

SAINT JAMES MISSION, WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

RELATIVE TO

The claim of the Roman Catholic mission known as the Mission of Saint James to the military reservation at Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory.

JANUARY 19, 1875.—Referred to the Committee on Private Land-Claims and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
January 18, 1875.

The Secretary of War has the honor to invite the attention of the House of Representatives to the claim of the Roman Catholic mission known as the "Mission of Saint James" to the military reservation at Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory.

This reservation is valued at \$1,000,000, and the claim of the Saint James mission covers the whole of the reservation.

The claim is based upon the act of Congress of August 14, 1848, (9 Statutes, page 323,) and has been before the Department many years. The War Department has always held, and still holds, that the religious establishment of the claimants was not a missionary station on the 14th of August, 1848; that it was not a missionary station among Indian tribes, and that the occupancy of the lands in question by the mission was not such an occupancy as the act of Congress required. As the questions involved in this claim can only be properly determined by a tribunal which can hear and weigh evidence, the facts and the law being so mixed that the questions of law are not susceptible of an independent solution, it is believed that the whole matter should go before a court and jury, and for this purpose it is respectfully recommended that House bill No. 3386, or some similar bill, may be passed at the present session of Congress, in order that this and similar claims may be finally and definitely settled.

WM. W. BELKNAP,
Secretary of War.