5-17-1880

Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate, adopted on the 5th instant, copies of reports of Capt. John W. White, of the United States Revenue Service, concerning matters connected with Alaska Territory, and also copies of all material papers relating to the transfer of the jurisdiction over the territory from the War Department to the Treasury, &c.
LETTER
FROM
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,
TRANSMITTING,
In compliance with a resolution of the Senate, adopted on the 5th instant, copies of reports of Capt. John W. White, of the United States revenue service, concerning matters connected with Alaska Territory, and also copies of all material papers relating to the transfer of the jurisdiction over the Territory from the War Department to the Treasury, &c.

MAY 17, 1880.—Referred to the Committee on Territories and ordered to be printed.

MAY 14, 1880.

SIR: In compliance with the directions contained in a resolution of the Senate, adopted on the 5th instant, I have the honor to transmit herewith copies of reports of Capt. John W. White, of the United States revenue service, concerning matters connected with Alaska Territory, and also copies of all material papers relating to the transfer of the jurisdiction over the Territory from the War Department to the Treasury.

Attention is invited to Executive Document No. 131, of the first session of the Forty-fourth Congress, concerning the jurisdiction of the War Department over the Territory of Alaska.

Very respectfully,

JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, D. C., February 28, 1877.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit the inclosed copy of telegram, just received, for information of the General of the Army and of the honorable the Secretary of War.

If the garrison is withdrawn it will certainly economize the expenses of the military service, while it will add to those of the naval service.

I am myself of opinion that the United States is rich enough to occupy, defend and protect, and keep the peace within all its territory, and that it should not shrink from doing so either on account of the expense or on account of any disinclination of its officers or troops to occupy remote stations.

If it be determined to rebuild the burned quarters, the money ($12,000) can be remitted at once from the appropriation of barracks and quarters.

Before taking action it will be well to hear from General McDowell.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant.

M. C. MEIGS,
Quartermaster-General, Brevet Major-General, U. S. A.

The Adjutant-General U. S. A.,
Washington, D. C.
To QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL,
Washington, D. C.:

General Howard telegraphed these headquarters yesterday that officers' quarters, Sitka, destroyed by fire 9th instant. Occupants barely escaped with their lives. Notify Quartermaster's Department, that funds may be immediately provided to replace them. Lowest estimate, $12,000. Batchelder thinks Howard's estimate should have been fifteen thousand.

If the troops can be withdrawn and naval vessels substituted, as heretofore recommended, the public service will be efficiently economized.

INGALLS,
Chief Quartermaster.

FIRST ENDORSEMENT

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, February 28, 1877.

Respectfully submitted to the Honorable Secretary of War.

Renewing a former recommendation that the troops be withdrawn from Alaska, because there is no emigration to that country, and the annual cost to the Army exceeds any present or prospective advantage. An occasional visit by a naval or revenue vessel would answer all purposes.

W. T. SHERMAN,
General.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, March 17, 1877.

Sir: I have the honor to inform you that the subject of withdrawing the United States troops from Alaska, often recommended by the General of the Army and his subordinate commanders, is now under consideration in this department, with the view that, pending the establishment of a proper government for that Territory, the authority of the United States may be more economically maintained by officials of the Treasury Department, supported by occasional visits of a revenue vessel; and in order that the matter may be properly presented to the President, I have to request your views as to the feasibility and propriety of this latter proposition.

The post of Sitka was established in 1867, and soon afterwards four other military posts were established, viz, Kodiak, Tongars, Kennay, and Wrangel. These were, however, soon found unnecessary, and in 1870 were all abandoned, leaving Sitka the only military post. In 1874 the discovery of mines on the Stakken River brought a few miners to that neighborhood, and the post at Wrangel, at the mouth of the Stakken River, was re-established.

At present the troops in the Territory consist of two companies (73 men) at Sitka and one company (35 men) at Wrangel—all of the Fourth Regiment of Artillery. The communication is kept up by monthly steamers from Portland, Oreg., and the companies are relieved every two years. Owing to its remoteness, the cost of maintaining garrisons in the Territory is unusually large. The population of the island upon which Sitka is situated consists of about 300 Russian-speaking half-breeds and 1,000 Indians.

There is no emigration whatever to this island, and the troops there are powerless to act in any other part of the Territory without the aid of a vessel. In the vicinity of Wrangel there are about 500 Indians, and it is reported that a few hundred miners have come into that neighborhood since the discovery of the mines; but concerning these mines we have no trustworthy information.

It is believed that the Department of State recommended an appropriation for marking the boundary line in this neighborhood at the last session of Congress, but that no action was taken upon it.

For several years the commanding generals of the Department of the Columbia and of the Division of the Pacific have recommended the withdrawal of the troops upon the ground that the military officers have neither the machinery nor the authority for carrying on a civil government, and that the mere police duty which they perform could be better accomplished by a revenue vessel free to move from point to point. General Sherman has earnestly indorsed their recommendations; and the subject now comes up with peculiar force from the fact that on the 9th ultimo the officers' quarters at Sitka were destroyed by fire, and that provision must at once be made to replace them, unless the garrison is to be withdrawn.

Twelve thousand dollars will be necessary to rebuild the quarters. The only objection to withdrawing the troops seems to be in the fact that, under the opinions of the Attorney-General of November 13, 1873, and June 3, 1874, Alaska is 'Indian country,' and the War Department has the control of the introduction of liquor into
the Territory; it does not appear, however, that this control could not be delegated to proper officers of the Treasury Department, and they certainly could enforce the intercourse act more thoroughly than the military officers, because offenders could be sent to Oregon for trial at any time, whereas now they must await the mail steamer, and if it does not arrive within five days the prisoners must be discharged.

It is also thought that the Treasury Department should properly have entire control of affairs in that Territory, as its commerce of furs and fisheries is already under that department.

I therefore request your views on the subject in order that it may be laid before the President for his action, and in view of the fact that the Army officers at Sitka have meantime no proper quarters, I would suggest the propriety of speedy consideration.

I inclose a copy of the latest communication on the subject and refer you to H. R. Ex. Doc. No. 135, Forty-fourth Congress, first session, for a full statement of the embarrassments attending the jurisdiction of the War Department in Alaska.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. W. McCRARY,
Secretary of War.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., March 24, 1877.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 17th instant, in regard to the subject of withdrawing the United States troops from the Territory of Alaska.

It appears that the troops in that Territory consist at present of two companies (73 men), at Sitka, and one company of 35 men at Wrangel, belonging to the Fourth Regiment of Artillery. Communication is kept up with them by monthly steamers from Portland, Oreg., but owing to the remoteness of the locality where the troops are stationed, the cost of maintaining the garrison is unusually large.

You state that one objection to the withdrawal of the troops seems to be in the fact that under opinions of the Attorney-General, given November 13, 1873, and June 3, 1874, Alaska is to be regarded as Indian country, and that the War Department consequently has control of the introduction of liquors into that Territory.

You state that it does not appear that this control could not be delegated to proper officers of the Treasury Department who could more thoroughly enforce the intercourse act than the military.

In regard thereto I have to state that the control of the troops or of the officers having charge of them over the introduction of spirituous liquors into that Territory would appear to be confined to the immediate locality in which they are placed, namely, at Wrangel and at Sitka. No vessel can enter the port of Sitka without the cognizance of the customs officers, and the same is true with Wrangel, there being a customs officer stationed there.

Should the withdrawal of the troops from Alaska be decided upon, this department will instruct the officers of the customs stationed at the various ports on the Pacific coast to permit no vessel to clear for any port of Alaska which has upon its manifest any spirituous liquors. If such shipment should be made from Victoria or other foreign ports to Sitka, the power of the collector of customs there to exclude the liquors from entry and landing would be the same as over liquors coming from a port of the United States.

In the sundry civil appropriation bill passed at the last session of Congress an appropriation of $18,000 was made to enable the Secretary of the Treasury to send a revenue-cutter to Alaskan waters and maintain the same in cruising there.

A suitable vessel for the purpose named is now being fitted for the cruise, and she will be ready to sail at such a date as to enable her to arrive in the waters referred to at an opportune time. This is thought to be the latter end of May. It is believed that she will render efficient service in cruising for the protection of the government interests there and at the sea-otter hunting grounds, and that she will materially aid in preventing the introduction of spirituous liquors into the Territory by unauthorized persons.

I am inclined to agree in the opinion expressed in your letter, that the introduction of spirituous liquors into the Territory of Alaska can be as well, if not better, prevented by the vigilance of the customs officers stationed there and at the ports on the Pacific coast and by the aid of the revenue-cutter, than by any control which the troops can exercise over the matter.

While the provisions of the law remain as at present this department can, prior to
granting any permit for the shipment of liquors into the Territory of Alaska, still con­
tinue to secure the consent of your department thereto.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary.

