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Headquarters, Department of the Gulf,
New-Orleans, February 7th 1863.

To all Commanding Officers
Provost Marshal. Quagse etc. etc.
Gentlemen

The enclosed circulars will explain to you an effort that is being made to provide work for the negroes, and to maintain the cultivation of Plantations upon a system compatible with the laws, and the spirit of the age. It is acceptable to a large number of Representative Planters, and I am sure it ought to be to all those who seek the welfare of the negroes. It is necessary that some active effort should be made to explain the plan, and to advise them to make the experiment. Rev. Mr. Hepworth Chaplain of the 47th Mass. Vols. deeply interested in the future condition of the Slaves, and other Gentlemen connected with the Army, visit the different parishes to aid the movement, fully comprehending and approving its objects. May I ask of you to facilitate this object, and to request any persons, who are willing to do so, to aid

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Date: February 7, 1863

Description: A copy of the letter Nathaniel P. Banks sent to all commanding officers which provided an explanation of his plan to put slaves to work.

us in explaining to the negroes the advantages of the plan to their race, to the planters, and to the Government. You may be assured I shall appreciate in a high degree your favor in this respect. It is not expected that an individual contract is to be made with the negroes who return to their plantations, or remain upon them, such arrangement would be impracticable. The fact that they return or remain is to be taken as proof of their assent. The Officers of the Government who advise and assist their return will feel that they are responsible that the advantages promised shall be secured to them. It will give me very great pleasure to hear from any one interested in the subject. If improvement upon the plan can be suggested.

I am, Gentlemen
With Much Respect
Your Most Obedt. Servant

To
Brigadier General
G. F. Shepley
Military Governor
of Louisiana

N. P. Banks.
M. G. C.

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