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Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, communicating, in answer to a Senate resolution of January 15, 1878, a copy of the report of Indian Inspector E. C. Watkins, in relation to the consolidation of Indian agencies in the Colville country.

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S. Exec. Doc. No. 20, 45th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1878)

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L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

COMMUNICATING,

In answer to a Senate resolution of January 15, 1878, a copy of the report of Indian Inspector E. C. Watkins, in relation to the consolidation of Indian agencies in the Colville country.

JANUARY 24, 1878.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 23, 1878.

SIR: In compliance with the terms of a resolution of the Senate, adopted January 15, 1878, I transmit herewith a copy of the report of Indian Inspector E. C. Watkins, dated November 26, 1877, relative to the establishment of a large Indian reservation or territory in the Colville country, for the use and occupation of a portion or all reservation Indians now on the various reservations in the State of Oregon and in the Territory of Washington.

I inclose also a copy of a letter addressed to me by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on the 22d instant, forwarding a copy of said report, and recommending the adoption, in part, of the plan of the inspector.

I am of opinion that the proposed consolidation of agencies will be of advantage both to the government and to the Indians, and I respectfully suggest such appropriate legislation by Congress as will enable the department to carry it into effect.

I have the honor to be, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

C. SCHURZ,

Secretary of the Interior.

The VICE-PRESIDENT.

OFFICE QUINAIELT INDIAN AGENCY,
Washington Territory, November 14, 1877.

SIR: In a conversation with Col. E. C. Watkins, inspector of Indian affairs at Olympia, in September last, I was informed by him of his views in regard to the consolidation of this agency with Neah Bay, on the ground of the lack of interest on the part of the Indians in support of the school and general improvements, and the inaccessibility of the agency; also stating as his opinion that this agency could be abandoned without damage to the service.

I will state that I concur with Colonel Watkins in this opinion. I have recommended the consolidation of these two agencies, as you can see by my annual report for 1876, page 142. I have not felt satisfied with the advancement of these Indians; yet, under my peculiar situation, I have done all I could.

There are four tribes of Indians parties to the treaty (treaty of Olympia), Quinaielts, Queets, Hohes, and Quillehutes. All of the last three live north of this agency, in the order named; the distance separating each tribe is from sixteen to twenty miles, each tribe living on the stream from which they take their name, and on which they depend for salmon, on which they live a great portion of the year; no one stream affording sufficient for all four tribes, were they confined to it. The only means of travel from here to these tribes is along the coast, at low tide, or by sea, in canoes. In stormy weather there is no communication. None of these tribes will give their children to the schools, and the last two tribes are more convenient to Neah Bay than here.

The Quinaielts are the only Indians near the agency, or who can be reached at any time; they live on the river, scattered from its mouth up the stream about twenty miles. This tribe numbers about 122 souls. Their mode of travel is by canoe, which at times is difficult. They are the only ones who send to the school, and they do not support it heartily, and owing to the peculiar surroundings I have not felt it prudent to attempt to compel them to send their children, but have endeavored to convince them of the benefit to their children in the future, but have only met with limited success. The school now has an attendance of thirteen scholars, who are constantly under the care of the teachers, and are taking more interest in their studies than formerly. I have full confidence in the teachers, yet the results are not satisfactory, and for lack of interest on the part of the Indians the work drags.

These Indians do not farm to any extent. Some have small patches upon which they raise a few vegetables, and a small amount of hay; but the land is so heavily timbered and poor that they could not make a support from it, so they depend on fishing principally.

In view of the above facts, and also as to the Quillehute tribe, numbering over 250 souls, have already been placed under the charge of the agency at Neah Bay, as per Commissioner's letter July 3, "Cir.," I recommend the consolidation of the other three tribes, believing it to be for the interest of the government, and that the change will not injure the Indian service.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. A. HENRY,
Special Indian Agent.

HON. COMMISSIONER INDIAN AFFAIRS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 26, 1877.*

SIR: In accordance with verbal instructions from yourself and the honorable Secretary of the Interior, I have the honor to submit the following report relative to the consolidation of the Indians of Oregon and Washington Territory.

In my recent inspection of the agencies in the country named I gave this subject as careful consideration as the time at my disposal would permit, availing myself of the views of officers and other living in the locality, whom I deemed best qualified to judge of this question.

The State of Oregon and Washington Territory are naturally divided

into two parts by the Cascade range of mountains, extending north and south from British America to the southern line of Oregon. The only natural pass or highway connecting the two parts is the Columbia River. North of the Columbia, in Washington Territory, no stream breaks through these mountains, and no road has yet been constructed over them. They have always formed a boundary-line between the Indians of the coast and those of the interior, and would prove a serious obstacle in the way of moving Indians from one side to the other.

