50TH CONGRESS, 2d Session. } SENATE. { Ex. DOC. No. 30.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TRANSMITTING,

In response to Senate resolution of December 13, 1888, *information about Indians in Alaska.*

DECEMBER 21, 1888.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., December 20, 1888.

SIR: I am in receipt of the following resolution of the Senate of the United States, dated the 13th instant, viz:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to communicate to the Senate such information as may be in the possession of the Department in relation to the condition of the inhabitants of Alaska, and especially of the treatment of Indian women by white people now domiciled in that Territory.

In reply I have the honor to state that beyond the custody and control of the Government buildings in the Territory of Alaska and the enforcement of the customs and navigation laws, this Department has had no transactions with said Territory which would place it in possession of any information of the character desired, except as to the islands of St. Paul and St. George, which being declared Government reservations by section 1959, Revised Statutes, have been placed under the control of the Department and the landing of any person thereon except by authority of the Secretary of the Treasury made unlawful.

With respect to these islands, the only information of the character desired which the Department possesses will be found in the reports of the agents appointed under section 1973, Revised Statutes, and who are charged with the management of the seal fisheries and the performance of such other duties as may be assigned to them by the Secretary of the Treasury. Recent reports from these officers have been received as follows: H. A. Gliddon, July 31, 1884, G. R. Tingle, August 15, 1885, July 31, 1886, July 31, 1887, July 31, 1888.

Copies of most of these reports have, it is understood, been transmitted from time to time to the Senate, and, it is presumed, have been printed.

A report dated July 31, 1887, was transmitted with Department's letter of December 16, 1887, and will be found in Senate document No. 31.

A copy of the report dated July 31, 1888, was transmitted to the

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Hon. Poindexter Dunn, chairman Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, House of Representatives, on September 27 last.

It is not known whether the last mentioned report has been printed, and a copy thereof is accordingly transmitted herewith.

Respectfully, yours,

C. S. FAIRCHILD,
Secretary.

Hon. JOHN J. INGALLS,
President pro tempore United States Senate.

OFFICE OF SPECIAL AGENT TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
St. Paul Island, Alaska, July 31, 1888.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a report of the operations of the fur seal islands of Alaska for the year ending July 31, 1888.

I inclose the Alaska Commercial Company's steamer *Saint Paul's* receipts for 100,000 fur seal skins "taken and shipped." Statement A shows the daily killing of seals, from which you will see the number of large seals killed after the close of the season of 1887, for native food, was 4,885, of which number the Alaska Commercial Company accepted, on the quota of 1888, 4,630; there were 59 rejected, being under size; and 196 rejected as stagy.

Two thousand one hundred and seventy-seven small pups were killed in November for native food, being 647 less than were killed the previous year, while the stagy skins destroyed this year were 394 less than the year last preceding. This was owing to the fact of the Alaska Commercial Company accepting and salting all the stagy skins that were but slightly touched, so as to save all that it is possible to pass as merchantable skins.

The large killing of seals in November, December, and January for food showed an unusual number on the island at that season of the year. Mr. Manchester, assistant Treasury agent in charge of St. Paul Island, had the natives' salt in the company's salt-house a large portion of the meat, which gave them a better supply than they have had for several years in the winter, when the islands are depopulated of seal.

Statement B shows the killing on Saint Paul and Saint George consolidated each month.

The extremely small number of seals rejected this year, viz, 273, attests the care which is exercised in killing the quota of 100,000. This insignificant loss is the more remarkable when it is considered that in the drives many large bulls and yearling seals are driven up to the killing grounds, which have to be separated in the pods when clubbing. The presence of these seals among the killables is very embarrassing to the clubbers, as they can not be turned out to return to the sea until nearly or quite all the acceptable seals are knocked down, when they are driven off to the water unharmed.

The sealing throughout the season progressed without any serious interruptions, and was concluded in a most satisfactory manner by the lessees on both islands.

There has been general good behavior among the natives on both islands during the past year, owing to the strict discipline and careful watchfulness of the Government officers in charge.

The natives have performed their work during this sealing season with alacrity, each one manifesting a disposition to do his whole duty.

