Letter from the Secretary of the Navy, transmitting, in response to Senate resolution of February 26, 1880, information in regard to the present condition of affairs in Alaska.
LETTER
FROM
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,
TRANSMITTING,
In response to Senate resolution of February 26, 1880, information in regard to the present condition of affairs in Alaska.

MARCH 5, 1880.—Ordered to lie on the table and be printed.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of an attested copy of a resolution passed by the Senate on the 26th ultimo, directing the Secretary of the Navy to report to the Senate “any information in possession of the Navy Department in relation to the present condition of affairs in Alaska,” and, in compliance therewith, to transmit herewith copies of reports from Commander L.A. Beardslee, commanding the United States ship Jamestown, stationed in the waters of Alaska.

Very respectfully,

R. W. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy.

Hon. WM. A. WHEELER,
Vice-President of the United States
and President of the Senate.

AFFAIRS IN ALASKA.
REPORTS OF COMMANDER L. A. BEARDSLEE, COMMANDING UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN, FROM JUNE 15, 1879, TO JANUARY 22, 1880.

Communicated by the Secretary of the Navy, in compliance with resolution of the Senate of February 26, 1880.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, June 15, 1879.

SIR: I have the honor to report the arrival of this vessel at this port at eight o’clock last evening; we having reached the entrance of the passage between the islands were taken in tow by the United States steamer Alaska and brought to the harbor.

I have not, as yet, had an opportunity to learn from my own observation anything in regard to the situation of affairs here, but shall as soon as possible, and shall communicate fully to the department.
The mail which left San Francisco on the 22d instant is now several days overdue, and we find no later dates than we have brought. The Alaska will leave to-morrow.

The officers and crew are in excellent health and spirits.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,

Commander, United States Navy

Hon. R. W. THOMPSON,

Secretary of the Navy,

Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,

Sitka, Alaska, June 23, 1879.

SIR: The mail steamer California arrived this a. m., fifteen days over time, she having been detained by an attachment at Portland. She leaves this afternoon, and I take advantage of the opportunity to fulfill that part of my instructions which called upon me to communicate with the department from time to time as to affairs in Alaska, so far as eight days’ experience and observation will enable me to do so.

I cannot ask that the department shall receive as perfectly sound the views which I shall express; they are but first impressions, and will probably be somewhat modified after a longer stay.

I have, and so have the officers of the vessel, mingled freely with persons of all classes and ages, both whites and Indians, and we have obtained a great deal of information in regard to the status, and we find that although individual interests cause great differences of opinion among the whites about other matters, all agree, and I do with them, that the condition of affairs here is such that the department has done wisely in sending a vessel to protect the settlement.

I am satisfied that both the local Indians and the Tchilcats have friendly feeling toward the whites, and that there is no danger of any premeditated attack upon the settlement.

The whites furnish the Indians a market for their furs, fish, &c., and supply them with many needed articles. Many of the Indians, both men and women, "dress up" on Sunday, and cheap dry goods are in demand.

The two settlements have existed in juxtaposition for many years, and it is exceedingly creditable to both that, with no law to govern, they have both so governed themselves that outrages and disorder are uncommon. There is, however, a terrible danger to which the whites are exposed, and it is far from an imaginary one. When intoxicated with the vile hoo-tche-noo, like all drunken men, the Indians are liable to commit outrages, which the whites are powerless to prevent, and to resent which would draw upon them the vengeance of the entire family to which the culprit belonged.

It is my belief that in February last this settlement narrowly escaped a massacre. That it did escape is due greatly to the influence of certain friendly Indians of superior intelligence.

I do not think that there is any danger while a vessel of war is here, and I hope to be able to so influence the Indians that after we shall have left they will preserve peace. I have instructed them at a "pow-wow" that they too belonged to the United States, and that should strange Indians attack them, we and the whites would assist them, and that another outbreak would probably occasion the government to send gunboat steamers (of which they are in great fear) to exterminate them. One result of this course has been that a leader, one of Catalan’s tribe, has, before taking a journey, applied to the collector for a certificate that he is a Sitka American Indian.

I have had occasion three times to exercise the discretionary power given me by the department:

The first was upon a request of the collector to furnish assistance to prevent smuggling of liquor, which letter, together with my answers and report of proceedings, will form a separate document.

Secondly, I have enlisted as first-class boys, to perform duty as policemen, the three Indians who did so much to save the whites in February last. These are "Amahoots," "Dick," and "Shukhoff;" the two former are connected with Tchilcats and Kooshes tribes, and "Shukhoff" is a good interpreter, and all are very influential. Their duty is to preserve order and impress upon the Indians the advantages of good behavior, and to make such arrests and citations as I may deem necessary.

I do not wish to bring any of our men into unfriendly contact, unless an emergency arises. A small guard might be overcome, and the effect would be demoralizing. These policemen have already been called upon and have done good service. A woman named "Kongu" died on the night of the 20th. On the 21st, a woman named...
"Gutzlo," one of the Church Indians, fled to the white settlement, and I was applied to to protect her, the friends of the deceased accusing her (by the instigation of the medical men) of having bewitched her, and had sentenced her to death. My policemen brought all of the parties to the collector's office, and all necessary steps were taken to prevent harm to the woman, "Amaboots," to whose tribe the deceased belonged, becoming responsible for her safety. I could not catch the doctor, the prime mover, he had fled; but shall if he return. The result of the "pow-wow" was satisfactory, and I have the names of all who would be at all liable to injure the woman, and they are promised a full punishment if they break their promises to me.

On the 18th instant I resolved to send a relief party in search of the mail steamer California, then nine days overdue, and in regard to whose safety there were reasons for grave anxiety.

Our steam-launches had just been placed in the water, and not having, as yet, any reason to feel very confident as to the condition of the engines, one of which had already been found defective in two points, I decided to charter the tug Rose, owned by a resident, which was in suitable condition for the work, and in her, Ensigns N. R. Usher and J. C. Gillmore (who volunteered), in charge, started on that day for Fort Wrangel, fully equipped, provisioned, and armed with howitzer and Gatling, rifles, &c., with orders to search thoroughly the coasts, and to rescue the passengers if they found the steamer wrecked.

The California left Wrangel yesterday morning and reports the tug Rose just nearing that harbor; they will replenish fuel and provisions at Wrangel, and probably be back here to-morrow night, as the weather is favorable. The distance is 160 miles, and about half the passage through inland waters.

We found great difficulties in entering the harbor, on account of incorrect sailing directions and charts. I propose to build beacons, anchor-buoys, locate shoals, and prepare such sailing directions as will enable any vessel to get safely in without a pilot. It will be necessary, for our work, that other bureaus should follow the example of the Bureau of Navigation and outfit us thoroughly. We need building tools and stores, in construction and equipment departments, very much; but shall proceed to do the best we can with what we have.

The weather is good; the ship's company healthy and contented.

The medical officer needs a larger stock of medicine; there is considerable sickness among the Russians and Indians, and no practitioner here; hence he has either to expend from the ship's outfit or refuse to attend to the sick.

We have moored the ship head and stern in the inner harbor, where our battery bears upon the Indian village.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, Commanding.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington July 26, 1879.

Sir: Your communication of the 23d ultimo, reporting state of affairs in Sitka, has been received. The department entirely approves of what you have done, and submits the future of your action to your discretion, until something shall occur to render specific instruction necessary.

It is believed that at the next session of Congress such an organization of Alaska will be authorized as shall designate the necessary civil officers to protect the persons and property of citizens; in other words, the government will not neglect to extend its authority over Alaska in such manner as shall secure to the people there all the rights it assumed to protect when the country was acquired. In the mean time the department has full confidence in your wisdom, capacity, and discretion to dispose of such matters as may require your intervention during your stay in Sitka.

If anything should occur rendering more specific instructions necessary, they will be forwarded either by mail or by telegraph to Victoria.

The department is gratified at being informed of the good health of yourself and the other officers and men of the Jamestown, and has given the necessary instructions to the proper bureaus to furnish the articles needed by you.

Very respectfully,

R. W. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy.

Commander L. A. BEARDSLEE, U. S. N.,
Commanding U. S. ship Jamestown, Sitka, Alaska.
Six: In compliance with your request that I should furnish you with all the facts of my own knowledge connected with the alarm at this place in February, I would state as follows:

In November last I left Cutting & Co.'s cannery, where I had been employed, and opened business in Sitka with one George Kostrometinoff. About the 15th of the month Mr. Kostrometinoff's brother had charge of the store during the absence of my partner and myself. A short time after we had left the store a drunken Indian came in with an axe in his hand, and demanded his "jetas," (meaning goods). He replied that "we had nothing that belonged to him," at which the Indian became enraged, and jumped over the counter, at which young Kostrometinoff ran from behind the counter out the door and down the street, the Indian running after him; he took refuge in Mr. Whitford's store. On our return to the store Mr. Kostrometinoff, who speaks the Indian tongue fluently, learned the cause of the intended assault. It seems that the said Indian was in the habit of selling everything he had when on a drum for "hoo tehe noo," and his "kloochman" (woman) had taken them to Mr. Goldstein's store, for safe-keeping, and he had gone to the first store to find them. There is no doubt in my mind but that he would have committed an assault, if not murder, but for the agility of the boy. Sandry other acts of violence were committed by the Indians during the succeeding month, of which I have no immediate knowledge.

About the 13th of November, Mr. Brown, then living at the Hot Springs, distant about 12 miles from Sitka, visited here for the purpose of purchasing supplies, called at my store, and I had quite a long conversation with him. I think he left for home on the 15th, taking with him quite a bill of goods, and saying that he would come in again in time to meet the steamer. On the 25th of December (as near as I can remember the date), Mr. J. Williams, a miner wintering in this place, concluded to take a trip to the Hot Springs. On the 3d of January he returned, and startled the town with the news of Brown's absence, and supposed murder, relating the circumstances. On his arrival at the springs late in the evening, he proceeded direct to the house where Brown lived, and, not finding him at home, supposed him to be either hunting or fishing; he spread his blankets and retired. On arising in the morning, and finding Brown had not returned, he commenced to look around and discovered traces of blood, and great confusion, as if there had been a struggle; continuing his searches, he discovered the absence of his gun, provisions, and canoe, and tracks of feet, as he supposed, and reported of a buck and a squaw, dragging a body down to the water, and such was proved to have been the case by the evidence on the trial of the Indians. Mr. Whitford, having an interest in the property at the springs, Brown being indebted to him, sent two Indians down to bring up all the movable property they could find. On their return they brought a few books and a box covered with blood. The Indians from the ranch had no hesitancy in telling who had done the deed, and offered to go for them for a reward.

The citizens of the town being much alarmed, and fearing, if we did not take some steps to apprehend the murderers, others of us would fall victims to Indian hate, offered a reward and selected a chief, named Amahoots, to send for them; he did so, by some of his clan, and brought them in. We lodged them in the old guard-house and kept a guard over them.

The following day a young chief named Katlan called, with a delegation, on Colonel Ball, the collector, and he having sent to the store for Mr. Kostrometinoff, who acted as interpreter for him on such occasions, I accompanied him. I should, perhaps, state here that two months before there had called on Colonel Ball, a delegation to inquire after five Indians, lost on a schooner named San Diego, that called here on her way to the northern hunting-grounds, and shipped the said Indians. Colonel Ball, in answer to their inquiries and requests, said he would write to the owner of the schooner, and also to the collector of San Francisco and try and recover the wages due the men, and the property that belonged to them.

To continue, Katlan said that he had called to inquire about his friends that had been drowned, and that he wanted pay for them. Colonel Ball tried to reason with them, and told them that it was not the custom in our country to pay for any one that was lost while in the discharge of their duties, and that he should not do so here. But that he would do all he could to recover the amounts due them and their goods. After some farther conversation, the Indians left. The same day Katlan came to our store and told Mr. Kostrometinoff that if he was not paid for the five men he would kill five white men, and should select them from the storekeepers, of which fact we immediately informed Colonel Ball.

Regarding the demonstrations of the Indians and the language used by them (as reported to us by one Schookoff, an Indian, who was educated by the Greek Church, and who affiliates with both Russian and Indian, and also Amahoots, the Indian chief before mentioned, whom we had every reason to trust) as alarming and threatening the lives and property of us all, the government rifles which had been stored at Father Metropolisky's, the Greek priest, and A. T. Whitford's, merchant, we distributed

SITKA, ALASKA, July 11, 1879.
As far as they would reach, to all responsible citizens capable of bearing arms, and some instructions issued as to the steps to be taken in case of an attack.

On the night of the 6th of February there was a perfect pandemonium in the ranch; howling and firing of guns; a party of us had gathered at Whitford's store. About 11 p.m. a resident of the town, Harry Wild, came in, and with some confusion asked, "What is the matter?" We inquired where, and he replied as follows: "I just met a Russian running up town with his rifle, and he said an Indian had killed a Russian over in the Bee Hive (a house in the town). I immediately left the store to go up to my partner's house to see if he knew anything about it, as Schookoff always reported to him. I found the house in complete darkness, but, after repeated knockings, gained admittance and found them (himself, mother, sister, and brother) in great alarm. After some little time, gained from him the information that Schookoff had just been there and reported Katlan and his party, of 15 or 20 Indians, were drunk, and were trying to come into the town, and that Amahoots was trying to prevent them, and Katlan's party had stabbed one of Amahoot's men." I asked him if he had sent word to Colonel Ball. He said he had, and also to Father Metropolisky's.

