

BENICIA, CALIFORNIA, Dec. 11, 1854.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE WASHINGTON UNION—
SIR:—I have just seen an editorial in the Semi-weekly
Washington *Union*, of the 4th of November, 1854, in
which I find the following remarks:

“The military purpose for which
the officer” (meaning me) “was sent to the Pacific
coast is especially marked by his assignment to brevet
rank. The last mails bring sad intelligence of
Indian massacres both at the northern and southern
extremities in the Military Department of the Pacific.
If the commander of that department is to be given
up to local and civil duties at the harbor of San Francisco,
the country which feels a deep interest in the
protection of its citizens against such outrages, has a
right to require of the Secretary of War, that no time
be lost in turning over the military command of the
department to an officer who is neither embarrassed
in the discharge of his duties by his civil employ-
ments, nor by an over-zealous attention to his political
prospects.”

These remarks are no less unjust than they are in-
correct and uncalled for by any act or omission of
my own. They are intended to represent me as ne-
glecting a very important part of my duty as Com-
mander of the Pacific Department, at the same time
playing the politician. So far from being correct, I
feel assured that when my whole conduct is made
known, the editor will discover that he has been
most grossly deceived, for, as can be shown, I have
in no respect whatever neglected any duty, civil or
military, which was required of me in the Pacific De-
partment, and no one in California will charge me
with an “over-zealous attention to my political pro-
spects.” Such a charge is no less unjust than wholly
at variance with truth. On that issue, notwithstand-
ing the threat, which has no terrors for me, by whom-
soever made, as contained in the article under con-
sideration, I am prepared to go before the people, in
whose honesty and integrity I have perfect confi-
dence. However much I might distrust individuals,
I have no fear, when my whole conduct is laid before
them, of the judgment of the people. I shall have
served to little purpose, if at this time of life, after
devoting more than forty-years in peace and war to
promote the honor and the interest of my country, I
should be found wanting. Whether or not the threat
shall be carried into effect, I am quite certain it will
not be required by the people. They will be slow to
favor accusations against myself or any one who has
ever devoted his life to the defence of their honor,
welfare and prosperity.

You say: “We have been careful to abstain
from indulging in anything like censure towards
that veteran officer,” meaning myself. If you
had been so kindly disposed towards me, and
you had no cause to be otherwise, as your remarks
would indicate, it seems to me, before you penned
the article in question, or the one of the 20th of July,
you would have called on the Secretary of War, who
could, and no doubt would, have informed you that
I had done all that was required by him or the Pres-
ident. He could have told you that I had, through
the efficiency of my officers, preserved peace and
quiet between the white and red men throughout the
Pacific Department; that batteries, by my orders, at
a small expense, had been erected for the defence of
the city of San Francisco.

the city of San Francisco; barracks at the Presidio for two companies intended to man the batteries, when necessary; an arsenal building at Benicia for the preservation of the ordnance property, and a new post established at the Tejon Pass. For the condition of each post, the discipline of the troops, the efficiency of the officers, and the numerous tribes of Indians in California, Oregon and Washington, I would refer you to the report of Colonel Mansfield, Inspector General. It took him between five and six months to visit the posts in the Pacific Department, not including Utah. No disturbance of any importance has occurred within the Department since I assumed the command, about ten months since. In that time, only one white man and five Indians have been killed. Some of the latter as reported, were killed by abandoned white men, without cause or justification. As specially instructed, I have freely conferred with the Superintendents of Indian Affairs, and given them such aid as was in my power, at the same time affording them the countenance and support of the military. All my officers, staff as well as of the line, have acted together harmoniously, efficiently and successfully. What more would you or the country require?

