

34th Congress, 1st Session - Senate - Ex. Doc. No. 66

Report of the Secretary of War
in compliance with

A resolution of the Senate of the 21st ultimo, calling for copies of all the letters of the governor of Washington Territory, addressed to him during the present year; and copies of all the correspondence relative to the Indian disturbances in the Territories of Washington and Oregon.

May 12, 1856. - Read, referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, and Ordered to be printed.

...letter of transmittal from Jeff'n Davis, secretary of war, to Hon. J. D. Bright, president of the senate --copies of communications from governors of Oregon and Washington Territories, and from Brevet Major General Wool, commanding the Pacific division.

from Geo. L. Curry, governor of Oregon, Portland, February 5, 1856, transmittal of a certified copy of a memorial adopted by the legislative assembly.. at last regular session... to the President of the United States.

The memorial, passed by the council, January 30, 1856, by the house, January 30, '56, signed by Delazon Smith, speaker of the house of rep., and by A. T. Dennison, president of the council; certified by B. F. Harding, secretary of the territory of Oregon, Jan. 31, 1856.

Memorial states that early in October of '55, the people of Wash. and Oregon territories were "startled by a general outbreak among nearly all the Indian tribes in the western and middle portion of those territories." Hostilities unprovoked by whites and characterized by usual modes of Indian warfare, indiscriminate slaughter, pillaging, burning of dwellings, destruction of property.. Volunteers "have nobly discharged their duties.. and are still in the heart of the enemy's country, combating the Indians, or holding possession of the country which they have conquered."

"In this distressing state of affairs, and while the Oregon volunteers were surrounded by Indians, it was with no little satisfaction that your memorialists, as well as the people of Oregon, hailed the arrival in this Territory of Major General John E. Wool, of the United States army. His past services had led us to hope that he would at once have sent have sent the forces under his command to the assistance and relief of our volunteers, who were desirous of returning to their homes. It is with regret we confess that, in this respect, our hopes have been disappointed. It is with regret that we are compelled to say that General Wool has hitherto remained inactive, and has refused to send the United States troops to the relief of the volunteers, or to supply them with arms and ammunition in their time of need; that he has gone into winter quarters and left our settlements exposed to the ravages of our enemies; that he has removed the greater portion of his troops from the Indian Territory to Vancouver, a military point removed from the scenes of war, and that too, while our volunteers were threatened by an overwhelming force of Indians; that he refused to go to the relief of a number of our citizens who had settled in the Walla-Walla valley, and who had fled from their homes for safety, and that he refused to send any of the forces under his command to protect the people of southern Oregon, whose lives and property were almost daily being destroyed or endangered by the Indians.

"Your memorialists would have borne all these grievances in silence, and left these public acts and omissions of General Wool to the just judgment of the people of Oregon and Washington Territories, and to the approval or disapproval of the proper officers of the United States government; but so it is, that General Wool, not content with the inactive and inefficient course which he has hitherto thought proper to pursue in this war, has departed from his inactive policy only to censure the governor and people of this Territory for their commendable zeal in defending their country, and to thwart all their efforts to procure supplies and the means of subsistence for the Oregon volunteers now in the field. Instead of offering aid and encouragement to our people, he has shown a disgraceful activity in his endeavours to persuade our merchants and those of California not to furnish ammunition and supplies for our volunteers in this trying time of their need. Instead of attending to the duties of his high office, he has become an intermeddler between the people of Oregon and the government of the United States, and publicly declared that his influence will be exerted to prevent the payment, by the United States, of the just claims incurred in prosecution of this war.

"Therefore, inasmuch as your memorialists, as well as the people of Oregon, have lost all confidence in the willingness of General Wool to assist and defend them in their present Indian difficulties, they most respectfully ask that he may be recalled from the command of the military department of the Pacific, and your memorialists will ever pray."

The Governor of Washington to the Secretary of War
Executive Office, Olympia, Washington Territory,
February 19, 1856.

Sir: Having been constantly and closely occupied since my return from the Blackfeet council, I avail myself of this my first opportunity to inform the department fully of the condition of the Territory in the existing Indian war. And in order to arrive at a full understanding of the state of affairs, it is deemed necessary to state the facts connected with my return from the Missouri, where a treaty of peace and friendship had been concluded with the Blackfeet and other tribes of Indians.

On the 29th day of October, when two days march from Fort Benton on my return to this place, W. H. Pearson reached my camp with an express from Acting Governor Mason, bringing the startling intelligence that the Yakima Indians, with whom I had concluded a treaty in June last, had murdered a number of whites in their country, their agent, A. J. Bolan, and had finally broken out into open war; had defeated a detachment of United States troops, under Major Haller, and had declared their ~~intention~~ determination to exterminate all the whites in the country.

It was supposed that the Cayuses, Walla-Wallas, and Umatillas, would join, and that the Spokanes and Coeur d'Alenes were disposed to hostilities

At this time my party of twenty-five men were in this condition: Our animals were poor and jaded from the constant express service in which they had been employed in the operations preliminary to the Blackfeet council, four our expresses had ranged from the Saskatchewan on the north to the Yellow Stone on the south. They possessed but few arms and little ammunition, as we had in coming up found no use for them, passing through the territory of friendly Indians.

Under these circumstances I halted the train, despatched my secretary, Mr. Doty, to Forts Benton and Campbell to procure arms, ammunition, and fresh animals; and, on October 31, I pushed forward to the Bitter Root valley, ~~where I had established my camp~~ to make arrangements for fresh animals and supplies, instructing Mr. Doty to come on as rapidly as the condition of the train would permit.

I reached the valley November 4, making the distance of 230 miles in four and a half days.

The train left the Missouri November 4, and reached Hell Gate, in the Bitter Root valley, where I had established my camp, in eight days, a distance of 200 miles.

I had overtaken, before reaching the valley, the delegation of Nez Perces chiefs, who had attended the Blackfeet council. A conference was held with them at Hell Gate.

They had already heard, through Indian rumors, of the war below. I stated to them fully the state of affairs, and requested that certain of their number would accompany me, it being my determination to push forward by way of the Coeur d'Alene pass, although it was declared to be impracticable on account of snow.

The result of our conference was most satisfactory. The whole party, numbering fourteen men, among who were Spotted Eagle, Looking Glass, and Three Feathers, principal chiefs among the Nez Perces, expressed their determination to accompany us, and share any dangers to be encountered.

