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Tsimpsheean Indians of British Columbia and Alaska

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

APRIL 10, 1894.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

Mr. MANDERSON presented the following

STATEMENT WITH REGARD TO MR. DUNCAN'S WORK AMONG
THE TSIMPSHEEAN INDIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND
ALASKA.

On the 1st of October, 1857, Mr. William Duncan, of England, arrived at Fort Simpson, British Columbia, to open a mission among the Tsimp-sheean. He found by actual count that they numbered 2,300. They were barbarians of a low type, and their history little less than a chapter of crime and misery.

On the 28th of June, 1858, he had so far acquired a knowledge of the language that he was able to open his first school in the house of a chief, with an attendance of 26 children and 15 adults.

In April, 1860, he made preaching tours to the various villages situated on the rivers which empty into the ocean near Fort Simpson.

Having secured a few followers among the natives, he proposed to them that they remove from the native village, where they were more or less under the influence of their heathen neighbors, and establish a new village that should be under strict regulations. The removal was accomplished on the 27th of May, 1860, the people arriving at their new location, 16 miles south of Fort Simpson, the next day at 2 o'clock. There were 50 men, women, and children that composed this first colony. On the 6th of June 290 additional natives joined them. Everyone desiring to settle in the new village was required to subscribe to the following agreement:

1. To give up sorcery.
2. To cease calling in sorcerers when sick.
3. To cease gambling.
4. To cease giving away their property for display.
5. To cease painting their faces.
6. To cease drinking intoxicating liquors.
7. To observe the Sabbath.
8. To attend religious instruction.
9. To send their children to school.
10. To be cleanly.
11. To be industrious.
12. To be peaceful.
13. To be liberal and honest in trade.
14. To build neat houses.
15. To pay the village tax.

The new village, notwithstanding the above stringent regulations, grew very rapidly until it had a population of 1,000 natives. They had erected for themselves good, comfortable frame houses, had a steam sawmill, a salmon-canning establishment, and a village store, owned

largely by native shareholders. A number of them had learned the carpentry trade, others furniture-making, and still others boat-building and boot and shoe making, and the various industries found in villages.

Their prosperity continued until about 1880, when the news of the remarkable success of the mission had circulated wherever the English language was known. This had attracted a great deal of attention to the mission, so much so that the Church of England, whose missionary society had originally sent Mr. Duncan to the field, thought that the importance of the mission demanded a bishop, and one was selected, ordained, and sent. The coming of the bishop to the station immediately started rivalries. If the bishop was to be at the head of the mission Mr. Duncan, who had given his life to the work and had created the mission, would have to take a second place, which he could not very well afford to do. On the other hand, the bishop could not afford to allow Mr. Duncan to rule and he himself take a second place.

In the meantime the attention of the Canadian Pacific Railway authorities had been attracted to the increasing importance of northern British Columbia and Alaska, and they had sent surveyors for a preliminary survey with regard to running a railroad to the coast at that point.

When the people found that the railroad surveyors were driving stakes over the lands that they and their fathers had occupied for generations they protested. Finding that their protests were of no avail they sent a committee to Ottawa to lay their grievances before the Canadian Parliament. Securing no redress there, the committee continued their journey to London, but were prevented from having a personal interview with the Queen, and returned home very much discouraged. Upon agitating the question of their personal rights they found that they had no right whatever to the land that they had always supposed to be their own, and that there was no future for their children under the regulations provided by the Parliament of British Columbia. This, in connection with the land difficulties and the difficulties of the church combined, made them very much dissatisfied; and, finally, in the winter of 1886-'87, they sent their leader, Mr. Duncan, to Washington to confer with the President, Secretary of the Interior, and leading officials of our Government, the result of which was that in the spring of 1887 they concluded to leave British Columbia and move in a body to the contiguous territory of Alaska in the United States.

They supposed, of course, that they would be allowed to take down the houses which they owned and transport their windows, doors, lumber, etc., over to their new home, which was about 60 miles north of the old place. They were, however, disappointed in this, as an official of the British Columbia Government forbade their taking anything. And this people, that had slowly come up from barbarism to civilization, were compelled to go out empty handed, leaving behind them all the property which they had accumulated during those nearly thirty years that they had been emerging from barbarism to civilization.

On the 7th of August Mr. Duncan returned from Washington and landed at Port Chester, on Annette Island, the place that had been selected for their new home. It was a great gala day for the people. A United States flag, donated to them by the ladies of Philadelphia in Independence Hall, was flung to the breeze with cheers and firing of guns. Addresses were made by Mr. Duncan and several tourists who were with him on the steamer. A prayer for God's blessing followed, and the public exercises were closed by the people singing with great vigor the doxology, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

The timber was cleared off a number of acres for a village site, which was duly surveyed and plotted and allotted to the inhabitants. A steam sawmill and a large store building were erected. Friends in Brooklyn, New York, and other cities sent several thousand dollars for public improvements. Since then a large schoolhouse, church, and salmon cannery have been erected.

In "An act to repeal timber-culture laws, and for other purposes," approved March 3, 1891, Congress set apart Annette Island as a reservation for the use of this colony and such other Alaskan natives as might join them.

Since their settlement in Alaska they have been knocking at the door of the district court at Sitka for naturalization, but up to the present time the court has held that there was no way under the statutes of the United States by which they could be naturalized.