The breeding rookeries were later filling this year than for several years past. I may say that fully three-fourths of the cows and bulls were ten days later hauling out than usual, which at the time gave the impression there would be a shortage this season of killable seals as well as breeders.

I am happy to be able to report that although late landing the breeding rookeries are filled out to the lines of measurement heretofore made, and some of them much beyond those lines, showing conclusively that seal life is not being depleted, but is fully up to the estimates given in my report of 1887.

The marauders which infest the sea, shooting and harassing the seals on their way to the islands, I am sure is the main cause of their late landing this year, and if this unlawful slaughtering of the fur seal in Bering Sea is not in some way effectually stopped, they will adopt some other route and make a home on some other land, most likely on the Russian side. The number hauling out on our islands will each year grow rapidly less, when it would be impossible for any lessee to secure the quota they may by contract be allowed to take, and your world-wide famous seal islands would be in a short time reduced to the home of a few straggling seals and as a source of revenue be entirely destroyed.

Although this question of unlawful killing of seals by schooners fitted out in British Columbia ports, as well as American, has been referred to at length in previous reports, I again beg to call the Department's attention to it. In view of the termination of the present lessees' contract on the 1st day of May, 1890, which gives them but one more season's killing, it is of the highest importance some definite and prompt action should be taken looking to the preservation of seal life, or the valuable seal property, which could be made to yield a larger revenue to the Government than it does now, will soon be of no value. With absolute protection the seals will increase, so that a greater number could each year be taken to keep pace with the increased demand, and the price cheapened to the people of the world, and particularly to those of moderate means in our own country who would be glad to enjoy the comforts of the beautiful seal garment.

On April 4 the steam-whaler *Orca*, Captain Baldray, touched at this island on her way to the Arctic Ocean. The captain very kindly sent on shore a file of San Francisco papers up to the 5th of March, together with a quantity of fresh fish and vegetables. In return for his kindness, the Treasury agent, Mr. Manchester, and the Alaska Commercial Company's agent, Mr. Redpath, sent him off some presents.

The weather last winter and spring was exceptionally mild. The lowest temperature in December was 14°, January 8°, and February 2° above zero, and then only for one day in each of the months. The ice did not make its appearance around either of the islands or even in sight, contrary to the usual custom. This is accounted for by the prevailing winds being east and southeast instead of north and northeast, as is generally the case.

The condition of the natives on the two islands remains about the same as heretofore reported. They are slowly becoming Americanized and are perfectly happy and contented, as they well may be with the treatment they receive at the hands of the Alaska Commercial Company and the Government.

The usual number of deaths occurred this year, mostly the result of imprudent exposure. Although the best medical treatment is furnished them, with medicines free, they fail to give that careful attention to nursing which is necessary to bring them through. When they are re-

monstrated with for exposing themselves unnecessarily in bad weather, they generally reply, in Russian, "Never mind; to die is good." When once prepared for death by the priest of the Greek Church, they calmly and happily await the end. No tears are shed by the relatives of the deceased and no sorrow is manifested in the household. If it is a wife the husband, according to their custom, makes the coffin, and if a husband, then the nearest male relative makes the coffin. The body in all cases is taken to the church, where services are held, at the conclusion of which every man, woman, and child kisses the corpse on the forehead and on the left cheek. The body is then carried to the grave by the relatives and buried. A few days after the funeral a tea party is given at the house of the deceased, and is usually largely attended, mostly by the female portion of the population. After forty days' mourning and prayers, the surviving wife or husband, as the case may be, is at liberty to marry again.

The sanitary condition of the villages on both islands could not be better, and, indeed, will compare very favorably with the small towns in the States, if not put many of them to shame could they be compared.

On the 17th day of June, at noon, the United States man-of-war *Thetis*, Lieutenant-Commander Emory, arrived at this island and anchored, having on board His Excellency A. P. Swineford, governor of Alaska.

