

NO. 9

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PART I.

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REPORT

OF THE

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

OF

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

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No. 29. (a).

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

INDIAN OFFICE,

VICTORIA, Oct. 1, 1875.

The Honorable  
The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs,  
Ottawa

SIR,—I have the honor to submit the following Report on Indian Affairs in the Province of British Columbia for the year ended 30th June 1875.

The unfortunate condition and non settlement of the Indian land question, has rendered it undesirable to make official visitations this year, and hence I am precluded from the possibility of furnishing you with ample and interesting matter in regard to the various nationalities of Indians inhabiting the Province, which I have no doubt would have been both acceptable and exceedingly useful to the Department.

Indians however expect at a visitation, that the policy of the Government respecting their affairs will be then made known, and therefore when a question of such vital import to a large proportion of them, as that concerning the quantity of land to be reserved for their benefit and support remains in doubt, an official visit is much more detrimental than useful in carrying out the object in view, of promoting confidence and amicable relations between them and the Whites.

This statement is no doubt more applicable to the Indians of the Interior who are extensive owners of stock, and possess considerable knowledge of, and much appreciation for, agricultural pursuits, than to those of the Coast, who depend almost exclusively upon the products of the sea for their existence. Still it is of importance and interest to all, and without some definite settlement it would seem a matter of great difficulty, if not impossibility, to establish that confidence among them of justice and fair dealing so necessary to the future peace and welfare of the Country.

Owing to the savage character of the natives inhabiting the West Coast of Vancouver Island, and the frequency of shipwrecks there, it was very desirable that an exception should be made in regard to them; and in accordance with your instructions, the only official visit during the year, was made to the various Tribes of this portion of the Province last autumn, in Her Majesty's gun vessel, "Boxer."

The Indians of the West Coast comprise some twenty Tribes, and though no accurate census of those above Barclay Sound has been taken, their number I think is pretty correctly estimated at some three thousand souls. Though heretofore noted for their treacherous and warlike character, I found them tractable and remarkably well disposed. Somewhat shorter in stature than the Indians of the East side, they are darker in complexion and more robust and strong in appearance.

The language of these Indians is spoken by twenty different tribes, and the resemblance of many of their words to the Quakewith tongue on the North, would convey the idea that at one period they were all united under one head, and must have been a powerful nation.

They are a hardy and industrious race, and so far as I could perceive, the richest of any Indians I have met in the Province. Were a proper disposal made of their immense gains they could, without a doubt, live independently, and furnish themselves with every comfort, and even luxury to be wished for. There seems to be scarcely a limit to their productive resources, and I am told that it is not at all uncommon for any Indian to realize from \$500.00 to \$1000.00 per annum, from their sealing grounds and fisheries alone.

Notwithstanding the above statement, it would seem almost paradoxical to add, that as a general thing they appear to be poor, if not in many cases absolutely in want. There are however two serious obstacles to be overcome ere a change can be looked for in this latter respect, or before their present condition can be much ameliorated by the blessings of civilization.

Firstly. They are inveterate gamblers, and this vice has taken such a firm hold of them, that from childhood to old age there is no attendant sacrifice they are not ready to make to gratify and encourage it.

Secondly. The frequent assemblages of the different tribes for the purpose of holding donation feasts ("potlaches"). On such occasions a large amount of property is given away or destroyed, and the continual round of feasting at a period of the year most important to the development of perhaps the most valuable source of wealth, is quite destructive to any settled habit of labor and industry.

They care very little for, and their knowledge of agriculture, is exceedingly limited. Indeed their facilities for obtaining support, and even plenty, from other and more profitable means are so great, and the extent of cultivable land is so limited, that Nature has furnished these rude savages with every requisite to make them what they really are, "Toilers of the Soil," and happily so—for placed where they are, they can never become tillers of the soil.

From the dangerous nature of the West Coast they have become splendid seamen and expert canoe men.

