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Report of the Governor of Washington Territory, 1878

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REPORT
OF THE
GOVERNOR OF WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

TERRITORY OF WASHINGTON,
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
Olympia, October 14, 1878.

SIR: In reply to your communication of August 9 last, requesting me to submit a statement showing the present condition of this Territory, &c., I have the honor to submit the following:

The Territory of Washington is divided by the Cascade range of mountains into two nearly equal divisions, which are popularly known as Eastern and Western Washington, differing widely in climate, soil, and, to some extent, in productions.

WESTERN WASHINGTON.

A very large portion of Western Washington is covered with dense forests of fir trees of immense height and girth. The average height of these trees is more than two hundred feet, in many cases exceeding three hundred, with diameters up to twelve feet.

Tested by an experience of more than twenty years, fir timber has been found to be a material almost unsurpassed for ship-building. Ships of more than a thousand tons have been built in this Territory *exclusively of fir timber and lumber*, which rank as A No. 1 with underwriters at San Francisco and Liverpool.

Spars from Puget Sound have for many years, in large quantities, been shipped direct to England, France, and elsewhere on the continent of Europe.

It has been estimated that the cost of building ships here is 35 per cent. less than the cost at Bath, Me., or at any other Atlantic ship-yard. In the near future, ship-building on Puget Sound will constitute one of the most important branches of productive industry in the Territory.

The attention of the government is respectfully directed to this subject, and to the advisability of establishing a navy-yard at some point on Puget Sound.

RESOURCES.

The principal resources of Western Washington are coal and lumber. Coal has been found in nearly every county. In fact, the entire Puget Sound Basin, extending over an area of more than 20,000 square miles, is supposed to be a vast coal-field. Mines are now in operation in the counties of Whatcom, King, Pierce, and Thurston. The daily production is about six hundred tons, the larger portion of which is exported to San Francisco.

The lumber interest at present takes precedence above all others. There are twelve large saw-mills upon Puget Sound, each having the capacity to manufacture daily from fifty thousand to two hundred thousand feet of lumber. The present annual production is about two hundred

and fifty million feet. More than two hundred million feet are exported to San Francisco, South America, the Sandwich Islands, and to other points.

There are also exported from Puget Sound, barley, oats, potatoes, wool, hops, hoop-poles, hides, canned and barreled salmon, oysters, and many other articles. The aggregate annual value of exportations from Western Washington is estimated at over five million dollars.

Four-fifths of Western Washington has a gravelly soil unfit for cultivation. This is especially the case where the fir tree grows exclusively. The other fifth is made up of rich alluvial land in the valleys of the rivers and smaller streams, of prairies and reclaimed tide-marsh land. On these lands, all the cereals except corn, and all the fruits and vegetables grown in the Northern States are raised, of a quality and in quantity and size only known on the Pacific coast.

While Western Washington as a whole cannot be classed as agricultural, yet it has an area of more than five thousand square miles of excellent farming land, which will be ultimately brought under cultivation, and be capable of maintaining a large population.

PUGET SOUND.

The great feature of Western Washington is Puget Sound. It extends from the British line on the north and from the Straits of Juan de Fuca on the west to Olympia in the interior, and has a coast line of 1,594 miles. It can be navigated with safety at all seasons of the year by the largest ocean-steamers or the smallest sail-boat. Severe storms on its waters are unknown, and there is not a bar, shoal, rock, or other obstruction to navigation from the Pacific Ocean to Olympia, a distance of more than 200 miles. It is made up of a continuous succession of bays, inlets, and harbors, and is so dotted with islands that it is impossible to get more than two or three miles from land at any point on its waters. It is, in short, one vast, noble harbor, destined to be the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and on its completion, being on the line of the shortest route between the Atlantic States and Japan and China, it will be the *entrepôt* of a large portion of the commerce of the Occident and the Orient.

CLIMATE.

Strictly speaking, there are only two seasons in Western Washington, winter and summer. The winter or wet season commences about the first of October and ends about the first of April. During this period there will be many weeks of pleasant weather. The average annual rain-fall in the Puget Sound Basin is about fifty inches. It will appear almost incredible that in this northern latitude, between 46° and 49°, ice and snow are seldom seen. The average temperature during the winter months is 39°, and during the summer 63°, a mean difference of only 24°. The maximum temperature for a few days in summer will be about 90°, but the nights are always cool and refreshing. The summer months are exceedingly pleasant, and the climate during this period compares favorably with that of Southern Italy. One singular and as yet unexplained climatic feature is, that thunder and lightning are of very rare occurrence.

