Mobile Jan 29. 1862

Hon. C. J. McRae

Dear Sir

Your dispatch is rec'd. and the barge load of coal taken by Lieut Johnston. I notice Government is waking up upon the subject of a supply of coal as is evinced by an advertisement calling for bids for 8000 tons at Mobile. I have some 3 or 4 more barge loads which I would like to forward as fast as it can be taken over the Al^a & Tenn R Railroad to Selma. That road is becoming much shortened for Rolling stock and can only forward coal in limited quantities. Several of its engines are hors du Combat for want of tire. If cotton were coming forward in any quantity coal would have to stop entirely. It is therefore important that what coal ~~that~~ may be ready should go forward as fast as it can get conveyance, on the road

All bids for the supply of coal will have to be contingent expressly or impliedly upon the coal getting over this road.
I will direct the coal to be forwarded and loaded in the expectation that the next barge load will be taken at the same terms as the last, and should be glad to have the order extended to the three or four barge loads which can be forwarded at intervals of two or three weeks. This will exhaust the supply on hand. Further mining will be contingent in some degree upon whether I contract for Govt supply.
I shall bid for all or part of the 8000 tons but so far as I can now see the price can be no less (Eleven $\frac{50}{100}$) and may be more. If arrangement can be made to receive what I have on hand as fast as I can get it forward. it will be so much secure against the contingencies of transportation (and they are many and embarrassing both by rail and river) if I succeed in its safe transmission. There say 4 Barge loads may be taken at

the same price as the first $ Eleven $\frac{50}{100}$ per ton or, if any apprehensions are entertained that the price is higher than will be contracted for under the advertisement. I will agree that the price after the first (next) cargo shall be governed by what good contracts are effected for, for the same quality of coal — Say then one more barge load at Eleven $\frac{50}{100}$ ~~dollars~~ per ton and the next three at contract under advertisement prices. The object to be gained is the forwarding the coal when it is practicable to do so and when least expensive to me. My Barge is now completed and manned for the trade and can soon take forward all I have ready for market if the Rail road does not fail me. Nothing can be lost by Govt thereby, and the latter way is to take it without conditions ~~as the~~ the price at Eleven $\frac{50}{100}$ but as you like as to that.

If objections are made — then I will thank you to obtain an order to receive the next ~~barge~~ load alone. I have

already given orders for the coal to be forwarded to Selma for the next loads.

It is my intention on my return to Selma to go to Richmond forthwith when I hope to have the pleasure of Explaining to you & any others in authority the condition of the coal trade in Alabama and I hope to come to an understanding as to the supply of Govt. I have written to you a long letter on that and other matters but my resolution to go to Richmond saves you the infliction of reading it. If you please, telegraph me at Selma promptly and let me know if it is all right to continue to forward coal as stated, and so far as one cargo more is concerned please secure its reception on the same terms as the last.

My personal presence in Richmond will be in time to arrange for what may follow, so that there will probably be no material delay thereafter.

Very Truly Yours
Wm P Browne

W. P. Browne
Jan 25th