

INSTRUCTIONS TO SPROAT

ISSUED BY PROVINCIAL SECRETARY

October 23, 1876

Memorandum of Instruction to Gilbert Malcolm Sproat,  
Esquire the Joint Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada  
and the Province of British Columbia and Indian Reserve  
Commission.

You will in your dealings with the Native Races of British  
Columbia in connection with the settlement of their  
reserves, take every opportunity of repeating to them that  
which has been conveyed to them under each and every  
administration since the earliest settlement of the  
Province viz: the anxious desire of the Local Government  
to deal justly and reasonably with them and to see them  
raised both morally and physically until they are in a  
position to enjoy all the privileges and advantages  
belonging to their white brethren.

You will also assure them that the fact of their having  
been placed immediately under the change of the Government  
of the Dominion instead of the Local Government as  
heretofor, has not lessened the interest of the latter in  
their welfare, or their desire that, in settling their  
Reserves, every indulgence should be shown them compatible  
with the welfare and advancement of the rest of the  
Community.

In dealing with the Indian Reserve there are two points  
which would appear to demand your special attention. The  
size of the Reserve. Second, their locality ...

With regard to the former point the Government does not  
desire to see any unnecessarily large Reserves such as  
would interfere with, the progress of white settlements.

You are aware from a perusal of the paper on Indian  
matters that has been placed in your hands that the  
dispute about the Indian Reserves which in your capacity

as Joint Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada and the Province of British Columbia you are now engaged in settling, took its rise in the different views entertained by the Government of the Dominion and of this Province respectively, as to the amount of land that should be allotted to each Indian family. The Dominion Government by Order in Council March 1873 contending for 80 acres, the Government of British Columbia demurring to this as an excessive grant and suggesting 20 acres, (being 10 acres over that which has been usual before Confederation), as a proper grant.

The Agreement under which you are acting was finally arrived at, by which no particular acreage is fixed upon, but each nation has to be dealt with severally, regard being had to the spirit of the British Columbia terms (which contemplates a liberal policy being pursued towards the Indians) - to the habits, wants and pursuits of each nation, - to the amount of available territory in each region, - and to the claims of the white settlers.

It is therefore incumbent to point out to you in your capacity as a Joint Commissioner the necessity for extreme care and for the exercise of mature and unbiassed judgement in carrying out this arrangement, so that while you endeavour in all cases to act with a liberal spirit toward the Indians, you do not impede the progress of white settlement by conceding unnecessarily large Reserves.

With reference to the second point, the locality of the Reserves, they should in all cases, where convenient, be in such spots as are endeared to the Indians by habit or association; nor would it be advisable in any scheme for consolidating a Reserve to deprive them, (without good) reasons, of any small isolated or particular spots, of no real value in themselves but endeared to the race who have occupied them.

With reference to your personal dealings with the Native Races, you will on all occasions endeavour to treat them

with friendliness and conciliated listening with the utmost patience to their wishes and complaints, complying with the former and remedying the latter when possible, advisable, or necessary.

You will avoid disturbing them in their proper and legitimate avocations whether of the chase or of fishing, whether pastoral or agricultural, and you will seek to avoid on all occasions either disturbing their minds or unnecessarily raising their hopes.

It would not be advisable that you should lay down any fixed theory for your dealings in connection with this commission. The circumstances, locality, habits and surroundings of one Tribe or Nation may and do differ materially from those of another; and you should be guided (rather) by the habits, tastes, pursuits and physical surroundings of each Nation than by any fixed preconceived determined rules.

In the event of compensation being demanded by them for any surrender or diminution of a Reserve contemplated by the Commission you will be careful in every instance before acceding to the same to communicate fully with the Government of the Province with a view to receiving their definite instructions on the subject of such compensation, and with a further view of enabling them to communicate on the subject with the Dominion Government.

The sooner the labours of the Commission are over the less the expenses will be. You must therefore use the greatest diligence and all convenient speed.

The amount of compensation you receive ( ) \$10 a day is very liberal and should insure a constant and unremitting attention to your duties.

In your capacity as a Joint Commissioner, the Government desires that your influence should be used on all occasions in Council against incurring any excessive or unnecessary expenditure, the burden entailed upon the Province by the Commission being a reality far beyond her capacity.

