

Indian Reserve Commission
British Columbia

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Return
H. B. 1876
A. B. 1876

In Camp below Hope,
25th November.
1878.

Dear Sir (The Lower Fraser)

I have the honour
to report to you that the
result of my examination of
Indian questions, so far, on the
Lower Fraser - that is from
Yale (the head of navigation) to
the mouth of the river, discloses
some confusion and considerable
difficulty, and makes me glad
that no further delay is to be
incurred in adjusting them.

Some of the questions date
from early times; others have
arisen since Confederation.

The Honourable
The Superintendent General
of Indian Affairs (Ottawa)

Indian Affairs. (EG 10, Volume 3670, File 10,770)

(2)

The whole district is so
much settled up, or owned
by non residents that it will
be extremely difficult to extend
the reserves in many places,
should such extension
prove to be necessary.

For your information I
have directed that a coloured
map of the district showing
the lands owned by whites
and also the Indian reserves
so far as the latter appear in
the Provincial Land office,
shall be sent to you in
a separate cover.

+ not
received
by me
YH

As the Indians on the
lower portion of the river

(3)

are one people, and, though claiming to belong to particular villages, move about constantly from one place to another, and as many Indians come from outside places to the Lower Fraser in search of employment at sawmills and Canneries. I propose, before assigning land to any of the tribes, to ascertain who are Lower Fraser Indians, and to take a view of the people as a whole.

I may mention a few of the questions which already have arisen, to show you their character.

A mass of Indian houses

but any day a suit of ejectment might be raised against these Indians if things took a turn.

That the Indians are upon the highway and upon private property, according to what is known as the official map of the town, is certain, but the difficulty is that Governor Douglas, on a reference made to him from the Lands office in 1860 as to what was to be done for the Indians at Hope, who then were said to have two villages there, ordered the Chief Commissioner of Lands to lay off 10 acres around each village within the town. The Chief Commis-

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it is further on record, ordered
Captain Lempriere R.E. to lay
off the town, and in reference
to the Indians, enclosed
for his guidance copy of extract
from Governor Douglas' instructions.

I have not been able
to find Capt Lempriere's report
as to what he did, but
the town map which soon
afterwards appeared, shows no
Indian lands within the
town. Capt Lempriere perhaps
made his report to the Chief
Commissioner in Commission.

Greenwood Island, opposite
Hope, is on the list of Indian

reserves given to the Dominion Govern-
ment by the Provincial Govern-
ment, but it appears to have
been sold to E. Croft in March
1861.

There is a large Indian
reserve, with fields and houses, just
above Murderer's Bar, about 3
miles on the right bank of the
Fraser below Hope - the
country reserve in fact of the
Hope Indians - but this is not
in the above mentioned list
of reserves, and there is no account
of it at the Land Office that
I can find.

Somewhat lower
down the river, a Mr Derby
representing a company engaged

in an important enterprise authorized
by an Act of the Local Legislature
for drying low lands on the Fraser,
has used, to the extent of the
wanted, two Indian reserves
without asking permission of the
Indians or of the Department.

The Department at New
Westminster ~~has~~ does not appear
to know this fact.

When Mr. Derby was getting
his bill through the House of
Assembly, I wrote to the Local
Government to ask them to see to
the bearing of the act on the
lands of the Indians.

Mr. Derby, who is an American,
states he did not know what

was necessary in the case of Indian
lands. I do not believe him.

I have informed him that
the Dominion Government is bound
by law to attend to the interests
of the Indians, and that such
high handed proceedings on the part
of his company with respect to old
Indian reserves formally assigned
to the Indians by the Crown, will
be viewed with regret, but
that I cannot say more
until I have personally examined
the ground.

In the meantime, it is
manifest that the Indians
are a little confused by these
occurrences.

The Crown, long ago,
they say, gave them land, and

by and by a white chief came
 along, and said they had too
 much land, and cut it
 down. They heard some
 years ago that their wishes
 were to be listened to, and
 a chief to look after ^{the Indians} ~~them~~
 was appointed, but ever
 since that, white men have
 continued to take land
 until it is now nearly all
 taken up, and Mr. Derby,
 who may or may not be a
 "chief", has used their land

This is their statement,
 and I, of course, will look into

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the matter and report to you on
it, and on other questions on
the Lower Fraser, in due course.

It is possible that Mr
Duby's work may do good
to the reserves.

I hear of other questions
up and down the river, and
the evident need of their
discovery and adjustment
reconciles me to the
extreme discomfort of
continuing the work in this
rainy winter season.

Transport

I have not been able
to charter a steamboat for
this work. The small screwboats
such as the "Leonora" which the

See mine
20 May. 70
and
13 Aug. 70

Commission formerly had upon the coast, are unsuitable in the shallow, rapid water of the upper portion of the Lower Fraser, and the sternwheel boats are too expensive. Moreover, even with a steamer, canoes are required to go up the numerous sloughs and some of the tributaries. I have therefore had to fall back upon canoes as the cheapest but most uncomfortable way of travelling in this season. The cost of canoes, well manned as they have to be in the rapid Fraser, exceeds the cost of transport in the interior, but in order not to increase the charge upon the

Government under this head
 under the estimate of expenditure
 acted upon as regards the interior
 of the country. I have told
 the Indians that they at least
 must convey me from one
 village to another, and in this
 way I may avoid any increase
 of cost. The Indians have
 been accustomed to receive pay
 for services rendered to officials
 coming to see about their lands
 and I cannot break up the
 custom altogether, as in practice
 it would throw a burden on
 individuals of small tribal influence
 or weight who would be ordered
 by the chiefs and others to do

the world but I think I am
justified at least in asking
them to do a little, if the
Government Commissioner works
among them in the winter season.

Capt. Jewett reports that
one of the tribes of the Shuswap
people a not a rich tribe, insisted
on furnishing transport for him,
and also cutting firewood.

I should be glad to be authorized
to send the chief, who is called
Chillikawtkeen of the Adams
Lake tribe, some little recognition
of this independent and proper
feeling. I am Sir

Your obedient Servant
Gillies Maclellan Sproule
Indian Reserve Commissioner