Hon. GEORGE W. McCRARY,
Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, April 10, 1877.

GENERAL: By direction of the President the United States troops now in garrison at

General W. T. SHERMAN,
Commanding United States Army.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, April 11, 1877.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of the order to General Sherman

The Honorable SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

GEO. W. McCRARY,
Secretary of War.

In response to General Howard's suggestions that a heavily-armed gun-boat, &c., be

The Indians of Alaska are in a condition of perfect peace with the few white men

The Indians of Alaska, unlike those of our great plains, have to depend entirely and
absolutely upon fixed bases of supply places, where they can draw food from the sea
at regular intervals during the year, and they must be permitted to live there or else
they perish, for they cannot strike back into the rugged, barren country; and, there­
fore, any agency controlling these locations controls the Indians absolutely. These
places are all by the sea-shore, and all easily accessible to the guns of a revenue-cutter.

The power and jurisdiction of the military in Alaska has been a perfect farce from the
beginning. They have never been called upon to settle a single dispute outside of
their own difficulties with the natives, for there has not been any others, and had any­
thing of the kind occurred a mile away from the picket lines at and on the town site of Sitka; these soldiers could only have sucked their thumbs in response for redress.

HENRY W. ELLIOTT,
Smithsonian Institution.

APRIL 13, 1877.

OFFICE OF SPECIAL AGENT TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
San Francisco, Cal., April 14, 1877.

SIR: The honorable the Secretary of War having directed the General of the Army to vacate the garrisons in Alaska Territory and order the troops therein to other posts in the Division of the Pacific, thus withdrawing entirely military protection in that quarter, I am induced to present to the department some facts for consideration, as coming within my own knowledge and as given by those familiar with the situation.

It is with some feelings of delicacy this subject is approached, in the absence of any opinion being requested, but as Alaska is embraced within the jurisdiction of my district, and having given that Territory and everything connected therewith much attention, and made it my especial study for the past two years, it is deemed proper at this time to give the results of such experience and observations.

The telegraph states that simultaneous with the withdrawal of the military a revenue-cutter will be ordered to Sitka. It is, of course, conceded that some adequate force must be supplied when the troops abandon the Territory in order to fully carry out our treaty stipulations with Russia and afford protection to our resident citizens there. The revenue-steamer Richard Rush is now preparing for sea; but her cruise and destination is not yet known here. It is conjectured she will proceed to the Seal Islands or to Sitka; possibly her cruise may extend to both places.

General Howard, United States Army, commanding the Department of the Columbia, has telegraphed to the division commander urging vigorously that a gun-boat be dispatched to Sitka or that the force on the revenue-cutter be sent there be materially increased. It is of this I now propose to speak, and will take the armament and complement of officers and men of the Rush as an example as applying to other vessels of her class in the service on this coast. The Navy has no gun-boat available in these waters; hence the revenue marine must, for the present, be charged with this duty.

The Rush carries 6 commissioned officers and a crew of 30 men all told, including seamen, firemen, petty officers, stewards, cooks, and boys. Her armament consists of two 20-pound rifled Dahlgren bronze howitzers. Small arms: 12 Ballard's breech-loading rifles, 12 revolvers, and 12 cutlasses. It is submitted this is not sufficient force to take the place of the garrison at Sitka. No assistance could be rendered the inhabitants on shore. There is a custom-house and other government buildings and property of value, all of which might be sacrificed if too small a display of force is made at the outset; that is, when the change is made. In fact, if trouble should arise with the Indians, it is not more than sufficient to protect and handle the vessel. It is true the cutter would be able to shell an Indian village, but would be generally unable to land a sufficient force to destroy it or burn the canoes, the latter being the greatest punishment that can be inflicted upon the coast Indians, as they live entirely by fishing, hunting, and trading. These Indians have at times been severely punished by American and British gun-boats, and they have great dread of them; but it must be borne in mind they have been manned with a large crew and had larger batteries.

When the troops leave Sitka an armed vessel should be stationed there permanently, making occasional cruises in the Alexander Archipelago, &c. (See my report of March 23, 1876, Senate Document No. 37.)

We have no vessels now in service that are fit for this duty. They are entirely too small, the armament not of the proper description, and quarters for officers and men entirely too contracted and wholly unsuitable for the severity of the winters in that inhospitable region. Proper steamers should be constructed. In 1868 Capt. John W. White, of the cutter Wyanda, visited Alaska, and in an able and elaborate report made that year to the department thoroughly discussed this subject. Attention is respectfully invited to his suggestions and recommendations.

It is submitted that two steamers will of necessity have to be sent to Alaska this season. The one destined for the westward—i. e., the Seal Islands—will be required there as soon as the sealing season commences, now close at hand. These islands are distant from Sitka full 1,500 miles, and to go there via Sitka is a very roundabout way. (See my report before mentioned.)

When the garrison at Sitka is withdrawn a cutter will have to be substituted in lieu thereof. I would recommend her supply of small arms be added to, her crew increased at least ten able seamen, a surgeon and additional engineer ordered to the vessel, and that she be liberally supplied with shot, shell, and fixed ammunition. Immediate steps should be taken to establish a coal depot at Sitka.
The Puget Sound cutter cannot with safety to the revenue be spared for so long a time from her station. This cutter is constantly cruising in the sound and in British waters, and is absolutely essential to prevent wholesale smuggling in that quarter. The frontier is remote, adjacent to foreign territory, and must be carefully guarded. In the winter season her services are constantly in demand to aid vessels in distress. She does more work and effective service than any other vessel of her class on the coast.

The Thomas Corwin, now being completed at this port, is a staunch, new vessel, and, when finished, will be in perfect condition. The whole work on her should be done by the 15th of May next. In every respect she will be more suitable for service in Alaskan waters than any vessel here. She was originally intended for the Columbia River station, but as it is only twenty-four hours' steaming from Puget Sound to Columbia River bar, it is submitted the Oliver Wolcott can in an emergency do all the duty of both stations until other vessels can be constructed or sent here. More vessels are certainly required on this coast, and I had this in view when treating this subject before. The change as adopted by the administration is fully in accordance with the views in my published report, but I doubt the wisdom of the policy in ordering the troops away before proper provision is made to replace them, and especially at this time, breaking up the post at Wrangel Island. This point is distant 700 miles from Sitka, and is the depot of supplies for the miners on the Stikine River, and at Cassiar, in British Columbia. Our coast steamers touch here and land their passengers for these mines. Miners, traders, packers, &c., congregate at this point in the spring and await transportation. In the fall they return from the mines, and frequently are delayed here several days. At this point a collision with the natives is generally to be feared. This is the season of the year when the government should have sufficient force on hand to suppress broils, protect the Indians from assaults of the whites, prevent the latter from obtaining liquor, and keep them in a proper state of subjection. In the winter season no such necessity exists, for the few whites remaining on the island have such close relations with the natives that no danger is apprehended. However, if the sale of liquor is to be unrestricted at Wrangel Island the miners will winter there to a large extent, and trouble will assuredly be the result.

During the summer season the Alaskan coast swarms with small vessels and canoes, navigated by desperate and lawless men, bent upon smuggling, illicit barter, and that especial curse to the natives, trading in ardent spirits. A deputy collector is stationed at Wrangel, but he will be utterly powerless to enforce the revenue laws and stop the smuggling from British Columbia. The sale of liquor will be had right under his nose and he cannot stop it.

If the company of soldiers now at Wrangel Island can be kept there until the miners have returned from the far North and gone into winter quarters at Victoria, Vancouver Island, it would, in my opinion, be a wise course for the War Department to pursue.

Until the Thomas Corwin is ready for sea the removal of the companies from Sitka would, I think, be premature.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. GOVERNEUR MORRIS,

Hon. JOHN SHERMAN, Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., April 17, 1877.

Sir: Under date of the 11th instant the Secretary of War informed this department that the troops now stationed at Fort Wrangel and Sitka, within the Territory of Alaska, would be withdrawn upon the arrival of the United States revenue cutter at those places.

You are hereby authorized to receipt for and take charge of the public property which may be at Sitka, and the Secretary of War has been informed that you will become responsible therefor.

Under date of the 3d ultimo this department transmitted to you an extract from a letter addressed to the special agent in charge of the Seal Islands, giving instructions in regard to the killing of fur-bearing animals on Otter Island.

The department now instructs you that no persons other than the natives will be allowed to kill any otter, mink, marten, sable, or other fur-bearing animal, except fur-seal, within the limits of Alaska Territory, or the waters thereof; and that any person found guilty of killing such animals will become liable to the pains and penalties prescribed by section 1550 of the Revised Statutes.
The department is desirous of warning parties (not natives) specially against engaging in killing otter within the waters of Alaska Territory.

