

DOCUMENTS

Army Officer's Report on Indian War and Treaties

O. W. Hoop, Major of the 7th Infantry, United States Army, at Vancouver Barracks, Washington, has found a most interesting report in a "Letters Sent" book at the Post Headquarters and has had it copied on account of the light it throws on the troubled history of the time of Indian wars and treaties.

In 1857, Edward Furste, Public Printer of Washington Territory, issued a book of 406 pages and index containing "Message of the Governor of Washington Territory. Also the correspondence with the Secretary of War, Major Gen. Wool, the officers of the Regular Army and of the Volunteer Service of Washington Territory." That book has been one of the prime sources of information on the Indian wars. This recently found report is not found in that book. Of course it could not have been included as it was sent from Fort Vancouver to Headquarters at San Francisco. Governor Stevens and his officers supplied for the book only such letters, orders and documents as passed through their own hands.

However, in checking over the old book there was found, on pages 155-156, a letter showing that Governor Stevens had had some correspondence with the writer of this document. The letter is as follows:

"Headquarters, Fort Vancouver, W. T.
May 19, 1856.

"To His Excellency, Isaac I. Stevens
Governor of Washington:

"Sir:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 18th instant, requesting me to approve your requisition on the military storekeeper at this post for howitzers, rifles, amunition, etc.

"In reply, I have to say that it will be impossible for me to grant the authority desired. My instructions from the Major General commanding the department on the subject of issuing arms, etc., to troops not in the service of the United States, are positive, and I cannot depart from them.***

"In case of any descent upon this portion of the territory, my command will do all in its power for the safety and protection

of the citizens and property, and will co-operate with the troops of the territory as far as practicable.

"My command consists of one company, and a few recruits. A company of the 9th infantry left here on Thursday last to join the command of Colonel Wright.

"I am, sir, with much respect,

Your obedient servant,

T. Morris

Lt. Col. 4th Infantry, Com. Post.

"P. S.—It may be proper to state that there are no mountain howtzers here for the use of the post, all having been forwarded some time since, to Fort Dalles, and I am informed by the ordnance officer that there are but rifles enough for the troops in the district."

The asterisks at the end of the second paragraph indicate that a part of the letter thought to be irrelevant was omitted.

The correspondence between Governor Stevens and Major General John E. Wool is crisp to say the least of it. The Governor's son, General Hazard Stevens, in his *Life of General Isaac I. Stevens* uses plain language in condemning the attitude of General Wool. It is well known that General Wool had a fine career in the army during the Mexican War and later during the first two years of the Civil War for which he was signally honored. During the Indian wars in the Northwest he took a positive stand against the citizen soldiers and civil authorities. His service in command of the Department of the Pacific ended in 1857, probably before Colonel Morris's report reached his office. From the other published correspondence, it is not likely that he would have approved the Colonel's suggestions about the treaties. He was succeeded by General Newman S. Clarke who adopted a different policy. Governor Stevens was elected Delegate to Congress. The Northwestern Indians were severely defeated by Colonel George Wright and by the volunteers under Colonel B. F. Shaw, after which Delegate Stevens had the pleasure of seeing all his treaties ratified by the Senate on one day, March 8, 1859.

The principal participants in the events concerned have passed away. Those who now undertake to study the Indian wars and treaties in the Northwest would do well to consider

the investigations and report by Colonel Morris as the wars were being brought to a close and before the treaties were ratified.

EDITOR.

Report by Colonel Morris

Headquarters Fort Vancouver, W. T.

November 7, 1857

Major

Pursuant to the instructions received from the Headquarters the Department I proceeded to Puget Sound and made a thorough examination into the affairs pertaining to our own Indians, and also the facts connected with the encroachments upon our territory of what are called "Northern Indians." From this examination I have the honor to submit the following report, and my views as to the means of defense necessary to be taken to preserve the present peaceful state existing.

Upon my arrival at Olympia October 21, 1857, I had a long conversation with the Honorable C. H. Mason, the Secretary of the Territory, who has on several occasions acted as the Governor of the Territory and is probably as well acquainted with the Indian relations of the Territory as any person in it. From him I learned that at present all our Indians are perfectly quiet, and he anticipated no difficulty with them at present, and every Officer and Citizen I conversed with on the subject were of the same opinion.

Some few months ago there was a good deal of dissatisfaction among the tribes on the Sound which is due to the inaction of Congress in regard to the Treaties made with them by Governor Stevens in 1854. The following are the Treaties;

1st. A treaty was made December 26, 1853, by Governor Stevens in his capacity of Superintendent of Indian affairs with the "Nesqually" Indians, and various other small bands in their vicinity, which treaty has been ratified by Congress, and its provisions are being carried out with success, the Indians being perfectly contented, and no apprehensions are entertained of their ever giving trouble again.