I started immediately for Colonel Ball's, having stopped at our store for my six-shooter. On my arrival at the custom-house, where Colonel Ball resided, occupying the upper story, I found the house in complete darkness, and the door barricaded on the inside. After frequent knockings and failures of response, I started for the priest's, knowing that a number of families had taken refuge there. On my way up I met H. Wild, in front of Mr. Whitford's store (which was in complete darkness), and asked him to accompany me up to the priest's. He acquiesced; as we walked up the street, we met Mr. Caplan, merchant, Mr. McGuire, barber, and Mr. McCluney, a miner, standing with him in front of his store, all with rifles in their hands. I stopped and asked the cause of their being out with their rifles, as they had orders not to bring them out, unless they saw imminent danger. I asked them if they wanted to make themselves targets for the Indians and ordered them to take their rifles borne, as I was afraid that, should the Indians come to the town and see them out with rifles, it might precipitate the trouble.

We proceeded to the priest's and I found a young man named Sokoloff, running out with his rifle; stopped him and asked him where he was going; found that he had been sent out by Father Metropolisky, and that all were arming. I spoke to him and told him to wait until I saw the father. Found his door barred, and after some trouble succeeded in getting admittance; found him in great agitation and his family in great alarm, as he had received the message from Mr. Kostrometinoff. I told him of the state of affairs, and that if there was any trouble down town, would inform him of the facts, and requested him to go down stairs and inform the families and quiet the agitation, as the women were crying and the children screaming, expecting instant annihilation. There were, to the best of my knowledge, twenty-five families quartered there at the time, in space hardly large enough to accommodate three. Before I left, I had him tell the men not to take out their rifles, unless they saw imminent danger. I asked them if they wanted to make themselves targets for the Indians and ordered them to take their rifles home, as I was afraid that, should the Indians come to the town and see them out with rifles, it might precipitate the trouble.

Leaving there, we came down to Colonel Ball's; found the house still in darkness. But after calling and giving my name, succeeded in getting in; found at the head of the stairs, a clothes-press, so arranged that, in an instant, it could be thrown so as to blockade the stairs, and prevent ingress. Found Colonel Ball, and with him Dr. Dunlay, in considerable alarm, and with their rifles and revolvers, together with ammunition laid out on the table. Had some conversation with Colonel Ball; told him all I had done, and he requested me to call a meeting in the morning of all citizens.

On the morning of the 7th a meeting was held at the custom-house, a commander chosen, adjutant appointed, officers elected, and it was resolved that we should have a guard of eight men every night until further orders, one post to be at the custom-house and the other in the small house back of the saw-mill, the beat of the first guard to be from custom-house to saw-mill, and that of second to Healy's. It was further resolved that in case of an attack the people above the saw-mill should gather at the priest's and those below at the castle, which we had decided to be the places we could hold the longest in case of a siege. We were formed, as far as able, into a regular military organization, and it was decided among the merchants that only small quantities of powder, shot, and sugar should be sold, and only on a permit from the commander, and this organization and resolutions were strictly adhered to until the arrival of the Osprey. At the request of Colonel Ball, I made my quarters at his house. On the morning of the 9th the mail steamer California arrived.

As there has been so much said about the petition sent from here to the English commander, and as Mr. Stenhouse has deliberately and with malice prepense made charges against parties who had no interest save that of humanity, I take this opportunity of stating the truth. On the arrival of the steamer, Father Metropolisky and others of the residents came to our store and discussed the situation and propriety of appealing for protection to the English government. It was discussed pro and con and at last decided in the affirmative, and to me was deputed the duty of getting it up.
Mr. Hughes, of the California, happened in and I told him what we were going to do, and asked him (knowing him to be a man of superior education) if he would furnish me with the language for the petition. He said "Yes"; took a piece of paper and wrote it, from which Mr. Milletich copied it. This is all he had to do with it, except delivery at the request of the citizens, Mr. Stenhouse or any one else to the contrary notwithstanding. Mr. Kostrometinoff and myself were the only ones that sought or procured signatures. I called on Colonel Ball and asked him to sign it. He answered me as follows: "I think the danger is imminent, but I cannot conscientiously sign it, as I am a government officer, holding an official position, and if I made an appeal it would be my duty to do so to my own country."

A meeting was held at the custom-house, and it was decided to send the Indian prisoners to Portland, and they were sent on board the steamer. The petition was sent by steamer sailing on the 10th. A number of miners left here for Wrangel, and more would have gone had they not been requested to remain by the collector. Mr. Capka sent his family as far as Wrangel; Mr. Goldstine, his to Portland; other citizens also left here who had no intention of so doing.

After the departure of the steamer there were many alarming reports current in the town. Mr. Corcoran, a merchant, stated, on the departure of the steamer, that he should not take the shutters down on his store until the arrival of some protection, and he did not do so. We had a guard every night; all in the town, including the collector, taking their regular turn on duty.

The arrival of the Osprey was hailed with enthusiasm, and all were loud in their praise of the kind and heroic conduct of the English officers. Immediately after her arrival, and as soon as it was learned by the citizens that Captain A'Court had said he would remain until relieved by an American vessel, they commenced returning to their homes, and, by night, Sitka had regained its former tranquillity. The guard was kept up for two nights after the arrival of the Osprey and was then deemed unnecessary. I was at the wharf on the arrival of the cutter Wolcott. There were a number of Indians present; one of them spoke to Mr. Kostrometinoff, and, noticing his gestures, I inquired the cause. Mr. K. replied, he says, "We are not afraid of that steamer, she is culis [worthless], and we could take her whenever we want to do so, but that one [pointing to the Osprey], is schookum [meaning powerful], and we do not want to have anything to do with her."

I remained in Sitka until the arrival of the March steamer, and having disposed of my interest here, sailed for Portland; returned here on June steamer.

Respectfully yours,

W. J. BURWELL.

Capt. L. A. BEARDSLEE,
United States Ship Jamestown.

The foregoing document, viz, the statement of Mr. W. J. Burwell, in regard to the troubles with the Indians, &c., suffered by the citizens of Sitka, was, this day, sworn to and subscribed before me.

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, Commanding Jamestown,
Senior Officer present.

Respectfully forwarded to the Navy Department with indorsement, that, from my personal intercourse with and general repute of Mr. W. J. Burwell, I have full confidence in his statements.

Careful inquiry of the various persons named in his statement has furnished me with abundant corroborative proof, and nothing which in any way contradicts his statements.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, United States Navy.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN, 3d rate,
Sitka, Alaska, July 15.

Sir: The monthly mail steamer California, due here on the 9th instant, has arrived this a.m., and leaves at noon to-morrow. I avail myself of the opportunity to make to you a brief report as to the condition of affairs here; I not as yet having secured the data necessary to prepare a more exhaustive paper, which I shall in due time.

The condition of the Indian affairs, as bearing upon those of the whites, is this: A breast of our ship, 500 yards distant, there is a deserted village of perhaps 50 or 60 log cabins, inhabited at present by about 100 squaws and children and about 50 older males, who, through age or infirmity or lack of energy, have not gone with the greater number of their fellows, in pursuit of food and fur.
About 100 Indians are employed at the cannery, about 6 miles from here, and I have a gang of about 20 employed in erecting beacons, &c.; it being necessary to employ them, as the service requires camping out on the rocky islands for days at a time, and could not be performed by our own men without great detriment to their health.

The Indians work well and cheaply. We have built one stone beacon at a cost of less than $100, which in the Eastern States would have cost five times the amount.

There is absolutely no danger to the settlement at the present time. In fall, when the hunters and fishermen return, there will be; their return will be celebrated by a series of "pot-a-latches" (tremendous drunks), which will culminate, unless precautions are taken to keep them under control, in a very probable assault upon the settlement, as the grudge excited by the events of last winter is as yet a cause for anticipation of trouble.

I do not believe that, unflamed by drink, the Indians would assault the whites, but this will be crazy with rum (and that they will so be is almost entirely due to the fault of our government).

Left, as this community is, without a vestige of civil law or authority, its position so undetermined, that to consider it either as or as not Indian territory, will involve the risk of serious error; it is deprived of the moral force, that it would have, did not the Indians consider that it has been abandoned by its natural protectors. A great evil arising from this state of affairs is, that while the introduction of even a gallon of good or ordinary liquor is sedulously prevented, material from which the most poisonous liquor can be and is made in great quantities is permitted to be imported by the ton.

The first and only step by which Alaska can ever be saved or developed, will be the enactment by Congress of a law which shall place the importation of molasses and coarse sugar under such restrictions that the manufacture from it of "Noo-tche-noo" can be stopped.

By the request of the collector, and in pursuance of an arrangement of his with my predecessor, Captain Browne, I last month detailed an officer and men to assist the collector in the prevention of smuggling of liquor from the mail steamer. I have since had time to weigh the subject and this time decline to so act. Aside from my apprehension that in so doing I was not acting lawfully, I feel that it is simply ridiculous to take strong measures to stop a little whisky and protect at the same time tons of molasses, a gallon of which will do as much harm as a barrel of the former.

The whites of Sitka may be divided into three classes, viz, a very few respectable people, worth saving; a larger number of Russians and half breeds, poor, miserable, lazy, poverty-stricken creatures, whom it would not be worth while to take much trouble about were it not for our pledge to Russia; and a few unprincipled white men, mostly discharged soldiers (or deserters), who make what little money they can by any scheme, however nefarious. Belonging to all three of the classes are certain "naturalized American" merchants, mostly Jews, who sell liquor to Indians and our sailors, and at the same time that they thus invite danger and incapacitate their protectors call loudest for "protection." Of those who signed the "petition to the President," two, at least, are of this class, and others I suspect.

This is a grand field for missionary labor: hundreds of bright little half-breed children and Indians, and quite a number of Americans, are growing up without any education or chance of obtaining one. With the assistance of Mr. John Brady, a Presbyterian clergyman, now here as a mining engineer, and of the officers who have formed a choir, I have organized a Sunday school and church service and have service every Sunday.

I would respectfully suggest to the department that a conversation with Prof. Wm. H. Dall, of the Coast Survey, would furnish it with the most reliable and intelligent statements in regard to Alaska affairs. Knowing him as I do, I would unhappily indorse everything that he would state.

I am gathering data as to the mineralogical and botanical resources, and am making collections of fishes, animals, plants, birds, &c., and when fully prepared will communicate results to the department.

I will now report as to the connection of the Jamestown with affairs.

Our most important work is the survey of this harbor and its approaches, the erection of beacons to mark channels and dangers, and the preparation of sailing directions, all of which is being carried on. We cannot do work in the straits which surround this island and lie between here and Wrangel. Even if my orders did not detain the ship at Sitka, I should not attempt to take her into any of the inland waters, except in cases of emergency, when the end would justify the risk. The channels are deep with dangerous rapids and many hidden and uncharted rocks; bordered by high mountains, there is seldom a breeze that could be relied upon, and the formation of the shores is such that anchorage could not be obtained; generally a long, flat reef projects, which suddenly terminates in a precipice.

Our steam launches are good boats, but with both of them we have had more or less trouble with the engines and boilers, and when we get them both, as I hope to do, into trustworthy condition, they would still be unequal to the work of making sur-
CONDITION OF AFFAIRS IN ALASKA.

Veys far from the ship. They cannot carry coal, water, provisions, instruments, arms, &c., sufficient to do the work. Steam launches of the class of the Nellie and Living at Mare Island yard would here be invaluable. I report to the Bureau of Steam Engineering in regard to the launches.

For winter work here a small steamer such as those known as "90-day gun-boats" is required. She could run with ease to any point when American interests were threatened; while, should I hear of troubles at Wrangel, or up the Sitka River, the most probable places, I should be helpless, and, although I should wish it, could not get to the rescue. Such a position would be a most painful one, and I would earnestly request either that in the fall this ship may be relieved by a steamer, or, if it be considered necessary that she should stay here, a suitable steamer may be sent to operate. I cannot again send the Rose; she is hopelessly used up.

On the 7th instant I organized a raid upon the illicit distillers; I had but awaited sufficient provocation. A murder in the white settlement and a continued drunk row, ending in a big fight, which I had to send an armed party to suppress, in the Indian village, furnished me with cause.

The result of our raid was the destruction or capture of three stills, and a large quantity of material and liquor in houses of "discharged soldiers," Thompson, Allard, and a Russian, and of 38 stills, 150 gallons of liquor, and as much "mash" among the Indians.

On the 9th I called a meeting of the citizens, and, ably assisted by the deputy collector, Dr. Dulaney, and by John Brady, have, I hope, started a public opinion which will result in the formation of a local government, with police regulations sufficient to restrain disorder, and regulate, if not check, the traffic in liquor.

The health of the ship's company is good; there are but two on the sick list, both of whom will be transferred to hospital at Mare Island. The climate is not damp; I have had more pleasant than unpleasant weather, and there is never a fog which penetrates apartments. Our books, clothes, boots, guns, &c., are easily kept perfect; free from mold or mildew or rust, and those of us subject to neuralgia, sciatica, rheumatism, &c., have no symptoms here. While it is raining, wet clothes hung under the awning will dry.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, Commanding.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, August 9, 1879.

Sir: Your letters of the 9th and 15th of July last, inclosing report of Ensign N. E. Usher, on trip to Wrangel and return, in search for the Pacific Mail steamer Callisto, supposed, at the date of starting, to have met with an accident, and forwarding statement of W. J. Burwell in regard to the causes which induced the citizens of Alaska to telegraph to the President for relief and protection, have been received. In reply thereto, you are informed that the department is gratified at your success, and hopes you will be able to carry out your purposes. Your course is approved, and you and your officers and men are entitled to the thanks of the department.

Very respectfully,

R. W. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy.
The mines are reported by the superintendent, Mr. George E. Piltz, to be unreliable, disorderly, and worthless.

As Mr. Piltz has the same material to work upon as Mr. Hunter and myself, I consider that his failure and our success must be due to differences in method. Mr. Hunter is respected by them; keeps all of his promises; has, and uses, tact; and the result is that the cannery is exerting a most beneficial influence. A large number of them, a leader, has, with his canoe-crew of eight, earned over $500 this season catching salmon; and all who behave earn a dollar each per day.

I believe that the desire to renew their work next season will actuate so many of them that they will prove a strong home guard to the whites this winter in case any evil-disposed ones should be inclined to make trouble.

