

INSPECTION REPORT OF
Bvt. Brig. Gen'l C. H. HOWARD,
South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,
Commissioner, Bureau Refugees, &c.

GENERAL:—I have the honor to submit the following report of a recent tour of inspection in Georgia and Florida.

Leaving Charleston, S. C., December 7th inst., I called at Beaufort, S. C., on my way to Savannah. Among other matters of the Bureau to which my attention was called, at Beaufort, was the operation of the new order from the Assistant Commissioner of South Carolina, establishing a public *Cotton-weigher*. The freedmen had been defrauded in various ways, by speculators, in the disposal of their cotton—sometimes by false weight, sometimes in making the change, etc., etc. A public *cotton-weigher* was therefore appointed as an agent of the Bureau, and the freedmen having cotton for sale, were required to have it weighed by him—all expense to be paid by a moderate toll defined in the order. This regulation I found was working well and had proved a great protection to the freedmen.

There had been of late considerable suffering for want of food for colored refugees coming into Beaufort from the main land, in transitu to their old homes on the islands or elsewhere. An order from the District Commander had established a military board to meet once a month and examine all applicants for rations, make a list of the indigent who were unable to work and confine the issues strictly to this list. The result of this, is, that the local Bureau Agent is prevented from getting rations for the destitute refugees, above alluded to and great suffering has followed and in some cases death from starvation. I instructed the agent to obtain requisitions to meet these cases, properly signed and approved, in accordance with Circular No. 8, from Bureau Head Quarters, and if the rations were not given, (by reason of the military order referred to) to report the fact at once to the Assistant Commissioner of the State.

On the 9th of December, proceeding to Savannah, I met there General TILLSON, Assistant Commissioner for Georgia, and was present at a meeting he had appointed with the Planters in the afternoon, and at another of the leading colored people in the evening.

The great difficulty before us was the reluctance on the part of the freedmen to make contracts for the coming year. General TILLSON was visiting this section of the State, with the purpose of making every effort to induce the freedmen to enter into contracts. At the meeting of the planters he stated distinctly that if they would offer liberal wages, he would bring all the influence of the Bureau to bear to this end, and would use authority to secure the fulfillment of such contracts when made. Many of the planters seemed to differ from him, as to what ought to be considered fair or liberal wages. They talked about eight, ten and twelve (8, 10 & 12) dollars per month; most agreeing that ten dollars and food was good wages for a full hand. General TILLSON was positive in his declaration that their offers were too low, and that he would not approve contracts giving less than from twelve (12) to fifteen (15) dollars per month, with food, for males, and from eight (8) to ten (10) for females: that they were at liberty, of course, to secure such contracts as they could, but that if they desired his co-operation, they must offer what he believed to be fair wages. Some of the planters agreed to his terms.

At the meeting of the colored people, plans were proposed for defraying the expenses of their hospital and their principal school, to render them entirely self-supporting. The people readily assented to a plan for soliciting regular contributions from all the colored population of the city, made practicable by the census recently taken by the Agent of the Bureau, giving the place of residence, occupation and amount of property of all colored persons in Savannah.

One of the strongest motives preventing the making of contracts, is the hope of possessing land of their own.

Notwithstanding the many orders on this subject, and the continued efforts of agents to correct the false impression, many freed people in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, still hope that the government will give them lands. At this meeting some other reason for the hesitation in entering into contracts for another year were given by freedmen themselves. One was their reluctance to work under overseers, especially the same overseers they had had in slavery. It was explained to those present that overseers or leaders of gangs are necessary in free labor, and are employed in all parts of the world where a number of hands are working together. But I would respectfully suggest that the recommendation be given to those desirous of employing freedmen, to procure if possible, overseers from the north, or, at least, not to insist upon the same ones they had under the old system. The freedmen distinctly aver that they have been beaten and ill-treated by these overseers, and now as free men refuse positively to work under them.

