

Letters from the Dalles: Roll No. 17

Office C.O.M & Com W.T.V.

Dalles, O.T. June 4, /56

Isaac I. Stevens

Gov. — Commander in Chief, Olympia W.T., Sir:

An express has just arrived from the Nez Perce country. I take the liberty to transmit a copy of a communication received from Col. Craig as it contains facts which will perhaps interest you. Excuse the briefness of this as the boat is about to push off.

Very Respectfully, your obdt. servt.

A.H. Robie, QM W.T.V.

Copy Lapwai, May 29, 1856

Head Quarters Co M I.R. W.T.vols

A.H. Robie, esq. C.M and Commissary

Dear Sir

I embrace the opportunity of your return express to drop you a line. Things are not very quiet in the neighbor country. The Nez Perces stand firm. Old Kamiakin was in the Spokane country four days ago on recruiting service but I believe he got no encouragement, the Spokans told him to go off, they wished to have a talk with Gov. Stevens and if he talked straight they would do the same; they also told the Cayuses that are encamped with them that they will say nothing. The Spokans will talk for them when the Gov. comes up. We are expecting a visit from the gentry every day and we are in a very bad fix to receive a large party, as the Nez Perces are scattered all over the country. We have about forty men and from eight to ten rounds of ammunition to each. I am certainly much pleased and also the Nez Perces to hear that there is some supplies and men on the way to this country as I am entirely out of everything. There was a Nez Perce chief at the Spokans when Kamiakin made his speech to them. He told

them he had col. "right just where he wanted him, that he had offered each chief forty blankets , ten bags of flour, sugar and coffee if they would make peace, but he only wanted to let the whites know that he could whip them. I believe I have no more news so God speed you on your way to this place.

Very Respy. Yours

Obd t servt.

William Craig

Special agent Nez Perces.

N.B. I sent to the Spokans for the Department animals at that place and received four mules and horses in miserable condition.

Wash'ton Suptch. Roll 17

Governor I.I. Stevens, Sir:

Learning that you were still at the Dalls I thought perhaps you would like to hear how we are getting on here before you leave for below. I also wished to express my gratification at your safe return from Walla Walla.

The Indians here are well contented and I think there is no danger to be apprehended from them, or no probability of their joining a hostile party again, unless they are overawed by a superior force coming into the neighborhood, this is certainly the case with the Vancouver and Cascade Indians. I have every confidence in them.

I cannot judge so well of the old hostile Klicka tats as I have as yet seen but little of them, but with exception of a little jealousy between them and the Vancouvers their demonstrations have all been friendly enough and I think they can be relied on at least as long as the military will keep hostile bands from molesting them.

Since the removal up here my Indians all have been out making the most of the fall and end of the season, drying berries, camas etc. They have nearly all returned and information that the Klickitats, Towetock and Epiers [?] bands numbering as near as I can judge some 300 will be in, in a few days most of them will require their whole subsistence from government this winter, soon as all are here I shall proceed to ascertain their number, condition etc and report. I have about 220 Vancouver Indians, 115 Cascades and the others will swell the numbers I think to near 700.

Doc a towit and Spencer are anxious to see you, I have given them permit to go up to Dalls. They also wish to see the Indians to see what they can learn regarding truth of rumor we have here of a meditated attack on the Dalls. As you must have business on your hands I will not occupy more of your time and remain.

Yours very resp ctfully A. Townsend, local Indian Agent. White Salmon
Oct 7, 1856

Wash'ton Suptch. Roll 17

Copy

Vancouver, W.T.

Oct. 14th , 1856

A. Townsend, local Indian agent

Sir: Your letter of Oct. 8 came to hand today. I am much pleased at the prospect of things on the reservation as your letter reports them. Today Gov. Stevens left for the Sound and left instructions with me to take the most efficient means to get together all the friendly Indians in all that country on our reservation that would come in and comply with the instructions of the Indian Dept. I will therefore request that you take the proper measures to communicate to the Indians in the Simcoe Valley and all other points in your neighborhood to come to your reservation on condition they submit to the requirements of the Dept. By instructions none of the murderers are to be admitted to any reservation. If they come upon it you will have them arrested and deliver them over to the authorities to be dealt with according to the laws.

