned by hundreds, ranging from downright murder, savage beatings, merciless whippings, hunting men with trained bloodhounds, through all the lesser degrees of cruelty and crime.

A great moral improvement has been noted in this regard of late, for one legal sentence inflexibly enforced has a moral effect, felt even in distant neighborhoods.

When the people of Texas become familiarized with the idea of law as an irresistible power to which all must bow, and which throws just the same amount of protection over the meanest black as the proudest white, the first great step will have been taken in the direction of a permanent peace. Great delays and difficulties have been met in obtaining officers from the army, and in keeping them when detailed, owing to the muster-out of so many regiments.

For this great State, with a territory as large as New York and all New England, my entire corps of assistants numbers but twenty-five, of whom ten are civilians. Consequently much the larger portion of the State is without an officer or representative of the bureau.

With regard to the sanitary condition of the freedmen, there are great deficiencies. For a full statement of the case, I respectfully refer you to the annexed report of Dr. Mintzer, surgeon-in-chief of the bureau.

Our schools are in a healthy and prosperous condition. Without funds, or a single dollar of pecuniary aid from any source; there are now in operation, sustained by voluntary contributions of the colored people, twenty-six day and evening schools, with an attendance of over sixteen hundred pupils.

The particulars are presented in the report, herewith annexed, of E. M. Wheelock, superintendent of schools for the State.

In that part of your congressional report where Texas matters are presented, this bureau is spoken of as "depending on a small tax upon the approval of contracts for funds to defray expenses."

This is an error. I have never ordered or sanctioned the levying of any such tax, and not a single dollar has ever been paid into the treasury of the bureau from this source.

The tax has been levied; considerable sums gathered; certain parties benefited, and much consequent trouble and opprobrium fallen on the bureau, but the whole affair was conducted by persons acting without warrant or authority from myself.

In my instructions to agents, and in published orders, I have directly forbidden my agents to receive any moneys or charge any fees for the approval of contracts; I have repeatedly and publicly disavowed any connexion with this movement, and have ordered the arrest of persons so engaged whenever found.

I may state that no other occurrence has caused me so much mortification and trouble.

The expenses of the bureau have been paid, thus far, from fines upon those who have wronged the freedmen in his person and in his rights.

I append herewith a statement of all moneys, from whatever source, received to this date into the treasury of the bureau during my administration in Texas.

Very respectfully,

E. M. GREGORY,

Br't Brig. Gen., Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner, &c., Washington, D. C.

HOUSTON, TEXAS, *January 31, 1866.*

GENERAL: I have the honor to report that, in obedience to your instructions to inspect the general condition of freedmen on the Lower Brazos and Colorado rivers, comprising the cotton district you visited before Christmas, I respectfully report, that on leaving you on the 10th instant in Washington county, I proceeded to Oyster creek, Brazos and Colorado, visiting upwards of one hundred plantations.

The general health of the freedmen is good, considering the miasmatic influences of these rich river-bottom lands, and the quality of water. As a general rule, the north and west banks of the rivers are most subject to miasmatic influences; the exceptions are, where the banks of the rivers are a protection against the prevailing south wind. There is often a marked difference, within a short distance in length some planters reporting no deaths and but little sickness during the year, while others report as high as 15 and 20 per cent. of miasmatic diseases and a proportionable number of deaths. Where bayou and river water is used, the sickness is greater than where the cistern water is made use of. This is considered the most healthy season in these bottoms.

I find that the quarters of the freedmen are indifferent, and the best of them will not compare with the average homes of our northern laborers; the great majority are built of logs, without windows, seldom floored, and with poor roofs, forming a one-room cabin from 16 to 22 feet square, and this frequently overcrowded. Whitewashing and scrubbing are a novelty almost unknown, and the bedding and clothing very indifferent. To correct these evils, I have appealed so the planters' self-interest. To hold and secure free and reliable labor, they must offer at least the healthful comforts of life, and make the freedmen's home attractive. The more intelligent seem to appreciate and are willing to act on the suggestion, while a few say that "it was good enough for the nigger while he was worth \$1,500 to them, and ought to be good enough now, as he has no jingle."

The ration furnished by the planter for the freedman is one of pork and corn-meal, he receiving from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 pounds of the former per week. Extras are generally furnished by the freedman himself.

"The freedmen are working well," is nearly the universal report of the planters. A few say they are doing better work than they did while in slavery. Where the freedmen are not doing so well, there is some dissatisfaction arising from the non-fulfilment of some promise made by the employer.

There is a far greater demand for labor than can be supplied. In Wharton, Richmond, Columbia, Columbus, and other small towns, there is not an idle freedman to be found. The inducements to labor have swept all clean. At Houston the planters have agents or runners employed at from \$3 to \$20 per hand premium. Agents are being sent to other States to secure laborers, and to try to induce negroes to emigrate to this. Colored soldiers are being importuned to promise to hire as soon as they are mustered out of service. Others speak confidently of white labor being imported, but it is from their aversion to render justice to the black man, their former bondman, whom they believed had no rights beyond their sanction—doubted their accountability, or that they had a soul to save. Most of the planters believe that the negro is constitutionally adapted to the raising of southern products—sugar and cotton—and will surpass all competition, and that if Swiss laborers are imported, before five years they will work some of the plantations. But there is room enough for all.

There is more demand for laborers in Texas now than there was before the war. This is owing in part to small capitalists and planters renting large plantations and employing additional laborers. Men here who never owned a slave, now work from forty to fifty hands. These men readily contracted, about Christmas, with first-class hands at the rate of from \$10 to \$12 per month, and

demonstrated the success of freelabor. The old line planters, who only a few weeks before had driven off their negroes, endeavored to secure their services by offering greater inducements. They offered part of the crop—first, one-fourth, then one-third, and now one-half—rather than let their plantations remain idle. Their efforts to secure the “lazy nigger,” it was thought by many, would demoralize the freedmen under contract, and unsettle labor. But so far, fortunately, it has failed to do so. Freedmen who at first contracted at low rates, as a general thing, remain true to their obligations. Surprising as it may seem, the ignorant freedman has shown more principle than the selfish white man.

The largest and most intelligent planters whom I have conversed with say that if it had not been for your direct and earnest appeals, they would not have planted this year. They did not believe the free negroes would work or go into contract. The negro had strong prejudices and expected too much from freedom, and feared to contract lest he might thereby resign his liberties. They looked for and wanted the very explanation you rendered. The confidence which the freedmen reposed in you then, and retain now, is to their mutual advantage. Men who would have crucified you three months ago are the warmest friends of the bureau, and shout loudest in its praise. This is a great contrast from the groundless forebodings of a few weeks. The achievement is indeed a great victory.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

I. J. W. MINTZER,

Surgeon U. S. V., Surgeon-in-Chief,

Bureau of Ref., Freed'n, and Ab'd Lands, State of Texas.

Brig. Gen. E. M. GREGORY,

Ass't Commissioner, Bureau of Ref., Freed'n, &c., Galveston, Texas.

No. 20.

WAR DEPARTMENT, BUREAU OF REFUGEES,
FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
Washington, D. C., January 1, 1866.

GENERAL: In accordance with instructions received from you early in October last, as contained in Special Orders No. 84, dated at these headquarters, I have the honor to respectfully submit for your information the following report of my action and observation in the State of Texas:

I passed little more than a month in the State, and during that time used every endeavor to ascertain the true condition of the freedmen; what they were doing to support themselves, and what the citizens of Texas, their former masters, were doing for *them*, under the new order of things.

As it was impossible for me to visit every portion of the State without remaining several months, and as the time allowed for my inspection was limited, I decided, after consultation with various officers on duty at Galveston and Houston, to travel in the eastern portion of the State, on the Trinity river, and between the Trinity and Neches rivers. This section of country is acknowledged by all officers and citizens with whom I conversed, to be the very worst portion of the State, and it was thought that more good could be done on this route than any other. I also visited the extreme western portion of the State, and several points along the coast between Galveston and the mouth of the Rio Grande.

I travelled with an escort of cavalry furnished by Major General Mower, commanding at Houston, and was accompanied as far as Huntsville by Brigadier General E. M. Gregory, assistant commissioner of this bureau for the State of Texas, and Colonel De Grass, provost marshal general of the district commanded by General Mower, and who, in addition to his military duties, has charge of the freedmen, reporting direct to General Gregory.

At Huntsville General Gregory and myself separated, he swinging to the left and heading towards Mellican, the terminus of the railroad, and I, accompanied by Colonel De Grass, with a portion of the escort, striking out in a due easterly course, crossing the Trinity river at Ryan's ferry. General Gregory and I separated, not on account of any disagreement or misunderstanding, as was reported in New Orleans by a Texas delegation, and telegraphed over the country, but simply for the reason that we believed more good could be accomplished by dividing the column.

At the little villages along our line of march the freedmen were collected together from the surrounding country, and as many of the planters as could be induced to attend, and addressed by General Gregory and myself. We explained to them in as simple and clear a manner as possible their rights, privileges, and responsibilities, and what the government and country expected of them as freedmen. We told them that they were free, and that they could never be slaves again; that they were free to go and come whenever they pleased, and to work for whoever they thought proper, and to control and use their own wages, and that they had the same right to purchase and own land, horses, mules, and farming implements that any white person had; and we advised them that when they had accumulated money enough to buy a piece of land, to invest it in that way. We also advised them to remain at their old homes and hire to their former masters, if they had been kindly treated and could obtain fair compensation for their labor; if not, to look about and make contracts with persons in whom they had confidence, and who would treat them fairly and pay them liberally for their work. We urged upon them the necessity of making contracts for the year 1866, and when once made, that they must observe and fulfil them religiously; and that if any of them broke a contract, through no fault of the employer, they would forfeit their wages or be compelled to carry out their portion of the agreement.

We also disabused their minds of the report that had been circulated very freely among them by corrupt and evil-designing persons, as to a general distribution of the property, and impressed upon their minds the fact that there was to be no division of lands, horses, mules, and farming utensils, on New Year's day; that the lands were owned by the citizens of Texas, and not by the government; that the United States had nothing whatever to give them; that they had been made free by the action of the government, and that in return for this they must show by their industry and perseverance that they were worthy of freedom.

General Gregory is an earnest and very able speaker, and these meetings, which were usually held at night, and conducted by him, in conjunction with religious exercises, I am well satisfied made a lasting impression upon the freedmen, and resulted in much good.

It is not my wish or intention to pass judgment upon the entire State of Texas by what I saw on my inspection tour. I, of course, travelled over but a small portion of the State, and, as I have heretofore remarked, in what is known as the very worst section. In the large cities, such as Galveston, Houston, San Antonio, and Austin, there are many most excellent men—men who are anxious and willing to abide by the laws of the country, and who would use all their influence and energy to promote peace and harmony among the freedmen and whites. I found this to be true in several of the larger cities which I visited; it was particularly the case in Houston. I met as fine gentlemen as I have ever seen, and was treated by them during my visit in the city with the greatest kindness and courtesy. That a majority of these gentlemen were sincere in their expressions, I am thoroughly convinced; that all of them were, I do not believe. All of the cities above referred to are occupied by United States troops, and held under strict military discipline, and the citizens dare not express themselves in an unfriendly manner towards the United States soldiers and the gov-

ernment, even though they felt inclined to do so. In the interior of the State, one or two hundred miles from the prominent cities, away from the influence of federal troops and federal bayonets, at points where our army has never penetrated, and where the citizens have but little fear of arrest and punishment for crimes committed, I assure you there is a fearful state of things. The freedmen are in a worse condition than they ever were as slaves. When they were held in bondage they were, as a rule, treated well; cases of extreme cruelty were very rare; it was for the interest of the master to take care of them, and not to ill treat them. Now it is quite different; they have no interest in them, and seem to take every opportunity to vent their rage and hatred upon the blacks. They are frequently beaten unmercifully, and shot down like wild beasts, without any provocation, followed with hounds, and maltreated in every possible way. It is the same old story of cruelty, only there is more of it in Texas than any southern State that I have visited. I could cite many cases of cruelty that came under my own observation if it were necessary to do so. The planters generally seemed discouraged, and insisted that the system of free labor would never answer; that the negroes were idle and worthless, and showed no disposition to work, and were wandering about the country utterly demoralized, and were plundering and stealing indiscriminately from the citizens.

It was also generally reported by the white people that the freedmen failed wholly to fulfil their contracts, and that when they were needed most to save the cotton crop, they would stop their work and leave them without any cause whatever. After a careful investigation, I do not find these charges against the freedmen to be wholly true.

The entire crop raised in Texas—cotton, corn, sugar, and wheat—was gathered and saved by the 1st of December. Most assuredly no white man in Texas had anything to do with gathering the crops, except perhaps to look on and give orders. Who did the work? The freedmen, I am well convinced, had something to do with it; and yet there is a fierce murmur of complaint against them everywhere that they are lazy and insolent, and that there is no hope for a better condition of affairs unless they can be permitted to resort to the overseer, whip, and hounds.

Two-thirds of the freedmen in the section of country which I travelled over have never received one cent of wages since they were declared free. A few of them were promised something at the end of the year, but instances of prompt payment of wages are very rare. Not one in ten would have received any compensation for the labor performed during the year 1865, had it not been for the rigorous measures resorted to by Colonel De Grass, provost marshal general of the district of Houston, who sends into the interior frequently two hundred miles and arrests the parties who have been guilty of cruelty to the freed people, and where they have violated their contracts with them, compels them to make fair and equitable settlements. Colonel De Grass has a small command of cavalry under his control, and he keeps it in motion constantly through the country, searching for parties who have murdered or maltreated the freedmen. I cannot speak too highly of the course pursued by the colonel. He displays the same earnestness of purpose and fearlessness in the discharge of his duty that he did in the old army of the Tennessee, and although his life has been threatened by the chivalric citizens of the country, yet he is not deterred by their threats from discharging his duty as he understands it. He is a true friend of the black people, and will not see them ill used. I know that some of the lessons which he has taught the citizens in the vicinity of Houston will not soon be forgotten.

I saw freedmen east of the Trinity river who did not know that they were free until I told them. There had been vague rumors circulated among them that they were to be free on Christmas day, and that, on New Year's there was to be a grand division of all the property, and that one-half was to be given to the black people.

The report circulated so extensively among the freedmen with regard to the division of the property on or about the holidays, and which was believed by many of them, was taught them by the citizens during the war.

Public speakers in different portions of the State declared and insisted that the only object the Yankees had in continuing the war was to free the negroes, and that if the southern people were beaten, all the lands and property would be taken from them and given to the blacks, and that the poor whites and rich people alike would be enslaved. It is not strange that the freedmen hearing this matter talked of publicly for four years by men of influence and standing should finally believe there was some truth in it. Nearly all the freedmen I met preferred to wait till after New Year's before making contracts for the year 1866.

In the vicinity of Mounts Jordan and Jasper, on the Neches river and San Augustine, and in all that section of country situated and being between the Neches and Sabine rivers, and as far north as Henderson, I was credibly informed, and firmly believe, that the freedmen are still held in a state of slavery, and are being treated with the most intense cruelty by their former masters; and I am well satisfied that the freedmen will be kept in ignorance of their true status, and will be forced to work without wages in these isolated districts until troops can be sent to occupy, for a time at least, this portion of the State, and till a few wholesome lessons have been administered the natives. The campaign of an army through the eastern part of the State, such as was made by General Sherman, in South Carolina, would improve the temper and generosity of the people.

The most intense hatred is shown by many of the citizens of the country towards northern men, officers, and soldiers of our army, and the United States government. Very many of the confederate officers and soldiers wear their old uniforms, with buttons and insignia of rank, and nearly every man we met in travelling was armed with a knife, seven-shooter, and double-barrelled shot-gun. At hotels and various places where we halted for the night, these gallant cavaliers (who claim that they whipped the Yankees in the last battle of the war, and that they are able to do it every day in the year) would collect in groups, and talk in a tone particularly intended for our ears of the deeds they had performed, and the number of Yankees they had slain, and that if an opportunity ever occurred they were ready and anxious to fight against the United States.

After leaving Huntsville our escort was reduced to twelve men, and a disposition was shown upon one occasion to attack the party, but the Spencer carbines carried by the men rather deterred them from so doing, and we were not molested. We were treated, however, on the road, and in the villages at which we stopped, with the most marked discourtesy and contempt.

I cannot account for the bitter feeling which seems to exist against the soldiers belonging to our army and the government, unless it may be for the reason that they know less about the war, and have seen less of our troops than any other people, and therefore cannot appreciate the power and strength of the government. In other southern States I have been treated with greater courtesy and kindness by officers and soldiers of the confederate army than by any other class of people.

In my judgment there is but little trouble in getting the freedmen to work if the citizens will only treat them with some degree of fairness and honesty, and pay them reasonable wages when they work well, and fulfil *their own* promises and agreements. They have as yet offered no inducements for the freed people to labor. I am not surprised that they have refused to make contracts for the present year; they have universally been treated with bad faith, and few have received any compensation for work performed up to the close of the year 1865. I cannot blame them for hesitating about making contracts which were to bind them for a year, and with no guarantee that they were to be treated better than when they were slaves. They have received thus far for their work, as a class,

curse, blows, poor clothing, and poorer food. There are exceptions. I learned the names of a few planters who had done well by the freedmen, and had paid ten dollars per month in specie for first-class field labor, and the other hands in proportion. But seven out of every ten who have paid wages to the freed people, in the vicinity of Houston, have done so over the point of the bayonet in the office of the provost marshal general, rather than go to jail.

General Gregory assured them that their employers would be forced to pay them every farthing that was justly due, and I have learned that during the month of December many contracts were entered into for the year 1866.

The crop raised and gathered in Texas during the past year is immense, and provisions ought to be very abundant. There is certainly sufficient to feed all classes, white and black, rich and poor, if it could be properly distributed among them.

The great difficulty is, the corn and wheat are all in the hands of the wealthy planters, and the poor white people who do not own land cannot obtain it for love or money. The planters hold on to their corn, expecting there will be a scarcity in the spring, and that it will then command exorbitant prices, and, further, they fear to sell it to their poor neighbors, thinking if they get a few bushels ahead they might possibly hire some of the freedmen. Frequently the poor white people came to us and entreated us to interfere and compel the rich people to sell them corn enough so that their wives and children would not starve. I heard several of them say that they had been in the confederate service through the war, and now that they had lived to get home the wealthy men, who had been instrumental in sending them to the field, would not assist them in distress, nor could they purchase corn for one dollar per bushel in specie to keep their families from perishing.

If the freedmen fail in attaining employment the present year, and if the planters refuse to sell their corn to poor white people at reasonable rates, there will necessarily be great suffering in many portions of the State.

According to the best statistics I have been able to obtain, there were in the State at the beginning of the war about two hundred and seventy-five thousand (275,000) slaves. During the war and prior to its close about one hundred and twenty-five thousand (125,000) were sent there from other southern States, to keep them out of the way of the United States forces and for safe-keeping, making a total of about four hundred thousand (400,000) at the time of the surrender of the confederate armies. The great mass of freedmen were owned and still remain on the rich plantations situated on the Sabine, Neches, Trinity, Brazos, and Colorado rivers, and within a distance of three hundred and fifty (350) and four hundred (400) miles of the Gulf coast. There are few freedmen north of Waco, on the Brazos river, or north of Austin, on the Colorado. A few are to be found as high up as Gonzales and Seguin, on the Guadalupe, but none west of that river.

Western and northwestern Texas is a wild, uncultivated, barren region, and is occupied and held, and has been for years, by Indians. The Comanches committed depredations in November within fifteen or twenty miles of Waco.

Of the one hundred and twenty-five thousand (125,000) freedmen sent to Texas for safe-keeping during the war, from Louisiana, Mississippi, and other States, nearly all of them are anxious to return to their old homes, or, at all events, to get out of Texas. Thousands of this number have already returned, and there is a constant stream pouring through the interior of the State in an easterly direction, heading towards Louisiana. The route usually taken by these people is the old San Antonio road leading from Bastor, on the Colorado, through Caldwell, Madison, Crockett, and from thence running a little north of east to Millan, on the Sabine river, near the Louisiana line. This road is famous as being the first and best route across Texas, and all the refugees get on to this road as soon as possible.

I found General Gregory stationed at Galveston, and am satisfied that he is doing everything in his power to regulate the system of labor throughout the State. He has labored with the most untiring industry since he has been in Texas to settle difficulties between whites and freedmen satisfactorily and justly, and has passed a great deal of his time in travelling through the country correcting abuses, and explaining to the freedmen their true status, and what was expected of them by the government. He understands your views and policy well, and will carry out your wishes to the best of his ability and against all opposition.

I do not think it possible for a man to hold General Gregory's position in Texas—do justice to the freedmen and be popular with the people. The general has been peculiarly unfortunate in not being able to obtain officers to assist him in the work. He is almost entirely alone, having only six or seven subordinates, who are all stationed at the larger cities.

In order to correct abuses and regulate the labor system thoroughly throughout the country General Gregory should have fifty (50) good officers to assist; and if these could be placed on duty at the principal villages in the interior, for three hundred and fifty (350) miles north of the coast, and a small force of troops sent with each assistant to enforce law and order, it would be but a short time before a decided improvement would be observed.

It is the opinion of every staunch Union man with whom I conversed, and with nearly every officer on duty in the State, that if the United States troops were removed from Texas no northern man, nor any person who had ever expressed any love for northern institutions or for the government of the United States, could remain with safety, and the condition of the freed people would be worse beyond comparison than it was before the war and when they were held in bondage.

I have the honor, general, to remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM E. STRONG,
*Inspector General, Bureau of Refugees,
Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.*

Major General O. O. HOWARD,
Commissioner of Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, &c.

No. 21.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
Augusta, Georgia, December 26, 1865.

GENERAL: I have the honor to call your attention to the fact that the legislature of the State of Georgia has passed a law giving the freedmen the right to testify in all cases in which they are parties interested.

This withdraws from the officers of this bureau the right to adjudicate in cases where negroes are parties interested, which was conferred by paragraph 7, circular 5, from your office.

But for the fortunate passage of the resolution by the late State convention, empowering me to appoint citizen agents of the bureau, I should be powerless longer to interfere in behalf of the freedmen.

As it is, my citizen agents, being duly constituted civil officers of this State, having been appointed by virtue of the resolution above mentioned, are still able to act, and their decisions are legal and binding.

I have no doubt the passage of the act admitting the testimony of negroes in the courts of this State will be followed by a demand upon the President to

withdraw martial law from the State and turn over all offenders to the civil courts for trial; such a proceeding would, in my opinion, be exceedingly unwise and in the highest degree prejudicial to the best interests of the State, and especially of the freed people. I have no hope or belief whatever that justice would be done the freed people by the civil authorities, in the present temper of the people of this State. An improvement, however, in the disposition and tone of the people is observable, and sooner or later, with kind and skilful management on the part of officers of the bureau, the administration of justice may be safely left with them.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Volunteers and Acting Ass't Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner of Bureau of Refugees, &c., Washington, D. C.

ALBANY, GA., December 29, 1865.

GENERAL: I have the honor to state that I arrived at this place last evening. I am happy to be able to report that the freed people in this vicinity are showing great willingness to make contracts for the next year, and that within the last few days quite a large number of contracts have been made at rates varying from twelve to fifteen dollars per month, board and lodging, for full male hands.

It requires no little effort to raise wages to a just and reasonable price, but I am having very satisfactory success. The best interests of the country require that the laborers shall be well paid and kindly treated, and then that they shall labor industriously and faithfully. I am trying to secure these conditions.

I have read General Grant's recent report very carefully, and particularly that portion of it referring to the bureau; I also notice in the papers an article stating that your orders and all military matters are under the control of the department commanders, and that assistant commissioners are required to keep department commanders informed of all they are doing, and obtain their approval to the instructions and orders issued by them. I take it for granted that this is to some degree a mistake; it is not only proper, but necessary, that the assistant commissioners should keep the department commanders informed of all they are or intend doing, that they furnish them with copies of all their orders, circulars, &c., and that they abstain from any interference whatever with military matters, which are of course solely under the control of the department commander; but if assistant commissioners must secure the approval by the department commander of all their instructions or orders, then you lose all the advantage which you have gained by selecting officers who have some fitness for the duties to which they are assigned, and leave assistant commissioners simply the power to record the will of the department commander, who may or may not be competent to deal with the intricate and delicate questions the bureau is expected to solve. You deprive officers of the bureau of all real authority, and with it the little respect heretofore shown their orders, and make it possible for the people to evade the requirements of the bureau by skilfully flattering military commanders, a majority of whom, experience justifies me in saying, regard the bureau and the negro with indifference or contempt. They may know how to make war, but they may not know how to make peace, and may have none of that good temper and delicate tact and skill required in dealing with the people in their present condition so as to produce the results desired by the government.

If General Grant's suggestion is to be adopted, and all officers on duty in the

south are to be indiscriminately regarded as officers of the bureau, then, as the past has shown, very many of them will be found simply able to play the part of the "bull in the china shop," and will be found utterly wanting in that proper knowledge and thoughtful discretion which is quite as necessary as the disposition to obey orders.

It seems to me that the only way General Grant's suggestion can be carried into effect without producing mischievous consequences will be, to select the department commanders, with reference to their fitness, as representatives of the bureau in their respective States, and let them, in addition to their other duties, act as assistant commissioners; in this way perfect unity of action can be secured, and all possibility of clashing of authority prevented.

I learn by recent orders that the number of troops in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi are to be reduced to 7,000 men; this will leave but about 2,000 in this State, and their duties will consist almost wholly in aiding officers of the bureau to enforce its requirements.

It may not be modest to make the suggestion, but it seems to me, under the circumstances, that in case General Steedman is not to return, General Grant would be willing to intrust the command of the few troops left in the State with me. I have some reason for thinking this would not be unsatisfactory to General George H. Thomas and the President. I should still be as thoroughly as before your officer, should have *the power which commands respect*, and should be able to control to a greater extent than ever the means of securing the results which the government desire.

This change would impose additional labors, which, however, I should be quite willing to accept, for the sake of securing the successful working of the bureau.

It is painful to feel that the plans I have arranged, and the promises I have made to the people of this State, may hereafter be set aside or ignored by some department commander, who may or may not have even the little capacity which I possess of managing such matters satisfactorily.

It would be to the very last degree humiliating to be placed in a position where I shall have seemed to have used authority with which I was not clothed, and to have made promises I had not the power to keep.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Volunteers and Acting Ass't Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c., Washington, D. C.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,

OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,

Augusta, Georgia, January 9, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to announce, with great satisfaction, that contracts are being very rapidly made throughout this State and at good prices, ranging from ten to fifteen dollars per month. The almost painful anxiety I have had as to the future of the freed people in this State is entirely relieved and removed. There is now no probability whatever of any considerable suffering among them. The way before me is clear. I can provide all the able-bodied freed people, young and old, with employment, good homes, good compensation, and a promise of kind treatment. The demand for labor and the price paid for

it are increasing every day. I am almost overwhelmed by applications for laborers.

The announcement of a definite policy which proposed to do everything right and proper, not inconsistent with the freedom of the colored people, to make labor reliable and profitable, has worked a revolution in the convictions, feelings, and intentions of the people, white and black. To-day both races are hopeful for the future. The freed people are especially pleased that, by the direct efforts of the bureau, their wages have been raised from the miserable pittance of from two to seven dollars per month, and from one-twentieth or one-tenth of the crop, to from ten to fifteen dollars per month, and from one-third the gross to one-half the net crop.

There was danger, of course, that, in interfering with the delicate subject of wages, however worthy my intentions, I might do mischief rather than good; but it has passed, and the result shows the wisdom of the course pursued. I am profoundly grateful that my labors have been, so far, blessed with success. I begin to feel the pleasure that one has in knowing that he has benefited others.

The bureau in this State is an extensive intelligence office, finding homes for freed people and laborers for employers. I have been, to a limited extent, giving transportation to freed people going to the valley of the Mississippi, where they are getting excellent wages; but I have stopped sending freed people out of the State. I cannot only take care of all I have, but can very likely provide for those you may have to spare in other States.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Volunteers and Acting Ass't Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c., Washington, D. C.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,

Augusta, Georgia, January 13, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to forward herewith copies of letters from Major Hastings, A. S. A. Commissioner, at Albany, Georgia, and one of my citizen agents, for your information.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Volunteers and Acting Ass't Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau of Refugees, &c., Washington D. C.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE A. S. A. COMMISSIONER,

Albany, Georgia, January 7, 1866.

DEAR SIR: I have just returned from Decatur and Mitchell counties. I find that in Decatur county the freedmen have contracted and gone to work. Their former masters are much encouraged, and think they will do well.

In Mitchell county the freedmen have nearly all left, and I cannot blame them. The white people in that county are as poor as the black. In Baker county there is a great call for laborers; they are some four hundred or five hundred short. Also in this county (Dougherty) there is a great call for laborers. If you can send me from three hundred to five hundred hands, I can get them good homes and good wages.

I have engaged two plantations for your Wilkes county freedmen, and am very anxious to hear from you soon whether they are coming or not. If they come they had better bring all the mules they can; also send as many workers as you can. I shall visit the counties west of here as soon as possible. The planters in this part of the State are in high spirits. They say the freedmen really act as though they were going to work.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

G. A. HASTINGS,

Major 12th Maine Vol. Inf., A. S. A. Commissioner.

General TILLSON.

Official :

W. W. DEANE,

Captain and Assistant Adjutant General.

Memorandum of Major Hastings's letter to General Tillson.

Has just returned from Decatur and Mitchell counties. In Decatur county the freedmen have contracted and gone to work, and their former masters are much encouraged and think they will do well. In Mitchell county the freedmen have nearly all left; cannot blame them; the white people in that county are as poor as the black. In Baker and Dougherty counties there is a great call for laborers, and he can provide homes and good wages for from three hundred to five hundred hands. Has engaged two plantations for the Wilkes county freedmen, and he is very anxious to hear whether they are coming or not. The planters are in high spirits, and they say the freedmen really act as though they were going to work.

