

## Transcription

### "Willing to act as well as to vote"

Clarksburg Va

May 9th 1861

Hon John Letcher Govr of Va

Dr Sir

We have formed and organized a Volunteer Company here but are without arms, Uniforms &c. I suppose a report of the Organization of this Company, by the Col, was sent to you, through Mr Gittings, a few days Since. It is important, I think, with reference to the condition of this part of the State, that every facility should be afforded to enable the Companys formed and forming to muster and concentrate. There were but few Volunteer Companies in North Western Virginia, before the Commencement of the recent difficulties, consequently everything had to be done hurriedly and imperfectly. The old companies have almost all been broken up by party differences. There is undoubtedly is a wide spread and earnest movement here to detach North Western Va from the other part of the State and to hold it by means to be furnished at home and to be supplied by the Federal Government, Ohio and Pennsylvania. The details of this scheme cannot be given, by me at least, but the purpose is manifest. It is founded upon the supposition that the State of Virginia cannot conveniently furnish Means to prevent ~~this consummation~~ and that Ohio and Pennsylvania can and will furnish the necessary aid for the accomplishment of, this object I fear that it will be necessary to send from the Valley of Virginia some troops, as far west as Grafton, as a nucleus for the Volunteer force to be collected there. Drill Masters at least should be sent. The Volunteers that will concentrate there and at Moundsville and Parkersburg, it must be recollected will be the rawest Militia and nothing more; The most of them will not even understand the simplest word of command. Any arms &c sent to this country, through Grafton, will have to be guarded at that point, at least; a combination of men at that place has for some time past been breaking open and searching the Cars for arms &c. It is useless to deny that a large part of the people of this part of the State prefer to follow the fortunes of the North and what they call the Union to a connection with Virginia and the Southern Confederacy. And they are willing to act as well as to vote to secure the success of this policy. And it is true too that many of those who would be disposed to adhere to Virginia are overawed and timid. The policy of sending troops here from the Valey, will, I think, have to be



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

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considered by those in authority; it is true that a good deal of prejudice may be excited by it, if it is done. Our people will be told that it is designed to overawe them and to influence the elections but still, I fear, that, if it is not done, there will be with the consent of a large part of our people an attempt to occupy this section by Northern Troops. This may not be easily understood by those not familiar with this Country. But it must be recollected that our intercourse is almost entirely with the West and the North, we have none with the Central and eastern portions of Virginia. We are not Slaveholders, many of us are of Northern birth, We read almost exclusively Northern newspapers and books, and listen to Northern preachers. But I cannot go into this subject fully.

The bearer of this letter will explain the condition of things here, more fully than I can now; he is well informed upon it and as you know entirely reliable. A judicious distribution of improved arms in this Country would encourage us greatly.

Very respectfully.

Yours &c

RO JOHNSTON

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**Citation:** Robert Johnston to Governor John Letcher, May 9, 1861, Executive Papers of Governor John Letcher, Acc. 36787, State Government Records Collection, Record Group 3, Library of Virginia.