The timber which often attains magnificent proportions in this region, affords them excellent material for the manufacture of canoes, from the tiny toy of the young pupoose, to that which gives safety and defense to one hundred warriors. A canoe was formerly dug out from a single tree, generally by means of a chisel and stone mallet, a gimlet from bird's bone, a muscle shell or stone adze, and perhaps the addition of a little fire as an assistant, these primitive tools have however long given place to the axe and chisel of the white's. The exterior is fashioned with the same implements, and the canoe is then thoroughly steamed, and light cross pieces are inserted from side to side which improve the form and render it symmetrical. Both ends are raised by means of separate pieces highly ornamented, the bow being long and pointed, the stern square or slightly rounded. These canoes whether for whale catching or war purposes, are not only most useful but splendid models of maritime architecture, and certainly merit special mention in respect to the manufactures and genius of the Aht Indians.

With the exception of potatoes raised by the women in limited patches, the food of the Ahts is wholly derived from the sea. Salmon is their great staple, and their winter stores are taken in August and September from the extensive inlets and rivers with which the whole coast is intersected. Many other varieties of fish, such as halibut, cod, herring &c., are obtained in any quantity, and with the greatest facility.

In May and June whales appear, but an attack is only made on one by a carefully selected crew, and after the most artistic preparation.

A set of whaling gear presented me by a Clayoquot Chief consists of two barbed bones (deer's horn) pointed with a sharp and polished piece of steel used as a harpoon, and fastened to a tow rope of whale sinew line, and this to a long bark rope, at one end of which are seal skin air bags and bladders to make it float. The harpoon is also fastened to a staff or shaft from 15 to 30 feet in length, from which it is easily detached. This rude and simple arrangement is very effective in the hands of a dauntless and dexterous crew, and if a sufficient number of floats or air bags can be attached to a whale, the largest of these "monsters of the deep" soon fall an easy prey.

Blubber and oil have always been esteemed delicacies by the Ahts, being much preferred when rancid or nearly putrid. Clams, shell fish, all kinds of fish spawn, wild fowl, deer, bear, and the meat of other land animals, afford them variety in food; while seaweed, lichens, "Camass," and other roots are regularly collected and preserved by the women for their winter supply of vegetables. Seals and Sea Otters are killed in large numbers by them, and the profits realized from the sale of their furs are comparatively great.

The mouling grounds of the Ahts are from 25 to 40 miles distant from the coast and extend from East to West (with a width of four or five miles) a great distance. In July the Seals leave for the Northern Sea, and are said to return in December,

when they are frequently killed on rocks bordering the sea coast or in the different sounds or inlets.

Another source of wealth these Indians have is in their oil fisheries. The ordinary dog fish, from their great number, furnish them with an almost inexhaustible supply, and they sell large quantities of oil every year to traders at the rate of twenty or twenty-five cents per gallon. The dog fish are found in all seasons, but most abundant in March, August, and December. I am informed a canoe will average during these months about 200 fish per diem, and as the livers are said, often to produce a quart of Oil, each Indian whilst so employed would earn from four to six dollars.

The Ahts have strict customs in regards to their exclusive right to every thing their country produces. The limits of tribal properties, or tribal claims to land are clearly defined. Anything for instance cast up by the Sea being considered at once the property of the tribe claiming the locality. Frequent and bloody disputes in times gone by have occurred between different Tribes from this reason, and have led to the establishment of distinct boundary posts by which the lines of each little locality are distinctly defined and respected by neighbouring Tribes. A knowledge of this fact led me in addressing them at each point along the Coast, to impress upon them the importance of living on friendly terms with the Whites, and particularly to afford shelter and hospitality to those who were unfortunate enough to be shipwrecked on the Coast. In every instance I was listened to with profound attention, and in their replies, the different Chiefs assured me of their intention to follow my advice. A gratifying proof of their sincerity was soon after exemplified in the great bravery of a party of Hes-qui-ah Indians who at imminent peril to themselves, rescued from certain death the Captain and crew of an American barque, which foundered during a gale off Hes-qui-ah Cove—great kindness of heart and humanity which would have distinguished any of our own race, were afterwards evinced in relieving the urgent wants of these distressed mariners, and in conveying them from one tribe to another until they reached Victoria in safety. I had much pleasure with your subsequent approval in promptly rewarding these Indians, and a further recognition of their services came in due course through the United States Consul from the Government, at Washington, an act of justice and appreciation which cannot fail to be followed by a most beneficial effect upon all these sea-faring tribes. Observation and personal inspection have convinced me, that the Ahts are a race of people confiding and easily controlled. Their prolific resources will render them independent of any material aid or assistance for years to come, and even their latent wealth may also be made subservient to general prosperity by simply treating these simple but fearless people with firm and judicious management.

