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Extract from Superintendent R. H. Milroy's report touching the Colville Reservation in Washington Territory

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COLVILLE RESERVATION, WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

EXTRACT

FROM

SUPERINTENDENT R. H. MILROY'S REPORT

Touching the Colville reservation in Washington Territory.

FEBRUARY 9, 1874.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

Colville reservation,

Or rather the San Poole reservation, as the San Poole River drains the greater part of it, while the Colville River is east of and separated from the reservation by the Columbia River.

It will be recollected that the Colville reservation proper, including the Colville Valley, was set apart by Executive order of April 9, 1872, and with the reservation the majority of the non-treaty Indians east of the Cascades in this Territory were much pleased. But without consulting their interests or wishes, and even without their knowledge, the Government, being deceived as to the true state of affairs, was induced to change the reservation by Executive order of July 6, 1872, to the west and north of the Columbia, east of the Okenagen, and bounded on the north by British Columbia as now constituted. The country embraced in this reservation was but little known to the whites, and I instructed Agent Simms, when he took charge there last fall, to make a personal exploration of the reservation, and report upon its capabilities and the best site for agency and school buildings. Ill health prevented him from doing so himself, but he sent out S. F. Sherwood, then employed as farmer for these Indians, to do so. Mr. Sherwood, after making an extended trip of 15 days over the reservation, reported very favorably upon its adaptability to the purposes for which it was set apart, as will be seen by a copy of his report forwarded by me, with the report of Mr. Simms of the council aforesaid, under date of December 15, 1872. But it will be seen that the chiefs and head-men contradict Mr. Sherwood's report in their speeches aforesaid as to the favorable character of the country embraced in said reservation, and it will be seen that Mr. Simms very much doubted it in his report forwarded with said speeches. After receiving said report of Mr. Sherwood, setting forth the splendid agricultural, pastoral, fishing, hunting, trapping, timber, water-power, &c., privileges of this new reservation, especially

of the valley of the Inespallum, "thirty miles long and from one-fourth to three miles wide;" "prairie, covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, the soil excellent, and will admit of the highest cultivation." * * * "Creek nearly through its middle;" * * * "borders of the stream densely covered with cottonwood, alder, and willow." * * * "Good water-privileges for milling purposes may be obtained anywhere above the farm of Gasper," (which is at the lower end of this 30-mile valley;) "timber is mostly pine, fir, and tamarack." * * * "Its position is central; from here the agent may travel with facility to any point of the reservation." * * * "It contains thousands of acres of agricultural land, and timber for all purposes required;" climate so mild that "stock keep in good order all winter," &c. Having no reason to doubt the truth of this report, I at once wrote to Agent Simms, directing him to proceed with as little delay as possible to the valley of the Inespellum, and select sites for a saw-mill, and for agency and school buildings. The bad weather of winter having set in before he received this order, he was unable, from that cause, to make the trip to Inespellum Valley till after the middle of April last, when he went there with several others and made a thorough examination of the valley, for the purpose of making the selections ordered, but declined to do so, and made a report to me of his examination, under date of April 30, 1873, a copy of which is herewith inclosed, by which it will be seen that he found that valley "was altogether unsuitable for the location of the agency," as the tillable land will "not exceed eight hundred acres in the whole valley," and "that there was not as much more agricultural land within eighty miles of the Inespellum Valley;" that "farming there was attended with much uncertainty, owing to its liability to summer frosts," on account of its elevation. That the San Poels, who claimed that valley and surrounding country, did not acknowledge the authority of our Government, and were disposed to be unfriendly, and that it would be unsafe to establish the agency there without military protection. That though the summer grazing for stock was good, yet there was no long grass from which to make hay for winter, during which livestock would perish, both from cold and starvation. That the greater part of the Indians for whom that reservation was set apart would be so far away from the agent as to require a journey of two or three weeks to go and return in visiting, or being visited by him. That "there is no post-office or mail-route within a hundred miles of the Nespellum Valley," &c.

These reports of Mr. Sherwood and Agent Simms were thus so very contradictory as to leave me wholly unable to decide as to the adaptability of the reservation for the purposes for which it was set apart, and made it necessary for me to travel over and examine it myself, in order to properly determine this question. So, on the 26th of July last, I started for Fort Colville, about 600 miles distant, via the Columbia River and Walla-Walla. At the latter place I learned that the Hon. J. P. C. Shanks was at Lewiston, in the edge of Idaho, 105 miles distant, visiting the Lapwai reservation, near that place; so I took stage and went over there, and got him to kindly consent to do the non-treaty Indians of the Upper Columbia in this superintendency and myself the favor to go with me to Colville to meet these Indians in council. We arrived there on the 7th of August, and having sent out runners to collect the Indians in council on the 11th, we spent the three intervening days in traveling over and seeing as much of the new reservation as possible.

