

## Joel Roberts Poinsett to Andrew Jackson, February 22, 1833, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### JOEL R. POINSETT TO JACKSON.

Charleston, February 22, 1833.

*My dear Sir,* I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 7th by the hands of Mr. Smith and am perfectly satisfied with the assurances it contains. The party with which I have the honor to act would prefer encountering any risk, rather than see the executive take measures for their protection, which are not warranted by constitution and laws of the United States. I do not wish even to see measures adopted, which might be calculated to irritate or provoke a conflict. You may rely upon it that we will remain firm at our posts and steadfast in our attachment to the Union. All the accounts I receive from the upper districts are very cheering. Those situated along the North Carolina boundary are strongly attached to our federal institutions, several thousands are enrolled and organized and their numbers increase daily. My latest accounts give one thousand men in Greenville, Fifteen hundred in Spartanburg, in York Eight hundred, in Chester seven hundred and fifty, Cheraw Five hundred, Lancaster seven hundred, Horry 487, Chesterfield three hundred, Marion four hundred and fifty. In the minority districts we have a very respectable force and the number of men enrolled in the whole state excluding Charleston amounts to very nearly 7000 men. In the City I have enrolled and officered and drilled as well as time and circumstances will permit,

In the 4 wards of the city 865 men

on the Neck 150

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a troop of Cavalry 62

A light infantry Company of young men under it 80

1157

To these are to be added five Volunteer Companies,

Washington light Infantry 65

German Fusileers 75

Blues 45

French Fusileers 40

Northern Volunteers 75

1457

I do not think therefore I over estimate the force of the Union party in the city at One thousand men. I should be much disappointed not to find this number, at least, at their rendezvous in case of an alarm. The Nullifiers estimate their force in the City at 1600 men. We consider our strength equal to theirs here. In the State they report 16,000 Volunteers. The greater the number of these disorderly troops they have the worse for them. They could not maintain this force two months. The chief leaders are willing to take Mr. Clay's bill as a peace offering; but the people in the middle districts are infuriated and it will be difficult to persuade them to remain quiet. Cooper and Preston in Columbia and Turnbull.1 in Charleston will not be satisfied until they attempt Secession. Hayne will be very happy to find an excuse to stay proceedings; but Hamilton talks oracularly and will continue to do so until he ascertains the temper of the people. The state convention will meet in Columbia on the Eleventh march and I have called the Union convention together for the Eighteenth;

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to give us time to know what they are disposed to do and suit our action to their resolves. It is rumoured, that if they do secede, which I verily believe they will do if the enforcement law passes and the tariff is not modified, the act of secession will be submitted to the people for their approbation. Now it is an important matter for us to decide whether we will go to the ballot box, and vote on this question. I am decidedly of opinion, that upon the passage of such an act, we ought at once to act vigorously against the seceders. Most of my intimate friends think differently. They all agree with me, that we will not submit if even a majority of the people should be seduced to vote in favor of secession; but think it possible we might have a majority against such an act. I am of opinion that if they agree to submit the question to the people they will have the assurance of being supported by a majority, and I fear if we do vote upon the question, the people will be governed by the decision of that majority—at all events I think it a hazardous experiment. I have addressed a circular to the Union members of the state convention urging them not to join that body in any act violating the constitution of the united states and not to go to the convention at all. This storm may yet pass off and not burst upon us, but we will be prepared to encounter and to resist it like men.

1 Dr. Thomas Cooper, president of South Carolina College; William C. Preston, at this time member of the S. C. house of representatives; Robert J. Turnbull, political writer in South Carolina.

I am Dear Sir, your most Obt. Sevt.