

OREGON TERRITORY—EXPENSES OF INDIAN WAR.

MEMORIAL

OF

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF OREGON,

ASKING

Congress to assume the expenses of the existing Indian war.

APRIL 2, 1856.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

Your memorialists, the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oregon, respectfully represent:

That for many years the relations between the white settlers and natives in Oregon have not been of a peaceful nature. Although treaties have been often made with the Indians here, those treaties have been as often broken. When our people have believed themselves the most secure in their homes, and the most free from danger in their migrations, they have been beset and murdered by the stealthy savage, or overwhelmed and slaughtered by the more open and ruthless hordes.

In Southern Oregon, since the treaty of the 10th September, 1853, outlawed bands of Indians have continually hovered over the borders of the settlements, and near unprotected trails and roads, cutting off trains of mules, and wagons loaded with the goods of our merchants and the produce of our farmers. From time to time our citizens have found it necessary to muster together and drive these robbers and murderers from the settlements, but only to be followed back ere the dust had settled upon their line of march.

Early in October last, nearly all of the young warriors of the tribes heretofore friendly with the whites in that part of our Territory, withdrew to the mountains, and, with the collected strength of many scattered tribes, suddenly, and without provocation, fell upon the

dwellings of the inhabitants, and indiscriminately butchered whole families, pillaged and burned farmhouses and granaries, so that for sixty miles south of the Umpqua mountains, in the midst of the settled portions of our Territory, not a house was spared—the whole was made one blank desolation.

From the Rogue River valley, hostilities extended in a rapid succession of untold cruelties and savage barbarities, into the Umpqua valley, north, and westward to the coast.

At the same time, on the northern frontier, five powerful and war-like tribes, numbering no less than four thousand warriors, declared for war.

Although these tribes had, within a few weeks from the opening of hostilities, entered into solemn treaties of peace and land-purchase with the agents of the United States, and received, in part, their pay, they killed an Indian agent, and defeated and drove in the United States troops sent among them to enforce those treaties.

They attacked our settlements in the valley of the Wallah-Wallah, destroyed the property and menaced the lives of the settlers, who, to the number of more than one hundred and fifty, retreated to the Dalles of the Columbia for safety. In the meantime Indian hostilities became general throughout Middle and Western Oregon, and Washington Territory, and in the northern portion of California.

The forces of the United States on this coast being inadequate to the exigencies of the moment, Major Raines, in command of the Puget's Sound and Columbia River districts, called for volunteer assistance from Oregon and Washington Territories, which call was promptly responded to by both Territories.

The governor of Oregon called out two regiments of mounted volunteers, one to operate in the north and the other in the south, amounting to nearly two thousand men. They were promptly mustered into the service of the Territory, and co-operated with the regular forces, endeavoring to quell the hostile outbreaks and to restore peace within our borders. They took the field, on the eve of winter, in many cases ill clad and wholly without tents.

They have crossed mountains covered with snow, traversed plains, penetrated dense forests and deep thickets, seeking and conquering the enemy; they have driven the tribes of the South into their mountain fastnesses; the Yakimas and Klickatats to their winter retreats; the Wallah-Wallahs and Snakes from their country, while much of the enemy's field is not yet approached.

The services rendered by our volunteers in the dead of winter, while the regular forces have been in garrison, are deemed of the greatest importance to the protection of the country; and their continuance in the field, until relieved by regular troops, will be found necessary, to follow up the success which they have achieved.

In conducting this war of self-preservation, the people of Oregon have labored under numerous and almost insurmountable embarrassments; nevertheless, every obstacle has been overcome, and important victories have crowned the movements of our citizen-soldiers everywhere.

Therefore, your memorialists most urgently ask Congress to recog-

nise this war as of national importance, and to provide for its prosecution to a speedy and successful termination. And your memorialists further urge that Congress assume the expenses of the Territory in conducting this war, which has thus far been a successful struggle of the citizens of Oregon against the combined forces of nearly all the savage tribes west of the Rocky mountains. And as in duty bound will ever pray, &c.

Passed the House, January 31, 1856. Passed the Council, January 31, 1856.

DELAZON SMITH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.
A. P. DENNISON,
President of the Council.

I certify that the above is a true copy of the original.

T. H. B. ODENEAL, *Clerk.*

TERRITORY OF OREGON, ss.

I, B. F. Harding, secretary of the Territory of Oregon, do hereby certify that the foregoing memorial is a true and perfect copy of the original, now on file in my office.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed [L. s.] the seal of the Territory, at Salem, this 5th day of February, A. D. 1856.

B. F. HARDING,
Secretary of the Territory of Oregon.