The Indians who do see proper to come in let them bring all their supplies and stocks with them and if they should need more during the winter the Dept. will furnish them on condition they remain at peace and friendship and obey instructions of the Dept. It will be proper to go to the commanding officer of the post at that point and make known to him the instructions of the Ind. Dept that he may be fully informed of the matter. If you find it is not safe for you to go in person then send some one to learn the mind of the Indians and act in the matter accordingly. In short, adopt the most efficient measures to ~~obtain~~ attain the end before the bad weather commences. Have me fully informed of all matters of moment that I may keep Gov. Stevens fully informed of the condition of things in this district.

is at the Dalles, if so he can make such disposition of the Indians belonging to his Territory as he in his judgement may deem proper, provided however that does not compromise any arrangements made with friendly bands on our side of the river. You will consider this communication as declining to receive or take charge of Klickitats from Washington Territory. The suggestions of Col. Wright that it would be well for me to take charge of the Indians at Vancouver is open to the same objection, as I have no right to interfere with Indians of that Territory. The statement that the prisoners in his charge belong to Tim-i-tas is doubtless correct for it is known that this chief was using his influence to disaffect the entire Indian population in lower Oregon and raising means to prosecute the war when he was arrested and that his people had every opportunity to come in and be received with their friends other friendly bands prior to the Yakima expedition, but they chose to join and remain with the war party. I shall write to the commissioner of Indian affairs and lay the matter before him and of course be guided by his instructions in the premises.

Very respectfully etc

[unsigned]

to R. R. Thompson, esq.
Indian Agent,
Dalles.

Wash'ton Suptch. Roll 17

Dalles, O.T.

April 17, 1858

Sir:

I assumed charge of the White Salmon Indian agency, and of the property thereat and of the operations then carried on, on the first instant.

On the 15th instant I received of John Cain Esq. Indian Agent the Indian Department Property at Vancouver, and the balance of funds in his hands, \$784.55 applicable to current expenses, for which I receipted and at the same time took charge of Columbia River District and added it to the District heretofore in my charge.

The condition of the Indians in the district east of Cascade Mountains and north of Columbia River is very favorable at this time. These Indians are at peace amongst themselves, at peace with the Whites and most, if not all of them express in words at least a strong desire to continue the peaceable relations now existing.

With regard to the Columbia River District I have to say that with the exception of the White Salmon Agency and the Indians near by it, I am unable to state what may be the condition of the Indians, not having had time or opportunity to visit them and ascertain their wants and wishes. So soon as possible I will visit all the Indians in the district lately occupied by Agent Cain, and will report upon their condition more fully.

Plows and other agricultural tools, potatoes and seed have been extensively distributed to the Indians of my old district, and to those at and near White Salmon Agency. These distributions have been quite up to the demand of the Indians, they are greatly pleased with such aid to agriculture and plainly show a strong disposition to cultivate the soil largely the present season; their individual parcels will be small but numerous.

Subsistence is yet partially afforded to the Indians at and near White Salmon. Their losses during the late war, their removal from their old homes west of the Cascade Mountains, and their poverty require this assistance; but it is hoped that they may soon be able to procure most if not all of their food, when salmon shall come into the Columbia and camas and other roots are ripe. These, with their cultivated crops will relieve the Department from the necessity of feeding them the ensuing winter, as I now confidently hope. No reduction of force in the district just vacated by Agent Cain is allowable; indeed the district now ~~comprised~~ occupied by me is so enlarged, extending from Pacific Ocean along the Columbia River, up to and opposite Fort Colville, I shall need to have increased assistance to enable me to serve the department successfully in guiding and controlling so many and various tribes.

I am sir your obedient servant.

R.H. Lansdale

Indian Agent, W.T.

Hon J.W. Nesmith

Superintendent Indian Affairs,

Salem, Oregon.

Portland, April 27, 1858

Sir

I arrived here last night to procure supplies for Indian Service on Columbia River District. That business accomplished I shall visit the Indians in that part of the district lying west of Vancouver [sic]

I regret to say the indications of an Indian outbreak in the upper country are greater than when I last wrote you. I have good reason to believe many of the Indians in the upper part of my district are decidedly hostile, having crossed the Columbia River to join the bad Indians in the Palouse country, Looney, an influential chief just above John Days River, and who took part against us in the late war has sent me ~~some~~ word his heart is yet good and that the bad Indians had driven off some of his horses because he would not join them. I not aware of disaffection having ~~spread~~ extended west of John Days River, but am using all the watchfulness the times demand.

I do not know of missionaries having penetrated west of White Salmon Agency but think it probable they may have tampered with the Indians on Puget Sound, at least it would be a wise precaution were the Indian officers in that ~~place~~ part of the country put upon their guard.

The army herders and stock have been withdrawn from Klickitat blockhouse as a precaution against surprise.

Immediately upon my return to White Salmon Agency I will write you, should there be new developments or anything worthy your attention.

I have promised Mr. Meigs to again bring the subject of his license to your notice, as he is desirous of beginning trade.