We had a satisfactory council with the Indians on the 11th and 12th of August, and on the 13th General Shanks left on his return to Idaho.

If the honorable Commissioner will read the reported speeches of the same chiefs and head-men in council November 6, 1872, forwarded with the reports of Agent Simms and Sherwood by me under date of the 15th of December, 1872, as before stated, he will see the wishes and feelings of these Indians as reiterated in the council of the 11th and 12th of August last.

The all-important matter with them at both councils was their reservation. As will be seen by reference to these speeches, they insist with both logic and equity that they and their ancestors from time immemorial owned all of the country before the white man came.

That the English and American governments had run an east and west line through it, dividing it between themselves without asking them anything about it. That when the white man came to settle in their country they were glad to receive them, and to divide their agricultural and pasture lands with them, and to learn from them how to work and live like white men. But that the whites kept coming, and without their consent claiming their last agricultural lands, and crowding them back into the mountains.

That the Government of the United States at first set off a reservation for them with which they were much pleased, but afterward, without consulting them, and without their consent or knowledge, had changed it all to the west side of the Columbia among the mountains and rocks, where agricultural lands were very scarce, and they could not make a living if they moved over there.

Therefore they would not move over on to that reservation, unless forced to do so. That the San Poels, Okanagans, and Lakes, who resided on different parts of the reservation, claimed the whole of it, used most of its agricultural lands, and would need the whole of them as game continued to grow scarce; therefore they with their women and children would starve if forced over there.

In view of these facts they asked that the Government would enlarge the reservation by extending it east of the Columbia River to the Idaho line, and to include all the country in Washington Territory north of the Spokane River.

Besides the three days spent in looking at the reservation with General Shanks before mentioned, I spent from the 20th of August to the 11th of September on the reservation, every day in the saddle, except three in council with the Indians residing on it. The reservation is well watered, having on it two good-sized rivers, the Kettle and San Poel. One fork of the former heads in British Columbia, but the latter, with its many branches and two lakes, all rise and end on the reservation, while there are twelve other streams of considerable size that rise on the reservation and enter either the Columbia on the east and south, and the Okanagon on the west. And then there is rock enough on the reservation to supply the world, much of it being fine marble. The timber, too, though mostly scattering and inferior in size and limited in variety, is sufficient for all necessary purposes.

The mountain scenery is varied, grand, sublime, and magnificent; the only objection to it on the reservation is that there is entirely too much of it. The old saying that "wherever there is a mountain there must be a valley" does not hold true on this reservation, as the mountains have been tumbled about and jammed together so carelessly that the valleys have been either wholly crowded out or squeezed into cañons or narrow streaks, so that the amount of agricultural land on the reser-

vation is very small in comparison to the whole amount; probably not more than one acre to the thousand, and in widely detached, narrow streaks of from one-quarter of an acre up to eight or ten in a body. The largest amount of agricultural land in any one valley on the reservation is in that of the Inespellum. Much of the land in this valley is thin, gravelly and poor, but about 500 acres of good agricultural land could be had in one body, which by irrigation could be made to produce wheat, oats, rye, barley, potatoes, turnips, and garden vegetables. Plenty of water can be had for irrigation, and the land is favorably situated for the construction of irrigating ditches. Probably 200 or 300 acres more of equally good agricultural lands, susceptible of like cultivation, could be had in the valley in detached bodies.

The only water privilege for milling purposes near this agricultural land is on the Inespellum, three miles below where the good land begins. Here the stream falls about 20 feet in 50 yards. But good timber for sawing is scarce, and would have to be hauled from four to five miles.

The summer grazing advantages in and around the Inespellum Valley are excellent. The rich bunch-grass is everywhere abundant, but it is too short and scattering to be cut for hay. Therefore, the question of feed for live stock through the snows of winter is a matter of much importance to those who would go into the stock-raising business in this valley, or indeed anywhere on the reservation, as long grass for hay is everywhere scarce and only found in small patches along the streams, and would furnish at no one place a sufficient quantity for the subsistence of a large herd through the winter. Bunch-grass is abundant in almost every part of the reservation, even upon the highest mountains, and on their steep, rocky sides. Wherever among the rocks soil has accumulated from the action upon them of frosts, and the attrition of the elements, bunch-grass is found, so that vast herds of cattle, sheep, and horses could find rich and abundant summer grazing on the reservation. The only difficulty of making the stock business always a certain success on the reservation is the uncertainty of subsisting them through the winter.