You will report your proceedings from time to time and communicate any action on the part of the Commission which in your opinion may tend to militate against the interest of the Province or may require remedying.

G.M. Sproat, Esq.

Sir Charles Good  
Dep. Prov. Sec.

Certified true copy

Gilbert Malcolm Sproat  
Joint Commissioner  
26 October 1876

Memorandum of Instructions to  
Gilbert Melville Stuart Esquire, Chief  
Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada  
and the Province of British Columbia  
and Indian Reserve Commissioner.

23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 1876

You will in your dealings in the  
Native Races of British Columbia in connec-  
tion with the settlement of their reserves,  
take every opportunity of repeating to them  
that which has been conveyed to them in the  
past and every administrative series the  
earliest settlement of this Province, viz.  
the anxious desires of the Local Government  
to deal justly and reasonably with them,  
and to see them brought both morally and  
physically until they are in a position to  
enjoy all the privileges and advantages be-  
longing to their white brethren.

You will also assure  
them that the fact of their having been  
placed immediately under the charge of  
the Government of the Dominion instead of  
the Local Government as heretofore, has not  
lessened the interest of the latter in their  
welfare, or their desire that in settling  
their Reserves, every indulgence should be  
shown them compatible with the welfare and  
advancement of the rest of the Community.

In dealing with the Indian Reserves  
there are two points which would appear  
to demand your special attention - 1<sup>st</sup> The  
size of the Reserves - 2<sup>nd</sup> Their location.

W. H. H.

With regard to the former point the Government does not desire to see appropriated any unnecessarily large Reserves, such as would interfere with the progress of white settlement.

You are aware from a perusal of the paper on Indian matters that has been placed in your hands that the disputes about the Indian Reserves which in your capacity as joint Commissioner for the Dominion of Canada and the Province of British Columbia you are now engaged in settling, took its rise in the different views entertained by the Government of the Dominion and of the Province respectively, as to the amount of land that should be allotted to each Indian family. The Dominion Government by Order in Council March 1873, allotting for 80 acres, the Government of British Columbia desiring to do so on an excessive grant and suggesting to me, being 10 acres over that which had been usual before Confederation as a proper grant.

The Agreement under which you are acting was finally arrived at, by which no particular acreage is fixed upon, but each Nation has to be dealt with severally, regard being had to the spirit of the British Columbia terms (which contemplates a liberal policy being pursued towards the Indians) - to the rights, customs and pursuits of each nation, - to the amount of available territory in each region, - and to the claims of the white settlers. It

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in all cases to act with a liberal spirit  
towards the Indians, you do not imperil  
the progress of white settlement by creating  
unnecessarily large Reserves.

With reference to the  
second point: the locality of the Reserves,  
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without proper reasons, of any small isolated  
or particular spots, of no real value in  
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have occupied them.

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hopes.

It would not be advisable that you should lay down any fixed thing for your dealings in connection with this Commission. The circumstances, locality, habits and surroundings of one tribe or nation may and do differ materially from those of another: and you should be guided, rather by the habits, tastes, pursuits and physical surroundings of each Nation than by any fixed, preconceived, determined rule.

In the event of compensation being demanded by them for any surrender or diminution of Reserve contemplated by the Commission you will be careful in every instance, before acceding to the same to communicate fully with the Government of the Province with a view to receiving their definite instructions on the subject of such compensation, and with a further view of enabling them to communicate on the subject with the Dominion Government.

The Honor the labors of the Commission are over the less the expense will be. You must therefore use the greatest diligence and all convenient speed.

The amount of compensation you receive of £10 a day is very liberal, and should incur a constant and unremitting attention to your duties.

In



In your capacity as a joint  
~~Commissioner of the Government~~ desired  
that your influence should be used in  
all discussions in Council against in-  
curring any excessive or unnecessary  
expenditure, the burden entitled upon  
the Province by the Commission being in  
reality far beyond her capacity.  
You will report  
your proceedings from time to time and  
communicate any action on the part  
of the Commission which in your opinion  
may tend to militate against the interest  
of the Province or may require remedying.

G. M. Sprunt Esq.

St. Charles Fort  
Dep. Prov. Secy

Accepted  
In Reply

John W. Stewart

26 Oct 1876