They expressed a desire that, after crossing the mountains, I should go to their country, whence a large force of their young men would accompany me to the Dalles, and protect us with their lives against any enemy.

Having replenished my train with all the animals to be had, on November 14th we pushed forward, crossing the Bitter Root mountains the 20th, in snow two and a half to three feet deep, and reached the Coeur d'Alene mission the 25th, taking the Coeur d'Alenes entirely by surprise. They had not thought it possible we would cross the mountains so late in the season. With the Coeur d'Alenes I had a council, and found them much excited; on a balance for peace or for war, and a chance word might turn them either way.

Rumors of all kinds met us here; that the troops had fought a battle with the Yakimas, and had driven them across the Columbia towards the Spokane, and that the Walla-Wallas, Cayuses, and Umatillas, were in arms, and that they had been joined by a portion of the Nez Perces.

The accounts were of so contradictory a nature that nothing certain could be ascertained from them, excepting the evident fact that several of the tribes below were in arms, blocking up our road, and had threatened to cut off my party in any event. However, I determined to push forward, having first dispatched Mr. Craig, my Nez Perce interpreter, with all but four of the Nez Perces, who remained to accompany me, to the Nez Perces country, with instructions to collect the Nez Perces, tell them I was coming, and wished a strong party to accompany me to the Dalles; and, having done this, to dispatch an express to me at the Spokane, on the 27th November; accompanied by the four Nez Perces, we made a forced march to the Spokane, reaching it the next day.

The Spokanes were even more surprised than the Coeur d'Alenes at seeing us. Three hours before my arrival, they heard I was going to the settlements by way of New York. I immediately called a council, sent to Fort Colville for Mr. McDonald, in charge of that post of the Hudson's Bay Company, and also for the Jesuit fathers at that point.

They arrived. A council was held, at which the whole Spokane nation was represented. The Coeur d'Alenes and Colvilles also were present.

The Spokanes and Colvilles evinced extreme hostility of feeling, spoke of the war below, wanted it stopped; said the whites were wrong. The belief

was current Pee-u-pee-mox-mox would cut off my party, as he had repeatedly threatened. They had not joined in the war, but yet would make no promises to remain neutral. If the Indians now at war were driven into their country, they would not answer for the consequences; probably many of the Spokanes would join them.

After a stormy council of several days, the Spokanes, Coeur d'Alenes, and Colvilles were entirely conciliated, and promised that they would reject all the overtures of the hostile Indians, and continue firm friends of the whites.

Having added to my party twenty men on their way from Colville to the Dalles, who had delayed some weeks at this point through fear of the hostile Indians below, I organized my party as volunteers of the Territory, and mustered them into the service.

I then made a forced march to the Nez Perces' country, striking the Clear Water at Lapeval. Here we found assembled the whole Nez Perces nation, excepting those in the buffalo country.

Mr. Craig had received letters which informed me that the whole Walla-Walla valley was blocked up with hostile Indians, and the Nez Perces said it was impossible to go through.

I called a council, and proposed to them that 150 of their young men should accompany me to the Dalles.

Without hesitation they agreed to go. Whilst in council, making the arrangements for our movement, news came that a force of gallant Oregon volunteers, four hundred strong, had met the Indians in the Walla-Walla valley, and after four days of hard fighting, having a number of officers and men killed and wounded, had completely routed the enemy, driving them across Snake river, and towards the Nez Perces country.

The next day I pushed forward, accompanied by 69 Nez Perces well armed, and reached Walla-Walla without encountering any hostile Indians. They had all been driven across Snake river below us, by the Oregon troops.

It is now proper to inquire what would have been the condition of my party had not the Oregon troops pushed vigorously into the field, and gallantly defeated the enemy.

The country between the Blue mountains and the Columbia was overrun with Indians, numbering 1,000 to 1,200 warriors, including the force at Priest's Rapids, under Kam-ai-a-kun, who had sworn to cut us off -- it was completely blocked up.

One effect of the campaign of the regulars and volunteers in the Yakima country, under Brigadier General Raines, was to drive Kam-ai-a-kun and his people upon our side of the Columbia river, and thus endangering our movement from the Spokane to the Nez Perces country.

Thus we had been hemmed in by a body of hostile Indians, through whom we could only have forced our way with extreme difficulty, and at great loss of life. We might all have been sacrificed in the attempt. For the opening the way to my party I am solely indebted to the Oregon volunteers.

Pee-u-pee-mox-mox, the celebrated Walla-Walla chief, entertains an extreme hostility toward myself and party, owing to imaginary wrongs he supposed had been inflicted upon him in the treaty concluded with the Cayuse and Walla-Wallas last June, and had been known to threaten repeatedly that I should never reach the Dalles. He was the first to commence hostilities, by plundering Fort Walla-Walla, and destroying a large amount of property belonging to the United States Indian Department.

This chief was taken prisoner by the Oregon volunteers, while endeavoring to lead them into an ambush. During the heat of the first day's battle, he and four other prisoners attempted to escape by ferociously attacking the guard, and were at once shot down.

At Walla-Walla I found some twenty-five settlers, the remainder having fled to the Dalles for protection. With these were 100 friendly Indians.

Special Indian Agent, B. F. Shaw, colonel in the Washington Territory militia, was on the ground, and I at once organized the district, placed him in command, and directed him, if necessary, to fortify, but at all events to maintain his ground, should the Oregon troops be disbanded before another force could take the field.

The Nez Perce auxiliaries were disbanded and returned home.

Thus we had reached a place of safety, unaided, excepting by the fortunate movements of the Oregon troops. Not a single man had been pushed forward to meet us, although it was well known we should cross the mountains about a certain time, and arrive at Walla-Walla about the time we did.

Why was this? Arrangements had been made with Major Raines, by Acting Governor Mason, to push forward a force under Colonel Shaw, to meet me at the Spokane about the time of my arrival there. A company had been enlisted, organized, and marched to Fort Vancouver, to obtain equipments, rations and transportation, which Major Raines had promised both Governor Mason and Col. Shaw should be promptly furnished them. Some little delay ensued, and in the meantime Major General Wool arrived, who immediately declined equipping the company, as promised by Major Raines, and stated that he could not in any manner recognize volunteers, or furnish them equipments or transportation, and declining to supply their place with regular troops, when at Vancouver alone were some 350 men.