OFFICE BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
GREENE COUNTY, GA., *Woodville, January 8, 1866.*

GENERAL: From the fact of my residing centrally, and in two miles of the Oglethorpe county line, besides, in connexion with the further fact of having been recommended by citizens (members to the State convention) from both Greene and Oglethorpe counties for the appointment as agent in both counties, for the mutual convenience of the citizens of each, whilst declining to appoint a commission to include both counties, I was, however, instructed to attend to and transact any and all business brought before me from either. Acting under these instructions I have approved quite a number of contracts presented by citizens of Oglethorpe county, which I purpose keeping and returning distinctly and separately from the business of this county, to the end that no confusion may arise.

For the last three weeks I have bent every energy and given my whole time to advancing the general interest of the freedmen within my jurisdiction and the surrounding section. At first I met with much opposition, and with but little encouragement from either white or black. The negro seemed resolved and obstinate, and the white indifferent and careless, and full of evil forebodings; and underlying both classes there seemed to pervade a general and mutual distrust, but little good feeling between the employer and the employed. My task was uninviting; I thought not hopeless. I went to work. In many places, wherever I could find or get a crowd of the freedmen together, I made it in every instance convenient to give them a "little talk." In a short time I was thoroughly crowded out with them. They came for miles around to see and hear for themselves. They always went away, if not rejoicing, at

least better informed. I dealt mildly yet firmly with them. I never deceived one, and they all soon learned to believe me, and I do not know of a single instance where one has failed to conform to any official order given him in my jurisdiction. I have had but few complaints, only three or four to punish for theft, &c. The result of my (I must say) energy, I am gratified to know, is apparent. Nearly all have made contracts and have homes for the present year, the general exception being confined mainly to the unfortunate classes of women, children, the aged, decrepit, and orphans. These classes necessarily are now and will continue to be great sources of solicitude and trouble.

The freedmen have been diligently and zealously employed getting homes and making contracts throughout Christmas, and even before, and within the limits of the districts comprising my jurisdiction in this county. I must confess that my most sanguine expectations have been greatly exceeded. All who wanted laborers are generally supplied, and nearly all the freedmen, with the exception of the classes above referred to, have obtained homes and work. Peace and quiet have pre-eminently been the order of the day. The freedmen throughout the holidays have behaved better, been more orderly, sober, and quiet than ever before recollected. This is the general remark and conclusion of every one; and nearly every *farmer* in this section enters upon the new year more cheerful and hopeful than he anticipated. On our large farms generally the contracts are made for part of the crops produced, say from one-quarter to one-half—one-third being the most usual wages. In most instances the laborers appear to be pleased and contented. I will further advise you as things develop themselves.

Pardon this long communication. The cheering information contained is presented as an apology.

In great haste, respectfully,

JAMES DAVISON,

Agent Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.

Official:

W. W. DEANE, *Captain and A. A. G.*

Memorandum of letter from James Davison, agent, &c., to General Tillson.

Was instructed to attend to and transact all business brought before him from either Greene or Oglethorpe counties; has approved a number of contracts presented by citizens of Oglethorpe county, which he purposes to keep separately from the business of Greene county, to the end that no confusion may arise. For the last three weeks has bent every energy and given his whole time to advancing the general interest of freedmen in his jurisdiction; at first met with opposition, and very little encouragement from either white or black; the negro seemed resolved and obstinate, and the white careless and indifferent and full of evil forebodings, and a mutual distrust, with but little good feeling, existed between the employer and employed. He went to work, and wherever he could find or get a crowd of freedmen together, gave them a "little talk," and the result is, nearly all have made contracts and have homes for the present year, except the unfortunate classes of women, children, the aged, decrepit, and orphans. All who wanted laborers are generally supplied, and nearly all the freedmen have obtained homes and work. The freedmen, throughout the holidays, have behaved better, been more orderly, sober, and quiet than ever before recollected. This is the general remark and conclusion of every one, and nearly every farmer in his section enters upon the new year more cheerful and hopeful than he anticipated. The contracts on the large farms generally are made for part of the crops—from one-fourth to one-half, one-third being the usual rate—and the freedmen in most instances appear pleased and contented.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
 OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
Augusta, Georgia, January 17, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of yesterday, in answer to my own of the 13th instant.

A careful reading of paragraph 3, of circular 5, from this office, will, I think, show that the rights of all the freed people are sufficiently guarded. The only persons who can by a compulsory process be hired out are those who, in the eye of the law, are vagrants, and even they cannot be thus hired out unless good wages are paid; and in a previous portion of the same circular, paragraph 2, I have stated what are good wages.

Either this must be done or those persons must be fed in idleness by the bureau, live by stealing or practicing some other vice, suffer or starve, or be turned over to the tender mercies of the civil authorities, to be dealt with according to the vagrant law of this State, which gives a white man not less than two nor more than four years' imprisonment for this offence. Can you wonder that the delegates to the freedmen's convention, recently in session in this city, when the question was placed before them fairly, fully, and frankly, should enthusiastically sustain the order? I told the convention that you and other of their friends were fearful that advantage might be taken of it to their injury, and admitted to them that possibly this might be done. Captain Bryant and others, the Rev. — Edes, of Boston, were present, and will bear testimony to the fact that I presented the question fairly; that I told the convention the whole truth, and then appealed to the members to express their real opinion; not to be influenced by my opinion or presence, but to act in accordance with their own conviction; that they were men selected to represent the interests of the race, and that it was their duty to do it, without fear or favor; and that if being here, and knowing the facts as I knew them, they thought the order right, to say so; if not, and they thought I was mistaken, to say that. And after I had said this and explained the whole matter, Chaplain Turner (colored) rose and read a resolution, drawn up by himself, indorsing the policy of the bureau in the State, and pledging the support of the intelligent colored people. Bradley, the colored lawyer released on parole by the Secretary of War from Fort Pulaski, was present and disposed to do mischief, but the convention had the good sense to vote him down by an overwhelming majority.

The convention seemed to realize fully the vast importance to their race of their making a good record on the labor question this year. They manfully admitted all the facts. They said they knew that there were many of their own race who would not work for fair wages, and who would be a burden upon them and injure the future of the race, and they were not only willing, but anxious, that such persons should be compelled to work, and not be allowed to bring disgrace upon them, and furnish arguments to their enemies to prove that they would not work except under the lash. I came away from the convention with more and better hopes of this people than I ever had before. These men had the courage and the pluck to admit the facts and the truth, which can only be injurious to those who are in the wrong.

I did not issue the order referred to until after I had labored earnestly for nearly three months to convince these people of the necessity of making contracts at fair prices whenever they could not otherwise provide for themselves, and with little or no good result. They would admit the truth of what I said, would promise to follow my advice, but did not do it. I waited until it was evident that something must be done beside talk, and then issued the order. It has worked like a charm. Doubtless advantage has been taken of it to misrepresent the fact and drive freed people into making improper and unjust contracts; but all such contracts are null and void on account of this fraud, and as fast as I can reach them I can set them aside. So far no contracts have been

finally approved which do not come up to the standard laid down in paragraph 2, circular 5.

In the mean time, on account of the vigorous and just policy of the bureau, the price of labor is increasing. I could only countermand the order by your direction, so stated, otherwise it would seem like a trick on my part and injure my usefulness. The order was very popular in the State, and consequently to countermand it in this manner would have made you and the bureau very unpopular.

Now that the order has done its work, induced the freed people to find homes, and prevented great suffering, I can counteract any of the bad effects you evidently fear by issuing the enclosed order.

Hoping that my explanation and the course pursued may meet your approval, I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and Acting Ass't Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c., Washington, D. C.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
Augusta, Georgia, January 19, 1866.

GENTLEMEN: Your communication of 13th instant has been received. Your attention is invited to that portion of paragraph 2, circular No. 4, from this office, which states that agents are directed to disapprove all contracts which do not give the freed people "fair and reasonable compensation for their labor."

Your attention is further invited to the fact that paragraph 2, circular No. 5, from this office, makes a distinction between southwest Georgia and the upper and middle counties. I have made the most careful investigation on the subject of wages, and have in my possession a mass of information, collected throughout different parts of the State. I can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of any man, that the wages mentioned in circular No. 5 are moderate and reasonable; for instance, Mr. Z. H. Clark, of Oglethorpe county, came here yesterday to convince me that he could not pay these wages; and, taking his own figures, paying able-bodied men twelve dollars per month, he would make a net profit out of each hand of one hundred and sixty-three dollars.

Labor is worth, in the open market in this State, more than is mentioned in paragraph 2, circular No. 5, and thousands of laborers can be furnished employment at those and higher rates.

Under these circumstances, and the fact that the rates of wages paid for labor, for instance, in the county of Wilkes, for the past ten years, average upwards of ninety dollars, (\$90,) with everything found, and the parties hiring the slaves taking all risks of lost time by sickness, idleness, or running away; the further fact that, with the present prices at which the freedman must purchase for himself and family all the necessaries of life, the compensation given him in your contracts will not afford him a living, I am compelled to disapprove them.

I have stated everywhere, and under all circumstances, that all efforts of the bureau to compel the freed people to comply with their contracts must be preceded by good wages and kind treatment.

No agent of this bureau in this State will be allowed to interfere to enforce contracts which shall not be approved at this office. It ought to be evident to all the people that this attempt to take advantage of the ignorance of the freed people, even with their own consent, to hire them for a sum which will not afford them a living, and practically re-enslave them, is simply giving a premium to insure a failure of the free-labor system.

If the people of your county think they cannot afford to give good wages in money, then let them give a portion of the crops; and, if the county is as poor as you state, then the portion of the crop ought to be large, in order to afford the laborers reasonable compensation. The portion of the crop mentioned in paragraph 2, circular No. 5, or one-quarter of the gross proceeds, the employer paying all expenses and finding the hands, will be deemed just and equitable at this office—the latter proposition, the one made by Mr. Clark, of Oglethorpe county.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and Acting Ass't Commissioner.

Messrs. JAMES R. LYLE and

JOHN CALVIN JOHNSON,

Athens and Watkinsville, Georgia.

Copy respectfully furnished for information of Major General Howard, commissioner.

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and Acting Ass't Commissioner.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING SUB-ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,
Albany, Georgia, January 22, 1866.

GENERAL: I take the liberty of informing you that the freed people of this county have, with but few exceptions, made contracts to work for this year, and have gone to work as they should do. They seem to be satisfied and happy, and the planters are generally in high spirits, thinking there is a probability, at least, of making a good crop. I have little doubt myself from all that I can see, (and I have been on many plantations,) but that freed labor will succeed well in this county, particularly where planters act with proper discretion. The contracts you will see for yourself. The planters are paying from five (5) to twenty (20) dollars per month, according to the class of laborers. There is a great demand for labor now, and I can find *homes for one thousand in three days in this county, at from \$12 to \$15 per month for men, and from \$5 to \$10 per month for women.*

I am, general, very, respectfully your obedient servant,

FRANCIS A. BILLINGSLEA,

*Agent Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands,
Dougherty county, Georgia.*

Brigadier General D. TILLSON,

*Acting Assistant Commissioner, Bureau Refugees,
Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, Augusta, Georgia.*

Official copy, forwarded for information of Major General Howard, commissioner.

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and Acting Ass't Commissioner.

P. S.—Mr. Billingslea is a citizen agent. It will be noticed that the facts stated by him prove conclusively that I did right by insisting upon the wages mentioned in my circular 5, yet the people of southwestern Georgia declared at first that they could not and would not pay these wages, and began making contracts at \$8 to \$10 per month.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
Augusta, Georgia, January 23, 1866.

DEAR GENERAL: A friend has called my attention to the enclosed article. Let me tell you that the impression sought to be conveyed is totally untrue and unjust to the freed people. and the statement that the rates of labor are "fully one hundred per cent. too great, that being the amount of advance on former wages," is simply an *unblushing falsehood*, which the writer must have known if he knew anything about the subject; and if he did not, he had no business speaking of it. I have in my possession overwhelming proof that the rates suggested in my circular, and which were obtained from intelligent planters in this State, are too low rather than too high. All southwest Georgia has already contracted at these rates, and the State is being ransacked for laborers, to whom even much higher wages are being offered, and the tendency is still upward. Any policy is to be judged by its results, and by this criterion I am right, and the correspondent of the *Intelligencer* is very *wrong*.

The fact is becoming more and more evident that hereafter labor and not cotton is to be king. Please mark the prediction. If the government will only continue to stand by the freed people in their *just rights simply*, then, by the operation of laws infinitely more potential and certain in their execution than those of Congress, the negro is to be master of the situation, and those who in times past practiced cruelty upon him, or who now hate, despise, and defame him, are to be a financially ruined people. To-day the men who have been cruel to their slaves cannot hire freed people to work for them at *any price*. Fortunes in the future are for those only whom the freed people can trust and for whom they will work—not for the proud and haughty owner of land merely. Land, good land, will be plenty, a drug in the market; labor will be the difficult thing to obtain, and the friends of the freed people, especially the northern man, can alone command it. *Entre nous*, I think I see the end, and I predict that Providence is not done dealing with this people. I believe their hate, cruelty, and malice are yet to bear more and very bitter fruit, and that by natural and irresistible laws the old-time southerner is to become entirely harmless in his impotent rage, or extinct. But we shall see.

Pray keep the President posted, and do not let him be deceived by these *selfish* falsehoods about the price of labor. I can prove that I am right, out of the mouths of the best men in this State. Not to sustain my action will do me no harm. I could simply resign, as I should feel it my duty to do. If the government is to be disgraced, some other instrument must be found; but it would do immense mischief to the freed people.

Just as I was finishing this letter Lieutenant Pratt returned from Washington, Wilkes county. I enclose his report. In explanation, I call your attention to the enclosed slip, cut from the *Loyal Georgian*.

I am yours, very truly,

DAVIS TILLSON

Brig. Gen. Vols., Acting Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau R. F. and A. L., Washington, D. C.

We learn that reports reached General Tillson's office a few days since that falsehoods were being circulated in Wilkes county respecting the intentions and purposes of the Freedmen's Bureau, in consequence of which freed people had been induced to make contracts which did not give them reasonable compensation for their labor, ranging from \$3 to \$8 per month. It was stated that they were sent by the bureau to Mississippi and southwestern Georgia, were sold into slavery, and that the women were drowned; that the bureau had an interest

in southwestern Georgia, and therefore desired to send laborers to that portion of the State.

Upon receiving undeniable proof that such stories were being circulated to deceive the freed people, General Tillson sent Lieutenant Pratt with a squad of soldiers to Washington, Wilkes county, to make known the fact that all contracts made in pursuance of such misrepresentation were null and void.

Reports have been received from Lieutenant Pratt that the planters of Wilkes county are coming in from all directions to re-contract with their laborers, and are now willing to give them reasonable pay. They further acknowledge that the prices at which they had contracted with the freed people were inadequate and unjust.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
Augusta, Georgia, January 23, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report my return from Washington, Wilkes county, Georgia, whither I had gone, pursuant to Special Orders No. 13, from this office, for the purpose of procuring homes for such freed people who had no employment, and correcting misrepresentations which had been circulated in regard to the objects and purposes of the bureau.

On my arrival at Washington I notified the planters and others that all contracts made with the freedmen which did not allow them reasonable compensation for their labor were null and void, and that the freedmen would not be allowed to work for less wages than the prices laid down in circular 5. I found most of the planters willing to re-contract, and pay from \$12 to \$15 per month, board and lodging, or give a share in the crops equivalent to these prices. Several planters came to me and stated that they had advised their neighbors to pay their freedmen better wages. They are anxious to keep all the freedmen on their plantations, and are willing to pay a better compensation than planters in other sections. I sent word to Dr. Pope, a planter living within three (3) miles of Washington, who had contracted with eleven (11) freedmen at the rate of \$6, \$7, and \$9 per month, that his contract would be disapproved. He immediately came to see me, and said he would pay his men \$150 a year, or would give them a share of the crops, and if the crops did not yield enough to allow them \$150 he would bind himself to pay in money the balance to make up the \$150.

Good people in this country say that freedmen are doing well, and that the planters should pay them well for their labor, which I find they are willing to do rather than have the freedmen leave. I find that the whites of this county are disposed to do what is right by the freedmen, and the freedmen are willing and say they will work hard for any white man, and all they ask is fair and reasonable wages for their labor.

Several persons requested me to say to General Tillson that they regret that reports are in circulation that negroes have been taken to Cuba and sold, and that the white people desire that the unemployed freedmen should be arrested and bound out for food and clothing. They also say that you are doing well by the negroes, and that they are deserving of every possible encouragement, and that they promise to promote the interests of the freedmen.

I am, general, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE H. PRATT,

Lieutenant 13th Conn. Batt. and Ass't in Office.

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and A. A. Com., State of Georgia, Augusta, Ga.

Official:

W. W. DEANE,

Captain and Assistant Adjutant General.

Letter from Georgia.

CRIMES BY THE FREEDMEN.—UNJUST DISCRIMINATIONS.—WAGES.—THE FREEDMEN CODE OF GEORGIA COMPLETED.—SYNOPSIS THEREOF.—NEGRO TROOPS.—NATIONAL BANK OF AUGUSTA.—GREAT MORTALITY OF BLACKS.—REFEAL NEEDED.—A FREEDMEN'S CONVENTION.

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA, *January 6, 1866.*

Editors of the National Intelligencer of the 13th instant:

The Christmas holidays have happily passed over without any such organized outbreak on the part of the black population as was at one time very seriously feared, though there have been no few individual cases of crime; some of very peculiar atrocity. Thus, on Christmas eve, that time when, of all others, it would seem as though the passions of men might respect the holy tide, a very estimable young man, residing some few miles from the city, was most brutally murdered. With such business-like malice was the deed perpetrated that it has been fully established the assassin or assassins went from this place with a wagon to the store where their victim traded and slept, and, after committing murder, deliberately loaded the vehicle with the murdered man's goods, not even forgetting to steal his clothes and the bedding of the couch from which, in the dead of night, he rose only to meet a death the bullets of four years' war had failed to inflict. About the same time, in this city, a gang of negro troops assaulted a house occupied by some Irishmen, who stood stoutly on the defence, and nothing but the interposition of a strong guard prevented the quarrel being pushed to a bloody conclusion, either party receiving strong re-enforcements after the first repulse of the blacks. Some weeks after these occurrences a very aggravated outrage, of a similar nature to the latter, was attempted by another crew of negro soldiers, aided by some debauched country blacks. Accounts of this affair—an attack upon the house of a widow lady, near the city, who at the time had several young ladies staying with her—have doubtless reached you, and a mere summary thereof is all that will, therefore, be given. Two young gentlemen, who acted with a most dauntless gallantry, kept the mob some time at bay, killing four and mortally wounding two, though, in the end, they were reduced to the greatest extremities, and would beyond doubt have been murdered, and their helpless female charges delivered over to brutality, had it not been for the timely arrival of an officer with troops. From twenty-five to thirty negroes, the soldiers who instigated and led on the assault being about half that number, were engaged in this affair, and all surviving were arrested, though, to speak plainly, it is not believed they will be at all adequately punished. Some month or so since, it will be remembered, a very worthy physician in a neighboring county was murdered, and his assassin, who avowed openly the crime, arrested and consigned to the jail in this city. It is now charged by a paper here, and no denial has been made apparent, that this negro was lately released from confinement, and seen upon the streets at liberty. *Per contra*, there are now in the same jail two young white men charged before and convicted by a court-martial of having killed a negro woman in the interior part of the State. Lying under sentence of death, these men were yesterday to have been hanged but a reprieve has been obtained to lay new testimony before the President. Now, while the sentiment here is that those offending the law should suffer under the law, it is undeniable that the severity, and perhaps a just severity, in the case of white men is thought to very illy contrast with the lenity shown to blacks. This impression of a very gross injustice is deeply rooted here, and as, in various ways, Augusta largely gives the tone to the State, it may safely be said that that impression is the greatest obstacle here existing to a hearty and a very general support of the federal Executive.

But, not to dwell on this particular view, something further on the general subject of the blacks may be of interest, before passing to other topics. Some dissatisfaction in the article of wages exists with a late circular issued, just prior to Christmas, from the headquarters of the Freedmen's Bureau in this State. This circular, while not expressly commanding any schedule of wages, suggests a tariff in such manner as, to the minds of the freed people, will doubtless be taken as equivalent to an order to that effect. These suggestions mentioned from \$180 to \$156 per annum for males, and from \$96 to \$120 for females, according to the scene of labor, the southwestern portion of the State ranking higher; food and lodging, in all cases, superadded. Now, it is claimed that these rates are fully one hundred per cent. too great, that being the amount of advance on former wages, when the full labor of each hand could be secured. Should contracts not be made voluntarily by the 10th of this present month, it is further declared that freed people will have such arrangements made for them, in case ability otherwise to support themselves cannot be made apparent. While on this subject, it is curious to remark how men of every class here, civilian or official, and of every diversity of opinion on other matters regarding the blacks, unite in considering it a necessity they should be enforced to make contracts. The bureau circulars on the topic always take this view, and the matter is viewed from the same stand-point by the State law commission.

This commission, appointed under a resolution of the late reorganization convention to prepare and report to the general assembly a system of laws to meet the legal exigencies resultant from emancipation, concluded their labors on the 19th of last month, and the report which embodies the conclusions arrived at is now in print. As it is highly probable the legislature at its approaching session will, with perhaps some few emendations, adopt this report, a synopsis thereof will be essayed. The report, then, consists of fourteen articles, made up of one hundred and fifty-four sections. Article first repeals the slave and free negro codes, defines *free persons of color*, and declares "such persons shall have the right to acquire, own, and dispose of property, to enjoy the fruits of their labor, to make contracts, to sue and be sued, to receive and transmit property by inheritance," and "to receive protection in their persons and property." There being already a law as to the testimony of such persons, the provisions of the report thereon are, as supererogatory, not given. Article second provides for the organization, procedure, &c., of a county court in each county, to hold daily sessions; jurisdiction, \$100. Articles third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh regulate respectively the domestic relations, husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward, master and servant, and master and apprentice. Those now living as man and wife are declared to be really such, choice to be made in case there are more than one *quasi* husband or wife. Parents are required to support children, legitimate and bastard alike, and all now born are legitimated. Relation of guardian and ward same as among white persons, subject to the jurisdiction of ordinary. The articles regulating the relations of master and servant and master and apprentice are quite lengthy, but in effect almost exact transcripts of the old common law in those regards, *mutatis mutandis*, to fit local exigencies. Article eight extends the law of contracts as of force among whites to the blacks, illiterate persons being especially and strongly protected. Article ninth extends the law of wills, administration, distribution of estates and the like, to the blacks, with some amendments to lessen expense to them of the usual procedure. Article tenth punishes certain crimes—larceny, grand and petit, vagrancy, receiving stolen goods, and attempts at larceny, burglary, arson, and robbery—by penal labor on public works; provides for superintendent of such labor, and gives right to him to farm out convict labor, taking bond for humane treatment, &c.; recusance of convict to be punishable by same chastisement now by law permitted in the penitentiary in the case of

white convicts recusant. Article eleven sets forth crimes and their punishment. Rape, poisoning, arson, and attempts thereat, punishable with from death to light imprisonment. Makes it a crime also to combine to injure negroes in their persons or property. Article twelve further defines crimes. Article thirteen regulates practice in criminal cases, and article fourteen regards licenses in business, requiring them in specified cases, irrespective of color.

From this *resumé* of a proposed code, drawn up by some of our first lawyers—Judge Starnes, an eminent practitioner, being chairman of the commission—it will be seen with what very peculiar care the interests of the blacks have been sought to be placed on the base of a common justice. Judge Starnes is emphatically and especially a lawyer—a rarer character now-a-days than most men think—and in the report, which strongly bears his impress, has, as it would seem, sought to regard the black in the same light as the Ulpian or Papinian did the old Roman freedman—entitled, as a human being, to all legal rights, but by polity debarred from civic franchise. In one word, this proposed code is simply an extension to the negroes of the old common law as to person and property. Could these principles, modified to some extent by the provisions of the chapters *de libertinis*, to be found in the civil law, be digested into a code applicable alike to each of the late slave States, the negro question would receive a quietus that would let the whole land be at ease on that point once more. Here in Georgia, at least, is no hostility worthy of note against the blacks, and were it not for the presence of negro troops even now things might go comparatively well. But so long as there is before the eyes of an ignorant and credulous race, lately freed from bondage, the spectacle of a standing army of their own race put in authority over those to whom that race has for an hundred years been subject, just so long will there be incitement to idleness and motive for false and delusive views. The glitter, the show, the brief authority, the civic irresponsibility pertaining to these black troops are—take the word for it of a man who would neither extenuate nor set down aught in malice—a fearful obstacle to the peace and prosperity of this country. Of the excesses of these troops I do not speak—there are bad men of every hue, and not a few crimes here committed are the work of the white garrisons, of prowling discharged desperadoes—but the very presence of such forces is an ever-flowing fount of evil.

From the first quarterly report of the national bank here—which, not having as yet received its notes, has not gotten fairly to business—it appears that the deposits already amount to \$295,788 76; discounts, so far, \$6,333 93.

By late mortuary returns it appears that during the year 1865 there were in the city cemeteries 1,618 interments; 614 whites and 1,004 blacks. In 1864 the white burials were 626, blacks 293, thus showing that during the last year the mortality among the blacks has increased over the twelve months previous very near four hundred per cent., and whereas the white deaths were about two to one of the blacks, that proportion has now been reversed. On yesterday the 136th United States colored infantry, Colonel Ruth, for some time past stationed at the Augusta arsenal, was mustered out, the discharged negroes mostly leaving for Alabama, where it is understood the command was raised. No regret is felt at their removal from this vicinity. The *Colored American*, a weekly paper issued here in the interest of the freedmen, in its number for to-day comes out with a call for a freedmen's convention; counties with large towns to send five delegates each, others three apiece; meeting to be held on the 10th instant; object, to adopt steps to procure rights of citizenship. With this much about the negro—a harping on one string almost unavoidable from lack of general political intelligence—let me close by hoping that the objectionable seventh proviso of section fifth of chapter 100, Laws United States, 1861-'62, may be

repealed. This law, approved July 2, 1862, and entitled "*An act donating public lands to the several States and Territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts,*" declares, in this obnoxious proviso, that no State shall be entitled to the benefits thereof that does not within two years from the date of approval signify, through its legislature, an acceptance of the donation promised. Now, in July 2, 1862, Georgia did not so signify this acceptance, and is, of course, ruled out, thus losing something like \$337,500 of United States stock, which, at the interest fixed in section four, would yield the handsome revenue of \$16,875 per annum for the encouragement of scientific agriculture and mechanic arts. Heaven knows if there be one State more than another needing this aid, it is this latently rich State of Georgia. Her wealth is, by the rules of political economy, the wealth of the federal government, and it is to be trusted Congress will show statecraft enough, by striking out this proviso, to assist her and the other late confederated States in the work of material development.

T. P.

PROPERTY OF
UNITED STATES SENATE

WASHINGTON, GA., *January 17, 1866.*

LIBRARY.
CAPTAIN: On arriving at this place and circulating the report that contracts made with freedmen, which do not come up to the standard price laid down in circular 5, the planters are coming in from all quarters and are anxious to re-contract with the laborers, and will give from twelve to thirteen dollars per month, or from one-quarter to one-half of the crop, or most any price, rather than have them take them away. The people acknowledge that the compensation is not enough; but they did not know that General Tillson had the power to remove them to other points where the freedmen could get better wages. Everything is very quiet, and the false reports circulated that when the freedmen were sent off by the bureau and sold into slavery have ceased. They state to the freedmen that such reports were untrue, and that the bureau intends to do well by them. Besides, the white people will do well by the freedmen and pay them the wages required by General Tillson, and are glad to do it. A large number of planters have come to Mr. McGuire's office to day to recontract with the freedmen, and admit they have not paid them a sufficient compensation for their labor.

I think it is well for the freedmen that General Tillson has disapproved of contracts which have been made on such unreasonable terms. Freedmen who contracted for seven dollars per month are now recontracting for twelve and thirteen dollars per month.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE H. PRATT,

Lieutenant, &c.

Captain W. W. DEANE, *A. A. G.*

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,

OFFICE ACTING ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER,

Augusta, Ga., January 23, 1866.

Official copy, furnished for the information of Major General O. O. Howard, Commissioner.

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brigadier General Volunteers and A. A. C.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
Augusta, Georgia, January 24, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to state that, notwithstanding the reply made to my communication of the 28th November last, by the Secretary of War, "that it is not the intention of the War Department to withdraw the troops from the State at present," the troops in the department have since continued to be mustered out until there are now less than two thousand, some eight hundred of whom are colored, in the State. I could not even wish for more prompt, hearty, and thorough co-operation than has been extended to me by General Steedman and General Brannan, the present commander of the department; but there are so many places containing public property where guards must be kept, that, with the present force, it is simply impossible to furnish even a small guard to aid the officers and agents of the bureau at points where they are absolutely necessary. The officers and agents of the bureau at Albany, Columbus, Marietta, Rome, Griffin, Waynesboro, Washington and other places, report that they need the presence of at least a few troops to aid them in the performance of their duties. In all cases, officers report that they are powerless without them.

In almost every case, as heretofore reported, the withdrawal of troops has been followed by outrages on the freed people; their school-houses have been burned, their teachers driven off or threatened with death, and the freed people by fraud, and even by violence, made to enter into unjust and fraudulent contracts. The responsible and educated classes are ashamed of these outrages, and loudly and justly claim that they should not all be judged by the people who are mean and cruel enough to practice these wrongs; but the convictions of the former never take form in action—seldom in a manly, open protest. It requires the most careful nursing and culture to keep alive even a show of justice towards the freed people.

Nearly all the females and young men, and all the blacklegs and rowdies, are open and defiant in their expression of hate for Yankees and negroes. The simple truth is, that the only public opinion which makes itself felt is as bitter and malignant as ever.

These are the facts, and any theory or policy which disregards or ignores them is of little account, no matter by whom advocated or sustained. Unless we keep a firm, just, kind hand upon these people, all our past labor will be thrown away.

A large number of troops is not required; but the State is one of the largest, and unless small garrisons are kept at many points, most unfortunate results will certainly follow; labor will be insecure and untrustworthy, and industrial operations will be sadly interfered with. Some of the unpleasant consequences to be anticipated are already exhibiting themselves; as, for instance, the recent attack on the garrison at Brunswick.

