

[Sep. 3, 1823]

To the President of The United States.



Sir,

The undersigned, a Committee representing the Union Merchants Exchange of St. Louis, had the honor to wait on you on the 3rd inst., and to submit for your consideration, certain suggestions concerning the restrictions, which, by regulations emanating from the Treasury Department, have been imposed upon the commerce of the West and North West; thus, virtually continuing, after the grand campaign which has opened it to navigation, the Blockade of the Mississippi.

Before the date of our interview with your Excellency, we had submitted this matter to the Hon. The Secretary of the Treasury, orally and in writing, briefly stating the grievance and urging the emancipation of Western commerce, from the restraints now imposed on it, except those which may be necessary
to secure

to secure success in the struggle for the preservation of the National life.

We desire now to submit to you Excellency, copies of the communication addressed by us to the Hon: the Secretary of the Treasury, and his reply thereto, for which we submit your careful consideration.

While we think, with all due respect to the Hon: Secretary that our argument against the system now in force, both on principle and policy, remains unassumed, we understand that the sole ground, ^{substantially} on which the regulations imposing the restrictions, complained of are rested by him, is that they are necessary to prevent embarrassment to military operations, and that ~~having~~ ^{being} ~~been~~ established only with that view, they will be abandoned so soon as in that view they can be safely discontinued. While this simplifies the whole matter, it furnishes, as we think, a full and conclusive argument against the whole system.

system of restrictions now in force. Since
if the only inducement to this system
is the necessity of presenting an embarras
of commerce which unlicensed and un-
regulated commerce, might offer to
our armies and their operations,
surely the whole matter of such re-
strictions is purely for military
consideration and decision, and ^{they} should
be applied or removed, and absolutely
controlled, not by the head of the
Treasury Department, but by the Com-
mander of the particular Depart-
ment, who, far better than any one
else, can judge, what the constantly
changing exigencies of a campaign
may require.

In brief, the system now prevailing is
defended only as an aid to military
operations, and to guard against and
prevent embarrassment to them. As-
suredly then, it should be exclusively
under

under military control. We were fully
in the opinion that trade should be
so restrained as that it shall in no
way, under, interfere with or ~~interfere~~
demoralize our armies, or embarrass
their movements, and we shall submit
without the least dissatisfaction or
complaint to whatever, and however
stringent, regulations the Chiefs of
our armies may find it expedient
for this purpose to adopt. What we
insist on is, that as they are deemed
necessary for military reasons, they
should be denied, improved and
enforced by military authority.
We of course make no complaint of
the Hon: the Secretary of the Treasury,
nor do we doubt his anxious desire
to relieve the grievances of which
we complain, so far as he thinks
consistent with the good of the
country, but we are unwilling to
differ from the conclusion, he has
reached, and we consider it our duty
duty

not only to our immediate ~~concerns~~
= ~~interests~~, but to the loyal people of the
whole valley, in view of the serious
injury entailed by the present ~~regu-~~
= ~~lation~~, and the magnitude of the
interests and issues involved, to
call the attention of your Excellency
to it, and request you to give it
full consideration and to apply
the remedy, ^{by referring the whole} ~~by referring the whole~~
matter for such regulations as may
be found necessary, to the military
authorities, under such general
instructions, as may be deemed
advisable.

The loyal people of the Valley have shed
much blood, and have expended
much treasure, in defence of the
Union. This was their plain duty,
discharged with glad alacrity, and
they will set no limits to the same
= ~~efforts~~ they can and will make in
this

this great cause. They claim to be the
equals in true loyalty of their fellow
citizens of other sections, and they
appeal to the record of the past
three years in proof that they
are surpassed by none.
And hence, while none can deny
their readiness to share whatever trials,
sufferings and sacrifices, the nation's
peril may demand, they feel that
they are entitled to be heard in
asking for the abandonment of
a system prolific of abuses, destructive
of even such commerce as a state
of war permits, and productive
of no good result.

We are assured that your Excellency
will be ready to exercise your just
authority in the correction of the
evils of which we complain,
and we submit the matter to
you in full confidence that
upon deliberate consideration

Yours

you will find our request not
only reasonable in itself, but
founded on true principle and
sustained by wise policy.

We are,

With the greatest respect
Yours etc etc

Edw. Buckingham

Charles L. Tucker

J. H. Alexander

Barton Allen