At this meeting, instances were reported of freedmen who had received under General SHERMAN's order a patent for twenty, (20) or forty (40) acres of abandoned land, situated on the Savannah river, within thirty (30) miles of the sea, and who had located and worked the same. Now the old owners are returning, and the freedmen are unwilling to give up the land; in fact I am not aware that any order has been issued requiring them to relinquish it.

A branch bank of the National Freedmen's Trust Company, having been set in operation at Savannah, by Mr. ALVORD, the Bureau Inspector of Finances, the matter was presented by him, and others to this meeting, and the importance of such an institution to the freedmen strongly urged.

The next day, December 10th, I took steamer for Darien, Ga., intending to reach the Gulf Rail Road, at Doctortown, its present terminus.

At Darien was a company of the 103d, U. S. Colored Regt., just about to be relieved by one of the 12th Maine Regiments. The resident freedmen complained to me, that the latter Regiment, when stationed there, had summarily evicted the colored people from the place.

had recently left them without paying them any wages, or giving them any share of the crop of last season, and they had constructed flats, or merely rude rafts, and embarking their families, had floated down the Altamaha River. They found the old plantations barren of any present means of subsistence, and now they must suffer. They hoped to make contracts for another year with their former owners, or preferably, with others owning plantations in that vicinity, but meanwhile, their means of living were exceedingly precarious.

Some procured work upon the docks at Darien, but only a small proportion of the entire number who have thus migrated to the coast. I have dwelt upon this matter because I found that their cases were examples of a general evil existing in that part of Georgia. And if the Bureau is compelled to provide rations for a considerable number of these people during the winter, it should be understood the cause is not alone the improvidence of the freedmen, nor is it possible to remedy the evil in the present scarcity of agents, by enforcing a fair division of the crops; for the people are thrown upon our hands some two hundred (200) miles, more or less, from the place where they have worked the past season.

I was informed that there were nine hundred (900) colored people upon Sapelo, who intended leaving the island, in case one of the former owners, (Mrs. —) returned to resume possession of her plantation upon which they had been located under the provisions of General SHERMAN's order.

There was need of a Bureau Agent at Darien. The officer who had been in command, stated that he had orders from General BRAXTON, not to interfere at all with freedmen's affairs, but if they had any complaints, to direct them to go to Savannah. As this is a distance of one hundred miles, and no transportation could be furnished them, few of the freed people could expect to gain redress for any wrongs, or to get information of their rights and duties.

One case of outrage, too flagrant to be passed without notice was authentically reported to me. It occurred at South Newport, fifteen (15) miles from Darien. A colored woman, after much maltreatment, made her escape. She says her master insisted that she was not free, that he cared nothing for "Lincoln's Proclamation," and when she asked to be allowed to go away and take her children, she was confined on bread and water, and finally got away as best she could, leaving her children behind, but promising to get help and come for them.

It is proper to state that General TILLSON visited Darien and Brunswick the following week, and appointed resident civilian agents of the Bureau, who he believes, will carry out orders, and deal fairly by all parties.

Ascending the Altamaha river, I reached Doctortown December 13th. Upon the boat I conversed freely with several planters and other residents of the country. All manifested great opposition to the colored troops, and meeting Captain RICHARDSON (12th Maine Vols.) the Sub-Assistant Commissioner for the Altamaha District, at Doctortown, I found that he was also of the opinion that the presence of the colored troops in the country had a tendency to unsettle labor, and in some other respects was harmful to the freed people. I therefore wrote a letter to General TILLSON, recommending that if practicable, white troops be substituted in that District. None of the citizens with whom I conversed, were in favor of the immediate withdrawal of all United States Troops. They said they were needed for the preservation of order, and the protection of the whites.

Most of the white residents of this section took ground against schools for the education of the freed people, not only as labor lost, but some held that it was injurious to all working classes to be taught from books.