I am sir, very respectfully, your obt servant

R.H. Lansdale, Indian Agent. W.T.

Hon J.W. Nesmith,

May 10, 1858

Sir:

Having returned from a visit to the Indians of the north side of the Columbia River and west of this agency I have to report them all at peace amongst themselves and towards the whites. They all make their living by fishing, hunting and working for the whites. I could not learn of one being engaged in tilling the soil, and of but one who was supposed to be disposed that way.

All these Indians live well on the salmon season, but in winter they are much dependant upon the employment and the charity of the whites.

They are sadly diminished in numbers within my own knowledge; excessive sexual license, drunkenness and the foul and fatal diseases flowing from these and similar immoralities have for many years ~~much~~ prevented precreation and finally lessens their numbers.

The agitation of the Cascade and Klikitat Indians brought about by rumors and reports from the bad Indians on the Palouse region has subsided. Emissaries from the Palouse having been forbidden to bring further messages and reports from those badly disposed, it is hoped their quietness and ~~industriousness~~ industrious pursuits may not be further disturbed.

I have no actual information as to what is actually transpiring east of the Columbia River but Col. Steptoe was to have left Fort Walla Walla with three companies of dragoons on the 3d instant, on a scout north of Snake River but we have no positive knowledge of his having marched.

Having by your direction been placed in charge of the district lately occupied by Jno Cain, Indian agent and having no positive knowledge of the limits thereof, I have to apply to you for instructions upon that point.

I am sir, very respectfully, your obt. servant.

R. W. Lansdale, Ind. Agt. W.T. Col. River District. (To J. W. Newsmith)

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White Salmon Indian Agency W.T.

September 20, 1858

Sir:

Some 10 days since an Indian called Kamiaken's slave brought to the Indian camp on "hite Salmon river eight horses representing them as being intended for the purchase of favors of them and such legitimate trade. Upon his leaving, however, he refused all pay for the horses and then said they were presents from the hostile chiefs in the Palouse country, Tiwetax and Spencer, leading chiefs of the Klickitats to make their hearts good towards the hostile Indians and bad towards the whites.

8

I have taken the horses and hold them subject to your order, thinking that with your permission they had better be given to such Indian as are undoubtedly friendly to the whites.

I am very respectfully

Your obt. servant

R.H. Lansdale, Indian Agent, W.T.

J.W. Newsmith,

Supt. Indian Affairs, Salem, Oregon.

(Copy)

Head Quarters Dept. of the Pacific, Fort Vancouver, W.T. Sept. 19, 1858
Special Orders No. 146

Lieut H.H. Walker aide de camp will proceed to the Dalles and give orders to the commanding officer to attempt the capture of an Indian agent of Kamiakin and some horses belonging to that chief.

By com and of Brig. General Clarke

H.H. Walker,

1st Lt. 6th Infy.

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White Salmon Indian Agency W.T.

September 20, 1858

Sir:

I have to inform you that the horses about which I wrote to you on the 20th inst. were demanded of me and taken possession of by Lieut. Walker, aide de camp of General Clarke, on the 21st instant I delivered seven only, however, Chief Spencer having just started on one of them for Fort Vancouver.

I have written to General Clarke upon the subject, and upon his becoming possessed of the facts, I have no doubt but he will return the horses to my possession, subject to your disposal. I forward a copy of my letter to the general, as also a copy of orders to Lt. Walker.

I am sir

Very respectfully, your obt. servant, R.H. Lansdale, Indian Agent W.T.

Hon J.W. Nesmith

Superintendent Indian Affairs, Salem, Ore.

of the Cascades mountains and the Indians on the Reservations west of those mountains nor do I apprehend that the Indians on those reservations will resort to arms unless compelled to by reason of having their supplies of subsistence discontinued a contingency which is bound to occur as soon as the appropriations for the present fiscal year are exhausted which will be early in the coming winter. The instructions contained in your letter prohibiting my excusing (??) the appropriations for the present fiscal year will be complied with by myself and I shall cease to give the Indians guarded upon the reservations rations after the the habitation becomes equal to the amount appropriated.

As to the results likely to flow from instructions contained in your letter of the 4th August I beg leave to refer you to my communication on the subject under date of May 15th and to which up to this date I have received no reply.

Very respectfully etc.

J.W. Nesmith

Supt. Ind. Affs.

Hon Charles E. Mix
Commissioner Ind. Affrs.
Washington, D.C.

...The case is different with the Walla Walla and Cayuses. The old treaty should be ratified at once, or a new treaty be made immediately. The whites will settle then in larger numbers, soon even against the wish of the military in occupation, and of the Indians and collisions will certainly ensue. Besides these Indians have forfeited their lands by reason of their hostilities waged against our people.