The people who have something to lose begin to appreciate the insecurity which follows the withdrawal of garrisons, and are asking to have them sent back.

The highest and best interests of the State, as well as of the freed people, require an addition to the force now in the department.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brigadier General Volunteers and A. A. C.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, Freedmen, and

Abandoned Lands, Washington, D. C.

OFFICE BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
GREENE CO., GA., WOODVILLE, *February 6, 1866.*

GENERAL: I met quite a number of the citizens of this county at Greensboro' to-day, and explained to them fully the conditions which, when complied with on their part, would enable them to retain their labor, under the protection and guarantees of approved contracts. Mr. J. B. Hart presented the following resolution for the action of the meeting—the same being adopted, with but three (3) dissenting voices:

Resolved, That we, as planters and citizens of Greene county, Georgia, do accept the terms for the hire of *freedmen* the present year as set forth by General Tillson in circular No. 5, December 22, 1865, and request that reasonable time be allowed us to amend our former contracts, so that they may conform to the stipulated standard of prices as set forth in paragraph No. II of said circular; and we further request that Mr. Davison, agent, &c., for this county, forward a copy of this resolution to General Tillson for his approval. With but few exceptions, probably none, our people will come up to the requirements, I think, promptly. The change may result in some few contracts heretofore made, not being amended, and in the consequent discharge of a small number of *laborers*, all of whom, however, will be able to obtain employment and homes, either in the county or elsewhere, as they may prefer, without difficulty.

I am, general, with due consideration, very respectfully,

JAMES DAVISON, *Agent.*

General D. TILLSON,

Acting Assistant Commissioner, &c., Augusta, Ga.,

Official copy furnished for information of Major General O. O. Howard.

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and Act. Assist. Commissioner.

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA, *February 6, 1866.*

DEAR GENERAL: I came here a few days since to try to arrange matters between the freed people and those who wish to employ them. I should have come here sooner, but that I was waiting to hear from you in reply to my letter, proposing to give former owners temporary possession of their lands, except where titles have been given to freed people. I see by the New York papers of the 1st instant that your anticipation that the bill enlarging the powers of the bureau, &c., would have passed by that time has not been realized. We cannot wait any longer if crops are to be raised on the coast and islands of this State this year; therefore I am making efforts to adjust the differences above referred to on the following basis, viz: I take it for granted that the bill before Congress will pass, and that the titles to land given in compliance with General Sherman's order will be made good for three years, but that other land not so encumbered may still be occupied by the owners if not abandoned, or restored to them if abandoned, in accordance with your instructions to Captain Ketchum. I take it for granted that Congress does not intend to make a general sweeping conveyance of all lands within Sherman's reservation to the freed people, or to confirm any titles given since the President countermanded General Sherman's order, but simply to confirm the titles properly and legally given in pursuance of Sherman's order. If I am right, then I cannot think the difficulties in the way of the adjustment of the question are insurmountable. I propose, for instance, where titles have been given without being definitely located, as is generally the case, or where they are located, then, with the consent of the parties, to consolidate the grants in some one portion of the plantation, giving

the freed people an average portion in point of fertility and other advantages, and leaving the remaining portion of the plantation unencumbered, so that crops can be raised upon all parts of the same. I propose, further, to get the owners, capitalists and freed people together, and, if possible, make some mutually satisfactory agreement which shall give work, good wages and kind treatment to the freed people, and crops to the country. I think I can do this; and if so, it seems to me that such an arrangement cannot be otherwise than agreeable to you, to Congress, and the country. If however, I am wrong, please telegraph me, that I may not act contrary to your wishes. I find things in very bad shape here and on the islands. I must remain for a time and try to improve the condition of affairs. It will require hard work, and I may fail, but I will do the best I possibly can. I met a large number of the freed people last night, and induced them to appoint nine of their own number who are to assist the bureau in ridding the city of the large number of vagrants and idlers who will do nothing themselves, and who interfere with the industry of others. I have telegraphed Captain Ketchum, asking him to meet me here. I want to act in concert with him, as I am determined not longer to issue rations to able-bodied people on the islands who refuse to make reasonable and liberal arrangements to work for their own support when such are offered. I have not heard from Captain Ketchum, although I have telegraphed twice, and have waited until I can wait no longer. I go to St. Catherine's island to-morrow.

I am yours, very respectfully,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brigadier General Volunteers and A. A. G.

Major General HOWARD,

Commissioner, Washington, D. C.

P. S.—General Hall, whom I expect to assign to duty here, has not reported yet. D. T.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
Augusta, Georgia, February 13, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report that, in compliance with Special Order No. 28, dated February 5, 1866, from this office, directing me to proceed with guard to Athens and Albany, visiting intermediate points, for the purpose of securing employment and homes for freedmen, I proceeded to Athens, and finding that but few hands could be obtained for southwest Georgia at that place, I went to Jefferson, Jackson county, where I procured about one hundred hands, who were anxious to depart. The citizens, who spoke in terms of praise of the bureau, and whose conduct towards me was faultless, rendered me every assistance in their power, and advised the freedmen to emigrate to southwest Georgia, as they would better their condition, receiving good homes and much better wages than they could possibly obtain by remaining where they were.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE H. PRATT,

1st Lieutenant 13th Conn. Vol. and A. A. G.

Brigadier General D. TILLSON,

Acting Assistant Commissioner.

Official copy forwarded for the information of Major General O. O. Howard, Commissioner.

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brigadier General Vol. and A. A. Com.

By W. W. DEANE,

Captain and A. A. G., in the General's absence.

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
Augusta, Georgia, February 8, 1866.

SIR: I have respectfully to report that Mr. Mitchell, who was appointed an agent of the bureau for this county, declines the position, and has forwarded to you his non-acceptance. Mr. Cline requires enlarged powers before he enters upon his duties for the bureau, and informed me that he had written to General Tillson to that end, (giving me a copy of his communication.)

There are some who want to have their work done for just such wages as they see proper to give, regardless of the requirements of the bureau in behalf of the freed people, who do not know the worth of their own labor.

Those "poor" people referred to must not expect to be benefited by the colored people unless they pay for it; if they are able to pay *two* second-class hands, they can pay *one* first-class hand. If they are not able, they must not expect to live by the sweat of other men's faces. Let them work for themselves, leaving the colored men to work for those who are able to pay for his labor. But the trouble is not here, but with those people who call the bureau a humbug and a nuisance, and hire the freed people according to their own notions, without submitting their contracts to the bureau, and who will not find more than *one* first-class hand out of a hundred. It is not maintained by the bureau that the aged, decrepit and children are first-class hands. The people here are aware of this, from contracts made by them and approved by me, wherein such laborers get *only* their worth. I have yet to see the colored man who refuses to work where he can get the best wages because he likes *one* man more than *another*.

Laborers in this section are scarce. I have now in my office applications for more than one thousand hands, where they can get from twelve and a half to twenty dollars per month. I respectfully request that you send me one thousand hands. I can find immediate employment for twice that number, for good wages. From the tone of Mr. Cline's communication you can judge the spirit I have had to deal with; notwithstanding this, employment and good wages have been secured to the colored people.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. C. RICHARDSON,

Captain and A. S. A. Comm'r.

Captain W. W. DEANE,

Assistant Adjutant General, State of Georgia.

Official copy furnished for information of General O. O. Howard, Commissioner.

• DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. of Vols. and A. A. Comm'r.

W. W. DEANE,

Captain and A. A. G., in the General's absence.

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,
OFFICE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,
In the field, Savannah, Georgia, February 20, 1866.

GENERAL: I have the honor to state that I have just returned from a second trip to the sea islands of this State.

I am happy to report that the arrangements mentioned in my preceding letter have been consummated upon St. Catherine's island; that all parties are perfectly satisfactory, and that the freed people are happy and working industriously.

Every additional fact I have obtained deepens my conviction, that but for this adjustment of their affairs, the freed people would be no better off at the end of the year on that island than they are now. As it is, there is every reason to hope for the most abundant success, and that this settlement, as it satisfies all parties, will not be overthrown for this year by any action of Congress.

By previous appointment I met the owners of St. Simon's island at Brunswick and took them to the island, called together the freed people, and had a full and free conference upon all matters in which they are mutually interested. I pursued a similar course at Sapelo island, and have strong hopes, from what I saw and heard of both parties, that they can be assisted by the bureau to make arrangements which shall be mutually satisfactory and profitable.

I enclose you a copy of Special Order No. 3, which will show the basis I have adopted for a settlement of the differences between the freed people and their former owners. I am glad to say that it seems to meet almost universal approval. (For evident reasons I have not published it, but made it known only to the parties interested.) Should the bill before Congress become a law, I have no doubt I shall be comparatively successful in my efforts to harmonize these conflicting interests.

Upon arriving in this city, I learned with much regret there is still some doubt as to the action of Congress upon the bill to enlarge the powers of this bureau. It is confidently stated that the President has or will "veto" the bill. Should this prove to be the case, you may possibly disapprove of the enclosed order, and of my presuming to act prior to the final passage of the bill; but I beg to assure you that so far, *good*, and not *harm*, has been done, and that I could not wait longer without making it impossible for either the white or freed people to raise crops this year—a result which I take it for granted all must desire to avoid.

With here and there an exception in the main portion of the State, the affairs of this bureau are progressing satisfactorily. The great work for the bureau now is along the coast and on the islands, and to this I must address myself personally and at once, as no time can be lost. It is now almost too late to begin planting cotton with a fair prospect of success.

The quartermaster's department has furnished me with a small steam-tug, the only boat at its disposal, which I have used in visiting the islands, but she draws too much water for the purpose, and I have been often delayed in consequence. I would not willingly put the government to any expense which could be avoided, but in consideration of the importance to the freed people and the government, the large field of labor, (embracing many valuable islands and 300 or 400 miles of coast,) I deem it indispensable to the interests of the service that a small light-draught steamer should be placed at my disposal to enable me to perform my duties efficiently and promptly, and I therefore ask your favorable consideration and immediate action upon the enclosed request for such a boat.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and Ass't Comm'r.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Comm'r Bureau, &c., Washington, D. C.

[Special Field Orders No. 3.]

BUREAU REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,

OFFICE ACTING ASS'T COMMISSIONER, STATE OF GEORGIA,

In the field, St. Simon's island, Georgia, February 17, 1826.

II. The former owners of land upon St. Simon's and the sea islands south thereof on the coast, and belonging to the State of Georgia, will be permitted to

return and occupy their lands, or a portion of them, subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter specified:

First. No owner will be allowed to make use of any threats against the freed people or the authorities of the United States, or to use any violence, or to say or do anything to disturb the peace on said islands; but all disputes will be referred to Mr. W. F. Eaton, the duly appointed agent of the bureau for said islands, for adjudication.

Second. Grants of land made the freed people, in compliance with General Sherman's Special Field Order No. 15, dated January 16, 1865, will be regarded as good and valid; but Mr. Eaton, the agent of this bureau, may set apart and consolidate them, contiguous to each other, on one portion of the plantation upon which such grants have been given, in such manner as to give the freed people a part possessing average fertility and other advantages, and at the same time place no unnecessary obstacle in the way of the owners occupying and cultivating the remaining portion of the plantation.

Third. The former owners of land on said islands will be allowed to occupy and cultivate the same when not assigned to freed people, as described in preceding section, or other portions of their estates that may be made vacant by the consolidation hereinbefore mentioned. Such owners will be permitted to hire freed people on terms satisfactory to both parties, and approved by the bureau.

Fourth. The freed people now on the islands, not having grants of land, will not be forced to leave their present domicile unless the owners of the land upon which they may be located, or their representatives, shall have offered them opportunities of labor upon such terms and conditions as shall be satisfactory to this bureau. Should such freed people refuse to accept the offer thus made, then they shall remove from such plantation, and allow the owners thereof the opportunity to hire others to cultivate the same.

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DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and A. A. Comm'r.

Official copy furnished for the information of Major General O. O. Howard, Commissioner, &c., Washington, D. C.

DAVIS TILLSON,

Brig. Gen. Vols. and A. A. Comm'r.

No. 22.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,

Washington, January 1, 1866.

GENERAL: In obedience to your Special Order No. 84, appointing me inspector of schools and of finances for freedmen, I have the honor to report that I left Washington on the 6th day of October last, and travelled through all the States south, below Tennessee, and this side the Mississippi river. The cities and large towns visited were Baltimore, Maryland; Hampton, Norfolk, Petersburg, and Richmond, Virginia; Newbern, Goldsboro', and Wilmington, North Carolina; Florence, Charleston, and Beaufort, South Carolina; Savannah, Augusta, and Atlanta, Georgia; Fernandina, Jacksonville, and Tallahassee, Florida; Mobile and Montgomery, Alabama; Jackson, Vicksburg, and Natches, Mississippi, and New Orleans, Louisiana. Most of these places both on my outward and returning journey. My whole tour extended over four thousand miles of travel. Going by land I was enabled to see along the line, and by excursions into the interior and to the islands much of the freedmen's condition

upon the plantations. I also went among the colored troops, as I could find them in their various regimental encampments, or as detailed in companies on special duty.

SCHOOLS.

The desire of the freedmen for knowledge has not been overstated. This comes from several causes :

1. The natural thirst for knowledge common to all men.
2. They have seen power and influence among white people always coupled with *learning*—it is the sign of that elevation to which they now aspire.
3. Its mysteries, hitherto hidden from them in written literature, excites to the special study of *books*.
4. Their freedom has given wonderful stimulus to *all effort*, indicating a vitality which augurs well for their whole future condition and character.
5. But especially the practical business of life, now upon their hands, shows at once their need of education. This they all feel and acknowledge ; hence, their unusual welcome and attendance upon schools is confined to no one class or age. Those advanced in life throw up their hands at first in despair, but a little encouragement places *even these* as pupils at the alphabet.

Such as are in middle life—the laboring classes—gladly avail themselves of the evening and Sabbath schools. They may be often seen during the intervals of toil, when off duty as servants, on steamboats, along the railroads, and when unemployed in the streets of the city or on plantations, with some fragment of a spelling-book in their hands, earnestly at study. Regiments of colored soldiers have nearly all made improvement in learning. In some of them, where but few knew their letters at first, nearly every man can now read, and many of them write. In other regiments one-half or two-thirds can do this. The officers of such regiments deserve great credit for their efforts in this respect. The 128th United States colored troops, at Beaufort, I found with regularly detailed teachers from the line officers—a neat camp school-house, erected by the regiment, and the colonel with great interest superintending the whole arrangement. Chaplains have also been the schoolmasters of their respective regiments with much success and greatly increasing their usefulness.

Even in hospitals I discovered very commendable efforts at such elementary instruction. In the above camp and hospital work the teachers of the northern associations were found helping. But the great movement is among *children* of the *usual school age*, and who are now otherwise wholly unemployed. Their parents, if at all intelligent, everywhere encourage them to study. Your officers in all ways add their influence, and it is a fact, not always true of children, that among those recently from bondage, the school-house, however rough and uncomfortable, is of all other places the most attractive; the average attendance being nearly equal to that usually found at the north. For instance, in the District of Columbia, the daily attendance at the white schools is but forty-one (41) per cent., while at the colored schools of the District it is seventy-five (75) per cent. In the State of New York, the daily attendance at the public schools averages forty-three (43) per cent. At the colored schools in the city of Memphis it is seventy-two (72) per cent. In the whole State of Alabama it is seventy-nine (79) per cent; and in Virginia it is eighty-two (82) per cent. The most thorough attendance at public schools at the north is probably in the city of Boston, where it is ninety-three (93) per cent. In the *comparison*, therefore, schools of colored children do not suffer (especially when we consider lax government at home, and opportunity for truancy) with the most vigorous system found among our own children. Love of their books is universally apparent. Dull and stupid ones there are, but a very common punishment for misdemeanor is the threat of being *kept at home for a day*. The threat, in most cases, is sufficient.

TOTAL UNDER INSTRUCTION.

The whole number of pupils in the colored schools of the eleven States lately in insurrection, and including Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, up to the last date of reports, viz., December 1, is ninety thousand five hundred and eighty-nine, (90,589.) Teachers, one thousand three hundred and fourteen, (1,314;) schools, seven hundred and forty, (740.) These numbers have increased rather than diminished since that date.

The above schools are sustained under your superintendence by the various benevolent associations of the north, with the exception of a few in charge of tax commissioners, and those in Louisiana until recently supported by a military tax on the people of that State. But these associations are indebted to the government for transportation of teachers and of school furniture, for military protection, and in many cases for the occupation of buildings in possession of this bureau. The loyal people of the country will, it is believed, do much more of this philanthropic work, if they can be furnished with the needed accommodations and protection. Most of the school-houses, churches, and other property hitherto occupied by them have now been returned to their former owners, and this immense system of education must fail or be greatly crippled unless permanent real estate for their use can be in some way secured. The above associations would, in many cases, erect buildings with their own funds if they could obtain land on which to do it.

VIRGINIA.

The best schools in this State are at Hampton and Norfolk, and the adjacent plantations, where the field could be occupied soon after the war commenced. Attainment in all the branches of a common education has been most commendable, and no abatement of zeal or slackening of progress is apparent among scholars most advanced. The higher classes are destined to go still higher if opportunity is afforded them.

In other parts of Virginia, these educating efforts have commenced more recently, but with equal promise. By the efforts of your excellent assistant commissioner at Richmond, schools, in their first stages, are now instituted in all parts of the State.

The whole number of colored children under instruction at the present time in Virginia is twelve thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight in ninety schools, with one hundred and ninety-five teachers, and the reports of the State superintendent are full and satisfactory.

Aside from these colored schools I found at Richmond a very good school for indigent white children, under the care of the American Union Commission, numbering three hundred and seventy-five pupils with five teachers, and fifty adults in an evening school. In addition to this, the old provost marshal building (General Winder's former headquarters) is now being fitted up for seven schools for poor white children, an industrial school, and a public reading-room. The lower and middling classes of the white population of the city favor this movement. In Petersburg and Fredericksburg, each, the commission has a similar school; the former numbering eighty, and the latter one hundred fifty pupils.

NORTH CAROLINA.

In this State there are schools well advanced at Newbern and vicinity, having had, for the same reason as above, time for thorough organization and progress. A vigorous system has been more recently arranged throughout the whole State, into which children and even adults are crowding, making a constant demand

for the opening of new schools. A general desire for education is everywhere manifested. In some instances, as in Halifax county, very good schools were found taught and paid for by the colored people themselves. Said a gentleman to me, "I constantly see in the streets and on the door-steps opposite my dwelling groups of little negroes studying their spelling-books." The aggregate for the whole State is: schools, eighty-six; teachers, one hundred and nineteen; pupils, eight thousand five hundred and six. The increase of scholars during the four weeks previous to this summary was one thousand four hundred and fifty-three.

We note the gratifying fact, that while there is this general increase, the attendance in the large towns is decreasing, showing that the tide of colored population is now setting strongly toward the rural districts where labor is called for, and where they will have their permanent settlement in life.

An industrial school on Roanoke island is in successful operation. In Raleigh and Wilmington there are schools for poor white children, numbering in both places two hundred and fifty attendants.

SOUTH CAROLINA AND GEORGIA.

In the city of Charleston the free colored people during the existence of slavery were, under various restrictions, permitted to have schools. The consequence was that some of that class were quite well educated. When the late emancipation came, these schools were at once enlarged, and by the aid of northern benevolence, became very soon unusually interesting. Opposition of the citizens was rather to the occupying of their public school-houses by the negroes than to their education itself. The whites had seen in former years that free negroes were elevated in character by having learning; and it may be well to state that, of the seventy-six teachers in South Carolina at the present time, twenty-five are natives, twenty-four being colored persons. It will undoubtedly be true, that as prejudice wears away, white persons of the south will be willing to engage in this well-paid and useful service. And as intelligence increases, colored teachers will also become more numerous. The happy effect of mingling in one common and honorable employment persons from opposite sections of the country, and also of different colors, is apparent. The accomplished head master of the largest school in Charleston, numbering eight hundred and fifty in daily attendance, is a colored man.

In all parts of the State schools are multiplying, the whole number being forty-eight—not as large as might be expected, but some of them are immense in attendance. Two in Charleston register over eight hundred pupils each, and fifteen others in the State from one hundred and ten to three hundred and seventy-two each. I visited the principal of these schools, and can say that many hundreds of pupils bore excellent examination in reading, writing, geography, and English grammar. Some of the schools in the interior are in their first rude stage, and many are deficient in making their regular reports. The whole number of teachers is seventy-six, and of pupils ten thousand.

Georgia having been under the same assistant commissioner, does not differ much, in the work done and in progress, from South Carolina. The best schools are in Augusta, Macon, and Savannah. It would be difficult to discriminate, though in the latter place the effort began earlier. In a very few days after the advent of General Sherman there were five hundred children under organized instructions in that city. This effort, in teaching and expense, was undertaken wholly by the colored people themselves. They received from white friends only advice and encouragement. These schools still continue, and with improvement, quite creditable to the agency by which they are carried on. There are in the State sixty-nine schools and three thousand six hundred and three pupils, with sixty-nine teachers, forty-three of whom are colored persons. The

associations of the north are doing well here, as in other States, but their efforts are crippled by want of buildings. In every place a crowd of pupils can find no adequate accommodation. It is also true that schools are prevented from going into the interior through fear of violence to unprotected teachers. A military police is everywhere needed.

At Athens, in this State, the Union commission has a school of refugee white children with ninety-five pupils. At Chattanooga there is an advanced school of this kind recently started.

FLORIDA.

This State is not as far advanced in education as some others; most of it being more sparsely populated, and the organization more recent. Notwithstanding, there are good schools in ten of the larger towns, with the same general results as above.

In Tallahassee I found five schools gathered and taught by the colored preachers of the place. Also a school of interesting girls instructed by a mulatto woman of education, and who said, "I intend to make ladies of these girls." They will undoubtedly become teachers. At Fernandina an orphan school of forty (40) little parentless children occupies the mansion formerly owned by General Finnigan. It is a lovely specimen of genuine philanthropy, and the lady principal deserves great credit for her self-denying labors.

The total in Florida is thirty schools, nineteen (19) teachers, and nineteen hundred (1,900) pupils.

ALABAMA.

As far as I could learn there have been but two schools in the State under the care of the assistant commissioner. These are large, having eight hundred and seventeen (817) pupils enrolled, with fifteen (15) teachers. That at Mobile bears a most rigid examination in all respects. It is well graded, its teachers thorough, and its discipline excellent. The progress made by the majority of the scholars is truly surprising. The school opened in May, 1865, and now there are classes in all the different readers, from the Pictorial Primer to the Rhetorical Fifth Reader. One class is now in fractions, of Robinson's Arithmetic; one class in Intellectual Arithmetic, reciting in reduction; other classes are well advanced in English grammar and geography. The teachers publish a monthly paper called *The Acorn*. This school receives help from the north, but each pupil, if able, is required to pay a small tuition fee of from 25 cents to \$1 25 per month—no child being excluded on account of poverty. The whole amount received from this tuition has been \$1,875 18. The other school is at Montgomery, and is in a very good condition, with 325 pupils, who pay, in the aggregate, \$118 per month tuition. Arrangements are in progress by your assistant commissioner to have a general system of schools throughout the State. Governor Parsons favors the work, and some white native teachers are willing to engage in it. But in the interior, as is true of all these States, much opposition is manifested, and military protection will, for the present, be needed, especially if the instructors are to be females.

There are also eleven schools in the northern part of the State, in the division known as the "Department of the Tennessee," which have hitherto been superintended by the commissioner of Kentucky and Tennessee. These are about to be transferred to the care of the commissioner of Alabama. They are at Huntsville, Athens, and Stevenson, and are good schools.

MISSISSIPPI.

There is a mixture of good and evil to report from this State. Your officers are indefatigable in their efforts. There are many good schools among the

thirty-four in operation. Some of these have made admirable progress, and a number not included have started under various auspices in different parts of the State. There is everywhere the usual eagerness to learn. But in some sections inveterate opposition among the whites is manifested towards these schools. Two teachers, at the time I was there, were sent to one of the large towns, twenty-five miles into the country where there was no military, and the next morning they were ordered off, and *threatened if they did not go*. This opposition is often openly avowed, but more generally is tacit and concealed, making itself felt everywhere in a sort of combination not to allow the freedmen any place in which a school may be taught. A superintendent in an interior town says: "The opposition to negro education is very great in my town and neighborhood." Colored men in some instances have paid their own money to prepare and furnish a room for a school and then have been forbidden to use it, the white people taking it from them for their own children. Similar things are true of other States, though in Mississippi such opposition has seemed to be more common than elsewhere, and yet there are redeeming features. Instances of planters have come to our knowledge who are desirous of employing teachers for the freed people. One of your officers states that "many planters are beginning to perceive that schools for the children would be an inducement for laborers to engage with them." General opposition is undoubtedly decreasing. We notice expressions of hope from those who are laboring in the State, and it is clear that a steady system of effort cannot be resisted; as I told one of the planters, "they would find it harder fighting the alphabet and spelling-book than they did Grant and Sherman." He made no reply.

There are now sixty-eight (68) teachers in the State, thirty-four (34) schools, and four thousand three hundred and ten (4,310) enrolled pupils. More than half of these are considerably advanced in reading, writing and arithmetic.

LOUISIANA.

In this State a peculiar and very efficient system was inaugurated by Major General Banks, in his General Order No. 38, March 22, 1864. That order created a board of education for freedmen, for the department of the Gulf, with power to establish common schools, employ teachers, erect school-houses, regulate the course of studies, and have generally the same authority that assessors, supervisors, and trustees have in the northern States, in the matter of establishing and conducting common schools.

The purpose of the order is stated to be "for the rudimental instruction of the freedmen of the department, placing within their reach those elements of knowledge which give greater intelligence and value *to labor*."

Previously the teaching of a negro had been a "heinous offence." It is true that the children of the free colored people, who were in good circumstances, (known as "creoles," generally of French or Spanish extraction,) when not educated abroad, or from fairness of complexion by occasional admission to the white schools, were quietly instructed at home, or in a very few private schools *of their class*. But for the poor, even of the free colored people, there were no schools.

Almost immediately upon the above order a great system went into operation and during the last two years there have been about one hundred and fifty schools for colored children established in the State, giving employment to two hundred and sixty-five teachers, and affording instruction to fourteen thousand children and five thousand adults, of which latter class more than one thousand were soldiers. There have been in New Orleans alone nineteen large schools, employing one hundred and four teachers, with an average attendance of five thousand seven hundred and twenty-four pupils. More than *fifty thousand* colored pupils, as reported by the local superintendent, have been taught to read in that city and immediate vicinity, and now they seem to feel more deeply

interested than ever in acquiring knowledge. *These are great results.* I visited these schools, looked over their records, heard their recitations, saw their excellent discipline, became acquainted with the majority of their intelligent teachers, and feel safe in saying that while no State has had so large an organization, no one has excelled Louisiana in the detailed perfection of their school system. The charges which have been made that too high salaries were given to teachers I investigated thoroughly, and found them entirely groundless. The expenses of living in Louisiana are enormous.

It may be well to state that quite a number of southern white teachers have been employed. They understand the negro, and their southern origin and education enable them to combat prejudice against his education.

These teachers may not be equal in some respects to those from the north, but their willingness to bear jeers and contempt of friends and kindred, and the practical exclusion from circles which hitherto have received them gladly, entitles them to great consideration. The superintendent has aimed to select the most capable and worthy of these, but has not been unmindful of those whose loyal antecedents and consequent suffering from the rebellion entitle them to sympathy and aid.

Whenever colored teachers, with the requisite ability, have presented themselves he has made no distinction whatever.

Much opposition has been encountered from those who do not believe in the elevation of the negro—the more, perhaps, as, by the labor order of General Banks, to obtain his services they were *obliged* to help pay for this education. A multitude of facts might be given.

It is the testimony of the superintendent that if the military power should be withdrawn, and the State once more resume all her functions, our schools would cease to exist, and the whole moral and political influence of the people of Louisiana be brought to bear against them. The constitution of 1864 makes it incumbent on the legislature to provide for the education of colored children, but that constitution is not yet regarded as the law of the land, and the dominant party demands that it be set aside as not expressing the will of the people. A member of the legislature, in session while I was at New Orleans, was passing one of the schools with me, having, at the time, its recess, the grounds about the building being filled with children. He stopped and looked intently, then earnestly inquired "Is *this* a school?" "Yes," I replied. *What!* of niggers? "These are colored children, evidently," I answered. "*Well! well!*" said he, and raising his hands, "I have seen many an absurdity in my lifetime, but *this is the climax of absurdities!*" I was sure he did not speak for effect, but as he felt. He darted from me like an arrow, and turned the next corner to take his seat with legislators similarly prejudiced.

It was with regret that I learned, while in the State, that the collection of the general tax for colored schools was suspended by military order. The consternation of the colored population was intense. They could not consent to have their children sent away from study, and at once expressed willingness to be assessed for the whole expense. Their part of the ordinary public school tax they were already paying, though not sharing its benefits, but they petitioned General Canby to levy an added tax upon them for their own schools. The New Orleans Tribune (colored daily paper) opposed this on the ground that it was without representation, and so did many of the rich creoles; but the middle and lower classes of the freedmen could not be restrained. Petitions began to pour in. I saw one from the plantations across the river, at least thirty feet in length, representing ten thousand negroes. It was affecting to examine it to note the names and marks (X) of each, a long list of parents ignorant themselves, but begging that their children might be educated, promising that from beneath their present burdens, and out of their extreme poverty, they would pay for it. I am happy to add that upon the back of that petition was indorsed the name of

your excellent commissioner, General Baird, asking, *on behalf of these poor*, that their request might be granted. I learn that this matter has not yet been accomplished, and that the schools have been temporarily suspended, the commissioner assuring the freedmen that, "by the first of March, the system of contracts prescribed for agricultural laborers will begin to yield a revenue," and it is expected that the schools in the country districts may then be re-established. He adds, that "in the cities and towns the mode of maintaining schools has not been so fully decided upon, but the vacation, which has become absolutely necessary from the want of funds, will be of the shortest possible duration. If means, from any quarter, come into the hands of the bureau, I would respectfully call attention to the reopening of these interesting schools at the earliest moment. A number of industrial schools have been in progress in New Orleans, and with good results.