Many talked hopelessly about the prospect of procuring steady labor from the negroes without some means of exterior compulsion. All set the wages at a lower rate than that proposed by General TILLSON.

Remaining two days at Doctortown, a good opportunity was afforded for obtaining information of the condition of the freed people in that region. The officer in command of the garrison, confirmed my previous impressions as to the large numbers flocking from the interior to the coast. Most of these were destitute of clothing, and on their arrival here had no supply of food. Many of the planters in this locality had been unwilling to give their hands a share of the crops, or any other recompense for the labor of the last season, generally claiming that they have not worked well enough to deserve any wages. Some cases of violence and other ill-treatment of the negroes had come to the knowledge of this officer. He said he had no instructions to attend to freedmen's affairs, but that his military duties would admit of it, and he would cheerfully undertake the matter—in fact had taken upon himself to correct some flagrant abuses. I requested him as far as in his power, to remedy all such evils in future—to encourage the freed people to remain at their present homes, and to this end to see that they were properly recompensed for their labor of the past season, and that fair contracts, correctly drawn were made for the coming year.

On my way from Doctortown to Thomasville, by Railroad, (upwards of a hundred miles) I conversed with the officers on garrison at the different stations, and found that what has been said of Doctortown, was substantially true of all the rest. I therefore gave written authority to the Sub-Assistant Commissioner of the District to call upon the military officers to act as agents of the Bureau until the resident civilians should be appointed for each county, in accordance with General TILLSON's plan, approved by the State Convention and the Provisional Governor. Some of the officers had before voluntarily rendered much assistance to the Sub-Assistant Commissioner where cases of misconduct, in which freedmen were involved, had come to their knowledge. It is now made their duty to investigate every complaint and reported abuses from either party.

The Sub-Assistant Commissioner of Altamaha District, who was travelling in company with me at this time, was engaged in investigating a case where certain parties were charged with kidnapping colored children and shipping them to Cuba. Other cases were reported but there was no conclusive proof that any children from that section had actually been taken to Cuba. In the case mentioned two children had mysteriously disappeared, but on the arrest of their former owner and his being put under bonds to produce the children he was able to find them in Florida, and brought them back but could not satisfactorily explain their sudden transfer to that state without their own or their parents' consent.

The Sub-Assistant Commissioner was also engaged in assuming formal possession of various Confederate Government buildings at the different stations along the Railroad. At Quitman, Ga., respectively, there were buildings of this kind, at each of which, one of which, was of

citizens would ever send their children there to school again. I urged upon them that only one would be used and that the poorest, and that if the school for whites were to be opened another place would be procured for the blacks meanwhile. But as these were among the fairest and most liberal of the citizens, embracing two judges of the district, and they persisted in asserting that the mere fact of the blacks having used one of the buildings would prevent forever afterwards the maintenance of any school there for whites, and stating that it was proposed to have a school, for whites, opened there the 1st of January, proximo, I yielded to them: partly to prevent the ill feeling which I saw would arise and partly to encourage the re-opening of the schools for whites which I believed no less important in that section than for blacks. I stated to them that I would not have yielded to such a groundless prejudice except for the latter reason, and that I should expect a flourishing school for whites to open there at the beginning of the New Year.

The colored members of the Methodist church, at Thomasville, have decided to separate from the whites, and have raised means to build a church of their own. Two thirds of the membership of the Baptist church are blacks, and they have also decided to separate, and have offered to purchase the church edifice, but the price required by the whites they think is more than the entire value of the building, whereas they claim that two-thirds of it rightfully belongs to them. The colored members readily gave their consent to the use of this church for a school, and if the teachers, expected from the Northern Benevolent Associations, arrive before the new school building is completed the Sub-Assistant Commissioner was instructed to use this church temporarily for the school.

