

ence of a question of doubtful jurisdiction in countries so situated. You say Washington Territory and Vancouver's Island is likely to give rise to a recurrence of acts of a similar nature to those to which I have already called the honor of calling your attention, and which, I have no doubt, would not be less deplored by the government of the United States than by that of Great Britain.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you, sir, the assurances of my high consideration.

JOHN F. CRAMPTON, Secretary of War.

Hon. W. L. MARCY, &c., &c., &c.

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON TERRITORY,  
*Executive Office, May 12, 1855.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of April 26, in which you state that information has been received by you to the effect that an armed party of American citizens, ostensibly acting under the direction of a person named Barnard, who styles himself sheriff of Whatcom county, landed on the island of San Juan, and demanded from Charles Griffin certain moneys, the payment of taxes, on behalf and in the name of the United States, and America, "a demand which, as a British subject, acknowledging no authority except that emanating from his own government, he refused to pay;" that Mr. Barnes and his followers "abstracted a number of valuable sheep, and that upon Mr. Griffin demanding restitution was menaced with violence, and put in danger of his life."

Of the matters detailed by you I have no official information from your communication. It is known, however, that Mr. Barnes is the sheriff of Whatcom county.

You further state that you have called my attention to the same for the purpose of ascertaining "if the said Mr. Barnes' proceedings were in that instance authorized or sanctioned in any manner by the executive officer of Washington Territory."

The sheriffs of the various counties come under the supervision of the executive in the exercise of the pardoning power, and in the case of a resistance of the laws. They act under certain prescribed laws and to these laws they are responsible for the proper discharge of their duty.

By the act of the legislative assembly of the Territory of Oregon, previous to the separation therefrom from the Territory of Washington, the boundary line as between the two governments was held to run through the Canal de Arro, and by the act of the legislative assembly of the Territory of Washington "to organize the county of Whatcom" the island of San Juan is included within the bounds of that county. The sheriff in proceeding to collect taxes acts under the law directing him to do so. Should he be resisted in such an attempt it would become the duty of the governor to sustain him to the full force of the authority vested in him.