

## DOCUMENTS

[Though the editor now has a wealth of materials for publication in this department of the *Washington Historical Quarterly*, he always welcomes suggestions or copies of unprinted manuscript documents.]

### Secret Mission of Warre and Vavasour

New light is here thrown upon the phase of American history so long epitomized in the phrase: "Fifty-four, Forty or Fight!" Heretofore we have not had access of the British side of that controversy. James K. Polk, on assuming his duties as President, said he was willing to carry out his campaign pledges, but he found negotiations pending on the acceptance of the 49th parallel as a compromise boundary. When the British Minister, Richard Pakenham, declined that offer, President Polk asked Congress for men and money to back up the American claims to the original boundary of "Fifty-four, Forty." Then the British, in turn, offered to compromise on the 49th parallel and the offer was accepted in the Treaty of 1846.

Nearly twenty years later, a retired officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, Dr. W. Fraser Tolmie, wrote a letter to the Oregon Pioneer Association,<sup>1</sup> in which he revealed one reason for the apparent retreat of the British, as follows: "It must be remembered that, between 1834 and 1846, the United Kingdom had—besides several fighting and other troubles in various parts of the world—great embarrassment in regard to Canada, during 1837-38 in a state of open rebellion. What seems more natural in such a case than that apathy as to further acquisitions of territory in North America should have prevailed in British councils?" He further says that the incessant nudging of the Hudson's Bay Company aroused the British government from its apathy on this question. The letters and documents here printed show that secret preparations were being planned by the British for a possible war, a calamity that was happily averted.

These documents are printed from copies obtained through the Provincial Library of British Columbia from the Public Records Office, London, where the originals are filed as "America Domestic Various," Volumes 440, 442, and 457.

<sup>1</sup>Oregon Pioneer Association, *Transactions of the Twelfth Annual Re-Union*, 1884, pp. 25-37.

## Simpson to Pelly

[Hudson's Bay House, 19th March, 1845.]

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Should the recent proceedings in the Congress of the United States on the Oregon question result in hostilities between the two countries, I think it would be absolutely necessary for the protection of the Company's interests in Hudson's Bay that a small military force should be stationed at Red River. Besides this force, I think it would be very desirable that a company of riflemen should be embodied in the country from our native half-caste population, who are admirably adapted for guerilla warfare, being exceedingly active, and by the constant use of the gun from childhood, good marksmen. It would be necessary, however, to forward from Canada along with the troops a sufficient number of officers to command and discipline this corps.

The officers and men should be forwarded from Canada, proceeding by steam to the Sault de Ste. Marie and I would provide craft to convey them from thence to Fort William, where they should arrive in the course of the month of August. From Fort William they would be forwarded in light canoes to Red River, each canoe taking ten men, who would have to work their passage, experienced bowsmen and steersmen being provided in the country.

The Company's agent at Red River could conduct the commissariat department better than strangers.

For the protection of British interests on the Columbia and N. W. Coast I would moreover suggest that two sailing ships of war and two steamers should be stationed there. It would be highly important to get possession of Cape Disappointment, and to erect thereon a strong battery, which would effectually command the mouth of the Columbia River, as unless the southern channel may have been found practicable since I was there, ships entering the River must pass so close under the Cape that shells might be dropped almost with certainty upon their decks from the battery.

The Columbia River, owing to the difficulty of ingress and egress, cannot be depended upon as a harbour; and to the southward there is no good harbour nearer than the Bay of San Francisco in about 40° N. Lat.; but in the Straits of de Fuca, Puget Sound, Hood's Canal, and the Gulf of Georgia there are many excellent harbours of easy access. Although it might be unsafe for sailing ships of war to enter the Columbia River, steamers would find frequent opportunities of going in and out, even in winter, and in summer the weather is so uniformly fine they could make certain of crossing the Bar at almost any time.

There should be a large body of marines attached to the ships of war for boating and land service, and a force of about 2000 men, half-breeds and Indians, might be collected on both sides of the mountain that could on a short notice be rendered disposable for active service in any part of the Oregon territory. It would be necessary, however, that sufficient officers should be at hand to command and discipline these people.

The country is so productive in grain and cattle, and fish are so abundant that such a force as I have pointed out could, with a little preparatory arrangement, be provisioned for twelve months certain.

Should the recent negotiations happily result in a partition of the country, the branch of the Columbia called Lewis River would be a satisfactory boundary as regards British interests. But if that cannot be obtained, the parallel of 49° might be continued as a boundary line from the mountains until it strikes the north branch of the Columbia, which from that point should be the boundary to the sea. If the 49° parallel be adopted as the boundary line the whole way from the mountains to the sea, then it would be indispensable to have Vancouver's Island and the free navigation of the Straits of Fuca secured to us; as in consequence of the prodigious tideway in Johnston's Straits, it would be impossible for trading vessels to reach Frazier's River by the northern channel.

In such partition of the country it would, as a matter of course, be necessary that the Company and British settlers should be secured in their present possessions by a provision in the Treaty; and the free navigation of the Columbia River, as the only practicable communication to the east side of the mountains,—as well as right of way by land (should a practicable route be found) from the Gulf of Georgie to the Columbia should be secured to us. The provision in the Treaty should also secure to us the undisturbed possession of the country now occupied by the Puget Sound Company, the farms on the Cowlitz, in the neighborhood of Vancouver on Multnomah's Island, our water privileges on the Willamette River, our posts on the Columbia and Umpqua Rivers, and all other establishments now occupied by the Company.

It is very desirable that Lord Aberdeen should instruct Mr. Pakenham to communicate with me confidentially on the state of the negotiations respecting the Oregon boundary, in order that I might be prepared to act according to circumstances, without loss of time necessary for communicating with England.

G. SIMPSON,

Hudson's Bay House,

19th March, 1845.

To Sir Hy. Pelly, Bart.,

Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

[Endorsed] Copy: Memoranda with reference to the Oregon Question, March 29, 1845. Communicated by Sir Geo. Simpson.

Simpson to Ogden

*Confidential* Encampment, Lac La Pluie, 30 May, 1845.

[To Peter Skeen Ogden]

Dear Sir:

Having submitted, for your private information, a confidential letter, I have under this date addressed to Messrs. Warre and Vavasour, two British officers now accompanying us from Canada on their way to the shores of the Pacific at the outlet of the Columbia river, which fully explains the object of their journey. I have now to request the favor of

your conducting these Gentlemen from Red River to their destination by the Saskatchewan, crossing the Rocky Mountains at the Bon River Pass, and touching en route at the Posts of Fort Ellis, Pelly, Carlton, Pitt, Edmonton, and Colville, and the other establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Columbia River.

