

NWP
970-56
45[647]

In my message of the 5th of August, 1846, communicating "a copy of the convention for the settlement and adjustment of the Oregon boundary," I recommended to Congress that "provision should be made by law, at the earliest practicable period, for the organization of a territorial government in Oregon." In my annual message of December, 1846, and again in December, 1847, this recommendation was repeated.

The population of Oregon is believed to exceed twelve thousand souls, and it is known that it will be increased by a large number of emigrants during the present season. The facts set forth in the accompanying memorial and papers show that the dangers to which our fellow citizens are exposed are so imminent, that I deem it to be my duty again to impress on Congress the strong claim which the inhabitants of that distant country have to the benefit of our laws, and to the protection of our government.

I, therefore, again invite the attention of Congress to the subject, and recommend that laws be promptly passed establishing a territorial government, and granting authority to raise an adequate volunteer force, for the defence and protection of its inhabitants. It is believed that a regiment of mounted men, with such additional force as may be raised in Oregon, will be sufficient to afford the required protection. It is recommended that the forces raised for this purpose should engage to serve for twelve months, unless sooner discharged. No doubt is entertained that, with proper inducements in land bounties, such a force can be raised in a short time. Upon the expiration of their service, many of them will doubtless desire to remain in the country and settle upon the land which they may receive as bounty. It is deemed important that provision be made for the appointment of a suitable number of Indian agents, to reside among the various tribes in Oregon, and that appropriations be made to enable them to treat with these tribes, with a view to restore and preserve peace between them and the white inhabitants.

Should the laws recommended be promptly passed, the measures for their execution may be completed during the present season, and before the severity of winter will interpose obstacles in crossing the Rocky mountains. If not promptly passed a delay of another year will be the consequence, and may prove destructive to the white settlements in Oregon.

JAMES K. POLK.

WASHINGTON, *May 29, 1848.*

OREGON CITY, *December 29, 1847.*

SIR: The bearer, Joseph L. Meek, esq., has been appointed by the legislature of Oregon territory a special messenger, to carry despatches to Washington city; his journey will be an arduous one,