

From J.B. Henderson to R.T. Van Horn

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Washington City

Mch 3. 1864.

Dear Col.

Yours of 24th ult. received. I am very sorry that you have been mustered out of service. I had hoped that the pay of that position would have been left, while you were getting up a brigade. The number of Brig[.] Generals is limited as all know [*text stricken through*] by law and Mr[.] Lincoln has managed so far to keep the number fixed, full, and such is the case at present. But I think the Senate will reject a number of the appointments leaving vacancies to be filled hereafter. The papers sent by Anderson were

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received and I have filed them after a long talk with the President in regard to the matter.

A few days since I prepared an application to authorize you to raise a Brigade and filed it with him, for favorable endorsement over to Genl[.] Rosecrans -- the War Department refusing to act here in such things independent of consent of District Commander. If I can procure such authorization, the appointment you knew will follow. If the authority be given I will try and have him give you a staff appointment in the interim, so as to pay you for labor. It shall be arranged in some way, before I quit[.]

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I fully agree with you in reference to the Convention bill -- I had had no previous conference with Dyer in regard to it & at first I doubted the propriety of his move, but I am now fully satisfied it is best as it is -- Mr. Lincoln will favor immediate emancipation. This I know. And that will secure the chief object of the Convention. As to disfranchisement, it is my opinion that rebellious sentiment will go with slavery, to a large extent. Again[, ] the War must be over in a short time and when the War is over, disfranchisement is not necessary. It cannot last longer than Jan[uar]y next.

I have read your speech on the Convention and I frankly say to you, I approve the most of it and do not seriously quarrel with any of it.

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If there be any objection, it is a "leaning to virtue's side". I mean its intense democracy as applicable to the times. However I am accused of the same feeling having become imbued with it in early youth. It is the best argument you ever made -- not subject to many of those metaphysical objections, found in your letter, declining to run for the Convention.

You are right in regard to Mr[.] Lincoln. He will be the nominee of the Union Convention. Nothing can now prevent it, except such a flank movement as the delegates in the Democratic Convention made on Mr[.] Van Buren in 1844. There are many objections to Mr[.] Lincoln, but

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taking into consideration all the circumstances surrounding us, I think he is the best man to be selected by the convention. I am not so certain of the result of the next election as some of my friends seem to be. Success politically, depends entirely upon military success this summer and we are starting out badly. Write me freely and fully.

Your friend

J.B. Henderson