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CIVIL GOVERNMENT FOR ALASKA.

APRIL 20, 1882.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

MR. J. S. RICHARDSON, from the Committee on the Territories, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 5900.]

The Committee on the Territories, to whom was referred the bill H. R. 3754, which, by its terms, provides a Delegate and a limited form of government for what is styled in the bill as Southeastern Alaska, has had the subject under consideration and has been unable to find (though this conclusion was not reached by a unanimous vote) that a Delegate is needed to represent this Territory in Congress, and has therefore stricken this provision from the bill; but, after examining quite a number of witnesses and bringing to its aid all the sources of information within its reach as to the wants and resources of Alaska, finds that a Territorial government is needed and should be established for this Territory.

The bill referred to your committee provides for such a government for Southeastern Alaska, but your committee can see no sufficient reason for not extending such government over the whole Territory. While the want of government is perhaps more felt, and the demand for it comes up more directly from Southeastern Alaska, it is also felt and needed to a considerable extent in the rest of the Territory; and, as the expense of providing a Territorial government for the whole Territory will be but very little if any more than if it be limited to Southeastern Alaska, it is recommended that the provisions of the bill be extended so as to make it cover the whole Territory.

In the judgment of your committee, Congress should no longer delay to establish a government for this Territory. We reach this conclusion from several considerations:

First. Because it is due to the people of the Territory by our treaty-stipulation. By the treaty of the 30th of March, 1867, the United States Government agreed and stipulated with Russia that the inhabitants of Alaska, in case "they should prefer to remain in the ceded Territory, * * * shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion." (15 Stat. at L., p. 542.) Fifteen years have passed since our government entered into this solemn obligation, and yet we have utterly failed to provide any government for the protection of the property or the lives of the people in that Territory.

Secondly. Because the people of this Territory, feeling the need of some form of government for the country they live in, are asking it from Congress. For years the people of at least a portion of Alaska have been asking Congress to give them some form of government;

and they are here to-day, with their petition, memorial, and delegate or agent, asking for legislation at the hands of Congress. Since 1869 to the present time there have been introduced into Congress, Senate and House, twenty-five bills to establish some form of government for Alaska. Some of these measures were to establish a movable court, on board of a revenue cutter; others, to attach this Territory to the Territory of Washington, and give the inhabitants the use of the courts and laws of that Territory; some, to extend the Territorial land laws over Alaska; and some, to give it a Territorial government. These measures, or some of them, have been, from time to time, reported on favorably, but no final action has been taken on any of them; and to-day, after fifteen years of our possession of that Territory, we have failed to perform what we stipulated to do under our solemn treaty. The fact that so many bills have been introduced, year after year, to establish some form of government for Alaska shows that the want of such a government is felt, and sorely felt, by the people inhabiting that Territory.

Thirdly. Because the population of the Territory is sufficient to warrant the expense of establishing such a government. Your committee believes in the principle that a population of 500 should receive the protection of law and government as well as one of several thousands; but, as there may be those who think differently, the population of the Territory, as found by the last census, is here inserted:

Population of Alaska.

Divisions.	Whites.	Creoles.	Aleuts.	Innuits.							Indians.	Total.
				Kodiak.	Togiak.	Bristol Bay.	Kuskokvim.	Yukon.	Bering Sea.	Arctic.		
Yukon division	28	10						3,339	633	2,990		7,000
Interior division											2,226	2,226
Kuskokvim division	2						3,506				147	3,654
Bristol Bay division	1	90	324		1,826	2,099						4,340
Kodiak parish	23	770		1,798							15	2,606
Kenai mission	9	64		98							813	984
Belkovsky parish	36	223	410									669
Oonashka parish	28	256	1,108									1,392
Pribylor Islands	18		372									390
Saint Lawrence Island (estimated)									400			400
Nunivak Island (esti- mated)									500			500
Total west of Prince Will- iam Sound	145	1,413	2,214	1,896	1,826	2,099	3,505	3,339	1,533	2,990	3,201	24,161
Estimate of Prince Will- iam Sound				300							200	500
Southeastern Alaska	247	270									5,000	5,517
Grand total	392	1,683	2,214	2,196	1,826	2,099	3,505	3,339	1,533	2,990	8,401	30,178

The above is the population, as found by the census agent nearly two years ago. In the opinion of a number of witnesses examined before your committee, some of whom have been in Southeastern Alaska during the last summer, the population of that part of the Territory has increased considerably since that time. Several witnesses claim that the white population in that section has increased, within the last eighteen months, to 1,500; and none place the present white population there below 1,000. All concur in saying that the increase is more rapid than had

been previously known, and nearly all unite in the opinion that this increase would continue if there were any laws to control and govern the acquisition of property, and to protect it when acquired. The Rev. Sheldon Jackson, a Presbyterian missionary to that country, gives the following as the present population of South eastern Alaska: Whites, from 1,300 to 1,400; Russians, 300; Indians, 6,000.