EASTERN WASHINGTON.

The vast rolling prairies of Eastern Washington make it one of the best grazing and wheat-growing regions on the continent. There is little

timber, except on the margins of the rivers and smaller streams. It has an area of wheat-land capable of producing, with ordinary culture, more than one hundred million bushels annually. A failure of crops *never occurs*.

The present season the yield is regarded as not an average, and it will be twenty-five bushels per acre. Forty to sixty bushels are not unusual. The wheat product of this region the past season will be about one million five hundred thousand bushels. One million bushels will be transported down the Columbia River to Portland, and from thence to Europe, and, as heretofore, will probably be claimed as a product of the State of Oregon. All the fruits, except tropical, and all vegetables, of superior quality, are grown in great abundance.

The climate and soil are particularly adapted to the production of peaches and grapes, large quantities of which are raised of unsurpassed excellence and flavor. A very nutritious indigenous grass, commonly known as "bunch-grass," *Festuca pratensis*, grows spontaneously over many thousand square miles, affording excellent range for stock. It is self-curative and retains its nutritious qualities when allowed to remain on the ground uncut. The raising of stock is extensively prosecuted. A market is found on Puget Sound and in British Columbia, and large numbers are annually driven to the Union Pacific Railroad and thence transported to Chicago.

It can safely be asserted that Eastern Washington will, in a few years, rival California in the production of all the cereals, both as regards aggregate quantity raised and quality, and will far surpass that or any other State in the average yield per acre. There is, however, at present, one serious drawback: The only outlet for the products of this region is down the Columbia River to Portland. There are two obstructions to navigation in this river, the Cascades and the Dalles. These are overcome, to a certain extent, by railroads constructed around them; but as the entire transportation on the river is now, and has been for years, controlled by one company, freights are necessarily very high.

At the present time the price of wheat in Eastern Washington is from thirty-five to fifty cents per bushel, and at Portland, Oreg., a distance of about two hundred miles, it is ninety cents; the cost of transportation being one hundred per cent. for this short distance. When the work of constructing canals at the Cascades and the Dalles, now being prosecuted by the general government, is completed, there will be an uninterrupted steam-boat navigation from the wheat growing regions of Eastern Washington and Oregon, and Western Idaho, to the Pacific Ocean. There is no work of internal improvement now carried on by the government which is of more importance than these canals. Another outlet can be furnished by the construction of the branch line of the Northern Pacific Railroad from Eastern Washington across the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound. The advantages of this road to the whole Territory are almost incalculable. It would afford ample facilities for the mutual interchange of the various dissimilar productions of the two sections. The coal and lumber of Puget Sound would be exchanged for the wheat and other products of Eastern Washington, and the surplus grain production of the latter could be transported to the western terminus of the road, and thence shipped to any part of the world.

CLIMATE.

The average temperature in Eastern Washington is as follows: Spring, 52°; summer, 73°; autumn, 53°; winter, 34°. The average annual rain-fall is about twenty inches.

TERRITORIAL UNIVERSITY.

This institution is located at Seattle. It was erected from the proceeds of the sale of university lands donated by the general government to the Territory. It is in a very prosperous condition. It is mainly supported by appropriations from the Territorial treasury, and managed by a board of regents.

INSANE ASYLUM.

An asylum for the insane and idiotic is located at Steilacoom. It is maintained at the expense of the Territory. The present number of inmates is seventy-six. Visitors from abroad speak in the highest terms of the management of the institution. It is under the control of a board of three trustees, appointed by the Governor.

PENITENTIARY.

The Territory has no penitentiary building. Criminals convicted of felonies have heretofore been confined in the county jails of the Territory. The last legislative assembly provided for the keeping of all prisoners by the sheriff of Thurston County, by contract. Suitable buildings have been erected by the contractor at Seatco, where all Territorial prisoners are now confined. The wisdom of this system has been questioned, but it is too early to determine whether the results will be favorable or not. The United States has a fine penitentiary on McNeil's Island. It is used exclusively for the confinement of prisoners guilty of offenses against the laws of the United States.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The legislative assembly meets biennially, and is composed of a council consisting of nine members, and a house of representatives consisting of thirty members. The sessions begin on the first Monday of October. Elections for members of the legislative assembly, Delegate to Congress, and other officers occur on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November, biennially.