When remonstrated with by Captain William McKay, in command of the company raised to push forward to my assistance, when informed of the object for which this company was enlisted, and that if it was not pushed forward at once, or if some other force were not sent, Governor Stevens and his party would be in the most imminent danger, the general replied that in his opinion the danger was greatly exaggerated; that probably Governor Stevens would be able to protect himself, but that if he could not, then Governor Stevens could obtain an escort from General Harney.

What a reply was this? A moiety of the Indians now in arms had defeated a detachment of 100 United States regulars.

Major Raines had placed on record his opinion, that an insufficient force would be defeated by these Indians, and my party was supposed to number no more than 25 men. Yet Major General Wool very coolly says, Governor Stevens can take care of himself. So, too, in the remark, that I could obtain aid from General Harney. Did General Wool know that the distance from Fort Benton to the supposed position of General Harney was greater than the distance from Fort Benton to the Dalles, and that to obtain aid from him would require not less than six months; and that an express to reach him must pass through the entire breadth of the Sioux country? Such ignorance shows great incapacity, and is inexcusable.

Mr. Secretary, Major General Wool, commanding the Pacific division, neglected and refused to send a force to the relief of myself and party, when known to be in imminent danger, and believed, by those who are best capable of judging, to be coming on to certain death; and this, when he had at his command an efficient force of regular troops.

He has refused to sanction the agreement made between Governor Mason and Major Raines for troops to be sent to my assistance, and ordered them to be disbanded. It was reserved for the Oregon volunteers to rescue us.

There has been a breach of faith somewhere. I ask for an investigation into the whole matter.

The only demonstration made by Major Raines resulted in showing his utter incapacity to command in the field. As has been heretofore said his expedition against the Yakimas effected nothing but driving the Indians into the very country through which I must pass to reach the settlements. I have, therefore, to prefer charges against General Wool. I accuse him of utter and signal incapacity

and signal incapacity, of criminal neglect of my safety. I ask for an investigation into his conduct and for his removal from command.

After making my arrangements in the Walla-Walla valley, I pushed to Vancouver, coming down the trail, the river being still closed, conferred with Major Raines, and then hastened to Olympia as rapidly as possible, reaching my home on the 19th January. The legislature was still in session. The greatest alarm prevailed throughout the sound. The people were living in block houses. The enemy had gained the advantage, and our regulars and volunteers had retired before them. Reinforcements were coming from the other side of the mountains to the hostile Indians. In obedience to my own convictions of duty, and in response to the sentiments of this entire community, I issued my proclamation, calling for six companies of volunteers for the defence of the sound, appointed recruiting officers for the raising of three companies on the Columbia river, to operate east of the Cascades, and after remaining in my office but two days, went down the Sound to visit the friendly Indians, confer with the inhabitants, and make the necessary arrangements for the troops to take the field.

Since my arrival on the Sound, Seattle has been attacked and everything outside of its line of defence burned, except a small place named Alki, on the same bay with Seattle. The whole county of King has been devastated. Rumors of all our places being attacked have reached us daily. The northern Indians have commenced making depredations. They are now meditating to send sixteen war canoes against us. These canoes carry seventy-five men each, and can be urged with great velocity through stormy seas. To meet which dangers I have requested Captain Gansevoort, now commanding the naval forces in the Sound, to keep the steamer Active cruising between Fort Townsend, Bellingham bay, and Seattle, and I have advised Governor Douglas of Vancouver's island, of the fact, and requested him to keep one of the Hudson's bay steamers cruising in the waters of his jurisdiction, and to keep me advised of the movements of the Indians alleged to be hostile.

I have also raised a force of friendly Indians to operate against the hostiles from the line of the Snow-hou-mish. They are already in the field, are supported by all the available strength of the northern battalion of the Washington Territory volunteers, and have struck two decisive blows. The central battalion have moved from this quarter, and are now establishing a depot at Montgomery's. They will on Friday or Saturday move on the Puyallup, and will also be ~~re~~ reinforced by friendly Indians.

The most cordial relations exist between myself and Lieutenant Colonel Casey, commanding the Puget Sound district, who appreciates fully the imminence of our danger, and who urges me to push into the field all the volunteers in my power. We shall act in concert throughout.

Since my arrival at the Sound I have revisited the Columbia river, and conferred with Colonel Wright, 9th infantry, in command of the Columbia river district. By letter I have urged both Colonel Wright and Major Rains, previously in command of the district, to dispatch troops to the interior. They are not permitted to do so by the stringent orders of General Wool, and knowing the necessity of prompt action, I have had no alternative but to call out volunteers.

In Colonel Wright I have entire confidence, and if he was allowed to act according to his own judgment there would be nothing to apprehend. But it seems to be the determination of General Wool to play the part of the dog in the manger, neither to act himself nor to let others act.

As commander-in-chief of the militia of Washington, and in view of my oath of office, I have taken the responsibility to act. Every energy will be devoted to the work. The Indians now hostile on this side of the mountains will soon, I trust, be struck, and peace be restored to our distracted Sound.

For my full views in reference to operations east of the Cascades, I enclose a copy of a memoir which I have addressed to General Wool, with an extract of a letter to Colonel Wright, modifying my views in certain particulars, in consequence of the lateness of the season and the condition of affairs on the Sound.

I also send a copy of my message to the legislature, and of the message of Governor Mason, when that legislature first assembled.

Governor Mason will soon be in Washington, from whom you will be able to gain every information which this office could furnish.

I have the honor to remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ISSAC I. STEVENS,

Governor and Sup't Indian Affairs, W. T.

Hon. Jefferson Davis,
Secretary of War.

Headquarters, Camp Washington Territory Volunteers,
Walla-Walla Valley, W. T., December 23, 1855.

Sir: I reached this point, some thirty miles to the eastward of Fort Walla-Walla, on the Columbia, on the 20th instant. We have had extraordinary success in our long march from the waters of the Missouri, and I trust that the conferences with the Indian tribes on my way will have some effect in preventing the tribes now peaceable from becoming hostile.

