

DOCUMENTS.

There are here presented another instalment of the old Hudson Bay Company documents secured from Canadian archives by Mrs. Eva Emery Dye while preparing her recent book on McDonald of Oregon.

The Farm at Fort Vancouver.

McLoughlin's predecessor on the Columbia reported that it was impossible to grow provisions in this region. Headquarters were moved from Astoria to Vancouver in 1825, and the following letter shows how the new farm prospered:

John McLeod, Esquire.

Fort Vancouver, 1st March, 1832.

My dear Sir,

I have now before me your kind letter of 2nd July by which I am happy to see that you are safely returned from across the Atlantic after having I presume had the pleasure of seeing your friends—by the by you omit mentioning whether you had any explanation about your Columbia affair and how things at present stand at home. I hope if an opportunity offered that you produced my Letters to you on the subject,—as to us here we go on in the old way Ogden is at Nass—this year though of three vessels only two could go on the coast and one was only fifteen days and the other was only three months still the coasting trade will clear itself and this year when we have nothing to interrupt our proceedings we intend to give it the first fair Trial it has had and from what has been done this year we have every reason to expect it will do well. Our other Branches of Business go on in the usual way our farm yielded

1800 Bushels wheat
1200 " barley
600— pease
400—Indian Corn
600—potatoes

I dare say the last article would be enough for all the Kings posts as to Returns you know I cant give you any information on that head as the accounts are not made out though I suppose they are about as usual quantity. I suppose you heard of the fever and ague being prevailing here in 1830 and I am sorry to say that it raged with greater violence in 1831 and for a time put an entire stop to all our Business. But thanks be to God for his mercies—My family and me Enjoyed good health. I

cannot but shudder when I think of Harriotts poor wife. Poor fellow it has affected him much—With best Wishes for your well fare Believe me to be

Yours truly,
(Signed) JOHN McLOUGHLIN.

Fever and Ague.

Many of the letters tell of the fever and ague on the Columbia in those early days. This writer says he could more easily endure a frozen nose at Norway House.

John McLeod, Esq.

Fort Vancouver, Columbia 16th March 1832.

My dear Sir,

I flatter myself that the interest you take in hearing of my welfare is sufficient to make you happy to hear that I reached my destination here in safety. I need say nothing of the Columbia to you who have already seen it. I may however mention that I find the climate very different from that of Norway House. We run no risk of freezing our noses but we are liable to be laid up with fever again and ague now very prevalent here and which more than compensates for a frozen nose. I have found Dr. McLoughlin very kind, he like yourself is an old acquaintance of my brothers. I have been kept very busy since my arrival in the office. We do a great deal of business here, having three vessels constantly employed on the coast, a new establishment called Fort Simpson has been lately built upon the coast by Mr. Ogden and is doing well. We have abundance to eat here, the Dr. has not yet killed any of the cattle, but we have such a variety of other good things as enables us to endure with calm philosophy the want of a roast of Beef. I expect our news from Europe will be very interesting. You have the advantage of us here in being much nearer the civilized world and you of course enjoy more frequent opportunities of communicating with your friends. I shall be very happy to hear from you at any time and I trust you will embrace an early opportunity of acquainting me where you are stationed and how you like this country after your return from civilized life. With best wishes for your welfare and that of your family,

I remain,
My dear Sir,
Yours very truly,
(Sgd) GEORGE T. ALLAN.

Trying to Best the Americans.

This letter was evidently written to John McLeod. It is marked private, evidently because of his expression of a desire to wrest the fur trade from the Americans.

Fort Vancouver 12th. March 1832

Private.

