Mobile Feb 21. 1861

Hon C. J. McRae

Dear Sir

You are aware of the interest I have taken in the subject of trade with Mexico & the establishment of a line of postal & passenger steamers between Mobile & all the gulf ports as far as Tampico. I negotiated a treaty with Mexico for this purpose & wrote home to you & other influential citizens urging the importance of holding out inducements to the contractors under that treaty to make Mobile the U. S. terminus. Other new political relations have enhanced the importance of this enterprise & early in the late session of the Legislature I wrote to Carter Butterfield who has a ten years contract with the Mexican Govt, granting him a subsidy of $120.00 per annum for the encouragement of a weekly line of steamers, advising him to change is field of effort from Washington

to the South. For the purpose of bringing the matter before the South I introduced a bill in the House on the subject & had it referred to the Committee on Commerce — I was Chairman & was prepared to make a report, but I could never get a quorum of the Cmt. together.

I have been advising Butterfield to repair to Montgomery & lay his plan before the Provisional Govt. so soon as it should be organized, & have expected him to do so. But I have to-day recd. a letter from him, herewith enclosed, which shows that the South has an eye to this question & that he is advised that the Govt. at Washington will take hold of his project if he will make St. Josh the home port. Butterfield is a Virginian & has long been a resident in Mexico. He is a man of great perseverance & energy —

For the purpose of giving you data to aid your judgment in the consideration of this question I beg to refer you to some manuscript & printed documents

which I shall transmit by tomorrow mail — I have to ask you to take care of them & restore them to me. In every point of view, political & commercial I regard the enterprise as one of the highest importance & I think you would confer a lasting benefit on Mobile & the Southern Confederacy if you could put it into successful operation.

The Register of to-day & tomorrow contains editorial bearing on the question.

Very Respectfully
& ever
John Forsyth

New York Feby 15. 1861.

My dear Sir,

I have just received several letters from Washington advising me that, if I will make New York the home port of my line the bill can pass. I will answer them tomorrow that I require some few days to consider the matter before deciding. I therefore beg you to be so kind as to give me your advice on the subject in full by return of mail — I must by Contract, start my line during the summer, and aid must come from some quarter I wish therefore to be governed according to your opinion, as to what I can expect from the South in the way

of encouragement from the State of Alabama: as well as from the General Congress of that Confederacy.

My sympathy as you well know is with the South and I cannot accept any offer from this side now unless actually compelled to do so for self protection.

Hoping soon to hear of you with kind regards to Mrs F from myself & Madame B.

I am Yours truly.

Charles Butterfield

Hon. John Forsyth
Montgomery
Ala