According to Dr. Jackson, and he is sustained by nearly all the witnesses, the whites in Southeastern Alaska are chiefly from among our own people. The Russians are those "inhabitants of the ceded Territory," who have "preferred to remain in the ceded Territory," and whom we stipulated to "maintain and protect in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion." The 6,000 Indians of this section are a different class from the nomadic tribes of Alaska. They dwell in permanent houses and in villages; they dress much as Europeans; they are an industrious people, and are employed as cooks, deck-hands, engineers, and pilots; also as miners. When the rivers are low they are the common carriers of the country, and are faithful as such, transmitting in their canoes, with care and certainty, whatever is intrusted to them. They excel in carving in wood, metal, and stone. They rapidly yield to government, are easily taught, and have embraced readily the teachings of the missionaries among them.

Fourthly. Because the trade and resources of the Territory needing protection and development are sufficient to warrant the expense.

It is not claimed for Alaska that it is, or can ever become, an agricultural country. Rugged, mountainous, and to a certain extent barren, with a soil and climate unsuited to farming operations, it holds out no promise of success to the agriculturist. A reasonable variety of vegetables and some fruits and berries are all that can be expected from its soil and climate. Upon this point the last census report holds the following language:

We now pass to an interesting and fruitful bone of contention, that is the agricultural and pastoral resources of Alaska. So much has been said upon this topic, of frantic declamation on one hand, and indignant remonstrances on the other, that we shall be very cautious in our presentation of what we believe and know to be the fact.

In the first place, let us preface our remarks with this statement: That the cereal crops cannot be grown in Alaska. It has been settled by numberless patient and repeated tests in the most favorable localities. Also, that the fruit trees, and the small fruits of our gardens here as we grow them and recognize them (unless it be the strawberry and the cranberry), cannot be cultivated successfully up there. But these people do have in Alaska quite an abundance of indigenous hardy shrub fruits, such as we have specified in our chapter upon the settlements. The statement made by certain high authority that wild apples are indigenous and perfect their fruit at Sitka, is a mere figure of speech; but the other half of the assertion that wild roses grow there is true; for that matter the wild rose blossoms with a rosy flush and the suggestion of perennial flowering up the Yukon, while the flowers, the violets, the gaily colored pea, and indeed the whole long list covering nearly 200 species of lovely blossoming annuals and perennials are found everywhere on the little prairie-like forest, on the bare hills of the Aleutian Islands, sweeping on and over the great moor and tundra of Alaska.

But when we take up the subject of the vegetable garden, we find that there are localities in Alaska where for the last eighty years, or even more than that, up to the present date they have and they do plant and raise good potatoes, though we should say perhaps that this raising of these tubers is not a certain success year after year, except at one or two points where it has been satisfactorily demonstrated within the Alexander Archipelago, namely, at the mouth of the Stakhine River, at Fort Wrangell, and at Prince of Wales Island. The potato grounds of Alaska, however, can with care and due diligence and common sense combined be made to furnish in the Alexander Archipelago, in Cook's Inlet, at Kadiak Island and islets contiguous, and at Bristol Bay, a positive source of food supply to the inhabitants. It is not generally known that on Afognak Island, according to the best of our personal knowledge, there are nearly 100 acres of land dug up in patches here and there which are planted by the inhabitants, and from which they gather an annual harvest of

potatoes and turnips. They have no fields spread out, squared up, and plowed anywhere in Alaska. The cultivation as it is conducted to-day, is directed in this manner: The little openings in the forest or the cleared sides of a gently sloping declivity in sheltered situations are taken up by the people who turn out, with rude spades of their own manufacture, principally, for the purpose of subjugating and overturning the sod. Many of the gardens, noticeably those at the Kadiak village itself, are close by the settlement, while others are at some distance.

The potato crop at Kadiak this year was a total failure; it will happen so at intervals of from four to six years, when it occurs in this way: The winter preceding the planting has been an unusually cold and protracted one, and the short season, at the best, of summer is cut off by unwonted early frosts during September and the latter part of August. The usual growing season, however, opens early in June—from the 1st to the 10th; the potatoes are planted in May, coming up and growing freely until October, when they are harvested. This growth of potatoes, fairly established and well defined, presents the only firm and tangible evidence that we have of agricultural capacity within the limits of Alaska. The turnip grows and flourishes wherever the potato succeeds.

But its other resources are very considerable.

Its fisheries, in the opinion of all the witnesses, are almost inexhaustible, and in itself this industry is capable of constituting a business so vast and profitable as to make Alaska the most valuable and wealth-producing Territory owned by the United States. These may be summarized as follows:

The *whale fishery* has a capital now invested in it of at least \$250,000, and doing a business of several million dollars annually.

