

the capital, taking the archives of State with them. The courts were suspended and civil magistrates almost universally ceased to exercise their functions. Confederate money was openly refused or so depreciated as to be nearly worthless. This, with the short crop of the preceding year and the failure on all the uplands of the one then growing, gave rise to the cruellest extortion in the necessaries of life and menaced the poor with actual starvation. These evils were aggravated by an address of the Governor, issued shortly before his flight, deprecating the withdrawal of troops and threatening secession from the Confederacy.⁵

"Brig. General J. S. Roane had been placed in command of Arkansas by General Van Dorn, but without any troops. He was instructed, as the best thing possible, to endeavor to hold the line of the Arkansas River, giving up more than half the territory, population, and resources of the State. That this might be done, General Van Dorn directed General Pike to send a portion of his force to Little Rock, but he refused.

"General Pike had at that time one regiment of Arkansas infantry, two 6-gun (Arkansas) batteries, one Texas battery of four guns, two regiments and several unattached companies of Texas cavalry, and ten 10-pounder Parrott rifles, besides 5,500 Indian Troops. There was no Federal force, other than small marauding parties, within 200 miles of him. General Roane was at Little Rock without a regiment, and Curtis' victorious army, at least 15,000 strong, was moving in that direction.

"Fortunately, five regiments of Texas cavalry arrived on their way to Corinth. General Roane, by permission of General Beauregard,⁶ detained them at Little Rock. About the same time, by order of the Navy Department, the Confederate ram Maurepas, Lieut. Comdg. Joseph Fry, came into White River, and the ram Pontchartrain, Lieut. Comdg. J. W. Dunnington, into the Arkansas. These accessions had the effect to retard the movements of Curtis,⁷ whose advance when I assumed command, was 35 miles from Little Rock.

"I found under General Roane eight companies of Arkansas infantry, wholly unarmed, one 6-gun battery, with but 40 men, and less than 1,500 effective cavalry, many of the Texans being unarmed and many of them sick. For this force he had about three days' subsistence and forage and less than 15 rounds of ammunition. There were no depots of supplies in the district.

"In the situation in which I was placed it was necessary to do many important acts with promptness. Any hesitation or serious error would inevitably result in the capture of Little Rock and the loss of the remainder of Arkansas to the Confederacy. That would involve the loss also of the Indian country and destroy all hope of recovering Missouri, besides exposing Texas and Louisiana to the greatest misfortunes. Such calamities could not be averted without an army. I had no army, and had not been authorized to raise one, the instructions of General Beauregard limiting me to the enforcement of the Conscript Act, which prohibited new regiments. To wait until the necessary authority could be applied for and received from Richmond, even if the Government should not deem itself precluded by the Conscript Act from granting such authority, would be nothing else than the surrender to the enemy of the country from which the troops must be obtained. I therefore resolved to accept the responsibility, which the situation imposed, of raising and organizing a force without authority of