Your party will consist of six servants of the Company, besides Messrs. Warre and Vavasour and yourself, and Mr. Lane, as one of the Company's clerk, who you will consider as specially attached to your party, and who is to be employed as I shall hereafter point out. Messrs. Warre and Vavasour are to be provided at Red River with two saddle horses each, and a horse each for the conveyance of their personal luggage, which are to be relieved by fresh horses at each post you may visit; and the necessary number of horses for the remainder of the party will, in like manner, be provided from station to station.

It is desirable that you should take your departure from Red River not later than the 12th proc. so as to reach the Pacific as early as possible, with a view of anticipating Lieut. Fremont of the United States Army, who, I understand, was to have left St. Louis on the 29th of April for the same destination; and by a steady prosecution of the journey, I am in hopes you may reach the Pacific by 12th August.

The first object to be attended to on arrival there is to take possession, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, of Cape Disappointment, ostensibly with a view to the forming of a trading post and pilot lookout (should it not have been previously occupied on behalf of the United States Gov't, or any of its citizens). In that case you will be pleased to employ Mr. Lane and the servants who accompany you, in the building of a house on the Cape, taking possession by a rough fence, of the headland and the isthmus connecting it with the back country, running a slight fence along the shore of Baker's Bay and across the point to the shore of the ocean, so as to enclose as much of the interior as may be desirable for the exclusion of strangers; likewise enclosing for the same object any high ground in the rear, within common range, which may command the Cape. After the necessary enclosures and buildings shall have been erected, I have to beg that Mr. Lane and two men be left in charge of the Post, to give their attention to the Indian trade being furnished with such provisions and supplies from the depot of Fort Vancouver as may be necessary for the maintenance of the Post.

I have further to beg that you will point out to Messrs. Warre and Vavasour the ship channel from the mouth of the Columbia up to Fort Vancouver, directing their attention to such points on the north shore as may command the channel, likewise to Tongue Point on the south side, and if those gentlemen be of opinion that the occupation thereof might become of importance in a military point of view, you will be pleased to take possession of the headland in behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, and erect a house on such position as those Gentlemen may select as the best site for a Battery, forming a rough fence across the neck of land connecting the promotory with the back country and along the edge of the woods around the promotory, leaving two men there for a few weeks, the more formally to establish our occupancy.

You will distinctly understand, however, that neither Cape Disappointment, Tongue Point, nor any other place is to be taken possession of by the Hudson's Bay Company if already possessed and occupied on behalf of the United States Govt. or its citizens; but after possession has once been taken by you of any of those points, I have to request that such may not be relinquished unless compelled to abandon it by superior force and overt acts of violence on the part of the United States Govt. or its citizens, and in that case either yourself or the Officer for the time being superintending the Company's affairs at Vancouver will be pleased to report the same in writing to the Commander of any of her Majesty's ships with whom you may have an opportunity of communicating, calling upon such Officer for support and protection and handing him the best proofs you can adduce of the nature and extent of the violence that may have been exercised in dispossessing the Company of the occupied points, transmitting to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company a detailed report of all proceedings connected with this subject.

Should Messrs. Warre and Vavasour wish to visit the Willamette Settlement or any other point of the Oregon Territory where we can afford them protection, you will grant the necessary facilities to do so; meeting all their demands in writing on the Hudson's Bay Company's stores and resources, providing them with a passage to the Mountains in spring, with a view to their accompanying the Express to Red River, so as to arrive there early in June, 1848, securing for them the kindest hospitalities and attentions at our different establishments, and consulting their pleasure, comfort, and convenience, in so far as circumstances may permit. I have further to beg that all expenses connected with the conveyance of these Gentlemen to and from the Pacific, and all other outlay that may be incurred connected with their expedition, likewise the wages and provisions of the officer and servants who may be employed in taking possession by occupation of Cape Disappointment, or of any other points that may be determined upon, in accordance with the spirit of the letter referred to, be charged to an account to be in the meantime headed, "Supreme account."

I have to request that this letter be considered strictly confidential, and that the object of Messrs. Warre and Vavasour's journey be not disclosed, but that it be given out that they are known to us only as private travellers for the pleasure of field sports and scientific pursuits.

Herewith I hand you an order on the Company's stores and resources at the different establishments you may visit, in furtherance of the objects of this expedition.

I remain, etc.,  
GEORGE SIMPSON.

Peter Skeen Ogden, Esq.,  
Chief Factor,  
Hudson's Bay Company.

[Endorsed] Lac la Pluie, May 30/45. Sir George Simpson to Mr. Ogden. *Confidential*.

Inclosures in Ld. Metcalfe's Letter to Lord Stanley of July 16th, 1845.

## Simpson to Warre and Vavasour

*Confidential*

Encampment Lac la Pluie, May 30th, 1845.

Gentlemen:

Having been confidentially informed by H. M.'s Gov't. that the object of your present journey is to acquire a knowledge of the character and resources of the country situated between the Sault de Ste. Marie and the shores of the Pacific, and of the practicability of forming military stations therein and conveying troops thither, with a view, should it hereafter be necessary, to the occupation thereof for military purposes; and having been requested to afford you every facility for acquiring such knowledge and to furnish you with such information as my experience might suggest, I beg to invite your attention to the following particulars which I think may be useful in enabling you to frame your report on the important objects of your missions.

You are aware that the United States are forming a cordon of military posts along their northern frontier at Michilimackinac, the Sault de Ste. Marie, La Pointe on the western shore of Lake Superior, Prairie de Chien, Lake St. Peters, and Council Bluffs; and others, I understand, are in progress on the Missouri from that point to the Rocky Mountains, showing the importance they attached to their Indian frontier and acquiring for them an influence among the surrounding Native Tribes, which would be highly important in the event of war; while the trade and settlements along the British frontier are altogether unprotected in that way.

Should H. M.'s Gov't. be desirous of affording a similar protection to the British settlements and interests, and of securing a similar influence over the Indian population in their neighborhood, I should consider that Point Muron, on the Kaministaquoiah River (falling into Lake Superior) above 9 miles above the Hudson's Bay Company's trading post of Fort William, situated in about 48° 30' N. Lat. and 89° W. Long. and Red River Settlement at the outlet of Red River into Lake Winnipeg in 50° N. Lat. and 97° W. Long. are the only two points where such protection appears, at present, necessary or desirable; and at these places military posts of the Indian Country East of the Rocky Mountains.

As regards the means of transport, the troops, ordnance, military stores, etc., could be conveyed to the Kaministaquoiah River from Canada in steam or sailing vessels. The intercourse with the Sault is now so great that for many years past there has been a constant communication during the season of open water, by steam and sailing vessels to that point; and the Hudson's Bay Company have a sufficient number of decked and open craft on Lake Superior for any amount of transport that might be required as far as Kaministaquoiah River.

