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# APPEAL

TO THE

## PEOPLE OF VIRGINIA.

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RICHMOND, FEBRUARY 22d, 1865.

FELLOW-CITIZENS: Commissary General St. John, at his recent entrance upon the duties of his bureau, invited several gentlemen of this city, including a number of clergymen, to a conference as to the best means of increasing the supplies of food necessary for the subsistence of the Army of Northern Virginia. At this conference, the undersigned were appointed as a committee to prepare and issue an address to the loyal people of the State, for the purpose of placing before them such facts, and of making such suggestions as will, it is confidently believed, ensure a general and hearty co-operation in this great and necessary work.

You are aware, fellow-citizens, that the movements of the enemy in South Carolina and Georgia have interrupted our communications with the Southern States, and seriously embarrassed the operations of the Subsistence Department, so that immediate and energetic action on the part of the Government and the people is demanded for the support of the army.

It is ascertained that the supply of food in the accessible counties of North Carolina and Virginia is ample for the subsistence both of soldiers and citizens. Of the four modes of obtaining it for the use of the army, viz: by impressment, purchase, loan, and voluntary contribution, it is believed that when the exigency, now existing, is clearly understood, the last mentioned method will be the one most approved by the people, and therefore the one which will command the most cheerful, immediate, and generous aid on their part.

The resources of the people have already been severely taxed. Vast quantities of food have already been obtained by impressments, loans, and voluntary contributions. But for these extraordinary efforts our armies would have long since been disbanded, and, without a continuation of these efforts, our soldiers cannot accomplish the task yet before

them. Apart from all those considerations of honor and duty, which most constrain high-toned and patriotic men, these liberal contributions on the part of citizens are necessary to the preservation of their own rights of property and personal safety. Interest itself demands any and every sacrifice necessary to prevent subjugation.

On this point, one testimony will be sufficient. Virginians and patriots all over the Confederacy will regard with implicit belief and profoundest respect any statement on such a subject emanating from our beloved General-in-Chief, ROBERT E. LEE. In reference to the very appeal we are now making, he writes:

"I cannot permit myself to doubt that our people will respond to it, when they reflect on the alternative presented to them. They have simply to choose whether they will contribute such commissary and quartermaster stores as they can possibly spare to support an army which has already borne and done so much in their behalf, or, retaining their stores, maintain the army of the enemy engaged in their subjugation. I am aware that a general obligation of this nature rests lightly on most men—each being disposed to leave its discharge to his neighbor—but I am confident that our citizens will appreciate their responsibility in the case, and will not permit an army which, by God's blessing and their patriotic support, has hitherto resisted the efforts of the enemy, to suffer now through their neglect."

Such being the emergency, and the corresponding obligation, it only remains now to consider the best practicable means of attaining the end in view.

There is in every county accessible to us in the State an officer or agent of the Bureau of Subsistence, charged with the duty of collecting by purchase or otherwise army subsistence, and forwarding the same to this city. It is also proposed to appoint two or more gentlemen of influence, energy and intelligence, in each county, (who shall appoint others in each magisterial district,) to call the attention of every family to the wants of the army, and to urge them to contribute in some way as large a portion of their supplies as can possibly be spared. These contributions can be made as DONATIONS, SALES OR LOANS, at the option of the owner, and the supplies, so obtained, will be sent to some convenient point to be indicated by the local officer, where he will receive and receipt for the same, and give the parties, when required, an obligation in kind or in currency.

But, as already intimated, there are difficulties in the way of obtaining supplies either by purchase or by loan, which can be best overcome by the spontaneous and free-will offerings of the people, generously contributing of their substance for the support of the army now battling and suffering in their behalf.

For the information of those who desire to aid the cause by voluntary contributions, we beg leave to state that the following plan has been considered and approved by the authorities:

1. Let every citizen, who can, pledge himself to furnish the rations of one soldier for six months, without designating any particular soldier as the recipient of the contribution.

2. Let those thus pledging themselves furnish, say 80 pounds of bacon and 180 pounds of flour, or their equivalent in beef and meal, to be delivered to the nearest commissary agent.

3. Let the donor bind himself to deliver one half of the amount above stated, viz: 40 pounds of bacon and 90 pounds of flour (or its equivalent) IMMEDIATELY, and the remainder at the end of three months,

unless he prefers to adopt the better plan of advancing the whole amount pledged at once.

4. Let the pledge of each individual subscribing and furnishing the rations of one soldier for 6 months be made the basis of larger subscriptions. Those whose generosity and whose means will enable them to do so, may obligate themselves to provide the rations of 5, 10, 20, or any other number of soldiers for 6 months; while even the poor, who could not afford to supply the ration of one man, by uniting their contributions may authorize one of the number, so combining, to make the designated subscription of at least one ration for one man for six months.

We trust that this plan, so intelligible and so easily put in execution, will commend itself to thousands of our patriotic people, who, by reason of age, sex, or infirmity cannot serve in the field, will yet take pride and pleasure in being represented in the field in the persons of soldiers whose rations they themselves furnish.

On this subject, Gen. Lee expresses the opinion that almost every one who has a family, especially among our farmers, could afford to support one more in addition to his present number, and that this plan will not require a man to do more than to send to a soldier what he would always be able to give in the way of hospitality to such soldier, were he an inmate of his house.

The scheme thus explained presents a system which may be contracted or expanded according to the ability of the contributor—not excluding the poor, and giving scope to the largest liberality of the rich; and, in fact, presents a plan for securing all the food in the country which can be obtained by voluntary contribution.

And now, in order to carry it into immediate execution, the co-operation of legislators, magistrates, ministers of the Gospel, and all persons of influence and standing in every county is earnestly invoked. The cause is one which makes its own appeal to fathers and mothers who have sons in the army; to men of wealth who have large possessions to protect; to men in humble circumstances, to whom the liberties of their country are equally dear; to all classes in the community, whose security and happiness are involved in the issue of this struggle for the right of self-government. Every right-minded and right hearted man must feel that citizens in their comfortable homes, exempt from the privations and perils of the field, should be willing to exercise the severest self-denial, if necessary, that the army to which, under God, we are indebted for our present safety, and to whom we must owe our final deliverance from the presence and the power of the enemy, should at least be supplied with the food which is essential to the vigorous health and comfort of its soldiers. A claim so reasonable and just **MUST** and **WILL** be satisfied.

And now, in concluding our appeal to you, fellow-citizens, we do not forget that Virginia has already suffered sorely in this struggle to obtain all that is dearest to the patriot's heart. The bloody tide of battle has swept over almost every portion of her territory; the sacrifices, as well as the services, of her sons have been great; yet the spirit of her people has never flagged, nor are her resources exhausted. She has hitherto responded nobly to every call the Confederate Government has made upon her; and it is not doubted that now, when

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made aware of its present wants, her people will prove themselves both able and willing to relieve them.

- MOSES D. HOGG,
- J. L. BURROWS,
- JOHN E. EDWARDS,
- CHS. MINNIGERODE,
- M. J. MICHELBACHER,
- W. J. PETTIGREW,
- THOS. W. McCANCE.
- R EDMOND,
- SAMUEL J. HARRISON.

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