In regard to your allusion to the "Indian Massacres, both at the Northern and Southern extremities in the Department of the Pacific," I would observe, there was no massacre in the South. Some emigrants were robbed of their cattle; not, however, in the Pacific Department. What occurred took place in the Department of New Mexico, commanded by Brigadier General Garland. The other took place near Fort Boise, four or five hundred miles east of the most advanced post in Oregon. You might with as much propriety hold me responsible for the massacre at Fort Laramie as for what took place at either of the places referred to. Where there is a predisposition to find fault with an officer, a pretext for so doing is never wanting. It seems to me it would have made no difference whether I had been stationary or traversing the vast regions of the Pacific department, something would have been discovered to call down upon me the censure of the *Union*. With my limited force, it would have been impossible to do more than guard the partially settled parts of California, Oregon and Washington. To protect emigrants approaching either, from the East, requires cavalry, or at least a mounted force. With two full regiments of cavalry, well mounted and left to my discretion, I would guarantee the safety and protection of all emigrant parties going to the one or the other. To accomplish which, they would have to be stationed at points which would require large expenditures of money to maintain them. The transportation of supplies would be enormous, at least \$50,000 a month. I have now but about three half companies of cavalry, with broken down horses. To remount them with effective horses would require in this country a very large sum of money. Horses of the proper size and condition could not be had for less than four or five hundred dollars each. It is due, however, to the officers on the Indian frontier, to say that they have rendered all the assistance in their power to emigrants entering the Pacific Department, and those nearest the places where the reported massacres occurred, were prompt in repairing to them, and seeking for those who had committed the murders

and robberies.

Whilst I have faithfully and successfully performed the ordinary duties of my military command, I have not neglected those of a "spécial" character, which required me "to maintain our international obligations, by preventing unlawful expeditions against the territories of foreign powers; to detect the fitting out of armed expeditions against countries with which the United States are at peace, and zealously to co-operate with the civil authorities, in maintaining the neutrality laws," and by the President's proclamation, "to arrest for trial and punishment," all who should violate those laws. Although I made no arrests, nor interfered with the duties of the civil officers, I was the cause of the arrest, trial and conviction of Colonel Watkins; the arrest, trial and conviction of the Mexican Consul; the surrender of Walker and his party, and the arrest and trial of the French Consul, who was not convicted: the jury stood ten for conviction and two for acquittal. The result of all which was to prevent the French Consul from sending to Sonora three thousand Frenchmen, to be commanded by Count de Raousset, with the object of either revolutionize the country or take possession of it, in the name of the French Emperor.

For preventing Mr. Dillon and Count de Raousset from taking possession of Sonora, with three thousand Frenchmen, you surely will not condemn me. It was maintaining the Monroe and Pierce doctrines, which I can scarcely believe you intend to repudiate. The filibustering among our own citizens, was indeed trifling compared with that of the French and Mexicans. To show, however, how different was your view of my conduct from that taken by others, in relation to this subject, I present you with an extract from the U. S. District Attorney's speech, delivered on the trial of the Mexican Consul. Referring to myself, Mr. Inge says: "In order that this law [the neutrality law] might be strictly enforced, an eminent officer of the army was selected to take command of this division, with special instructions to inquire into and expose all and every violation of this law, and to bring them to the notice, the official notice, of the civil officers of the government. We are all apprised of the extraordinary diligence of this distinguished veteran, since he assumed the command. We all know the remarkable success which has been the result of his efforts. We know that he has exposed plots and brought to light machinations, the tendency and objects of which were the contravention of law, and which were unknown to the people till his presence among us. I acknowledge that I am indebted to him for the valuable information that I have offered on this prosecution. The American people are indebted to him, and the government will acknowledge, gratefully acknowledge, the eminent services he has rendered the country."

If I had permitted three thousand Frenchmen to leave our shores to seize upon Sonora, which was intended, as lightly as you may think of it, the President, Secretary of War, as well as yourself, indeed the whole country, would have had just cause to complain, not only of my want of vigilance, but of gross neglect of duty. In such a case, you would have had good and sufficient grounds to appeal to the people to require of the Secretary of War, that no time be lost in turning over the command to an

officer capable of maintaining the honor, the interest
and the dignity of the country.

As you have done me a great wrong, this letter is
intended for publication. I have therefore to re-
quest that you will do me the favor to insert it in
the *Union*.

I am very respectfully,

Your ob't servant,

JOHN E. WOOL.