By reference to section 195 of the Revised Statutes, you will find that the collector and deputy collector of customs appointed for Alaska Territory and any person authorized in writing by either of them have power to arrest persons and seize vessels and merchandise liable to fines, penalties, or forfeitures under the laws extended over the Territory.

I deem it proper that notices should be publicly posted in conspicuous places in Omahas, Kodiak, and Balcorskie, warning parties of the penalties they incur in killing otter or other fur-bearing animals within the limits of Alaska Territory, or in the waters thereof. Copies of such notices are transmitted herewith.

It is also desirable to prevent, as far as possible, the killing of sea-otter by the natives with fire-arms, especially during the months of May, June, July, August, and September. No vessel will be permitted to anchor in the waters of the well-known breeding districts of the sea-otter in Alaska, unless engaged in conveying hunting parties of the natives themselves to and from the hunting grounds. The captain of the revenue cutter will be given instructions of a general character, which will also empower him to aid in the enforcement of the law before mentioned, and he will be instructed to assist you by all proper measures in the faithful enforcement thereof.

Respectfully,

John Sherman,
Secretary.

M. J. J. O. HOWARD.

Headquarters Department of the Columbia,
In the Field, Wallula, W. T.,
April 29, 1877.

Sir: I wish permission to furnish a small volunteer company at Sitka and another at Wrangel, not to exceed thirty men each, with arms and ammunition sufficient to enable them to make resistance to the Indians in their immediate vicinity in case of sudden outbreak.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. O. Howard,
Brigadier-General, Commanding.

The Assistant Adjutant General,
Military Division of the Pacific, San Francisco, Cal.
HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION PACIFIC AND DEPARTMENT CALIFORNIA,
San Francisco, May 9, 1877.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant-General. If these places need protection, it should be furnished by the Army.

IRVIN MCDOWELL,
Major-General, Commanding Division and Department.

[Second indorsement.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, May 21, 1877.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War, with the recommendation that it be not approved. To amplify the remark of the division commander (first indorsement), the issuing of arms to a volunteer body for such a purpose would be sure to be followed by large claims for pay and all kinds of allowances on account of the services of the volunteers to the United States Government. The quota of arms given to the State ought to supply citizens who require them for self-protection without the interposition of the United States.

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Adjutant-General.

Referred by War Department to Chief of Ordnance.

[Third indorsement.]

ORDNANCE OFFICE, WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, May 25, 1877.

Respectfully returned to the Secretary of War. No Territorial government having been extended over Alaska, no arms can be issued under the law for arming and equipping the militia nor under the law for protection of frontier against Indians. (Joint resolution 13, July 3, 1876.) Alaska, whatever be her status in our governmental system, has no United States arms for her defense. How her citizens are to be protected, and whether arms shall be issued to them without authority of law, is for the Secretary of War to decide. This department can supply arms if so ordered.

S. V. BENET,
Brigadier-General, Chief of Ordnance.

Respectfully returned to the Adjutant-General. The troops are not to be removed from Alaska until the arrival there of a revenue-cutter. The Secretary of War has no authority to order arms to be sent as requested by General Howard, and hopes the cutter will be found sufficient for all the purposes desired.

GEO. W. McCRARY,
Secretary of War.

[Telegram.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, June 1, 1877.

To Adjutant General, U. S. A.,
Washington, D. C.:

By direction of the President the troops in Alaska were to be prepared to leave about May 15th. Some of the military property has arrived at Portland, and General How-
ard telegraphs that arrangements have been made to bring away the troops by the steamer leaving Sitka June 19th. He adds that the cutter Rush has gone to Alaska, with orders only to touch at Sitka and then go to regions beyond. Notice in regard to the designation of a Treasury official to receive property in charge of military officers in Alaska, referred in Secretary of War’s instructions of April 10, has not yet been received. The collector of this port has not received orders for any other cutter than the Rush to go to Alaskan waters. As affairs are now tending, it may happen soon that neither the authority of the War or Treasury Department will be represented in Alaska.

IRVIN McDOWELL,
Major-General.

[Telegram.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL’S OFFICE,
Washington, June 2, 1877.

Major-General I. McDowell,
Commanding Division Pacific, San Francisco, California.

The telegraphic instructions of the Secretary of War of yesterday were not intended to delay withdrawal of troops from Alaska by steamer of 19th instant, as already contemplated. The cutter Rush is the only one that will be sent to Alaskan waters, and by occasional visits to Wrangel and Sitka will enable the customs officers to prevent the liquor traffic.

If this is done, it is not anticipated that there will be any trouble in Alaska. The property will be turned over to the collector at Sitka and the deputy collector at Wrangel, as directed in letters in April last. Acknowledge receipt.

By order of the Secretary of War.

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Adjutant-General.

ADJUTANT’S OFFICE, June 2, 1877.

Official copies,
E. D. TOWNSEND,
Adjutant-General.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, May 4, 1877.

Sir: Your letter of April 27, inclosing a communication from Special Agent Morris, on the subject of the removal of the troops from Alaska, has been received and duly considered.

I am of opinion that Mr. Morris overestimates the trouble which is likely to arise at Wrangel, and if the revenue-cutter is on hand to support the customs officers in suppressing the liquor trade, I have no anticipation that any serious difficulty will arise.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. W. McCRARY,
Secretary of War.

[General Orders No. 13.]

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE COLUMBIA,
Portland, Oreg., May 23, 1877.

In compliance with instructions from the Secretary of War and the major-general commanding the division, announced in General Orders No. 1, Headquarters Military Division of the Pacific and Department of California, April 23, 1877, the companies of the Fourth Artillery, garrisoning Sitka and Fort Wrangel, Alaska Territory, will be withdrawn by the first steamer leaving for Portland after the arrival at Sitka of the revenue-cutter under orders for Alaska.

Companies G and M, at Sitka, will proceed, the former to Fort Canby, Washington Territory, and the latter to Fort Stevens, Oregon, and be reported to the respective post commanders.

Company A, at Fort Wrangel, will proceed to Fort Townsend, Washington Territory, and be reported to the commanding officer for duty.

Instructions have already been issued for the removal by the May steamer of surplus serviceable public property.
So much of the public property in charge of the military officers as cannot be removed will be transferred, at Sitka, to the collector of customs, and at Wrangel, to the deputy collector of customs, officials designated by the Secretary of the Treasury to receive and receipt for it.

In addition to the receipts required by the officers in the settlement of their accounts, duplicate receipts, one for department and one for division headquarters, will be taken by them for all the public property, including lands and buildings now in their charge, transferred to the customs officials. The condition of the property will be noted on the receipts.

The lists of public buildings transferred will include, at Sitka, not only those in actual occupation by the garrison, but also all other public buildings, including those of which Colonel Jefferson C. Davis repossessed the government.

Assistant Surgeon William R. Hall, and Acting Assistant Surgeon William D. Baker will accompany the troops; the former reporting to the commanding officer, Fort Stevens, as post surgeon; the latter reporting in person to the medical director.

Ordnance Sergeant Golkell and Commissary Sergeant Brown will report to the post commander, Fort Townsend, and Commissary Sergeant Burrows to the commanding officer, Fort Stevens.

The chiefs of staff departments will issue such detailed instructions concerning the interests of their respective departments in connection with the abandonment of these posts as may be necessary to carry into execution this order or orders from a superior military authority.

The post records, securely packed, will be forwarded to the assistant adjutant-general.

The post commander and chiefs of staff departments concerned will make full report to department headquarters as to the time and manner of executing this order.

Upon the departure of the troops Sitka and Fort Wrangel will be discontinued military posts, and "all control of the military department over affairs in Alaska will cease."

By command of Brigadier-General Howard.

H. CLAY WOOD,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

[Telegram.]

PORTLAND, OREG., May 29, 1877.

General Howard expecting the cutter [name torn off the original] would remain at Sitka; so interpreted order of Secretary of War as to order military away. Subsistence, ordnance, and quartermaster's stores have already been brought down. Steamer sails for Sitka June 2, to bring troops under this order. General Howard desires vessels designated in order to complete order. Will leave detachments there in charge of public property until its arrival. Please answer immediately.

WILLIAM GOUVENEUR MORRIS,
Special Agent.
The captain was directed to visit the Seal Islands of Saint Paul and Saint George at least twice during the season, and to cruise in Alaskan waters for the protection of the seal-fishing interests, which was the prime object of sending the cutter there. She will be likely to return to Sitka during the season, and her commanding officer was instructed to confer with the collector of customs at Sitka, and this conference will probably embrace all matters which, in the opinion of the collector, may be of importance to the interests of Sitka.

From this dispatch of Mr. Morris it is inferred that some apprehension of trouble exists in case of the removal of the troops, unless a cutter is stationed at Sitka permanently.