A very important result has been gained by the operations of the volunteers of Oregon in this valley. The Cayuses, Walla-Wallas, Umatillas, the Tye of Deshute, and a portion of the Palouse Indians, mustering five to six hundred warriors, have been defeated and driven across the Snake river. They are now scattered along the north bank of the Snake from its mouth to the Nez Perce country, and the bulk of them are believed to be in camp in the first wood on the Palouse river. From the best information I can gain, I am of the opinion that not more than five to six hundred Indians participated in the fight; these Indians are in constant communication with the Yakimas, under Kam-i-a-han, and we have reports that he is meditating an attack with their combined forces upon the troops in this valley. These reports I do not credit; I am of the opinion that the Indians desire the war to be put off till spring, in the hope that their numbers may be augmented by the Spokanes, Omahanes, Colvilles, Coeur d'Alenes, and the tribes north of the line, and in case of defeat, by having the means of retreat to the north and across the mountains eastward to the buffalo country.

The Coeur d'Alenes, Spokanes, Colvilles and Omahanes number about 2,100 souls, and some 400 to 500 warriors, only a portion armed with guns. The former tribes, numbering about 1,700, I called into council on the Spokane, early this month, and have received from them the most unqualified assurances that they would reject all the overtures of the hostile tribes, and maintain relations of friendship with the government; but they have been very much shaken by the efforts made to invoke them in the war, and if operations are suspended till spring there would be great danger that they then would be met in arms.

The Nez Perces are staunch and entirely reliable. Some seventy of these warriors, well armed, accompanied me from their own country and are now in my camp. I crossed the mountains with twenty-five men, and by accessions from the mines, and citizens who had fled for protection to the Nez Perce country, and from other sources, we have a force of volunteers, organized in two companies and numbering in all fifty-two men. The volunteers of Oregon in this valley number about four hundred men.

I am of the opinion that all the tribes, from the Dalles to the Nez Perce country, and f

from the Blue Mountains to the Spokane river, now in arms against the government, have not over twelve hundred adult males, and that they cannot bring into the field more than one thousand effective men. My sources of information are good, and I write with much confidence. The hostile tribes, throwing out bands known to be friendly and in charge of local agents, do not number quite five thousand souls..

On reaching this point, I exceedingly regretted to learn that the Yakima country had been abandoned. In my opinion, it could have been held by two hundred men, and have been supplied by Walla-Walla. There is a good road from Walla-Walla to the Yakima mission; the distance is about ninety miles. Little or no snow lays on the ground for more than two thirds of the distance, and at the mission the snow is seldom more than six inches deep.

This whole valley is remarkably favorable for winter operations. Grass and water are abundant, and there are numerous streams of excellent water. The snow lays on the ground but a short time, and then but a few inches deep, and scarcely interfering with the grazing of animals.

North of the Snake, the Palouse and its tributaries, the grass is also good, and there is a large quantity of pine. The pine on the Palouse is found eighteen miles from its mouth.

From the Palouse to the Columbia, north of the Snake, the country is not so favorable; there is not much wood, nor much running water, and the grass is of inferior quality. There is nothing but drift wood on the Snake, enough, however, for camping purposes. There is nothing but drift wood on the Columbia till you reach the mouth of the Wee-nat-chap-pam, where the pine commences.

From the mouth of the Palouse, and from the several crossings above, there is no difficulty in moving to the Spokane country all through the winter. The grass is uniformly good, there is abundant pine in the Spokane, and there will be wood for fuel at all the intermediate camps on all the routes. here

This information is given so minutely is wholly the result of personal examination, and I can vouch for the accuracy of it all.

I send you a map of the country from the Cascades to the Bitter Root mountains, showing the Indian tribes, their numbers, their warriors, the points those hostile are now believed to occupy, the several routes for the movement of troops, points for depot camps, where there is abundant grass and abundant pine within reach, the several crossings of the Snake river, and the winter snow line, over which the Indians cannot cross when pursued by troops, and the line within which troops can operate all through the winter.

I will respectfully recommend that you urge forward your preparations with all possible despatch, get all your disposable force in this valley in all of January, establish a large depot camp here, occupy Fort Walla-Walla, and be ready in February to take the field.

February is generally a mild and open month. February and March are favorable months for operating. All the Indians are destitute of food, the rivers are easy to cross, the mountain passes are closed. In April the Indians can retreat in the Pearl d'Oreille route eastward of the mountains. In May the Coeur d'Alenes route is also open. In June roots are abundant, and the streams most difficult to cross. If operations be ~~prosecuted~~ vigorously prosecuted in February and March, there is little probability of any of the tribes now peaceable taking part in the war. This is the conclusion to which I was brought by the recent council held by me with the Indian tribes on the Spokane.

I do not entertain the idea that all operations can be brought to a close in these two months. The strength of the combination can, however, be broken, but the country should be held all through the ensuing year.

As to the transportation, I would urge that a line of barges be established on the Columbia; that supplies be hauled in wagons from the Dalles to the mouth of the De Chutes, and thence by water to Fort Walla-Walla, then to the Yakima country, (the Mission:) to the crossing at the mouth of the Palouse, and to any point which may be selected in this valley as a depot camp, supplies can be hauled in wagons. The roads are all good.

When operations are extended to north of the Snake, and the north bank is held, a new depot camp can be established, and the water line extended.

The Hudson Bay barge should be adopted, only be increased in size. The barge mostly commonly in use carries 6,000 pounds and requires seven men. But the great difficulty in the river is at the Falls, at the mouth of the De Chutes river, which is avoided by hauling in wagons to above that point. A barge should be constructed which would carry 12,000 pounds, require eight men, and make two round-trips a month from the De Chutes to Fort Walla-Walla. Supplies of 500 men, say four pounds ~~and~~ per day, including clothing, ammunition, etc., ~~would require~~ and forage for 500 animals, 12 pounds a day, each animal, would require 10 of these barges, 80 men, about ten (10) three-yoke ox teams, running from the Dalles to the DeChutes. An ox team could not make more than three round trips from the Dalles to Fort Walla-Walla, in two months, and this would be more than ought reasonably to be expected. To transport the above amount of supplies and forage in wagons would require 100 ox teams and 100 men. Unless foraged on the road, oxen, after making one round trip, must have rest, and a large number of spare oxen must be at hand at both ends of the line to keep the teams constantly in motion. It will probably be very difficult to get early into the field so large a train; a pack train will be ^{still} more expensive, and it will be wanted in advance. Supplies, in my judgment, will mostly have to be transported from the depot in this valley by pack trains.