No doubt the different tribes of this nationality have been decimated by bloody and ruthless internecine wars, but with scarcely any effort on our part, they evince a great desire by the sincerity of their acts, for a permanent change, and there seems to be no reason to anticipate a repetition of past troubles with any of the natives on the West Coast so long as we ourselves, are not the aggressors.

In addition to the implements named above, these Indians manufacture with neatness and facility chests, boxes, buckets, cups, eating ladles, baskets, mats, and ornaments painted or carved and adorned with shell work &c.

Their intercourse with the whites and the adoption of many of their customs have lessened their necessities for native manufactures and no doubt checked their inherent ingenuity.

An American Commissioner—Mr. I. G. Swan, a gentleman of long experience among Coast Aborigines is now engaged at the request of the United States Government in making a collection of their handiwork which cannot fail to be of interest at the approaching Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia, in showing the character and ethnological history of all our Coast Indians.

Many rare and curious relics exhibiting the ancient manners, customs, and habits of distant Northern tribes of the Province have already been added to the

repertoire of Mr. Swan, and the specimens of native genius as exemplified in the present manufacture of various useful implements, gold and silver jewelry, ornamental carvings in slate, stone, &c., will not be among the least of the attractions furnished from this Coast.

#### PRESENTS.

Agricultural implements, and seed grain to the value of \$5198.13 have been distributed to the Indians of the Interior, the lower Fraser River, and other places, and much improvement is already noticeable in both the quantity and quality of the crops grown on many of the Reserves. In making these presents in the name of the Government, I have endeavoured to avoid giving the impression that they were indiscriminate gifts, but rather as aid and encouragement to those only who gave me evidence that they were able and desired to utilize them. Learning from personal inspection those articles which would really be appreciated, I placed them in the hands of the Chief, whom I authorized to act as Custodian and who became responsible to me for their care and preservation; in this way any Indian could obtain the use of any article in the possession of the Chief, but as it was intended for the benefit of the Tribe, he was obliged to return it safely to the Chief for the further use of others. The Indians thus do not experience that feeling of dependence which they otherwise would, and whilst acquiring the confidence of all Chiefs by investing them with a certain amount of authority, I have not been harrassed as I should have been by individual appeals for gifts and assistance which anything like the present appropriation for this Province would not by any means justify.

For the articles presented in the manner described, I have had the honor of forwarding receipts of the various Chiefs duly attested, along with the ordinary vouchers for payment.

#### SURVEYS.

No surveys have been undertaken during the past year owing to the unsettled condition of the land question. The correspondence which has already taken place in regard to this vexed subject is so voluminous, that I do not feel it necessary to add more to the present report concerning it, than to express my great regret that the usefulness of the Department to the peace and prosperity of the Province, continues to be so retarded, if not indeed destroyed by its non settlement.

#### FISH AND FURS.

Until sub-agents are appointed to reside among the various Indian nationalities, no concise estimate can be formed of the quantity of fish, fish oil, and furs, taken by the various tribes of the Province.

The Exports for the year ended June 30, 1875, are as follow:

Fish.....	\$114,170 00
Oil.....	19,816 00
Furs.....	411,810 00
Cranberries.....	3,568 00

Total..... \$543,364 00

Nearly the whole of the above exports are contributed by Indians. I beg also to submit a comparative statement for similar exports last year, showing the increase in favor of the present.

1874.		1875.	
Fish.....	\$69,665 00	Fish.....	\$114,170 00
Oil.....	44,453 00	Oil.....	19,816 00
Furs.....	307,625 00	Furs.....	411,810 00
Cranberries.....	2,011 00	Cranberries.....	3,568 00
Total.....	\$423,754 00	Total.....	\$543,364 00

Gold is mined by the Indians—principally the "Shushwaps," who obtain it in considerable quantities from the various tributaries of the Fraser.

## SCHOOLS.

With the exception of the Wesleyan School at Fort Simpson, no additional schools have been opened by any of the Christian Missions this year.