It is not practicable for this department to furnish another cutter for this purpose. The appropriation of $18,000 made by Congress last session was for the express purpose of enabling this department to send a cutter to these waters to protect the seal-fishing interest. She is also expected to aid, as far as practicable, in preventing the introduction of spirituous liquors into the Territory.

Mr. Morris states that General Howard will order part of the troops to be left at Sitka in charge of the public property until the arrival of a second cutter; but I do not know whether he speaks by authority.

If you shall be of opinion that the presence of some restraining force is actually necessary at Sitka it is respectfully suggested that ample time remains for you to give such further orders by telegraph to the proper officer in regard to the removal of the troops as you may deem proper, as the vessel which is to bring the troops away will, it is understood, not leave until June 2.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, June 2, 1877.

Sir: Your letter of 31st May has been received, covering a dispatch from Special Agent Morris in regard to the withdrawal of the troops from Alaska.

My understanding of this matter is as follows:

On 17th March I wrote to you that "the subject of withdrawing the United States troops from Alaska, often recommended by the General of the Army and his subordinate commanders, is now under consideration in this department, with the view that, pending the establishment of a proper government for that Territory, the authority of the United States may be more economically maintained by the officials of the Treasury Department, supported by occasional visits of a revenue vessel," and requesting your views in order that the subject might properly be presented to the President.

In reply, you stated that an appropriation had been made to "enable the Secretary of the Treasury to send a revenue-cutter to Alaskan waters and maintain the same in cruising there. A suitable vessel for the purpose named is now being fitted for the cruise, and she will be ready to sail at such a date as to enable her to arrive in the waters referred to at an opportune time. This is thought to be the latter end of May. It is believed that she will render efficient service in cruising for the protection of the government interests there, and at the sea-otter hunting grounds, and that she will materially aid in preventing the introduction of spirituous liquors into the Territory by unauthorized persons. I am inclined to agree in the opinion expressed in your letter, that the introduction of spirituous liquors into the Territory of Alaska can be as well, if not better, prevented by the vigilance of the customs officers stationed there, and at the posts on the Pacific coast, and by the aid of the revenue-cutter, than by any control which the troops can exercise over the matter." Upon this assurance the order was given for the removal of the troops on the arrival of the revenue-cutter.

Subsequently, on April 27, you forwarded a letter from Special Agent Morris, giving the reasons why, in his opinion, the troops should not be withdrawn, and recommending that a second cutter be sent there, to which I replied that I thought he "overestimated the trouble likely to arise at Wrangel, and if the revenue-cutter is on hand to support the customs officers in suppressing the liquor trade, I have no anticipation that any serious difficulty will arise."

There seems to have been some misunderstanding as to the carrying out of the order. It was anticipated that the cutter would remain for a few weeks at Sitka or Wrangel before proceeding to the seal fisheries, and that during this time the troops would be withdrawn. Instead of this, the cutter (Rush) has only touched at Wrangel and Sitka, and immediately proceeded to the Seal Islands; and General Howard seems to be expecting a second cutter in Alaska, although there is no warrant for such an expectation in any letters from this department.
I have given orders by telegraph to-day that the troops be withdrawn and the property turned over to the customs officers, as previously arranged.

No trouble whatever is anticipated in Alaska, except through the introduction of liquor, and your department has coincided in my opinion that its officers can suppress that quite as well, if not better, than officers of this department.

I venture to suggest that instructions might be sent to the cutter Rush, on her return to Sitka, to remain there for at least three weeks before visiting the Seal Islands a second time, and also to be present at Wrangel in the fall when the miners return from the interior, as mentioned by Special Agent Morris in his previous communication.

Copies of recent telegrams on this subject are inclosed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. W. McCRARY,
Secretary of War.

The honorable the Secretary of the Treasury.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington D. C., June 8, 1877.

SIR: The Secretary of War a short time since issued instructions for the withdrawal of the United States troops from Sitka and Wrangel, in the Territory of Alaska, where they had been stationed for some years.

Anticipating the withdrawal of the troops, this department directed the revenue-cutter Rush to visit your port and to cruise in Alaskan waters, mainly for the protection of the seal-fishing interests, but partly to afford such aid in preserving peace and in preventing the introduction of liquors into the territory as might be found practicable, having in view the main object of her cruise.

Special Agent Morris has reported to the department that there is a strong apprehension felt in the minds of some people on the Pacific coast that trouble will arise at Sitka and Wrangel, after the removal of the troops, unless some other restraining force is sent there.

The Secretary of War does not seem to share these apprehensions, and the vessel to bring away the troops has already sailed for Sitka and Wrangel. The public property at those two places will be turned over to yourself and the deputy collector at Wrangel, as you were informed by instructions which were given to the captain of the cutter Rush for delivery to you.

This removal of the troops practically places the supervision of the Territory and the preservation of peace therein under the charge of the Treasury Department.

Unusual vigilance should, therefore, be exercised by you to prevent the landing of any liquors at Sitka, and you will report from time to time the state of affairs which may exist there.

I desire that a report shall be made upon the condition of affairs there by the first mail that leaves Sitka after the receipt of this letter. It is probable that the cutter Rush will visit your port again during the season, and either that cutter or another will be ordered to visit Wrangell about the time the miners are leaving the camps, on the Stikine River in the fall, provided there shall be an urgent necessity for the same. You will report fully upon that point, and, if such necessity exists, you will state the time at which it would be most proper for the cutter to go there.

You will also state fully your views as to the necessity for the presence at Sitka of any additional force to preserve the peace. If the introduction of liquor can be prevented, the department sees no reason why the relations of the whites with the Indians and the Indians with each other cannot be as peaceable as ordinarily exists in communities of like character.

Very respectfully,

JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary.

Collector of Customs,
Sitka, Alaska.

OFFICE OF SPECIAL AGENT TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Portland, Oreg., June 23, 1877.

SIR: I have the honor to inform the department on the 14th instant the whole of the military were withdrawn from Sitka, and such public property as was not sold or taken away by order of the War Department duly turned over to the collector of customs.
After leaving Sitka the transport touched at Wrangel, and took on board the garrison at that point. On the 28th of May I notified the honorable Secretary by telegraph that Gen. O. O. Howard, U. S. A., commanding the Department of the Columbia, would leave detachments of troops in charge of public property until the arrival of a revenue-cutter, and asked the vessel be designated. This telegram was written in General Howard’s presence and sent at his request.

I inclose copy of General Orders No. 13, dated Headquarters Department of the Columbia, Portland, Oreg., May 23, 1877, for the management of the troops from Alaska. This order was based upon the supposition that the cutter Richard Rush was the vessel alluded to in the letter of the honorable Secretary of War addressed to the General of the Army, and dated War Department, Washington City, April 10, 1877.

When General Howard ascertained that the Rush was intended for service at the Seal Islands, he directed that detachments be left in charge of the public property.

On the 1st of June I sent to Col. H. Claywood, U. S. A., a general of this department, a copy of the telegram of the Secretary of the Treasury to myself, dated Washington, D. C., May 31, that the Rush had probably gone from Sitka to the Seal Islands, and that no other cutter could be sent. The steamer sailed for Sitka June 2, the order for detachments to be left still in force. A member of General Howard’s personal staff went to Alaska on this steamer.

Upon arrival there, in pursuance with previous orders to dispose of all surplus subsistence stores, it was found that the order had been so literally complied with as to leave nothing whatever for the subsistence of the men to be left there, such order not being contemplated by General Orders No. 13. The same condition of affairs was found to exist at Wrangel. Accordingly General Howard’s staff officer directed all the troops to be immediately removed, which was done, and they arrived at this place on the morning of June 20.

It will thus be perceived that all control of the military department over affairs in Alaska has ceased.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. GOUVERNEUR MORRIS,
Hon. JOHN SHERMAN,
Special Agent.
Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C.

CUSTOM HOUSE, SITKA, ALASKA,
Collector’s Office, July 10, 1877.

SIR: I have the honor to lay before you the following report: Upon the withdrawal of the military and abandonment of this post, the Indians immediately assumed an arrogant bearing, and plainly informed us that there was neither gunboat nor soldier; therefore they had no fear.

Before the steamer left the dock Russians and Indians began to raid the government buildings. They have completely gutted the hospital. They are removing the government stockade; have also commenced to destroy the block-houses.

The Indians indulge in threats, which no doubt they will put in practice when they find that no gunboat of any kind appears on the scene.

A large proportion of the Russians are thieves and drunkards; they steal on every opportunity.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. P. BERRY,
Collector.

CUSTOM HOUSE, SITKA, ALASKA,
Collector’s Office, July 13, 1877.