At the solicitation of the white citizens and the urgent request of the Sub-Assistant Commissioner, I arranged to return to Thomasville and address the colored people on the evening of December 18th. The white citizens claimed that the freed people, having no confidence in them, would not heed their advice, and that a word from an officer of the Bureau had more weight with them than from any other source; and the local agent desired that I should confirm what he had explained to them of the importance of immediately renewing contracts for another year.

Taking a private carriage to Tallahassee, (35 miles,) I had opportunity to converse with the inhabitants along the road. In this way I ascertained that contracts had been very generally made the past season, in this section, under the supervision of the Bureau officer,—the most of them fair, giving one-fourth as the share of the crop for the laborers; but some had been for too small a share, from one-sixth to one-tenth. Most of the freed people expressed a willingness to contract for another year on fair terms. Some wished to change employers. Some said they would like to go where their children could go to school. All, except one, met on the route in going to and returning from Tallahassee had employment now, and seemed to have no notion of living without working.

Near Tallahassee I met an intelligent freedman, who, in answer to my questions disclosed the fact that he had received for the labor of the past year, 15 bushels of corn, 100 pounds of pork, and a small measure of peas. He had, as in former times, with the help of his family, cultivated a small garden of his own, but the products of this had been taken from him.

Meeting Col. Osborne, the Assistant Commissioner for Florida, at Tallahassee, I spent two days chiefly with him; having interviews, also, with Generals Foster and Newton, commanding the Department and Western District of Florida, respectively, and conversing with several citizens of Tallahassee and vicinity. From the District Superintendent of Education (for the Bureau) I learned that a number of schools had been started since my last visit to Florida in October. There is a great demand for books and teachers. There are two teachers from a Northern Association at Tallahassee. Some two or three planters in that District had proposed to pay half the salary and expenses of a teacher to come upon their plantations and open a school for the colored children. They were convinced that this measure would do more than any other to make their laborers contented, and thus secure to them steady and effective labor.

From conversation with Lieut. Col. Apthorpe, one of Col. Osborne's Inspectors, as well as from the other sources of information I have mentioned, I became convinced that there were rather more exceptions in Florida to the general rule, prevalent in Southern Georgia, of prejudice and unjust dealing against the freedmen, but that still with the majority of the people there was the same unwillingness or moral incapacity to treat them with fairness and as free men. I was informed by a high military official that since the hanging of a citizen for murder at Tallahassee, convicted by a military court, and the pending trial of another for shooting a negro, he had received letters from parties declaring they would not "live in a country where a man must be hung for resenting an insult with arms," and where "a man must be tried for his life for shooting a nigger." He informed me, also, that certain of these parties had carried out their threat of leaving the state and had gone to Texas to reside. From the same official I was gratified to learn as a testimonial to the good discipline of some of the colored troops, and as an offset to the complaints against them in Southern Georgia that all the principal citizens of Jasper, Florida, petitioned for the return of a company of colored troops which had been ordered away from there—the constant quarrelling between discharged Union and rebel soldiers, resident there, rendering the presence of troops necessary. The colored troops were sent back to continue garrisoning the place.

There is the same disposition to depreciate wages in Florida as in Georgia, but I learned that a new demand for labor had sprung up at Fernandina, and that agents had been sent to Tallahassee for freedmen to work in the lumber business, offering \$1 and \$1.25 per day and board. Thirteen new saw mills had been put in operation there by northern men, and it had been found impossible to get all the hands they desired.— This will tend to raise the price of labor throughout the State.

I would respectfully ask attention to certain provisions of a recent Circular, No. 9, from the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Florida.

1st. The general appointment of all Judges of Probate without regard to special fitness, as agents of the Bureau, and in a similar manner in some districts, Clerks of Court and Justices of the Peace as assistants. It is to be feared, that in many cases, these officers from their prejudices and other personal qualities are entirely disqualified to be impartial agents of the Bureau. Again, they would not have the confidence of the freedmen, and the latter would therefore hesitate to apply to them for redress.