The Indians of the two localities are also very dissimilar in their customs, habits of life, and means of subsistence, and have little or no intercourse with each other. Those of the coast are accustomed to water; are skillful in constructing and managing canoes, and subsist mostly on fish; while those of the interior are more athletic, skillful horsemen, and subsist on game, berries, and the products of the soil. For these and other reasons that readily present themselves, it might not be advisable, for the present, to attempt to consolidate the two classes. But gradual consolidation of the Indians on the coast until they shall inhabit but one reservation, I think practicable, and believe it would be for their best interests and result in a great saving of expense to the government. Those of the interior, I think, might ultimately be brought together on one or two reservations.

On the coast of Washington Territory, the straits of Fuca, and Puget Sound there are at present thirteen reservations and five agencies. The Indians occupying them number about 6,000. All the treaties now in force with them contain provisions looking to the consolidation, at some future period, of all the bands in that section on a single reservation. The Indians generally understand this provision of their treaties, and, while they are generally opposed to being moved, are, in a degree, prepared for it. For the present, however, I think two reservations should be retained: one on the ocean-coast, for the exclusively fish-eating Indians, and one on the sound, for those who have been or may be induced to engage in agricultural pursuits. For the first class Neah Bay is the only suitable reservation. The Indians from Shoal-water Bay and Quinalt reservations should be located there. Nearly all of these two bands are less than a hundred miles by the coast from Neah Bay. They are the same class of Indians, with similar habits and mode of life. I think they can readily be induced to move, as they are accustomed to roam up and down the coast, fishing and hunting the sea-otter, sometimes extending their trips to the point named. The expense of their removal would be trifling, and should be mostly confined to erecting houses for them on the Neah Bay reservation. They have but very little property to be moved save their matting and limited cooking-utensils, and these could be packed in their canoes and taken up the coast by the Indians themselves.

Probably some of the S'Komish, and perhaps a few others, from the bands on the sound, would prefer to go to this reservation; and such as strongly prefer this location might be permitted to go there, although all should be encouraged to go upon the reservation selected for its agricultural advantages, upon the assumption (thoroughly proved by trial) that Indians are much more rapidly civilized by means of an agricultural life than any other.

I am aware that various opinions have been expressed by commissioners, inspectors, and superintendents, who have visited the reservations on the sound and reported upon the question of consolidation, as to the advantages for agricultural purposes of reservations named. For the second, or agricultural class, I think the Puyallup reservation,

however, far the best adapted for consolidation, for the following reasons:

1st. It is centrally located.

2d. It contains 18,061½ acres, fully two-thirds of which is good agricultural land, the greater portion being exceedingly fertile. This is doubtless six times as much good agricultural land as is contained in any other one reservation on the sound. It has an abundance of timber, is well watered, and about eight hundred acres are already under cultivation and occupied by Indians. It has been surveyed into forty-acre lots, and about one hundred and forty have been allotted to heads of families and are now occupied and partially cultivated by the Indians.

3d. A branch of the Northern Pacific Railroad runs through it, to the coal-fields, twenty-five miles above, thus affording ready access to market for all the surplus productions of the reservation.

Under proper management, I think the Puyallup reservation susceptible of maintaining 4,000 Indians from the products of the soil. Probably not over three-fourths of this number would, however, be gathered on this reservation. I estimate that 2,000 would naturally go to Neah Bay, 1,000 would avail themselves of the provisions of the Indian homestead act, which would leave not to exceed 3,000 to be gathered on to this reservation. By this plan of consolidation, eleven reservations would be vacated in this locality, viz, Shoalwater Bay, Quinaialet, S'-Ko-mish, Chehalis, Squakshin, Nesqually, Muckleshoot, Port Madison, Lummi, Swinormish, and Tulalip.

Some time would be required to accomplish this work, depending largely upon the amount of funds appropriated for the purpose, and the energy and ability displayed in the work of consolidation.

Honest, humane, energetic, and able men would be required to accomplish this work successfully and economically. - The amount required to effect the removal, and afford the necessary facilities for beginning life in the new locations, I should estimate at \$100,000.

The lands thus vacated, if put in market, would doubtless sell for, at least, \$1,000,000. [But in all cases, on all the reservations to be vacated, where Indians are farming and are self-supporting, I would recommend that they be allowed and encouraged to remain in their present location, securing title to their land under the act above referred to;] and where Indians having improvements made by themselves do not desire to become citizens, but prefer to go upon either of the reservations named, that they be given improvements equal in value to those they are required to abandon, in the new location.