The influence of the mines is detrimental. The Indians neither respect nor fear the superintendent.

The labor which I have found it necessary to impose upon the officers and crew of the Jamestown is so great that I have thought it advisable to fill up all vacancies which have occurred through desertion, transfers to hospital, &c., by enlisting as first class boys a number of good working natives. I have enlisted twelve; three (chiefs) as policemen, and nine as laborers. The work upon which we are engaged requires that every one of us shall be kept busy.

First, the

HYDROGRAPHIC.

Finding that all charts and sailing directions were very incomplete and full of errors, we have undertaken the construction of substitutes, which shall be complete and correct. Beginning with our own base line, a chart is now well under way which will be as correct and perfect as can be made.

Among our results, up to the present, there are a number of discoveries of uncharted dangers, of a new and better channel into the harbor than any hitherto known, and the erection of greatly needed beacons to mark fairways, three of which have been built for less than $300. I was compelled to hire Indians for this work, as it was necessary that the working parties should remain at their posts throughout bad weather and nights. This work employs daily 5 officers, 4 boats, and 40 men.

THE WHARF.

The government wharf is rapidly crumbling into ruins. In its construction the serious error was committed of using wooden cribs and a hulk as foundations; these filled with immense stones, supported by means of large piles, from 15 to 40 feet in length, a heavy deck, the beams and stringers of which are huge logs, some 3 feet in diameter and 70 feet long. It was a structure which would have endured forever, but for the blunder which overlooked the ravages of marine borers upon the foundation; these have been so great that the underlying timber is honey-combed; the cribs burst asunder, and the stones settling down the grade (which, in 50 feet, deepens from 10 to 40 feet), have left the ends of the piles, which now hang to the front edge, touching bottom only at low tide. The first gale of autumn will undoubtedly sweep the structure away. This being the case, I feel that it would be serious neglect of duty on my part not to take steps for its preservation. I have, therefore, torn down an old dilapidated government building; its timbers furnish me with rafts upon which my Indians transport stone, and its heavily barred windows furnish good bolt iron, and I hope, without expense to the government, further than the time and labor of three officers, fifty men, and two boats, to be able to put it into comparative good order.

I have made a bargain with the steamship company by which they are to pay all bills incurred, and to furnish also a gang of Indian laborers; they, in turn, reimbursing themselves by collecting from the merchants wharfage on freight.

The old foundation embarrasses us very much; we have blown out a portion, but fear to attack it further on account of danger to the remains of the wharf.

STEAM LAUNCHES.

Our launches are now in good running condition. We have been compelled to make great repairs and alterations to the machinery and to build the first launch up 14 inches higher. Previous to our doing so she was not safe in a tide-rip or sea-way.
CLIMATE.

We have experienced most delightful weather since the first of July. During 744 hours, there were but 137 of rain; the thermometer has ranged from 58° to 95° in the shade, and as high as 95° in the sun.

We have not a case of sickness on board originating in climatic influences.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

After a number of apparent failures, during which, however, public opinion was being aroused, I have at last succeeded in getting the people of Sitka to form a compact which will insure some order and law.

An election was held on Saturday, the 1st August, and the following officers were elected, viz:

Chief magistrate.—M. D. Ball, collector.

Councilmen.—Rev. N. Metropolsky, priest; Patrick Corcoran, merchant; F. Hall, merchant; Thomas M. McCauley, salmon canner.

The miners at Silver Bay, distant some 12 miles, refused, in an offensive letter (a copy inclosed, marked A), to co-operate.

I am informed by the priest that the Russians whose names are signed were led to sign by representations on the part of Mr. Piltz, the superintendent, that the whole thing was a trick upon my part; that should such a government be formed, the Jansenites would at once leave. It is my conviction that Mr. Piltz did not himself believe this, but that he was actuated by other motives.

I inclose a copy of the preamble which was drawn up by the collector.

The code of laws which are to be adopted are as simple as will effect the purpose of enabling these people to preserve order among themselves until such time as the government will help them.

Very respectfully,

Hon. R. W. THOMPSON, 
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

Preamble.

Provisional government of the town of Sitka, Alaska.

Whereas the Territory of Alaska, purchased from Russia by the United States in 1867, has not hitherto been provided by the latter government with any civil law or with the authorities necessary for the administration of the same;

And whereas, by reason of such failure of the United States to provide some such law, the settlements of said Territory are entirely without the means and authority to protect life and property, to administer the effects of deceased persons, to preserve the public peace and to punish crime;

And whereas, in the town of Sitka, in said Territory, with a population of over 300, there have been since the withdrawal of the military forces from said town in June 1877, sundry instances in which danger to the persons and detriment to the property of residents have resulted from such lack of law;

And whereas, by reason of the want of intimation by the United States Government of an intention to provide at said town the armed protection necessary to the moral strength and enforcement of any authority the citizens might assume to establish, as also from the singularity and perplexity of their situation, they have been hitherto deterred from attempting any such organization;

And whereas they have now a reasonable confidence that they will enjoy, permanently, such countenance and support of their government as will enable them to sustain successfully in practice, till supplanted by regularly enacted law, such organization of authority as their situation requires;

And whereas it has become perfectly apparent that not only individual rights, but the welfare and existence of the community itself, now absolutely require the erection of some form of civil authority over the said town and vicinity, so that a supreme necessity is upon us, and under nature's first and unalienable law, and in duty to ourselves and posterity:

Now, therefore, be it resolved and ordained by the residents of the said town of Sitka, and the settlements contiguous thereto, in the Territory of Alaska, That from the cauuses for the purposes hereinbefore recited a provisional government for the said town and
adjacent country be, and the same is hereby, organized, adopted, and established, to
be known as "The Provisional Government of the Town and District of Sitka, Alaska," which said government we do declare to be of absolute necessity for the protection of lives, persons, and property, the prevention of lawlessness, and the moral and material advancement of said town and district, and to which, and to the hereafter-to-be-constituted authorities and officials of which, we pledge our firm and cordial recognition, obedience, and support in all their authorized acts, and such personal efforts and duty as may be required to sustain and uphold the same over all persons within the jurisdiction thereof, as now to be set forth.

A.

Copy of letter addressed by George E. Piltz and others to the "Chairman and members of the so-called provisional government of Sitka."

We, the undersigned citizens of Silver Bay district, propose and intend to hold ourselves aloof from all intercourse with the so-called provisional government of Sitka. We deem it an unwise move, and we are all of the unanimous opinion that the men of the Jamestown should preserve the peace. Should this government be established, we look to the early departure of the Jamestown, and then we will be in a far worse condition than ever before.

Geo. E. Piltz.
Frank L. Burton.
*John Prior.
*WM. StekwaRT.
*Walter Darly.
*A. KashavaroFF.
N. Haley.
T. S. Smith.

E. H. Murphy.
James Hollywood.
F. Alskey.
Peter Starkzoff.
Ph. Kashavaroff.
John Gorman.
WM. Donnelly.
John Leman.

And 13 unreadable Russian signatures, in the same handwriting.
(Names marked * in Burton's writing.)

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, Alaska, September 6, 1879.

SIR: I would respectfully report in regard to the present condition of affairs at this station, as follows:

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

The Indians are beginning to return to the ranches, the salmon-canning season having ended and the hunting season being nearly over. The return of each canoe-load of from 8 to 12 men is generally celebrated the same night by a carouse, during which fights occur and great uproar prevails.

As this ranch is in close contact to the best portion of the white settlement and within 200 yards of this ship, these rows become a source of great annoyance and of possible danger. I have, therefore, made it my business to suppress them. In so doing I have experienced no difficulty. Generally the three Indian policemen are equal to the occasion; they are always prompt and zealous; when they are resisted a hail to the ship is answered by sending in a boat, and the Indians without any show of a fight yield at once, the sober ones assisting our men in arresting the drunken ones, who are carried to the government guard-house, locked up, in irons, for the night, dismissed in the morning with an admonition, which, up to this date, has been sufficient punishment to insure against a second offense. As far as I can judge, on all of these occasions the greater proportion of the Indians are pleased and grateful for an interference.

By the middle of October there will be about six or eight hundred Indians here, and it is necessary for us to get them under control as they arrive.

It is my intention, should this ship be left here this winter, to increase the force of Indian policemen, to make Annahootz and Sitka Jack, both of whom control large numbers, responsible for the preservation of order and peace, and to leave, to a great extent, in their hands the management of the Indians. I can easily manage them.

The task of preserving order here would be but a slight one, were it not that at the very start an obstacle is encountered which is placed in our way by our own government.

When sober the Indians are tractable, exceedingly anxious for employment, and good
workers; any or all will readily obey any order I may give, and seem pleased at recognition. But when drunk they are very dangerous and pugnacious and care for nothing. They could not get drunk if it were not for the help of the whites, and these whites could not help them but for the failure of our government to heed the repeated warnings and put an end to the traffic in molasses in Alaska. The monthly steamboat brings tons of it to a lot of so-called "American merchants," nearly all of whom are German and Jews. These "merchants" retail the stuff to a gang of discharged United States soldiers, all but two of whom are of the same class, only poorer, and to the lower order of Russian creoles and to the Indians. These men, by the aid of an apparatus that is so cheap, simple, compact, and portable that any one can buy, make, hide, or transport it, turn this molasses into hooch-noo, for which ready sale is found among themselves and to our sailors. The result from each gallon of molasses about 50 drinks of a liquor, of which two or three will transfer a sober man into a murderer.

Until the government shall stop the traffic, it will be necessary for a man-of-war to remain here to protect the few who are not guilty from the dangers caused by it, to leave these few people, among whom there are a fair proportion of worthy ones, almost a certainty of eventual massacre.

Now, a large proportion of the Indians themselves are opposed to hooch-noo, and I have been three times urged by respectable deputations of them to stop the sale of molasses; but the number who are addicted to its use constantly increases.

Sporadic raids upon the distilleries have but a temporary effect, and in making them a risk is incurred that serious trouble may be inaugurated through possible indiscretions of marines or sailors. A fight in which bloodshed should occur would start a trouble that would soon assume great magnitude.

It is my judgment that we will best serve American interests by so teaching and cultivating this race as to win their confidence and get them to recognize us as their friends whom it is to their interest to serve.

An experiment, which I have lately tried, strengthens me in this belief.

Hunter's Bay, where the cannery is situated, is six miles from here, and not visited from the town or harbor. In the neighborhood of the cannery there are three ranches occupied by about 80 Indian employees, with their families. Mr. Hunter wrote to the collector requesting him, as chief magistrate, to call upon me to send a force to destroy the distilleries which surrounded him, and which gave him great annoyance, and through the drunkenness produced, interfered seriously with his business. I did not consider it to be wise or my duty to comply with his request. A raid upon the villages would probably be resented by the Indians, who would undoubtedly have done injury to his property after we should have finished and returned. Besides consider that in thus surrounding himself with these Indians, Mr. Hunter takes business risk. His increased profits, through employing cheap labor, should reason him for some annoyances and drawbacks. No outrage was charged, and therefore I could not interfere and place myself in the position of keeping his servants orderly.

But it suggested itself to me that this would furnish me with a valuable test of the correctness of my views as to the best method of managing the Indians; also of the estimation in which this ship was held by the Indians, and how strong our influence was.

Accompanied by Colonel Ball, whom I invited, the three Indian policemen, and an interpreter, I went in one of the steam launches to the cannery. On our approach there was great excitement in the ranches, and we could plainly see many stills and kettles being transported to the woods in the rear. I assembled the Indians and addressed them, explaining my views on the subject of hooch-noo and warning them of the probable troubles which would spring from its use. I told them that I had come out soldiers because I believed I could get them to do right when they understood so. Calling for volunteers to smash up all the distilleries, over twenty stepped forward and as they insisted upon my going to see for myself, I did so, and in a few minutes found myself the director of an excited crowd, who, with axes, clubs, "halibut killers and stones, smashed up about forty stills and destroyed great quantities of mash and liquor. We went to all three of the ranches, our party rapidly increasing in number. Every Indian whose still was discovered and destroyed became at once active in hounding those of his neighbors.

During the whole affair I was treated with great respect and apparently ran no risk whatever, except, perhaps, from some enraged squaws from whose impending clutches Sitka Jack rescued me.

After the raid a number of Indians of the better sort thanked me for not bringing sailors and begged me to stop the sale of molasses. I found it very difficult to make them understand that while the government condemned hooch-noo it approved molasses.

Since this raid several stills have been broken up by the Indian policemen under general orders.
CONDITION OF AFFAIRS IN ALASKA.

HYDROGRAPHY.

The surveys of the approaches have been carried on during all suitable weather, of which, however, August has not furnished as much as July. One very important result has been obtained. We have discovered (for none here had any knowledge in regard to it) that the small bay on the northern face of the island of Bear-a is an excellent harbor of refuge, and it has been surveyed, the chart, &c. going by this mail to the Bureau of Navigation. The island is 12 miles south of Sitka.

We shall keep this survey going as long as there seems to be a chance of adding to the value of it. We have already located a number of new dangers.

GUARD AND STORE-HOUSE.

I have found it necessary to utilize the army prison, guard and store-house, which is situated near the wharf and to the Indian ranch. Peculiarly situated, as we are, I have, at times, a dozen men whom it is advisable to subject to short and severe punishment. These are furnished by drunken Indians, creoles, and sailors, the latter having many opportunities while on shore as working parties or on liberty. It is impossible to prevent them from obtaining hoo-teche-noo, which, unfortunately, is a rather pleasant drink. For this reason I requested of the department, in July, authority to build new cells, &c. The worthless element took advantage of our limited resources in this respect.

The Army guard-house supplies the needed prisons, and I trust that the department will approve of my thus making them useful. The cells are equal to the dimensions required, and are better ventilated than any we could build on board. Above the guard-room are large dry apartments, in which we have stowed large quantities of provisions received by last steamer, there not being room for them in the ship. The sentries who guard the prison, guard, thus, also the stores, and their presence in the location adds to the security of the town.