As I did not visit the States of Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee, I will only give the general facts.

In Texas there are ten day and six night schools for freedmen, under ten teachers, with 1,041 pupils—many of them adults. They are all self-sustaining. Arrangements have been made whereby thirty teachers will soon be obtained, and that number of schools will be organized as soon as books can be procured.

In Missouri, Kansas, and Arkansas, under the care of General Sprague, there are 39 schools, 51 teachers, and 3,444 pupils. One school has been recently closed for want of a building.

In Kentucky and Tennessee the last report gives 75 schools, 264 teachers, and 14,768 pupils. The commissioner says: "In addition to these free schools, the colored people have sustained many independent schools in Louisville, Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville, largely increasing the above numbers." Several schools, however, have been abandoned lately for want of suitable buildings, and others from the breaking up of government camps. The cold weather of winter also prevents many from attending. Much opposition has been made to educating the freedmen in some parts of these States, while in a few places (as at Athens, Alabama) the citizens are said to be "favorable to the school." There is a constantly increasing demand among the freed people for education. The superintendent testifies that "while the expenditures for educational purposes in this department for the past six months has not been less than \$50,000, scarcely a beginning has been made in this great work."

At Nashville a square of land has been purchased by northern associations for sixteen thousand dollars, on which a high school building has been erected for teaching the children of freedmen in all the higher branches. It is expected that this institution will equal in its advantages the best schools of the same class in New England. The building was dedicated on the 9th of January last, and has now 1,100 pupils. A normal department is attached, which will prepare teachers for elementary schools throughout the whole State.

There is an orphan asylum of colored children at Nashville, with 60 inmates.

A number of teachers for refugee white children have been sent to Tennessee, and other places of the west and southwest. This has been done on application from the citizens of those sections. The effect of such schools is not only to benefit the children, but to produce fraternity of feeling with us among the people, especially the common classes. The wealthy and aristocratic look upon this effort with less favor.

In Maryland I made a brief inspection, though this State is not fully under your jurisdiction.

The "Baltimore Association for the Moral and Educational Improvement of the Colored People" has sixteen flourishing schools in Baltimore, numbering, day and night, 1,957 pupils. They occupy seven buildings, and employ sixteen teachers, three of whom are colored. These schools are now crowded to their

utmost capacity, and would be much larger if room could be obtained. In the several counties of the State, this association has 18 schools, with 19 teachers and 1,110 pupils, fourteen of whom are colored. The colored people have aided these county schools the last year by paying \$2,000 of the expense themselves.

The society of Friends has an evening school in Baltimore of forty draymen and porters, taught by young men of the society, and who are making good progress. These Friends also aid the above association.

The American Missionary Association has five schools in Maryland, viz., two in Baltimore and three in the country, under the care of seven teachers. With their evening schools and classes of older people, they have from six to seven hundred under instruction. All their schools are doing well.

Besides these, there are seven schools in Baltimore solely under the management of colored people—taught and paid for by their own money. These contain, in all, 319 pupils, a considerable number of whom are adults. This is an interesting effort, and shows what the colored population will do themselves, even alongside of schools both well taught and gratuitous.

In the Douglass (colored) Institute, which is on a permanent foundation, the children are generally from the working classes, and their parents pay for tuition from \$1 to \$1 50 per month.

I found two schools in Baltimore which have been going on more than ten years, supported from a legacy given by Nelson Willis, a colored man; having seventy-five scholars, daily attendance.

The educational work in Maryland has had much opposition, such as “stoning children and teachers at Easton,” “rough-handling and blackening the teacher at Cambridge,” “indignation meeting in Dorchester county, with resolution passed to drive out the teacher,” and the “burning of church and school-house at Willington, Kent county;” “a guard had to be placed over the school-house at Annapolis,” &c.

Colored churches have also been burned in Cecil, Queen Ann, and Somerset counties, to prevent schools being opened in them, all showing that negro hate is not by any means confined to the low south.

I have thus been somewhat particular in regard to Maryland, as you are without regular official reports from that State.

In the District of Columbia there are reported 45 schools, 100 teachers, and 5,191 pupils; some thousands of these are good readers, and also are in English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and higher branches; 1,854 are learning to write, and only 1,097 are still in the alphabet. There are nine other schools, not reported, having 500 or 600 pupils. 21 night schools are in operation, with 1,200 pupils; and, besides Sabbath schools attached to all the colored churches, there are 25 such schools connected with this bureau in a flourishing condition, having 2,329 pupils.

A number of industrial schools have been started, one of which made during last month 162 garments; another has made one hundred articles of clothing. The last is a school of adult women. This whole work is a vast improvement upon the state of things here, as some of us well remember only a few months since. The superintendent, Mr. Kimbell, says “all the teachers seem to be earnest and hopeful.” One writes, “I find the children are very much like white ones—some stupid, others bright. They are rather more eager for learning, because it has been forbidden fruit to them.” The order and general character of many of these schools in Washington has much improved of late. One of them, situated in the heart of the city, and therefore open to much observation, was a few months ago declared “a nuisance” by the neighbors. Now no complaint is made, and even much praise is elicited by the good conduct of the children.

Eight or ten self-supporting schools, taught by colored teachers, numbering at least 500 scholars, are also in operation here in the District. Some of these appear remarkably well. There is an association of all the teachers of the schools,

with 100 members. In their monthly meetings reports are made and questions of mutual interest discussed, and in this way the general character of the schools is constantly improved.

Thus I have given a sketch (meagre, indeed, as *all the facts and incidents* would make a volume) of the system of education for the refugees and freedmen which has been under the general superintendence of this bureau.

I may be permitted to say that, from my personal observation, much more is being done than finds its way into the above statistics. There are many schools not reported. Evening schools for adults, of great utility, are becoming very numerous. Often they are conducted by volunteer friends of the colored man, and with a modesty which forbids making public mention of their work. *Sabbath schools* among freedmen have been opened throughout the entire south; all of them giving *elementary* instruction, and reaching thousands who cannot attend the week-day teaching. These are not usually included in the regular returns. They are often spoken of with special interest by the superintendents. Indeed, one of the most thrilling spectacles which he who visits the southern country now witnesses in cities, and often upon the plantations, is the large schools gathered upon the *Sabbath day*, sometimes of many hundreds, dressed in clean Sunday garments, with eyes sparkling, intent upon elementary and Christian instruction. The management of some of these is admirable, after the fashion of the best Sunday schools of white children, with faithful teachers, the majority of whom, it will be often noticed, are colored. I do not, therefore, doubt that the footing, as given from the several States, in the first part of this report, of 90,589 pupils, would be, if *all was told*, swollen to at least 100,000, who are now under effective and well-superintended instruction.

Another great feature of this educational movement remains to be noticed, and which will add a very important item to even this number. Throughout the entire south an effort is being made by the colored people to educate themselves. In the absence of other teaching they are determined to be self-taught; and everywhere some elementary text-book, or the fragment of one, may be seen in the hands of negroes. They quickly communicate to each other what they already know, so that with very little learning many take to teaching.

A willingness, even *an ambition*, to bear expenses is also noticed. They often say, "we want to show how much we can do *ourselves*, if you will only give us a chance."

This may seem to be an overstatement to those who doubt the character of the negro; not that they are ungrateful or unwilling to be helped, but so universal is the feeling I am describing, that it seems as if some unseen influence was inspiring them to that intelligence which they now so immediately need. Not only are individuals seen at study, and under the most untoward circumstances, but in very many places I have found what I will call "native schools," often rude and very imperfect, but *there they are*, a group, perhaps, of all ages, *trying to learn*. Some young man, some woman, or old preacher, in cellar, or shed, or corner of a negro meeting-house, with the alphabet in hand, or a torn spelling-book, is their teacher. All are full of enthusiasm with the new knowledge *the book* is imparting to them.

Again, I saw schools (shall I call them) of somewhat higher order. A deserted house has been obtained. There is some organization and awkward classifying; larger members, better books, with tolerable exhibition of easy reading. A sample of such I met at Goldsboro', North Carolina. Two colored young men, who but a little time before commenced to learn themselves, had gathered one hundred and fifty pupils, all quite orderly and hard at study. A small tuition fee was charged, and they needed books. These teachers told me that "no white man, before me, had ever come near them." At Halifax was a similar school, the first of *any kind* which had been opened in that county since the war.

A still higher order of this native teaching is seen in the colored schools at

Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans. With many disadvantages they bear a very good examination. One I visited in the latter city, of three hundred pupils, and wholly taught by educated colored men, would bear comparison with any ordinary school at the north. Not only good reading and spelling were heard, but lessons at the black-board in arithmetic, recitations in geography and English grammar. Very creditable specimens of writing were shown, and all the older classes could read or recite as fluently in French as in English. This was a free school, wholly supported by the colored people of the city, and the children were from the common class of families. They have six select schools where a better class attend. *Such* are not by any means common, but all the above cases illustrate the remark that this educational movement among the freedmen has in it a self-sustaining element. I took special pains to ascertain the facts on this particular point, and have to report that there are schools of this kind in some stage of advancement (taught and supported wholly by the people themselves) in all the large places I visited—often *numbers* of them, and they are also making their appearance through the *interior* of the entire country. The superintendent of South Carolina assured me that there was not a place of any size in the whole of that State but where there was an attempt at such a school. I have much testimony from others well informed, both oral and written, that the same is true of other States. There can scarcely be a doubt, and I venture the estimate that at least five hundred schools of this description are already in operation throughout the south. If, therefore, all these be added, and including soldiers and *individuals* at study, we shall have at least *one hundred and twenty-five thousand as the entire educational census of this lately emancipated people*. This is a wonderful state of things. We have just emerged from a terrific war; peace is not yet declared. There is scarcely the beginning of reorganized society at the south; and yet here is a people long inbruted by slavery and the most despised of any on earth, whose chains are no sooner broken, than they spring to their feet and start up an exceeding great army, *clothing themselves* with intelligence. What other people on earth have even shown, while in their ignorance, such a passion for education?

It is also seen that the children of the poor whites of the south are very ready to receive instruction, and that already considerable has been done for them.

The conclusions forced upon us from the above facts are:

1. *The experiment of educating the freedmen proves to be successful*, and the ignorant whites may be greatly benefited.

It only remains to carry on with confidence the work so well begun.

That colored children can at once compete with white children who from the first have had high advantages, need not be said. It is enough that with early bad habits, bad example, and wholly unpracticed in study, they seize upon books gladly, and learn rabidly. As well endowed naturally or not, we certainly see in the majority the same brightness, the same quick ambition, as with children of the more favored color, and, stimulated as they are by the novelty of study, there is at present an actual progress scarcely to be paralleled anywhere. In advanced studies, or at a more mature age, pupils give no signs of having reached the limit of their capacity. I have discovered hesitation in their plans for *using* education. Their ardor is dampened by the well known aversion to their hereafter occupying high position; but always, when assured that as character and intelligence increase, ways and means of usefulness will be opened, they are ready to push on to new and harder tasks. When I have told the higher classes in the schools that they will be wanted as teachers, at least of their own color, a new stimulus is seen at once to come over them, and their instructors have always assured me that such promise had inspired an intense ambition.

It is probable that the tastes and temperament of the race, which are peculiar, certainly, will lead in special directions. They may not excel in the inventive power or abstract science, perhaps not in mathematics, though we have seen

commendable ciphering in the colored schools. But they certainly are emotional, imitative, and affectionate; are graphic and figurative in language; have conceptions of beauty and song, and already become skilled mechanics and even artists. If so, then why are not this people destined to honor labor, gladden social life, and when sufficiently cultured, to enlarge art, invest ideas in harmony and grace, give hearty good cheer to religious faith, and thus add important elements to the more perfect civilization of the coming time.

As to improvement at an advanced age, we find individuals vigorously *attempting* it, and many are succeeding. Colored troops have shown aptness to discipline, *courage*, never more to be questioned. And under exceeding disadvantage a large proportion of them have become comparatively educated. A paymaster in Louisiana made the public statement that "a far greater proportion of the colored troops which he paid off at the close of the war signed their names than of the white troops raised in the south."

The interests which the soldiers of the colored regiments have taken in learning to read is well illustrated by the following statement made by an army surgeon in New Orleans:

About a year ago he was stationed at Fort Livingston with colored troops; and soon after his arrival, finding that his time was very little employed professionally, he began to look around to see what he could do. Finally, the thought occurred that he might be useful in teaching the soldiers to read. He proposed the subject to the officers, and they laughed and sneered. Concluding that their advice was not needed, he called the soldiers, and talked with them one after another; and finding that they largely accepted the proposition, he made the following arrangement: He agreed to pick out a class of ten of the brightest and smartest soldiers in the fort, and spend two hours a day in teaching them how to read, provided each of this ten would take a class of four and spend the same amount of time with them. Books were soon procured, and a little school started on this method. The soldiers kept their agreement. While being taught by him, they taught one another, and in a few days many of them could begin to read. When the experiment proved an undoubted success, the soldiers procured a competent teacher from the board of education, and had a regular school established under its auspices. A short time since the commanding officer of the fort told the doctor that the soldiers which were his A, B, C pupils one year ago now took over forty copies of Harper's and Frank Leslie's Weeklies, besides other papers.

2. *The good influence of the schools upon all the habits of the freedmen is apparent.*—As the children repeat their lessons at home, parents become thoughtful, acquire many new ideas, and are led to prize their families, who are thus increasing in knowledge. They make new exertion for self-support, especially for these schools, insuring both industry and economy.

At Little Rock, Arkansas, after paying tuition some months, the colored people formed a school society for the city, and made their schools free for the rest of the year, (the first free schools in Arkansas,) paying in full the compensation of all the teachers.

Besides *elementary* instruction, our schools teach morality and Christianity, and thus, through the children, are waking up a general conscience, and guiding the entire population in the ways of virtue. That class of older persons having now a little learning are stimulated to increase it by study. A group of elderly preachers in Savannah said to me, with much emphasis, "We must now go to studying ourselves, or these young folks will all be ahead of us." They begged me earnestly to adopt a plan by which they might be brought into a class for mutual improvement.

3. *The white population of the south feels the power of these schools.*—Assent, if not the favor, of the better men is being gradually obtained. The major part are indignant, indeed, that negroes should have learning. All sorts

of evil is predicted as the consequence. But a portion of this enmity is provoked by the rivalry which their own children must now struggle with.

The "poor whites" are excited by hearing negroes read while they are ignorant; and it is my belief that they will now receive schools, if furnished them, as never before.

The educated class are not slow to perceive that their schools must be reopened, or fall behind, humiliated, and that new schools must now be organized on a *more popular* plan than heretofore. Poverty, and perhaps pride, with the want of teachers, as the public feeling now is, are the present difficulties in carrying out these convictions.

Some of the religious denominations in the south, seeing there *will be* schools for the freedmen, are saying, "We may as well undertake the work ourselves," and have already passed resolutions adopting the education of the negroes as one of their missionary enterprises.

4. *A class of schools is called for in which colored teachers can be taught.*—If dignified by the name of "*normal schools*," they should be for training in the simplest elements of the art.

The system of education for the freedmen, *as a whole*, must be at first very rudimental, in which the text will be found mainly in the spelling-book, and which can become, as soon as possible, universal. This people are not like pagans in ancient countries, who a thousand years hence will be mainly as they are to-day. Slaves even, in a country like this, could not be kept from many noble impulses. The war has been to them a wonderful school of knowledge, and thought, and of purposes; and now suddenly emancipated, these 4,000,000 are, as "a nation, born in a day."

This great multitude rise up simultaneously, and ask for an education. With it, they will at once start upward in all character. Without it, they will as quickly sink into the depravities of ignorance and vice, free to be what they please, and, in the presence only of bad example, they will be carried away with every species of evil. And, then, what is the actual and astounding fact? One that startles philanthropy itself. A million, at least, of these four millions, (and mainly the rising generation,) are to-day ready to engage in the study of books. They cannot well be put off. Considerations, political, social, financial, and moral, all ask that their demand be promptly met.

If the million be divided into schools of fifty each, we need for its supply 20,000 teachers. Where are they to come from? The north can supply a few thousands. Perhaps the more noble, here and there, in the south will help us. But still at least 15,000 remain to be supplied from some other quarter.

The great impulse to teach, *among these freed people themselves*, with readiness to pay expenses, gives to us the solution of this problem. If they can be by some short method (at first) helped on in study, perfected in what they already know, taught how to teach the same, how also to organize, classify, and govern a school, many thus prepared could be sent out in a very few months to commence the work. Successive classes, prepared more thoroughly, would follow, and, with the certificate of their instructors, no difficulty would be found in obtaining employment. I have never known among the freedmen the offer of a teacher which was not accepted.

The benefits of this plan would be—

1. Such native teachers would go everywhere with very little opposition. The interior of States could be penetrated where now no white teacher can go.
2. The freedmen would mainly support these schools themselves. If school-houses were furnished they would need no other charity.
3. The *elevating effort* of this plan would be universal. The better class of youth among the freedmen would at once see an honorable employment open to them. The present schools would be stimulated with the same idea, and

those of a higher grade would imitate this plan and have a normal class into which their better pupils could at once go.

4. It could be shown in this way what the freedmen are, *as by their own efforts*. This opportunity they deserve. A *development* system, bringing out what they can do themselves, is far better than a perpetual pauperizing, which only shows what others can do for them. If they are to be men, let them be self-educated. Calumny from their worst enemies will grow silent when this is successfully commenced.

If such a system could be instituted at all the central points of the south, we could ere long approximate the great teaching demand now felt. This does not imply that the better schools of northern associations could not all go on, and be greatly increased. The large cities and towns where they now are need them. They could rise still higher in grade, preparing pupils for all the spheres of life, and help immensely in the plan I am now advocating.

On this plan I feel sure that in a few years the whole education of the freedmen could be made *self-supporting*, and by that time the white population would perhaps be willing to incorporate them into some great common-school system for the State. What should prevent this when these freedmen become intelligent and it was seen that they were no longer to be a public burden?

Labor, also, would feel the impulse. Its effects would be seen upon the *employer*. Negroes now crowd into large towns where their children can have learning. If they are to be retained as laborers, or brought back, similar opportunities must be furnished on the plantations. Hence, already instances could be given where a school in the interior has been started only from this motive. This is now being stipulated in the contracts. Liberal-minded, and northern men, who are preparing for crops, are earnestly asking that schools be established, knowing that they concentrate and keep the people content, greatly stimulating industry, and especially that labor is valuable just as it becomes intelligent. The head of one of the largest of the timber and turpentine enterprises in South Carolina (a German) told me that he formerly had hired *only men*, but he had now learned that he must have their families too, and that this could only be done by allowing them patches of land, treating them properly, paying them well, and *giving them schools*.

Your commissioners, in several of the States, have been consulted on this subject, and they will give it their unqualified approval. Attempts are already making at several points to inaugurate something of the kind, either by officers of the bureau or by northern benevolence. But a *systematic plan* is called for, and would very easily be carried into effect. In Tennessee already nearly one hundred colored teachers are at different places in a course of training. The superintendent says: "This should be the great object aimed at in the education of this people. Ten good training-schools for colored teachers," he adds, "should be established in every one of the southern States, and in a few years the great demand for teachers could be met." His plan, in a circular letter to the teachers of the State, I beg leave to insert:

"1st. Select all the most advanced and intelligent of your pupils—say ——— in number.

"2d. From this class you will select all those of sufficient age, advancement, good moral character, and requisite natural qualifications, for teachers.

"3d. These you will organize into a separate class for the purpose of special drill in their studies, with a view of fitting them as speedily as possible for teaching.

"4th. You will report to this office the names, age, advancement of each member, time of organization, character, and amount of instruction given this class, as soon as the organization is completed.

"The foregoing plan is sent you, with a request that you will at as early a day as practicable organize such a class in your school, with a view to supplying the great demand for trained colored teachers as soon as possible."

4. *The people of the country are strongly seconding the educating efforts of this bureau.*—Northern associations were in the field almost as soon as our conquering armies gave them foothold. They have increased in numbers and in arduous, well-directed effort. Their several corps of teachers deserve all praise for self-sacrifice and fidelity. Your appointment of State superintendent of schools has given organic unity to these efforts, and greatly enhanced their efficiency. Popular donations are rapidly increasing, and you may rely upon the continuance of sympathy and the increase of this important aid. Text-books used by the associations should be more uniform, and more promptness is desirable in the making of monthly reports. But time will perfect these details.

5. In conclusion, permit me distinctly to call attention to the fact that *this whole educational movement among the freedmen must, for the present, be protected by the general government.* I need not repeat, what appears all through this report, military force alone can save many of our schools from being broken up, or enable us to organize new schools. Such is the improper spirit in many parts of the south, that where as yet there have been no atrocities attempted against the schools, protecting power is called for to give that sense of quiet and consciousness of security which the calm duties of both teacher and pupil always require.

FINANCES OF FREEDMEN.

Poor and dependent as most of the freedmen are, I found that a considerable number had money. Among the former free people many had reached a condition above want, and in the large towns and cities there are individuals who might be called rich. These men, in some cases, purchased themselves from slavery, and are mechanics, keepers of groceries and wood-yards, butchers, market men and women, owning their own dwellings in the town or its suburbs, and some with small plantations. In Louisiana there are colored creoles who are merchants, bankers, and large planters, each handling hundreds of thousands of dollars. On the bayous back of Baton Rouge there are a number of these colored planters, each said to be worth near half a million. These men are enterprising, are destined to increase in numbers and in wealth, and they seem to act unitedly and strongly for the education and advancement of the whole colored race.

Even the lower class of free blacks and the slaves had laid aside small sums of money, usually in coin, and this is now found in some secret box or old stocking, blackened with rust, no longer kept hid from fear, but cheerfully used for what they need in freedom. A considerable number had been persuaded to place these funds in the former savings banks of the south. Many thousands of dollars of such money went to Richmond to sustain the confederacy, and to be lost forever to these people. One colored church in Savannah had \$2,000 thus deposited. But there are multitudes who as yet know nothing of thrift. Slavery prevented all forecasting of thought, and, in general, every possibility of improvement. Now, however, a change has come. There are, indeed, those who are too degraded perhaps ever to be recovered. Their minds are childish and dark. But *pay for labor* puts even these to thinking of the value of things. The wants and opportunities of freedom show the worth of money, and what can be done with it. Time, however, will be needed for the whole effect. Much patient instruction is called for. But in every direction industry is seen to start under the impulse of prompt reward, and if kind treatment accompanies it, there will soon be on this whole subject little to complain of.

Already homesteads are being purchased, and many more *would* be if there was opportunity. The freedmen have a passion for land. Where little can be obtained, they are always purchasers. The tax commissioners of South Caro-

lina told me they had given over 600 "certificates of title" to real estate to *colored* men. I know one man on St. Helena island—a slave formerly on an adjoining plantation—who now owns a farm of 315 acres, works twenty laborers, has twelve cows, a yoke of oxen, four horses, twenty swine; and he showed me, with very pardonable pride, his fifty-eight acres of the best sea-island cotton I saw anywhere, fifty-two acres of corn, besides a number of acres of provision crops. He had been helped some by the Union officer to whom he had, for a year or more in the war, been a servant; but he expected soon to be wholly out of debt. This man could neither read nor write, and his children aided him in his accounts. There are a number of men on Edisto and the other sea-islands who are only waiting the action of government in permitting them to have lands to engage in similar operations.

Such examples as the above encourage the negroes around, however poor, to form provident habits and to imitate the same thrift. It is the universal impression that freedom is to be coupled with prosperity, and it is not difficult to induce them to save their surplus earnings for accumulation and future use. I found that the large crowds of negroes whom I often addressed sprang forward to ideas of industry and economy, that they might save for old age, for sickness, for purchasing homesteads, or other prosperity, in the future. Their notion of having land *given to them* by government is passing away, and we hear them saying, "We will work and save and buy for ourselves." When they know this is what their prosperous friends (the Yankees) have always done, they seem *eager* to follow the example.

Much fraud has been practiced in bargains and contracts hitherto made with their old masters. Some of these contracts as drawn by the planters themselves are purposely constructed to be misunderstood. I saw one in which it was stipulated "one-third of seven-twelfths of all corn, potatoes, fodder, &c., shall go to the laborers," &c. Another, that "the party violating the contract shall forfeit his right to all services and wages." It will be seen at once how blind in the first case, and unjust in the second, these terms were to the poor negro.

In many places, last autumn, laborers were turned off without pay, or any portion of the crops, and in other cases four or five dollars only a month were given, or even only food and clothing. The plan of these oppressors was evidently to keep the negro in a condition of perpetual poverty and dependence. There were exceptions, of course, and I am happy to report great improvement of late in the wages given. The present year opens with the prospect that labor will be everywhere in demand, and at fair prices. This is owing, in part, to the high value of the great staples of the south, and the desire for a large crop, but much more to the efforts of your bureau officers, who have, everywhere, insisted on just compensation.

The lien on crops for wages, or *work on shares*, to be had, of course, only at the end of the year, may be necessitated by the present poverty of the planters, but, in our opinion, it would be much better for the freedman if he could be paid often, and *in money*. His immediate wants could then be met; he would work for men contentedly; and he would the sooner learn how to manage properly his own finances.

Colored troops have been defrauded of very large sums of money. I have spent much time and labor in ascertaining this. Almost universally the regiments complain, often unreasonably, without doubt, and from ignorance. Though it would seem that they have reason, in some respects, to complain of the government itself, that they have not been treated precisely as if they had been white men. But these frauds are charged by the soldiers mainly to the bounty agents of the several States, or to enlisting and disbursing officers, and sometimes to their own regimental officers.

Moneys were undoubtedly sent by States to procure enlisted men, which

only in part reached these men. They were made merchandise of, while the agent enriched himself by the balance retained. This class of frauds can probably never be effectively detected. The colored soldier was, in many cases, ignorant of money, and the bounty agent will make no confession.

Enlisting and disbursing officers had many opportunities of pocketing funds, by keeping them back from the soldiers unduly, or taking them from him as in trust; the enlisted man being, as was alleged, in no condition to keep the same. Such funds, of course, were put upon a very precarious tenure, the trustee himself being only a military officer. There are facts which lead to the suspicion that some of these officers are *deeply implicated in this species of fraud*.

Officers of regiments have borrowed money largely of their men. This is a very common practice, and pay-day for them, in multitudes of cases, has never come. The officer may be profligate or dishonest; or if otherwise, he is off on furlough—it may be, mustered out of service; and it is easy to forget borrowed money, *especially* when due the negro. I know of many cases of such indebtedness.

I need not say how sutlers often defraud, nor tell of gamblers, rumsellers, and bad women, who hang about camps and pay-tables, luring the unwary, and robbing these ignorant and yet *brave* colored men. This is a humiliating statement, and there should be some remedy. Of course, if the troops are mustered out such evils must cease, and others are being corrected. Those officers who are honest and able are paying back borrowed funds. Others are promising to do so. But there are large sums which cannot yet be touched by the proper owners. I gathered, by your direction, papers and testimony in a number of notorious instances, and have transmitted copies of the same to the financial officer of the bureau; action having been taken thereon which it is hoped will result in the detection of the guilty. Such action, however, as now pending, prevents my giving names, or going into any specific details.

It is respectfully suggested that a *standing commission*, empowered to call for persons and papers, and with transportation to all parts of the country, should be appointed by the War Department to pursue every case of this kind of fraud to a final issue.

The Savings and Trust Company for freedmen, chartered by Congress last winter and placed under your advisement, has gone into successful operation in nearly all the States south, and promises to do much to instruct and elevate the financial notions of the freedmen. The trustees and friends of the institution believe that the industry of these four millions furnishes a solid basis for its operations. Pauperism can be brought to a close; the freedmen made self-supporting and prosperous, paying for their educational and Christian institutions, and helping to bear the burdens of government by *inducing habits of saving* in what they earn. That which savings banks have done for the working men of the north it is presumed they are capable of doing for these laborers. I was charged by you, in my late tour, with this subject, and can say that everywhere, privately and publicly, the freedmen welcomed the institution. They understand our explanations of its meaning, and the more intelligent see and appreciate fully its benefits. Calls were made upon me at all the large towns for branches of the bank. In fifteen of the more central places, viz., Washington, Richmond, Norfolk, Newbern, Wilmington, Charleston, Beaufort, Savannah, Mobile, New Orleans, Vicksburg, Huntsville, Nashville, Memphis, and Louisville, such branches were established. Most of these begin to make returns.

I here insert the report of the actuary at the principal office in New York of the business condition of the institution on the 31st day of January, and the amount done during that month:

Amount due depositors December 31, 1865.....		\$201, 126 55
Amount of deposits received at branches during the month of January:		
Vicksburg	\$5, 087 00	
Wilmington	902 44	
Norfolk	491 20	
Newbern	35 00	
Louisville	4, 895 15	
Huntsville.....	390 22	
Memphis	620 00	
Nashville.....	4, 259 96	
Washington	4, 369 05	
Savannah	1, 579 55	
Mobile	4, 809 00	
Charleston.....	424 15	
Richmond	170 15	
Beaufort.....	498 20	
		<hr/> 28, 531 07
		<hr/> 229, 657 62
Less drafts paid depositors during the month.....		54, 704 90
		<hr/> 174, 952 72
Balance due depositors.....		174, 952 72
Balance on hand at branches.....	\$17, 132 43	
Balance on hand at New York	6, 577 83	
United States securities at New York	181, 600 00	
		<hr/> 205, 310 26
Surplus (on the books)		<hr/> <hr/> 30, 357 54

But \$15 to \$20,000 of this surplus is only in statements or drafts which have not been received at the principal office in New York, and contingent expenses not paid. Hence, the true surplus, as near as we can estimate it at the present stage of affairs, (our securities being valued at par,) is about ten thousand dollars: A dividend of five per cent. per annum has been declared on all sums which have been on deposit six months previous to January 1, 1866.

The trustees are encouraged, from this auspicious beginning of their work, to go forward with high hopes of large benefit to these millions of freedmen "and their descendants," and, if the amendment to their charter now before Congress shall pass, connecting the bank more intimately with your bureau, they will entertain no doubt of its perfect success.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

J. W. ALVORD,
Inspector of Schools and Finances.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,
Commissioner of Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, &c.

