

LAND DISTRICTS IN WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

[To accompany Bill S. 375.]

SUNDRY LETTERS

FROM THE

COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE,

IN REFERENCE TO THE

Creating of additional land districts in the Territory of Washington.

JANUARY 18, 1859.—Ordered to be printed.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE,
February 10, 1858.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 8th instant, covering a diagram of Washington Territory, and requesting my views as to the necessity of creating two additional districts in said Territory, and the draught of a bill designating the boundaries &c.

I therefore herewith submit the draught of a bill creating two additional land districts in that Territory; and for my views as to the necessity therefor, I beg leave to submit the copy of a letter dated May 21, 1856, to the then chairman of the Public Land Committee of the House, covering the copy of a bill at that time drawn in this office for the creation of *three* additional districts; and as the reasons therein stated still exist, I recommend now that either two or three additional districts be created, as the committee may see proper to recommend for the action of the House.

The diagram submitted by you is herewith returned.

With great respect,

THOMAS A. HENDRICKS,
Commissioner.

Hon. W. R. W. COBB,
Chair'n Com. Public Lands, House of Reps.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE,
May 17, 1858.

SIR: Pursuant to your oral request of this morning, I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy of my letter of February 10 last to the chairman of the Committee on Public Lands of the House, together with the copy of letter of May 21, 1856, therein referred to, and the draught of a bill to create two additional land districts in the Territory of Washington.

Should this bill be passed, it is all-important that the section containing an appropriation to meet expenses under it be retained in the law, as without it we will not have sufficient funds for the purpose.

With great respect,

THOMAS A. HENDRICKS,
Commissioner.

Hon. C. E. STUART,
Chair'n. Com. Public Lands, Senate.

GENERAL LAND OFFICE,
Washington, May 21, 1856.

SIR: I have the honor to return herewith the joint resolutions of the Territory of Washington, one passed in December, 1855, and the other in January, 1856, instructing the delegate in Congress to use his influence to secure the passage of acts creating two new land districts in said Territory, referred in your letter of the 11th instant for my opinion, and, if expedient, to prepare a bill in the proper form, &c.

In reply, I have the honor to state, that at this time there is but one land district in the whole of that new Territory, the office for which is at Olympia, and settlers desiring to secure their claims, excepting the comparatively few in the neighborhood of the office, for the purpose of entering their homes, are compelled to travel many miles at great expense over a vast country, obstructed by an almost endless succession of mountains, heavy growths of timber, and water-courses, with as yet indifferent roads and poor bridges; so that what would be considered on our Atlantic slope a moderate distance, would, in effect, owing to the impediments mentioned, be more than tripled in that region.

Under these circumstances alone, it seems no more than just that the Territory referred to should be subdivided into at least four land districts; that the officers for the new districts be appointed as necessity may require.

This is a measure which addresses itself to the favorable consideration of Congress, no less on account of its prospective public utility and importance to the citizens of this infant frontier territory, than on general principles of good policy, to prevent encroachments upon our territorial limits, of which disposition we already have sufficient evidence in the fact mentioned in my late annual report of a claim set

up by British settlers to a number of islands in the Straits of San Juan de Fuca, which appear to lie most clearly on our side of the territorial line when definitely established under the existing treaty. The direct effect of the measure, if adopted, would be to extend our settlement; and thus placing our own citizens on the soil, the fostering hand of the government would be felt there, and it would serve in a great measure to prevent the encroachments referred to, whenever other action may hereafter be taken by Congress in the premises to secure our just rights.

With these views I therefore submit the draught of a bill dividing the Territory into four land districts, including the present office at Olympia, and suggest its passage at the present session of Congress.

With great respect,

THOS. A. HENDRICKS,
Commissioner.

Hon. HENNY RENNETT,
Chairman Committee on Public Lands, House of Reps.