SUFFRAGE.

All citizens of the United States, all persons who have declared their intention to become citizens six months preceding any election, and all half-breed Indians who pay a property tax, are legal voters. At all elections for school officers, women who pay a property tax are legal voters, and are eligible to any office under the school system of the Territory.

POPULATION.

Chehalis County	720
Clarke County	4,288
Clallam County	470
Columbia County	5,820
Cowlitz County*	1,893
Island County*	616
Jefferson County	1,677
Kitsap County	1,548
King County	5,443
Klikitat County	1,999
Lewis County	1,806
Mason County	520
Pacific County	1,411

* Estimated from the census of 1877.

Pierce County	2,801
San Juan County	700
Skamania County*	274
Snohomish County	1,042
Stevens County*	1,360
Thurston County	2,971
Wahkiakum County	698
Walla Walla County	5,701
Whatcom County	2,155
Whitman County	3,709
Yakima County	1,711

ASSESSABLE PROPERTY.

The aggregate value of real and personal property in the Territory the past year, according to the assessment returns, is \$18,930,964.96. The value of property in each county is as follows:

Counties.	Personal property.	Real property.	Total.
Chehalis	\$63,319 00	\$230,599 00	\$293,918 00
Clallam	76,893 00	55,469 00	132,362 00
Clarke	340,281 00	528,892 00	869,173 00
Columbia	1,014,782 00	506,652 00	1,521,434 00
Cowlitz	185,080 00	565,120 00	750,200 00
Island	98,461 00	263,109 00	361,570 00
Jefferson	192,729 00	319,296 00	512,025 00
King	702,517 00	1,540,287 00	2,242,804 00
Kitsap	535,593 00	454,187 46	989,780 46
Klilkitat	434,557 00	135,756 00	570,313 00
Lewis	190,730 00	478,867 00	668,897 00
Mason	57,058 00	307,080 00	364,138 00
Pacific	248,459 00	113,921 00	362,380 00
Pierce	817,530 00	919,267 00	1,736,797 00
San Juan	133,585 00	20,983 00	154,268 00
Skamania			117,519 00
Snohomish	122,637 00	259,582 00	382,219 00
Stevens	330,301 00	11,351 00	341,652 00
Thurston	704,762 00	948,086 00	1,652,848 00
Wahkiakum	102,092 00	32,336 50	144,428 50
Whatcom	226,167 00	386,035 00	612,202 00
Whitman	749,412 00	69,730 00	819,142 00
Walla Walla	1,504,400 00	1,206,610 00	2,711,010 00
Yakima	470,032 00	119,553 00	589,585 00
Total			18,930,964 96

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

Within the past two years public opinion in this Territory has radically changed on the Indian question. There is now a very strong feeling against the reservation system. This, to a great extent, has been created by the Indian outbreak in Idaho last year and in Oregon during the present year. There is also a feeling of insecurity in the minds of settlers, especially in Eastern Washington. They are surrounded by disaffected and discontented Indians, who may at any moment and with little warning commence hostilities. Many of these Indians were in full sympathy with the hostiles in Oregon during the recent outbreak in that State, and some of them actually joined the Bannocks. The opinion very generally prevails that, had the hostiles been able to cross to the north side of the Columbia River, they would have been joined by at least five hundred Indians in Eastern Washington. The presence of gunboats on the Columbia River probably prevented the hostiles from crossing.

At a recent conference between General Howard and a part of these Indians, they were promised a new reservation in this Territory; on both

* Estimated from census of 1877.

sides of the Columbia River. The citizens of this Territory are almost unanimously opposed to this. They regard the reservation policy not only a failure but a constant menace to them. While the Indians remain upon the reservations their tribal relations are kept up; they talk over their grievances, real or imaginary; they send emissaries to other reservations to excite feelings of hostility to the whites, and the result for several years has been an annual Indian war, in which innocent men, women, and children have been massacred, and the government put to millions of dollars of expense.

