

required by the sheriff is far beyond what I believe to be necessary, and indeed far beyond what could be raised in this Territory. From five to eight hundred men will be amply sufficient, I have no doubt, to protect the sheriff, and enable him to execute the legal process in his hands. With the view of giving to the sheriff the requisite aid, I have issued orders to Major General Richardson, of the northern division of militia of this Territory, a prudent and discreet man, a copy of which I send you herewith. I also send you a copy of a request I have made of General Strickler, who resides in the adjoining county to Douglas. These are the only orders I have thought it necessary to issue, by means of which I believe a sufficient force will be raised to protect the sheriff, and enable him to execute the legal process in his hands.

The time has come when this armed band of men, who are seeking to subvert and render powerless the existing government, have to be met and the laws enforced against them, or submit to their lawless dominion. If the lives and property of unoffending citizens of this Territory cannot be protected by law, there is an end to practical government and it becomes a useless formality.

The excitement along the border of Missouri is running wild, and nothing but the enforcement of the laws against these men will allay it. Since the disclosure of the existence and purposes of this secret military organization in this Territory, there has been much excitement along the borders of Missouri, but it has been held in check, heretofore, by assurances that the laws of the Territory would be enforced, and that protection would be given to the citizens against all unlawful acts of this association. This feeling and intense excitement can still be held in subordination if the laws are faithfully executed, otherwise there is no power here that can control this border excitement and civil war is inevitable. This military organization is looked upon as hostile to all southern men, or rather to the law and order party of the Territory, many of whom have relations and friends, and all have sympathizers in Missouri, and the moment it is believed that the laws will not furnish adequate protection to this class of citizens against the lawless acts of this armed association, a force will be precipitated across the line to redress real and supposed wrongs inflicted on friends that cannot be controlled, or for the moment resisted. It is in vain to conceal the fact, we are standing on a volcano, the upheavings and agitations beneath we feel, and no one can tell the hour when an eruption may take place. Under existing circumstances the importance of sustaining the sheriff of Douglas county, and enabling him to execute his process, independent of other considerations connected with the peace and good order of society, will strike you at once; and to do this by the aid and assistance of the citizens of this Territory is the great object to be accomplished, to avoid the dreadful evils of civil war. I believe this can be done; in this, however, I may be mistaken. No efforts shall be wanting on my part to preserve good order in the Territory, and I will keep you constantly advised of the progress and state of things here.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

WILSON SHANNON.

His Excellency FRANKLIN PIERCE.