The Hudson Bay people at Fort Vancouver can put their hands on the men who understand making these barges. I estimate that five barges could be built at Portland and be in readiness for their loads at the mouth of the DeChutes in 20 days, and five more in 30 days. It is a small affair to make them.

I derive my ~~knowledge~~ information in regard to the barges from Mr. Sinclair, of the Hudson Bay Company, a gentleman of sound judgment and large experience, and most favorably known to all the citizens of the Columbia valley.

I believe it is practicable to run stern-wheel steamers ~~on~~ from the mouth of the De Chutes to above Walla-Walla, and as far as the Priests' rapids; but time will be required to get a suitable one on the route, and to establish wood yards. There is nothing but drift wood on the immediate banks of the Columbia, below the mouth of the Wee-nat-chap-pan. I would respectfully urge, however, that your early attention be given to the matter.

The plan of campaign which occurs to me as feasible is as follows: Occupy the Walla-Walla valley in January; establish a large depot camp on the Touchet; hold Fort Walla-Walla; get up supplies by a line of barges on the Columbia; have an advance post on the Tucanon, and pickets at the crossings of the Palouse and opposite the bend of the Tucanon. This disposition of the troops will make you master of the Walla-Walla valley, give you ^{the} control of the country of the Snake, and enable you to get information of the enemy. In February cross the Snake, attack the enemy on the Palouse, establish a depot camp at the first wood, extend the line of barges up the Snake to the Palouse, and push forward a column to below Okinahane.

These operations will probably drive all the hostile Indians into the

Yakima country, west of the Columbia river; when more down the Columbia, cross into the Yakima country and put the enemy to his last battle. He cannot cross the mountains till May, and all the troops left behind at Fort Walla-Walla and at depot camps, except indispensable guards, marched up seasonably from Fort Walla-Walla by the line of the Yakima river, would, with the movement of the column from north of the Snake, drive him into a corner, from which he could not easily escape.

There will be no difficulty whatever in making the crossing of the Snake. To the upper crossings canoes could be brought from the Nez Perces country. For the Palouse crossing, with a few tools, boats could be made in a few days, on the touchet, and be transported thither on wheels. My India rubber boats for the Indian service were unfortunately cut to pieces by the Indians, at Fort Walla-Walla. During the winter months the rivers are low.

The question occurs, is the plan compatible with the force at your command?

In my judgment, 300 to 400 effective troops will signally defeat any force which the enemy could bring together from the tribes now hostile. In my plan of operations at Fort Walla-Walla, at the depot camp of the valley, and to hold the river crossings, 800 men would be required. If a smaller force were left, it might tempt the Yakimas, under Kam-a-a-hum, to move rapidly into his own country, if not already there, cross the Columbia below the mouth of the Snake, steal all the animals, and break up the communications. If very much reduced, he might successfully attempt an attack upon the troops. With 200 men, I do not think he would attempt anything on this side of the Columbia. The barges in brigade of five each, manned by 40 men, I do not think, with a small force of the Umatilla, would be in danger of attack. They could destroy all the canoes, and take from the enemy the means of crossing the river below Walla-Walla.

In the advance movement on the Palouse, there should be five hundred men. This whole force will be disposable for the first blow on the Palouse. 200 men will hold the line on the Snake, and 300 will be left for the advance movement on the Columbia, below Okinahane.

When the enemy is driven into the Yakima country, from the depot camps north and south of the Snake, say 200 men, which, with 150 from this column moving towards Okinahane, will give 350 men. I would advise that 150 of that column be left to cut off retreat in any attempt to recross the river.

In this plan of campaign, the troops are interposed between the hostile tribes and the friendly ones, and they are brought to a final stand, where there is scarcely a possibility of escape. If the Yakima country were ~~in~~ held simultaneously with this valley and with operations upon the Palouse, might drive the enemy upon the Spokane, and thus cause them to embark in the war. The holding of the Yakima country would, however, effectually protect the line of the Columbia, and render it unnecessary to leave so large a force in this valley. But this plan would require more troops than the other.

By the Walla-Walla valley on this paper, I mean the whole country in the re-entering of the Snake.

With a small force on the Umatilla, and the troops required at the Dalles, 800 effective men will be required, and making allowances for the sick list and for casualties, 1,000 men should be in the field. There are here, or on their way, 500 volunteers from Oregon; I hear that you have, or will have soon, 500 to 600 regulars.

The volunteers with me have been mustered into the service of the Territory for a specific duty, and will be discharged when I go down to the Dalles. On the Spokane, I was able to learn nothing of the plan of the campaign, and only knew that Kam-i-a-hum, with all his forces, was

believed to be on the Spokane side of the Columbia, ~~river~~ and that the Cayuses and Walla-Wallas were assembled, some 600 warriors, in the Walla-Walla valley. I expected at that time to be obliged to force my way through this body with my small force of less, at that time, than 50 men, and the Nez Perces, to the Dalles. The Nez Perce chiefs who accompanied me from the Blackfeet council, tendered to me the services of 150 fighting men of the nation, and it was not till I had been some hours with them in council, in their own country, making the necessary arrangements, that I learned of the defeat of these tribes, and that the road was opened. I took with me, however, some 70 Nez Perces, well armed, besides young men, to herd and guard our animals.

Olympia, W. T., January 29, 1856.

The above was written to be dispatched by an express to you at Vancouver. I concluded, however, to come in person, and reached Vancouver the day of your departure from Portland to San Francisco.

I have since my return carefully examined the condition of affairs in the Sound, have visited nearly every point, and informed myself thoroughly of our necessities.

We are now feeding 4,000 Indians on the Sound alone; a band of hostiles, numbering from 200 to 400 are in the field. The whole country is opened to attack from them and the northern Indians. All our people are living in block houses. The town of Seattle was attacked on the 26th instant, and the families compelled to go on shipboard. The whole of King county has been devastated, and the inhabitants driven within the line of defenses of the town of Seattle. We need at least six hundred troops to cope with the enemy, and the war will, I fear, from the nature of the country, be a protracted one.

In conclusion, it is due to frankness that I should state that I have determined to submit to the department the course taken by the military authorities in the Territory of Washington for my relief. No effort was made, although the facts were presented both to Major General Wool and Major Raines to send me assistance. The regular troops were all withdrawn into garrison, and I was left to make my way the best I could through tribes known to be hostile. It remains to be seen whether the commissioner selected by the president to make treaties with the Indians in the interior of the continent is to be ignored and his safety left to chance.