In this connection, I would state that we are now supplied with over eight months' provisions of all kinds except bread, of which we have over a year's supply. Since the requisition for provisions was sent in, arrangements have been made by which the crew receive good fresh bread three times a week, and we now obtain excellent venison and vegetables.

There is a great deal, and will be more, suffering for food among the Indians and creoles this winter. I would respectfully request authority to serve out such quantities as I judge proper to those in need.

WHARVES.

The government wharf is now in condition to be serviceable for many years, and we are engaged building a coal wharf on Japonski Island, in obedience to the order of the Chief of the Bureau of Equipment.

SALMON CANNERY.

The season has closed. Since it opened, in June, 6,000 cans, 40 pounds each, have been canned and exported; also a large quantity of corned salmon in barrels.

CLIMATE.

The first half of August, temperature 54° to 70°, with a large proportion of pleasant weather; during latter part, temperature 47° to 69°, with considerable rain. During the month 16 days were rain, 15 not so. Several strong southeast gales have occurred, which, however, are but slightly felt in the harbor. The dampness is beginning to give us some trouble, things stowed in the hold becoming moldy, and diseases due to climate are developing. The winter's snow still covers many of the peaks, and on August 15 a new fall of snow occurred on the mountains.

DEFICIENCY IN CREW.

Owing to desertion, transfer to hospital, &c., and to our having hurried away from San Francisco while we lacked five of our complement, we are in need of a draft of men, viz, eight sailors and eight marines. These men are not absolutely necessary, but, with the amount of work we are doing, we need a full crew. We have to maintain a guard on shore, and should have, at least, six more marines than our complement. Of our crew fifteen are Chinese servants, who would be of little account if we had any
fighting to do, and our sick-list now averages about ten. Requisitions for them go by this mail to the commandant of Mare Island yard, also explanatory letters to chief
Bureau of Equipment and Commandant of Marines. Should the department approve
of these requisitions, I would respectfully suggest that the men be sent up in a naval
steamer, a short visit of one of which would have a most beneficial effect.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.

The government established by vote of the people is in successful operation. Its
existence relieves me of one source of embarrassment. Before its formation each
every citizen applied to me for any action he might think desirable. Now, all ap-
lications are made through the chief magistrate, and we are thus enabled to, as much
possible, assist the civil authorities, instead of exercising arbitrary power.

All offenses committed by Indians outside of the white settlement I take charge of
I thus apply military government to the Indians alone.
The miners will probably join in soon; already a better feeling prevails, and the
superintendents have written to their respective companies for authority to join in.
The true reason for their objection in the first place has developed; they were afraid
of being overtaxed.

HOMESTEADS.

I would request instructions in regard to the method by which homes can be pre-
cured here. There are a number of miners, mining engineers, and others, &c., who
are desirous of settling in Sitka and bringing their families. If they could pre-empt
land here or purchase land and houses from the government, the place would take
step forward; this they cannot do.

By the decision of O. H. Browning, Secretary of the Interior, dated October 26, 1868,
directed to Hon. William H. Seward, Secretary of State, "such claims and settlemen-
t. are not only without the sanction of law, but are in direct violation of the provi-
sions of the laws of Congress applicable to public domain secured to the United States
by any treaty made with a foreign nation," &c.
The government owns, within the precincts of the town, 3,000 acres of land which
could be made valuable; and the island of Bearka would furnish grazing ground for
500 cattle. A short distance to the north are the Kataliansky Plains, where are about
250 acres of good grazing ground. Turnips, potatoes, radishes, carrots, beets, peas,
lettuce, cabbages, and cauliflowers are plentiful and good. Clover and grass and be-
ties of many varieties are abundant.

MINES.

The gold mines on Baranoff Island are assuming an importance. They are all qua-
ledges.

During the last month parties arriving by last steamer, representing San Francis-
companies, have purchased one-sixth interest in one slightly-developed mine from
original locator for $7,500, and an offer of $20,000 has been made and refused for an
un-developed ledge. Every steamer adds to the number of miners, who will form a va-
ble element in the community.

There is, I believe, ore which will pay, if judiciously worked, in every one of the
degradings in this vicinity.

Lumber, water-power, fuel, labor, and food are plentiful and cheap. Every one here
who has any money is investing in them. I shall by next steamer send a report in
detail in regard to them.

The steamer California arrived this morning, and, leaving to-morrow, I am com-
pelled to close up this report.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, U. S. N.

Hon. R. W. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, September 7, 1874.

Sir: In forwarding with my approval the inclosed letter of Passed Assistant Sur-
geon N. M. Ferreebe, I would respectfully state that if the department can grant
the authority to take the necessary steps, much suffering will be avoided this winter.
I would also urgently request that an assistant surgeon may be detailed to the ship.
In case of the death of Doctor Ferebee, or of illness which would incapacitate him, our
force would be in a sad condition. Doctor Dulaney is an invalid, and would not be
able to take charge of all cases of sickness.
Very respectfully,

Hon. R. W. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN (3d rate),
Off Sitka, Alaska, September 6, 1879.

SIR: I would respectfully call your attention to the following statements:
There is in Sitka and in the Indian village a great deal of sickness, due in a great
measure to bad hygienic surroundings, little or no attention being paid to ventilation
or change of diet. The rate of mortality among the sick is excessive.
There is no medical man in Sitka except Doctor Dulaney, deputy United States
revenue collector, who charitably attends the sick, and from his private purse furnishes
medicines. There is in Sitka a building belonging to the government formerly used
as a hospital, which, by work done by this ship and an expense of $50, could be re-
paired sufficiently well to receive patients. To accommodate 15 patients there would
be needed as many beds, mattresses, and bed linen. To furnish diet for 15 patients
would require only a very small outlay of money.
Medical stores might be supplied by allowing to this ship an extra supply of medi-
cines from the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.
Medical attendance could be supplied by the medical officer of this ship and by
Doctor Dulaney, deputy collector, who has kindly signified his willingness to assist in
every way in his power.
Respectfully,

N. M. FEREBEE,
Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. N.
Commander L. A. BEARDSLEE, U. S. N.,
Commanding United States Ship Jamestown, Sitka, Alaska.

Approved and respectfully referred to the honorable Secretary of the Navy.
L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, Commanding, Senior Officer Present.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, September 7, 1879.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the two letters from the de-
partment, dated July 26 and August 9, 1879, in both of which the department so kindly
recognizes the efforts of all on board of this vessel to carry out its views. I have to
say that such letters will strengthen me in my somewhat difficult task. I shall en-
deavor to continue to merit the approval of the department, but, as in many cases
which arise, I am compelled to either act promptly on my own judgment or not to act,
I must in advance state that between the possibility of being considered neglectful of,
or over zealous in the performance of duty, I shall always select the latter alternative,
and shall act upon my best judgment as to what is right. If I fail, I trust that the
department will look with leniency upon any error of judgment which does not involve
serious consequences.
I have communicated to the officers and crew the flattering expressions of the de-
partment and they are much gratified.
Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander U. S. N.

Hon. R. W. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy.
16 CONDITION OF AFFAIRS IN ALASKA.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, Alaska, October 5, 1879.

SIR: I respectfully submit herewith a report as to condition of affairs in Sitka and vicinity.

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

The month has been marked by perfect freedom from drunkenness, fighting, or disorder of any kind in the Indian ranch. A great number of Indians have returned from hunting, &c., and the ranch is no longer deserted, but the returns have ceased to be celebrated by potlatches; the Indians throng the white settlement, but there are no disturbances. The residents state that there has never been so quiet a month.

When we first arrived, every night was made hideous by drunken orgies, and many by fights. I have not had cause to even censure an Indian since the raid upon the canneries ranches by themselves. I attribute the changes first of all to the influence of the Indians in our employ. There are twelve of them; three as steady policemen; nine as laborers and boatmen, by day, and to preserve order nights; they furnish a large canoe capable of carrying twenty men, and are very useful in helping the surveying party, landing them in places where our boats would be stove.

These men have undertaken to suppress the distillation of hoo-tchee-noo, and of their own accord have made several descents upon distilleries established in the vicinity, and brought on board in triumph the smashed apparatus and captured material. Their task has been rendered somewhat easier than it will be next month by the comparatively small stock of molasses in Sitka, the cause of which I will give in writing of the civil government.

On the other hand, there has been an unusually exciting cause for sprees. About the 25th of September, news was brought by Indian canoe-men that there had been a big fight up in the Tchilcat country between two families of the Tchilcats, viz., the Klockwatons and the Onochetades, and that the chief of the Klockwatons, Klockkutch (head chief of the Tchilcats), was seriously wounded, and that a number on both sides had been killed; the inciting cause having been a barrel of molasses, with which Klockkutch had given a potlatch.

There are quite a number of Tchilcats living in Sitka, having intermarried with the Sitka families. Among them are Dick, one of my policemen, who is a nephew of Klockkutch and a very intelligent Indian, speaking considerable English and reading and writing a little; also Saska, our head boatman, a very good and leading Indian. They, assisted by "Sitka Jack," restrained the usual drunk which takes place on such excitements, and, except that for a couple of days the miners could obtain no packers, they all having come in town to a caucus, no untoward event occurred. They however, organized an expedition to visit the scene of contemplated trouble, and, on the 3d of October, three canoe loads, about 30 Indians in all, started for the Tchilcat country (up Chatham Straits).

If this vessel was a steamer, I should have gone too, for these Indian wars are almost interminable and will do much to hazard American interests here. I did the next best thing in my power, and judging that the influence of such men as Dick Sitka Jack, Stickcesh, and others who knew us and could explain to those who did not the value of white friendship and danger of the opposite would be very powerful, I resolved to secure it for our side, so helped to fit out the expedition, furnishing them with flag, provisions, &c., and receiving from them the promise that they would do their best to prevent trouble.

The Rose is in running condition again, and some of the Tchilcats saw, and will remember, her howitzer and Gatling gun at Wrangel, and will hesitate in taking any steps which might bring her, so armed, up the straits.

THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

While thus the Indian ranch is under comparative good government and discipline, the white settlement, of far inferior numbers, has presented a contrast. During the month it has been reported to me that one "discharged soldier," a drunkard, who, among his drugs, keeps barrels of molasses, had shot at his wife with a revolver; that another "discharged soldier," a saloon-keeper, had, at midnight, beaten shamefully a woman who occupied, temporarily, the position of wife to him, and had turned her into the street; that another, a member of the common council, had endangered life by reckless revolver shooting at dogs on a neighbor's stoop; and many minor offenses.

As there was a civil government established to meet such emergencies, all of which were due to drunkenness, I took no steps further than in one case to send a small boat to stop the row. The government took no action in either, the sum of six dollars per month set aside for the purpose having been insufficient to provide them with a police force of sufficient ability and courage.
The attempt to form a local government was wise, but the method of its formation was not so. The idea was good, but it was badly put into shape; there was not sufficient consultation and exchange of views, nor a thorough understanding of the relative value of the interests involved. The men, who once form a strong, and soon will form the strongest, part of the community, refused to enter into the arrangement; they had reasons, which I then doubted but now believe, to think that their interests would not be fairly represented.

The refusal was couched in offensive words, and a quarrel sprung up, in which, as is usual, there was wrong and right upon both sides. Under such circumstances little could be expected of even a capable organization of the citizens of Sitka. Such an organization was not made; some of the men who were elected to the September steamer. One of them, named Sam Goldstein, a Jew, received a large stock by this steamer. The others, who had kept their compact, were naturally menaced, for the welfare of the community aid reputations which did not command respect. Colonel Ball, who was elected to be chief magistrate, has done his utmost to effect some good, but, with the slight assistance given him by his “councilmen,” and harassed by the requirements of his position as collector, has been unable to accomplish anything of value. For example, the merchants entered into a compact not to order molasses by the September steamer. One of them, named Sam Goldstein, a Jew, received a large stock by this steamer. The others, who had kept their compact, were naturally menaced, and delivered the lawfully imported stuff. The consequence is a general back down from the compact, and the October steamer will bring large quantities, and drunkenness and riot will re-begin.

A heavy blow was dealt to the attempt at reform by the public opinion, in the Alaska Appeal, a little sheet widely taken here, of a portion of my report of July 15, which, without its context, places me in the position of singling out certain people here alone to censure for the chaotic condition of affairs, whereas, in my report, the action of the government itself is criticized with equal freedom. The paragraphs reproduced were those in which, in general terms, I classify and describe the whites in Sitka. This has greatly enraged the Jewish portion of the community, who feel themselves hit. I am still convinced that my remarks were perfectly just, as, however, lies among and the discharged soldiers, and that no person innocent has been in any way reflected upon; but I find upon becoming better acquainted with the Russian creole element of the population that I have committed a mistake when I pronounced so sweeping a condemning judgment upon them. I find that although a large portion of them are, as represented, lazy and troublesome characters, yet there is among them a fair proportion of well-behaved and fairly industrious persons, who, now that the mines open up a resource, are willing to labor. My adverse impressions were caused by the facts that, during the earlier portion of our sojourn, there was hardly a day passed without its case of drunkenness, riot, attempts (and in one case successful) at murder, hoo-teche-noo selling, &c., and upon investigation the culprits were always the creoles.

In the mean time I, in coming in contact with the better portion of them, understood that they were Russians and not creoles. I now desire to correct my error and to do justice. There are Russian creoles, dwellers in Sitka, who are people of education and refinement, and remarkable for their kind and thoughtful care of the poor. We, who are thrown into contact with them, value highly their friendship and appreciate their characters. We have learned, in fact, that, except the priest, there is no other Russian here; all whom we so considered are of mingled Russian and Alaskan parentage.

