

Executive Department

Milledgeville March 7<sup>th</sup> 1864

His Excellency Jefferson Davis.

Dear Sir

Your letter of Feb 17<sup>th</sup> is now before me, and it affords me an opportunity of which I now avail myself of correcting an error which I find by reference to the reports and information I have since received from the officers of the Road I had fallen into, as to the loss of the Engines, I knew that all the late statements from the officers, in charge of the Road, showed the loss of over 200 of our cars, while in Confederate service under the direction of Confederate officers, and I took it for granted that a like proportion of Engines had been lost with the Cars.

I am now informed however that our Cars were carried out on the Memphis & Charleston Road for the assistance of Genl A S Johnston by Engines belonging to that Road, and not by State Road Engines, and that the losses on the other Roads have been of Cars carried off by their Engines and in charge of their Conductors & Engineers acting under military direction. I cheerfully make the correction as I have no disposition to misrepresent or exaggerate our severe losses.

The report of the officer in charge of Railroads to you would have some reason in it, if it were not true, as it is, that a very large proportion of our cars and Engines are so much worn by the heavy drafts made upon both, to do not only the transportation of the Road proper, but military transportation on other Roads, as to render them very unreliable.

conductors of our Road in Confederate service, upon application made for such favor in view as stated of the necessity of such labor in keeping up the Road, and transporting military supplies for this army. It is proper in this connection, that I say that Genl Johnston has made no such refusal.

To that part of the correspondence which seems to be intended to charge bad management of the State Road under my control I can only say that this charge has been made in this state by my enemies and has entered as an element of opposition to me before the people of the state and I have been sustained over every opponent by a vote with which I felt that I had no reason to be dissatisfied.

I trust the management of the State Road will not suffer by comparison with the management which lost us New Orleans and opened the Mississippi to the enemy, which lost us Fort Donaldson & gave them Nashville, which kept the ~~army~~ too weak to defend both, divided between Vicksburg & Tennessee till we lost both, and which opened Georgia to attack, by dividing our ~~army~~ at Missionary Ridge in the face of a superior force of the enemy.

But I prefer to pass these errors which have cost the people of the Confederacy so much loss of life and property without further remark. I should not have alluded to them here had I not been convinced of a purpose in your correspondence which I had not heretofore supposed you entertained.

In conclusion I beg leave to renew my application to you to do me the justice to return to the State Road part of the rolling stock your officers, have caused us to lose, and to assure you that we can not without this justice,

It would have been but reasonable to suppose that an officer in charge of the Railroad transportation of the Confederacy would have known a fact, known to every business man of the Country to be true of all the Roads, and that, some mention would have been made of it in a report as to the Capacity of a particular Road.

Your Excellency doubtless seeing this injustice, is pleased to close your letter by saying "If it is foreseen that all the Railroads of the Country must be subject to some embarrassment from the War and occasional destruction of their rolling stock and that constant effort will be required to replace such losses by repairing and building new Engines & Cars."

You do not mention in this connection where the material to be used in "repairing and building new Engines and Cars" is to be had.

Confederate officers have the control of almost all the iron Mills in the Confederacy, and it is next to impossible for the Railroad Superintendants to get their consent to get from the Mills the smallest amount of material with which repairs absolutely necessary to the present use of the Roads can be made. I have found very great embarrassment on this account in keeping the State Road in running condition; after I had furnished iron to lay the track on the branch Road from the State Road to the Etowah works without which the work could not have been successfully conducted at the rolling mills and while I was transporting all ~~the~~ the stone coal used in the manufacture of the iron, in consideration of which I had the obligation of the Company to sell to the Road all the iron necessary for the use of the Road.

Nor has this been all the difficulty with which we have had to contend as those under your command have expressly refused to detail or discharge good machinists and old

continue to transport your supplies promptly, if the army  
should be heavily reinforced and should be able to  
advance.

Very respectfully  
your obedt servant  
Joseph P. M. W. W.

March 7. 1864

Gen Brown

Pa.

In relation to the  
transportation in Pa.

Recd. March 21/64