I was told that in that portion of the valley of the Okanagon, around the south end of Lake Sooyoons, and for eight or ten miles south, and also in portions of the valley of the Columbia, around the south and east sides of the reservation, the Chinook winds prevail to such an extent through the winter as to prevent snows from interfering with the grazing of cattle and sheep, and hence that they subsist and keep fat through the winter without feed in these places. I know, from undoubted authority, that live-stock has been repeatedly so subsisted through winters at these points. But the grazing areas of these favored portions of valleys are too small to support large herds of cattle, and it is possible that the Chinook winds may lull for a few weeks some winter at these points, and let the snow and cold so accumulate as to cause cattle and sheep to perish from hunger and cold. So that if the non-treaty Indian tribes in this Territory east of the Columbia and the reservation are forced on to it to remain, I cannot see how they can obtain a subsistence with certainty, and the greater part of them would most probably be soon starved to death. It would, therefore, be both unjust and cruel to restrict these tribes to the reservation as now constituted, and I most certainly concur with them in asking the addition mentioned. This addition, leaving out what the Northern Pacific Railroad will take from it, would embrace about 3,000 square miles, and, with the exception of the Colville Valley, is mostly a conglomeration of barren, rocky

mountains. The Colville Valley is about thirty miles long and from a half to two miles wide, and though it contains much agricultural land, yet it is not all such, as much of it is too rocky, gravelly, or sandy to be fit for agricultural purposes; and then the valley is so elevated as to be liable to frosts every month in the year. But with all these disadvantages, tolerably good wheat, rye, barley, oats, and potato crops can be raised with tolerable certainty, and the grazing is very good; so that with the agricultural lands of this valley, and those to be found on the Spokane and in patches along the Columbia and on a few small streams on this addition, with the advantages for grazing, the non-treaty tribes of that region can not only maintain themselves in comfort, but some 500 or 600 Cœur d'Alenes, over in the edge of Idaho, who had a talk with General Shanks about a reservation over there, on the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad, could be willingly brought on to this reservation, thus enlarged, and there maintain themselves; also some 300 or 400 Cootneys and Pend d'Oreilles, residing mostly in Idaho, would consent to come on to this enlarged reservation and maintain themselves. Thus some 800 or 1,000 more Indians, besides those on this proposed addition, could be brought on to it, and all be made to subsist themselves. It would be a material benefit and advantage, both to the whites and Indians, to have the Cœur d'Alenes brought away from the vicinity of the Northern Pacific Railroad, where they claim a large reservation. All of the Indians on this proposed addition, together with those proposed to be brought on to it, with the exception of a portion of the Spokanes, belong to the Catholic Church and are strongly under the influence of the Catholic fathers, are more or less intermarried, and would therefore readily coalesce and harmonize. All of the Lakes, the larger portion of the Okanagons, and a portion of the San Poels residing on the reservation, are also Catholics. There are four white settlers on the reservation, who have made some improvements on their claims, that were taken before the reservation was set apart, that will have to be appraised and paid for. There are about 60 white settlers on the proposed addition, who have claims or improvements that will have to be adjusted, if this addition is made to the reservation. About one-half of these settlers are intermarried with, or living with, Indian women.

The improvements made on the reservation and proposed addition are generally small and not of much value, but if taken for the Indians would be of great value to them as beginnings in the right direction.

In consideration of these facts and reasons, I respectfully ask that the addition shall be made to this reservation, and that an Executive order be issued defining the whole reservation, including the addition, as follows: Beginning in the middle channel of the Columbia River, two miles below the mouth of the Okanagon River; thence up the middle channel of the Columbia River to the mouth of the Big Spokane River; thence up the south bank of the Spokane to a point where the northerly line of the lands granted to the Northern Pacific Railroad intersects the same; thence northeasterly with the line bounding said grant to a point where it intersects the boundary-line between the Territories of Washington and Idaho; thence north on said boundary-line to where the same intersects the boundary-line between the United States and British Columbia; thence west on said last-named boundary-line to a point two miles west of Sooyoos Lake; thence southerly with the course of the Okanagon River, but two miles therefrom, to the place of beginning.