Inspection report of Brevet Brigadier General C. H. Howard.

SOUTH CAROLINA, GEORGIA, AND FLORIDA.

CHARLESTON, December 30, 1865.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit the following report of a recent tour of inspection in Georgia and Florida.

Leaving Charleston, S. C., December 7th, instant, I called at Beaufort, S. C.

on my way to Savannah. Among other matters of the bureau to which my attention was called at Beaufort, was the operation of a new order from the assistant commissioner of South Carolina, establishing a public *cotton-weigher*. The freedmen had been defrauded in various ways by speculators in the disposal of their cotton—sometimes by false weight, sometimes in making the change, &c., &c. A public *cotton-weigher* was therefore appointed as an agent of the bureau, and the freedmen having cotton for sale were required to have it weighed by him—all expense to be paid by a moderate toll defined in the order. This regulation I found was working well, and had proved a great protection to the freedmen.

There had been of late considerable suffering for want of food for colored refugees coming into Beaufort from the main land, in transitu to their old homes on the islands or elsewhere. An order from the district commander has established a military board to meet once a month and examine all applicants for rations, make a list of the indigent who were unable to work, and confine the issues strictly to this list. The result of this is, that the local bureau agent is prevented from getting rations for the destitute refugees above alluded to, and great suffering has followed, and in some cases death from starvation. I instructed the agent to obtain requisitions to meet these cases, properly signed and approved, in accordance with circular No. 8, from bureau headquarters, and if the rations were not given, (by reason of the military order referred to,) to report the fact at once to the assistant commissioner of the State.

On the 9th of December, proceeding to Savannah, I met there General Tillson, assistant commissioner for Georgia, and was present at a meeting he had appointed with the planters in the afternoon, and at another of the leading colored people in the evening.

The great difficulty before us was the reluctance on the part of the freedmen to make contracts for the coming year. General Tillson was visiting this section of the State, with a purpose of making every effort to induce the freedmen to enter into contracts. At the meeting of the planters he stated distinctly that if they would offer liberal wages, he would bring all the influence of the bureau to bear to this end, and would use authority to secure the fulfilment of such contracts when made. Many of the planters seemed to differ from him, as to what ought to be considered fair or liberal wages. They talked about eight, ten and twelve (8, 10 and 12) dollars per month; most agreeing that ten dollars and food was good wages for a full hand. General Tillson was positive in his declaration that their offers were too low, and that he would not approve contracts giving less than from twelve (12) to fifteen (15) dollars per month, with food for males, and from eight (8) to ten (10) for females; that they were at liberty, of course, to secure such contracts as they could, but that if they desired his co-operation they must offer what he believed to be fair wages. Some of the planters agreed to his terms.

At the meeting of the colored people, plans were proposed for defraying the expenses of their hospital and their principal school, to render them entirely self-supporting. The people readily assented to a plan for soliciting regular contributions from all the colored population of the city, made practicable by the census recently taken by the agent of the bureau, giving the place of residence, occupation and amount of property of all colored persons in Savannah.

One of the strongest motives preventing the making of contracts, is the hope of possessing land of their own.

Notwithstanding the many orders on this subject, and the continued efforts of agents to correct the false impression, many freed people in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida still hope that the government will give them lands. At this meeting some other reason, for the hesitation in entering into contracts for another year were given by freedmen themselves. One was their reluctance to work under overseers, especially the same overseers they had had in slavery.

It was explained to those present that overseers or leaders of gangs are necessary in free labor, and are employed in all parts of the world where a number of hands are working together. But I would respectfully suggest that the recommendation be given to those desirous of employing freedmen to procure, if possible, overseers from the north, or, at least, not to insist upon the same ones they had under the old system. The freedmen distinctly aver that they have been beaten and ill treated by these overseers, and now as free men refuse positively to work under them.

At this meeting instances were reported of freedmen who had received, under General Sherman's order, a patent for twenty (20) or forty (40) acres of abandoned land, situated on the Savannah river, within thirty (30) miles of the sea, and who had located and worked the same. Now the old owners are returning, and the freedmen are unwilling to give up the land; in fact, I am not aware that any order has been issued requiring them to relinquish it.

A branch bank of the National Freedmen's Trust Company having been set in operation at Savannah, by Mr. Alvord, the bureau inspector of finances, the matter was presented by him and others to this meeting, and the importance of such an institution to the freedmen strongly urged.

The next day, December 10, I took steamer for Darien, Georgia, intending to reach the Gulf railroad, at Doctortown, its present terminus.

At Darien was a company of the 103d United States colored troops just about to be relieved by one of the 12th Maine volunteers. The resident freedmen complained to me that the latter regiment, when stationed there last summer, ill treated the colored people, robbing their houses and committing many acts of violence, unrestrained. They expressed great fears at their return. I reported this to the commanding officer of the detachment, who promised to prevent like occurrences in future.

On the other hand, some of the white residents were rejoicing at the removal of the colored troops, for which they had petitioned General Brannon. They claimed that their influence was bad upon the freedmen, and some complained that they were generally lawless. But from particular inquiry of resident northern citizens, and others, I concluded the latter complaint was without good foundation.

I saw there some freedmen who had recently returned from the interior of the State to their old homes, whence they had been taken by their masters during the war to work leased plantations, situated from one to two hundred miles or more in the interior. They said their masters had recently left them without paying them any wages, or giving them any share of the crop of last season, and they had constructed flats, or merely rude rafts, and embarking their families, had floated down the Altamaha river. They found the old plantations barren of any present means of subsistence, and now they must suffer. They hoped to make contracts for another year with their former owners, or preferably with others owning plantations in that vicinity, but meanwhile their means of living were exceedingly precarious.

Some procured work upon the docks at Darien, but only a small proportion of the entire number who have thus migrated to the coast. I have dwelt upon this matter because I found that their cases were examples of a general evil existing in that part of Georgia. And if the bureau is compelled to provide rations for a considerable number of these people during the winter, it should be understood the cause is not alone the improvidence of the freedmen, nor is it possible to remedy the evil in the present scarcity of agents, by enforcing a fair division of the crops; for the people are thrown upon our hands, some two hundred (200) miles, more or less, from the place where they have worked the past season.

I was informed that there were nine hundred (900) colored people upon Sapelo, who intended leaving the island in case one of the former owners (Mrs.

—) returned to resume possession of her plantation upon which they had been located under the provisions of General Sherman's order.

There was need of a bureau agent at Darien. The officer who had been in command, stated that he had orders from General Brannon not to interfere at all with the freedmen's affairs, but if they had any complaints, to direct them to go to Savannah. As this is a distance of one hundred miles, and no transportation could be furnished them, few of the freed people could expect to gain redress for any wrongs, or to get information of their rights and duties.

One case of outrage, too flagrant to be passed without notice, was authentically reported to me. It occurred at South Newport, fifteen (15) miles from Darien. A colored woman, after much maltreatment, made her escape. She says her master insisted that she was not free; that he cared nothing for "Lincoln's proclamation;" and when she asked to be allowed to go away and take her children, she was confined on bread and water, and finally got away as best she could, leaving her children behind, but promising to get help and come for them.

It is proper to state that General Tillson visited Darien and Brunswick the following week, and appointed resident civilian agents of the bureau, who he believes will carry out orders, and deal fairly by all parties.

Ascending the Altamaha river, I reached Doctortown December 13. Upon the boat I conversed freely with several planters and other residents of the country. All manifested great opposition to the colored troops, and meeting Captain Richardson (12th Maine volunteers,) the sub-assistant commissioner for the Altamaha district, at Doctortown, I found that he was also of the opinion that the presence of the colored troops in the country had a tendency to unsettle labor, and in some other respects was harmful to the freed people. I therefore wrote a letter to General Tillson, recommending that if practicable, white troops be substituted in that district. None of the citizens with whom I conversed were in favor of the immediate withdrawal of all United States troops. They said they were needed for the preservation of order and the protection of the whites.

Most of the white residents of this section took ground against schools for the education of the freed people, not only as labor lost, but some held that it was injurious to all working classes to be taught from books.

Many talked hopelessly about the prospect of procuring steady labor from the negroes without some means of exterior compulsion. All set the wages at a lower rate than that proposed by General Tillson.

Remaining two days at Doctortown, a good opportunity was afforded for obtaining information of the condition of the freed people in that region. The officer in command of the garrison confirmed my previous impressions as to the large numbers flocking from the interior to the coast. Most of these were destitute of clothing, and on their arrival here had no supply of food. Many of the planters in this locality had been unwilling to give their hands a share of the crops, or any other recompense for the labor of the last season, generally claiming that they have not worked well enough to deserve any wages. Some cases of violence and other ill-treatment of the negroes had come to the knowledge of this officer. He said he had no instructions to attend to freedmen's affairs, but that his military duties would admit of it, and he would cheerfully undertake the matter—in fact, had taken upon himself to correct some flagrant abuses. I requested him, as far as in his power, to remedy all such evils in future—to encourage the freed people to remain at their present homes; and to this end, to see that they were properly recompensed for their labor of the past season, and that fair contracts, correctly drawn, were made for the coming year.

On my way from Doctortown to Thomasville, by railroad, (upwards of a hundred miles,) I conversed with the officers on garrison at the different stations, and found that what has been said of Doctortown was substantially true of all

the rest. I therefore gave written authority to the sub-assistant commissioner of the district to call upon the military officers to act as agents of the bureau until the resident civilians should be appointed for each county, in accordance with General Tillson's plan, approved by the State convention and the provisional governor. Some of the officers had before voluntarily rendered much assistance to the sub-assistant commissioner where cases of misconduct, in which freedmen were involved, had come to their knowledge. It is now made their duty to investigate every complaint and reported abuse from either party.

The sub-assistant commissioner of Alabama district, who was travelling in company with me at this time, was engaged in investigating a case where certain parties were charged with kidnapping colored children and shipping them to Cuba. Other cases were reported, but there was no conclusive proof that any children from that section had actually been taken to Cuba. In the case mentioned two children had mysteriously disappeared, but on the arrest of their former owner, and his being put under bonds to produce the children, he was able to find them in Florida and brought them back, but could not satisfactorily explain their sudden transfer to that State without their own or their parents' consent.

The sub-assistant commissioner was also engaged in assuming formal possession of various confederate government buildings at the different stations along the railroad. At Quitman, Valdosta, and Thomasville, respectively, there were buildings of this description; and there being two at each place, one of which was of inferior value, and the freed people being desirous of having schools, authority was given to use one of the buildings in each place in repairing the other for school purposes. The freedmen readily agreed to furnish the requisite labor. But afterwards finding that the buildings at Thomasville could be profitably rented, and as it would consume considerable time to re-locate and make the necessary repairs upon the one for a school, ascertaining that there were two unoccupied brick buildings, built for an academy, in the outskirts of the town, I proposed to negotiate for the use of one of these for a school for the colored children. Visiting them, I found one a good deal out of repair. Some of the leading colored people promised that their people would fit this up if allowed to use it for schools. One small school was already in operation in town, taught by a colored resident, but it had been found impossible to procure a suitable building for it. Meeting some of the principal white citizens, I proposed to them to use one of the academic buildings mentioned, at least until a school-house could be built for colored children. They were unwilling it should be done, saying that, prejudice though it might be, yet that their citizens would never consent, and if either of the buildings was taken for that purpose none of their citizens would ever send their children there to school again. I urged upon them that only *one* would be used, and that the poorest, and that if the school for whites were to be opened, another place would be procured for the blacks meanwhile. But as these were among the fairest and most liberal of the citizens, embracing two judges of the district, and they persisted in asserting that the mere fact of the blacks having used one of the buildings would prevent forever afterwards the maintenance of any school there for whites, and stating that it was proposed to have a school for whites opened there the 1st of January, proximo, I yielded to them partly, to prevent the ill-feeling which I saw would arise, and partly to encourage the re-opening of the schools for whites, which I believed no less important in that section than for blacks. I stated to them that I would not have yielded to such a groundless prejudice except for the latter reason, and that I should expect a flourishing school for whites to open there at the beginning of the new year.

The colored members of the Methodist church at Thomasville have decided to separate from the whites, and have raised means to build a church of their own. Two-thirds of the membership of the Baptist church are blacks, and

they have also decided to separate, and have offered to purchase the church edifice; but the price required by the whites they think is more than the entire value of the building, whereas they claim that two-thirds of it rightfully belongs to them. The colored members readily gave their consent to the use of this church for a school, and if the teachers, expected from the northern benevolent associations, arrive before the new school building is completed, the sub-assistant commissioner was instructed to use this church temporarily for the school.

At the solicitation of the white citizens, and the urgent request of the sub-assistant commissioner, I arranged to return to Thomasville and address the colored people on the evening of December 18. The white citizens claimed that the freed people, having no confidence in them, would not heed their advice, and that a word from an officer of the bureau had more weight with them than from any other source; and the local agent desired that I should confirm what he had explained to them of the importance of immediately renewing contracts for another year.

Taking a private carriage to Tallahassee—35 miles—I had opportunity to converse with the inhabitants along the road. In this way I ascertained that contracts had been very generally made the past season, in this section, under the supervision of the bureau officer; the most of them fair, giving one-fourth as the share of the crop for the laborers; but some had been for too small a share, from one-sixth to one-tenth. Most of the freed people expressed a willingness to contract for another year on fair terms. Some wished to change employers; some said they would like to go where their children could go to school. All, except one, met on the route in going to and returning from Tallahassee had employment now, and seemed to have no notion of living without working.

Near Tallahassee I met an intelligent freedman, who, in answer to my questions, disclosed the fact that he had received, for the labor of the past year, 15 bushels of corn, 100 pounds of pork, and a small measure of peas. He had, as in former times, with the help of his family, cultivated a small garden of his own; but the products of this had been taken from him.

Meeting Colonel Osborne, the assistant commissioner for Florida, at Tallahassee, I spent two days chiefly with him; having interviews, also, with Generals Foster and Newton, commanding the department and western district of Florida, respectively, and conversing with several citizens of Tallahassee and vicinity. From the district superintendent of education (for the bureau) I learned that a number of schools had been started since my last visit to Florida, in October. There is a great demand for books and teachers. There are two teachers from a northern association at Tallahassee. Some two or three planters in that district had proposed to pay half the salary and expenses of a teacher to come upon their plantations and open a school for the colored children. They were convinced that this measure would do more than any other to make their laborers contented, and thus secure to them steady and effective labor.

From conversation with Lieutenant Colonel Apthorpe, one of Colonel Osborne's inspectors, as well as from the other sources of information I have mentioned, I became convinced that there were rather more exceptions in Florida to the general rule, prevalent in southern Georgia, of prejudice and unjust dealing against the freedmen; but that still, with the majority of the people, there was the same unwillingness, or moral incapacity, to treat them with fairness and as freemen. I was informed by a high military official that, since the hanging of a citizen for murder at Tallahassee, convicted by a military court, and the pending trial of another for shooting a negro, he had received letters from parties declaring they would not "live in a country where a man must be hung for resenting an insult with arms," and where "a man must be tried for his life for shooting a nigger." He informed me, also, that certain of these parties had carried out their threat of leaving the State, and had gone to Texas to reside. From the same official I was gratified to learn, as a testimonial to the good

discipline of some of the colored troops, and as an offset to the complaints against them in southern Georgia, that all the principal citizens of Jasper, Fla., petitioned for the return of a company of colored troops which had been ordered away from there—the constant quarrelling between discharged Union and rebel soldiers, resident there, rendering the presence of troops necessary. The colored troops were sent back to continue garrisoning the place.

There is the same disposition to depreciate wages in Florida as in Georgia, but I learned that a new demand for labor had sprung up at Fernandina, and that agents had been sent to Tallahassee for freedmen to work in the lumber business, offering \$1 and \$1 25 per day and board. Thirteen new saw-mills had been put in operation there by northern men, and it had been found impossible to get all the hands they desired. This will tend to raise the price of labor throughout the State.

I would respectfully ask attention to certain provisions of a recent circular, No. 9, from the office of the assistant commissioner of Florida :

1. The general appointment of all judges of probate without regard to special fitness, as agents of the bureau, and in a similar manner in some districts, clerks of court and justices of the peace as assistants. It is to be feared that in many cases these officers, from their prejudices and other personal qualities, are entirely disqualified to be impartial agents of the bureau. Again, they would not have the confidence of the freedmen, and the latter would therefore hesitate to apply to them for redress.

2. These officials are not required to signify their acceptance of the appointment. Hence it will not be known to the assistant commissioner whether he has any agent in any given district or not. Besides, no provision is made for informing the freedmen as to who is the agent for their locality.

3. They are to enter upon their offices immediately upon the sight of the order, even in a newspaper; hence are not required to take any oath of office or to familiarize themselves with existing orders of the bureau.

4. They are not required to make any report, or in any manner make themselves responsible to the assistant commissioner for their acts or measures as agents of the bureau.

It is proper to state that as a corrective of some of these evils, the assistant commissioner had divided the State into five or more districts, and had appointed a competent inspector for each.

As recommended in person to the assistant commissioner, I would further urge that these inspectors have authority to reject any of the judges of probate found unfitted for the duty, for any reason, and to nominate some other person in their stead; that they be required formally to accept the agency, to take an oath of office, and to make reports.

Returning to Thomasville, I addressed a large audience of colored people, according to appointment. Having heard it stated by the planters that some of the freed people were reluctant to make contracts, because of a belief that it remained them to seven years of slavery, I put the question to vote, as to whether any present believed this report. They unanimously declared their disbelief of it, and that they were willing and expected to make contracts. A few contracts had been made for another year. Some of the freedmen informed me that they had desired to rent land, but had been told by citizens that no black man would be allowed to have land by lease. They had therefore procured the offices of a white man to rent a plantation for them, and contracted with him to have all of the crop above a certain amount.

Some cases of difficulty from the irregularity and unnatural condition of the marriage relation came to my notice; and this is a fruitful source of disquiet and immorality among the freed people. A sweeping regulation, like that passed by the Georgia legislature, legalizing all existing marriages, is not what

is needed, but a discriminating law, which shall require all parties continuing to live as man and wife to be legally married, but shall permit, with proper restrictions, the old involuntary contracts of this kind to be set aside when mutually desired, and shall give some suitable regulation by which one husband and one wife may be fixed upon where several are living as the result of the slave system.

From Thomasville I proceeded by private conveyance to Albany, Georgia, 55 miles. This mode of travelling gave me an opportunity of visiting different plantations. I found generally in this section that the contracts for the last year had been at the rate of from one-sixth to one-tenth of the crop, and the latter the greater number. Where no written contracts, properly signed and approved, had been made, I gave directions to the sub-assistant commissioner, that an officer, or agent of the bureau, visit these plantations and make an equitable division of the crops. The division had not been made at the plantations visited by me except in one case not far from Albany.

From the small number of officers allowed to the bureau, the districts in Georgia have been by far too large to be properly cared for.

There seemed to be a general disposition in this section (southwestern Georgia) to set wages too low, and to keep the freed people as nearly as possible in their former state of servitude.

The sub-assistant commissioner at Albany (Major Hastings, 12th Maine volunteers) seemed to be an efficient officer, but had been there only a few weeks. He proposed to start a school of 150 scholars, if books and teachers could be furnished. There had been a small private school there for colored children, taught by a young lady from New York. Here, also, I heard of another instance of a planter in a neighboring county who desired a school for colored people upon his plantation.

There was great call for agents to superintend the division of crops in this section. The freedmen were not satisfied unless some United States officer or bureau agent were present.

After one night at Albany, I proceeded to Andersonville, where I found a small garrison, some twenty men and one officer. This officer had given some attention to freedmen's affairs by virtue of a general order from headquarters of the department. But being the only officer there, and having no horse, he was limited to plantations and places comparatively near. The same old complaints of being turned off with no payment for last season's work were common.

I learned of some cases, in that locality, of renewal of contracts for another year.

Mr. H. A. Welton, a Union citizen of Georgia, who had been imprisoned for his loyalty to the United States government, seven months during the rebellion, and who is now employed by the quartermaster's department as superintendent of the Andersonville burial ground, had started a school for the colored people at Andersonville.

A "confederate" building was used for a school-house, and a sergeant of the 147th Ohio taught adults in the evening.

At Macon were prosperous schools and a good hospital. The bureau officer now there (Lieutenant Colonel Lambert) had been on duty only two weeks. There was the usual complaint of reluctance of the freedmen to make contracts. On investigation, I found that the prevailing offers of wages were too low, and that in this region the share given the laborers last season was generally one-tenth. Hearing of disturbances and much ill-treatment of negroes in Twiggs county, I recommended that a garrison be sent there.

At Atlanta there was more of an accumulation of destitute freed people than I had seen elsewhere. The armies had more completely devastated all the country around. Many whites, at least three hundred families, as estimated by the sub-assistant commissioner, will suffer greatly this winter, unless relieved by

government agency. The bureau officer has assisted some of these destitute refugees, by transportation and rations. He was endeavoring to find places for all the able-bodied colored people, and had already considerably diminished the number. By the help of the assistant commissioner of the State, he will be able to apprentice most of the homeless children. Many cases of violence to negroes in that section are reported to him, but his district is so large that he cannot, he says, rectify these evils except in comparatively few cases. Several good schools and a hospital are in successful operation at Atlanta, the former, as at Macon, being chiefly sustained by the benevolent associations of the north.

At Augusta, meeting again the assistant commissioner of the State, General Tillson, at his headquarters, I made a report of my tour in Georgia, and secured the adoption of some measures of immediate and practical importance to different localities visited. General Tillson had just returned from Waynesboro', where he had addressed a large meeting of freedmen, some few planters also being present, to encourage the making of contracts.

The schools at Augusta are flourishing under the immediate supervision of the bureau State superintendent of education.

I obtained information while there from officers and agents of the bureau, as well as from military authorities and the newspapers, that the militia organizations of the opposite county in South Carolina (Edgefield) were engaged in disarming the negroes. This created great discontent among the latter, and in some instances they had offered resistance. In previous inspection tours in South Carolina much complaint reached me of the misconduct of these militia companies towards the blacks. Some of the latter, of the most intelligent and well disposed, came to me and said, "What shall we do? These militia companies are heaping upon our people every sort of injury and insult unchecked. Our people are peaceably inclined, and we are endeavoring to inculcate good feeling; but we cannot bear this treatment much longer. Many are beginning to say, 'We have been patient long enough; we are free men now, and we have submitted to such usage as long as we can.' " And again they ask, "What shall we do?" I assured them that this conduct was not sanctioned by the United States military authorities, and that it would not be allowed.

They then asked what they should do when the United States troops were withdrawn, saying *they had nothing but evil to apprehend from these military organizations.*

Now, at Augusta, about two months later, I have authentic information that these abuses continue. In southwestern Georgia I learned that the militia had done the same, sometimes pretending to act under orders from United States authorities. I reported these facts to General Brannon, commanding the department of Georgia, and to General Sickles, commanding the department of South Carolina.

I am convinced that these militia organizations only endanger the peace of the communities where they exist, and are a source of constant annoyance and injury to the freed people; that herein is one of the greatest evils existing in the southern States for the freedmen. They give the color of law to their violent, unjust, and sometimes inhuman proceedings.

I would earnestly recommend that these organizations be abolished in these States for at least several years to come, and that some suitable substitute be instituted as a general police force, to preserve order and maintain the laws until it again become safe to allow the organization of militia.

Orders had just been issued for the muster out of the troops remaining in Georgia. General Tillson, the assistant commissioner, was apprehensive that the efficiency of the bureau would be much impaired by the loss of these troops. Not only would the means of executing orders and punishing crime be taken away, but his sub-assistant commissioners, already far too few in numbers, would

be mustered out with their regiments. He would thus be deprived of all except one or two of his most efficient agents.

Another evil, of less extent, and it is hoped of short duration, would arise from the muster-out of the colored troops raised in that or neighboring States. The men would thus, for the present at least, be thrown out of employ and regular wages. Just let loose from military restraint they would be an exciting element, not prepared to settle down to steady labor at once themselves, and their influence tending to disturb others. Besides, while receiving pay as soldiers they could make their families comparatively comfortable, whereas now this means of support is suddenly cut off, and it must necessarily be some time before they can make satisfactory provision for their families.

From Augusta I returned, *via* Savannah, to Charleston, South Carolina, having been absent twenty-three days.

As the result of this tour I beg leave to submit the following general considerations :

I. Agencies of the United States government, of some sort, similar to the existing bureau agencies, are for the present indispensable in every part of the two States visited.

1st. Great *suffering* and *starvation* would ensue among the refugees and freedmen in some sections were all government aid withdrawn.

2d. Public sentiment is such that even should the laws be made impartial, the negro *could not obtain redress* for wrongs done him in person or property.

3d. There seems to be a moral incapability with the majority of white residents to treat him fairly in the *ordinary transactions of business*, as, *exempli gratia*, in making contracts. His own inexperience in such things, therefore, renders necessary some agency to guard his interests.

4th. Existing theories concerning the education of laborers and the prejudice against the blacks are such as absolutely to *prevent the establishment of schools* for the freedmen, even though the expenses be paid by the benevolent associations of the north; and the *many successful schools now in operation would be broken up* in most places on the withdrawal of the government agencies. The same general observations will apply to all missionary work by northern agents; and from special inquiry and investigation of this subject, I am convinced that very little in the way of moral and religious instruction for the freed people is to be expected at present from the members and ministers of the southern churches. On the other hand, it is for the interest of the whites for the agencies to remain, and the better class of the thinking men expressed themselves unhesitatingly in favor of it.

1st. The prevailing want of confidence on the part of the freedmen in those who had been slaveholders makes it necessary to have a third party (and a United States official is better than any other) to induce the freedmen to enter into contracts. Many of the white residents told me that no contracts would have been effected but for the bureau officers.

2d. Such agents are needed often to secure the fulfilment of contracts on the part of the freedmen, both in explaining the exact meaning and force of the contract and enforcing it by different motives and means.

3d. For the protection of the whites against any hostile combinations of the blacks. This will be needed as long as the present public sentiment of the whites continues, insuring a corresponding distrust and hostility on the part of the blacks. Our agents have done much to allay such ill-feeling; and however unreasoning and ignorant the freedmen may be in any community, and however much their number may preponderate over the resident whites, they will generally heed and be governed by the advice of United States officials.

II. In order adequately to protect the persons and property of the freedmen, and promote their education, as well as for the proper regulation of labor for the benefit of all concerned, *the present number of agents should be increased.*

III. United States troops are at present absolutely necessary as auxiliary to the agents.

1st. There is no other means of executing orders and insuring justice to the freedmen.

2d. In many sections United States agents would not be tolerated unless backed by military force. I was assured by respectable and influential residents of the country in some sections that no northern man could reside there were it not for the presence of the bayonet, and that, in their opinion, such would be the case for ten years to come. I am not convinced of the truth of this statement, yet, with my own observation, I am led to conclude—

3d. That the troops should remain for protection of northern residents and to encourage emigration.

4th. As desired by the better part of the whites, to maintain good order and peace.

5th. Wherever United States troops are withdrawn a militia organization at once springs into life, which invariably tends to disturbances between whites and blacks, and to the latter is, I am convinced, an unmixed evil.

IV. As the result of this and other tours of inspection, as well as from my experience and observation while on duty in the States of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida for the past nine months, I beg leave to submit further, that, in view of the acknowledged necessity of United States troops, and the fact that many now there are soon to be mustered out, and that all the volunteer white troops are desirous of going home, and must sooner or later be discharged, a provisional force might be raised in the southern States, officered by the War Department, (preferably from meritorious officers lately discharged from United States volunteers, and selected with a view to peculiar fitness for this service,) which would meet the want, and for other special reasons, besides the general reasons given for the retention of troops in those States, would be highly beneficial to the country. For example:

1st. Such a force recruited in the south could easily be substituted for the militia, which, for every consideration of safety to the peace of the country and justice to the freedmen, ought to be abolished for some years to come. Officered by the War Department, it would be subject to discipline and control giving to it the character of United States troops, and in no respect resembling the present militia.

2d. Its officers could be used as agents in the affairs and interests of refugees and freedmen without the inconvenience and injury to the service of having frequent changes and losses incident to the inevitable muster out of the present volunteer force.

3d. Most of the officers and men of the present volunteer white troops are discontented, and thus more or less disqualified for their duties, believing, as they do, that they should be allowed to go home, now that the rebellion has been crushed.

4th. This would be the means of enlisting on the side of the government a class otherwise dangerous and troublesome throughout the south, and finally secure among them and their families a permanent loyal sentiment.

5th. Many who would thus be arrayed on the side of law and order are at present without lucrative means of support. They have been absent three or four years in the rebel army, or, as in Florida, some in the Union army, and by the habits acquired, in addition often to the fact that they never were accustomed to steady industry in early life, are unfitted and indisposed to enter into any suitable business, even if other circumstances favor it.

6th. The greater part of the class referred to are unable to read and write. Gathered into companies and regiments, under suitable officers, they could easily be taught in the rudiments of education, as has been done in the case of many of the colored regiments.

Two or three regiments of this description might readily be raised in each State with comparatively little expense, and for such term of service (say three years) as it may be thought probable that a military force will be needed in the States lately in rebellion.

This plan of a provisional force in the south was urgently recommended to me by some of the present prominent military commanders in the States mentioned.

If this measure cannot be adopted for want of a basis of law, similar results might be attained by the recruitment of some two or three regiments for the regular army in these States, if the army is to be increased. But this recruiting should begin at once, and no time be lost, as is obvious from what has been said of the disabilities connected with the retention of the present volunteer force.

Respectfully submitted.

C. H. HOWARD,

Brevet Brig. Gen., Inspector for S. Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c.

General Baird to the Planters of St. Martin.

[Circular No. 29.]

The following letter explains itself:

HEADQUARTERS BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN,
AND ABANDONED LANDS; STATE OF LOUISIANA,
New Orleans, February 3, 1866.

SIR: A copy of the preamble and resolutions, adopted by the planters of St. Martin, authenticated by your signature as secretary, I have received.