The character of the community is also changing for the better, through the monthly arrival of miners, who, up to this date, have proved to be men who came to work, and not of the desperado class, which eventually follows them up. Some of them have brought families. They experience great inconvenience upon arrival, from the fact that they cannot procure homes. The government owns land and buildings which could be let or sold to good advantage, if any one here were empowered to act.

CLIMATE AND STATE OF HEALTH OF SHIP'S COMPANY.

September has been a very rainy and unhealthy month. It rained, more or less, on 26 days, and the total rainfall was not less than a foot. We are not provided with a suitable rain-gage, and our attempt to manufacture one has not resulted in the production of a very accurate instrument. We are able, however, to approximate. One shower lasted 17 days, with but slight intermission. Our spar-deck has become thoroughly water-soaked, and the holds and lower decks are getting damp, although we have taken every precaution to keep them dry as possible. To-day, October 6th, which is bright and warm, has been devoted to breaking out holds, drying gear, &c.
The effect of the dampness is very bad upon the health of the ship's company, and we have many sick. We have sent three to the hospital at Mare Island, and this steamer will carry four more, one of whom, Colin Douglas, coxswain, an excellent man, is breaking down with rheumatism, but is still able to perform the duty of taking care of an insane and a completely bed-ridden rheumatic patient, whom I send at the same time.

The medical officer experiences great difficulties. When once a man begins to run down it seems to be impossible to build him up again. One man, a landsman, named Martin Mung, has died from typhus fever, and several others of our men are losing health, strength, and flesh. The only checks to an increasing sick-list are the very rare intervals of a little sunshine. We have taken every precaution possible. Indians do much of our out-door work. We have six stoves, which are kept going; two on berth and four on gun deck. Have turned the spare gunports into sashed windows, and I have made requisition for lumber with which to build a house over the opening on the spar-deck, now covered with gratings and tarpaulins, through which the largest steam-launch is stowed. The berth-deck is shellacked, and the spar-deck will be bright varnished if we ever get it dry enough.

We have plenty of good, wholesome food; venison, ducks, grouse, fish, and several vegetables are abundant; and our water is obtained from a mountain brook, and is greatly, snow-water. I would again respectfully urge upon the department the necessity of this ship for an assistant surgeon. Dr. Ferebee is constantly busy, and should he give out we would be unable to procure medical help. Five third-rates, commanded by my juniors, have two medical officers each. No ship needs them more than we do.

**HYDROGRAPHIC.**

The heavy sea outside and almost constant rain have seriously retarded our work, which, however, is so far advanced that three or four more suitable days will finish the hydrographic work; the topographic is completed.

The character of the islands of the group is such that a number of accidents have been unavoidable; many of them consist of crags and ravines, and the officers carrying the instruments have received severe falls and have broken several of the instruments. I think that we got off cheap, in that no lives have been lost; and the chart will pay for the instruments.

Over 150 miles of sounding lines have been run; over 4,000 soundings obtained; a great number of incorrectly charted shoals corrected, and several new dangers discovered.

**MINES AND MINING.**

This report is assuming such length that a report upon the above subjects, which I am preparing, will be sent separate. Here, I will but say that, from personal observations upon two trips to the mining regions, I am fully convinced that there are, in this immediate vicinity, a large number of very valuable gold mines which can be worked very profitably, and that the stories as to their being "salted", &c., are utterly without foundation.

**STEAM-LAUNCHES.**

Both of our launches are in good condition. The first launch was too low, and we have built her up 14 inches, and it is a great improvement. The second launch had not sufficient capacity for water; we have enlarged one tank, so as to add 50 per cent. to her capacity, but finding the job much more difficult and expensive than we had contemplated, owing to our inability to procure suitable iron, we left the other as it was.

Our hydrographic work being about over for the season, we have removed crew, haft, &c., from the boat, and rigged her as a sailing-launch, and she proves an excellent one.

**DEMISE OF THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.**

The following document, posted on the door of the custom-house, signals the fall of this republic, whose rise and progress I have described:

"To the residents of Sitka mining district:

The undersigned, elected under the Provisional Government of Sitka, have become convinced that their power to act efficiently is greatly impaired by the fact that a large and important element of the population was not represented in the formation of said
government, have decided to surrender their offices back to the people, and, for the purpose of having them decide upon the action now to be taken, do invite a general meeting of all of the men of the district, to be held at the custom-house, on Sunday, October 12, at —.

(Signed)

"M. D. BALL,
"NAT. CORCORAN,
"T. McCauley,
"N. G. Metropolsky,
"F. Hallinan."

This step restores the status to that which existed upon our arrival, with, however, a greatly modified public opinion.

The collector now, in virtue of his office as such, represents the civil, and this ship the military, elements of the government. We have to-day tried both thoroughly. Last night a man named John Williams, a native of Scotland, and formerly a man-of-war’s man, emptied five barrels of a “British bull-dog” revolver, cal. 31, into the body of a miner named Edward Roy, a native of England. The affair took place after a drunk at the saloons of Messrs. Mooney and Allard (discharged United States soldiers). Williams, in great danger of being lynched by the excited miners, of whom about forty are in town, ran to our guard-house, surrendered himself to the corporal, who brought him on board; he was placed under our sentry’s charge to await investigation to-day. He had received two, not dangerous, stab wounds.

To-day I detailed a board of three officers with instructions to co-operate with a jury of citizens, which had been summoned by Colonel Ball, and to investigate the affray. The entire proceedings are embodied in a separate report. The evidence amounted to little more than the statements of both parties, and the result was a recommendation that Williams be held for trial. I shall so hold him subject to instructions from the department. This is necessary for his own safety, as he would be lynched if released, and to the preservation of peace, as any attempt at lynching would be met at once by the force under my command.

The general result is good, in that, first, our course has won over the miners, who are now ready to co-operate with us, and a new and stronger government will arise, phoenix-like, from the ashes of the old, and the case presents, in the strongest possible light, the necessities of this country. The whole lawful power of the United States Government, with full co-operation of all respectable citizens, have been brought to bear upon a serious offense against public safety and human life (the wounded man will probably die); and the utmost we can do is to hold the offender a prisoner to be tried by somebody at some indefinite time, and only because I, having the power, am willing to assume the responsibility, believing that in so doing I am acting in the interests of right.

But for the presence of this ship this town would have undoubtedly been the scene of a lynching and possible riot to-day; but, with such backing as we can give, the orderly element of the miners will preserve order in the town.

October 12—10 p. m.

The steamer California arrived on the 10th, and is to leave at daylight to-morrow, unless prevented by the weather, which to-night is threatening a southeaster. It is possible that during this month her schedule time will be so changed to give her the advantage of more light in the most difficult portions of the passage, that instead of arriving here on 9th or 10th, she will not till 23d or 24th November, in which case, as she is our only means of communication, our next month’s mail may be two weeks behind the usual time. This change of time may not, however, take place until December.

Indications now are that, the miners heartily co-operating, we will soon have a sound government under way.

Contrary to expectations, the man shot three nights ago has not died, and seems to be improving. Should he not die, I would suggest that the ends of justice might be attained by simply sending the man Williams away. I don’t believe that any reliable evidence can be got in the case. What we need is law here.

Very respectfully,

L. A. Beardslee,
Commander, United States Navy.

Hon. R. W. Thompson,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, Alaska, October 11, 1879.

Sir: I inclose herein a correspondence and proceedings of a mixed court in case of an affray between one Williams and one Roy, viz:

1. Letter from Colonel Ball requesting co-operation.
B. Reply to same.
C. Copy of orders to Lieutenant Symonds.
D. Letter of Colonel Ball inclosing proceedings of court.
E. Deposition (ante-mortem) of Roy.
F. Testimony taken by court.
G. Finding of same and recommendation.

In forwarding this correspondence, &c., I deem it just to the officers upon the court to state that they in no way managed the affair, but, by their presence, insured to the official by their signatures that all was as represented.

The man Williams was sent ashore under a guard of marines with loaded rifles. My verbal instructions to Lieutenant Symonds were that the prisoner must be protected at all hazards. These were made necessary by threats of lynching which had been freely uttered by the excited miners, the wounded man being a member of the "miners' union," the shooter an outsider. The miners, however, showed no disposition to interfere after they found that we had taken hold of it, and our doing so had greatly gratified them.

Miners arrived by the steamer of yesterday—men who had been at work at the Cassier mines, and most of whom had been unsuccessful. These men themselves houseless upon arrival. I have sanctioned their taking possession of, putting in order, and dwelling in the Army Hospital building, which is commodious and empty.

I think I can safely count on their services, should I need any extra force.

I have to-day by personal investigation found out some additional evidence in connection with the affray, which I will now lay before the department.

Roy, in his deposition, states that "Williams came to my cabin," &c., and no evidence was taken as to the correctness of this statement. Williams states to me, at the most, that it was more his cabin than Roy's; that the two were "chumming," and that he, Williams, had given security for the rent, and that he had lived in this cabin about two weeks. He referred me to Mr. A. Cohen, a brewer, for confirmation of his statement. I had Mr. C. summoned to the collector's office, and, in the presence of Colonel Ball, questioned him, and his statement fully confirmed that of Williams. Thus Williams, instead of breaking into another man's house, simply broke into one where he had a right to enter. This fact, in my judgment, materially alters the status of the affair, which is now very simple. Both men were drunk, and had a row; one went home first and locked the other out. The latter, enraged at finding himself locked out, burst in. There was a fight, and both men got hurt. With the same evidence, had Roy's knife gone one inch deeper, and Williams's bullets done less damage the position of the parties would have been reversed.

I would respectfully ask for instructions in regard to the prisoner Williams. His own safety requires his confinement in this ship. If Roy dies, as is probable, Williams should be tried by a competent court; therefore, I shall assume the responsibility of holding him for orders.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, Commanding.

Hon. R. W. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

A.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,
Sitka, Alaska, October 9, 1879—11 a.m.

CAPTAIN: You have, before this hour, learned the fact that a miner was dangerously probably fatally, shot in the city last night; the offending party having, as I understand, surrendered himself to you.

The provisional government here having failed in sustaining itself, and its officials having called a meeting to resign their trust, there is, just at this time, no form of civil authority here strictly empowered to take charge of the case, unless I assume it, as collector. I therefore request that you, as representing the other branch of the government, co-operate with me in the steps necessary to preserve the matter in proper form for justice to be administered, when we shall be instructed from Washington as to the manner in which it is to be accomplished. I have called a commission of three citizens, to meet this afternoon at two o'clock, and take the wounded man's testimony and such other evidence as may be obtainable, and would be pleased if you would send a jury of your officers to assist them and produce the offender for identification.

Very respectfully,

Capt. L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commanding United States Ship Jamestown.

M. D. BALL, Collector.
CONDITION OF AFFAIRS IN ALASKA.

B.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, October 9, 1879.

SIR: In compliance with your request of this date, a board of officers, of which Lieut.-F. M. Symonds is senior member, has been directed to co-operate with the jury called together by yourself.

The prisoner is and will remain under military control, and will be sent, suitably guarded, to be identified by the wounded man.

I must urge upon you the necessity of exerting your influence at once to allay excitement among the miners to such extent that no person or persons will make any attempt at lawless proceedings. Such a course would deal Alaska interests a severe blow; the contrary course will inure to its benefit.

Respectfully,

Col. M. D. BALL,
Collector.

C.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, October 9, 1879.

SIR: You are hereby appointed senior member of a board of officers, who, in compliance with the request of Collector M. D. Ball, the only representative of civil authority in Sitka, will cooperate with a jury of citizens, called together by Colonel Ball, in investigating the circumstances connected with the affray which last night took place between two miners, named (as reported) John Williams and Edward Roy. Passed Assistant Surgeon N. M. Ferebee and Master G. C. Hanus, U. S. N., will be associated with you in this duty.

The investigation will take place as early as possible on account of the dangerous condition of one of the parties.

Respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, United States Navy.

D.

CUSTOM HOUSE, Sitka, October 9, 1879—5 p. m.

CAPTAIN: As notified by you in your letter of this date, the board of officers appointed to cooperate with one of the citizens in investigating the case of the shooting of Edwin R. Roy, reported and entered upon the examination which is just closed.

I inclose you herewith a copy of their finding, and also of the deposition of Roy taken by me, and made in full consciousness of his situation, and under oath; also copy of the other evidence.

I shall report the case to my department also.

I gather from your letter that you will keep charge of the prisoner until the result of the wounds of Roy is known, and instructions received from Washington. I hope such is your intention.

Very respectfully,

M. D. BALL, Collector.

Capt. L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commanding United States Ship Jamestown.

E.

Deposition of Edwin Robert Roy.

My name is Edwin Robert Roy; was born in Manchester, England; am thirty-seven years old, married; my wife resides in Newry, Ireland.

"Scotty" and I were at Mooney's saloon, singing and enjoying ourselves, last night. My song was well liked, but Scotty's disapproved, so he commenced calling me names,
such as sons of b——. Afterwards I went home and went to bed, and had been there about three-quarters of an hour, when he came to my cabin and demanded admittance, calling me sons of b—— again, which I refused. He then kicked the door-panel in, and I went to replace and secure it, and he jumped on me and grabbed my throat, and threw me down and commenced emptying his revolver into my body. I think he fired five shots.

(John Williams, or “Scotty,” was here brought in and fully identified by Roy as the man who shot him.)

Roy continued: I never carried a weapon in my life. Had a small pocket-knife in my pocket, to cut tobacco with. Did not use it in the scuffle at all, or cut Scotty with it.

F.

Testimony taken in the case of the examination of John Williams for the shooting of Edward R. Roy, at Sitka, Alaska, on the night of October 8, 1879.

STATEMENT OF THE PRISONER.

My name is John Williams; am called “Scotty” because I am a Scotchman. I went to Roy’s house last night about half past ten—knocked at the door; he shoved it open, said he would fix me, and caught me with one hand, using the knife with the other. I told him to leave off the first time he struck me, and he didn’t, and I used the shotgun on him to save my life. I went and surrendered myself afterwards. The door was bolted inside and opened outward. Could not see what Roy struck with; it was a knife or some sharp instrument.

