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SOUTH CAROLINA VOLUNTEERS.

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LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN ANSWER TO

*A resolution of the House of the 9th instant, in relation to the organization of South Carolina volunteers, composed of black men—fugitive slaves.*

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JUNE 17, 1862 —Laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

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WAR DEPARTMENT, *Washington, June 14, 1862.*

SIR: A resolution of the House of Representatives has been received, which passed the 9th instant, to the following effect:

“*Resolved*, That the Secretary of War be directed to inform this House if General Hunter, of the department of South Carolina, has organized a regiment of South Carolina volunteers for the defence of the Union, composed of black men—fugitive slaves—and appointed the colonel and other officers to command them.

“2. Was he authorized by the department to organize and muster into the army of the United States, as soldiers, the fugitive or captive slaves?

“3. Has he been furnished with clothing, uniforms, &c., for such force?

“4. Has he been furnished, by order of the Department of War, with arms to be placed in the hands of those slaves?

“5. To report any orders given said Hunter, and correspondence between him and the department.”

In answer to the foregoing resolution, I have the honor to inform the House—

1. That this department has no official information whether General Hunter, of the department of South Carolina, has or has not organized a regiment of South Carolina volunteers for the defence of the Union, composed of black men—fugitive slaves—and appointed the colonel and other officers to command them. In order to ascertain whether he has done so or not, a copy of the House resolution has been transmitted to General Hunter, with instructions to make immediate report thereon.

2. General Hunter was not authorized by the department to organize and muster into the army of the United States the fugitive or captive slaves.

3. General Hunter, upon his requisition as commander of the south, has been furnished with clothing and arms for the force under his command, without instructions as to how they should be used.

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4. He has not been furnished, by order of the Department of War, with arms to be placed in the hands of "those slaves."

5. In respect to so much of said resolution as directs the Secretary "to report to the House any orders given said Hunter, and correspondence between him and the department," the President instructs me to answer that the report, at this time, of the orders given to and correspondence between General Hunter and this department would, in his opinion, be improper, and incompatible with the public welfare.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON,  
*Secretary of War*

Hon. GALUSHA A. GROW,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*