The soil and climate of the banks of the Kaninistaquoiah are favorable for the production of various descriptions of grain, potatoes, and garden stuffs, with pasturage for any quantity of cattle and an inexhaustible supply of very fine fish in its immediate vicinity. There is water communication by rivers and lakes of about 700 [to] 800 miles from the Kaministiquoiah to Red River Settlement, through which you are now passing; but owing to the obstructions arising from rapids and falls it is practicable only by

that craft that can be carried over such obstructions, usually known as "portages." Bark canoes, capable of conveying 15 soldiers and about 30 cw.t of luggage and provisions which can be navigated across the portages by 4 men, are the most suitable craft for half that distance, say from the mouth of the Kaministaquoiah to Lac de Pluie; and boats capable of carrying 30 men with their provisions and baggage can be employed from thence to Red River. If the troops were to render the quantum of assistance in working these craft which has frequently been afforded by women in the Hudson's Bay Company's craft, the journey from Lake Superior to Red River might be performed in about 20 days; but if they traveled merely as passengers, the work being performed by the bare number of experienced hands absolutely required in each craft, the journey would occupy 5 or 6 weeks.

With the co-operation of the Hudson's Bay Company, who have always large Depots of provisions and craft on hand, a regiment might thus be conveyed to Red River Settlement in the course of one summer. The best mode, however, of transporting this transport would be through the agency of the Hudson's Bay Company who, I have no doubt, would contract for maintenance and conveyance of the troops with their luggage from Lake Superior to Red River Settlement, after the rate of about 40 shillings pr. man if they were to assist in the transport or about 60 shillings pr. man if conveyed as passengers.

Point Muron, the site I would recommend for a military post on the Kaministaquoiah is high ground, overlooking the River, and is not commanded by any other point within reach. The Indian population in that neighborhood is very thin, not exceeding 100 to 150 families, of the Chipe-way tribe, mild and docile in their character, and entirely under the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose posts they frequent and from whom they receive all their supplies of British manufactures.

The Hudson's Bay Company have four establishments on the route from Lake Superior to Red River Settlement, namely, Fort William, Lac a la Pluie, Rat Portage, and Fort Alexander, where craft and all necessary supplies or refreshment for the troops could be provided.

At Red River the Hudson's Bay Company have an Agricultural Settlement containing about 5000 inhabitants, consisting principally of their retired Officers and servants and their half-caste families, and a few Indians. The country is beautiful, salubrious, and very productive in wheat, barley, pease, etc., Cattle, sheep, swine, and horses are very abundant, and the fisheries so productive that they would alone afford the inhabitants the means of living if all other resources failed. Salt is procured in the settlement from numerous saline springs in the neighborhood, and maple is so plentiful as to afford large supplies for maple sugar.

The distance from the settlement to York Factory, the Company's principal Depot on the shores of Hudson's Bay in communication with England, is about 700 miles. Lake Winnipeg which is navigable by decked vessels, forms nearly half the distance. From thence to the coast, the navigation by a chain of rivers and lakes is practicable by boats of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 tons burden. The downward voyage with cargo is usually performed in about 16 days; and the upward voyage is from 5 to 6 weeks. By that route, such articles of British produce and manufacture as might be

required in the country can be conveyed at a charge of about 15 per cent on English invoice prices.

The Company have at Red River Settlement two establishments or Forts, walled in and protected by bastions, of sufficient extent to quarter a regiment and from the facility of obtaining labour, and stone, lime, brick, timber and other materials, extensive buildings might be erected there at a very short notice.

Red River Settlement is the most favourable situation in the Indian Territory east of the Rocky Mountains for a military depot, and large levies of troops might be there raised from the half-caste population of the settlement and the neighboring Indian tribes, who, when properly disciplined, would form such a force as would overcome many, and greatly harass all the United States Settlements on the Missouri. A detachment of about 200 regular troops, however, I should consider sufficient to form the nucleus of a force of several thousand natives, who, from their activity and habits of life, are admirably adapted for Guerilla warfare. The result of your own observations on the spot will, I have no doubt, confirm all I have said on this subject; and in order that you may be the better enabled to prepare estimates of the expenses that might be incurred in the formation of the establishment I have suggested, and in the maintenance of troops, I beg to annex a tariff of prices current list of labour and supplies of every description.

From Red River Settlement whither I have now the pleasure of conducting you, a party will be despatched under the charge of Mr. Ogden, an influential officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, to conduct you from thence across land to the Saskatchewan River, and from thence across the Rocky Mountains to Fort Colville on the Columbia River. Horse traveling is the best and most expeditious mode of conveyance by that route, and the journey may occupy 40 to 50 days, having been performed by me in the year 1841 in 47 days. Mr. Ogden's knowledge and experience will guard against privation, inconvenience, or danger along that route. From Fort Colville, you will be able to reach the Pacific in boats in 5 or 6 days, so that, leaving Red River about the 12 June, you ought, according to the ordinary rate of travelling, to arrive at the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon Territory about the 12th August. From Red River you will find a fine open prairie country, which has been traversed by wheel carriages to the base of the Rocky Mountains to a defile or pass situated in about 51° N. Lat. which, although impracticable for wheel carriages, is by no means difficult on horseback, having been lately passed by a large body of emigrant families from Red River Settlement. The Country through which you will have to travel abounds with buffalo, deer, and game, enabling the Hudson's Bay Company to collect depot of jerked meat, pemmican, and other provisions to any extent at their trading stations of Forts Ellis, Pelly, Carlton, Pitt, and Edmonton, so that troops either cavalry or infantry might by that route be forwarded from Red River to the mouth of the Columbia River.

While in Oregon Territory, I have to suggest your close examination of Cape Disappointment, a headland on the North bank of the Columbia River at its outlet to the Pacific, overlooking the Ship Channel, and commanding as far as I was able to judge when upon the spot from super-

ficial observation, the navigation of the River, the occupation of which as a fortification would, in my opinion, be of much importance in the event of hostilities between England and the United States. Mr. Ogden has private instructions from me to take possession of that headland on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, ostensibly with a view of forming a trading post and "Pilot's Lookout" thereon; and if, after you have made an accurate survey, it be found that any part of the back country overlooks the Cape, Mr. Ogden has been further instructed to take possession of such commanding positions also. I have therefore to request the favour of your communicating to that gentleman whatever preliminary measures you may consider it desirable should be taken, with a view to the prior occupation of all important positions by the Company in order to be afterwards available by H. M.'s Govt. should such be deemed necessary or expedient.