These resolutions, which, in their general tone, are highly creditable to the intelligence and liberality of the planters of St. Martin, show at the same time a want of clear understanding upon certain points connected with the labor system at present in force in the State, which it would be well to correct. I received also from other quarters interrogatories which convince me that the spirit of circular No. 29, and of the form of contract issued recently from this bureau have been misunderstood; and I purpose in addressing you to reply to as many others as may be interested in the matter.

The acts passed by the general assembly of the State of Louisiana, at its present session, regulating agricultural labor and kindred matters, have not yet received the sanction of the governor, and are, therefore, not laws of the State. Should the governor approve them they must still be subordinate to the act of Congress, of March 3, 1865, which places the control of all subjects relating to freedmen in the hands of the Bureau of Freedmen and Refugees.

The acts in question I have forwarded to Washington, and they are now in the hands of the President. Their provisions can be enforced in so much only as they coincide with the orders he has given or may give.

In relation to labor and contracts between freedmen and their employers, the only action that has been taken by this bureau has been first to impress upon the laborers the importance of making contracts to cover the whole of the coming year. This because it is the prescribed policy of the government, and in addition as a necessity to provide a sure maintenance for the large number of agricultural laborers in the State, as well as to enable us to shield them from the impositions of the dishonest and designing who can be found in every community.

The policy of making contracts for long periods has met with opposition

from well-meaning friends of the black man, and it is quite sure that but for the influence we have been able to exert, and the advice which we have given, there would have been but few contracts made, unless those extending from month to month or from week to week.

It has been the effort of the bureau, in the second place, to secure written evidence with regard to every contract made, so that at any time during the year should either the employer or laborer complain of wrong, the information required for righting the grievance would be at hand.

It was thought advisable also that each contract made should be submitted to an agent of the bureau, that he might explain its provisions to the freedmen and caution them against injudicious engagements; but being satisfied that the bargain was understood, and such as they desired to make, that he should witness it by his approval, and forward copies to be put on files here and in Washington. This has been provided for.

The blank form of contract sent out by the bureau presents the most ordinary bargain that has hitherto been made between planters and laborers, and has generally been approved by both. The circular explanatory which accompanies it was intended to show how the blank might be modified, either by erasure and interlineation, or by additional articles appended and witnessed by the agent of the bureau, so as to suit the peculiar views of every one contracting with regard to labor. A certain ration is fixed upon in the circular, which was determined after much consultation with old planters; but it is not intended that this shall prevent the employer from furnishing more, or the laborer from working for wages alone without food, but only to fix that value which was in the minds of the contracting parties when it was agreed that the laborer should receive food together with a stated amount of money wages.

The circular in like manner fixes the amount of clothing to be furnished, when not otherwise expressly determined, and also establishes the number of hours that shall constitute a day's work when the bargain simply requires a day's, a week's, or a month's labor. There is no regulation to prevent the freedmen from contracting to work sixteen hours out of twenty-four, or to do their work during the night, or that they shall be fined and punished at the will of the employer for any slight delinquency. If they choose to make such an agreement they have a right to do it, and the agent of the bureau will interfere only to advise against what is manifestly for their disadvantage, or to withhold his approval where the contract is likely to become oppressive.

In the third place, the instructions given to the agents of the bureau require that they should insist upon provisions being made in every contract for the maintenance of schools for the children of laborers.

The appeals coming from the agricultural district for the privileges of education have been most pathetic, whilst the instructions which we receive to keep up the schools are equally positive, and it is our endeavor to provide means by which schools may be supported out of the wages of the laborers for the instruction of their own children.

It is not intended that the money collected in one locality shall be used to support schools in another neighborhood; but that it shall be used solely for the payment of the teacher who actually instructs the children connected with those who pay it. Where schools from any cause are not kept up, no money will be collected; and in no case will more be exacted than is required for the maintenance of the school at that particular point.

Should it be found to be the unanimous wish of the freedmen to have no schools, it is not thought that it would be the wish of the government at this time to force them upon them.

Beyond this matter of schools, there is nothing that can be regarded as coercive in all of the rules regulating contracts. All that we say is, that when parties refuse, upon such easy terms, to avail themselves of the influence of the bureau

to enforce their contracts, they must not complain if assistance is not offered them.

And should the laborers in the middle of the season choose to quit the plantation on which they are working, the bureau will not ask them to remain, but may insist on the payment of wages for the work that has been performed.

Where the employer offers to laborers fair terms upon which to contract in form, and they refuse to do so, the neglect is on their side; and should they be deceived and cheated, it may be out of the power of the bureau to afford them relief.

How parties wishing to contract could be left more free in respect to the terms of their bargain, I cannot conceive; nor do I understand how the simple rules to insure fair dealing can be objected to by any one who intends to deal fairly.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. BAIRD,

Brevet Major General U. S. Vols., Assistant Commissioner, &c
State of Louisiana.

GABRIEL A. FOURNET, *Secretary.*

Report of Missouri and Arkansas, by Brigadier General J. W. Sprague, assistant commissioner.

ST. LOUIS, Mo., July 17, 1865.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit the following report for the quarter ending June 30. In obedience to your Special Order No. 4, dated May 31, 1865, which was delivered to me at Washington city, I came to this city, where I arrived June 10. The officers of my staff ordered to report to me here did not receive their orders so as to arrive until the 17th of June. Office room was obtained, and opened the 19th June. Immediately on arrival, I endeavored to acquaint myself with all affairs that would come under the control of this bureau. In this I was greatly assisted by Major General Dodge, commanding department, Chaplain A. Wright, superintendent of freedmen, and Jas. E. Yeatman esq., president Northwestern Sanitary Commission. Major General Dodge issued the following order:

[“General Orders No. 150.”]

“HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI,

“*St. Louis, Mo., June 17, 1865.*”

“All superintendents of refugees and freedmen of this department will hereafter render their reports to, and be subject to the orders of, Brigadier General J. W. Sprague, commissioner of refugees and freedmen for Missouri and Arkansas. Immediate reports will be made to him, at St. Louis, Missouri. The staff departments will furnish authorized supplies as heretofore, and give all aid consistent with their duties to enable General Sprague to successfully carry out his instructions.

“By command of Major General Dodge:

“J. W. BARNES,

“*Assistant Adjutant General.*”

And he has up to the present moment given me all aid and encouragement in his power in the discharge of my duties. In consequence of the time required to communicate with the distant posts, I have found it difficult to obtain from the officers on duty as superintendents, local facts and figures necessary to give me a full understanding of the affairs of my district, and this report in consequence will not show in detail, as I could wish, all the information which I

know you desire. I found in operation in this city a "refugees and freedmen's home," which was sustained jointly by the government and the Northwestern Sanitary Commission. I found the cost to the government was about two thousand dollars per month. It was well managed, and was indeed a "home" for the poor refugees and freedmen, and the orphan children of these classes; but, regarding the expense to the government as too great for the services rendered, I ordered that it be closed by the 10th of this month, which was done with the cheerful concurrence of Mr. Yeatman, president of the Sanitary Commission. The former inmates, both white and colored, are now cared for by the city and county authorities. On inquiry I found that in the month of May last the government issued rations to 4,452 white refugees and 236 freedmen in Missouri. In Arkansas the number of persons to whom rations were issued is not stated, but 75,097 rations were issued to freedmen.

Believing that I could better discharge the duties of my position by visiting Arkansas in person, I accordingly left St. Louis June 30, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel D. K. Williams, assistant inspector general, and Surgeon A. B. Monahan, medical director. I visited Helena, Devall's Bluff, and Little Rock, returning to this place the 17th instant. I intended to have Doctor Monahan make a tour of inspection, and visit all the important posts in this district, but while at Little Rock I received notice of the order to muster out his regiment, (the 63d Ohio veteran volunteer infantry,) and he left at once for Ohio. I respectfully refer to his report, which I forward herewith.

I have made inquiries of the officers of the Treasury Department, at Memphis, Tennessee, at Helena and at Little Rock, Arkansas, for information about abandoned lands and taxes collected on cotton &c., for the use of freedmen. I have not been able thus far to find any of the "abandoned" property which they have "registered," with any more definite description than the former owners' names, and about the number of acres. I was informed at Helena and Little Rock that only such abandoned lands had been registered as parties sought to lease, and I have been unable thus far to obtain any information as to the tax ordered to be collected on shipment of cotton, &c., for the use of freedmen, except that all such moneys had been remitted to Washington, in obedience to orders from the Treasury Department. Major General Reynolds, commanding department of Arkansas, expressed a cheerful willingness to aid and assist me to the extent of his power in the discharge of my duties. Refugees in large numbers, and in most pitiable and destitute condition, have been flocking to our posts for subsistence—most of them are of the lowest type of humanity to be found in this country—they are *willing* mendicants and paupers; some are worthy people suffering the extremes of poverty and sickness. It requires officers of energy, discrimination, and judgment to deal with these people, to *sift them* so as to act for their future welfare, and to prevent imposition upon the government. Many of them have been returned to their homes; some have been sent to their friends who could and were willing to aid them; many more can be disposed of in these ways; but great care is necessary to avoid simply changing them from one place, where they are subsisted by government, to another where they would be, perhaps, a greater burden.

I respectfully call your attention to the large increase of issues of rations in the month of June over the preceding month, on the western frontier of Arkansas, particularly at the posts of Clarksville, Fayetteville, and Van Buren, as shown by tabular statement in Major Sargent's report, page 10. That vast region of country is said to be almost entirely destitute of the necessaries of life, and the supplies issued there by our government are transported at enormous expense. I sent Lieutenant Colonel Williams, from Little Rock, to visit all the posts in western Arkansas and Missouri, with strict orders to stop the issue of all supplies not necessary to prevent starvation, and to issue to none who were able to work. The present harvest will relieve the government from the support of many who

are now fed by its bounty; but there are large numbers of these poor people where there are no crops to harvest. As you will see by the table referred to, large issues are made to refugees and Indians at Fort Gibson; but this post not being in my district, I have not assumed charge over them.

FREEDMEN.

These people, wherever protected so as to enable them to dispose of their labor and collect their wages, are exhibiting remarkable aptitude to support themselves and their families. They are somewhat *bewildered* by their sudden change from slavery to freedom; but very few, indeed, are willing to be paupers, and notwithstanding the constant teachings of slavery for generations, that they were not responsible for the support of aged parents or helpless children, their care and affection in these relations are marked characteristics, highly creditable to this poor and down-trodden race. But I regret to say that even now in Missouri and Arkansas, wherever the power of our government is not felt through the military arm, the negroes are still held and treated as slaves, and it is from these former slave-owners, *now violators of the laws*, from whom the cry constantly comes that "the negro will not work!" "he will forsake the farm," and "flock about the cities and military posts." By their conduct and bearing, the negro is frightened; he fears that in some way he will be cheated out of his *liberty*, and it is my firm conviction that it is the settled policy of a large majority of former slave-owners to accomplish by State legislation and by covert violation of law, what they have failed to accomplish by rebellion. Men who profess to be honest and honorable cannot understand that there is any moral wrong in *robbing or cheating* a negro. I can, perhaps, give a better idea of the demand for labor by an actual occurrence, than in any other way. A few days before I left for Arkansas, Doctor McGavock called to see me; he owns three plantations in Arkansas, about 50 miles above Memphis; he was formerly a large slave-owner, but has been and is a Union-man; he treats his negroes as *free*. Two of his plantations are now supplied with white laborers, (Irish;) on the other two freedmen are employed. He is desirous of obtaining freedmen for all, and offered \$20 per month for men and \$15 per month for women, by the year. I made inquiry at Helena and Little Rock, but there were no laborers to be had; all that were able to work were employed. On my return I saw the doctor in Memphis, and referred him to General Tillson, superintendent at Memphis.

I respectfully state, in my opinion, the general welfare will be promoted, if it shall be the policy of the government and this bureau to lease and sell lands, in small quantities, to all negroes who have, or may prove themselves worthy. The experiments, so far as tried in this district, have been attended with the best results. If this is done under proper regulations, industrious, prosperous, and *loyal communities* will be established, which will largely contribute to the public wealth and welfare.

I would earnestly but respectfully recommend that, in making leases of abandoned or confiscated lands for next year, preference be given the freedmen over white applicants who seek to obtain large plantations. I believe if this system is carried out wisely, after the coming winter is past, it will not be found necessary to issue any subsistence from the public stores.

Respectfully referring you to the various sub-reports herewith enclosed for information in relation to schools, I desire to add that the most wonderful avidity is manifested by the colored children to learn, and their parents are anxious to support their own schools. I attended a colored church in Little Rock, where a colored preacher presided and conducted the services; after they were closed he announced to the congregation that they employed eight teachers at \$20 per month, and that, with other items, made the expenses for June about \$175. He stated that there was a deficiency of \$75, and asked the congregation to make

up the amount. Their contributions were sent up and counted, and it was found that there were forty-three dollars over the amount required. I cannot too highly commend the efforts and labors of the benevolent associations and teachers who are laboring to open the minds of the freedmen. I must express a regret that it was thought best to stop the issue of rations to teachers. Every good teacher is worth a score of rations to government, as they by their counsels and labors render efficient aid in preparing these people to become valuable members of the body politic, instead of being, as they have been, burdens. In a conversation with Colonel Charles Bentzoni, commanding district of east Arkansas, in relation to freedmen, he expressed some views which I requested him to reduce to writing, and I respectfully submit the same for your consideration. I was much pleased with the condition of affairs as I found them at Little Rock, under the charge of Major W. G. Sargent, general superintendent and provost marshal, department of Arkansas; Lieutenant James H. Raines, superintendent and acting assistant quartermaster, Little Rock; Captain Henry Sweeney, superintendent and provost marshal, district of east Arkansas, to whose reports I respectfully refer you with pleasure, and Captain S. W. Mallory, superintendent and provost marshal, Pine Bluffs. I respectfully recommend these officers for promotion by brevet, for faithfulness and efficiency in the discharge of their respective duties. Such recognitions are well deserved, and if conferred, will stimulate other officers.

Being compelled to select all my assistants from the army, the rapid mustering out of regiments and other military organizations has necessitated such frequent changes of officers in important positions, that I have been embarrassed in conducting the affairs of the bureau in this district.

I respectfully refer to the following enclosures :

Report of Major W. G. Sargent, general superintendent of Arkansas, marked A.

Report of Captain Sweeney, superintendent of eastern Arkansas, marked B.

Consolidated report of Missouri and Arkansas, marked C.

Report of Surgeon A. B. Monahan, medical director, marked D.

Communication of James E. Yeatman, esq., president Northwestern Sanitary Commission, marked E.

Communication of Colonel Bentzoni, marked F.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. W. SPRAGUE,

Brigadier General and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c.

Report of South Carolina and Georgia, by Brevet Major General R. Saxton, assistant commissioner.

CHARLESTON, S. C., December 6, 1865.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit the following report of my operations in connexion with the bureau since my assignment to duty with it, per General Order No. 238, current series, from the War Department, appended and marked A. Previous to this time, and to the organization of the Freedmen's Bureau, I had been on duty as inspector of settlements and plantations, by virtue of Special Field Orders No. 15, headquarters military division of the Mississippi, herewith appended, and marked B. I have continued to act under this order to the present time. Circulars Nos. 1 and 2, appended, and marked C and D, were issued upon entering upon my new duties. My official action has been guided by the principles expressed in them. In the month of August I was relieved

from the charge of Florida by Colonel T. W. Osborn, who was appointed assistant commissioner for that State, and Brigadier General E. N. Wild was appointed sub-assistant commissioner for Georgia. In September he was relieved by Brigadier General Davis Tillson, who was appointed acting assistant commissioner for that State, under whose entire charge it has since remained. General Orders No. 8 regulate the marriage relations of the freedmen; it is marked F, and appended. Circular No. 3, marked G, is also appended.

In compliance with your orders, I seized for this bureau large tracts of abandoned lands, estimated to amount to 312,014 acres, and a great number of houses (120) were transferred by the Treasury Department to the custody of this bureau. Under the provisions of circular No. 15, from the War Department, these have mostly been restored to their former owners.

General Orders No. 16, appended and marked I, announce the assignment of staff officers and the appointment of superintendent of education. Appended, also, is circular No. 4, which provides for the apprenticing of orphans. Circular No. 5 applies to the labor question, and urges the freedmen to enter into contracts with the land-owners for the cultivation of the soil; it is appended, marked K. Document L, appended, is a copy of a circular letter addressed to each officer and agent on his assignment to duty with the bureau, which, with the other instructions from your own and these headquarters, were to serve as the guide of his official action. To provide for the orphans, discourage vagrancy, encourage industry and thrift, I issued, in accordance with instructions from yourself, circular No. 4, which, I am well assured, will prove of great benefit to the parties concerned. The great question which, of course, lies at the foundation of all the efforts of the government to promote the well-being of the freedmen, through the agency of this bureau, is the labor question. Will the freedmen work? Can these rice and cotton fields be cultivated by the voluntary paid labor of the freedmen? The difficulty which has been found in the way of the immediate solution of this important question has been the natural disinclination of all the human race to labor, unless compelled to do so. This disinclination is shared by the freedmen in common with other races of men, and, so far as my observation extends, to no greater extent. Until they were emancipated, as a general rule the only stimulus to work was the fear of punishment. Faithful labor scarcely benefited their physical condition, and, as a natural consequence, they were only industrious to the extent necessary to escape punishment for idleness. The old stimulus to industry having now been removed, and that of freedom—the necessities of the laborer—substituted, it is to be expected that there should be an interruption of labor—a natural feeling of relief from restraint. The entire want of capital on the part of the planters to pay for labor is undoubtedly the principal reason why the planters cannot at present secure all the labor they require. As a rule, the freedmen are ready to work where they are sure of receiving their pay. Their confidence in their former master is not yet sufficient to cause them to accept his promises to pay, as such promises cannot relieve their present necessities. The great want is money, and those who are so fortunate as to have it at the commencement of their agricultural operations will, if they pay fair and regular wages, be able to secure all the labor they may require.

The impression is universal among the freedmen that they are to have the abandoned and confiscated lands, in homesteads of forty acres, in January next. It is understood that previous to the termination of the late war the negroes heard from those in rebellion that it was the purpose of our government to divide up the southern plantations among them, and that was one of the reasons urged for greater activity on the part of the late rebels. Our own acts of Congress, and particularly the act creating this bureau, which was extensively circulated among them, still further strengthened them in the belief that they were to possess homesteads, and has caused a great unwillingness upon the part of the freed-

men to make any contracts whatever; but this refusal on their part arises from no desire to avoid labor, but to the causes above stated. All the officers and agents of this bureau have been instructed to do everything in their power to correct these impressions among the freedmen, and to urge them in every possible way to make contracts with their former owners; but so deep-seated a conviction has been found difficult to eradicate, and, although many contracts have been made, I doubt not that much greater success in this direction will attend our efforts in the future.

The question of next importance has been the status of the sea islands. By General Sherman's order, appended, and in accordance with its provisions, some forty thousand destitute freedmen, who followed in the wake of and came in with his army, were promised homes on the sea islands, and urged by myself and others to emigrate there and select them. Public meetings were called, and every exertion used by those whose duty it was to carry out the order to encourage emigration to the sea islands. The greatest success attended our efforts, and although the planting season was very far advanced before the transportation to carry the colonists to the islands could be procured, and the people were destitute of animals, and had but few agricultural implements with which to work the ground, and the greatest difficulty in procuring seeds, yet they went to work with much energy and diligence to clear up the ground which had run to waste by three years' neglect. Thousands of acres were cleared up and planted, and provisions enough were raised to provide for those who were located in season to plant, besides large quantities of sea-island cotton. Considering the obstacles to be overcome, it must be admitted that the first year's experiment of freed labor on the sea islands has been a success, far beyond the most sanguine expectations of its friends. There are those who claim that this grand experiment for free labor has failed, because, amid all the confusion and interruption caused by the operations of our contending armies, not as much cotton or corn has been produced as under the old slave system. The friends of freedom can afford to wait for the future to demonstrate whether it is a failure or not.

On some of the islands the freedmen have established civil government, with constitutions and laws for the regulation of their internal affairs, with all the different departments for schools, churches, building roads, and other improvements. In short, few new communities have ever made a fairer start than have these freedmen of the sea islands. The former owners have recently been using every exertion to have these lands restored to their possession, and to secure this end promised to make such arrangements with the freedmen as to absorb their labor, and give them homes and employment on their estates. The officer detailed by yourself to restore these lands has been unable thus far to make any arrangement, nor do I believe it will be possible for him to make any satisfactory arrangement. The freedmen have their hearts set upon the possession of these islands, and nothing but that or its equivalent will satisfy them. They refuse to contract, and express a determination to leave the islands rather than do so. The efforts made by the former owners to obtain the possession of the lands have caused a great excitement among the settlers. Inasmuch as the faith of the government has been pledged to these freedmen to maintain them in the possession of their homes, and as to break its promise in the hour of its triumph is not becoming a just government, which can only live in the hearts of its whole people, I would respectfully suggest that a practical solution of the whole question of lands, embraced in Special Order No. 15, may be had by the appropriation of money by Congress to purchase the whole tract set apart by this order, have a fair and liberal assessment of its value made, and offer to pay to the former owner that sum, or give him possession of the land, as he may elect. In case he should prefer the land to the money, then pay the money to the freedman who occupies it. I can assure the government that this arrangement would satisfy the freedmen and some of the former owners. It would maintain

the good faith of the government, and, in addition, the freedmen who received lands under the provisions of such a law, would eventually refund to the government the cost of the land. The passage of a law like this would relieve the government of a most difficult question now at issue between the planters and the freedmen, and would be just to all parties.

I am able to report a satisfactory condition of schools for the children throughout the department. It is estimated that in South Carolina no less than 6,000 colored children are being educated. The various benevolent societies have placed teachers in the field, earnest and accomplished men and women, whose labors are destined, more than any other, to aid in the solution of this great problem of the age.

The day cannot be far distant when the value of their services will be acknowledged, and the freedmen's relief associations of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia will be honored by the record of the great services rendered to this poor, degraded, unfortunate race by their representatives, who at the sacrifice of personal comfort and social enjoyment have been brave enough to come here as humble instructors to this degraded race to aid in this great work of atonement for wrongs inflicted upon them. These teachers of the freedmen deserve to be and will be honored.

In obedience to what seemed an urgent necessity, and to prevent suffering and loss of life among the people whose interests were committed to my care, I addressed letters to several of the freedmen's aid associations, setting forth the necessities of the people as regards clothing and blankets necessary to protect the destitute from the cold in the approaching inclement season. Thus far they have most generously responded to my call, and large quantities of blankets and useful articles of clothing for women and children have been received, which will be the means of saving the lives of many who would otherwise have perished from cold. White refugees, as well as freedmen, received the benefits of this charity. The care and distribution of all articles received is committed to the hands of Captain J. P. Rutherford, assistant quartermaster, who is specially assigned to this duty. The greatest care is taken in the distribution of the articles sent, and at the close of the season Captain R. will make a full report of all articles received by him for the freedmen and refugees, and of their disposition, for the information of the different benevolent associations who have furnished them. For the present there must be large demands made upon the charity of the government.

The complete change in the organization of society, the transformation of an entire people from slavery to freedom, the desolation of war, and the consequent interruption of industry, must cause more or less suffering. The seeds have not been planted nor the crops harvested, and vast quantities of the necessaries of life have been destroyed by fire, and there is a scarcity of food in the land for present needs.

The want of confidence existing between the freedmen and the landholders, neither of whom have any faith in the other, and the want of capital to pay for labor, are some of the questions which this bureau has had to meet and solve. They are difficult and important.

In my administration of the affairs of this bureau, it has been my earnest endeavor first to carry out faithfully all my orders, and, in cases where discretionary power was given me, I have aimed to be just to all, irrespective of color or condition, to try to break down all antagonisms, encourage friendly feelings between the freedmen and their former owners, by showing them that their interests were identical, and that each should be just to the other, and respect all the other's rights. Fully conscious of the importance of maintaining friendly relations with former masters, I have been scrupulously careful to be just to them, and not to exercise any authority not clearly set forth in my instructions. I have only asked simple justice for those committed defenceless to my care,

contented oftentimes not even to secure this, carrying the olive branch where conviction would have declared for the sword of justice. I have not always been met in the same spirit. The hard lesson which the former slaveholder has to be taught, to treat those he owned as freemen, and to deal justly with them, is not to be learned in a day. It is, however, being learned as rapidly, perhaps, as could be expected. In good time they will see that exact justice is the wisest expediency and truest policy, and that free educated labor is the most profitable.

The medical department of the bureau, in this State, has been under the control of Surgeon DeWitt, a most faithful and skilful officer, who, in spite of all the many discouragements and obstacles in his way at the outset, has succeeded in overcoming them all. His department is well organized and thoroughly efficient, so far as he has been able to extend it, and has accomplished the objects for which it was established. In its mission of mercy to suffering humanity it has been eminently successful.

The abandoned house of Mr. Memminger, formerly the secretary of the treasury for the so-called confederate government, was recently set apart as an asylum for the destitute colored orphans in the department. It now contains some sixty orphans between the ages of one and twelve years, has accommodations for two hundred, and will probably soon be filled. These children are being clothed and educated by the benevolent associations of the north, and are fed by the government. Mr. Redpath, jr., is in charge. When suitable homes can be found for them, these orphans are apprenticed in accordance with your directions. I commend this noble institution to your most favorable consideration.

The South Carolina Freedmen's Savings Bank, which I established in October, 1864, and which was continued under my charge after my assignment to my present position, I have recently transferred to the National Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company. In making this transfer I published the circular letter herewith appended, marked P. The history of this bank is given in it, and it is interesting, as showing that some of the freedmen, at least, care for the future, and that not all of them, as is frequently asserted, think only of to-day. With regard to the future of the freedmen, their present condition, degraded and unfortunate as it now may seem, is more hopeful than at any period of their history. If we are just to them, time will solve the labor question, and all others relating to them, for the best interests of humanity. The government, through the Freedmen's Bureau, should be their teacher, guide, and protector for the present. Having made them free by its own acts, it is bound to stand by them until such time as the State governments shall grant them such civil and political rights as shall be necessary to their own safety and protection. I would therefore urge the importance of the continuation of this bureau for the present, as it is now the only place where the freedman, who is injured in his person or property, can lay his complaint with any hope of redress.

In these peculiar and delicate duties I have been greatly aided by my able and efficient staff, whose zeal and interest in this work has never seemed to flag. They have given me their earnest and hearty support and co-operation at all times. In the performance of their varied and difficult duties they have deserved and received my unqualified approbation. I respectfully commend them to your favorable consideration.

The lists of all officers and agents of the bureau in the State under my charge, with the other monthly reports, contain all the statistical information at present in my possession.

I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. SAXTON,
Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,
Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c.

Summary report of Virginia, by Colonel O. Brown, assistant commissioner.

RICHMOND, VA., November 31, 1865.

GENERAL: In compliance with instructions, I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in that portion of Virginia under my charge:

In obedience to orders from the headquarters of the bureau, the assistant commissioner entered upon the duties of his office at Richmond, June 15, 1865. Previous to this time no uniform system had been adopted for the management of freedmen's affairs, and the control of these matters was in the hands of the several commanders of the military districts.

The larger portion of the State having been so recently overrun by contending armies the usual business avocations were almost entirely suspended, and large numbers of the laboring population were collected in camps, or located on abandoned farms, or obtained a precarious subsistence on charity and the fruits of irregular employment. In the neighborhoods of Norfolk, Fortress Monroe, and Yorktown about seventy thousand had been collected during the war. From among these from eight to ten thousand recruits for the army had been enlisted. Many other of the able-bodied men had found employment in the different staff departments of the army, leaving their families in this district partially dependent on the government. In other districts thousands of freedmen were roaming about without settled employment and without homes. In localities least disturbed by the presence or conflict of armies, and where the average amount of land was under cultivation, the crops were suffering from want of proper attention, the planter being unwilling to acknowledge his late slave a freeman by becoming a partner with him to a contract, and the freedman conscious that no further service was "due" from him, and wishing to satisfy himself that he was really free by exercising his liberty to leave his old master.

Eighty-five thousand six hundred and forty-seven (\$5,647) acres of land were held in the State, exclusive of that in the counties of Loudon and Fairfax, for the benefit of the freedmen. Some of these lands were worked by them on shares, some by government, the freedmen being paid wages; some even rented to them, some were occupied as homes for those who were unable to pay rent or to support themselves, while others, on account of their location, were unoccupied.

The problem to be solved was, how to provide for the protection, elevation, and government of nearly half a million of people suddenly freed from the bonds of a rigorous control, acquainted with no law but that of force, ignorant of the elementary principles of civil government and of the first duties of citizenship, without any provision for the future wants of themselves and families, and entertaining many false and extravagant notions in respect to the intentions of the government towards them.

The citizens generally afforded no assistance in meeting these difficulties. Stripped to a great extent of ready resources by the operations of the war, they were unable to allow these people their just dues, much less any charitable assistance. In some sections of the State public meetings had been held, and the citizens had entered into covenant not to pay more than five dollars (\$5) per month to able-bodied men, not to rent lands to the freedmen, nor to give employment to any without a certificate from their former owners. Many of the citizens, under the control of tradition, habit, and education, only sullenly acquiesced in the freedom of their former slaves. They regarded the colored population as necessarily and appropriately servile and unfit for freedom, and, stimulated by the feeling that the late slaves were in some way responsible for the failure of their cause, they were wholly disqualified from co-operating in the work of the bureau.

Another class, numerically small, but of the best talent, culture and influence, not only accepted the situation, but, with a wise foresight and noble patriotism, were ready to co-operate with the government for the speediest restoration of tranquillity and law, and to assist the bureau in its endeavor to bring the highest good to all classes out of present evils. A third and more numerous class, because forced to acknowledge the freedom of their former slaves, wished either to effect their entire removal from the State, or to bind them by such contracts as would allow them but little more freedom than they formerly possessed.

The work of the bureau was organized by dividing the State into eight districts, with one assistant quartermaster as superintendent of each, to whom all property in use by the bureau within the district was turned over.

The superintendents were instructed to divide their districts into convenient sub-districts, each county constituting one sub-district, except when the colored population of a county was less than 5,000, in which case two or more counties were to be united, and to apply to the commander of the military district for an officer to act as assistant superintendent over each sub-district.