2nd. A treaty known as the "Point Elliot Treaty" was made with the Indians on the east side of the Sound, including the country from Puyallup river to the 49 parallel of latitude, taking in the "Dwamish, Snohomish, Snoqualine, Scaget, Samish, Stilaquamish, Lummi and Nooksacks" tribes of Indians. This treaty was made in January 1854, by Governor Stevens.

3rd. A treaty known as the "Point no Point" treaty was made by Gov. Stevens in January, 1854, with the Indians located on the west side of the Sound commencing at a point nearly opposite the town of Stilacoom and terminating at or near Dungeness on the Straits of Fuca. The tribes are the "Callams, Tchiuni Kum¹ and Skokomish."

4th. A treaty known as the "Cape Flattery Treaty" made in the same month by Gov. Stevens with the "Macans"² whose country is about Cape Flattery.

5th. A treaty was made in 1854³ by Gov. Stevens at the mouth of the Quinalt or Quenaith, with the Indians of that vicinity. This includes all the Coast Indians from Grays Harbor to the country of the Macans.

Of all the treaties enumerated above only *one* has been ratified, that with the Nesquallies, and these Indians are about the only ones on the Sound who were hostile during the late war. From the fact of their treaty being the only one acted upon, the other tribes are justly dissatisfied, they say that they remained perfectly friendly during the war and were promised pay for their lands and homes for themselves, as they have never received anything at all, and as the Whites are gradually encroaching upon their country, they are justly afraid they will lose their country altogether, and can put no faith in what is told them by the Agents of the Government.

This is particularly the case in regard to the "Nooksacks" whose country is about Bellingham Bay, extending north to Mount Baker. This tribe of Indians is represented by Captain Pickett as being superior to the tribes on the Sound. They are mountain Indians, subsisting by the chase, and different altogether from those who live by fishing. Last summer a party of white men commenced cutting a road into their country, which caused a great deal of bad feeling among the Indians, and there is no doubt but what the Indians would have commenced hostilities, if the whites had not been induced to desist making the road by the influence of Col. Fitzhugh, the Agent at Bellingham Bay. Capt. Pickett also says that these Indians say that they have never made a treaty with the whites, that a few of their men

1 Chimacum.

2 Makahs.

3 This treaty required two meetings, one at the mouth of the Quinalt River on July 1, 1855, and a second in Olympia, on January 25, 1856. See Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II., p. 721. This report mentions but five of the ten treaties negotiated by Governor Stevens. The other five were with tribes east of the Cascade Mountains.

were at the treaty when it was made but that they were not authorized by their nation to make any such terms as were made, and that if the treaty were to be ratified they would object to going on the reserve which is the large island near Bellingham Bay called "Lummi Island." This objection of theirs arises from their mode of life, as they have always been accustomed to live by the chase, they cannot now make up their minds to go on a small (in comparison) island, where game is scarce and depend mostly for subsistence upon fishing.

The ill feeling was confined to the tribes immediately on the Sound—the "Macans" and the Indians south have not manifested any bad feeling. The country about the "Quinalt" is represented as being very desirable for settlements, and will probably in a short time be occupied by the whites, then if their treaty is not acted upon the same trouble will occur there.

The first thing to be done in my opinion, to preserve the peaceful relations now existing is to urge in the strongest manner the immediate action of Congress on these Treaties, either ratify them at once, and show the Indians that you intend to keep good faith with them, or if not ratified make new ones. With the "Nooksacks" perhaps it would be advisable to make a separate treaty and have a reservation laid out for them more congenial to their tastes and former habits of life. This I would recommend. At any rate some immediate steps should be taken to show the Indians that it is not the intention of the government to take their lands without giving them a fair valuation for them. Unless this is done, and as soon as the whites trespass upon their country (which they will do) the Indians will get alarmed, and under the belief that their country will soon be overrun, go to war—and if they do, it will take a large force and a larger amount of money to bring it to a close. On the contrary if their treaties are confirmed and they see that the government intends to act fairly with them, the present condition of affairs on the Sound will remain for a long time. I trust the General Comdg. may make such representations to the Dept. at Washington, as may induce the present Congress to act at once.