East of the Cascade Mountains, in Washington Territory, there are two reservations only, the Yakama and the Colville. The former contains 800,000 acres of land, about one-half of which is excellent for agricultural purposes. It is surrounded by mountain-ranges except down the valley of the Yakama River, toward the Columbia, thus being separated by natural barriers from the surrounding white settlements. The reservation has been surveyed into forty-acre lots, and nearly all of the Indians now belonging on it are located on separate farms, are cultivating the soil, and entirely self-supporting. The uncultivated land produces a heavy growth of grass, yielding from two to three tons of hay per acre when cut, and affording the best of pasturage for stock. In my opinion, it is by far the best adapted for consolidation and permanent location for Indians of any reservation in Oregon or Washington Territory. All of the roving bands along the Columbia and Snake Rivers have been ordered to that reservation, have promised to go, and many have already

gone. The agency comprises what was formerly the military post of Simcoe, and is sixty-five miles north of The Dalles, on Columbia River.

The Warm Spring Indians of Oregon, I think, should be moved to this place. Their reservation is about seventy-five miles south of The Dalles, is sterile and volcanic, nearly worthless for agricultural purposes. These Indians number nearly five hundred. They have frequently been talked to about removing to the Yakama. When I visited them, last month, some told me they were willing to go; others had various objections, but, with proper management, all can be induced to remove willingly. Improvements should be made for them on the Yakama reservation equal in value to those left behind, and such as desire to become citizens and are qualified for the change should be allowed to remain and secure homesteads where they now are. I estimate the cost of their removal and location at \$20,000.

The Umatilla reservation, near the east line of Oregon, is excellent agricultural land, and surrounded by cultivated farms occupied by white people. The Umatilla Indians, however, cultivate but very little land. They have many horses and cattle, but are strongly addicted to roaming. They would be improved by contact with Indians engaged in farming. Some of them would doubtless prefer the Nez Percés reservation, in Idaho, to the Yakama. But, with fair treatment, I think the greater number could be induced to go peacefully to the latter location. I estimate the cost of their removal at \$30,000. They number about 680.

The Colville reservation comprises all the country between the Columbia and Okinokane Rivers, extending north to the British line. It contains 2,800,000 acres. But few Indians have ever resided on it. With the exception of a little band of Okinokans, who live along the river of the same name, on the western border, and a little squad of Lakes, who live near the British line to the north, all on the reservation live along the Columbia River, near the eastern line.

The greater portion of the entire reservation is mountainous and contains very little agricultural land. A large majority of the Indians belonging to it have been in the habit of roaming over the country to the east of the Columbia River. Many are cultivating land in this locality, and others work for white farmers. They object to going into the mountains of their reservation, saying they cannot live there. When I met them, in August last, all the northeast bands united in asking for a strip of land six miles wide, lying east of the Columbia River and adjacent to it, extending from the British line on the north to the Nemchin Creek on the south. They promised to go upon this strip of land, and most of them have gone, as I am informed.

The Spokanes and Pelouse I located north of the mouth of the Spokane River, giving them a tract about twenty miles square adjoining the Colville reservation. Both of these tracts are described in my report of the conference held with those Indians, and both were recommended to be set apart for their use. All of the Colville reservation except a strip ten or twelve miles wide adjacent to Columbia River might be restored to the public domain without loss to the Indians. The small part retained, with the two additions recommended, would form a comparatively small reservation, upon which are now located nearly all the Indians in the extreme eastern part of Washington Territory. I would recommend that they be not disturbed for the present. Ultimately they might be removed to the Yakama. They were much excited over the outbreak of Joseph and his band, and discussed their rights and wrongs very much last summer. There are not lacking white men to incite them to oppose the wishes of the government, whatever they may be. They

number about 3,000, and any attempt to move them at present would incur large expense, and might lead to serious trouble. They occupy a country not needed by the whites, and which probably will not be needed for many years to come.

The Grand Ronde reservation, near the coast of Oregon, contains 61,440 acres. A fair proportion is excellent farming-land, and the Indians occupying it are good farmers. Nearly all talk the English language, and are among the most civilized Indians of the United States. Their reservation has been surveyed, and is sufficiently extensive to accommodate all of the coast Indians in that State. I recommend that all the Indians now living along the coast, who are not prepared for citizenship, or do not desire to become citizens be concentrated there. Very many, I think one-half, are practically civilized, engaged in farming, and self-supporting. These do not need the care of an agent, and should be encouraged to become citizens and secure homesteads. In this way the government would be rid of the guardianship of a large class at once, and the Indians themselves would be improved and their rights better protected by the change. So long as they are held simply as wards, it can hardly be expected they will pass much beyond their present state of civilization.

The Siletz agency could be abandoned, and after homestead selections are made by the Indians the reservation could be opened up for white settlement.