(Prisoner’s coat shown, containing three cuts on the left side, under the arm, about an inch long each; cuts of the same size on his outer shirt, and one of the same size and several smaller on his under shirt; a cut or stab about half an inch long and one-eighth of an inch deep over the seventh rib, and two scratches below.)

I think I shot four times. The shooting took place outside of the house. Roy fell to the ground; I don’t know whether he broke the door or not. Had no row with Roy but a sort of quarrel in Stewart’s bar-room. Made no threats against him there. Could not swear that I did or did not call him hard names. Had some singing there and also at Mooney’s. Both of us were on our feet when he grabbed me; but after I commenced firing I could not swear how it was. I think he fell after the second shot.

I shot him in the chest. Could not swear that I asked him for it. I felt the stab and the blood trickling before I fired the first shot, and he gave the stab while he was drawing the shooter. He was under the influence of liquor, and so was I, but I don’t think he was drunk. He grabbed me by the right side of my coat collar by the throat, I could not say which.

WM. STEWART:

Knows the prisoner and the man who was shot. Heard a little quarrel between the last night. It was between ten and one o’clock somewhere. It originated by Scotty thinking he could sing better than Teddy (Roy). There was a small strife between them, and a miner named Donelly stopped it. Scotty was tending the bar for me, and I told him we would close the doors, as I did not want to have any fuss there. I did so, and locked up and went off, leaving the three (Teddy, Scotty, and Donelly) on the sidewalk. I heard no hard names called. Both sung, and, it seems, Teddy could beat Scotty, and there was some hard feeling on account of it. There were two — in the house, and Teddy said he was going home with one of them, and Scotty said, “I’ll be d----d if you will.” I recollect putting Teddy outside first, and then the three of us, taking a drink.

JOHN PLATOFF:

Lives close to the cabin Roy slept in. During the night heard four shots and a man calling. Saw the man that was shot go to Vlasoff’s house and try to get in; and then he came to my house, and I went out and saw he was shot in the hand and his clothes on fire in his right side. I put the man in his own house and went for Billy the Bug, who he said he wanted. Did not notice if the door was broken—it opens outward—the shots were in quick succession. Saw no blood on the floor of the house or ground. Heard no words between the parties.

The wounds were viewed by the board of examination and are three in number: one through the right wrist, one on the right side, a bruise and burn, and one through the body on the left side, which the surgeon thinks is most probably fatal.
Finding of the commission.

The undersigned, a mixed commission of officers of the United States ship Jamestown and of citizens of Sitka, convened by order of Commander L. A. Beardslee, and request of M. D. Ball, collector, to inquire into the circumstances of the shooting of Edwin Roy on the night of October 8, 1879, having taken all the evidence available in the case, do certify that from the same we are of the opinion that John Williams should be held to await the issue of the wounds of said Roy and for trial for the said shooting, subject to such orders as may be received from the authorities at Washington.

SITKA, October 9, 1879.

F. M. SYMONDS, Lieutenant, U.S.N.
N. M. FEREBEE, Past Assistant Surgeon, U.S.N.
G. C. HANUS, Master, U.S.N.
M. P. BERRY.
G. E. PILZ.
JOHN G. BRADY.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN (3d rate),
Off Sitka, Alaska, October 11, 1879.

SIR: In obedience to your order I have succeeded in gaining the following information:

The house was rented by a Mrs. Senatmeso to two men; she does not know their names, but they were the two engaged in the shooting affair. Mr. A. Cohen advanced Edward Roy the sum of $2.25 to pay the rent. John Williams informed Mr. J. Cohen that if Roy did not pay the rent he (Williams) would.

Corporal Gray, by my order, went to the house and took from a chest the following articles claimed and identified by Williams: "Two shirts, flannel; two drawers, two socks, one overshirt, one pair overhauls."

The wounded man, Edward Roy, admitted to me that he and Williams both "camped together."

Very respectfully,

H. G. ELLSWORTH,
First Lieutenant U.S.M.C., Commanding Guard.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, Alaska, November 10, 1879.

SIR: The steamer California, which arrived yesterday morning, sails to-morrow for Portland. She brought as passengers about fifty people, partly miners and partly the rough element which usually follows an influx of miners, viz, rumsellers, gamblers, and a lot of semi-civilized squaws.

There is every indication that in spring there will be a mining excitement here.

There has been nothing of importance transpired since the date of my last report (October 12). The Indians are still well-behaved and orderly, and have given no trouble whatever. A possible outbreak, caused by the exciting effects of hoo-teche-noo upon some of our men, who raised a disturbance in the ranch, was nipped in the bud by the prompt arrest and punishment of the culprits.

Most of the miners have been driven in from the mountains by the snow, and the town is rapidly developing into a mining camp. The Stewart Tunnel is the only mine far enough advanced to continue its operations through the winter. The mill of this mine has run but four days during the month, the water-supply having been shut off by ice. I am informed by the superintendent that, owing to the remarkable richness of the rock crushed and treated during the four days, the "clean up" for the month...
amounts to over $1,800, gold, which goes down by this steamer, which on the inward trip has brought engines, boilers, &c., to be put up at once. In my last I reported the demise of the provisional government. I find that I was premature in so reporting. It was still in existence at that date, as I subsequently learned by letter from Colonel Ball, the chief magistrate, a copy of which is appended. I may be pardoned for my error, inasmuch as the character of the government was not one the existence or non-existence of which would attract attention.

At the meeting referred to the miners attended, prepared to co-operate with the "merchants," but the latter, having for various reasons (among which was the necessity of taxation, the possibility of interference with traffic in molasses, of drunken and disorderly persons being arrested and fined, and probably some others best known to themselves) concluded that they did not wish any government, did not attend. So no new one was formed, and the experiment has proved a dead failure, principally for lack of suitable material.

Our hydrographic work, work on wharves, &c., has been suspended for the season. September was a very rainy, and the first part of October a very cold and stormy month. Our men were becoming affected by rheumatism and other diseases produced by exposure. We have devoted ourselves to bringing up our drills and exercises.

The health of the ship's company has greatly improved. Taking advantage of a few bright, frosty days, the holds were broken out and everything dried and aired. This and sunshine have had marked beneficial effects.

There were several sharp southeast gales during the month, which, deflected by the mountains, became northeast and east-northeast in the harbor, and, although no sea arose, the strength of the winds was such that our anchors dragged considerably. One, the starboard bower, lying to the southeast, and backed by the stream, planted between bowlders on Harbor Island, dragged its backer off into deep water. We have, therefore, removed, and now lie as safe as is possible.

Our port bower, with 90 fathoms, backed by 45 fathoms, shackle into a large Russian mooring anchor, embedded in the masonry of the wharf, east-northeast, the starboard bower, with 90 fathoms, backed by 45 fathoms, on the stream anchor, which is bedded among the bowlders at high-water mark on Harbor Island, bearing southeast, and the latter backed by a hawser carried across the island and made fast to a great bowlder and both quarters well secured with long scopes and backing on starboard to southwest, I think we are safe for the winter.

We have lain here for nearly five months. The climate has not been as bad as expected, as the following abstract will show you:

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<th>Hours of snow and hail</th>
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<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Average</td>
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I would most respectfully state that we need a draft of men, both marines and sailors, and, very greatly, an assistant surgeon.

We have found it necessary for the better preservation of order and security of government property to establish a guard on shore. We have fitted up the Army guard-house (shown at the right, in illustration No. 8, page 84, in Morris's Report). The upper part of this building is used as a storeroom for bread and provisions, also for a school and church. The custom-house, wharf, warehouse and castle, and the houses of the collector and deputy collector, all government property, are adjacent.

I have applied for eight more marines. Through various causes our crew is reduced sixteen men, and we need the full complement, especially if we should have to land a battalion.

A school has been started, and is maintained by a joint subscription of the citizens, officers, and your office, through its contingent fund, on which I have felt that you would justify my drawing to the extent of $30 per month to pay for the services of an interpreter, who teaches and interprets daily. There are about 45 scholars, and the brightness and intelligence of many of the creole children are surprising. Children
who, six weeks ago did not know a letter of the alphabet now spell and read readily, and some write words of three and four letters. Mr. Alonzo A. Austin, a truly Christian gentleman, has charge of the school, and Miss Kashavenoff, a young lady of Russian and Alaskan parentage, assists and interprets. I cannot see how I can better obey that portion of my instructions which calls upon me to "advance all American interests" than to thus aid in bringing these, our future citizens, out of the depths of ignorance. I have found it necessary to order Passed Assistant Paymaster Rnger to proceed to Portland and obtain money. He has been unable to procure sufficient here for our needs, being compelled to gather it up in small sums, and has thus nearly exhausted his check-books. I append copy of letter from him upon which I base my action. His traveling expenses will be less than the express charge on the funds. The mines absorb a large quantity of money in circulation here.

The United States marshal at Portland, Oreg., has sent by this steamer a deputy with warrant for the arrest of the prisoner Williams, upon charge of "assault, with pistol, with intent to kill." I have gladly delivered him over, as it thus saves the department all trouble in the matter. The wounded man, Roy, has so far recovered, in spite of a ball through his lungs, that he, too, will be taken by the marshal as witness. It seems that both parties are "wanted" in Portland for a garroting scrape of which they are suspected.

There is nothing further of importance to report.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, COLLECTOR'S OFFICE,
Sitka, Alaska, October 25, 1879.

CAPTAIN: It becomes my duty to inform you that, at the meeting held this evening in the custom-house, called to consider the subject of the formation of some civil government for this section, the only action taken was the appointment of a committee to prepare and forward a petition to Congress.

The failure of the lately attempted "provisional government" to sustain itself was announced, and the meeting (which was very small) decided that it was inadvisable to repeat the experiment. I had, on the 15th September last, presented my own resignation as chief magistrate to the "council," having found the position incompatible with my official duties as collector. I was induced to withhold it till the people had an opportunity to decide on some other arrangement to take the place of that they had unsuccessfully tried, by the assurance that my resignation would be followed by that of all the other members.

As I cannot, consistently with known and defined duties, continue the effort to discharge those which are both uncertain and uncongenial, I shall make no further attempt to assert any authority with which the late action of the people may be supposed to have clothed me. The people have had a full opportunity to frame another organization, and having failed to do so, I must consider myself released from further action in behalf of the movement.

In making this announcement I will add my conviction that only a condition of extreme personal danger, from lawless whites or threatening Indians (either of which the presence of your ship prevents), can arouse the community to such action as would impart the necessary vitality to any form of government, self-organized, and lacking the authority of that organic law to which this people have long, rightfully, but vainly, looked for some organization charged with the protection of their persons, and the administration of their property.

Very respectfully,

M. D. BALL, Collector.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN (3d rate),
Sitka, Alaska, November 10, 1879.

SIR: I would respectfully beg leave to inform you that I find it impossible to supply myself with the necessary funds for disbursement on ship-board in this place. The public money in my charge being deposited in the United States sub-treasury in
San Francisco, and there not being sufficient on shore to cash my checks, I would respectfully recommend that I be ordered to Portland, Oreg., to supply myself with necessary funds. I would respectfully state that I believe this means of procuring money to be the safest and the most economical for the government.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES A. RING
Passed Assistant Paymaster, U.S.N.

Commander L. A. BEARDSLEE, U. S. N.,
Commanding United States Ship Jamestown,
and Senior Officer Present.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Off Sitka, Alaska, December 19, 1859.

Sir: The mail steamer which made her last visit on the 9th of November is not expected within a day or two, and as she will make but twenty-four hours' stay, during which the correspondence which has been accumulating six weeks must be attended to, I write thus in advance such portions of my usual monthly report as require no longer delay.

There has been very little of importance occurred during the interval. The Indians remained orderly, and we have had no trouble of any kind. An occasional raid was made by the Indian policemen upon some newly-discovered hoo-teche-noo distillery, but we have had to punish but one Indian, for a case of aggravated assault, when drunk upon another. He was arrested by Annabootz and locked up. In this case I permitted the Indians to settle it their own way. After three powwows, the family of the injured man received from that of the injurer twenty blankets, and the affair was considered settled and I released the prisoner.

The whites have given no trouble; for a community utterly without law, the absence of disorder is wonderful.

CLIMATE.

November was a very disagreeable month. It rained or snowed on 23 of the days. For the first 28 days the average temperature was 42°.3, with extremes of 58° and 22°. The 29th and 30th were very cold, the temperature averaging 12°.5, with extremes of 17° and 9°.

The snow at no time was over an inch in depth, and soon melted away.

Several severe gales were experienced, most of them from the northeast quadrant, although outside the wind was southeast. During the night of the 16th-17th, a very heavy northeast gale shifted suddenly to the southeast and south, and parting an 8-inch hawser, which, attached to a large boulder on shore, backed a 900-pound anchor planted between boulders, which, with 30 fathoms of chain, backed our starboard bow with 75 fathoms, and before the squall moderated we had dragged into dangerous proximity to the rocks on the northern side of the harbor. Fortunately our port bow chain caught around the stone pile of the old wharf and checked us in time. We have remoored, and I think can hold out. A diagram of our moorings and report subject is sent to Bureau of Navigation by this mail.

December, up to date, has been much pleasanter. The average temperature has been 31°.7, with extremes 17° to 43°. There have been 62 hours rain and 60 of snow. A fair proportion of bright, clear weather, with but one or two storms of much

HYDROGRAPHIC WORK.

Our office work is finished, and by this steamer we send to the Bureau of Navigation a set of charts, which is the only correct set in existence of this archipelago sound. Also a tidal establishment which coincides closely with that of the Coast Survey. I would state that Lieutenant Symonds and Master Hanus have enticed themselves to the commendation of the department for the zeal and ability they have displayed in carrying out this important work.

GUARD-HOUSE.