My dear Sir,

The time for the departure for our Express hence for York is fast approaching, & I cannot allow it depart, without sending a few lines in search of you, expressive for my good wishes for the welfare of yourself and family as well as the Governate, you have in view to take into your family; for the various edification of all its branches not even yourself excepted. On this account I would not in the least be surprised to hear that you have been long ere now deprived of that elegant piece of ingenuity your scalp, and every deservedly, if you have been playing hide and seek with this same Governante. But to be serious I hope you find matters in that part of the world going on smoothly & to your wish, & that the utmost harmony and good understanding prevails among you all. In this quarter matters are going on in the usual routine, the Returns of the Department are far superior to those of last year & there is but one evil to disturb the prosperous state of affairs, but that may be considered a serious one— The Fever— which committed great ravage amongst the natives during the last Summer, was still on our arrival here, sufficiently malignant to confine many of our people to their beds, and ever since symptoms of it occasionally appear amongst us, gaining ground as the warm weather sets in, & if something does not cast up, to diminish its virulence, I am afraid the consequence of its fury will be seriously felt. We must, however, hope for the best, and trust to Providence as a safeguard and an unerring guide to steer us clear of the shoals with which we are surrounded. The coasting trade is progressively improving—it turned out last summer about 3000 Beavers, exclusive of other valuable furs, but the loss it sustained in the death of Cap. Simpson will be seriously felt as his experience, coupled with his talents & abilities would give a decided favourable turn to our affairs in that quarter. He departed this life at Nass on the 2d. September of a liver complaint much lamented and regretted and whatever feelings might be entertained toward him during his career in the past of the country there is now but one of general sympathy for his untimely end. Our people appear to be firmly seated down at Nass—the natives are so far peaceable and well disposed and we have in view to extend our settlements along the coast, the best and most judicious plan we can adopt for the purpose of wresting that trade from the grasp of the Americans who have so far monopolized it and no doubt derived considerable gain therefrom. Trusting to hear from you fully and particularly and with best wishes for yourself and family I am My dear Sir, Yours Sincerely

(Sgd) D'N FINLAYSON.

Luck of the Fur Trade.

James Douglas, afterward famous as the Governor of Vancouver's Island, here shows how some posts thrive while others fail. He also tells of the river tragedies, which were most likely all too common in that day.

Vancouver, 12th March, 1832

Jno. McLeod, Esquire
Dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to inform you that in compliance with your request, I now forward a box, to your address, containing a variety of prickly pears, which I hope will reach your distant quarter without injury. Our Columbia news are of a varied nature, a proportion of good, mixed up with evil, but on the whole I believe the good predominates at all events I am convinced that the best news are always the most gratifying and will on that account leave the most unpleasant to bring up the rear.

The Nass party left us in the early part of April, Mr. Ogden being the superintendent of the land operations, with Captain Simpson to command the shipping. They were greatly retarded on the passage by contrary winds and in consequence did not reach their destination before the 11th. May.

To their great surprise and not a little to their satisfaction the natives received them in the most friendly manner, nor have they as yet displayed any symptoms of a hostile or turbulent disposition. They are nevertheless keen hands at the bargain and make the most of competition among the traders. If they cannot do business with one party they make no ceremony in trying what can be done with the other. The Returns of the Coast are something like 3000 skins, upon which there is a loss of £1600.

Your friend Archy has been doing wonders at Fort Langley, he has collected about 2000 Beavers, and is not a little vain of his feat. Your old post Thompsons River seems determined to remain in the background. I believe its resources are exhausted, or perhaps Langley and Colville have a share of the trade which in your time it exclusively enjoyed.

This placé as well as Nez Perces show an increase of returns, but I cannot say how the campaign will end in New Caledonia as we have had no late intelligence from that quarter. The Brigade on its return to the interior met with a serious accident between the Portage Neuf and Cascades, by which two men and nearly forty pieces of property were lost. Another poor man was drowned in Frasers River.

Captain Simpson died at Nass after a short illness of 13 days of an inflammation of the lungs. Please present my respects to Charlotte, Miss Flora and the little ones. Believe me to be with much respect Your obt Servant,

(Sgd) JAMES DOUGLAS.