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GEN. B. G. FARRAR ON FREMONT.

(Statement of Gen. B. G. Farrar, of St. Louis, Mo., to J. McCan Davis November 17, 1898.)

At the beginning on the war I was major and aid-de-camp on the staff of General Lyon. About two weeks before the battle of Wilson's Creek word was received from Arkansas from a reliable source that the rebel General Price was on his march to Missouri with from 17,000 to 18,000 men. Lyon's avilable force at Springfield was 5,200 men. Supplied with a letter to General Fremont, supplemented with verbal instructions, I made my way to St. Louis. At Rolla I took an engine and traveled with all possible speed, arriving at General Fremont's headquarters at about 10 o'clock in the morning. I immediately saw his adjutant general, Captain Kelton. I told Kelton that I had a very important message from General Lyon, and in delivering that message would like to have a personal conference with General Fremont, as I could explain more fully the situation at Springfield and the organization of Price's army, which was not stated in the despatch. Word was returned to me that General Fremont was very busy; that he would receive the despatch and requested me to call in the afternoon. I called in the afternoon and was again told that General Fremont was very busy. Three days passed before I succeeded in obtaining an audience with Fremont. I explained to him the critical condition of affairs at Springfield and urged the forwarding of two full regiments, the 7th Missouri and the 9th Illinois, then stationed at Rolla, and gave my

reasons in full for the need that Lyon had for immediate reenforcements. Fremont's reply was that there was no transportation for these two regiments. I stated that Colonel Wyman of the 9th Illinois and Colonel Stephenson of the 7th Missouri, before I left Rolla, had informed me that they did not need transportation, that their regiments would carry their rations on their backs. All they asked was the order to move on Springfield and they would be ready to move within one hour after receipt the ~~reception~~ of the order. Fremont paid no heed to my advice, stating that the enemy was moving on south east Missouri and that troops were urgently needed there. The result was that not a man was forwarded to the aid of General Lyon. Lyon was killed and his little army fell back to Rolla. If the 7th Missouri and the 9th Illinois had been allowed to reenforce Lyon he would have won the battle of Wilson's Creek and probably would not have lost his life; for with a larger force he would hardly have been found at the head of the column. It will be remembered that Lyon was at the head of an Iowa regiment whose colonel was too cowardly to lead in the assault. The truth is that Fremont wanted Lyon to lose the battle. He ~~wanted~~ was jealous of Lyon's growing fame and wished to deprive him of the prestige of victory.

General Jefferson C. Davis was stationed at Jefferson City with a brigade. He was ordered to join Fremont at Springfield. The orders were to proceed with all possible despatch, as ~~the~~ reliable information had been received that the enemy was advancing in force on Springfield. General Davis's army made very long and very rapid marches. When they got to the Osage a courier was awaiting them with a message from General Fremont urging Davis not to delay a moment, but to march

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his entire brigade without stopping and join him at Springfield, as the enemy was advancing in great force. In accordance with these urgent instructions General Davis, without resting his men, marched all night and a part of the next day, reaching Springfield about noon, having accomplished a march of forty miles in fifteen hours. General Davis rode on in advance of his brigade to consult with Fremont with reference to the peril which threatened the Union forces. On his arrival at Springfield he was astonished to find that there was not an officer in Fremont's entire command who had any tangible information that there was an enemy within two hundred miles. The country was flooded with despatches from Springfield, emanating from Fremont's agency, announcing the approach of the enemy, and all the world was waiting for the expected battle, but the battle was not fought. These facts were related to me by General Jefferson C. Davis's adjutant general.

My own belief is that Fremont was insane. The powerful enemy which he declared was advancing upon Springfield was wholly the creature of his imagination. As commander of the department he assumed all the prerogatives of an absolute ruler. The approach to his headquarters was through a long line of guards. There were guards at the corners of the streets, guards at the gate, guards at the door, guards at the entrance to the adjutant general's office, and a whole regiment of troops in the barracks adjacent to his headquarters. I saw his order making Colonel Harding of the home guard a brigadier general. This was done without consultation with the President and without authority of law. The Czar of Russia could hardly be more absolute in his authority than Fremont assumed to be at St. Louis.

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It was generally rumored that summer that Fremont was organizing a party in the army, composed of his personal followers, for the purpose of establishing a separate military government west of the Mississippi, to be known as the "Northwestern Confederacy." These rumors became so frequent and so well authenticated as emanating from the headquarters of Fremont that they were forwarded to Washington and received serious consideration at the hands of President Lincoln. Possibly that was one of the causes of his removal as commander of the western department. In the fall of 1862 I was appointed provost marshal-general for the department of the Missouri. During my administration of that office I made it a point to try to get some tangible evidence of the facts in connection with Fremont's scheme for the establishment of a northwestern confederacy. I consulted with many Germans who were more or less connected, though not in affiliation, with Fremont. They had all heard of it, but none could give direct evidence showing the complicity of Fremont in the matter. But such information as I was able to obtain left no question in my mind that such a movement had been inaugurated and that that movement emanated from the followers of Fremont and the members of his staff.

Fremont never asked Washington for authority to do a thing. While at St. Louis Fremont visited nobody, so far as I know. When he went forth from his headquarters at all he went under the escort of his body guard and a staff brilliantly uniformed. When he removed his headquarters to Jefferson City he went on a special train, with all the trappings and surroundings of a royal potentate.

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