The remedy that is desired is, to abolish all Indian reservations, break up tribal relations, hold all Indians responsible under the laws for their acts, permit them to avail themselves of homestead and pre-emption rights, and, in short, treat them as citizens of the United States, which this policy would clearly make them under the first section of the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This policy was unanimously recommended by both the Republican and Democratic Territorial conventions which assembled in this Territory the present year. It is possible that this policy might not be feasible in other Territories. Reference is only made to this Territory, where it might be tried as an experiment at least. In the event that it is not deemed advisable to pursue this policy, then the transfer of all the Indians in Eastern Washington to the Colville Agency and those of Western Washington to the Neeah Bay Agency would be far more satisfactory to our people than the present system, provided that an adequate military force were stationed at each reservation to keep the Indians under subjection. These reservations could be easily enlarged so as to afford ample facilities for hunting, fishing, grazing, and agricultural pursuits; they are isolated, one being in the northeastern and the other in the extreme northwestern part of the Territory, and from their peculiar geographical position years must elapse before they will be encroached upon by settlers.

The interest of the Indians in the other reservations could be appraised by the government; the amount thus found due could be invested in United States 4 per cent. bonds, the interest from which could be paid to the Indians on the two reservations, for the support of schools or other beneficial objects. This policy would open to settlement more than one million acres of fine grazing and agricultural land now included in reservations. These reservations are to-day entirely surrounded by settlers, many of whom are encroaching with their stock upon the grazing lands on the reservations, thus engendering quarrels and bitter feelings between the settlers and the Indians.

The opinion very generally prevails that there will be an Indian war in Eastern Washington during the coming summer if matters are allowed to remain as they now are. The following article published in the Daily Oregonian of yesterday is indicative of the feeling of settlers near the Simcoe Reservation:

[Extract from The Daily Oregonian of October 13, 1878.]

INDIANS INSOLENT.

An attempted outrage—Indians in the Kittitas country preparing for war.

A gentleman from the Kittitas country reports that serious trouble is anticipated with the Indians, who are daily becoming more insolent and demonstrative. Recently a buck belonging to Moses's gang attempted an outrage on a white woman, but her screams brought several men, who were at work within hearing distance, to the rescue, and the Indian fled. Just previous to his (our informant's) departure the Indian was to covered in the same vicinity and arrested by a band of citizens. He again proved disbe a desperate villain, and at first resolved upon "standing off" the entire party.

The settlers, concluding that here was their opportunity of meting out to the wretch the punishment which he so justly deserved, resolved upon sending him off to the happy hunting-grounds on short notice. So they made a grand charge on him with the butts of their rifles, and one settler dealt so heavy a blow as to break off the stock of his gun. However, the Indian dodged about and finally got away under cover of the darkness, which was now coming on, without sustaining any other injuries—it has since been ascertained from his comrades on the reservation—than a broken jaw and several severe bruises about the head. The Indians are all greatly incensed over this procedure and declare they will have revenge. The Indians are preparing, it is generally believed, for an attack upon the white settlers just as soon as opportunity shall present itself. The ugly breach between them and the settlers is being widened every day, our informant states, and both parties are arming themselves for an outbreak. Numerous complaints are made against Seattle and other merchants on the sound, whom the settlers claim are supplying the Indians with all the arms and ammunition they want. Recently, our informant states, an Indian returned, via the Snoqualmie Pass, from this section, with three kegs of powder on one pack-animal. The restless feeling engendered thus among the settlers by these well-grounded apprehensions of Indian troubles, coupled with the general excitement over the outrageous project of establishing an “Indian Botany Bay” in the very heart of their country for the accommodation of the savage hordes of the Columbia, has well-nigh driven them to desperation. They are, for the most part, beginning to feel just as if they would sooner fight than not, and are making no effort to conciliate the red man.

It is deemed absolutely necessary for the preservation of peace that a military force should be stationed in the Yakima country at the earliest practicable moment. General Howard, to some extent, concurs in this view, but will not order a force there until next spring, when it may be too late.

The attention of the government is earnestly directed to this whole subject.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. P. FERRY,

Governor of the Territory of Washington.

Hon. CARL SCHURZ,

Secretary of Interior, Washington, D. C.