A copy of the letter of Judge Bugbee is herein inclosed.

In the meantime some of their young men who had been educated at Sitka have established a steam sawmill on an island to the north of Annette, and are asking how they can secure a title to the land upon which their property is situated, just as American citizens do. I inclose a copy of their letter.

Hoping that you may have time to examine the statutes and see if there is any provision for their naturalization, and if there is no such provision that you will feel disposed to introduce a bill into Congress for their naturalization, I am,

Very respectfully, yours,

SHELDON JACKSON,
U. S. General Agent of Education for Alaska.

Hon. CHAS. F. MANDERSON,
U. S. Senate.

CHAMBERS OF JUDGE OF U. S. DISTRICT COURT,
Sitka, Alaska, September 29, 1890.

MY DEAR SIR: I have given much consideration to your very interesting letter of the 8th instant, in which you request me to make an official visit during the autumn or winter months, when your people are at home, for the purpose of receiving their declarations of intentions to become citizens of the United States.

I have no doubt whatever that admission to citizenship would be a great boon to them, and that they would make good, useful, and law-abiding citizens. I feel, too, that they have strong claims to share the rights to which, under the naturalization laws, other British subjects are entitled. But the law of the United States relating to naturalization expressly declares that its provisions "shall apply to aliens being white persons" (Rev. Stat. U. S., sec. 2, 169), and this has been construed by such eminent jurists as Judge Lorenzo Sawyer, *In re Ah Tup* (5 Sawy., 155), and Judge Matthew P. Deady, *In re Camille*, and Indian half-breed (6 Sawy., 541), as limiting the application of the law to persons of the Caucasian race.

I can see no relief for your people except through the action of Congress.

Even if I felt at liberty to receive their declarations of intention in the hope that future legislation might ripen such action to full citizenship, it would neither be just to them nor fair on my part to hold out to them a hope which may never be realized, and the realization of which I am powerless to forward.

I feel that it is a great pity that such good people as yours, anxious to swear allegiance and prove their loyalty to the United States, with undoubted competency to perform all the duties of citizens, should, through no act, omission, or want on their part, be denied the rights, privileges, and immunities that the Government so freely extends to paler but less deserving men; but beyond my heartfelt sympathy and good wishes for you and them, which at all times I gladly express, I am helpless to act in their behalf.

I regret that I shall not be able to visit your people this autumn or coming winter in a judicial capacity, although I believe, with you, that a session of court would be

desirable then and might prove salutary in the interests of peace and good order to the settlements surrounding your own; but there does not seem at present to be such necessity as would justify burdening the Government with the expense. Nevertheless I hope that I may before long be able to visit your interesting community and to pay my respects to you in person.

Very sincerely yours,

JOHN S. BUGBEE,
U. S. District Judge, District of Alaska.

Rev. WILLIAM DUNCAN,
Metlakahla, Alaska.

[Hamilton, Simpson & Co., manufacturers and dealers in spruce, red and yellow cedar lumber.]

PORT GRAVINA, ALASKA, *February 20, 1894.*

DEAR SIR: We are pleased to let you know what we want, for we know that you are doing good to the natives of Alaska; that you help those teaching us in English, and to obey God.

We, the people of Metlakahtla, starting a business as we were taught and choose to do what God wants, but we refused to follow the deeds of our forefathers, wanting ourselves as free men of the Union.

We have started a saw mill on this Gravina Island, Alaska, and have settled all the machinery by our native hands, and running it correctly.

By the time we finished the mill our town of Metlakahtla was partly burnt down, so we earnestly sawed all the lumber, waiting not till they will pay us. So this seems that heaven let us do this so we gradually increase all the machinery used, and in the past year we spent \$10,000 for all, still there are more tools we need. We wanted to use a \$12,000 worth of a mill.

Therefore, this we want you to help us to let us borrow from the Government of \$1,000 or \$2,000, for to get some more tools and machineries for our mill, and to trust us to pay back after awhile, for we don't perfectly know if the bank will trust us and lend us the said amount, and we expect the Government will let it, for we are trying to do what we can and know on this American country.

Now in regard to school, we have seen W. Duncan about it, and he told that the money sent by the Government is so few that he added his own money in paying the teachers at Metlakahtla.

So this we want that the Government may help us about school, that our children here are over 20 in number at our mill. So we want to be helped by the Government for a few money and we will add our own money to pay the teacher, for some of our Metlakahtla students can do as teacher, not to be paid so dearly as white teacher for one year, to use both our money for we know you are anxious to let us learn English and we are eagerly study as whites.

In regard to the portion of land whereon we built a mill, we want you to explain us what power we should have to hold this spot, for many of the bad whites who are citizens, said can easily seize our mill for we start this business as whites do so we want to firm and defend our business. For we left where we born for a freedom. Though it is very hard to us about that, but it is harder to be vexed, so we crept under the Union flag where we heard it's all free, so we have seen that it's coming to be good to us, for the Americans are kinder any others. Awaiting your answer we'll be pleased to hear from you and try and consider our wanting and oblige.

Very sincerely yours,

HAMILTON, SIMPSON & Co.,
Per HALDANE.

Dr. SHELDON JACKSON,
Washington, D. C.