As an instance of the idea the Indians get by the failure of Congress to act upon their treaties I was informed by Mr. Mason that when Gov. Stevens came to make a treaty with the "Chinooks, Cowlitz and Lower Columbia River" Indians, they utterly refused to treat giving as an excuse that a treaty which they had made some years before had never received any attention,

and they had no confidence in treaties, and would have nothing to do with them.⁴

As regards the northern Indians there are none at all in our waters now nor have they made their appearance since the murder of Colonel Ebey on Whidby's Island. I was at Victoria on Vancouver's Island and had a conversation with Governor Douglass who gave me the name of the tribe to which the murderers of Colonel Ebey belong. These Indians are Russian Indians and live at a place called "Kooio" a short distance below Sitka and could be reached with ease. Gov. Douglass said there would be no difficulty in obtaining permission from the Russian authorities at Sitka to inflict such punishment upon them as would deter them from ever committing such outrages again. As the tribe is a large one it would be absolutely necessary to send a large force—at least 500 men—so that no failure could happen to the expedition. That they should be pursued and chastised for their outrages seem to me to be desirable and the sooner it is done the better. Gov. Douglass also informed me that no Indians of the British possessions had ever committed any outrages in our waters. I found though, that a great diversity of opinion exists as to this fact. Many Gentlemen residing in Puget Sound being decidedly of the opinion that outrages have been committed by British Northern Indians. Gov. Douglass' information as to what tribe murdered Col. Ebey was sent from Fort Simpson where the murderers were seen to pass with the head of Col. Ebey. The party was led by the brother of an Indian who was killed in an engagement of the steamer *Massachusetts* with a party of these Indians several months ago at Port Gamble. To insure complete safety for our frontier from these Indians, there should be a swift steamer constantly cruising in our waters. Situated as our posts are these northern Indians can come down in their large canoes carrying from 75 to 100 warriors, commit their outrages and clear out before anything is known, and you could never catch them with the present means of transportation. This steamer should be, in my opinion, a side-wheel steamer of 5 or

⁴ On July 8 and 11, 1897, the present writer had published in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* two articles giving the history of the ten treaties negotiated by Governor Stevens. These articles prompted Judge James G. Swan to publish in the same paper on July 18, 1897, an extensive article on "The Chehalis River Indian Treaty." Judge Swan, then living on Shoalwater (now Willapa) Bay, was invited to accompany Governor Stevens in an attempt to make a treaty with the Chehalis, Quinault and Chinook tribes. Being an interested participant, his article, though written forty years afterwards, is of importance. He states that not all the Indian delegates would sign the treaty but the main reason for failure was the fact that Tleyuk, son of Chief Karkowan, had brought liquor into the camp contrary to orders and the council was thereupon abandoned. The date of the council was February 25, 1855, and the place was on the farm of James Pilkington, on the south bank of the Chehalis River, about ten miles from Grays Harbor.

600 tons, well armed with howitzers, etc. and say one long gun, and 18 pounder, and should be under the orders of the Commanding Officer of the District, so that troops could be put on board if necessary and sent wherever their presence might be required. The steamer in addition to the protection she would afford against foreign Indians would be of the greatest possible use as regards our own Indians as we could transport our troops from point to point, with facility and dispatch, and by being enabled to do so many difficulties would be prevented. The Mail Steamer is not always where you can get hold of her, if wanted, and as she has to carry the mails at certain times, could not be obtained without paying a large sum for her services. The necessity of a steamer is imperative, and if one attached to the army cannot be obtained now it is highly desirable that a Navy steamer should be sent. The presence alone of such a vessel would keep out the Indians, and from what I can learn, I am convinced that if the *Massachusetts* had remained in the Sound the Indians would never have had the courage to kill Col. Ebey as they knew very well they could have been pursued and captured. One happy feature with respect to these Northern Indians is the bitter hatred borne towards them by all our Indians. There is hardly a tribe within our waters but has had some of their men killed by these Indians, and frequently their women and children stolen to be made slaves of, so that they are constantly on the alert and retaliate whenever an opportunity presents itself. This feeling should be encouraged as our Indians can be of great assistance to us and it is much more desirable to have them hostile to these foreign Indians than to be their allies.

As regards the disposition of troops on the Sound, I think they are placed so as to act to the best advantage as matters are now. In case the General succeeds in obtaining a steamer attached to the army another company might be sent to Port Townsend as that point is situated on the Straits and is the best point for the steamer to obtain troops in case any Northern Indians made their appearance.

I directed Lieut. Hodges, Adjt. 4th Infy. to accompany me on my tour and am much indebted to him for the assistance he rendered me in procuring information and enabling me to more fully carry out the object for which I visited the Sound.

We left here on the 19th Octr. arrived at Olympia on the 21st and after having visited all the posts on the sound including

Simi-ah-mon⁵ the present Headquarters of the Boundary Commission and Victoria—returned to this post on the night of the 3rd instant.

In concluding the report I must reiterate that in order to preserve peace on the Sound, the two things most required are—a suitable steamer and the ratification of the treaties (modified if necessary) hertofore made with the different tribes of Indians.

I am very respectfully
Your obedient servant
T. Morris
Lt. Col. 4th Infantry
Comdg.

To

Major W. W. Mackall
Asst. Adjt. Genl. U. S. A.
San Francisco, Cal.

⁵ Semiahmoo, now Blaine.