

cure hay for the winter and in this belief I concur. I do not perceive that any good results will arise to the Oregon emigration by the troops going so far at this late season, or at the period when they will be able to start (after awaiting the declared election of the Lieutenant-Colonel). The emigrants of this year cannot certainly be benefited. My own opinion is that it would be best for the troops to winter at the mouth of Table creek. There a blockhouse has been erected, and a very large quantity of lumber, &c. remains with which the troops could erect temporary quarters that, with a supply of stores, could be made comfortable. Forage could be procured from the opposite county. I should be glad to receive the views of the department on this point by return of mail, if possible. I have written amidst many interruptions as the appearance of this sheet will indicate.

Respectfully,
Your obdt. servt.,
C. WHARTON,
Lt.-Col. First dragoons,
Commanding.
Brig.-Gen. Jones,
Adjutant-General,
Washington, D. C.

23.

A. G. O., WASHINGTON, August 20, 1847.

Colonel: Your letter of the 3d instant has been submitted to the secretary of war and your suggestions in reference to the Oregon battalion are approved. Accordingly you will order it to halt and winter at Table creek, whence the commanding officer will be directed to proceed as soon in the spring of 1848 as the season will permit, to execute the instructions heretofore given him. As regards escorts for the Santa Fe trains, my letter of the 29th ultimo (which you had not received at the date of your communication), will have apprised you that a battalion of five companies (one of artillery, two of horse, and two of foot), has been called for from Missouri to protect the government supplies in crossing the prairies and it is believed this force will be fully adequate for the purposes.

I am, colonel, &c.,
R. JONES,
Adjutant-General.
Lt.-Col. C. Wharton,
First dragoons,
Fort Leavenworth, Mo.

24.

W. D., A. G. O., Washington,
October 13, 1847.

Colonel: Since sending you the instructions of August 20, directing on your recommendation, that the Missouri battalion of volunteers for the protection of Oregon emigrants, winter at Table creek, the subject has been presented to the secretary of war whether, owing to the late period at which the battalion was completed, anything would be gained by sending the troops

to that point. They will arrive at a late period, and then have to construct quarters with, perhaps, but scanty materials; and although huts may be erected for the men, it will be very difficult to protect the horses and large number of cattle during a rigorous winter. The providing of forage and other supplies, owing to the early period at which the upper Missouri closes will be attended with great expense and inconvenience.

Under these circumstances it is suggested for consideration whether the battalion had not better winter at Fort Leavenworth, where there is commodious barracks and ample stable room, &c.? It cannot be doubted, it is presumed, that the battalion can be supplied at much less expense at Fort Leavenworth than at Table creek. Another important consideration is that some additional provision must be made in the spring preparatory for the forward movement, and as all supplies will be drawn from below, the troops, by being at Fort Leavenworth, can the more readily make their arrangements for a very early start on the Oregon route. These important considerations outweigh the advantages of the distance gained by the troops being at Table creek, which is not in the direct route traveled by the emigrants, though the distance to Grand Island is less than from Fort Leavenworth to the same place. If therefore the battalion has not proceeded to Table creek let it winter at Fort Leavenworth, and even if it has advanced, it is highly probable that due regard to economy, the convenience of the service and the comfort of the men, may require that it return to that post. In any event (and you must decide), you will be careful to see that all necessary preparations are made during the winter that the battalion may be pushed forward in the spring as early as possible.

I am, colonel, &c.,
R. JONES,
Adjutant-General.
Lt.-Col. C. Wharton,
First dragoons,
Fort Leavenworth, Mo.

25.

Headquarters Fort Leavenworth,
October 27, 1847.

Sir: I received last evening your communication in reference to "the Oregon battalion." In a former letter I informed you of its departure hence several weeks ago, and it was after its departure that, owing to your instructions of the 20th of August last, based on my recommendation, I ordered it to go into winter quarters at Table creek. So far as I have been informed the measure has been deemed judicious and instead of "scanty materials" to construct quarters, &c., as stated in your communication, I personally know that the command has the lumber, &c., on the spot for the permanent work con-

templated. It will be the fault of the commander if the troops are not made comfortable for the winter. But it is necessary to inform you that I learn unofficially, or rather incidentally, that Lieutenant-Colonel Powell has been distributing his command to a degree to retard the advancement even of temporary accommodations. I learn that, after detaching a company, agreeable to your orders, to attend the Pottawattamie emigration he sent a company, on the requisition of the engineer officer, to Grand Island as an escort, for the purposes of a survey of the vicinity. Again, I learn, that he has detached, at the instance of Major Harney, superintendent of Indian affairs, "heavy detachments from the remaining companies, moving against the Sioux. The latter expedition was got up at the suggestion of Major Harney and left about a week since. The season is so late and the distance so great that no possible good can result from it." This is the language of Captain VanVliet, assistant quartermaster, to me under date of the 18th instant and received yesterday. I concur in the captain's opinion, sustained by a gentleman of great experience on the frontier, formerly an Indian agent and every way worthy of confidence. These movements may keep back the arrangements for winter accommodations, but, it is to be supposed, that Lieutenant-Colonel Powell would scarcely order them without reference to the necessity of ulterior measures for the accommodation of his troops. You allude to the necessity of making arrangements in the spring for the further movement of this command. Permit me to remind you that when it left here it started with no expectation of going into winter quarters at Table creek. I have before me a communication, just received from the assistant commissary, showing that some of the subsistence supplies which accompanied the battalion were for one year, and none for less than nine months. All the arms and ammunition provided by the government—a very large amount—also went with the command. I consider therefore that the supplies originally intended for the objects of the battalion are with it and the only question is can the command be comfortably quartered this winter at its present position, agreeable to my recommendation? I think if it is not thus accommodated it will be its own fault. But that there may be no doubt on the subject I have this morning sent by express to Lieutenant-Colonel Powell to get an explicit answer from him on this point; and to ask him what he needs for a movement early in the spring.

Assistant-Surgeon Walker, of this command, was here yesterday, and he informed me that a contract had been made for, I think, 20,000 bushels of corn for Lieutenant-Colonel Powell's com-