No 236.

Columbia Barracks. O.T.

February 23. 1858

B. L. E. Bonneville

Capt. 4th Infty

Concerning settlements

on Indian lands

Head Quarters Cal. Barracks, U.T.

February 23, 1853.

Major,

Looking over the papers I observed the bill of the Lane, which I cut out, to enclose to you. This I believe is looking to an important question, both on the score of humanity to the Indian — as well as in a Military point of view. The question is this; Can the citizen lawfully locate his claim for settlement, any where he pleases in the territory, spreading alike over that claimed by Indian tribes; or, are there any limits assigned for the settlement of the whites? The Nez Perces, Walla Wallah, and Cayuse Tribes are located near Fort Walla Wallah, about 250 miles East of this Post.

These tribes are represented to be numerous and very prosperous — owning immense droves of horses and many cattle. The two first have always been very friendly, and rapidly adopting the habits of the whites. Their climate is most inviting, their soil exceedingly fertile. These are great attractions for our people. Who are always looking that way — and contemplate forming settlements in that vicinity this summer; that towards fall, immigration there will be greatly increased.

Whatever policy the Government intends to pursue on this subject, I believe the sooner it is decided upon, the better it will be for all parties. These people are not to be crowded from their present locations, without exciting a good deal of angry feelings on their part. Their village grounds are generally well selected, for health, soil, range &c &c. If settlements can lawfully be made anywhere within the imaginary limits of the Indian possessions – may it not even the village ground itself – and expel the Indians from his own Rancheria. This can easily be avoided; by giving the Indians his limits with an Agent residing among them, to superintend matters and things. I have not met Dr. Dart the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon; perhaps intending to resign soon, may not feel much interest with regard to it.

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I am Major,

Major E. D. Townsend
A. A. General
Hd. Qrs. Pac. Div.
San Francisco
Cal.

Very respectfully
Your Most Obt Svt
(Signed)
B. L. E. Bonneville
Lieut. Col. 4th Infty.

A true extract
E. D. Townsend
Apt Adjt Genl.

Head Quarters Pacific Division
San Francisco, March 14, 1853.

Congressional.

In Senate, December 29. Mr. Weller presented several petitions from merchants and others in California, praying a restoration of the law allowing the receipt of ingots and bars in the payment of duties at custom houses.

Mr. Gwin entered into a long explanation of his course upon this subject, and upon the legislature, out of which these complaints of the petitioners have grown, and justified his conduct as tending most to the benefit of California. The petitions were referred.

In Senate, December 29. the house bill, allowing the Secretary of Oregon to select new school lands in cases where the sixteenth section has been taken up in grants to actual settlers, was considered and passed.

The President on the 4th of January nominated to the Senate, Senator Badger for judge of the Supreme Court. Some think he will be confirmed, more think not. The democrats in the Senate were to hold a caucus in relation to the nomination.

Mr. Lane introduced a bill giving bounty lands to Officers and soldiers of the Cayuse war in Oregon territory, and a bill providing for the location of bounty lands there.