Selma Ala. January 21. 1862

Hon. C. S. McRia,

Dear Sir,

In writing you on yesterday I omitted to state a fact which may be of some importance in connection with the establishment of a foundry and armory here. We have here, one of the most skillful gun makers I doubt not, in the Confederate States. He has been in the business here for some five or six years, and has established quite a reputation for making superior pistols, rifles and shot guns, and has by his industry and attention to business, a accumulated property, and is in independent circumstances. He is a foreigner, Belander I think, and is esteemed and respected as a moral, industrious, intelligent and every way reliable citizen. He agreed last spring to take charge of an armory, if one should be established here as then proposed; and was willing to go to his native country, and employ and bring over as many skillful workmen as might be wanted. Being acquainted

there, he could get workmen when a stranger could not. I have no doubt his services could now be commanded on fair and reasonable terms, to go to work with such workmen as could be procured in the Confederacy; or if need be, perhaps, to run the blockade, and go to Europe for them. Being a foreigner who would be seeking to return to his native land, he would stand a better chance to get through than a native of this country. I consider him every way trust worthy and reliable. I have thought this matter of sufficient importance to state it to you.

While writing I am tempted to trouble you with some of my political notions, to go for what they may be worth. I have been attentively considering the course of events, and have arrived at the following conclusions as to what will probably be the course of the Yankee government. That the blockade can't stand much longer. England can't afford to do without cotton, and can't afford to wait much longer for a supply. This the Yankees know as well as we do, and probably they have been keeping England quiet by assurances that they shall in one time have access to the cotton ports, expecting to open the ports by their

fleets. Failing in this, something must be done soon to satisfy England to keep her from breaking the blockade by force; which England will be very loth to do, if she can accomplish her ends by more pacific means; for she evidently dreads war. I therefore predict that the North will abandon the blockade ere long, at least in several, if not all of the Cotton ports, under an agreement with England and all other powers who desire to trade with these ports, that all means in their power shall be adopted to prevent the shipment from their ports to Confederate ports, of all articles contraband of war. This, so far as the importation of arms is concerned, would be far worse for us than the existing blockade. If the foreign governments were true to their engagements, as, for the consideration named, they probably would be, we would be effectually cut off from external supplies of arms and other war munitions. The further policy of the North would be to withdraw the bulk of their forces from the Southern coast, and on the opening of the Spring Campaign, concentrate all the power they can wield upon

Virginia Kentucky and Missouri, with the determination by all means and at all hazards to possess and hold these states, if they have to let all the rest go. In this way I look for a very severe and protracted struggle. They will probably keep ships enough in the gulf and along the Atlantic coast not only to keep our privateers in check and watch contrabands, but to make such demonstrations on our seaport cities as to compel us to keep a considerable force at all of them. This under all the circumstances seems to me so manifestly their policy (unless they soon succeed in making serious inroads upon the South) that I seriously apprehend it will be adopted. They would thus be relieved of their fears of English or French, interference, and feel more at ease to push the war inland from the North and West. If my conclusions should be correct, how important is it that we should be resorting to all practicable means to develope our internal resources, and provide ourselves with the means of defence with the least possible delay?

Very Respectfully yours

J. W. Lapsley

The express did not leave on yesterday as expected; by which the papers referred to on yesterday are to go.

J. W. Lapsley