While in the Oregon country, I beg to suggest your visiting the Willamette Settlement, where there is a large population, consisting of citizens of the United States and British subjects, the retired servants of the Hudson's Bay Company,—that you examine into the resources of the country as regards the means of subsistence, and that you notice any situations on the River which may appear to you well adapted for military stations, more especially on the North bank of the Columbia between Fort Vancouver and Cape Disappointment, contiguous to the Ship Channel, which Mr. Ogden will point out to you. It might be well to examine Tongue Point, commanding the Ship Channel on the south side, the occupation of which from its commanding situation might, I think, become an object of importance; and if, after examination you be of the same opinion, Mr. Ogden has been instructed to take formal possession thereof for the Hudson's Bay Company.

You will see from the extent of the Company's agricultural operations and from the large quantities of cattle and sheep at their establishments of Fort Vancouver, the Cowlitz and Puget Sound, that they could provide the means of subsistence for any naval or military force that is likely to be required in that quarter, and other parts West of the Mountains, while the sturgeon, salmon, and other fisheries are inexhaustible.

Mr. Ogden has been instructed to meet all your demands on the Hudson's Bay Company's stores, depots, and resources in furtherance of the objects in view, and to afford you safe escort and means of conveyance back to Red River, where I shall expect to have the pleasure of meeting you in the month of June, 1846, whence a passage will be provided for you to Canada.

In conclusion I beg to suggest that you report from Red River Settlement for the information of H. M.'s Gov't. the result of your observations up to the time of your departure from thence for Oregon; and from Vancouver by one of the Company's vessels that will sail for England in October, you will have an opportunity of communicating such further information as you may have collected up to that period.

Wishing you a safe and prosperous journey,

I have, etc.,

GEORGE SIMPSON.

H. J. Warre  
M. Vavasour, Esqre.

## Ogden to Warre

*Private*

Fort Vancouver, October 2nd, 1845.

My dear Sir:

Only yesterday I returned from Oregon City, and leave this again for the interior. If nothing unforeseen should happen, trust to have the pleasure of seeing you here by the first week in November.

I regret to say that my purchase of the Cape is now null and void. The man I purchased it from had no right to dispose of it. Two men, Americans, viz: Wheeler and McDaniell, had a prior claim. They, however, proposed to part with it for \$900.00, which I refused, having no authority vested in me to negotiate.

At all events, in my opinion, by not appearing over-anxious to obtain it, we can before spring secure it at a lower rate. On this subject more when we meet.

Believe me, &amp;c.,

P. S. OGDEN.

H. I. Warre, Esq.,  
&c., &c., &c.

[Endorsed] Received on our return to Fort Vancouver from Pugets Sound and the Straits of Juan de Fuca on the 17th October, 1845.

## Warre to Ogden

*Confidential*

Fort Vancouver, November 17th [15?], 1845.

P. S. Ogden, Esq.,

Chief Factor H. B. Company.

Sir:

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated this morning.

I have consulted with Lieut. Vavasour on its purport, and beg to call your attention to the following extract from Sir G. Simpson's letter to us, viz:

"Mr. Ogden has private instructions from me to take possession of that Headland, on behalf of the *Hudson's Bay Company*, ostensibly with a view of forming a 'Trading Post or Pilot's Lookout' thereon; and, if, after you have made an accurate survey, it be found that any part of the back country overlooks the Cape, Mr. Ogden has been further instructed to take possession of such commanding positions also.

"I have therefore, to request the favour of your communicating to that gentleman whatever preliminary measures you may consider it desirable should be taken, with a view to the prior occupancy of all important positions by the Company, in order to be afterwards available by Her Majesty's Government should such be deemed necessary or expedient."

In consequence of the foregoing extract I have to request that we may be informed whether it is the intention of *The Hudson's Bay Company* to occupy Cape Disappointment according to the orders of Sir G. Simpson, as conveyed in his confidential letters to us.

HENRY I. WARRE.

Ogden to Warre

*Confidential*

Fort Vancouver, Nov. 16, 1845.

Dear Sir:

In reply to yours of yesterday, having attentively perused and duly considered the remarks you make, as also the extract from Sir G. Simpson's letter to you, still, I cannot consider myself authorized to purchase the claim on Cape Disappointment, altho most anxious to meet your wishes, and from the following extract from Sir G. Simpson marked "Private and Confidential":

"You will distinctly understand, however, that neither Cape Disappointment, Tongue Point, nor any other place, is to be taken possession of by the Hon'ble H. B. Company, if already possessed or occupied on behalf of the United States Government or its citizens."

The above paragraph binds me down and deprives me of all power or authority, under existing circumstances to act; and should you not consider it of sufficient importance to authorize me to purchase the claims, I cannot, situated as I am, take the responsibility on myself.

I remain, &c.,

P. S. OGDEN.

Henry I. Warre, Esq.,  
&c., &c.

[Endorsement] Mr. Ogden thus declining to take possession of Cape Disappointment on behalf of the H. B. Company, we requested he favour us with his reasons for entering into any arrangements in the first instance, with also an American.

Warre to Ogden

*Confidential*

Fort Vancouver, Nov. 19, 1845.

My dear Sir:

Having duly received your confidential letter of yesterday's date, declining to take upon yourself the responsibility of purchasing Cape Disappointment on behalf of the Hon'ble H. B. Company, in consequence of the confidential instructions received by you from Sir G. Simpson, may I beg that you will favour me with a statement of the late transaction regarding the purchase of that headland from Mr. Saules, which I have reported to the higher authorities as in progress.

The necessity and object of my thus troubling you will be apparent under existing circumstances.

I shall also feel obliged if you can inform me, whether in the event of Wheeler and McDaniell not having registered their claim to that headland, according to the laws of Oregon, now in force, your purchase with the man Saules will not hold good.

I consider it very probable that Wheeler or McDaniell may have claims in some other part of the Territory, or even that they may have

"jumped" Mr. Saules' claim. In either of which cases, as far as I understand the laws of Oregon, he (Mr. Saules) would be at liberty to dispose of his own property.

Believe me, &c.,  
HENRY I. WARRE.

P. S. Ogden, Esq.

Ogden to Warre

*Confidential*

Fort Vancouver, Nov. 19, 1845.

Dear Sir:

I have to acknowledge receipt of yours of this date, and shall briefly afford you the statement you require. The purchase from James Saules was not considered by the laws of Oregon valid; he, not having any claim or authority to dispose of it, being merely employed in the service of Wheeler and McDaniell as a guardian to their claim on Cape Disappointment.

They had also taken the precaution, at their expense, to erect a building on their claim, thereby rendering their right to it still more valid.