The *cod fishery* has a capital also of about a quarter of a million dollars invested, and doing a business of about a million dollars annually.

The *dog-fish*, the *salmon*, the *mackerel*, the *halibut*, the *herring*—these all, in their season, are almost inexhaustible, and several of them have now quite a considerable amount of capital invested in them, and it is stated by several of the witnesses that the business would be enlarged and extended if the protection of law and government was thrown around the Territory.

The *fur-seal trade*, as is generally known, is considerable and very profitable. From it the government now derives an annual revenue of over \$300,000.

The sea-otter trade and the land-fur trade, derived from the furs of the fox, the land-otter, the bear, the beaver, and the reindeer are all very considerable, and could be made quite profitable.

The *timber resources* of Alaska, though considerable, cannot be expected to be brought prominently into the markets of the world while the immense forests of Oregon, Washington Territory, and Southern British Columbia stand ready to compete with it, but still this supply is there, and is important enough to receive this mention in enumerating the resources of the Territory.

There are other resources in the Territory which should be referred to in this connection. The gold, silver, coal, and iron mines, or rather ores. The census report is referred to for exact data on these points. In reference to the gold mines the last census report says:

In regard to the reputed findings of large paying gold mines and other precious minerals, we can only say that as far as is known to-day there is nothing of the kind in Western Alaska; at least, there is nothing located and worked as such, though the prospecting or searching is as active as it has been since the transfer, and is likely to continue. The surface of the country in Southern Alaska being so mountainous concealed by the timber cloak everywhere covering it, is, of course, a slow and exceedingly difficult undertaking to penetrate any distance back, up, and among the mountain valleys in search of mineral. The color of gold can be washed out of the sands of every little stream emptying into the ocean on the northwest coast, and in many places it can be found by searching in the surf-beaten beaches of the sea-coast itself. But the question immediately arises with the miner, "Will it pay?" and by that he means "Will it yield me \$4 to \$10 per day if I work it?" Less return for his labor does not satisfy him, nor will it bring others to the places.

The gold bearing belt of the Rock Mountain divide, so familiar to us as it crops out all through our States and Territories, and which we leave at Boise City, in Idaho, for instance, or Salmon Diggings above, reaches undoubtedly up and on, as rich at that point in the far north and trending to the Arctic Sea itself as it is where we now note it and work it with so much success. But it must be borne in mind that with every degree of northern latitude as we ascend we cut off working-days, as the icy grasp of frost checks the flow of water and shuts down the mills, so that when this gold-bearing belt crosses into our Alaskan boundary away back, and concealed from the sea by the towering summits of the Coast Range, we find it so far north as to be practically barred out from our miners unless they shall find the free gold and a rich quartz in unwonted abundance.

But several witnesses examined before your committee assert that in Southeastern Alaska there are a number of gold mines recently discovered which have yielded \$150,000 within the first year of their discovery, and that there are no less than six new companies organized and incorporated in different portions of the country for carrying on this business in this section of Alaska.

The Presbyterian Board of Home Missions have established in Southeastern Alaska a number of churches and schools, and have invested a considerable amount of money in the erection of houses and stations. This board expends about \$15,000 annually for these purposes in this section. The Roman Catholic Church has also established a mission there which is kept up at considerable expense.

All these interests, in the opinion of witnesses, need the control and protection of law, and are languishing for the want of it.

Iron ore.—Mr. Caleb T. Fay, of San Francisco, Cal., one of the witnesses examined before your committee, speaking of the iron ore found in Alaska, says it is of a high grade of magnetic oxide, free from sulphur and phosphates, and equal in quality to the best Swedish and Russian ore, and is found in very large quantities in both Western and Eastern Alaska.

And fifthly. Because some form of government is absolutely needed to afford protection to life and property within the Territory. We cannot expect our people to go there and live and develop the country until we give them some law by which they can acquire and hold property, and which will protect them in their lives and liberty.

In view of the necessity for some authorized form of legal government to control and regulate these people and their various and valuable interests, your committee does not hesitate to recommend the establishment of some government for Alaska. We find that it is due to these people by our treaty stipulations, and that it is to the interest of the government to do this, in view of the considerable business and material interests we own in the Territory.

In considering what should be done, and how far we should go, your committee has thought it best to establish for the present as inexpensive a government as possible, and to that end recommend the passage of the bill herewith reported. This bill is in all essential features the House bill 3754, with the provision for a Delegate stricken out, and its other provisions made to extend to the whole Territory of Alaska.

In the judgment of your committee the bill proposed for your adoption will meet all the present wants of the Territory and those that are likely to arise for some years to come. The entire annual expenses of the government under this bill will not exceed \$12,000. To do more your committee would not feel warranted in recommending, and to do less would be a failure on the part of Congress to discharge our duty to the people of Alaska, as to perform our solemn treaty stipulations.