The grants inaugurated in 1874 have been continued, and the following schools have received aid subject to the conditions contained in the Order in Council of April 7, 1874.

* St. Mary's industrial.....	R. C.	\$350 00
* Nanaimo.....	W.	250 00
* Metlakatla.....	A. M.	500 00
Do (special grant).....		1,000 00
Comox.....	A. M.	250 00
Quamichan.....	A. M.	250 00
Kincolith.....	A. M.	250 00
Fort Simpson.....	W.	300 00
Victoria.....	W.	300 00
Lytton (amount to aid).....	A. M.	75 00
Quamichan (tools to assist).....		49 47

Total..... \$3,574 47

## MEDICINES AND MEDICAL ATTENDANCE.

During the past year medicines and attendance have been freely bestowed on all suffering Indians and have contributed greatly to relieve the distress heretofore experienced from the absence of such a boon. Many of the Missionaries resident among distant tribes have been furnished with medicines and medical comforts, so that the benefits under this head have been pretty generally dispensed throughout the Province.

Owing to the small pox having lately appeared among the Natives sojourning in this city, I established a Post House and Quarantine grounds which have been greatly instrumental in preventing the spread of the disease not only in this vicinity, but along the whole coast. The Indians confined in this place have been regularly attended by a medical man, and supplied with all necessary food and medicine.

The Indian however is not blessed with the *vis naturæ* capable of withstanding an attack of small pox, and recoveries among them are rare and exceptional. In previous years whole Tribes have been decimated and swept off by this much dreaded disease, and a chief object I had in view in establishing quarantine grounds, was to confine the contagion to this place.

Many of our Northern tribes however visit Puget Sound regularly, and as it seems to have been brought thence to this City, it is not at all improbable that the disease may yet be carried to distant Camps at present out of reach of protection. Shortly after accepting the appointment of Superintendent of Indian Affairs, I applied to the Medical Department of the Privy Council in England for some pure lymph, and thanks to the kindness and courtesy of the medical gentleman in charge, I am now furnished every six months with an abundant supply of fresh vaccine virus by which a large number of Indians have been regularly vaccinated.

## LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

This nefarious trade has considerably declined since the adoption of the new liquor law, both on Vancouver Island and the mainland; on the American shore however, the British Columbia Indian can still obtain it in large quantities, no law

\* The grants paid to these three schools do not appear in the accounts for the past fiscal year, having been paid in May 1874 and July 1875. Metlakatla grant not yet paid, for year ending June 30, 1876.

existing in the United States against the selling of spirits to other than American Indians; consequently a considerable quantity is still purchased at the various ports on Puget Sound by the Stydabs, and other Northern Tribes, and taken by them direct to their own houses.

The knowledge of the distillation of alcohol by the Natives in the Alaska territory, as stated in my report of February 3, 1874, does not appear, so far, to have spread beyond the boundaries of that State.

#### RESERVES.

There are many places in the Province where Reserves are urgently needed as anticipating White settlement, and the difficulty of selecting them subsequently.

No Reserves have been made north of Burrard Inlet on the Coast of the Mainland, nor north of the Shuswap Nationality in the Interior. On the Island no land has been reserved for any of the Tribes north of Comox, nor on the West Coast.

I have, with your concurrence, considered that until all doubt was dispelled as to the basis which should determine the acreage of existing Indian lands, any application for reserves to meet future requirements, would only complicate the present untoward condition of Indian affairs. The schedule of Indian Reserves therefore remains the same as that furnished the Department last year.

#### SONGHEES RESERVE.

Negotiations have been opened with the Songhees Indians in regard to their removal to a more suitable place. The Reserve at present occupied by them being in the suburbs of Victoria, and consequently open to the visits of whiskey sellers, and other disreputable characters.

Two tracts of land were selected for this purpose, Sallus Island lying about 20 miles from the City, and a farm at Cadboro Bay about 3 miles distant. Neither of these places seemed altogether acceptable to them, for various reasons, the former from its distance and consequent liability to be exposed to raids from marauding bands of Northern Indians, and the latter, though favored by the young men of the tribe, was considered to contain too limited an extent of arable land. Such opposition has been given to any intended removal of these Indians by traders and others, who regard such an intention as most detrimental to their interests. They do not act as Monarchs to the Indians, for their advice is generally neither faithful nor wise, but they instigate obstacles which greatly retard the accomplishment of the object in view. Added to this, the Indians cling with great tenacity to their old village sites and burial grounds, and were no consideration shown to those valued predilections, so much confidence in the reasonableness of one's advice would be lost, that its acceptance would be much delayed, if not indeed quite rejected.