I had no fear of my own safety, but the facts in the settlements did not warrant such belief. I simply, with 50 odd men and 150 Nez Perces, would have been compelled to fight 600 Indians in the Walla-Walla valley had it not been for the operations of the Oregon volunteers.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ISAAC I. STEVENS,

Governor Territory of Washington,

Major General John E. Wool,

Commanding Pacific Division, Vancouver, W. T.

N. B. The map is not quite ready. I will send it to the post at Vancouver.

Extract of a letter from Governor Stevens to Colonel Wright,
February 6, 1856.

In view of the lateness of the season, my views, as stated in my memoir to General Wool, and a copy of which I have sent to you, are

modified as follows:

1. Operate simultaneously in the Yakima country, and north of the Snake river.
2. Send at least two companies of the troops now at Vancouver to the Sound.

The volunteers on the Sound will be in the field this week, but the force will be small, and unless operations are prosecuted with great promptness and energy, we have reason to apprehend that men of the Indians now friendly will become hostile.

I will urge you to push two companies to the Sound without ~~delay~~ delay, and to push your troops against the Indians east of the Cascades.

Message of the governor of the Territory of Washington, delivered in joint session of the council and the house of representatives of Washington Territory, Friday, December 7, 1854 (?)

Fellow Citizens of the Legislative Assembly:

In the absence of the executive, I have the honor to respond to your call. To the people of this Territory, and to me especially, that absence is, at this time, particularly to be regretted, for the present juncture of affairs, requires all the experience, ability, and energy so justly conceded to the distinguished gentleman who has the honor to preside over this Territory, and whose duties in such absence by law devolves upon the Secretary of the Territory. With real sincerity I will assert that many and grave doubts have arisen in my mind as to my ability to discharge the weighty and responsible duties incident to, and arising out of, our present Indian relations; but, with a firm reliance upon the patriotism of the people, and their hearty co-operation, I have endeavored to compensate for want of experience by an earnestness of purpose, and a zealous effort to discharge my whole duty.

It is a subject of regret that pressure of business and multiplicity of labors prevent as full and careful a review of matters as desirable. Should, therefore, things seemingly important be omitted, or slightly alluded to, the neglect must be attributed not to intention, but rather to an attention to more pressing matters.

Since you were last assembled an important and I regret to say, disastrous change has taken place in our social prospects. While peace and security seemed to reign about us, and every person was, as usual, pursuing his customary avocations, an Indian war breaks out in our midst, spreading alarm throughout the whole Territory. Families are murdered, property is destroyed, claims are abandoned for the fort and the block house, and the whole country, instead of portraying the ~~peaceful~~ usual peaceful occupations of American citizens, has the appearance of desertion, and nothing but parties of armed men are to be seen in motion. How long this state of affairs is to continue it is impossible to say; but from the energy which our citizens has shown, and the measures which have been adopted, it is earnestly to be hoped that the end is not far off.

The extinguishment of the Indian title to lands within the Territory has been long and loudly called for by the people. This was a matter absolutely necessary for our ~~own~~ welfare, in order that there might be no conflicting claims between the settler and the Indian, and that the Indians might be placed in such a position that, while they were taken care of and protected, they could at the same time, as far as possible, be prevented from doing harm.

In the month of December, 1854, in pursuance of instructions from the general government, Governor Stevens entered upon this delicate and

arduous task. The first treaty was made in the county of Thurston, in the vicinity of the Nisqually river, on the 26th of December; was ratified by the United States Senate before its adjournment, March 3, 1855, has been proclaimed by the President, and is now a part of the supreme law of the land. The basis of that treaty is the basis of all that have been concluded since. Great care was taken to explain the provisions and the object of the negotiations to the various tribes. Careful interpreters were secured, and every individual was allowed to speak his views. Similar treaties have been concluded with all the Indians west of the Cascade mountains, with the exception of the Chehalis, those residing in the neighborhood of Shoalwater Bay and on the Columbia, as far east as the Dalles.

In pursuance of the instructions and line of policy marked out by the Indian department at Washington City, Governor Stevens crossed the Cascade mountains, and in conjunction with the superintendent of Indian affairs of Oregon, treaties were effected with the various bands known as the Yakima tribe, the Cayuses, the Walla-Wallas and the Nez Perces. He then proceeded to Fort Benton, on the Missouri river, where a great council had been called to conclude and settle a definite peace between the tribes divided by the Rocky mountains, hostilities between which had continued ever since the whites had any knowledge of the country.

This measure was of vital importance to the Territory of Washington, as, while these hostilities continued, there could be no safe travel or communication by the great northern route connecting the waters of the Columbia ~~with~~ Puget Sound with the headwaters of the Mississippi. It may be well here to state, that the latest information received will justify the belief that that treaty has been concluded, and the return of Gov. Stevens is daily looked for.

In the midst of this favorable appearance of things, while the ink was scarcely dry with which treaties had been written, Indians, who had entered into these stipulations, and solemnly pledged their faith to preserve amity and peace towards all American citizens, have risen in arms, treacherously surprised, and barbarously murdered our inoffending citizens, killed an Indian agent, while in the performance of his official duties, and in defiance of all plighted troth and written obligation waged a war, accompanied with all the horrid brutalities incident to savage life.

The sphere allotted to this message will not justify a recital of the preliminary aggressions. Satisfactory evidence, however, has been afforded, indicating that both in Oregon and this Territory, for a great length of time, preparations for war had been going on on the part of the Indians. Simultaneously with the murders committed in the Yakima valley, southern Oregon became the scene of Indian warfare, and the moment ~~the~~ troops move from Puget Sound across the mountains, an outbreak takes place on the White river prairies.