On application to the recorder's office in Oregon City, I was informed that six months were allowed by the Organic Laws to register; and two years if buildings were erected on the claim. This both Wheeler and McDaniell had in part availed themselves of, consequently, my claim, by purchase from J. Saules, was by the authorities declared null and void.

As my duty requires me shortly to absent myself from this place, it would be desirable you decide on the measures you intend to take in regard to the purchase of Cape Disappointment.

I remain, &c.,  
P. S. OGDEN.

H. I. Warre, Esq.

Warre to Ogden

*Confidential*

Fort Vancouver, November 19, 1845.

Dear Sir:

As Sir G. Simpson's letter to Mr. Vavasour and myself is rendered nugatory by your interpretation of his instructions to you; and my private instructions not anticipating such an occurrence, I cannot consider myself justified in authorizing you *individually* to purchase Cape Disappointment.

Very truly,  
HENRY I. WARRE,  
Lt. 14th Reg't.

P. S. Ogden, Esq.,  
H. B. Company.

Ogden to Warre

[Endorsement] On the 14th of February, 1846, we received the following letter from Mr. Ogden:

*Private and confidential* Fort Vancouver, 14th Feb., 1846.  
Sir:

Since our late correspondence having mutually reflected that the principal object of your journey to this country had been frustrated by the prior claim of Wheeler and McDaniell to Cape Disappointment; and our respective instructions, not authorizing us to purchase the Cape, and being fully aware of the importance of securing the Cape, for the services of the British Government, I, this day made a purchase of the same for one thousand dollars; surveyor's fees two hundred dollars, forming a total of twelve hundred dollars; and the same has been duly registered in the Oregon Register Office in my name and on my own responsibility.

May I trust the above information meets with your approbation, and that you will on your return to Canada report the same to the High Authorities.

I have, &c.,  
P. S. OGDEN.

Henry I. Warre, Esq.

Warre to Ogden

*Private* Fort Vancouver, Feb. 15th, 1846.  
Sir:

I have to acknowledge your note of yesterday's date, informing Mr. Vavasour and myself of your having completed the purchase of Cape Disappointment on your own responsibility, in consequence of your instructions not authorizing you to make the purchase on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company.

I will not fail to report your proceedings on my return to Canada, and I have no doubt from the tenor of Sir G. Simpson's letter to us he will approve of the measure you have taken for the occupation of the Cape by a British subject, which is evidently so desirable.

I have, &c.,  
HENRY I. WARRE,  
Lt. 14th Reg't.

P. S. Ogden, Esq.,  
Chief Factor

Note From Warre

Hon'ble Hudson's Bay Company.

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Sir G. Simpson, on our return to Red River last June, approved of the purchase of Cape Disappointment, and gave orders for the Post formerly at Fort George on the south bank of the River to be removed to that headland. The expense of the purchase of which would be defrayed in the accounts of the Hudson's Bay Company for the current year.

HENRY I. WARRE,  
Lt. 14th Reg't.

Red River, June 16th, 1846.

## Report of Lieutenant Vavasour

Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River, Oregon Territory,

1st March, 1846.

Sir:

In continuation of my report dated Red River Settlement, 10 June, 1845, I have the honour to inform you that I left that settlement in company with Lieut. Warre and party on 16th June and after passing through a swampy country on the left bank of the Assiniboine, crossing several small streams, all of which are fordable during the summer months with the exception of the Assiniboine, which was crossed in a boat, swimming the horses. Arrived at Fort Ellice on the 22nd June. Fort Ellice, or Beaver Creek, is situated on an elevated plain overlooking the Assiniboine Valley, and consists of a square of poplar pickets of 60 yards width, with 4 square towers, also of poplar. The buildings are of the same material having the intervals between the logs filled with clay. This Post is in a state of decay, and will soon require renewing.

Having procured fresh horses at this Post, passing over an open undulating country studded with small lakes, many of which are salt, and crossing the south branch of the Saskatchewan River (about 300 yards wide) in a batteau, and swimming the horses, we arrived at Fort Carlton (on the 1st of July) situated on the right bank of the north branch of the Saskatchewan River, and about 300 yards from it, on a level plain backed by high ground, within arrow shot of the Fort, which is an irregular hexagon of about 100 feet side, having two small, square towers flanking the gateway toward the River. The houses are similar to those at Fort Ellice as also the pickets, which are 15 feet in height, having new wall pieces mounted on them, and a gallery running round the interior.

On the 3rd of July crossed the north branch of the Saskatchewan River in a batteau, swimming the horses, the river at this point being about 400 yards in width. Passed over a dry, undulating country to Fort Pitt on the left bank of the Saskatchewan River, where we arrived on the 6th July.

Fort Pitt is situated on the left bank of and 350 yards from the River. It consists of a picket enclosure of 150 feet square, with 3 square towers of 14 feet facing the River, each containing a 2 pd. iron gun, and a lookout in rear. The pickets are about 15 feet high with a gallery in the interior to enable the men to fire over them.

Leaving Fort Pitt on the 8th July, crossing the Saskatchewan River in boats and swimming the horses, we proceeded up its right bank through a level, swampy country covered with small poplars, willow and dogwood, to Fort Edmonton, where we arrived on the 12th July, recrossing the river to the left bank where the Fort is placed, on the top of a high hill, but is commanded by a rising ground about 50 yards to the rear. The buildings are of wood, and enclosed by 15 foot pickets in a pentagonal form with 4 small square towers, containing 21 pd. Iron guns.

This is the largest post in the Saskatchewan District, and the last fort we visited on the East side of the Mountains.

The nature and construction of these forts are not calculated to make any defence except against Indians. Fort Carlton and Edmonton

are both commanded in the rear, within musket range, and from the dryness of the climate and nature of the materials they could be easily set on fire, nor have the inhabitants the means of extinguishing it. their sole dependence for water being the river in the vicinity. For this last reason, if blockaded by Indians for any length of time, they would be reduced, there being no wells, and from all the information I can obtain and the appearance of the country, the execution would be very great before water could be procured. Their positions have been chosen for the convenience of obtaining firewood and to trade with the Indians, who generally visit these parts of the country with skins, etc., during the hunting season and not with a view to defence. They have all been removed several times since their first establishment as the fuel in the vicinity grew scarce.

The Indians seldom attack a fort now, having become accustomed to trade, and finding their utility for this purpose they do not wish to destroy them. Leaving Fort Edmonton on the 15th July we crossed the Rocky Mountains about 51° N. Lat. and arrived at Fort Colville on the Columbia river on the 16th August with the loss of 34 horses. From the nature of this journey, the steep and rocky mountain passes, the deep swamps and almost impenetrable forests, it could not be made available for the passage of troops to the Oregon Territory.