The coast Indians are, probably, all within one hundred miles from the Grand Ronde reservation. The cost of removal would be slight. But they should be provided with houses, farming-tools, &c., at Grand Ronde, which would cost much more. There are about 1,600 Indians on the coast, outside of Grand Ronde. Of these, I estimate the citizen portion would represent one-half, leaving not to exceed eight hundred to be gathered upon the reservation. The cost of removal and locating, including the construction of houses and the purchase of farming-tools, I would estimate at \$50,000. The Klamath and Malheur Indians occupy mountain reservations, in a degree remote from white settlements, and I would not advise a change at present.

The consolidations thus briefly outlined and recommended in this communication I believe to be entirely practicable. Some opposition would be encountered from a portion of the Indians to be moved, doubtless. They are generally very strongly attached to their homes and the country in which repose the bones of their fathers. The removal must be conducted with care, in order to be successful, and judicious selections of men for the purpose should be made. In all cases, they should be provided with houses and other improvements, equal in value to those they abandon, and such as have no houses or other property in their present location should be assisted in beginning a more civilized life. Before the reservations to be abandoned are opened for settlement by white people, such Indians as are qualified by their intelligence, industry, and ability to provide for themselves and families to become citizens should be encouraged and assisted in selecting homesteads in the territory to be restored to the public domain.

The reservations upon which the Indians are consolidated should be placed in charge of capable agents, assisted by an efficient corps of employes, so long as such service is required. Good schools should be maintained, and compulsion resorted to, if necessary, to compel the attendance of Indian children. The government is the guardian, the Indian the ward. It is the duty of the guardian to act for the best interests of the ward, without regard to the latter's wishes; and, as it is

conceived that the interest of the government and good of the Indians require the relation of guardian and ward to terminate so soon as the latter are qualified to act independent of guardianship, and as this can only be reached by civilizing them to such an extent that they may be safely citizenized and incorporated into the body-politic of the nation, it is eminently proper that the government should adopt the most rigorous means to accomplish this end.

The estimates of expenses incident to the consolidation proposed are of necessity crude. The time necessary to accomplish the work may exceed one year, and the appropriations should be so made that unexpended balances will not be required to be covered into the Treasury at the close of the fiscal year unless the work is accomplished.

RECAPITULATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

I. That all the Indians west of the Cascade Mountains, in Washington Territory, be consolidated on the Neah Bay and Puyallup reservations; the purely fish-eating and those who live exclusively from the products of the water on the former, and the agricultural class on the latter.

II. That the Warm Spring Indians and Umatilla Indians of Oregon be removed to the Yakama reservation, in Washington Territory.

III. That the bands of Northeast Washington Territory be consolidated on the Columbia River, above the mouth of the Spokane, upon the territory described in the body of this report

IV. That the Siletz and other Indians on the coast of Oregon be consolidated on the Grand Ronde reservation.

V. That before the reservations thus vacated are restored to the public domain such Indians as are qualified for citizenship, and desire to become citizens, be permitted to select homesteads from the lands to be vacated.

The following are the estimates of appropriations required :

For removing and settling the Indians on the coast of Washington Territory, \$100,000.

For removing and settling the Warm Spring Indians on the Yakama reservation, \$20,000.

For removing and settling the Umatilla Indians on the Yakama reservation, \$30,000.

For settling the bands of Indians in Northeast Washington Territory on the Columbia, above the Spokane, \$10,000.

For removing the Siletz and other Indians on the coast of Oregon and settling them on the Grand Ronde reservation, \$50,000.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. C. WATKINS,
United States Indian Inspector.

Hon. E. A. HAYT,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, January 22, 1878.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith a copy of the report of Inspector E. C. Watkins, dated November 26, 1877, concerning the con-

solidation of the Indians of Oregon and Washington Territory, together with copy of letter of November 24, from G. A. Henry, special Indian agent at the Quinaliet agency, Washington Territory.

I entertain no doubt of the advisability of consolidating these Indians. I am clearly of the opinion, however, that it will be unwise policy to encourage those Indians who are now farming to remain in their present locations. They should all be consolidated upon the reservation selected, and the title, which may be given to them in severalty, should be made inalienable. The experience which has heretofore attended the granting of individual titles to Indians in localities where they are surrounded by the whites, versed in all the machinations by which the Indians are systematically circumvented and ruined in property and discouraged in civilization, compels me to disapprove of so much of Inspector Watkins's recommendation as is included in brackets on pages — and — of said copy of his report.

Such consolidation, accompanied with individual proprietorship, would relieve the country outside of their presence, and would enable the government to exercise a system of direct protection, education, and civilization, of which the Indians are in imperative need, and without which their general improvement cannot be anticipated.

With these brief suggestions, and except as above stated, I heartily recommend the speedy adoption of the proposed plan.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. A. HAYT,
Commissioner.

HON. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.