On the 23d of September, in addition to previous floating rumors, positive information was received that two of our citizens had been murdered in the Yakima valley, while travelling on the military road across the Naches pass. A requisition was immediately made upon the commanding officers of the military posts of Fort Steilacoom and Fort Vancouver for sufficient ~~force~~ forces to proceed, by different routes, into that country, to procure, if possible, the murderers, if not to punish the tribe, and to furnish protection to such persons as might be travelling to, or returning from the Colville mines. Both of these requisitions were promptly complied with. Previous to this, Major Haller, commanding Fort Dalles, being nearer the scene of action, and having earlier information, had moved into the field, and on the 6th of October was attacked by an immensely superior force, and, after a gallant and desperate conflict of about forty-eight hours, succeeded in driving off the enemy, losing five men killed and sixteen wounded; together with a large portion of his animals and all of his provisions. The last

compelled him to return to the Dalles. Upon the receipt of this information Major Raines, commanding the Columbia river and Puget Sound district of the United States army, made a requisition upon the governor of Oregon for four companies of volunteers, and upon the governor of Washington for two. The proclamations by the respective executives, calling for these forces, were responded to with zeal and alacrity by the citizens of this and our sister Territory. In consequence of the scarcity of arms existing in this section of country, in order to furnish the volunteer force being raised here, it became necessary to make a ~~requisition~~ requisition both upon the United States sloop-of-war ~~Decatur~~ "Decatur," and the revenue cutter "Jefferson Davis," for such as could be spared. Much praise is due to the commanding officers of those two vessels for the willingness and promptness with which they responded to that request, thus enabling the first company of Washington Territory volunteers to be equipped and ready for the field the moment their organization was completed.

On the 30th of October, Major Rains, having received from me the appointment of brigadier general of the volunteer forces serving in the Yakima war, moved into the field with all the disposable regular troops, and having the co-operation of nine companies of Oregon mounted volunteers, under command of Colonel Nesmith. After proceeding as far as the Yakima mission, having several skirmishes with the enemy, capturing some of their cattle and horses, and destroying several large caches of provisions, the whole command returned to the Dalles, the unusual inclemency of the season preventing a winter campaign. In the meanwhile, the command moving from Fort Steilacoom, under command of Lieutenant Slaughter, proceeded across the mountains, through the Naches pass, to within about twenty-five miles of the Atahman Mission, where, learning of the return of Major ~~Rains~~ Haller (?-Rains) to the Dalles, they fell back, first to the summit, and then to the upper prairies of the White river. Being reinforced with seventy-six regulars and Company B of the Washington Territory volunteers, under command of Captain Gilmore Hays, the whole detachment, under command of Captain M. Maloney, U. S. 4th infantry, again advanced; but, after crossing the summit, were overtaken by an express, informing them that delay had taken place in the movements of the troops from the Columbia river. Captain Maloney consequently fell back to the first grazing ground on this side of the mountains - the White river prairies. During these movements, a band of rangers had been organized, under command of Captain Charles H. Eaton, whose duty it was made to guard the outskirts of the settlements, and watch the various mountain passes. Scarcely had the command commenced its operations when a detachment of eleven men, on regular scouting duty, were suddenly attacked by Indians, heretofore supposed to be friendly. Taking refuge in a log house, after gallantly sustaining a siege of some sixteen hours' duration, the Indians were repulsed. The murder of several highly esteemed citizens travelling from Captain Maloney's camp into the settlements, and the massacre on White river, followed.

The return of the command ~~of~~ under Captain Maloney cannot but be looked upon as a most fortunate event for the settlers on Puget Sound, as it is impossible to say what might have been the result, with the settlements entirely unprotected, and many of the Indians at open war, and the rest, to say the least, wavering. The battle on White river, in which both regulars and volunteers so admirably distinguished themselves, cannot fail to impress the Indians with the superiority and power of the white man, and that however protracted the contest may be, ruin and desolation must necessarily come upon them.

The calls upon the people of the Territory for their services in the present war have been met by the organization of 12 companies, consisting of two companies of rangers and ten companies of the 1st regiment of Washington Territory volunteers, amounting, in all, to upwards of seven hundred men.

Of these about five hundred are mounted. In addition to these, there is a company of rangers at the Cowlotz Farms, under command of Captain Deers, not regularly mustered into service but ready to perform such duty as may be required of them.

I deem it my duty, here, to make public acknowledgements of the services rendered by his excellency, JAMES DOUGLAS, governor of Vancouver's Island. Upon the alarm naturally attendant upon a serious Indian outbreak, almost within arm's-length of us, and owing to the scarcity of arms and ammunition, application was made to him for such an amount of these munitions of war as he could possibly furnish. That application was ~~immediately~~ promptly and cordially responded to, to the extent of his power; he at the same time regretting that he had at the moment no vessel-of-war at his disposal, and that his steamers, the "Otter" and "Beaver," were both absent, but upon their arrival of either, she should be dispatched to the Sound, to render such service as might be required of her. Since the the "Otter" has visited this place.

The movement on the part of the executive of Vancouver's Island cannot fail to have its influence upon the Indians residing upon our waters, having a tendency to show them that whatever differences may exist between the Americans and the Englishmen, in their social and political organization, as far as savages are concerned they are but one.

The Indians west of the Cascade, with the exception of those before alluded to, still continue friendly. They have been collected at various points, disarmed, and placed under the surveillance of local agents, and arrangements have been made for their support. The only fear at present entertained is that, by some act of indiscretion, they may be frightened into the hostile ranks.

The disposition which has been subsequently made of the troops in the field in this portion of the Territory has been with the design - while at the same time to keep the hostile Indians in check, adequate force ~~which~~ should be moving into the outskirts of the settlements - in order that the farmers might be enabled to return to their claims to provide for the coming year's subsistence.

The general stagnation in trade and industrial pursuits, arising out of the present state of affairs, loudly calls for prompt and speedy action on the part of the general government. Should Congress adjourn without affording ~~relief~~ the relief so pressingly needed in this emergency, it will much retard our territorial growth and advancement. I therefore earnestly recommend a memorial calling for a sufficient appropriation to remunerate the citizen soldiery for their valuable and patriotic services, and the citizens generally ~~employed~~ for the supplies they so promptly furnished, and for the property destroyed.

Beyond the limits of our Territory to the north, the coast and innumerable islands are inhabited by numerous tribes of Indians of a fierce and warlike character, bands of which are constantly in the habit of descending into our settlements for the ostensible purpose of procuring labor. Besides the alarm occasioned to the most exposed settlers by the presence of these unwelcome visitors, complaints frequently arise from the various thefts committed by them. In case punishment is attempted to be inflicted, isolated settlers, as we already know from past experience, are liable, in revenge, to be cut off by them. In view of these facts, in order to discourage their coming within the limits of the Territory, I respectfully submit to your consideration, whether or not it would be advisable to enact a law making it penal for any person to employ for hire any of these northern bands. In connexion with this subject, considering the nature of the waters of Puget Sound, the numerous tribes residing on its borders, the liability to incursion from foreign tribes, and the utter inefficiency of sailing vessels for rapid communication, I will recommend that you memorialize the Navy

Department to station within our waters an armed steam vessel.