2d. These officials are not required to signify their acceptance of the appointment. Hence it will not be known to the Assistant Commissioner whether he has any agent in any given district or not. Besides no provision is made for informing the freedmen as to who is the agent for their locality.

3d. They are to enter upon their offices immediately upon the sight of the order, even in a newspaper. Hence, are not required to take any oath of office or to familiarize themselves with existing orders of the Bureau.

4th. They are not required to make any report, or in any manner make themselves responsible to the Assistant Commissioner for their acts or measures as agents of the Bureau.

It is proper to state that as a corrective of some of these evils, the Assistant Commissioner had divided the State into five or more districts, and had appointed a competent in

require all parties continuing to live as man and wife to be legally married, but shall permit, with proper restrictions, the old involuntary contracts of this kind, to be set aside when mutually desired, and shall give some suitable regulation by which one husband and one wife may be fixed upon, where several are living as the result of the slave system.

From Thomasville, I proceeded by private conveyance to Albany, Georgia, 55 miles. This mode of travelling gave me an opportunity of visiting different plantations. I found generally in this section, that the contracts for the last year, had been at the rate of from one sixth to one tenth of the crop, and the latter the greater number. Where no written contracts, properly signed and approved had been made, I gave directions to the Sub-Assistant Commissioner, that an officer, or agent of the Bureau, visit these plantations, and make an equitable division of the crops. The division had not been made at the plantations visited by me except in one case not far from Albany.

From the small number of officers allowed to the Bureau, the Districts in Georgia, have been by far too large to be properly cared for.

There seemed to be a general disposition in this section, (Southwestern Georgia) to set wages too low, and to keep the freed people as nearly as possible in their former state of servitude.

The Sub-Assistant Commissioner at Albany, [Major Hastings, 12th Maine Vols.] seemed to be an efficient officer, but had been there only a few weeks. He proposed to start a school of 150 scholars, if books and teachers could be furnished. There had been a small private school there for colored children, taught by a young lady from New York. Here also, I heard of another instance, of a planter in a neighboring county, who desired a school for colored people upon his plantation.

There was great call for agents to superintend the division of crops in this section. The freedmen were not satisfied, unless some United States Officer, or Bureau Agent were present.

After one night at Albany, I proceeded to Andersonville, where I found a small garrison, some twenty men and one officer. This officer had given some attention to freedmen's affairs by virtue of a general order from Head Quarters of the Department. But being the only officer there, and having no horse, he was limited to plantations and places comparatively near. The same old complaints of being turned off with no payment for last season's work, were common.

I learned of some cases in that locality, of renewal of contracts for another year.

Mr. H. A. Welton, a union citizen of Georgia, who had been imprisoned for his loyalty to the United States Government, seven months during the rebellion, and who is now employed by the Quartermaster's Department, as superintendent of the Andersonville Burial Ground, had started a school for the colored people at Andersonville.

A "confederate" building was used for a school house, and a sergeant of the 147th Ohio, taught adults in the evening.

At Macon were prosperous schools and a good hospital. The Bureau officer now there, [Lieutenant Colonel Lambert,] had been on duty only two weeks. There was the usual complaint of reluctance of the freedmen to make contracts. On investigation, I found that the prevailing offers of wages were too low, and that in this region the share given the laborers last season, was generally one tenth. Hearing of disturbances, and much ill-treatment of negroes in Twiggs County, I recommended that a garrison be sent there.

At Atlanta, there was more of an accumulation of destitute freed people than I had seen elsewhere. The armies had more completely devastated all the country around. Many whites, at least three hundred families, as estimated by the Sub-Assistant Commissioner, will suffer greatly this winter, unless relieved by government agency. The Bureau officer has assisted some of these destitute refugees, by transportation and rations. He was endeavoring to find places for all the able-bodied colored people, and had already considerably diminished the number. By the help of the Assistant Commissioner of the State, he will be able to apprentice most of the homeless children. Many cases of violence to negroes in that section, are reported to him, but his District is so large that he cannot, he says, rectify these evils except in comparatively few cases. Several good schools, and a hospital are in successful operation at Atlanta, the former as at Macon, being chiefly sustained by the benevolent associations of the North.