Fort Colville is similar in construction to those on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, surrounded by a picket fence of 60 yards wide and having one blockhouse or tower. At the time of my visit the pickets were nearly all blown down. It is on the left bank of the Columbia river, on a rising ground, on a sandy plain surrounded by sand hills, 400 yards from the River bank at the head of an impassable rapid called the Chaudière Falls, around which it is necessary to carry the boats, baggage, &c., making what is usually termed a portage. This Portage is usually made on the left bank but there is no reason why the right should not be equally available. I left Fort Colville on the 19th August, embarked below the Falls in a boat belonging to the H. B. Company expressly adapted to this dangerous river navigation, and descended the rapids.

These boats are built of cedar after the model of a bark canoe, the planks being rivetted to the ribs, having no knees, and the seams filled with pitch and gum. They are propelled with oars by 5 men and steered with a paddle. From Colville we descended the rapid current of the river, the banks of which are bold, and covered with fir trees, which gradually diminished in number as we proceeded downwards; having passed several rapids, at one of which we found it necessary to carry the baggage, and the boat being let down by a line, we reached Okanogan, a small post on the right bank of the river 138 miles from Colville. This post is used as a provision station for the Brigade crossing the Mountains in the spring. It is situated on a salient bend in the river; contains 3 wooden buildings, and is surrounded by a picket fence of 50 feet side.

Below Okanogan all appearance of timber ceases, the country is wild and desolate in the extreme, presenting a boundless extent of barren rocks and sand hills, many of which are crested with Basaltic Rock. About 60 miles below Okanogan, the Piscous River enters the Columbia from the West, taking its rise in the dividing range of mountains, between this point

and Pugets Sound. Across these mountains a route is said to exist, practicable in the summer and autumn seasons by which Pugets Sound may be reached in 7 days.

Between Okanogan and the South branch or Snake River, the Columbia is very rapid, and it is necessary to make several portages, none of which exceed  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in length, and present few difficulties in the accomplishment. The Eyakama River joins the Columbia from the westward near its junction with the Snake River, by which another route to Pugets Sound is said to exist.

Fort Nez Percés or Walla Walla is 9 miles below the junction of the Snake River 205 miles from Okanogan, on the south bank of the Columbia, and near the Walla Walla, a small fordable river, beyond which there are high perpendicular scarps. The Fort itself is situated on a sandy plain, built of mud formed into bricks and baked in the sun. It is 45 yards square, having a square tower at the N. E. and S. W. angles of two stories and loop-holed; the walls are bullet proof, as also the houses which are also made of mud.

Below this Fort the channel of the Columbia is contracted between nearly perpendicular Basaltic scarps; after which the current continues with varied force to the Dalles where the bed of the river is contracted into a narrow gorge about 39 yards wide, rendering it impassable. Here it is necessary to make a portage of 1 mile. The distance between Walla Walla and the Dalles is 125 miles, the River being occasionally broken by rapids, but having generally a smooth, swift current. The Indians between Okanogan and the Dalles have large bands of horses and herds of cattle. From the Dalles, the river is uninterrupted by rapids to the Cascades (48 miles) where it is necessary to make a portage of nearly 3 miles, the river having apparently forced itself through a range of lofty mountains running parallel to the sea coast and extending from Lat. 49 N. into California. From the Cascades to the Pacific Ocean the river is navigable, although numerous sand bars exist, rendering its navigation rather intricate. Ships of 300 tons are in the habit of navigating its waters to Fort Vancouver, 32 miles from the Cascades and 100 miles from the sea.

Before continuing my report, and with reference to the 3rd paragraph of your orders, I beg to insert an extract of a letter from Sir George Simpson to Lieut. Warre and myself (Sir George Simpson having remained at Red River) which contains all the information or advice I have received from that gentleman.

"While in the Oregon Territory I have to suggest your close examination of Cape Disappointment, a headland on the north bank of the Columbia River at its outlet to the Pacific; overlooking the ship channel and commanding as far as I was able to judge, while on the spot from superficial observation, the navigation of the river, the occupation of which as a fortification would in my opinion be of much importance, in the event of hostilities between England and the United States.

"Mr. Ogden has private instructions from me to take possession of that headland, on behalf of the H. B. Co. ostensibly with a view of making a trading post and pilot's lookout thereon, and, if after you have made an accurate survey it be found that any part of the back country overlooks

the Cape, Mr. Ogden has also been instructed to take possession of such commanding positions also. I have therefore to request the favour of your communicating to that gentleman whatever preliminary measures you may consider it advisable to be taken with a view to the prior occupation of all important positions by the company in order to be afterwards available by Her Majesty's Government should such be deemed necessary or expedient.

"While in the Oregon country, I beg to suggest your visiting the Willamette valley, where there is a large population consisting of the citizens of the United States and British subjects, the retired servants of the Hudson's Bay Company; that you examine into the resources of the country as regards the means of subsistence and that you notice any situations on the River which may appear to you well adapted for military stations, more especially on the north bank of the Columbia River, between Fort Vancouver and Cape Disappointment contiguous to the ship channel, which Mr. Ogden will point out to you.

"It might be well to examine Tongue Point commanding the ship channel on the south side, the occupation of which from its commanding situation might, I think become an object of importance, and if, after examination, you be of the same opinion, Mr. Ogden has been instructed to take formal possession thereof for the Hudson's Bay Company."

By the foregoing extract you will perceive that the points to which Sir George Simpson has drawn my attention are Cape Disappointment and Tongue Point. The former has been purchased by one of the Hudson's Bay Company for the disposal of Her Majesty's Government; the latter is in the possession of an American citizen.

The banks of the Willamette River, between the Columbia and the Falls are also for the most part occupied by British subjects and American citizens. Fort Vancouver on the north bank of the Columbia River in  $45^{\circ} 36'$  N. Lat., and  $122^{\circ} 39'$  West Long., 100 miles from the Pacific ocean, at the head of ship navigation, is the principal Post of the Hudson's Bay Company on the west of the Rocky Mountains.

The present fort is placed near the end of a small plain on the bank of the Columbia River, which is nearly inundated by the spring freshets; a ridge of high land on which the old fort was situated confines the plain on the north, in the rear of the present site, over which it has a command.

The establishment contains several large store houses, made of squared timber, small stone powder magazine, and several framed dwelling houses; these are surrounded by a picket fence 15 feet high and 226 yards by 100 yards; at the N. W. angle there is a 3 storied blockhouse, 20 feet square; the two lower stories are loop-holed; the upper is an octagonal cap containing eight 3 pd. iron guns.

