

(Copy. H. N. R.)

St. Paul, Minn., Dec. 22, 1892.

The Attorney General,  
Washington, D. C.,

Sir:

In reply to your telegram of this date I have the honor to state that during most of the time I was engaged in the investigation of the charges against Marshal Rankin, Senators Warren and Carey were both absent from their homes. In their absence Judge Willis Vandevanter and Attorney W. R. Stall gave to me, as they understood them the details of the causes which led up to the unlawful invasion by representatives of the cattle owners into Johnson county. I was impressed with the clearness and the frankness with which they made their statements. Soon after this I had an opportunity to talk with Senators Warren and Carey, who took substantially the same position as did Judge Vandevanter and Mr. Stall.

Their statement of the case was very convincing and I have no doubt that I prematurely gave expression to the opinions forming in my mind that left the impression on their minds that I was convinced that Marshal Rankin was wanting in courage.

Subsequent to that, however, I had opportunities to interview a number of men who had known Marshal Rankin for twenty or twenty-five years and who had been with him at times when a man's courage would be thoroughly tested and

invariably their testimony was to the effect that cowardice did not enter into Marshal Rankin's make-up in any degree. I gave fullest credit to the statements made by men who had been exposed to danger, and who knew well the nature and character of the men in Johnson county, and considered that such men, especially those who had known Marshal Rankin longest, and known him not only as a brave man but as an man of good judgment in cases of emergency when the lives of men were in danger, were better qualified to speak, where the question of courage was involved than those who by reason of their avocation have had no such experiences. Judge Vandevanter and Walter R. Stall were at that time employed as attorneys by the cattle-owners, and also to defend the invaders in court in any action that might arise as an echo of the invasion. Major Walcott and Wm. C. Irvine, referred to in my report, were leaders of the invasion, and while I consider them brave and fearless men, I was convinced after my interview with them that they were impulsive and displayed a remarkable lack of good judgment in attempting such a foolhardy expedition as the one they conducted into Johnson county which would have resulted in the slaughter of every member of it, if it had not been for the timely interference of the federal troops. Mr. Irvine told me in person that he "hoped

and expected "that, when Marshal Rankin attempted to serve the warrants for the arrest of the Rustlers in Johnson county he would meet with the resistance threatened, namely, that they would die in their tracks before they would allow service to be made; thereby placing the marshal, if he lived, in a position to call for the assistance of the U. S. Troops.

Such statements, prompted by motives purely selfish, and in view of the failure of the object of the 50 picked men "armed to the teeth", and after learning the desperate character of the men for whom warrants had been issued, and believing they would kill any man or sight against whom they had a grievance, and after talking the matter over fully, with disinterested ex-county sheriffs, with deputy marshals of known bravery and courage and with the late marshal T. J. Carr, whose opinion on such matters cannot be questioned for a moment, and further in view of the fact that no one not even those who are now complaining against the marshal's action in this matter, has ever mentioned or intimated to me a single act, reflecting discredit during his entire prior record, involving either his courage or his integrity -but on the other hand the testimony of everyone was given in the strongest terms in his favor. in view of all these conditions my impressions as first formed, and as expressed prematurely to

Senators Warren and Carey, were completely and entirely changed, and I became thoroughly satisfied that it was not lack of courage or it was not cowardice that prevented marshal Rankin from executing the writs in Johnson county.

The marshal frankly and freely admits that he was afraid to go to Johnson Co. but his fears were well-founded, and it would have been foolhardy for him to have attempted to arrest those men at that time, and I am well satisfied that it was through the exercise of his good judgment that loss of life and bloodshed was prevented. It must not be overlooked that the people in Johnson county were worked up to a feeling of the most intense hatred for all interested in the invasion and they supposed that the office of the marshal had been used, inasmuch as there were several deputy marshals from Texas in the party as well as two deputy marshals who have been in the service for a number of years in Wyoming, hence the feelings of enmity for the marshal and all his deputies.

The absence of Senators Warren and Carey prevented me from correcting the impressions they formed from statements made by me during my first interview or during the early part of my investigation.

I did however, inform Judge Vandevanter and Senator Carey's Secretary that my views on the matter had undergone

a radical change .

I had no feelings in the case for either side and only endeavored to obtain and report the facts as I found them, and my conclusions reached from all surroundings in order that justice might be done as nearly as possible. Briefly, I will say again that marshal        in the exercise of his best judgment -knowing the character of the men he had to deal with, and not being able to organize a competent posse, decided that the expedition would be foolhardy and in vain, and would have resulted in the loss of life without having accomplished the arrest of a single person. This position is supported by nearly every man interviewed in Wyoming excepting those interested directly or indirectly in the results of the invasion. My impressions and conclusions were formed without prejudice or influence of any kind, being simply the result of a careful consideration of all the lights to be had upon the subject.

I have the honor, sir, to be

Very respectfully,

Frank B. Crosthwaite,

Examiner.