I will here call your attention to the trade that has been too largely carried on with the Indians in guns and ammunition. Our very self-preservation demands that it should entirely cease, and that very stringent laws should be passed upon the subject.

The present existing war has suggested many deficiencies in our militia law. It provides for the election of officers, but on the subject of ~~the~~ enrollment of men, and the rendering ~~of~~ the militia effective, it is extremely defective. I would respectfully recommend the election of the general staff, consisting of a brigadier, adjutant, quartermaster, and commissary general, by the legislative assembly, and a system of enrollment of all capable of bearing arms in the various counties, and that the formation of companies be entirely volunteer -- to elect their own officers, and to be formed into battalions or regiments as circumstances may require. The scattered nature of our settlements, and the isolation of some of our counties, seems to dictate this as the most effective means for their protection, and at the same time the most expedient for combination or general action. I suggest it for your consideration.

During the past summer, rumors of ~~gold~~ discoveries of gold fields near Fort Colville induced many enterprising and energetic citizens of the Territory to visit that region. Many have returned on account of the war, and the impossibility of obtaining provisions there, during the winter. Although the extent of the gold bearing district is not known, yet the fact is certain, that those who worked the bars and prospected the country near Fort Colville found gold in sufficient quantities to pay ~~the~~ well for the working. Wherever the more experienced miners dug, either upon the bars or upon the hill-sides, gold was found, and even ~~the~~ with the rude mode of working with pans an average of \$10 per day has been made, and those ~~still~~ who are still at the mines report profitable employment. I have no doubt that, with improved machines and better preparations for working to advantage, these gold mines will prove amply remunerative to many citizens who may go there, whenever the state of the country will permit communication between the Columbia river and Puget Sound settlements and the gold bearing region.

The prosecution of the public surveys during the past year, has developed large bodies of fertile lands, and made great addition to the topographical knowledge of the Territory, which will be useful to emigrants in search of the best lands. As to the amount of work thus far accomplished the office of the surveyor general shows the following results: Total amount surveyed ~~and under contract since the~~ while the Territory was under the Oregon office, 1,876 miles; amount surveyed and under contract since the organization of the Washington office, 3,063 miles; proposed to be surveyed in 1856 and 1857, as per annual report of the surveyor general, 5,688 miles - all lying west of the Cascade mountains.

The general government has made liberal appropriations for public survey in the Territory, but the surveyor general has found it impossible to obtain surveyors willing to contract for the whole amount, as the exceedingly difficult nature of the country, and the high prices of labor and provision have subjected to loss those who undertook the work, even at the maximum prices allowed by law. The present Indian war has stopped all field work in this important part of the development of our Territory; but it is hoped, that it can be resumed in the spring, and that you, by your action, will second the urgent request of the surveyor general to the General Land Office that an increased sum per mile be allowed by the general government for further surveys.

At the last session of Congress, appropriations were made for the military roads in ~~the~~ this Territory: One from Fort Benton, in Nebraska, to Walla-Walla; one from the Dalles to Columbia barracks; and one from Columbia barracks to Fort Steilacoom. A reconnaissance has been made of the

two latter during the present fall, and it is expected work will be commenced thereon during the coming spring.

In addition to these roads, communication should be opened by land to Bellingham Bay, on the north, and through the valleys of the Chehalis and Willapa to Gery's Harbor, Shoalwater Bay, and some point near the mouth of the Columbia, on the south. These roads will be of great importance, in a domestic ~~view~~ point of view, as opening a large section of country to settlement, and communications with other settlements; and, in military affairs, as affording means of communication with exposed points, and of rapidly marching troops into the fastnesses, and lairs of those savages who may hover upon the outskirts of the settlements. I call your attention to this as a subject of memorial.

In the "act making appropriations for the support of the army for the year ending the 30th of June, 1856, and for other purposes," it was provided, that the Secretary of War shall equalize, as far as practicable, the number of arms heretofore distributed, and now in possession of the several States, so that each State which had received less than its pro rata share shall receive a number sufficient to make ~~an~~ an equal pro rata proportion for all the States, according to the number of their representatives and senators in Congress, respectively.

Under this provision, the amount falling due to this Territory is 2,000 muskets. An effort was made to draw them in rifles, but failed from some regulation to the contrary. In addition to this, our annual quota of arms is 137 muskets, which amount, consisting of 2,137 muskets, have been drawn in 1,980 muskets, 100 rifles and accoutrements, and 30 cavalry sabres. The whole amount - to which 208,000 caps were added - have arrived at Vancouver, in this Territory, some mistake having occurred in their shipment. Owing to the difficulty of transportation at the present season of ~~affairs here has been made~~ the year, between the Columbia river and Puget Sound, efforts have been made to procure the proper portion suitable for the Puget Sound section of country, transported direct, by sea, from Vancouver to this place.

Your attention is urgently requested to the subject of the postal arrangements for the Territory. Mail routes have been established throughout the Sound, and a large appropriation has been made for carrying the mail from Olympia by sea to San Francisco.

The contracts of the former have not as yet been let, and the latter has proved inadequate for the service required, and thus far been of no avail.

In the present critical state of affairs ~~in~~ our exposed position demands from the general government a more rapid communication with San Francisco and New York.

By the act of the last legislative assembly, the public buildings of the Territory were located, and by subsequent resolution the governor was requested to draw the amount appropriated by Congress to be used in the erection of the capitol.

During the vacation of the legislature, and as soon as a site for the capitol could be cleared, the plan of construction was adopted, and a contract entered for its erection. The building was fast reaching its completion when the Indian war broke out, taking from said building the artisans engaged, and preventing the possibility of securing others. Under these circumstances, a suspension of the work was ordered, and I have been compelled to employ, temporarily, the hall used by the legislative assembly at its last session. The architect and contractor of the capitol assures me, however, that the work will be finished shortly.

In reference to our boundary question, and the extinguishment of the rights of the Hudson's Bay and Puget Sound Agricultural Companies, I refer you to the last message of the executive.

etc., etc.-----

paragraphs.

C. H. MASON

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