The establishment was removed from the rising ground before mentioned in consequence of the inconvenient distance from the River side, for the conveyance of goods and procuring water. The latter defect has been remedied by sinking 2 wells in the present fort, which are supplied by the river, the water filtering through the soil, which is composed of gravel and sand a few feet below the surface. These wells rise and fall with the variations of the river.

The plain is inundated in the same manner, the water rising through the earth and forming a lake before the banks are overflowed.

The simplest method of strengthening this post against sudden attack would be to dig a ditch around it, throwing the earth against the pickets, which should be loop-holed, and a banquette formed in the interior, erecting another small blockhouse at the S. E. angle to flank the south and east sides, and placing small traverses behind the gates.

But in the event of Vancouver being occupied by Troops, I would recommend the position marked on the plan, which is not commanded by any ground in the immediate vicinity, is contiguous to the ship channel, and presents the advantage of never being liable to inundation. It is at present covered with fine pine trees, which could be made available in the construction of barracks, etc., all of which must be built of wood, there being no limestone found on the Columbia nearer than Fort Colville or Vancouver Island in the Straits of Juan de Fuca. The lime used by the Hudson's Bay Company in building their chimnies being made from coral brought from the Sandwich Islands.

For this position I would recommend a picket enclosure, ditched and flanked by two small block houses having a battery facing the river, made of logs, in which 2 18 pd. might be placed to advantage to command the ship channel, the H. B. Co. having two at their establishment; the barracks to be built of logs or squared timber, which can be procured of any dimensions in the immediate vicinity.

The H. B. Co. have a saw and grist mill on a small stream 6 miles from Vancouver, a large farm attached, with large bands of horses, herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep.

The Columbia river is about 1 mile wide at Vancouver and runs in a N. W. direction toward the sea; 6 miles below Vancouver the north branch of the Willamette River from the south enters the Columbia; and the south branch, 12 miles farther down, forming a large island which is nearly all inundated at the periods of high water.

The Cowlitz river joins the Columbia from the north about 35 miles from Vancouver. These are the most important tributaries, but there are innumerable small streams running into it from either side. About 90 miles from Vancouver on the south side of the river, is Fort George, formerly called Astoria, which was given up to the American Government at the close of the late war.

At this point there are a few old wooden buildings, but not even surrounded by a picket fence. This establishment is about being abandoned and a new one formed on Cape Disappointment. A range of hills runs on either side of the river, following its general course; receding at some places for 3 or 4 miles from its immediate banks, at others abutting immediately on them, forming perpendicular scarps; where the hills recede from the river the intervening ground is low and marshy and covered with water for two months in the year. There is no road from Vancouver to the sea and all communication is carried on by boats and canoes navigating the river.

The most important points on the Columbia River are Cape Disappointment, Point Adams, and Tongue Point, Cape Disappointment being the extremity of its north and Point Adams that of its south bank.

These two points completely command the entrance of the river which is about 5 miles wide.

Cape Disappointment is a high, bold headland, consisting of two bluffs having perpendicular scarps towards the sea, connected by a narrow ridge running nearly N. and S. of about 30 feet in width on the top, the face being nearly perpendicular, and about 320 feet in height, sloping more gradually to rear, where it is connected with the main land by a neck of 300 yards in width. The sea coast for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile presents a scarp of about the same height as the Cape, but is only a narrow ridge with two spurs running at right angles towards Baker's Bay. Those spurs are also narrow and steep; that to the N. W. falling into a deep marsh of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in length and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile in width, near the extremity of which there are two headlands jutting into the sea and rising abruptly from it.

The Cape and adjacent country is densely covered with pine trees.

Point Adams on the south shore is a low, sandy point, densely covered with timber, having some small plains in its rear on which there are several families settled.

The entrance to the Columbia river is obstructed by a very dangerous bar, 2 lines of breakers, called the North and South spits, running respectively from Cape Disappointment and Pt. Adams, and also a middle sand between these two points on either side of which run the north and south channels.

The North and one in general use passes close under North Bluff of the Cape, which completely commands it, and also the anchorage in Baker's Bay. The south channel runs along the Clatsop shore, is straight but narrow, and has seldom been attempted. These channels are constantly changing, the difficulties of the Northern have been greatly increased by the formation of a new spit in the channel during the past year, altering all the former bearings and marks for entrance.

Tongue Point on the south shore of the Columbia and 15 miles from its mouth, is a narrow peninsula,  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile in length, containing about 70 acres of land.

The highest point is about 300 feet above the river, from whence it descends in a succession of steps towards the main land and its extremity. The western side is steep in all, and quite perpendicular in many places. On the east side it slopes more gradually, but is very steep, having a small space of open level ground on the summit. The remainder is covered with magnificent fir trees, having a thick underbrush on the east side.

The ship channel at present known passes round this point, whether the river is entered by the north or south channel, for which reason the occupation of the point is evidently so advantageous.

For the occupation of Cape Disappointment, I would recommend 3 batteries of heavy guns, one of 4 guns on the center of the Cape, one of 4 guns on the north bluff towards the middle sand, with a two-storied block-house placed near a small run of water, ditched, with the earth thrown up to form parapet around it, overlooking the landing place in Baker's Bay. The block house to be made of wood, being the only material on the spot, and which can be procured of any dimensions, many of the trees on the Cape measuring 20 feet in circumference.

On Point Adams I would place a battery of 5 guns, having its gorge defended by a blockhouse, similar to that for Cape Disappointment. These points being covered with immense timber, which would require a length of time to remove, open works could not easily be formed, more particularly at the Cape, from the nature of the ground. From the nature of the coast and the continual line of breakers, boats could not land for several miles to the north and south of these points, and boats entering the river by the ships channel on a calm day would be exposed from every part of the Cape, and a few men well disposed could prevent their effecting a landing in Baker's Bay, the only available spot for the purpose near the Cape.

The nearest place on the sea coast, north of Cape Disappointment, for a safe landing in boats is 18 miles distant, in Shoalwater Bay, and the nearest harbour in Chehalis, commonly called Gray's Harbour, which will only admit vessels of light draught, having only 9 feet of water on the bar, is 40 miles distant.

For the occupation of Tongue Point, I would recommend a battery of heavy guns on the West side overlooking the ship channel, with a blockhouse or defensible barrack near its gorge. Tongue Point might easily be cut off from the main shore by a ditch across the narrow neck of land connecting it, which is only 80 yards across.

There are some other points on the north shore apparently offering good positions, such as Chinook point and Point Ellis.

