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Title: Letter from James Buchanan to Gerard Hallock

Date: August 11, 1860

Location: MC 1998.10, B4, F3

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Private & Confidential.

Washington 11 August 1860.

My dear Sir / I have received your favor of the 5th instant & in acknowledging it embrace the opportunity of expressing my warm & sincere acknowledgments to the Journal of Commerce for the able & valuable support which it has voluntarily given to my administration.

In regard to Mr. Comstock: - the difficulties of retaining him in office, I can assure you, are almost insurmountable. I do not indulge a proscription and have not removed one in twenty of the Douglas office holders. His father-in-law (Cutler) & his brother-in-law (Granger) are still in lucrative offices in this City & I have no present intention of removing either. There are peculiar cases, however, which I cannot overlook & it appears to me that Mr. Comstock is within this category. Whilst holding one of the best offices in my gift he is at the same time ^{as you say} ~~as you state~~ at the head

of the leading Democratic organ in your State. This organ
not only does not sustain the principles of my administration
but is in direct antagonism to them. It maintains
political doctrines in violation of the Constitution of the
United States as expounded by the Supreme Court. ^{unless} ~~Without~~
these doctrines can be overthrown, there never will be a
re-union between the Democratic party North & the Democratic
party South, or in other words a Democratic party co-extensive
with the Union. Without this, the Constitution & the Union
cannot be perpetuated. Under these circumstances, how can
I remove any other office holder who is at the same time
the Editor of a Journal ^{using it to oppose} for ~~opposing~~ my administration on
questions which I consider ^{magnificent & even} vital, - should I retain W. Comstock?
I assure you I have no failing against that gentleman;
but directly the reverse, although his Journal has clasped
the friends of Breckenridge, of course including myself, as
Disunionists. - This is the very first letter of the kind I
have ever written. I intended to write but a few lines
when I commenced; but my pen has run on. I remain
very respectfully
Your friend
Gerard Hallock Esquire. James Buchanan

Private & Confidential

Washington 11 August 1860

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In regard to Mr. Comstock: - the difficulties of retaining him in office, I can assure you, are almost insurmountable. I do not indulge a proscriptive spirit & have not removed one in twenty of the Douglas office holders. His father-in-law (Cutts) & his brother-in-law (Granger) are still in lucrative offices in this City & I have no present intention of removing either. There are peculiar cases, however, which I cannot overlook & it appears to me that Mr. Comstock is within this category. Whilst holding one of the best offices in my gift he is at the same time, ~~as you state~~ as you say "at the head

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of the leading Democratic organ" of your State. This organ not only does not sustain the principles of my administration but is in direct antagonism to them. It maintains political doctrines in violation of the Constitution of the United States as expounded by the Supreme Court. ~~Without~~ Unless these doctrines can be overthrown, there never will be a re-union between the Democratic party North & the Democratic party South, or in other words a Democratic party co-extensive with the Union. Without this, the Constitution & the union cannot be perpetuated. Under these circumstances, how can I remove any other office holder who is at the same time the Editor of a Journal for ~~opposing~~ using it to oppose my administration on questions which I consider momentous & even vital, - should I retain Mr. Comstock I assure you I have no feeling against that gentleman; but directly the reverse, although his Journal has classed the friends of Breckinridge, of course including myself, as Disunionists. - This is the very first letter of the kind I have ever written. I intended to write but a few lines when I commenced; but my pen has run on. I remain

very respectfully
your friend
James Buchanan

Gerard Hallock Esquire