SIR: Department letter of June 8, 1877, “H. B. J.” and “S. J. K.”, asks for report on condition of affairs in this place and Wrangel since the withdrawal of the United States troops. Having anticipated the demand of this letter in report forwarded by this mail, I will nevertheless take this one up and answer in detail.

Paragraph 1, Department letter.—The cutter Rush came into this port May 19, 1877. Captain Bailey informed me that on the finish of his cruise to the westward he should return to San Francisco. I asked him to come in here in September if he could, giving my reason therefor. He informed me that his orders did not contemplate other movement than to return to San Francisco direct.
Paragraph 2—Special Agent Morris's report I am forced to confirm. The Secretary of War has been misled by the report of his officers, just as I have been myself. I have the best of reasons for believing that if there is not a vessel dispatched at a very early day to this port, this people have been handed over bodily for slaughter to the Indians. Permit me to state that I watched and studied these Indians for three years. Their seeming desire to be on good terms with the Americans, their adaptability to our method of working, their cupidity, connected with many other things, completely misled me. Therefore it becomes my duty to say that there is danger for this community; I might write very great danger.

The property was removed, as you will see by other reports per this mail.

Paragraph 3.—"The preservation of peace," &c. If peace is to be preserved, there must be a vessel stationed at this port. From Chilcat to Tongas are the fierce people; the whole voyage of nearly five hundred miles is in inside waters. The western people—or I might say after leaving Behring's Bay—they do not seem to be at all belligerent.

Liquor.—There is no necessity for using vigilance to prevent the landing of liquor; the Indians make all they want, and in town here. I have been informed that there are two discharged soldiers and eight different Russians running stills. There are probably four or five Americans and two or three Russians who would purchase good liquor in small quantities for their own use.

Paragraph 4.—In the first part of this report I have written of the Rush, because the captain was so positive about his destination. Regarding a cutter to visit Wrangel when the miners are on the move: At that time Wrangel is perfectly safe; British Columbia tolerates no cutting and shooting, and it soon tames our pistol and bowie-knife gentry when they have one or two seasons under English law. It is at Sitka where the vessel's presence is needed, and that forthwith.

At Wrangel, when the miners are moving through the country, the Indians are the supply agents. They smuggle, to sell to the whites, English liquors; and when they desire a drunk, they either make or purchase from other Indians liquor of their own manufacture.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. P. BERRY,
Collector.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit a copy of a telegram this day sent to the department upon the present existing state of affairs at Sitka, Alaska.

On the 27th of June last I wrote from Portland, Oreg., to Collector M. P. Berry, at Sitka, requesting from him a statement of the status of affairs since the departure of the troops, and asking the reply to be sent me at this port.

On yesterday the mail steamer California arrived here, bringing me a letter from Mr. Berry, inclosing a copy of his report to the department, dated Sitka, July 13, and also another informing me of his presence at Victoria. I deem the report of sufficient importance to telegraph an extract to the department without delay, and state other coherent information in the dispatch.

In a conversation had yesterday with Capt. Charles Thorne, master of the steamer California, he expressed to me grave fears of a general uprising of the Sitka Indians. These Indians belong to the Rojoab tribe, and about one thousand are now absent engaged in fishing. "Sitka Jack," a noted chief, informed Captain Thorne that about one thousand of his tribe were absent fishing and hunting, and when they returned they intended to seize all the government buildings and other valuable property at Sitka; that the country and everything in it belonged to his tribe.

Captain Thorne further states the Indians, contrary to when Sitka was garrisoned by troops, thronged his vessel while at the dock, and were generally haughty, insolent, and overbearing in their manner; that the citizens had a ball in the house known as the "Castle," and during the festivities the Indians entered the stockade, obtunded themselves upon those present, rendering themselves peculiarly disagreeable and obnoxious. It is his opinion and that of the officers of his ship that an outbreak is not far distant, which will result in the destruction and plunder of private property; and if the whites make any demonstration of resistance a wholesale massacre will ensue.

The Russian priest has already sent his family to——, in British Columbia, and general consternation and terror prevail amongst the whole white inhabitants.

Collector Berry has written me requesting my presence at Victoria, which place I shall visit on the 28th instant, en route to San Francisco, and confer with him.
Not being able to make personal inspection of this portion of my district, I cannot of my own knowledge present such an array of facts as might be considered incontrovertible, but I have sought every available and reliable source of information, and have no hesitation in saying that the outlook in Alaska is exceedingly dangerous and alarming. All concurrent testimony points to a speedy outbreak and resultant bloodshed by the warlike tribes, unless restrained by the strong arm of the government; that an armed vessel, either of the Treasury or Navy Department, is absolutely needed in the Sitka Archipelago without delay.

I very much question whether the vessels of the revenue marine on this coast are suitable for this duty, and either in armament or crew will prove themselves equal to the service which may be demanded of them. I hear they carry too few men and are not equivalent to a gunboat; which is the proper class of vessel for this dangerous and delicate service.

These views have heretofore been frequently expressed, and any further repetition would be unnecessary verbiage. I merely report such facts as are collected upon this frontier, and respectfully present them for the consideration and action of the department.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. GOVERNEUR MORRIS,
Special Agent.

Hon. JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES REVENUE MARINE,
STEAMER THOMAS CORWIN,
Sitka, Alaska, August 12, 1877.

SIR: In compliance with the department telegram of the 26th ultimo, I proceeded to this place, where I arrived at 4 p. m. of the 10th instant, and as the mail steamer will leave here this p. m., I have the honor to submit the following report:

Soon after mooring a number of the natives gathered around the vessel in their canoes with fish, game, &c., for the purpose of trade. From them I learned that most of the men were away fishing, as is their custom at this time of the year, and none with whom I conversed seemed to know of any particular trouble brewing.

Early the next morning, accompanied by an officer, I visited the customs house building, and found there Mr. E. S. Harvey in charge, Collector M. P. Berry being absent at Victoria, V. I., for medical treatment.

Mr. Harvey seems clearly to understand the situation of affairs here, and several of the traders support his views in the main. It is the opinion of Mr. Harvey that any trouble which may arise will be due to the excessive use of a very fiery and intoxicating drink, which the Indians and creoles (or half-breed Russians) easily distill from either molasses, sugar, potatoes, or the various kinds of wild berries growing here—molasses, however, being the chief article relied upon. The making of this drink (an art learned from the soldiers) is now being carried on by both Indians and half-breeds, and in quantities sufficient to suit the demand, so that all can have a "big drunk" whenever they are so disposed; and at such times serious trouble may possibly arise.

In my opinion, however, much of this could be averted by the traders themselves if they would not dispose of molasses save in very small quantities; or, better still, not at all, as the principal use of the molasses imported, which is of the cheapest and most inferior Sandwich Island production, is for the manufacture of this intoxicating drink. Judging, however, from the class of men trading here, I think it unlikely that they will refrain from trading in anything the law allows at least.

The mode of distilling this drink is very simple and the apparatus used inexpensive in the extreme, viz, two coal-oil cans and a very small coil of pipe, which is easily put out of sight or destroyed upon the slightest chance of detection; and I am informed many did so destroy or remove to the woods these petty stills upon our arrival in sight, especially when it was seen to be a Government vessel.

After diligent inquiry and careful observation since our arrival here I have not discovered any breach of the public peace, nor has my attention been called to any particular act, save of a few petty trespasses committed by the Indians, half-breeds, and white men as well, soon after the departure of the troops.

While the Indians, more thoughtful, are now preparing fish for winter use, the half-breeds, from their utter shiftlessness and inordinate cravings for strong drink, sacrificing all their summer earnings to obtain it, will, I am afraid, suffer for it this coming winter.

The great desire of all with whom I have conversed seems to be that the Indians should be made to understand that the government has not entirely abandoned the country to them, and that its presence here should be represented by an armed vessel
or the return of the troops. I would here respectfully suggest the propriety of having an armed vessel visit this place and the principal Indian villages in this archipelago once every two or three months at most, as that of itself would have a greater restraining influence over both whites and Indians and tend to the better enforcement of the laws and the preservation of the public peace than by stationing troops at this point. Carrying out this view, I would respectfully inform the department that after becoming satisfied that our stay here will be no longer required for the proper enforcement of the laws for the time being, I shall proceed to visit some of the principal villages and Fort Wrangel; thence to Port Townsend, Wash., where I shall leave Pilot Keene and report to the department, exercising my best judgment at all times for the best interests of the government.

I have to add that from the best data obtainable the population of this place is as follows: About 12 or 15 white men of various nationalities, claiming to be American citizens; 5 full-blooded Russians, including the priest, and about 270 half-breeds, including men, women, and children.

The Indian population varies from 300 to 1,500, according to the season. The priest informs me that the half-breeds are a low, degraded class, over whom he has no influence, and that more fear is to be apprehended from them when drunk than from the Indians themselves.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, &c.,

J. W. WHITE,
Captain, U. S. R. M.

Hon. JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C.