At Augusta, meeting again the Assistant Commissioner of the State, General TILLSON, at his Headquarters, I made a report of my tour in Georgia, and secured the adoption of some measures of immediate and practical importance to different localities visited. General TILLSON had just returned from Waynesboro, where he had addressed a large meeting of freedmen, some few planters also being present, to encourage the making of contracts.

The schools at Augusta are flourishing under the immediate supervision of the Bureau State Superintendent of Education.

I obtained information while there, from officers and agents of the Bureau, as well as from the military authorities, and the newspapers, that the militia organizations of the opposite county, in South Carolina, [Edgefield] were engaged in disarming the negroes. This created great discontent among the latter, and in some instances they had offered resistance. In previous inspection tours in South Carolina, much complaint reached me of the misconduct of these militia companies towards the blacks. Some of the latter, of the most intelligent and well disposed, came to me and said, "What shall we do?" "These militia companies are 'heaping upon our people every sort of injury and insult, unchecked. 'Our people are peaceably inclined, and we are endeavoring to inculcate 'good feeling; but we cannot bear this treatment much longer. Many 'are beginning to say, 'we have been patient long enough, we are free men 'now, and we have submitted to such usage as long as we can.' " And again, they ask, "what shall we do?" I assured them, that this conduct was not sanctioned by the United States Military authorities, and that it would not be allowed.

They then asked what they should do when the United States Troops were withdrawn, saying, they had nothing but evil to apprehend from these militia organizations.

Now, at Augusta, about two months later, I have authentic information that these abuses continue. In South-western Georgia, I learned that the militia had done the same, sometimes pretending to act under orders from United States authorities. I reported these facts to General Brannon, commanding the Department of Georgia, and to General Sickles, commanding the Department of South Carolina.

I am convinced that these militia organizations, only endanger the peace of the communities where they exist, and are a source of constant annoyance, and injury to the freed people; that herein is one of the greatest evils existing in the southern states for the freedmen. They give the color of law to their violent, unjust and sometimes inhuman proceedings.

I would earnestly recommend that these organizations be abolished in these States, for at least several years to come; and that some suitable substitute be instituted as a general police force, to preserve order and maintain the laws, until it again become safe to allow the organization of militia.

Orders had just been issued for the muster-out of the troops remaining in Georgia. General TILLSON, the Assistant Commissioner, was apprehensive that the efficiency of the Bureau would be much impaired by the loss of these troops. Not only would the means of executing orders and punishing crime be taken away, but his Sub-Assistant Commissioners, who would be mustered out with their regiments, except one or two of his most

refugees and freedmen in some sections were all Government aid withdrawn.

2d. Public sentiment is such that even should the be made impartial the negro could not obtain redress wrongs done him in person or property.

3d. There seems to be a moral incapability with the jority of white residents to treat him fairly in the ordinary transactions of business as e. g., in making contracts. own inexperience in such things, therefore, renders necessary some agency to guard his interests.

4th. Existing theories concerning the education of the ers and the prejudice against the blacks are such as to lutely to prevent the establishment of schools for the men, even though the expenses be paid by the bene associations of the north; and the many successful now in operation would be broken up, in most places, withdrawal of the Government agencies. The same g observation will apply to all Missionary work by ne agents,—and from special inquiry and investigation subject I am convinced that very little in the way of and religious instruction for the freed people is to be pected at present from the members and ministers of Southern churches. On the other hand it is for the inte of the whites for the agencies to remain, and the be class of the thinking men expressed themselves unhesi ingly in favor of it.