The superintendents were further instructed to protect the negroes in their rights as freemen, to see that they were not in any way oppressed by their former masters, and to cultivate friendly relations between the two classes; to assist in the organization and maintenance of schools; to discourage as far as possible the disposition of the freedmen to remove from one locality to another, except so far as it might be necessary for uniting members of separated families, or to find profitable employment; to urge upon them the importance of making contracts for their labor, and to fulfil the same when made; to aid them by their advice when necessary to prevent their being defrauded, but in all other cases to leave them free to make their own bargains; to furnish rations, medicines, and medical attendance for the helpless and destitute, not provided for by their former owners, but not to issue rations to persons able to work for whom employment could be found; to require assistant superintendents to keep registers of all colored persons in their sub-districts, and to aid such in finding remunerative labor. If, when labor was found for such persons, they neglected to avail themselves of it, they were to be treated as vagrants. Superintendents were ordered, either themselves or through their assistants, to adjudicate upon all cases arising between the freedmen themselves, or between freedmen and whites, including crimes committed by the freedmen, in which the penalty should not exceed imprisonment at hard labor for a period of three months, or a fine of one hundred dollars. All other cases were to be referred to competent military authority. Subsequently the assistant superintendents were ordered to invite the whites and the freedmen of their respective sub-districts, each class to select for itself a suitable person to assist in the performance of this duty.

From the want of funds to employ civilians, the bureau has been obliged to depend, for the management of its affairs, almost exclusively upon details of officers and men from the army. Some of these officers have been eminently successful in the discharge of their duties, which are often very delicate and difficult. But many of these details have been of persons who had little sympathy with the duties to which they were assigned. The duties of the bureau being peculiar, and requiring experience for their proper performance, injurious results have followed the constant changes in its officers, made necessary by the mustering out of troops. But few assistant superintendents have occupied their positions for three consecutive months, while in many sub-districts the changes have been more frequent.

Notwithstanding these obstacles to a uniform and efficient administration of the affairs of the bureau, important progress has been made in the work undertaken.

The late slaves have been fully protected in their rights as freedmen, and the exceptional instances where their rights were for a time denied are no longer heard of. It is believed that there is not within the State a person who does not understand and successfully assert his rights to freedom. The extraordinary eagerness of the freedmen for the advantages of schools has been met, as far as the resources of the bureau and the charitable zeal of its friends abroad would allow. There are at present about eleven thousand five hundred pupils receiving instruction from one hundred and ninety-five teachers. Numerous urgent appeals have come from remote and isolated localities for teachers and books, to which it has been impossible to respond for want of school-rooms and suitable quarters for teachers. Their progress in learning is such as would warrant a much larger expenditure in money and effort. Many citizens, adhering to the ideas and customs of the past, strongly oppose these movements, while others indorse and encourage them. The sentiment of the community is gradually changing in favor of educating the freedmen.

The irritation existing between the whites and the freedmen immediately after the cessation of hostilities has greatly abated, and instances of personal violence are becoming more rare. There is, however, much for the citizens to learn in regard to the best management of free labor, and much for the late slaves to learn in regard to their duties as freedmen. The attempt to introduce the contract system, so essential to the reorganization of the labor of the State, is embarrassed by many difficulties. The master has been unaccustomed to sustain to the laborer the relation which this system implies, and seeks to retain by contract much of the power which the slave system formerly gave him, and the freedman has yet to learn properly to appreciate the obligations which he assumes in making a contract. A further embarrassment is found in the excess of laboring population over the supply of profitable labor. It is impossible for the employers, even with the best intention, to give all the laborers such wages as their support and that of their families require. It is believed that this evil cannot be wholly remedied without the emigration from the State of at least fifty thousand freedmen.

The disposition to roam from place to place, and especially to leave the country for towns and camps, is almost entirely corrected; there is very little changing of location, except when necessary to provide the means of subsistence. They are generally contented with such arrangements for their services as can be made, and are seeking homes and employment that promise to be permanent.

The capacity of the freedmen of Virginia to take care of themselves, even under adverse circumstances, is best shown in the southeastern part of the State. During the war nearly seventy thousand were gathered here, on a limited territory, in extreme destitution, and yet at this time only four thousand four hundred and twelve are receiving government aid, and about one-half of this number are of the families of soldiers. Many have rented or purchased comfortable homes, some have saved considerable sums of money, and nearly five thousand of their children, decently clad and furnished with books of their own purchasing, are attending schools.

During the month of July it was impossible to ascertain the number of rations issued to freedmen, as the provision returns of both whites and blacks were consolidated.

There were issued, on returns signed by the officers of the bureau, during the month of August, one hundred and seventy-eight thousand one hundred and twenty (178,120) rations, to fifteen thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine (15,779) persons. Besides these, issues were made, by military authority, in localities to which officers of the bureau had not been assigned.

In September the entire issues to freedmen were made by officers of the bureau. The whole number of rations issued during the month to sixteen thousand two hundred and ninety-eight (16,298) persons was two hundred and seventy-five

thousand eight hundred and eighty, (275,880,) or nine thousand one hundred and ninety-six (9,196) per day. During the month of October there were issued two hundred and thirty-five thousand seven hundred and eighty-six (235,786) rations to eleven thousand six hundred and twenty-two (11,622) persons, or seven thousand six hundred and six rations per day; the number of persons receiving rations being reduced from the previous month thirty (30) per cent.

The requirements of the freedmen for medicines and medical attendance have been met, as far as the limited resources of the bureau would allow. Eight hospitals have been organized, and fifteen medical officers employed, and, in addition, much valuable voluntary assistance has been rendered in treating the sick by medical officers of the army and by citizen physicians. The total number of refugees and freedmen treated has been about four thousand three hundred, (4,300.) The number at present under treatment is about seven hundred, (700.)

In addition to the land held by the department of negro affairs, there have been turned over to the bureau eleven thousand one hundred and five (11,105) acres, making a total of ninety-six thousand seven hundred and fifty-two (96,752) acres that have been under its control. Of this land, forty thousand seven hundred and fifty-one (40,751) acres have been restored, leaving on hand fifty-six thousand and one (56,001) acres.

The rights of the freedmen in the crops and improvements on the land restored have been secured. The result of the cultivation of these lands by the freedmen is not yet known, as the crops have not been fully harvested, but it is believed to be satisfactory.

The special courts organized for the freedmen are successfully accomplishing the ends aimed at in their establishment, and are giving general satisfaction. By them justice has been more generally received than could have been done by any other available means.

Notwithstanding the many embarrassments under which the bureau has labored, it is believed to have succeeded in promoting the welfare of the class in whose interest it was created, and to have afforded important aid in securing good order in the State.

Whatever success the bureau in this State may have achieved is largely due to the cordial sympathy and assistance it has uniformly received from the major general commanding the department.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. BROWN,

Colonel and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c.

Report of Texas, by Brigadier General E. M. Gregory, Assistant Commissioner.

GALVESTON, December 9, 1865.

GENERAL: I have the honor to make the following report, which, though brief, I trust will give you such information in reference to the operation of the bureau in this State, and the present condition and future prospects of the freedmen, as may be satisfactory.

From the most reliable information I can obtain from my sub-assistant commissioners, the planters, farmers, and business men, as well as from personal observation, during a journey of some seven hundred miles through the cotton-growing regions of the State, I believe the crops of all kinds are garnered, and that we have an abundant supply of subsistence to meet the demands of all, white and black, for the coming year. The cotton crop, although probably not more than

one-half as large as it has been some previous years, was so well gathered, and demands such high prices, that it will bring more wealth into the State than any which has heretofore been thrown into the market. This has been accomplished, principally, by the labor of the freedmen, and at a time, too, when under the influence of the excitement incident to their transition from bondage to freedom, and while they were more or less unsettled and undecided in their purposes. If such results have been produced by free labor, trammelled as it has been during the period of its inauguration by innumerable adverse interests and prejudices, may we not reasonably expect from it, when fully and thoroughly established, still greater and largely increased crops, and a corresponding increase in the wealth of the nation? Indeed, but little complaint has been made by their former masters, and even they, notwithstanding their hostility to everything pertaining to freedom, in some instances have admitted that free labor will not only materially enhance the value of their property, but that it will infuse a spirit of enterprise, industry, and thrift, and that they will thereby become more virtuous, intelligent, and prosperous.

On the 10th ultimo I left Galveston, in company with Inspector General Strong, and travelled twenty-one days in the interior of the State, he taking one direction and myself another. During that time I met and addressed about 25,000 freedmen and planters. In doing so, my efforts were directed to impressing upon the minds of both the necessity and importance of turning their attention to the preparation demanded by the business of the coming year, and in instructing the former in their rights and duties. I found that but few contracts had been made by employers and employés. Such as had been made were verbal ones. I urged them to contract at once, (furnishing them with a form,) beginning the first of January and ending with December, and thereby get themselves and their families comfortably settled on some plantation, and, if possible, to remain where they have been born and raised, and where all their family ties and associations are, if they were kindly and properly treated, as this course would be more pleasant, satisfactory, and profitable to all parties. I have recommended to them that they labor for a fair compensation in money, or a portion of the crop; and that if any of them possess the means, they purchase and cultivate such lands as they desire. The freedmen are well informed as to the value of their labor, as some of them have been hired out by their former masters ever since they have been of a sufficient age to make their labor profitable, and are not likely to be imposed upon by their employers. I have also endeavored to disabuse their minds of the false impression which has been made thereon by the rumor which some designing and evil-disposed parties have very industriously circulated among them, that on or about Christmas they would be placed in possession of the property of their former masters.

In our intercourse with the freedmen we have found them kind, courteous, and well disposed towards all. Rumors are freely circulated in different portions of the State that there is danger of an insurrection. This we do not believe, from the fact that irregularities and disturbances are becoming less frequent every day. If, however, one does occur, it will be brought about by the action of the whites, and not the freedmen, who, although somewhat elated by the possession of that long-wished-for blessing, (freedom,) have not and will not commit any act of aggression or lawlessness, but will quietly settle down in the "enjoyment of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Since we have visited and spoken to the freedmen, we find that many who have heretofore refused to contract are now doing so, as their contracts are being forwarded to us for our approval; and from what we can learn from the sub-assistant commissioners, we fully believe that the work of adapting employers and employés to the circumstances by which they are surrounded is progressing rapidly.

The freedmen are, as a general thing, strongly impressed with religious sentiments, and their morals are equal, if not superior, to those of a large majority

of the better informed and educated. We find them not only willing but anxious to improve every opportunity offered for their moral and intellectual advancement, and they are constantly inquiring for books and tracts of a religious character, there being some few among them who can read. Hence, we have had but little difficulty in opening and organizing schools, all of which, so far, we are pleased to be able to state, have been self-sustaining. We regret that we are compelled to report that we have not been able to give this portion of our labors that attention which its importance demands. This is owing, however, to the absence of Lieutenant Wheelock, our superintendent, and the want of proper books and a sufficient number of teachers. The lieutenant is now in New Orleans. The cause of his detention is, we presume, fully understood by you. We are daily expecting him to return, with such books and help as he may have been able to procure. Both are essentially necessary, if we improve in the future upon our past efforts. Some liberal-minded planters and business men have kindly and voluntarily offered us their assistance, and are doing all they can for the cause of education. What effort has been directed in this channel has been eminently successful, and we doubt not we will be able to show a marked and decided improvement in this department of our labors in our next report.

The business of that portion of the State through which I have passed has been but little affected by the war. The planters are wealthy, crops are good, and nowhere are to be seen evidences of suffering and want. But few cases of destitute and impoverished freedmen have come under our observation. These we have relieved as best we could, there being no poor or alms houses in the State. The health of the freedmen is good, as will be seen by the report of the surgeon-in-chief, S. J. W. Mintzer.

The testimony of freedmen is admitted in the courts of some of the judicial districts of the State, while in others it is excluded. It is my opinion that their rights are not properly acknowledged and guarded by the judiciary; but still there are encouraging indications that ere long they will receive that consideration to which they are entitled under the laws of the United States, and by the proclamation of the President.

Some few difficulties have occurred between the blacks themselves, and the whites and blacks. These we have endeavored to adjust equitably and justly. In the settlement of differences which have grown out of past transactions of a business character, we have pursued such a course as will insure to the freedman all the rights and privileges to which he is lawfully entitled.

In some portions of the State, and especially is it the case where our troops have not been quartered, freedmen are restrained from their liberty, and slavery virtually exists the same as though the old system of oppression was still in force. The freedmen do not understand their true status, and their former masters, although acknowledging them to be free, practically deny the truth by their acts. With this class of men (and a few of the editors who still continue to misrepresent the object for which this bureau was instituted) we have more difficulty than any other, as they refuse to pay the laborer his hire, and it seems almost impossible for them to deal justly and honestly with him. This is owing, perhaps, to the fact that heretofore they have had his labor without compensating him therefor. In this respect, however, there are evidences of improvement, and I trust that in the future there will be less cause for complaint on this account. They must pay them, if they expect to employ "laborers worthy of their hire."

Owing to the vast extent of territory embraced in my district, I find great difficulty in procuring a sufficient number of officers who can render me that assistance, as sub-assistant commissioners, which is necessary to a proper discharge of my official duties. But few, comparatively, feel and manifest that interest in the advancement of the freedmen that they should.

Your letter of instructions of October 4, 1865, so far as it relates to apprentices, cannot be applied here, as there is no such a law in the State. Any instructions that you may have, which would be applicable in this case, will be thankfully received.

The military authorities of this department have rendered us all necessary assistance.

My present labors are directed to the uniting of capital and labor. If I succeed in inducing the freedmen to settle down and enter into contracts with the planters—this accomplished, labor is applied to capital, future want and its attending train of evils will be driven from our midst, and the freedmen will become an educated, prosperous and happy race of people. This, by the blessing of God, I believe I will be able to accomplish. I can do so in no way so rapidly and effectually as by visiting and talking with them. For this purpose, I contemplate leaving here in a day or two for another town in the interior, from which I do not expect to return until after the first of January.

In the mean time, I am, general, yours, very respectfully,

E. M. GREGORY.

Brigadier General, Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD.

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c.

Memorandum of report of General Gregory for November.

Believes that all the crops are garnered, and that there is subsistence enough for all, for the coming year.

The cotton crop, although about half its usual size, will bring more wealth into the State than any previous one has. This has been made by the freedmen while in a transition state, and expects largely increased crops when the free labor system is developed. The former masters, although disbelieving in freedom, acknowledge that it will increase the value of property, and infuse a spirit of enterprise, and cause more intelligence, virtue and prosperity.

For twenty-one days was in the interior of the State with General Strong, and addressed 25,000 freedmen and planters, and urged contracting, furnishing forms. Found few contracts made, and these only verbal. Endeavored to disabuse their minds of the maliciously circulated report of the division of lands and property at Christmas. The rumor of the insurrection is unfounded. The freedmen are anxious to learn; schools self-sustaining, but lack books and teachers.

Business is little affected by the war; planters are wealthy; but few cases of destitution, and these speedily relieved. The health of the freedmen is good. The colored man's testimony is received in some courts, in others excluded. In some parts of Texas, slavery virtually exists. The planters acknowledge their slaves to be free, but deny it by their acts, by refusing to pay them. There are evidences of improvement, however. Has so much territory, that he has great difficulty in finding a sufficient number of sub-commissioners, and few of these manifest proper interest in the work.

Is no apprentice law in Texas, so he cannot apply circular letter, October 4. Wishes for instructions in this. Military authorities have rendered all necessary assistance. Intends making another tour to last till 1st January, to urge contracting.

Summary report of the District of Columbia, by Brevet Brigadier General John Eaton, jr., assistant commissioner.

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 15, 1865.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of the bureau specially under my direction:

Your circular No. 4, requesting all officers or agents in any way connected with the care of refugees and freedmen in this department to report to me, brought together all official statements, and much other valuable information. Much had been done by the government and by the benevolent since this necessity first arose, especially during the preceding winter.

A tax levied upon the colored men employed in the staff departments of the army had furnished the funds from which expenditures had chiefly been made.

No lands were reported, save those in charge of Captain J. M. Brown, assistant quartermaster, and known as government farms, in Virginia and Maryland.

Much had been accomplished in the way of education; but no definite and complete report could be made out of the material furnished.

Relief establishments were in existence in this city, and at Freedmen's Village and Mason's island, under Captain Carse; at Alexandria, under Chaplain Ferree; and on the government farms in Maryland, under Lieutenant O'Brien.

The work of reduction had been commenced, but the negroes had gathered here, as at a city of refuge, for safety from their bitter foes; they saw whence they came only the tortures and terrors they had escaped. Many women and children had no adult male support; the men had been run off by the enemy, or gone into our military service; they could not turn back, and the north was not, generally, inviting to them; so the work attempted was difficult. But industry in the cities was over-supplied, and was being rapidly reduced by the discontinuance of government work. The great armies, too, just coming from the field, left here their surplus servants.

At once I began to send out officers to explain and enforce the new relations of whites and blacks in the surrounding country, and, with your approval, with little regard to territorial limitations.

A hearty spring to industry, it was easily seen, could, so late as the organization of the bureau, do much to raise from the fertile soil something with which to meet the sure necessities of the coming winter. There was a general disposition manifested to take advantage of the inexperience of the negroes; but they received news not only of their liberty, but its labors, gladly, and generally arranged for the season's work at once, when still at their former homes. Unfortunately, the old masters often found it difficult to treat as free those so lately slaves, and for whose enslavement they had fought so fiercely, and against whose liberation they had cultivated ignorant prejudices for so many years. Complaints centred here from a wide extent of country, and were listened to with the same liberality of boundaries. Families, torn asunder by the various forms of violence which had become an essential part of slavery, came with their tears and sighs for reunion. Now and then an old master, still holding to the idea of chattels, resisted.

Husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, limited by no shade of color or grade of intelligence, sought each other with an ardor and faithfulness sufficient to vindicate the fidelity and affection of any race—the excited joys of the regathering being equalled only by the previous sorrows and pains of separation.

Mothers, once fully assured that the power of slavery was gone, were known to put forth almost superhuman efforts to regain their children, travelling any distance, daring any perils, and even beating the pugnacious specimens of Chris-

tian chivalry in hand-to-hand conflict, and bearing off in triumph the long-sought child. Wisdom, however, was required in the aid we rendered, for, sometimes, the mother was not sufficiently emancipated from the brutal ideas of her bondage to understand the duties of a Christian parent.

By the application of the various simple instrumentalities at hand, with the issue of few orders, abuses began to decrease, and the surplus population here to work off. Operations of the bureau were specially required, and equally difficult to conduct. Congress had fixed liberty in the District of Columbia, and Maryland for herself. Both of these exercised their respective civil functions, and were supposed to have them in full force, and the adjacent counties of Virginia sought the same immunities.

The formal conflict of arms had ceased over all the country. Peace, with its simple instrumentalities, was the end and aim of the entire government. The whole military machinery was being taken down, and transformed to the uses of peace. The display of any military power was against the prevailing spirit. We had, as it were by a "right-about face," returned to the spirit so averse to war, which animated us before the outbreak of the rebellion. A military officer, especially if he had anything to do with the negro, was found to be peculiarly abhorrent in sections of the surrounding country. Indeed, rebels had not altogether laid down their arms. Here and there a desperado or two still stealthily continued the struggle, shooting a Union man, or officer, or soldier; or, not daring to do that, the unarmed and defenceless negro, especially if he dared, in anything, to claim his proper liberty. On this line the old spirit of slavery remained. Oaths, amnesties, special pardons, the dower of peace, the demands of self-interest, with some were not enough; a negro still was the proper object of their warfare. Fortunately, the military character of the bureau was adapted to meet this continuance of the struggle between the government and slavery.

But the continued exercise of this war power, in the midst of the general reduction of the military force, and of the undisturbed civil authority, was specially delicate, and particularly here, at and near the seat of national government, where it was important to illustrate alike the liberty vouchsafed to the negro, and the magnanimity of the government towards its late mortal enemies, now its penitent, seeking impartial justice as citizens of the same nation with those so lately their slaves.

And it has seemed to me proper to regard the entire work of the bureau as an incident of the war, alike in the exercise of authority and the disbursement of temporary aid to those absolutely needy. Refugees, whether white or black, have become such as an incident to the war; emancipation itself was decreed as a military necessity; slaves of rebels had been transformed into loyal armies, and whatever of suffering was thus occasioned, it was plainly the dictates of humanity, and the duty of a government leading civilization, to relieve. Old precedents of aid to captives of war it was well enough to remember. But the occasion was worthy of the making a precedent for all time to come, in overcoming any mere local, personal, formal obstacle, in wise and liberal, yet economical, execution of the demands of justice and humanity for the refugee and the freedman. Accepting this principle, I felt it equally important that the utmost care and economy should characterize each disbursement of aid, alike as a duty to the government and to the individual aided.

Governments, as they approximate to the tyrannical, may, to save themselves from the violence of the mob, temporarily nurse multitudes into beggary. But republics, dependent on the labor, integrity, and intelligence of the individual, cannot for a moment afford to empty their treasuries, or degrade the self-respect of any of their individual members, by any such disbursement of supplies as will encourage beggary, or foster idleness, or other crime. The punishment of crime, the support of pauperism, and the reformation of juvenile and other offenders,

and the aid of all unfortunate, and blind, deaf, idiotic, insane, &c., plainly should include the idea of industry and self-support.

The negro has never been a beggar among us; he should not be made such now, as he drops his chains, and while he accepts his manhood as a ward of the government. With these views, looking over the facts in the light of your instructions, I determined to continue a single establishment for those entirely unable to support themselves.

Freedmen's Village, though chiefly a self-supporting community, had needful buildings and accommodations, and was selected. The establishment on Mason's island was broken up, most of the people going to work and supporting themselves.

The government farms have been brought forward to the gathering of the crops, and, with few exceptions, returned to their owners, as ordered. These farms have been cultivated, not as a source of revenue, but as a means of industry to those who would otherwise have been entirely supported at government expense. Those in Maryland, under care of Lieutenant O'Brien, have furnished an asylum for the wives and children of many soldiers who joined our army from the midst of a white population chiefly engaged in aiding the rebellion, and of late, according to affidavits, disposed to class all loyal white soldiers with the negroes, in their hatred of the Union, and subject them to the same insults.

Great efforts have been made to reconcile the labor and capital thereabouts, and induce the negroes to engage at industry with private parties. The bad faith of employers has prevented success. They would work well anywhere for kind treatment and fair wages; but one negro unpaid for his faithful services, or another bruised and cut by his faithless employer, was enough to rouse the abhorrence of their companions.

With all the opposition to the true interests of free labor prevalent in the surrounding community constantly disturbing the relations of employer and employé, the freedmen on the government farms in St. Mary's county, Maryland, have proved the advantages of fair treatment and wages, and good faith, by producing with great economy of labor the best crops in that section of the State. Thirteen hundred acres have been under cultivation, of which 176 acres were wheat, 630 acres corn, 248 acres tobacco, 240 acres oats, and 6 acres potatoes; in addition to these were the gardens of the people. Besides the work on the crops, barns, fences, &c., have been built, and other permanent improvements made. The number of people has averaged about 500 during the season, about half of whom are laborers, and are paid regular wages. Most of the remainder earn enough to pay for their rations, while a few, too old or too young, are dependent. Besides disseminating through the various agencies at work in behalf of the freedmen, and through colored churches, the importance of finding industry outside of the cities, I found it necessary, at an early day, to establish in this city an intelligence office, to quicken and aid the acquaintance and confidence of those who needed work, and those who desired their services. Captain Spurgin has charge of this office, where he also hears all complaints, and listens to all calls for relief from suffering in this city and Georgetown. The duties thus performed are of so miscellaneous a character as hardly to admit classification. Prominent among them is the settlement of difficulties arising between whites and blacks, or among the latter, regarding contracts, &c., of which cognizance has been taken, and which have generally been adjusted satisfactorily without the delay and expense of an appeal to the courts. Attention has been given to the collection of claims against the government for labor, and thus the dishonest designs of pretended friends thwarted. Cases of personal abuse have been of rare occurrence, though occasionally the conductor of a street-car, or other person of similar authority, has exercised it unlawfully to the prejudice of the negro; and having been given, no case of unjustifiable assault has gone unpunished.

Titles to property have been examined and determined where freedmen wished to purchase.

Cases of destitution becoming known by any means are at once investigated and proper measures taken for their relief, and a general supervision of the interests of the freedmen, business and social, is being exercised with a satisfactory degree of success.

The number reported as having found employment through the intelligence office in this city, from July 20 to October 31, is 773; this includes only those who have contracts registered; probably as many more have been helped to situations; 729 applications for labor have been filled, many of which were for families. Several hundred dollars have been paid by employers for labor thus obtained. Several calls for labor have been received from railroad and mining companies at the north, by which the introduction of a large element of colored labor is desired. For various reasons these calls have not yet been answered.

An intelligence office has been lately opened at Alexandria, where there is a large amount of surplus labor.

Until August 21 the medical care of the freedmen remained under the direction of Colonel R. O. Abbott, medical director, department of Washington. At that time the freedmen's hospitals were turned over to this bureau, Surgeon Robert Reyburn, United States volunteers, having reported for duty in charge of medical and sanitary affairs.

Campbell hospital having been secured for the use of the bureau, and possessing superior advantages for the treatment of patients, the freedmen's hospital in town was discontinued, and the patients transferred to Campbell.

In the month of September L'Ouverture hospital, at Alexandria, was also turned over to the bureau.

There are now three hospitals for freedmen in this district—one in Washington, one in Alexandria, and one at Freedmen's Village, having in all a capacity of 300 beds.

One assistant surgeon United States volunteers and ten acting assistant surgeons are at present on duty. Two of the latter are at the government farms in Maryland, four devote their time to visiting those patients at their homes in Washington and Alexandria who, with the aid thus rendered, are able to maintain themselves; the remainder are on duty in the hospitals.

In Loudon and Fairfax counties, Virginia, having an estimated colored population of 9,000, all self-supporting, no medical officers are required.

The whole number sick in the district during the month of October is reported as 2,445. Of these there remained under treatment at the end of the month 778; 1,585 had been discharged cured; 82 had died.

Comparing the results of cases treated in this and former years a manifest improvement is visible. In 1863, out of 1,014 patients, 299, or about 30 per cent., died. In 1864 there were about 153 deaths out of 3,806 patients, or about 4 per cent. During the present year, from the organization of the bureau to September 30, out of 6,251 cases treated there were 207 deaths, or about 3 per cent.

Frequent inspections of the freedmen in the cities have been made, and efforts to improve their sanitary condition. Owing to the neglect of the municipal authorities to enforce proper cleanliness and hygiene, it has been difficult to attain any very satisfactory results.

Arrangements having been made with the mayors of Washington and Alexandria by which the care of sick and infirm freedmen, properly residents of those cities, has been assumed by them, the medical officers of the bureau have received instructions to devote exclusive attention to those freedmen who have become such by the operations of the war.

In addition to the hospital, two extra-diet kitchens are in operation in this city,

where rations are issued to such sick and infirm, not treated in hospital, as require them.

It is believed that the present number of medical officers will be amply sufficient to supply all necessities during the coming winter.

In view of the suffering brought upon the poor colored people by high rents, and the undesirableness of removing any of the buildings at Campbell hospital, after in possession of the bureau, I ordered some of the barracks separated by partitions into small tenements for cheap rents. These are now occupied by such families as are most worthy, and least able to pay the exorbitant rents demanded by private parties. Similar tenements are being prepared at Sickles and Seward barracks, in Alexandria.

The first report of rations issued to freedmen in this District, not including Alexandria, after the organization of the bureau, was rendered May 31. The total number of rations then issued daily was 2,574; 621 to laborers who paid for them, and 1,953 to dependents. The exact number of people thus aided cannot be ascertained, 600 rations daily being distributed at the government soup-house.

In September, Alexandria was added to the District.

October 31, 282 men, 349 women, and 346 children were reported as receiving rations. Of these 339 were laborers. 466 rations were issued daily to sick in hospital and quarters. The total daily issue was 1,270—a decrease since May 31 of 1,304 daily.

The home established by special act of Congress for women and orphans, conducted by a board of excellent ladies, and located in Georgetown, I have ordered from time to time supplied with subsistence. It is now also furnished medical attendance by the bureau. It has at present about 60 inmates.

The calls by refugees for aid have not been numerous. With few exceptions it was found that by giving them transportation to their homes, they could relieve the government of further expense by supporting themselves. No pauper establishment for their benefit has been opened. Twelve were reported as receiving rations October 31.

No effort for the freedmen is complete that does not embrace their education. Most strictly debarred in slavery, as a rule, from letters, or any proper culture, no pledge of liberty is greater to them than the privilege of learning to read, especially the word of God. Nothing so inspires their hope, or assures their self-respect, and awakens their efforts for themselves.

If the physician finds his patient rising and sinking under disease with the elevation or depression of his feelings, so much the more shall we find a slave-sick race, distinguished for nobility and largeness of sensibility, rising or falling, in working out their freedom, according as we rouse their deeper religious and moral feelings.

Looking over the facts, I was stung with shame that at the capital of our nation, distinguished for its liberties and general diffusion of knowledge, the negro was excluded from any chance for education. I found Congress had been mindful of the subject, and legislated upon it once and again, but foolish old prejudices had found means of thwarting the faithful and laborious trustees to whom its execution was committed. The mayor of Washington had refused to pay them the funds required by law.

A school or two had been suffered to exist here among the free negroes for a quarter of a century. More recently loyal charity had opened numerous schools, but generally at great cost, paying rents, and in some cases at disadvantages, to be overcome only by system.

About town was an abundance of buildings, erected by the government, soon to be vacated and sold. Their retention for school purposes would be no outlay, and slight expense in any form.

If the bureau had the "control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen from rebel States, or from any district of country within the territory em-

braced in the operations of the army," and was a part of the army, and its operations a moral and social campaign, closing the war, I could see no difficulty in using the war power, and the fragments of its material, barracks, &c., for the execution of the most fundamental condition in the pledge of emancipation. Could the nation afford that this great assurance of hope to the four millions just emancipated should be blotted out under the dome of the Capitol? Everything but the spirit of rebellion answered me.