The establishment of the guard-house on shore has turned out to be a successful experiment. The presence of the small force of reliable men has a good effect in preserving order, as they furnish protection to the most valuable of the government
buildings and to the school and church. They also proved very useful on the 6th instant, when the custom-house caught fire from a defective flue and was saved from destruction by the exertions of our men under charge of Lieutenant-Commander Rockwell. Very little damage was done, and what there was we have repaired.

**SCHOOL.**

The school thrives, and about 30 of the creole children are learning to speak English and to read and write. Their progress is very satisfactory. They are bright and intelligent.

**DECEMBER 21.**

The steamer arrived this morning and sails to-morrow. The collector leaves by her. He will be subpoenaed to Portland to testify in the case of John Williams, the man whose arrest for shooting Roy I reported to department. I, as reported, turned Williams over to the United States marshal in November. In the possible event of my being at any time subpoenaed by the United States court at Portland, obedience to said subpoena would involve my absence from my command for over a month, and I would be very uncertain as to my duty in the case, and would respectfully request advice from the department.

There is nothing further of importance to communicate.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, Commanding.

**United States Ship Jamestown (3d rate),**

**Sitka, Alaska, January 20, 1880.**

Sir: In anticipation of the arrival of the steamer within a day or two, I thus antedate my monthly report of condition of affairs.

**INDIANS.**

There has been no trouble whatever with the Indians. The number who live in this vicinity this winter is far less than I had been led to expect; and of those here, there are not many who can be considered in any way dangerous. I have appointed as policeman Cathaan, the chief of the most dangerous tribe, fully satisfied that it is the best policy, for the future, to win him and his tribe to loyalty to the government and friendship to the whites. I have made his appointment and the Indian affairs here the subject of a separate report.

**WHITES.**

The severe weather having caused a closing up of the mines, the town is quite full of miners and their followers; there is, however, as little disorder as could be expected in any community not Quakers.

On the Russian Christmas day there was a distribution among them and to the Indians of food and other necessaries, which were bought with money contributed by citizens and the Jamestown officers. On this occasion I authorized the expenditure of four barrels of beef and a quantity of bread as the contribution of the government to the fund, feeling no manner of doubt but that you and the chief of Bureau of Provisions and Clothing would have so directed me to act could you have been appealed to.

**CLIMATE.**

Up to this date the winter has proved unusually stormy and cold, and more snow has fallen than in any previous year.

The storm on November 16 and 17 from southward and eastward, during which we dragged (as reported by last mail), did much damage on shore; a number of the houses on the ranche were blown down, as were two old stables and some sheds belonging to the government, has been followed by several others, from both southward and eastward and northward, of considerable value.
The snow has for a month been from 6 to 18 inches deep, and the fresh-water lakes and streams covered with ice over a foot thick.

The average temperature of November was 39°, and of December 32°, and of January, up to date, 14°. The extremes of temperature were, in November, 48° and 9°; in December, 42° and 17°; and in January, to date, 23° to -7°. The cold and snow have seriously interfered with our drills, and produced considerable sickness, which we have taken every precaution to prevent. The spar and berth decks are varnished, and the latter seldom wetted. We have, as far as possible, with such lumber as was furnished to us by the Bureau of Construction (about one-sixth of the amount needed and required for), and all that we could use of the blown-down stables, built houses over portions of the openings through our spar-deck, and over the head, where the men had become frost-bitten. We have still an opening (the hatch through which the steamlaunch is lowered) whose area is 465 square feet, which should be housed in. We have, however, derived one advantage from the low temperature, having procured a series of observations upon the temperature, and effect of the kuro sino, at very probably a lower temperature than ever before obtained. These and their result I report in detail to the Bureau of Navigation. Here I will but say that the extreme ranges of temperature observed at the surface were 42° to 33°, during a period of fifteen days, during which the temperature of air ranged from +15° to -7°, and the coldest water was not coincident with the lowest air temperature, but seemed to depend more upon the state of the tide, it being lower at extreme low than at high tide. On shore the thermometer averaged about 1° to 3° lower than on board. The surface was covered with a vapor arising to a height of 6 to 10 feet, and then becoming invisible. This vapor was visible at 10° and invisible at 15° with bright sunshine.

MINING INTEREST.

All of the mines, except the Stewart tunnel, have been abandoned for the winter. At the tunnel some work is being done, but its advancement is seriously interfered with by the cold weather and snow.

DISCIPLINE.

Since the trial by court-martial on the 15th December of a man for straggling, there has not been an offense of any magnitude against discipline; and but three offenses of any description. I feel assured that the ship is now thoroughly purged of its worst characters, and that the crew are subordinate and contented.

SCHOOL.

The school established and carried on by private subscription, and the valuable assistance of your contingent fund, is progressing satisfactorily. The average daily attendance is about 35, and the improvement in the children is very noticeable. In this connection, I would state that upon different occasions during the summer and fall Sitka was visited by several clergymen, among whom, with their families, were the Rev. Sheldon Jackson and others sent by a missionary board (Presbyterian, I believe) to look into the necessities of this country as to schools, &c.; also a number of San Francisco tourists. All of these people promised to send us school outfits and assist us in our efforts to educate these children. Not a promise made has been kept.

HEALTH OF THE SHIP'S COMPANY.

We have considerable sickness, mostly due to exposure to bad weather and to syphilis and other diseases of the nature. Our crew is still dwindling. We send by the steamer which carries this two of our best seamen to hospital; one broken down with rheumatism, the other with hernia. We can get along well enough with our present crew if due allowance will be made for probable defects in drill, &c., which cannot be very thoroughly carried on with a short crew and constant bad weather. But in spring, when we hope to resume hydrographic work, and may have to deal with an irritation of lawless characters, drawn by the mines, we ought to have a full crew.

The only protection to our big main-batch is a loom cover, which was old and defective on the start, and is now very much worn and leaky.

The California arrived this a.m. She had been detained five days in the Columbia River by a heavy gale, which made it impossible to cross the bar. By her I received a communication (copy inclosed marked A) from a Mr. Woodcock, who, I am informed.

JANUARY 25.
is an old miner and a man who would not ask assistance when he could help himself.

Colonel Ball explained to me the situation, and at my request put his statement in writing, of which I inclose original, marked I, and I have procured additional information from captain and officers of steamer, which, summed up, amounts to this, that there has a fight started which will only end when the opposing sides have met with equal loss; the Stickienes have lost three and the Koo-tche-noos two. If a very badly wounded man of the latter tribe dies, the affair may be settled by a pow-wow; if not, it will last until the two parties "get even." There are now threats made against the whites, and there are enough of them to protect themselves if they were suitably armed. Eighty have been enrolled and a guard established, but they have but few guns.

I find that the outside number of Stickienes is 120, of the Koo-tche-noos not over 50, but it is supposed that the latter have sent up the straits to their village for reinforcements. Allowing such to be the case, and the forces made equal, 80 well-armed whites ought to be able to take care of themselves by maintaining an "armed neutrality," or by backing one side or the other, and thus making a thorough affair of it; they, however, lack arms, and I consider that I ought to furnish them.

I shall therefore send them to-morrow a gatling gun and 50 rifles, and shall send an officer and suitable junior gunner to care for them.

This affair could be quickly settled if I had a steamer instead of this ship, which would lose herself before she got half way there.

At a meeting of the citizens last evening Colonel Ball was appointed to go to Washington by the steamer of to-day to represent to proper authorities the needs of Sitka. Colonel Ball thoroughly indorses every statement in the special report of 22d January, which goes by this mail, and I would most respectfully solicit the influence of the Navy Department in giving him strength to perform his mission.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, United States Navy.

FORT WRANGLER, January 24, 1880.

Sir: As chairman of the committee appointed by the residents of Wrangel, I have furnished Captain Ball with a statement of the situation of affairs here, in pencil, and would have communicated to you in person if I had time. The committee respectfully ask, for their protection, that we should have 25 or 30 soldiers sent here. And their services would not be required any longer than the next trip of the California. As we are very short of arms, I respectfully request that 75 stand of arms, with ammunition, and a gatling gun be forwarded by the California.

I have the honor, &c., your obedient servant,

W. H. WOODCOCK.

Capt. L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commanding United States Ship Jamestown.

JANUARY 25, 1880.

Sir: I beg to submit to you a general report of the state of affairs existing at Wrangel, so far as my information extends.

On the arrival of the steamer California at Wrangel, on the 24th instant, we found the whole population under arms to guard against encroachment of the Indians, who were at war. It appears from the reports that a number of Hoonchenoo Indians (about 50), visiting Wrangel on a trading expedition, had engaged in the manufacture of the liquor which bears their name. This traffic the Suchen Indians tried to suppress by force, and finally resulted in a fight between them; several were killed and wounded on both sides. The Hoonchenoo Indians sent off a canoe to their village, 60 miles distant, for reinforcements, and further trouble was anticipated. The whites had stored their powder and ammunition in a storehouse, and established a system of guards for the town. So the matter rests since the steamer left, but it shows the necessity of some government authority to take precedence.

Yours,

W. E. GEORGE.
CONDITION OF AFFAIRS IN ALASKA.

B.

CUSTOM-HOUSE, COLLECTOR’S OFFICE,
Sitka, Alaska, January 25, 1880.

CAPTAIN: On my way back to Sitka I have met at Wrangel a committee of safety, formed of the citizens there, whose chairman has addressed you a letter on the subject of the Indian trouble now existing there. There was no time during the short stay of the steamer there for them to write you a full account, which I was requested to give, but must make more brief than they desired.

The trouble arose from a personal difficulty between an Indian of the Stickeen tribe with some of the Hookchenoo tribe, which occupy, respectively, the shores east and west of the white settlement there. The Sickeen, being beaten by some of the Hookchenoos, went with a party of his friends to their ranch and took retaliation in kind on the Hookchenoos, with interest. Thereupon a party of Hookchenoos attacked the Stickeen family, which made the assault on them in regular armed fashion, and a fight occurred, resulting in the death of two Hookchenoos and three Stickeens, and the wounding of a number, some mortally.

After the fight the parties kept up a skirmish for several days, which, from the shape of the town, &c., was a very dangerous thing for the citizens, many houses being struck, and some persons narrowly missed by bullets. They at last made threats to seize the powder in the stores.

The trouble commenced the 11th instant, the fight occurred the 14th, and on the 15th the citizens met and appointed a committee of safety and organized a guard, and have established military orders, forbidding the Indians to enter the town armed (they were running through with arms freely during the skirmishing), and keeping them out after ten a.m. entirely.

The deputy collector at Wrangel concurs with the committee in the danger of the situation, and has been active in the organization of means of defense. I may add that the testimony of all the citizens there asserts the coolness and determination and good judgment of his course in dealing with the situation, to which is, in my opinion, to be attributed the comparative safety of the place now.

While, as at present organized, the white population at Wrangel is perhaps secure from serious present trouble, yet I am confident they should be furnished, if possible, with better means of defense, and hope you will respond to their request, as far as in your power.

Very respectfully,

Capt. L. A. BEARDSLEE,
M. D. BALL,
Colleoto1· of Customs, District of Alaska
Commanding United States Ship Jamestown.

UNITED STATES SHIP JAMESTOWN,
Sitka, Alaska, January 22, 1880.

SIR: The subject of a government for Alaska being under consideration, and the department having done me the honor to submit to the cabinet such views of mine as were contained in a previous letter, I feel that I should submit to it my more matured views, based upon the results of observation and experiment.

I can only speak in regard to the affairs of Sitka, and of such local government as would best meet the requirements for it. Before doing so I will endeavor to explain clearly the status of Indians and whites and the relation which they bear to each other.

First, the Indians—numbers.

During the summer months there were probably on an average about 100 men, women, and children occupying the 50-odd houses, which would constitute the ranch. The mines and cannery gave employment to about 100 men more, and large parties were said to be away for seal hunting, to return in the fall. They are now all back, or rather nearly all, and by a census that I have caused to be made the 2,000 who were to be here have dwindled to not over 600, of whom not more than 200 are men. And this number, I fully believe, embraces every Indian living within 30 miles of Sitka; but were it not for the presence of this ship, which exerts over them a control which is not to their taste, I have no doubt but that great numbers would gather here from Tchila, Wrangel, and all along the strait, as I am reliably informed the case during previous winters.
Although of one tribe, speaking one language, and with common customs and superstitions, they are subdivided into "families," a family (which I will distinguish with a capital F) being composed of a number of families connected through the mothers.

For example, if a Tchilcat man marries a Kalosh woman the children are Kaloshes, and vice versa; through the fathers, a connecting link between the "families" exist, so that one way or the other they are all more or less related.

In each of these "families" some man, with either superior brains, force, or wealth (and generally the three attributes are combined), becomes the leader. And although the others are not bound to obey him, yet they generally do; these leaders generally put a portion of their wealth into slaves, and their dignity measured somewhat by the number. An able-bodied male slave is worth 200 blankets, and a good blanket is worth $3.

About 15 slaves are included in this census, which is, if at all erroneous, probably an overestimate, as much as it was furnished by the chiefs, in response to my notice to them that we wanted to give on Christmas a gift to every man, woman, and child; 400 pounds of beef were ample.

There are in Sitka two large "Families," and a number of Koutzenos, Kosa, Tchilcat, and other Indians; the largest "Family" is the Klochwatone (warriors), whose leader is Annahootz, a man of about sixty years, brave, faithful, and always a good friend to the whites, except upon one occasion when the proprietors of the Cannery, at Old Sitka, attempted to introduce Chinese labor; then it is said old Annahootz showed his teeth.

The Klochwatone consist of about 40 families, in which there are about 200 persons, of whom about 80 are men.