[Telegram.]

J. W. WHITE,
Captain of United States Cutter Thomas Corwin,
Astoria, Oregon:

Referring to your report of August 12, how soon, in your judgment, should cutter be sent again to Sitka?

R. C. MCCORMICK,
Assistant Secretary.

Charge Treasury.
J. C. UPTON, C. C.

Notice to operator: If not there, please forward dispatch to San Francisco.

C. C.

[Telegram.]

SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,
Washington, D. C.: 

Indians have festival at Sitka last of October; there might be necessity for cutter at that time.

J. W. WHITE,
Captain, U. S. R. M.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., April 13, 1877.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, inclosing a copy of an order to General Sherman withdrawing the troops from Alaska, and requesting this department to designate the officer to whom the military officers shall transfer the public buildings or other property which will be left by the military.

In reply, I have to inform you that there is a collector of customs stationed at Sitka and a deputy collector of customs at Fort Wrangel, where the troops are now stationed, to whom the transfer can be made.

Very respectfully,

JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary.
Sir: I have the honor to lay before you the following report in reference to the condition of affairs at this place since you were last informed:

The Indians have gradually grown bolder, owing to the fact that there is no means at my command of enforcing discipline or punishing wrongdoing, until they have become utterly regardless of consequences, and make open raids upon the government property in my charge, and in many instances private property has suffered like depredations. Yesterday, the 14th instant, from forty to sixty Indians went in a body and carried off a large part of the stockade. Being unable to prevent such wholesale destruction of property, the sewash is encouraged to pursue a course that will eventually bring about serious trouble, and from present appearances the day is not far distant.

While Captain White, of the revenue-cutter Thomas Corwin, was here, I entreated him to order the Indians at this point to repair the stockade where it was then destroyed, and informed him that I had checked the stealing in a measure by holding out the threat that when a gunboat arrived they would have to make good whatever they were taking. He would not undertake the matter, and consequently the position is even worse than previous to his arrival.

The inhabitants live in a state of continual fear, and on the occasion of the slightest rumor congregate nights in the most secure buildings for mutual protection.

The facts of the case are we are wholly subject to the caprices and at the mercy of several hundred Indians, who have almost unlimited supply of liquor of their own manufacture. They are well armed and provided with ammunition, while we are simply waiting, hoping. Their avarice, impelled by drunkenness and every petty difficulty which they have had with whites, which they never forget and often remind us of, will not lead them to commit an act of which we would be easy victims, without chance for escape, almost destitute of any means of protection.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDW. G. HARVEY,
Special Deputy Collector.

Hon. JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES REVENUE MARINE STEAMER THOMAS CORWIN.
San Francisco, Cal., October 4, 1877.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of department letter of August 17, E. W. C., addressed to me at Sitka, Alaska, but only received by me two days since at this place, transmitting copies of letters of the 26th and 28th of July, 1877, respectively, from the collector of customs at Port Townsend, Wash., and Capt. J. M. Selden, commanding the revenue steamer Oliver Wolcott, relative to the necessity for the presence of a revenue vessel in Alaskan waters, &c., and directing me to prepare a special report of such facts bearing upon the statements made in these communications as I might be able to ascertain in my cruise to Alaska with the revenue steamer Corwin.

Since my reports of August 12, 1877, and of September 8 and 22d ultimo, have anticipated much of what I deem a proper reply to the statements made in these communications, it will be necessary, therefore, to refer only to such portions of them as are not more particularly covered by the said reports.

Captain Selden speaks of the possible necessity arising for landing an armed force, and of the great assistance a steam launch would be not only for such an emergency, but for the pursuit and capture of canoes in places where the vessel could not go. It is also said the coast Indians may successfully invoke the aid of the interior tribes in their warfare against the whites. In reply to these statements, and speaking from my own personal observation and the experience gained in my former cruise to this portion of Alaska, embracing the waters of the Alexandrian Archipelago and extending from latitude north 54° 40' to latitude north 60°, I have no hesitation in respectfully stating that even for armed vessels of the deepest draught there is no difficulty in approaching within easy shelling distance any of the villages and completely destroying them and the canoes without resorting to the step of landing an armed body of sailors entirely inexperienced in the methods of Indian warfare, and where the odds would be largely against them. A small vessel, properly armed and equipped, could accomplish all that a larger and more heavily armed one could, with the added advantage of celerity of movement and quickness of evolution. The tribes are scattered over a large extent of coast, and the massing of any force to carry into execution a plan of attack must be by canoes, since land travel, from the difficulties of the country, is out of the question.

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I lay much stress upon the fact of an armed vessel being able to destroy their villages and causes as a means of overawing them, because, do this, and their accumulations of perhaps years of toil and industry are swept away and their very means of a livelihood taken away from them. The idea of the interior Indians coming to the assistance of the coast tribes seems to be visionary and far-fetched, for there is no community of interest, feeling, or pursuits between them, and a jealousy of local rights and privileges animates them.

The presence of this vessel in their waters had an undoubted good moral effect, and lest this should be too quickly effaced by the absence of the cause which produced it, I recommend that an armed vessel should visit them at short intervals.

The statement that the build of the Wolcott with a quarter deck without bulwarks, affording no protection to the officers and crew from the aim of breech-loading rifles in the hands of the Indians, applies to the other two cutters on this coast, and it would have great force and pertinence lying moored in the narrow harbor of Sitka, particularly with no steam up and the vessel within short musket range of the village. In these cases the only safety would be in keeping under way.

Referring to my letter of the 22d of September ultimo, in relation to a particular class of vessel for the Alaskan waters, it was not intended to convey the idea that the cutters on this coast are none of them fit to do duty in Alaska; on the contrary, they are all able to make special cruises there for brief periods, including the winter months. The idea sought to be conveyed was this: That for an extended service in those waters at all seasons of the year a vessel specially designed would be required, and the steam-launch there suggested was with the view of sounding out and exploring unknown passages and anchorages, and performing such other work as could not be accomplished in open boats.

I have to add that the steamer California on her last trip landed in Sitka for the traders there two hundred barrels of molasses, enough to make two hundred barrels of liquor. The traders know full well that the chief if not the sole use for this molasses is for the making of liquor, thus importing into their very midst the probable means of their own ruin and destruction. If the importation of this molasses could be prohibited it would go far towards allaying any fears of depredations by the natives.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

(Signed)

J. L. WHITE,
Captain, U. S. R. M.

Hon. John Sherman,
Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C.

UNITED STATES REVENUE MARINE WOLCOTT,
Port Townsend, Wash., November 12, 1877.

SIR: I have the honor to report my arrival here from a cruise to Sitka, in accordance with your orders of the 1st of October, and beg leave to submit the following report:

On receipt of your telegram, I immediately made such preparations as time would permit, and sailed on the 4th instant. The vessel having but one gun, and the carriage to that defective, I did not feel secure, in view of the alarming reports coming from there, in going to Sitka without further means of defense; consequently I borrowed three 12-pounders, formerly belonging to the cutter Joe Lane, from Messrs. Tibbals & Waterman, of Port Townsend. The round shot and grape belonging to these guns, fortunately were a portion of our ballast. As additional ammunition I received from Col. E. L. Stone, quartermaster United States Army at Port Townsend, two cases of fixed ammunition, and fifty cylinders of powder, with the understanding if they were not used they should be returned.

Owing to our not having received the requisitions for October, November, &c., in time to procure the necessary articles we needed, as they were only handed to me the evening before we sailed, I was compelled to purchase oil, tallow, and a small quantity of lumber, and become personally responsible for the same. Knowing our rifle-cartridge were unreliable, as had been reported to the department, I telegraphed to Seattle and Victoria for a necessary supply and received answer that they could not be obtained north of San Francisco.

On the evening of October 5 I arrived at Nanaimo, and immediately commenced coaling ship. I could stow only fifty-five tons in the bunks, and as that amount was insufficient to take her to Sitka and back, by twenty tons, in good weather, and the coal bags asked for on October requisition not having been allowed, I was compelled to borrow from the agent of the coal company and the messes of the ship what few gunny bags they had and store the balance of the coals in bulk on deck.

Apart from the added danger to the vessel, the decks were so encumbered that offi-
have yielded readily to medical treatment, but the parties died a few days afterward. From Nanaimo to Sitka, where we arrived on the afternoon of the 15th, we encountered almost continuous bad weather. During the passage we used our sails as much as possible, and discovered them to be much weaker than supposed. The canvas is rotted so much by the smoke and soot as to have become very thin and badly perforated, and I consider them unsafe to trust in bad weather. The quantity of coal consumed on the trip to Sitka left an insufficient amount for returning if the weather proved at all boisterous; therefore I had to purchase wood to burn while there and to assist in bringing us back. I purchased fifty cords at $2.50 per cord, the bills for which I presented to Collector Webster at Port Townsend for settlement.