1st. The prevailing want of confidence on the part of freedmen in those who had been slave-holders makes it cessary to have a third party, (and a U. S. official is be than any other), to induce the freedmen to enter into ctracts. Many of the white residents told me that no ctracts would have been effected but for the Bureau officer.

2d. Such agents are needed often to secure the fulfilme of contracts on the part of the freedmen, both in explain ing the exact meaning and force of the contract and en forcing it by different motives and means.

3d. For the protection of the whites against any hostil combinations of the blacks. This will be needed as long as the present public sentiment of the whites continues, insur ing a corresponding distrust and hostility on the part of the blacks. Our agents have done much to allay such ill feeling and however unreasoning and ignorant the freedmen may be in any community, and however much their number m preponderate over the resident whites they will gene heed and be governed by the advice of U. S. officials.

II. In order adequately to protect the persons and prop erty of the freedmen, and promote their education, as wel as for the proper regulation of labor for the benefit of al concerned, the present number of agents should be increased.

III. United States troops are at present absolutely ne cessary as auxiliary to the agents.

1st. There is no other means of executing orders and in suring justice to the freedmen.

2d. In many sections, U. S. agents would not be tolerat ed unless backed by military force. I was assured by respect able and influential residents of the country in some sections, that no northern man could reside there were it not for the presence of the bayonet, and that in their opinion such would be the case for ten years to come. I am not convinc ed of the truth of this statement, yet with my own obser vation I am led to conclude:

3d. That the troops should remain for protection of north ern residents, and to encourage immigration.

4th. As desired by the better part of the whites, to main tain good order and peace.

5th. Wherever U. S. troops are withdrawn a militia or ganization at once springs into life, which invariably tend to disturbances between whites and blacks, and to the latter is, I am convinced, an unmixed evil.

IV. As the result of this and other tours of inspection as well as from my experience and observation while on duty in the states of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida for the past nine months, I beg leave to submit further: that, in view of the acknowledged necessity of U. S. troops, and the fact that many now there are soon to be mustered out, and that all the volunteer white troops are desirous of going home and must sooner or later be discharged, a provisional force might be raised in the Southern States, officered by the War Department (preferably from meritorious officers lately discharged from U. S. Volunteers, and selected with a view to peculiar fitness for this service) which would meet the want, and for other special reasons, besides the general reasons given for the retention of troops in those States, would be highly beneficial to the country. For example:

1st. Such a force recruited in the South could easily be substituted for the militia, which, for every consideration of safety to the peace of the country, and justice to the freed men, ought to be abolished for some years to come. Officer ed by the War Department, it would be subject to discipline, and a control giving to it the character of U. S. troops, and in no respect resembling the present militia.

2d. Its officers could be used as agents in the affairs and interests of refugees and freedmen without the inconvenience and injury to the service of having frequent changes and losses incident to the inevitable muster out of the present volunteer force.

3d. Most of the officers and men of the present volun teer white troops are discontented, and thus more or less disqualified for their duties, believing, as they do, that they should be allowed to go home now that the rebellion has been crushed.

4th. This would be the means of enlisting on the side of the Government a class otherwise dangerous and trouble some throughout the South, and finally secure among them and their families a permanent loyal sentiment.

5th. Many who would thus be arrayed on the side of law and order, are at present without lucrative means of sup port. They have been absent three or four years in the rebel army, or, as in Florida, some in the Union army, and by the habits acquired, in addition often to the fact that they never were accustomed to steady industry in early life, are unfitted and indisposed to enter into any suitable busi ness, even if other circumstances favor it.

6th. The greater part of the class referred to are unable to read and write. Gathered into companies and regiments under suitable officers they could easily be taught in rudiments of education, as has been done in the case many of the Colored Regiments.

Two or three regiments of this description might be raised in each

REPORT OF
J. H. HOWARD

[Faint, mostly illegible text covering the majority of the document, appearing to be a report or letter.]

Handwritten signatures and notes:
J. H. Howard
Pm July 1876