The next "Family" in importance is the Kaksatis; their leader is Catlaan, a man of about forty years, brave and intelligent, who keeps sober and has perfect control over the "Family." It is from the Kaksatis that all of the dangers apprehended by the whites have been expected. There are in this "Family" about 125 persons, subdivided into about 30 families; of this number about 40 are men. And this two score of warriors in blankets, with probably not one score of serviceable guns among them, constitute at present the force of enemies, whose possible attack upon five times as many white men, the Jamestown lies here to prevent. It is, however, highly probable that should troubles arise their force might be trebled by allies.

The term "Indian" does not give a correct idea of these people to any one whose interpretation of that name is based upon the characteristics of our Indians of the plains. In selecting another race with which to compare them, I should, after encountering wild men in all parts of the world, fix upon the Kroomen of Monrovia.

They are ignorant, superstitious, and some are untruthful, but, so far as I can judge by my experience, not thieves nor savages; and I have found among them a goodly proportion of men upon whose promise I can rely, and who will execute faithfully any duty assigned to them. I have employed the leading men as policemen, and they have never failed to do their duty, and a dozen of the others whom we have had as part of the ship's company, for six months, we find to be invaluable, performing much labor under exposure which our sailors could not undergo with safety. Their skill and industry have made the season at the Cannery a successful one, and at the mines their services as packers could not be dispensed with. They are docile, obedient, and not quarrelsome. There has not been a single difficulty between our sailors and the Indian crew, and but few between the liberty men and Indians, and in these I have always found that the drunken white man was in fault; but in handling them due allowance must be made for the existence of certain drawbacks to their usefulness and character; these are due to superstitions, customs, and liquor; the latter, which they obtained first from the whites, and still obtain (in the form of molasses), giving strength to the others.

Among them, the most sacred duty is that of retaliation; they are not exactly revengeful, for they seek no more than justice, and when once they have "got even," they are satisfied.

Every injury inflicted must be atoned for by an equal one, even to a life for a life and in settling difficulties the entire "Family" of the injurer is held responsible by and to the entire "Family" of the injured.

This code would necessarily involve them in endless feuds were it not that all injuries can be paid for. After due consultation at a pow-wow between the two "Fami-
lies," a certain number of blankets is agreed upon as a just equivalent; they are paid and the affair is settled.

I have been called upon several times to investigate and act as arbitrator, and have permitted this atonement, which satisfied all parties, in preference to inflicting punishment, which would make all dissatisfied.

The difficulty between the Indians and whites may be traced to a combination of the causes mentioned as drawbacks. Their knowledge of the whites being based upon a very limited amount of intercourse with a comparatively small number of hardly first-class representatives, the Kaloshes have not imbibed a great deal of respect for the "Family," and owing to the failure on the part of the owners of the schooner San Diego (which was lost in Bering's Sea) to pay to the heirs of five Kaksati Indians (who, as part of her crew, were lost in her) the wages due them, the Kaksatis are fully impressed with the idea that they are suffering an injustice from the whites. While insignificant about this matter there occurred the murder of the man Brown, at the Warm Springs, by a Kaksati Indian; this produced great excitement, and hoo-tche-noo profusion produced its natural effects among the Kaksati families, whose houses constitute the eastern end of the ranch and are within a stone's throw of the guard-houses, in which, led by Colonel Ball, a few resolute men had imprisoned the murderer.

A portion of these men, crazed by liquor and incited by the squaws, attempted to enter the white settlement through an opening in the stockade with the expressed intention of releasing the two prisoners. They were prevented from so doing by a number of the Klockwatone, among whom were Dick and Shukoff, who were led by Annahootz, and had got in it is probable that they would have met with a severe reception by the small band of whites.

In the mêlée a Kaksati was badly cut. This series of events produced great excitement among the Kaksatis. I do not believe that at first they had any intention of committing outrages upon the whites, but I do believe that unless thoroughly whipped by the whites the affair would have terminated in a general massacre. At that time the whites who would count for anything in such an affair were very few, and hampered as they were with their wives and children they remained in great danger of a night attack during the period that the excitement lasted, and they did right in calling upon the President for help, and the English officer, Captain A'Court, of the Osprey, who nobly came to their relief, earned from our government the thanks which his part years ago to Commodore Bardin, and he has received from the people of this place the warmest gratitude.

I have information, in which I place faith, that Catlaan was not engaged in the affair at the gate, and that he neither made nor encouraged the attack upon the white. Also, that he expressed himself as willing that the murderer should be hung in Sitka. As leader of the tribe, though, he was held responsible, and two days after he left Sitka, and has remained away until this month, in the early part of which he returned and asked for an interview with me; this I accorded, and as a result of that interview, I appointed him to the position of policeman, for the following reasons: The experiment of keeping the Indians under control through the aid of their leaders, had proved a success, but not a perfect one; they had done good service, and I never regretted the step, but there was a difficulty growing, which in time might prove a magnitude.

In the original appointments I had been guided in selection by the records of the applicants, and not then understanding the "Family" arrangements and feelings, appointed Klockwatone altogether; the Kaksatis asked for one of the appointments, but were refused, with, however, the condition that if, for six months the conduct of their "Family" was such as to merit it, I would select from them and appoint a man. The six months have passed, their conduct has been equally as good as that of the Klockwatone, they have submitted to Annahootz, and some have assisted him; but there was a bitter feeling arising, and charges that Annahootz was not impartial—which charges I do not believe—were circulating. It was a bitter dose to a Kaksati to be arrested by a Klockwaton. So I found that both to keep my promise and to extinguish this spark, I needed a reliable and powerful Kaksati. Catlaan was beyond a question the man; and he is now so serving, and has already proved very useful in bringing into the traces some young bucks who had resented Annahootz's interference. They won't dare to question the act of an'Catlaan's, and Catlaan does just as I expect.

This appointment brings me to the discussion of the white of Sitka, for by it has been freely discussed; and while men like Dr. Dulany, Mr. Austin, Mr. Pills, and a few others who are capable of divesting themselves of prejudice and looking at the subject from a broad point of view, uphold me in my action, and think it a wise move to thus secure to this place in the future as friends and allies a set of men who, if not secured, would be the opposite, others of, I think, a lower type, condemn it. I have, therefore, thought it advisable to fully acquaint the department with the reasons for my action. I do not consider that, in doing me the honor of intrusting management of affairs here to my discretion, the department contemplated that I consider it my duty to hunt up old offenses, to punish offenders for acts committed
the past, and to thus keep alive the troubles from which this place has escaped, but rather that I should so manage that the necessity of a ship being constantly kept here should be reduced to the lowest possible limit. This I should not do, if by taking part in any old issue I should create enemies, who, fearing us, would hide their time, and after our departure "get even" with the remaining whites.

THE WHITES OF SITKA.

The population of Sitka has greatly increased during the last year. There are now not less than 100 able-bodied men here, without counting in the Creoles. The increase is due to the attraction of the gold mines, and it is more than probable that as the spring opens every steamer will bring a fresh supply.

These men are miners, prospectors, mechanics, storekeepers, and keepers of saloons, dance-houses, and gambling halls, and some with no particular business except to get a living as best they may. Many of these men possess arms and know how to use them. There should be no difficulty in mustering, in case of need, a well-armed force, capable of defending the place against the attack of any body of Indians that could be raised, unless an Indian war of such magnitude should spring up that the Tchilcats, Cakes, and Kon Indians should unite with the Kaloshes, an event which will probably never occur, and if it did, would be preceded by such extensive arrangements and pow-wows that there would be no difficulty in being prepared for them.

While I remain of the opinion expressed in all of my letters that protection for this place was a vital necessity at the time it was asked for, I cannot see in its present condition that such necessity still exists, so far as defense of the whites against the Indians is concerned; but with a large and growing inconsiderable community of whites, the protection afforded by law and a government is a necessity, and until this is supplied the place should not be left entirely without recognition in some form by the government, but I would respectfully suggest that the recognition at present given to it by the permanent retention of a ship of war involves a much heavier burden of expense to the Navy Department than the whole government purse should be called upon to sustain. An occasional visit by one of our steamers of the Pacific squadron, during which she should touch at several of the ports, would at much less expense do a great deal more good to a much greater number of American citizens.

However pure may have been the motives of most of those who called for protection I am fully convinced that some of them then, and more now, value at a far higher figure this ship as a means of money-making, through our disbursements of several thousand dollars monthly, than they do for the protection she affords.

Our position as protector does not protect us from being most outrageously overcharged for every necessity that we purchase. With such prices as 90 cents per pound for butter, 35 cents for canned vegetables, &c., while at San Francisco or Portland, 30 and 12 cents purchases as good, we are certainly a great source of profit. And one annoying point in the situation is that through us the government becomes the repurchaser, at high prices, of material it sold to the storekeepers at low. For instance—when the Army left, 200 cords of wood were sold for 75 cents a cord, and has been since stored, rent free, in a government building. We are buying it back at $2.50, and iron, tools, &c., at proportionate profits.

I cannot think that the claim that no self-interests other than self-preservation were involved in the call for protection can be considered true of all of the whites of Sitka.

The two portions of this community, Indians and whites, so widely different, have maintained among themselves and toward each other a degree of harmony which is remarkable. During the earlier part of our sojourn, rows among themselves were more or less frequent in both portions; but none occurred between the whites and Indians; for a long time these have been of very rare occurrence. In the white community, this is greatly due to the superior character of most of the miners, who, as a body, are law-abiding, and of a very different type from the men depicted in most accounts of mining communities; but if the expected influx takes place in spring, a large proportion of lawless men will probably come. To meet this influx, there should be a civil government adapted to the requirements. In the formation of such a government, knowledge of local affairs will be valuable, and this I have furnished in the foregoing notes.

I would respectfully submit, in addition, that a government for this place should be one which would embody at least as follows: A court should be established possessing full power to summon a jury and try and settle all minor cases of delinquency on the spot, and with power to make arrests and inflict punishment of fine or imprisonment. For offenses of magnitude this court should have full power to take all testimony, which should be received by the United States court at Portland as final; the ends of justice would be greatly hampered if, as at present, witnesses were compelled to go to Portland; the trip involves at the least a month's absence from home, and expenses so far beyond the means of most witnesses that they would evade the duty if possible.

S. Ex. 105-3
To carry out its orders, there should be at least three white and three Indian po-

men. One of the former to act as jailer, and the two "Families" to be represented by

the latter, old Annahootz being retained as chief.

The court should have authority to call upon the Greek priest, and to recompense

him for his services. No oath taken by a creole would be considered as binding unless

administered by the priest with certain forms.

In regard to the traffic in liquor, this cannot be prevented unless stringent meas-

ures are enforced against the sale even of beer, and the importation of molasses prohibited.

It is questionable whether it would be a good policy to devote the strength of the

small force to more or less futile efforts to stop the sale of liquor.

In a country with a climate like this, where a great number of white men think

they need liquor to enable them to bear the exposure incident to prospecting, moun-
taineering, and mining, a prohibitory law would, if carried out, produce great discon-
tent and hardships. The sales should be regulated and such license fees charged as

would produce a fair revenue, and the cause of temperance would not suffer.

The land here should be surveyed and existing titles perfected and protected and

made possible to transfer real estate.

The government owns much land and a number of buildings (the latter going to

ruin), which could be sold at good prices. Dilapidated as they are, many of the build-
ings are now rented by the collector, and they are eagerly sought. The development of

Alaska would be greatly advanced if the public land could be thrown open to pre-
emption, and section 2255 of the Revised Statutes not considered as bearing upon it.

In such an event the rights of the native Indian should be considered, as are those re-
ferred to in section 2310.

The danger of conflict with the Indians through incidental causes and the expense

of protecting this place would be greatly reduced if the government should take steps
to purchase from the Indians at such price as would satisfy them the land upon which
their ranche is built. This is a long, low, flat hill facing the sea and abutting on the
stockage, through the wreck of which they now stroll freely into the white settlement.
As partial payment, a great portion of Japousky K'd could be offered. This is of

little value. They should be required to remove and permitted to take away their
houses, which are substantial log structures, and costly. I would not advise their
removal to any great distance, as their services are needed to develop this country;
but they are now a little too close.

There would be, of course, considerable difficulty in arranging such a bargain, but
I believe it could be accomplished for less money than it costs the Navy Depart-
ment to keep this ship here six months, and the land would undoubtedly bring back a good
portion of the money invested, if, as expected, this place through the mines and can-
neries becomes prosperous. The purchase of the houses would be complicated by a

custom which I should have referred to in describing their Family arrangements.

The houses consist of one large room (square), around which on three sides is an
elevated platform, from which a number of small rooms are entered, very much like a
ship's ward-room. Each of these small rooms belongs to a family, and the entire num-
ber of occupants use the large room, in the centre of which an open fire is kept up in
common for eating, hootche-noo making, and cooking.

When a house is to be built, a dozen, more or less, of the heads of families belong-
to one Family contribute, say, 20 blankets each and their own labor, and, when fin-
ished, the leader, whose house it is called, gives a big potatch and distributes many
blankets. Sitka Jack, I am informed, gave away on the completion of his house 300
blankets. When the potatch is over, and they begin to count up the cost of the
house, these presents are counted in, and thus each house represents a large expended
sum. Annahootz tells me that his house cost him three slaves, worth 200 blankets each,
and 100 red blankets. Such points would, of course, have to be considered.

Finally, if through failure upon the part of Congress to take the necessary steps to
serve to this country its rights, the duty shall be left upon the Navy Department. I
would respectfully suggest an equally good and much less expensive plan than the
present. A small steamer with a crew of 50 men and three or four howitzers would
be all the force required. There is coal here to last her a long time, and she could in
addition to visiting all of the ports, among which is Wrangel, which is more exposed
to danger than Sitka, do useful hydrographic work, and go easily where we could not go
at all.

Let the present system of keeping the head men on the pay-roll continue, super-

or regulate the traffic of liquor and molasses, and there need be no apprehension of
any future trouble with the Indians.

Very respectfully,

L. A. BEARDSLEE,
Commander, U. S. N.

Hon. R. W. THOMPSON,
Secretary of the Navy.