The whole of the north shore from Cape Disappointment is covered with an impenetrable forest, with the exception of Chinook point, which is low and sandy, having a high, bare hill in its rear, at the foot of which there is a small marsh; Point Ellis is steep and rocky. These points might be made available for temporary purposes, but with the occupation of Cape Disappointment and Tongue Point would not, I think, be required. The south shore of the Columbia is also high and covered with forest.

The navigation of the Columbia River is obstructed by numerous sand banks, which are constantly shifting, and vessels are often detained a long time in ascending and descending it, as also in Baker's Bay, waiting for a favourable opportunity of crossing the bar. The Hudson's Bay Company's barque "Vancouver" was one month from Vancouver to Baker's Bay, and 45 days lay in the bay, before an opportunity offered for leaving the River. An American merchant vessel the "Tulon" was also detained for the same period.

The two ships cleared the bar in company during my last visit to Cape Disappointment.

The other posts belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company which I have visited are: the Cowlitz, Nisqually, on Pugets Sound; and Fort Victoria, on Vancouver Island, in the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

Descended the Columbia River for 35 miles (from Vancouver) to the mouth of the Cowlitz, ascending it for 45 miles to the Cowlitz Farm. The Cowlitz is very rapid and shallow, but like all the rivers in this country, subject to sudden rises of the water, caused by the melting of the snow or rain in the mountains. During these floods the river is difficult of ascent the boats being pulled up by the branches, the banks being too thickly wooded to admit of tracking with a line. It, however, is navigable at all seasons for flat-bottomed boats, in which the Hudson's Bay Company transport the produce of the Cowlitz Farm to Fort Vancouver.

The farm establishment is situated on a large plain about 500 yards from the river, and about one mile from the landing place. There is a small settlement of about 19 families, and a Roman Catholic church in the immediate neighborhood. There are large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and bands of horses at this post.

At the Cowlitz we procured horses and rode to Nisqually, a distance of about 60 miles. This route, or portage, as it is usually called, passes through small plains traversing the intervening points of woods, crossing the Quinze, Sous, Vassels, Chute and Nisqually Rivers, all of which are fordable in the summer, but become deep and rapid in the winter and spring.

Nisqually is also an agricultural and sheep farm, the buildings are of wood, situated at the end of a large plain, close to a fine stream of fresh water, and about one mile from the shores of Puget's Sound.

This appears the best place for landing troops in this country, the Straits of Juan de Fuca and Puget's Sound being accessible to vessels of any tonnage and at all seasons, with safe and commodious harbours.

There being large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep at Nisqually Establishment, provisions could easily be procured and troops forwarded from Puget's Sound to the Columbia by the portage and Cowlitz River.

Light baggage, etc., can be forwarded from the head of Puget's Sound, making a portage of 5 miles through a thickly wooded country to the head of the Satchat or Black river, which can be descended in flat-bottomed boats or rafts for 30 miles, from whence there is a portage of 15 miles to the Cowlitz farm. This latter portage can be traveled by carts, the road having been opened by the few settlers on the plains. The Satchat and Chehalis rivers are rapid, and the latter is obstructed in one or two places by driftwood.

From the Cowlitz Farm the troops, etc., can descend the river in boats to the Columbia, and proceed to any required position on it by the same means.

At Nisqually I would recommend a blockhouse or defensible guard-house overlooking the Sound, and commanding the road from the landing place, the banks on the shore being too steep to be easily ascended excepting at this point. Any description of work can be thrown up (such as a bastion or redoubt) on the large plain near the Sequelitz stream, with barracks, etc., for the accommodation of Troops.

Fort Victoria is situated on the southern end of Vancouver Island in the small harbor of Commusan, the entrance to which is rather intricate. The Fort is a square enclosure of 100 yards, surrounded by cedar pickets, having 2 octagonal bastions, containing each 6 six-pd. iron guns at the N. E. and S. W. angles. The buildings are made of squared timber, 8 in number, forming three sides of an oblong. This Fort has lately been established. It is badly situated with regard to water and position, which latter has been chosen for its agricultural position only.

About 3 miles distant and nearly connected by a small inlet is the Squimal harbour, which is very commodious and accessible at all times, offering a much better position, and having also the advantage of a supply of water in the vicinity.

This is the best built of the Company's Forts. It requires loop-holing and a platform or gallery to enable men to fire over the pickets, a ditch might be dug around it, but the rock appears on the surface in many places.

There is plenty of timber of every description on Vancouver's Island, as also limestone, which could be transported to Nisqually, or other places in the territory where it may be afterwards deemed necessary to form permanent works, barrackets, etc.

Oregon City is situated on the right bank of the Willamette River, about 21 miles above its junction with the Columbia, and immediately below the Falls, which are about 35 feet in height.

It contains 300 inhabitants, 2 churches of wood; 2 grist mills and 3 saw mills, and about 80 houses, with one exception built of wood; there are two ferries across the River communicating with the Tuality Plains. The country in the immediate vicinity is very high and rocky, forming two scarps, one immediately below the town, the other about 500 yards from the River.

These scarps are very high. The first being of about 100 feet and the second of still greater elevation. The ground falls away toward the Clackamas River, below the junction of which, with the Willamette River, there is a small rapid which is difficult to ascend during high water. The ground on the left bank of the River immediately opposite to Oregon City is very much broken, steep and rocky, and both the banks are covered with a thick forest.

The settlement extends about 60 miles up the River on either bank and contains about 5000 inhabitants, composed of Canadians and Americans. 25 miles from Oregon City there is a Roman Catholic Mission, with several large wooden buildings, 2 churches, dwelling houses, and a nunnery. There is an American Methodist Mission 25 miles higher up the settlement. At both of these Missions ferries are established across the river.

At Oregon City I would recommend 3 block houses, one at the upper end of the town near the Falls, one near the lower and overlooking the road the Champoviac and the upper settlements to be placed on the first scarp, and a third on the higher scarp behind to prevent its being occupied and a command obtained from over the ground below. The mills of Mr. McLoughlin might be loopholed and made defensive, being built of square timber.

I have recommended block houses for the defense of those points of the country at which I think defensive works are being required, as the country is nearly all covered with dense forests at these points. They are easy of construction and the materials are on the spot.

All defensive works must be thrown up by the Troops, there being no available labour in the country. Everything there has a nominal value and there is no circulating medium, wheat being taken as the standard. For these reasons I have not been able to form any estimates of expense.

As all subjects of general information are embodied in the general report of Lieut. Warre and myself addressed to His Lordship, the Secretary of the Colonies, I have not referred to them further than as they are

connected with the descriptions of the Establishments of the Hudson's Bay Company in the country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servants,

M. VAVASOUR,

Lieut. Royal Engineers.

Col. Holloway,

Com'r Royal Engineers,

Canada.