My reasons for placing the western boundary of the reservation two miles west of the Okanagon River are as follows: The valley of the

Okanagon is the home of the Okanagon tribe of Indians. This valley, from the British boundary to the Columbia River, is about eighty miles in length and will average about one mile in width. It is bounded on each side by high, basaltic, rocky mountains. The land in the valley is generally rocky, gravelly, alkali, and valueless except for pasturage, but there are occasional patches of rich agricultural land, affording long, rich grass for pasturage and hay. If the river is continued as the boundary, white men will settle and have cattle ranges at these occasional patches on the west side of the river, which is fordable in many places during a large part of the year. The cattle would cross from both sides and give trouble.

But a greater and much more injurious source of trouble would be that whisky hells would be established at these occasional patches if left outside and adjoining the reservation, and send their streams of demoralization, misery, and death among the Indians. This valley should therefore all be for the use of the Indians, and under the control of the agent. The western boundary being two miles from the river, and back among the mountains, would include all of the desirable lands in the valley, and no settler could find a footing within twenty miles of that border. I would locate the boundary along the southern bank of the Spokane, for the purpose of enabling the Indians to keep the control of their old and valuable fisheries on that river.

If the Government is really desirous of bringing up her Indian wards from barbarism to civilization, and of passing them on from pupilage to citizenship as speedily as possible, she should not hesitate to furnish all of the necessary means and appliances to that end. No equipment for civilizing operations of any kind has ever been furnished by the Government for the reservation near Fort Colville. No agency, school, shop, or other buildings have yet been erected for the benefit of the Indians of this reservation. I therefore recommend the following appropriations, namely:

For agency buildings, including office, dwelling, stable, wood-shed, and other necessary out-buildings, fencing, water-works, or piping	\$5,000
For school buildings, including school-rooms for male and female pupils, kitchen, cooking-ranges, dining-rooms, dormitories, lecture-rooms, barn, wood-houses, stable, wash-houses, teacher's rooms, water-works, &c, with necessary bedding, school, household and kitchen furniture, school, garden, and farm fencing	10,000
Shops, including blacksmith, carpenter, wagon and plow maker, with set of tools for each	5,000
For dwelling-houses for employés, to wit: for doctor, farmer, assistant farmer, blacksmith, carpenter, wagon and plow maker, harness-maker, shoemaker, interpreter, and herder, and water to each	6,000
For farming implements, including a large lumber-wagon, one two-horse wagon, one light spring-wagon, one reaper and mower, one wheat-drill, one raker, four plows, hoes, spades, mattocks, axes, forks, shovels, &c., for school, farm, and garden	2,500
For hospital building, office, cots, bedding, kitchen and other furniture, and outfit of medicines, surgical instruments, &c.	5,000
For salary of agent	2,000
For salary of physician	2,000
For salary of superintendent of schools, farm, and garden	1,500
For salary of matron	1,000
For salary of two teachers, \$1,000 each	2,000
For salary of farmer, in coin	1,000
For salary of assistant farmer, in currency	800
For salary of blacksmith, carpenter, wagon and plow maker, harness-maker, shoemaker, and interpreter, each \$1,000	6,000
For salary of herder	600
Total	50,400

Considering the number of Indians there will be on this reservation,

if the addition is made as requested, and the Cœur d'Alènes and others mentioned are brought on to it, at least 5,000, the above sum for rigging up the appliances and machinery for their civilization is reasonable, as according to the policy proposed. (See Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1872, pp. 331 and 332.) All of the employés on reservations should be teachers, and each have capacity to impart their vocation.

The interpreter at Colville, George Hern, is a very capable and useful man. He speaks fluently some seven or eight different dialects, being those of all the tribes who annually frequent the great Kettle Falls fishing on the Columbia, most of whom belong to that agency. His services, therefore, are very valuable and indispensable to the agent, and his time is all required; I therefore ask that his pay be increased to \$1,000.

I also ask that the agent's salary be increased to \$2,000 per annum. The great cost of the necessaries of life at that place, on account of the cost of transportation, so far overland, the discount on currency, in which he is paid, and the amount of service required in attending to so many Indians, make the present salary inadequate. I also ask that there be a physician appointed for this reservation, and that his salary be fixed at \$2,000, with hospital, medicines, instruments, &c., furnished by the Government. Upon this point I respectfully refer to my letter to you written from Fort Colville, under date of the 14th of August last, which sets forth the justice and necessity for granting this request, and I ask that that letter be here inserted as a part of this report.

For particulars as to the operations at this agency, I respectfully refer to the accompanying report of Special Agent J. A. Simms; also to the report of Assistant United States Army Surgeon, A. W. Wiggins, employed by the Indian Department, at an additional salary of \$800, to medicate the Indians around that post. I also refer to the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1872; pp. 341, 342, and 343.

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