Commander Emory, with a number of his officers and the governor, came on shore, and were met at the landing by the Treasury officials and Alaska Commercial Company's agent, Dr. H. H. McIntyre, by whom a cordial welcome was extended the distinguished visitors. Every facility was offered the governor to further the object of his visit. He was placed in possession of the fullest information from the books, and by personal observation as well as inquiry among the natives, as to the management of the fur-seal islands. The entire ship's party were taken to the rookeries by the Treasury agent, as well as upon the seal fields, through the salt-houses and store, school-house and church, where the governor looked into everything critically. He took occasion to express himself as highly pleased with the condition of the natives, and the management of the Government interests and the relation of the lessees therewith.

He was indeed quite profuse in his praise of the company's care and provision for the natives, as well as the correct methods of conducting the Government business. He thought it could not be improved on.

The governor's visit here can have but one result, as he is a fair man, viz, to give him the data gained by personal knowledge on which he will base a report correcting many of the errors into which he was led in his last report, by accepting as true the false statement of a man named Anderson.

The visitors were entertained at the Government house, and on the 18th the Treasury agent returned their visit and was entertained at dinner on board the ship.

The United States revenue cutter *Bear*, Capt. M. A. Healy, arrived and anchored at this island on the 16th of June, the day before the arrival of the *Thetis*. She brought our mail and papers from San Francisco up to May 25. The two ships left on the 19th at 3 p. m., under sail for Oonalaska. The *Bear*, after cruising to the south and eastward, returned to the island on the 7th of July, departing again the morning of the 8th instant, at daylight.

The United States revenue cutter *Rush*, Captain Sheppard, arrived at the island on the 25th instant, bringing mail for the islands from San

Francisco up to July 2, and the first intelligence we had of the action of the two national conventions.

The cutter *Bear* anchored here on the 20th instant, and left on the 21st for the Arctic Ocean. She had cruised quite extensively in the Bering Sea since she was last here. Captain Healy reported to me that he had not sighted any schooners, which indicates an unusual absence of marauders this year. In a letter from Captain Glover, of the United States cutter *Walcott*, by the *Rush*, I am informed that the American schooners had decided not to enter Bering Sea this season to kill seals. Captain Glover's opportunities in Puget Sound for obtaining correct information are good. He is fully sustained by the report from Captains Healy and Sheppard, who up to the last of this month have not sighted a single marauding vessel in Bering Sea.

The good work of the United States revenue cutters last year in seizing the vessels unlawfully engaged in sealing has had a salutary effect.

Whilst the vessels have kept out of Bering Sea up to this date, they have vigorously pursued the fur seals in the North Pacific Ocean en route to their home on the islands of Saint Paul and Saint George, killing and destroying a very large number.

All the obligations of the lessees were performed to the entire satisfaction of the Government officers and in strict accordance with their contract.

Although the schools are as well supplied with every facility for teaching that can be found in any Eastern town, yet the native children make but limited progress in their studies. They are extremely dull and indifferent about learning and are not encouraged by their parents to study; they are particularly averse to learning English.

I leave Saint George Island in charge of Captain Loud, assistant Treasury agent, and Saint Paul Island with Mr. J. P. Manchester, assistant Treasury agent in charge. Mr. William Gavitt, assistant Treasury agent in charge of Saint George Island during the past year, and myself returned to our homes, as per Department letter of authority, March 5, 1888, A. F., 308.

Respectfully submitted.

GEO. R. TINGLE,
Treasury Agent.

Hon. C. S. FAIRCHILD,
Secretary of the Treasury.

Census January 1, 1888.

SAINT PAUL ISLAND.

Number of families		64
Male adults	58	
Males five to seventeen years old	19	
Males under five years old	15	
		92
Female adults	81	
Females five to seventeen years old	34	
Females under five years old	20	
		135
Total population		227

Deaths:		
Male adults	7	
Males five to seventeen years of age	1	
Males under five years old	3	
		11
Female adults	3	
Females under five years	6	
		9
		20
Births:		
Males	2	
Females	6	
		8

SAINT GEORGE ISLAND.

Number of families		30
Male adults	29	
Males five to seventeen years old	13	
Males under five years old	8	
		50
Female adults	37	
Females five to seventeen years old	22	
Females under five years	10	
		69
Total		119
Deaths:		
Males	5	
Females	10	
		15
Births:		
Males	5	
Females	2	
		7