It was plain, also, that such effort would be only of the most temporary character, for Congress would doubtless look to it that the spirit and letter of its laws for the District no longer suffered such violations, and that the negro had a fair chance in the race of improvement.

I determined, therefore, in accordance with the spirit of your instructions, to do what became the bureau for the initiation of what might become a free-school system for the negroes of the District. The plan was to secure from among the buildings, barracks, &c., to be abandoned by the government, enough to accommodate the schools, so arranged in location and classification as to result in giving the trustees of the colored schools a complete system of graded schools in each district, crowned with a central school for the more advanced.

This required an effort to harmonize all the benevolent interests at work here.

Reverend John Kimball, lately an army chaplain, an able, faithful, practical, and at the same time scholarly man, was elected as superintendent. All societies have found it easy to unite their efforts with his. The honorable S. J. Bowen, postmaster of this city, and Dr. Brud, of the board of trustees of colored schools, have assured me of the aid he has been to them in their difficult work.

In the difficulty of finding lands on which schools for colored persons could be placed, without being indicted as nuisances by prejudiced citizens, application was made to Hon. James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, for the temporary use of government lots. He afforded us every facility. Congress would greatly facilitate the education of the colored people if these lots could be granted in trust to the trustees for this purpose.

The procuring of buildings, to our mind, was soon found impossible. Considerable, however, has been done by Mr. Kimball's indefatigable efforts, assisted by the agents of several benevolent associations, especially Mr. A. E. Newton, agent New York National and Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Associations.

At the end of October the superintendent reported 41 schools in operation: 25 in Washington, 4 in Georgetown, 10 in Alexandria, 1 at Freedmen's Village, and 1 at Good Hope. The number of teachers was 91, representing the following benevolent associations: A. M. Society, Pa. F. R. Association, N. Y. N. F. R. Association, Pa. Friends' Society, African Civilization Society, O. S. R. Presbyterian school, N. E. Friends, O. S. Presbyterian, N. S. R. Presbyterian, American Baptist Free Mission, and American Tract Society. Besides the schools of these societies, there are others, either exclusively private enterprises or aided by local societies not reported.

The whole number of scholars reported was 4,884; the average daily attendance, 3,566; 1,682 studied arithmetic; 1,006, geography; 254, grammar; 1,296, writing; 153, needlework, and 60, the higher branches.

Two schools at the government farms in Maryland, under the auspices of the New York Society of Friends, attended by an average of one-hundred and thirty pupils, have not been definitely reported.

In this city and Georgetown there were also thirteen night schools, from which no definite report has been received; the largest attended by one hundred and fifty and the smallest by fifteen pupils--mostly adults.

There are three industrial schools in operation, conducted by agents of benevolent societies; two other schools of this kind, one in Washington and one in Alexandria, are about being opened under the direction of the bureau. A

large amount of material adapted to the wants of these schools has been received from the Post Office Department and Sanitary Commission.

The advantages of the Soldiers' Free Library in this city have been extended for the benefit of the freedmen, and it will be the depository for all the books donated to the bureau in this District.

Since the date of the last report, other buildings have been secured and new schools opened to meet the constantly increasing demands of the colored people for educational facilities.

It is estimated that 6,000, or about one-fourth of the entire colored population in the cities, are now receiving instructions in the schools.

Of the improvement of the pupils the superintendent remarks: "My visits always encourage me to persevere in this good work. The progress of the scholars is remarkable under the circumstances. They are learning very rapidly, and often surprise me by their ready and correct answers to difficult questions."

The affairs of freedmen in the three counties in Virginia assigned to my care have required comparatively little attention, save in Alexandria. Captain Hoff has reported as commissary of subsistence.

Lieutenant Smith, in Fairfax, and Chaplain Ferree, in Loudon, are occupied chiefly in forwarding the adjustment of the new relations of whites and blacks. No rations are issued in either of these counties.

I have endeavored to have a complete census of these counties, and of the District of Columbia; but, owing to the difficulty of securing soldiers for this duty, have been only partially successful.

Returns have been received from Fairfax county which show a total colored population of 2,941—1,552 males and 1,389 females. January 1, 1863, 2,167 of these were slaves, 774 free; 128 are able to read; 1,121 are children under 14 years of age. The estimated colored population of the entire District is 33,000.

At Alexandria, Captain Hambrick's provost court for freedmen, established at your request by Major General Augur, has been eminently serviceable in securing justice.

A strong disposition has been shown on the part of local judges and city magistrates to consider as still binding the old judicial rules in reference to negro testimony and suits.

Efforts to punish by whipping were revived, but were checked by the prompt order of General Augur.

Aiming steadily at the securing of justice, simple justice, for the negro, in spite of the remaining disabilities and prejudices of slavery, thoroughly convinced that this fairly done, the long-disturbing negro question was settled, I have more than anything else watched and tried to reach all incidents and influences which should prompt this among whites and blacks, and especially in the administration of justice. Some of the police of this city and Georgetown at first were not disposed to be questioned in regard to their mistreatment of blacks; but that has passed away under the prompt and faithful attention of Mr. A. C. Richards, Superintendent of Metropolitan Police.

Lieutenant S. N. Clark, my efficient acting assistant adjutant general, made repeated examinations in Maryland, in answer to complaints, taking affidavits, and gathering trustworthy testimony. These reveal an antagonism between capital and labor hardly to be expected in a State where emancipation came by the voice of the people, and where the greatest present complaint is scarcity of labor. A lingering feeling of disloyalty to the government led many otherwise respectable people to countenance the misdeeds of those prompted to personal abuse of the negro, by their ignorant prejudices, and his powerlessness to secure legal address. Cases of personal assault were numerous; the punishment of any assailant, if white, by the law, was unknown.

The same statute which debars the negro the right to testify where his per-

son is imperilled, applies also where his rights of property are invaded. He can by no means compel the good faith of his white employer.

The law in Maryland by which, as interpreted, colored children may be apprenticed without the consent of their parents, and the abuse of it, bad as it is, operate to remove all those who would escape the forced separation of families, which formed so sad a feature of slavery.

Even written contracts to labor, including the names of each member of a family, have proved insufficient to protect from apprenticeship those whose age alone brought them within the scope of the law; and it has often happened that the children taken were the main-stay of aged parents, whose best years had been spent in unrequited toil for their masters.

The fruits of these abuses have been not alone discouragement and hardship for the laborer, but uncultivated fields, short crops, and consequent pecuniary loss to the employer.

Heeding all the privileges of Maryland, as a State which has respected its constitutional obligations, my endeavor has been to act not so much by direct authority as to secure the best possible administration of bad laws, and exercise an influence in favor of their speedy amendment, to aid, as far as I might, in enforcing order, exacting good faith between employer and employé, preventing injustice and fraud, and promoting the best interests of all classes.

It is gratifying to find the number of complaints steadily decreasing.

Captain J. M. Brown, assistant quartermaster at your headquarters, and for the bureau in this District, has shown excellent business qualities in the management of the finances committed to his care. All required financial reports have been forwarded.

The sources of the fund, and the fund itself, are steadily diminishing. Indeed, the tax should be removed at an early day.

Careful attention to provision against possible suffering during the now trying portion of the winter has been given. A steady application of present instrumentalities will, it is believed, enable the free people in this vicinity, as industry appears again in the spring, to relieve the general government from any special efforts in their behalf. This will be specially assured, should Virginia and Maryland so modify their statutes as to do them justice, and in the local administration of laws assure them the inalienable rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Their efforts for themselves are more and more wisely directed.

Their road up is still steep, rough, and badly hedged. Their friends, too, often mistake them and treat them as paupers, and their enemies keep up the old cry of "worthlessness."

Common sense, good faith, and simple justice would render their road easy, and their goal direct and certain.

CONCLUSION.

Although what has been done may come short of our wishes, more is already attained than any one dared hope last March. A prudent survey of facts cannot fail to encourage us.

An experience of several years, embracing the settlement in some form of nearly all the questions which arise out of the new order of things, and the peculiarities of feelings and circumstances among black and white south, gives my convictions of the success of emancipation, whatever temporary evils bad faith may here and there engender, the assurance of positive knowledge, more than of the confidence in opinions based on influence.

When first ordered to duty here, consenting to remain only till the bureau should be fully organized, I find myself closing this report after it has been in full operation so many months, and, under your faithful and earnest lead, has

filled page after page with illustrations of the humanities and charities unparalleled in the annals of national history.

Accept my sincere thanks for your uniform personal kindness and courtesy.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN EATON, JR.,

Brevet Brigadier General, Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner Bureau Refugees, &c.

Summary report of North Carolina—Colonel E. Whittlesey, Assistant Commissioner.

RALEIGH, N. C., *October 15, 1865.*

GENERAL: In presenting my first quarterly report of the operations of this bureau in North Carolina, which I have the honor to forward, I deem it proper to give a history of its

ORGANIZATION.

On the 22d of June I arrived at Raleigh, with instructions from you to take the control of all subjects relating to "refugees, freedmen, and abandoned lands" within this State. I found these subjects in much confusion. Hundreds of white refugees, and thousands of blacks, were collected about this and other towns, occupying every hovel and shanty, living upon government rations, without employment, and without comfort; many dying for want of proper food and medical supplies. A much larger number, both white and black, were crowding into the towns, and literally swarming about every depot of supplies to receive their rations. My first effort was to reduce this class of suffering and idle humanity to order, and to discover how large a proportion of these applicants were really deserving of help. The whites, excepting "loyal refugees," were referred to the military authorities. To investigate the condition of refugees and freedmen, and minister to the wants of the destitute, I saw at once would require the services of a large number of efficient officers. As fast as suitable persons could be selected, application was made to the department and district commanders for their detail, in accordance with General Order No. 102, War Department, May 31, 1865. In many cases these applications were unsuccessful, because the officers asked for could not be spared. The difficulties and delays experienced in obtaining the help needed for a proper organization of my work will be seen from the fact that upon thirty-four written requests, in due form, only eleven officers have been detailed by the department and district commanders. With such assistance, however, as could be secured, I proceeded to divide the State into four general districts, viz: Eastern, western, southern, and central. To the eastern district I assigned, as superintendent, Captain Horace James, assistant quartermaster, who was already on the ground, and had for a long time been in charge of "contrabands," under the appointment of military commanders of the district. Over the central district, Captain Beal, 9th Maine volunteers, was first appointed superintendent, but he was soon relieved by Lieutenant Colonel D. E. Clapp, 38th United States colored troops. The western district was placed under the supervision of Major Smith, 17th Massachusetts volunteers, who was, however, soon relieved to be mustered out with his regiment, and the vacancy has not yet been filled.

The southern district remained without an officer until August 18, when Major Charles J. Wickersham, assistant adjutant general, was assigned as its superintendent.

The next step was the division of these four districts into sub-districts. My first intention was to make each county a sub-district; but the impossibility of obtaining so large a number of officers as this would require compelled me to embrace from two to eight counties in each sub-district. The arrangement now made is as follows: Eastern district has eight (8) sub-districts, central district has nine (9) sub-districts, western district has six (6) sub-districts, and the southern district has four (4) sub-districts.

For the 27 sub-districts the whole number of assistant superintendents (inclusive of citizen agents) has been 33. The largest number at any specific time has been 20. The number on duty now is 15. Thus more than half of the State is still without an officer or representative of the bureau.

My organization has been three times almost broken up by the mustering out of regiments to which my officers belonged. The only permanent officers, and such only can be useful in this service, are those detailed by order of the Secretary of War. With this brief history of my efforts to organize the bureau, I proceed to state

THE DESIGN AND WORK PROPOSED.

In my circulars Nos. 1 and 2, (copies of which are herewith enclosed,) the objects to be attained are fully stated. All officers of the bureau are instructed—

- 1st. To aid the destitute, yet in such a way as not to encourage dependence.
- 2d. To protect freedmen from injustice.
- 3d. To assist freedmen in obtaining employment and fair wages for their labor.
- 4th. To encourage education, intellectual and moral.

Under these four divisions the operations of the bureau can best be presented.

RELIEF AFFORDED.

It was evident at the outset that large numbers were drawing rations who might support themselves. The street in front of the post commissary's office was blocked up with vehicles of all the descriptions peculiar to North Carolina, and with people who had come from the country around, in some instances from a distance of sixty miles, for government rations. These were destitute whites, and were supplied by order of the department commander. Our own headquarters, and every office of the bureau, was besieged from morning till night by freedmen, some coming many miles on foot, others in wagons and carts. The rations issued would scarcely last till they reached home, and in many instances they were sold before leaving the towns, in exchange for luxuries. To correct these evils orders were issued that no able-bodied man or woman should receive supplies, except such as were known to be industrious, and to be entirely destitute. Great care was needed to protect the bureau from imposition, and at the same time to relieve the really deserving. By constant inquiry and effort the throng of beggars was gradually removed. The homeless and helpless were gathered in camps, where shelter and food could be furnished, and the sick collected in hospitals, where they could receive proper care.

The statistical reports prepared by Captain Almy, C. S., forwarded herewith, will show a steady and healthy decrease of the number of dependents from month to month: In July there were issued 215,285 rations, valued at \$44,994 56; in August there were issued 156,289 rations, valued at \$32,664 40; in September there were issued 137,350 rations, valued at \$28,706 15.

Should no unforeseen trouble arise, the number will be still further reduced. But we have in our camps at Roanoke island and Newbern many women and children, families of soldiers who have died in the service, and refugees from the interior during the war, for whom permanent provision must be made. Some of the women might earn their support as servants in northern families, if there were any organized agency for finding them employment, and means for transporting them north. Many children might be collected in orphan asylums, saved

from death, and properly educated. And I earnestly recommend that the "soldiers' bounty fund" be expended in establishing such institutions. In this connexion may be properly reported the efforts made in behalf of the sick. At the organization of the bureau many white refugees were found in a wretched condition. These were placed, as far as possible, in hospitals. Some have died, others have recovered, and been sent back to their homes. But very few of this class now remain under our control. The reports prepared by Surgeon Hogan will show the condition of freedmen hospitals. In the early part of the summer much suffering and mortality occurred for want of medical attendance and supplies. This evil is now being remedied by the employment of surgeons by contract. One is on duty at Beaufort, another at Wilmington, and several others are expected soon.

The whole number of sick under care of the bureau has been 3,771 during the quarter ending September 30.

PROTECTION.

Regarding this bureau as the appointed instrument for redeeming the solemn pledge of the nation, through its Chief Magistrate, to secure the rights of freedmen, I have made every effort to protect them from wrong. Suddenly set free, they were at first exhilarated by the air of liberty, and committed some excesses. To be sure of their freedom, many thought they must leave the old scenes of oppression, and seek new homes. Others regarded the property accumulated by their labor as in part their own, and demanded a share of it. On the other hand, the former masters, suddenly stripped of their wealth, at first looked upon the freedmen with a mixture of hate and fear. In these circumstances some collisions were inevitable. The negroes were complained of as idle, insolent, and dishonest; while they complained that they were treated with more cruelty than when they were slaves. Some were tied up and whipped without trial, some were driven from their homes without pay for their labor, without clothing or means of support, others were forbidden to leave on pain of death, and a few were shot, or otherwise murdered. All officers of the bureau were directed, in accordance with your circular No. 5, to investigate these difficulties between the two classes, to settle them by counsel and arbitration, as far as possible to punish light offences by fines or otherwise, and to report more serious cases of crime to the military authorities for trial. The exact number of cases heard and decided cannot be given. They have been so numerous that no complete record could be kept. One officer reported that he had heard and disposed of as many as 180 complaints in a single day. The method pursued may be best presented by citing a few of the cases, and the action thereon. From the report of Captain James, for August, I quote the following:

"I forward to you, in his own language, a report of a case which occurred in Gates county, on the northern border of the State, far away from any influence of troops, and where the military power of the government had been little felt. No doubt it illustrates others in similar localities far from garrisons and northern influences. The report will repay perusal, and appears to have been managed with admirable tact on the part of Captain Hill: 'Reports had reached me of the way in which David Parker, of Gates county, treated his colored people, and I determined to ascertain for myself their truth. Accordingly, last Monday, August 20, accompanied by a guard of six men from this post, (Elizabeth City,) I proceeded to his residence, about forty miles distant. He is very wealthy. I ascertained, after due investigation, and after convincing his colored people that I was really their friend, that the worst reports in regard to him were true. He had twenty-three negroes on his farm, large and small. Of these, fourteen were field hands. They all bore unmistakable evidence of the way they had been worked—very much undersized, rarely exceeding, man or

woman, 4 feet 6 inches; men and women of thirty and forty years of age looking like boys and girls. It has been his habit for years to work them from sunrise to sunset, and often long after, only stopping one hour for dinner—food always cooked for them to save time. He had, and has had for many years, an old colored man, one-eyed, and worn out in the service, for an overseer or “over-looker,” as he called himself. In addition he has two sons at home, one of whom has made it a point to be with them all summer long—not so much to superintend as to drive. The old colored overseer always went behind the gang with a cane or whip, and woe betide the unlucky wretch who did not do continually his part. He had been brought up to work, and had not the least pity for any who could not work as well as he.

“Mr. Parker told me that he had hired his people for the season; that directly after the surrender of General Lee, he called them up, told them they were free; that he was better used to them than to others, and would prefer hiring them; that he would give them board and two suits of clothing to stay with him till the 1st day of January, 1866, and one Sunday suit at the end of that time; that they consented willingly—in fact, preferred to remain with him, &c. But from his people I learned that though he did call them up, as stated, yet when one of them demurred at the offer, his son James flew at him and cuffed and kicked him; that after that, they were all “perfectly willing to stay;” they were watched night and day; that Bob, one of the men, had been kept chained nights; that they were actually afraid to try to get away. There was no complaint of the food, nor much of the clothing; but they were in constant terror of the whip. Only three days before my arrival, Bob had been stripped in the field and, given fifty lashes, for hitting Adam, the colored over-looker, while James Parker stood by with a gun, and told him to run if he wanted to; he had a gun there. About four weeks before, four of them who went to church and returned before sunset, were treated to twenty-five lashes each. Some were beaten or whipped almost every day. Having ascertained these and other similar facts, I directed him to call them up and pay them from the first of May last up to the present time. I investigated each case, taking into consideration age, family, physical condition, &c., estimating their work from \$8 down, and saw him pay them off then and there, allowing for clothing and medical bill. I then arrested him and his two sons, and brought them here, except Dr. Joseph Parker, whose sister is very sick, with all the colored people I thought necessary as witnesses, intending to send them to Newbern for trial. But on account of the want of immediate transportation, I concluded to release them on their giving a bond in the sum of \$2,000 to Colonel E. Whittlesey, assistant commissioner for the State of North Carolina, and to his successors in office, conditional as follows:

“That whereas David Parker and James Parker have heretofore maltreated their colored people, and have enforced the compulsory system instead of the free labor system, now, therefore, if they, each of them, shall hereafter well and kindly treat, and cause to be treated, the hired laborers under their or his charge, and shall adopt the free labor system in lieu of the compulsory system, then this bond be void and of no effect; otherwise to remain in full force and effect, with good security.”

Lieutenant Colonel Clapp, superintendent central district, reports three cases of cruel beating, which have been investigated, and the offenders turned over to the military authorities for trial, besides very many instances of defrauding freedmen of their wages.

From the reports of Major Wickersham; superintendent of southern district, I quote the following:

August 25, A. S. Miller, Bladen county, states that Henry Miller (colored) neglects to support his family. Action: required Henry Miller to use his wages

for the support of his wife and children, who have no claims on their former master, and can look to no one else than the husband and father for support.

27th. Betsy Powell (colored) states that Mrs. Frank Powell, Columbus county, has driven her away without pay for her labor. Gave letter to Mrs. Powell, directing her to pay Betsy for her labor since April 27, 1865.

29th. Len Shiner (colored) states that he made an agreement with Mr. David Russel, of Robeson county, to work and gather his crop, for which he was to receive subsistence and one-third of the crop, when gathered. Mr. Russell has driven him off and refuses to pay. Wrote to Mr. Russell directing him to comply with terms of agreement, or furnish satisfactory reasons for not doing so. These are but examples of hundreds of complaints heard and acted upon by Major Wickersham and other officers in the southern district.

The following cases are taken from the report of Captain Barritt, assistant commissioner, at Charlotte:

Morrison Miller, charged with whipping girl Hannah (colored.) Found guilty. Action: ordered to pay said Hannah fifty bushels of corn towards supporting herself and children, two of said children being the offspring of Miller.

Wm. Wallace, charged with whipping Martha (colored.) Guilty. Action: fined said Wallace \$15, with assurance that if the above offence was repeated the fine would be doubled.

Council Best attempts to defraud six families of their summer labor by offering to sell at auction the crop on his leased plantation. Action: sent military force and stopped the sale until contract with laborers was complied with.

A hundred pages of similar reports might be copied, showing, on the one side, that many freedmen need the presence of some authority to enforce upon them their new duties; and on the other, that so far from being true that "there is no county in which a freedman can be imposed upon," [speech of Judge Reed in constitutional convention,] there is no county in which he is not oftener wronged; and these wrongs increase just in proportion to their distance from United States authorities. There has been great improvement, during the quarter, in this respect. The efforts of the bureau to protect the freedmen have done much to restrain violence and injustice. Such efforts must be continued until civil government is fully restored, just laws enacted, or great suffering and serious disturbance will be the result.

INDUSTRY.

Contrary to the fears and predictions of many, the great mass of colored people have remained quietly at work upon the plantations of their former masters during the entire summer. The crowds seen about the towns in the early part of the season had followed in the wake of the Union army, to escape from slavery. After hostilities ceased, these refugees returned to their homes, so that but few vagrants can now be found. In truth a much larger amount of vagrancy exists among the whites than among the blacks. It is the almost uniform report of officers of the bureau that freedmen are industrious.

The report is confirmed by the fact that out of a colored population of nearly 350,000 in the State, only about 5,000 are now receiving support from the government. Probably some others are receiving aid from kind-hearted men who have enjoyed the benefit of their services from childhood. To the general quiet and industry of this people, there can be no doubt that the efforts of the bureau have contributed greatly. I have visited some of the larger towns, as Wilmington, Newbern, Goldsboro', and, both by public addresses and private instructions, counselled the freedmen to secure employment and maintain themselves. Captain James has made an extensive tour through the eastern district for the same purpose, and has exerted a most happy influence. Lieutenant Colonel Clapp has spent much of his time in visiting the county seats of the central district,

and everywhere been listened to by all classes with deep interest. Other officers have done much good in this way. They have visited plantations, explained the difference between slave and free labor, the nature and the solemn obligation of contracts. The chief difficulty met with has been a want of confidence between the two parties. The employer, accustomed only to the system of compulsory labor, is slow to believe that he can secure fruitful services by the stimulus of wages. The laborer is unwilling to trust the promises of those for whom he has toiled all his days without pay. Hence but few contracts for long periods have been effected. The bargains for the present year are generally vague, and their settlement, as the crops are gathered in, requires much labor. In a great majority of cases the land-owners seem disposed to do justly, and even generously. And when this year's work is done, and the proceeds divided, it is hoped that a large number of freedmen will enter into contracts for the coming year. They will, however, labor much more cheerfully for money, with prompt and frequent payments, than for a share of the crop, for which they must wait twelve months. A large farmer in Pitt county hires hands by the job, and states that he never saw negroes work so well. Another in Lenoir county pays monthly, and is satisfied so far with the experiment of free labor. Another obstacle to long contracts was found in the impression which had become prevalent to some degree, *i. e.*, that lands were to be given to freedmen by this government. To correct this false impression I published a circular, No. 3, and directed all officers of the bureau to make it as widely known as possible. From the statistical reports enclosed, it will be seen that during the quarter 257 written contracts for labor have been prepared and witnessed; that the average rate of wages, when paid in money, is from \$8 to \$10 per month; that — farms are under the control of the bureau, and cultivated for the benefit of freedmen; that — acres are under cultivation, and — laborers employed. Many of the farms were rented by agents of the treasury as abandoned lands previous to the establishing of this bureau, and were transferred to us with the leases upon them. Nearly all have been restored to their owners, under the President's proclamation of amnesty, and our tenure of the few that remain is so uncertain that I have not deemed it prudent to set apart any for use of refugees and freedmen, in accordance with the act of Congress approved March 3, 1865. But many freedmen are taking this matter into their own hands, and renting lands from the owners for one or more years. The following communication indicates an interesting movement in this direction.

"KINSTON, N. C., August 16, 1865.

"Whereas we, a portion of the freedmen of Lenoir county, in the State of North Carolina, being desirous of embracing every facility which the United States government offers to provide for ourselves the comforts of a permanent home; and whereas we have felt the importance of mutual labor and mutual interests, and believing that industry is the basis of progress, and being desirous of becoming good citizens, showing that the labor spent on us was not thrown away: Therefore,

"*Be it, and it is hereby, resolved,* That we form ourselves into a society to purchase homes by joint stock, and for other purposes to be hereafter stated.

"*Be it further resolved,* That we raise ten thousand dollars for the purpose of homesteads, and that the said sum be raised by the 1st of January, 1868. And be it resolved, That this society shall be composed of the best and most reliable freedmen in Lenoir county. And it is further proposed to raise the required amount in the following manner, *viz:* Two hundred and fifty men will compose the society, each to be assessed the sum of forty-eight dollars per annum, to be paid in monthly instalments of four dollars each.

"ANTHONY BLUNT,

"JAMES HARGATE,

"EZEKIEL BLUNT,

"*Committee.*"

I am also endeavoring to purchase or rent, for a long period, the lands upon which houses have been erected by freedmen, so that they may not lose what has been expended. The most important local interest of this kind is the Trent River settlement. The village was carefully laid out by Captain James, and now contains a population of nearly 3,000, all but about 300 self-supporting. "Although," says Captain James, "in interest a part of the city of Newbern, it lies outside of the corporate limits, and therefore came under no municipal regulations." I therefore issued an order erecting it into a separate municipality. I imposed a small tax upon the trades and occupations of the people, and a very moderate ground rent upon the lots, to raise a fund for meeting the necessary expenses of maintaining the settlement. They pay these sums with pleasure, deeming them an evidence of citizenship. From the fund thus raised, the superintendent, assistant superintendent, a clerk, six nurses in the hospital, and some fifteen mechanics and laborers employed about the settlement, are paid. A good market is now nearly completed, the stalls in which have been taken up beforehand at high rates. It needs only the power to sell these people their lots of land to induce them to put more permanent improvements on them. The settlement, as such, is by all confessed to be well ordered, quiet, healthy, and better regulated than the city proper.

EDUCATION.

The quarter has been one of vacation, rather than active work, in this department. Still some progress has been made, and much done to prepare for the coming autumn and winter. Rev. F. A. Fiske, a Massachusetts teacher, has been appointed superintendent of education, and has devoted himself with energy to his duties. From his report it will be seen that the whole number of schools during the whole or any part of the quarter is 63, the number of teachers 85, and the number of scholars 5,624. A few of the schools are self-supporting, and taught by colored teachers, but the majority are sustained by northern societies and northern teachers. The officers of the bureau have, as far as practicable, assigned buildings for their use, and assisted in making them suitable. But the time is nearly past when such facilities can be given. The societies will be obliged, hereafter, to pay rent for school-rooms, and for teachers' homes. The teachers are engaged in a noble and self-denying work. They report a surprising thirst for knowledge among the colored people, children giving earnest attention and learning rapidly; and adults, after the day's work is done, devoting the evenings to study. In this connexion it may be mentioned, as a result of moral instruction, that 512 marriages have been reported and registered, and 42 orphans provided with good homes.

FINANCES.

The financial condition of the bureau is clearly presented in the reports of Captain James, who, in addition to his duties as superintendent of the eastern district, has acted as financial agent, with the assistance of Captain Seely, assistant quartermaster. The duties of the department have been very great, and have been faithfully discharged by these officers. In July, Colonel Heaton, agent of the United States treasury, turned over to the bureau a large amount of real estate in Wilmington, Newbern, and adjoining counties, which had been leased for terms varying from one month to one year. The collection of rents from several hundred lessees of tenements and farms has been a laborious work. But the examination and adjustment of claims for this property, and the restoration of it in accordance with the President's amnesty proclamations, has been more trying and perplexing. Nearly all, however, is now out of our hands, and unless a re-examination of these claims is forced upon us by application for rents, on the

ground that the property was not abandoned, we shall be able hereafter to devote all of our time to our appropriate work.

The following summary of operations presents the leading facts to the foregoing report :

Receipts for the quarter.....		\$44,913 24
Current expenses	\$4,350 34	
For soldiers' families from bounty fund.....	7,977 25	
Remitted to treasury	21,584 17	
	<hr/>	33,911 76
Balance credited October 1, 1865		<hr/> <hr/> 11,001 48

Farms, 128; acres on farms cultivated, 8,540; acres of pine lands worked, about 50,000; freedmen employed on farms, 6,102; contracts witnessed, 257; freedmen employed under them, 1,847; marriages registered, 512; orphans apprenticed, 42; schools established, 63; teachers employed, 85; scholars attending, 5,642; cases of crime reported for trial, 12; cases of difficulty settled, reported in full, 257; cases not reported in writing, several thousand; rations issued, 508,924; value of, dollars, 106,365 11; hospitals, 14; sick in hospitals, &c., attended by direction of the bureau, 54,441; deaths, whole number of freedmen reported, in hospitals, camps, and towns adjoining, 2,680.

Reports of sick and deaths embraces all cases in the vicinity of stations, and with which the bureau has in any way been connected.

Estimated crops: Cotton, 858,700 pounds; corn, 32,715 bushels; sweet potatoes, 1,000 bushels; turpentine, 5,700 barrels; tar, 5,808 barrels.

The number of men engaged in fishing cannot be ascertained.

Many of the officers in command of troops in this department have given me their hearty support, and my own subordinates have been faithful and zealous in the discharge of their duties. I am specially indebted to Lieutenant F. H. Beecher, acting assistant adjutant general, for his industry; to Captain Thomas P. Johnson, acting assistant quartermaster; Captain George C. Almey, commissary of subsistence; and Surgeon M. K. Hogan, for their efficient management of their respective departments.

Very respectfully,

E. WHITTLESEY,
Colonel and Assistant Commissioner.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,
Commissioner of Bureau of Refugees, &c.