An appropriate place for these Indians in lieu of their present Reserve is exceedingly difficult to be found, owing to the scarcity of suitable locations in this vicinity; but I trust at no distant day that a favorable selection may be made, when I may be able to effect their much required removal, peacefully and without any great difficulty.

It would almost seem superfluous to repeat, or add to, the recommendations I have in previous years had the honor of submitting for your approval, in order to perfect and facilitate the management of Indian Affairs in this Province. I am aware that pending the settlement to the land question, any policy in the power of the Department to pursue, must of necessity be merely a temporizing one. A very large number of our Indian population I believe understand this, and it is most creditable to their intelligence and desire to cultivate friendship and peace with the Whites, that no disturbance has taken place in any part of the Province. Fortunately too, for the past security of the Whites, Indians are divided into small bands under as many chiefs, and I am not aware of any instance where the different tribes of one nationality or tongue, have been able to combine in any united movement under one Chief, or head, either to act on the offensive or defensive. No doubt present complaints among them on account of

the deficiency of the Reserves chiefly exist among the Indians of the Interior, who depend for support almost solely on pastoral lands and small cultivable contiguous areas. From these people I have had frequent evidence of the serious dissatisfaction which prevails amongst them, and which if not allayed, may possibly culminate in something more to be dreaded and of greater difficulty to control. The land question excites much less attention and anxiety among the generality of Coast Indians who obtain all their necessities or desires required, from the sea and its tributaries.

Their prolific fishing resorts are as yet unmolested, and the wild and rough aspect of their hunting grounds bordering on the Coast, have been too repellent to foster and encourage the encroachments of White settlers experienced in the Interior.

Should difficulties occur they are at any season easily reached, either for the purpose of satisfying their complaints or punishing their misdeeds, and hence they are not wanting in respect or admiration for Her Majesty's law and power. Notwithstanding this however, it is important that Reserves which may include many of their most valued fishing stations should be set aside for them without delay, in order to prevent possible intrusion and consequent disturbance.

Justice and fair dealing with a due allowance for the perplexity possible to their primitive nature in regarding our different roadways to attaining the superiority of the Christian Race, and civilizing habits, will then render them contented, law-abiding—in most instances industrious and useful citizens.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

I. W. POWELL,

Indian Commissioner.

No. 28. (b.)

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

INDIAN OFFICE,

VICTORIA, October 29, 1874.

The Honorable

The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs,  
Ottawa.

Sir,—I have the honor to report my return in H. M. Gun Vessel "Boxer" from a visitation to the Aht Indians inhabiting the West Coast of Vancouver Island, and to enclose, for your information, copies of correspondence between the Senior Naval Officer and myself relative to having one of Her Majesty's ships of war placed at my disposal for the purpose above referred to.

Accordingly to the arrangement made I embarked on board H. M. Gun Vessel "Boxer" on the 3rd ultimo, accompanied by Mr. Blenkinsop who had just returned from Barclay Sound, and a photographer to take views of Indian Villages and inhabitants at different points on the West Coast.

The "Boxer" steamed down the straits de Fuca and arrived at Neah Bay, W.T. at 5 o'clock p. m., at this point there has long been an American Indian Agency, which is now in charge of a Mr. Harrington. Upon invitation of the Agent we landed and inspected the Village, and buildings erected by the United States Government for the uses of the Agency. Some 250 Indians called Mak-Kaha, reside here, and though large sums of money have been expended upon them annually by the American Government, they are seemingly no better off nor further advanced in civilization than the Coast Tribes of this Province, who have always been obliged to provide for themselves.

These Indians still live in their primitive houses (ranchorias), and preserve their former customs and habits. The fine school house erected here appears decidedly more "ornamental than useful," nor could I find that they had made any advances in mechanics or agriculture, such as I expected to witness.