Great inconvenience and discomfort were experienced on this cruise by the officers and crew for want of the use of the pilot-house, as, being compelled to use the after-wheel, they were constantly exposed to the severity of the weather and drenching rains. I respectfully call the attention of the department again to this matter, asking that some plan may be adopted to render the forward steering-gear useful. I also desire to call the attention of the department again to the condition of our boats. Twice while we were at Sitka we were called upon for medical assistance, supposing we had a surgeon on board. In each case the diseases were such as would apparently have yielded readily to medical treatment, but the parties died a few days afterward.

IN REGARD TO MATTERS IN SITKA.

The present number of Indians at Sitka, including visitors, are perhaps from six to seven hundred, comprised of Chilthats, Koloshes, and Kakes, of whom the Keloshes number about four-fifths; the remainder are simply on a visit, and will take their departure hence shortly for their homes or other places in the Territory. The leading men of the Keloshes appear to be friendly towards the whites, and, judging from their expressions, desire to live on terms of peace and amity with them. These Indians don't appear to be under the control of any particular chief, and this independence of control makes it difficult for the chiefs to prevent the mischievous acts of some of the younger members of the tribe. Such depredations as the pulling down of the stockade, breaking locks, windows, and stealing lead pipe, &c., do not appear to have been done from any malice towards the whites, and are greatly deprecated by the chiefs. I cannot learn that any overt act of hostility has been committed towards any white person since the removal of the troops, nor is there likely to be, unless it is brought about by the effects of rum. The facility with which the Indians can supply themselves with unlimited quantities of ardent spirits, which is already showing its demoralizing effects upon them, will eventually react upon the whites, unless a stop is put to the sale of the material that is used in its manufacture. From my own personal observation, and from what I learn from others, the trade in rum is in a great measure to blame for putting this temptation in the way of the savage, by persisting in selling them the materials that they know are to be used for distillation. This evil has been pointed out to them, and they have been repeatedly remonstrated with in reference to it; still, they are unwilling to give it up, or lose this source of profit, although they are aware of the consequences to themselves. The very last trip of the steamer California we had further proof of their persistence in continuing this nefarious traffic, by the receipt of seven hundred gallons of molasses, the principal part of which could only be required for the purpose of manufacturing hootznan. In connection with this subject I wish to mention what Mr. Hall, the chief trader of the Hudson Bay Company, at Port Simpson, told me. He said: The principle article of trade with the Indians on the American side, at his post, was molasses to manufacture liquor; this was to be deeply deplored, as it was rapidly diminishing their numbers and destroying their inclination to follow useful pursuits. They were an incorporated company of traders, and responsible to their stockholders to make as profitable returns as possible, and it could not be expected that they would deprive themselves of this source of profit while the American traders continued it, as the refusal to sell this article would keep the Indians from coming to their trading post. They were as desirous as the United States Government to keep liquor from the natives, and would willingly unite in any measure which would put a stop to the traffic, provided our own citizens could be made to conform to it.

I understand that the parties engaged in the manufacture of this poisonous decoration are well known to the people of Sitka, and could be readily made to desist, provided they would combine for that purpose, but this they don't seem willing to do.

The white and Russian population together number about three hundred, and, properly organized for self-defense, would be bale to protect themselves against any ordinary outbreak of the Indians, but there appears to be too little affiliation between them to admit of associating themselves together for this object. It is inconceivable to us, that, if this fear is well founded, the citizens should sit down with folded arms, without taking any measures to protect their lives and property. They have abundance...
of arms among them, and their substantially built houses are well adapted for barricades, in case of an attack. Under the circumstances we fail to be convinced that their appeal for help from the government is actuated entirely by their apprehensions of danger to themselves. The resident priest, in a conversation with me, says: "Both white man and Indians had, and what is most needed here is a magistrate and police to keep order."

I think that some measures should be adopted to maintain order and protect the government property here, that is gradually going to destruction for the want of care. These buildings were very substantially built by the Russian Government, and could not be replaced without great expense. Although I see no immediate danger threatening, it seems necessary that the government should have some means of enforcing its authority over the natives of this Territory. There is no use disguising the fact that the citizens here have reasonable cause for fear. What I saw during our stay at Sitka convinces me, if the lawless spirit of the Indians is suffered to remain unchecked, the lives and property of the citizens hang upon a slender thread. Notwithstanding our presence here, and Captain White's and my own commands that they should desist from pulling down the stockade and pillaging of public property, they have continued to do so, and have demolished body greater portion of the stockade, each night, during our stay here. The tenor of my instructions and limited means at my command to enforce my authority, together with the consequences which might be visited upon the citizens after the Wolcott left, prevented me from proceeding to extreme measures.

It seems to me unfortunate that the Army should have left behind them so large a quantity of ammunition, as the citizens will not use it in their own defense, which they could readily do if so disposed, and furnishes a ready supply for the Indians in case of hostilities to the whites. There is now at Sitka 11 4-pounders, 4 18-pounders, 1,181 ½ pounds of cannon powder, 546 ½ pounds of rifle powder (stored in rear of custom-house), and about 190 stands of grape and canister (in two old block-houses, one of which the Indians have commenced to undermine), and in easy reach of the Indians, secured only by an ordinary wooden door and padlock. This is exclusive of the new arms and ammunition brought here recently by Col. H. C. De Ahna, collector of customs.

In my opinion, the authority of the government could be more effectively and cheaply enforced by a suitably adapted armed vessel, which could move freely from point to point, than by the stationing of troops at any one place. The natives living as they do in scattered villages along the coast, that can be only reached by water, soldiers cannot get to them as easily as a gun-boat. They stand much more in awe of a gun-boat than of a garrison, but a vessel for this purpose should be well equipped and manned, capable of resisting any body of Indians successfully. The commander of such a vessel should be invested with full magisterial powers for the arrest and punishment of all offenders in all ordinary cases, so that offenders might be reached and crimes prevented by prompt punishment.

Should the government decide to send a vessel to Alaska for this purpose, a coal depot, at some suitable point there, should be established. The frequent and long-continued gales of wind and fogs that prevail at certain seasons of the year render it impossible to calculate with accuracy the quantity of fuel required to steam a given distance, which at one time could readily be made in five days requiring at other times fifteen days of hard steaming to accomplish. At present the only coal in Alaska is some anthracite at Sitka, belonging to the Navy Department; furnaces adapted to burning soft coal will not make steam with it.

For the interior passages the admiralty charts are completed to Fort Simpson. Northward from thence the passages are only in outline and have not been surveyed; only a Russian reconnaissance has been published, very incorrect and wholly unreliable in every particular. Without a pilot it is impossible to find your way by these charts, and he is often misled by the incorrect courses and distances. A survey of the main channel way from where the admiralty chart leaves off to Sitka would greatly assist navigation and undoubtedly prevent many disasters. The courses of nearly all the channels from Dundas Island northward are laid down too incorrectly that no chart can be shaped and run by chart. Many hidden dangers are to be found in most of these channels, and nearly every passage made north by steamers some new danger is discovered by experience. On our recent trip to Sitka, we found that it was out of the question to run by courses given on the chart. Every shipmaster and pilot complains of the same thing, and of the great risk that is run in navigating this part of the interior channels to Sitka.

Before closing my report in regard to matters at Sitka, I feel it my duty to mention the destitute and deplorable condition of the lower class of Russian and creole population. The men have acquired such a passion for rum that they will resort to any means to procure it. I understand that during the fishing season, when the Indians were procuring fish to put by for their winter support, these men would accompany the Indians, and on their return sell their catch to them for a bottle of this detestable compound, koulinoo. The result of this is, now winter is approaching, they have no
food nor means to procure it, and their poor women and children are on the verge of starvation. I am told they are driven to beg food from the Indians. Unless help is given to them, their sufferings will be great this winter.

When the stockade was erected, the government procured the plank from these Indians, paying them fifty cents each for fifteen hundred planks. I hope the department will pardon my suggesting that nothing would so effectively deter the Indians from further depredations upon public and private property here as to compel them to replace it as it was originally.

On the 29th ultimo the Indians concluded their festival, which, I must acknowledge, passed off much more orderly and quietly than I had expected with the unlimited quantities of hootznoo they obtained and drank. I noticed a good deal of drunkenness among them, but, strange to say, I saw no fights or disturbances.

The majority of these Indians are industrious and are always anxious to get employment, but, like all Indians on the coast, are passionately fond of rum. Such is their desire for it that they will dispose of their most valuable furs at an extraordinary sacrifice to obtain it. It is a well-known fact that the sale of liquor to Indians on this coast has reduced their numbers, caused petty feuds, idleness, and theft, and predisposed them to disease and mortality.

I remained at Sitka until the afternoon of the 2d instant, to satisfy myself of the future intentions of the Indians and to quiet any alarm the citizens might have had. I had hoped the Chilkate, after the celebration was over, would shortly take their departure for their homes, and with that hope in view I offered to give them a tow a good distance upon their way, but I learned from them that it was very uncertain when they would leave, as they had a number of furs they wished to trade off, and if they could not dispose of them at Sitka they intended to try and sell them elsewhere.

Before I sailed I called a meeting of their chiefs, and talked with them. I told them that I had been sent there by the Great Father at Washington to talk with them, and to learn the truth about the reports that had been made against the Indians for pulling down the stockade, and other depredations. I urged strongly upon the Indians the necessity of their remaining at peace and submitting quietly to the authority of the United States Government, and of relying on its good faith and kind intentions towards them. I moreover told them that if they did molest the white people or destroyed private or public property that the Great Father would punish them severely. They made long speeches and stated "they were friendly to the whites and wished to continue so, that they talked every day good to their people and urged them to do nothing that would bring upon them trouble." They said, "the white man sell Indian rum, and then abuse him if he acts foolish." They moreover said "much that had been told about them were lies; the Russians steal and pull down stockade and say Indian done it." They pledged themselves to use every means in their power to keep peace and order, and that no disturbance should occur among their people and the whites if they could prevent it. I am firmly convinced that what they promised they meant to perform.

The people of Sitka, both whites and Indians, have an impression that a man-of-war is soon to visit Alaska, for what reason I did not inquire. This expectation, probably, had somewhat to do with the orderly conduct of this festival, and I think that a visit of this kind at the present time would have a good effect, as all classes, whites and Indians, are uncertain to what extent the government proposes to exercise its authority for and over them.

The uncertainty of the movements of the visiting Indians, together with the quietness of the place and the assurance of the chiefs that it should continue so, decided me, in view of the uncertainty of the weather at this season, and my very limited supply of fuel and provisions, and considering that my orders were executed, to proceed to Port Townsend.

In conclusion, I respectfully state that on the passage down the weather was very boisterous, consequently we were nine days making the passage.

I report all on board in good health, and with the exception of the wear and tear incident to such a trip, the vessel, after some overhauling and repair to machinery, will be in fair working order.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. M. SELDEN,
Captain, U. S. R. M.

Hon. JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C.
SIR: After forwarding my report from Sitka, dated the 12th ultimo, by the mail steamer California, I remained at that place until the 20th, then proceeded to visit the various tribes north and east, viz: the Hooners, Chilkarts, Ooks, Tarkoos, and Hootenhoos, embracing a distance of nearly 500 miles, returning on the 27th to Sitka.

We found the people of the above-named tribes engaged in trading, hunting, and preparing fish for winter use. All expressed themselves as friendly toward the whites; they are also at peace among themselves, which has not been the case for many years past. At several places, and particularly at Kake, they are shy of approaching the vessel until fully assured of our friendly intentions. The cause of this fear, I soon learned, was from a belief, widely circulated among them, that the government was not yet satisfied with the punishment already inflicted on them by the burning of their villages some years since, but intended to carry it further. I saw no drunkenness while among these people, but a thrift and industry very commendable. Taking all these Indians together as a body, living as they do upon the sea-coast, in exposed villages, the only means of intercommunication frail canoes, one armed vessel being capable of inflicting irreparable loss and destruction upon them, it seems to me that motives of self-interest would compel their friendship for the white man, especially, too, as their intercourse with him has begotten wants which are fast becoming part of their nature, and which trade with the white man only can supply; in few words, the trade of the white man is fast becoming a necessity to them. I am convinced that the presence of this vessel has had a very excellent moral effect. Numerous inquiries were made by the natives everywhere as to when we would return among them, and I purposely left the impression that they need not be surprised at seeing a gunboat at any time, as the government intended to keep peace in the country.

Returning to Sitka without having advised the people there of my intention to do so, we found everything quiet and peaceful as when we left, save the usual drunkenness and demoralization as before reported.

During our first stay at Sitka, and after the departure of the mail steamer, I visited and examined in company with Mr. Harvey all the government buildings. I found many windows broken, locks taken from a number of the inside doors of several houses, and all the lead piping removed. The roofs of most of the houses are in a leaky condition and the property is fast going to destruction. The removal of the lead pipes, locks, &c., is charged to the Indians; be this as it may, however, I learned that these articles had fallen into the hands of the traders, some of whom, I am satisfied, will buy anything without stopping to question the ownership.

While at Sitka I endeavored to urge upon the people the formation of some sort of organization for self-protection in case of possible trouble arising out of drunken brawls, for under no other circumstances, so far as my observations go, can I see why any disturbance should arise. I am further impressed with the necessity which exists of having some one at the head of affairs of energy and force of character, able to command the respect of all, and one upon whose reports the department may safely depend.

Seeing no further necessity of remaining longer in Sitka, and deeming it important equally to visit other points in the Archipelago before leaving the waters of Alaska, I left there on the afternoon of the 28th ultimo, and proceeded by the outside passage and through Clarence Straits to Wrangel, where, on the evening of the 29th, we arrived.

Here I visited Mr. Dennis, deputy collector in charge. Wrangel is at the head of navigation for deep-water vessel, bringing supplies for the mines up the Stackine River. It has grown to be a mining town in all its features, and has a population during the winter of two or three thousand whites and Indians. A large portion of their supplies come from Victoria, V. I., and liquors are so easily obtained that their manufacture from canoes, &c., is rarely resorted to. I saw no drunkenness or disorderly conduct during my stay there; the Indians, however, have heard of any breaches of the peace, although it would be impossible to say how long this quiet state of affairs might last in the absence of all power or authority there to enforce law and order should occasion arise. The Indians, with that keen instinct for trade which I have had occasion to remark as characteristic of them, knowing liquor to be an article of profitable commerce here, bring it in their canoes from the Upper Stackine and from Port Simpson, and arriving as they do at all hours of the day and night, it is impossible as things are to exercise that sort of surveillance which would prevent its introduction into the town by them.

Leaving Wrangel on the morning of the 1st instant we proceeded to Kaita Bay, the home of the principal chief, Skoual, of the Hyde tribe of Indians north of 54° 40'. We found this tribe like the others engaged in the usual occupation of hunting and fishing. We left this place on board forty tons of coal. Leaving Nanaimo on the 7th instant we continued on to
this place, where we arrived at 2 a.m. of the 8th instant and transferred to the Wol­
cott-pilot Keene, also the pistols and ammunition borrowed from that vessel.

With regard to the resources of that portion of Alaska which we have visited, I
would mention the recent discovery of gold on several of the streams of the main­
land, between the parallels of N. 57° 10' and 58° 00', emptying into Stephens Passage,
some 30 or 40 white men and as many Indians being now engaged in mining there,
many of whom are making from $5 to $10 a day. We had passed through Stephens
Passage to the southward before learning of this fact, otherwise we should have
stopped and communicated with some of the miners. I saw at Sitka very rich speci­
mens of gold-bearing quartz and silver ore which had been obtained from lodes on
Baranoff Island; also very rich specimens of copper ore and galena found on other
islands in the Archipelago. I feel assured that when this portion of the country is
thoroughly “prospected,” very rich mineral deposits will be found. The waters of
this Archipelago abound in food fish—a source of prospective wealth which I think
it needs only capital and industry to develop.

If a mere reconnaissance of the principal passages and inlets were made, anchorages
marked and the compass courses corrected, it would generally facilitate the develop­
ment of this portion of the country and render its navigation much easier and far
less dangerous than at present. With one steamer and a good steam launch, much of
this could be accomplished in a year with proper energy. Both coal and wood for
steaming purposes can be procured through the natives in trade at a very low rate.
The bestowal of this small patronage by the government would have its beneficial
result.

The only charts of this part of the country are from Vancouver’s survey in 1792,
with a very few corrections made by the Russians. They are very incorrect and not
to be depended on.

Weather permitting, we shall leave here on the 11th instant for San Francisco,
touching at the Columbia River, if weather is favorable, to lay the vessel in fresh
water for a few days.

The cog quadrant of the reversing gear of engine was broken on the 20th ultimo
while getting under way, and was temporarily repaired by the engineers. It will be
necessary, therefore, on our arrival at San Francisco, either to repair it properly or have
a new one made. No other accident has happened during the cruise, the vessel and
machinery performing admirably. The health of the officers and crew has been good.

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

J. W. WHITE,
Captain, U. S. R. M.

Hon. JOHN SHERMAN,
Secretary of the Treasury, Washington, D. C.