The case is again different with the larger country north and west of the Columbia river, and east of the Cascade mountains called the Yakima country, many tribes and bands have interests and their homes in this extensive district of which the undersigned is now acting as agent.

Of all these tribes, the Yakima chiefs, Kanakin, Skloom and Owhi were the only ones present at the Walla Walla Council in 1855 who signed the treaty conveying all the vast district included.

The injustice and simplicity (?) of using (?) upon the lands of several tribes because their leading men falsely signed a treaty ceding lands that did not belong to them will be apparent when it is plainly seen that the following tribes have a great interest at stake as the Yakimas, the only people represented as before stated and falsely represented at best.

Klickatats

589

Located on White Salmon and Klickitat Rivers and on Columbia River at White Salmon Agency.

Columbia River Indians-

900

Located on Columbia River from Klickitat River eastward to opposite mouth of John Day river and made up of Klickatats, Wisham and Skin tribes.

The friendly Yakima Indians amount to about 500 souls. The

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(Copy)

"hite Salmon Indian Agency W.T.

September 24th, 1858

Sir:

Upon a demand made on the 21st inst. by your aide de camp, Lieut Walker, I deliver to your possession seven horses that had, a few days since, been taken possession of by me, as property sent by hostile Indians to the friendly Indians near the agency for improper purposes.

These horses I held, prior to your demand, in perfectly safe keeping, subject to the order of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs with whom I had communicated upon the subject.

Upon your coming into possession of all the facts in the case, I hope you will conclude to return the horses to this agency, for the disposal of the legitimate authority of the Indian Department.

I am sir,

Very respectfully

Your obt. servant

R.H. Lansdale, Indian Agent. W.T.

To Brig. Genl. Clarke.

Comdg. Pacific Department

Fort Vancouver, W.T.

Klickitat, Columbia ~~xxxxxxx~~ River Indians and the number of
 Yakimas mentioned are all friendly since the pacification of 1856
 and all alike interested in the country ceded without their consent in
 1855. They should alike be consulted when the whites ask for the
 larger part of their country and should share alike in the ^{benefactions} ~~benefits~~
 of the government .

As by mutual action of the military and Indian authorities
 in the two territories, as with the assent of our people ... part of
 the district is open to settlement, a delay of a year or thereabouts
 would work an injury to any party. I confidently and earnestly recom end
 that the old treaty of 1855 be set aside and that commissioners
 be speedily authorized to make a new treaty for the district indicated
 and with all the tribes and peoples interested.

To take up your suggestion ^{.....} ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx(2)~~ for the number of
 Indians in my charge I ^{refer} ~~s00000~~ you to to the number just given and
 to the reports of local agents Townsend and Special Agent Robie, 1857.

The character of the country ceded is made of grassy hills, plateaus
 and valleys with fir, pine and oak timber ... the highest hills
 and mountains and with cotton wood and willows on the waters. The
 part reserved is central and is the better part , a fine large
 reservation . The Indians of this district have been slightly
 diminished since 1855.

The policy now being ^{pursued} pressed is a temporary one in which the Indians
 are partially assisted in making a precarious living and helped and and
 a little ~~000~~ ground and to raise cattle. When a new treaty
 made the policy would be changed by definite and permanent relations
 between the whites and Indians. The Indians would have a permanent
 reservation and could be more rapidly advanced in agriculture,
 domestic husbandry and in the preparatory education for
 civilization and would have all the advantages of mills, schools,

Wash'ton Suptcy. Roll No. 17

White Salmon Indian Agency, Wash T.

January 1, 1859

Sir:

In a former report I indulged the hope that the Indians of the Columbia River District ~~XXXXX~~ would not be given large ~~benefactions~~ benefactions from the government for provisions and clothing during the present winter. These hopes have been realized as to those tribes denominated the Columbia River tribes and who live along the Columbia east of the Klickitat. In the last month I was informed by several leading chiefs of those tribes that their people would not likely need the assistance of government in providing food this winter but at the same time expressed a strong hope of assistance in farming and gardening next season. They also represented the cattle distributed to them as being fat and doing well.

When last at Fort Simcoe, the army officers assured me all the Indians near that point, some 300 or 400 people, would be out of provisions by the first of ^{this} ~~the~~ month. I accordingly furnished some ten barrels of pickled pork and six tons of flour and a small supply of blankets and warm clothing to be distributed by the officers in command during the winter. The Indians packed out the goods prior to the first storm in the mountains between this agency and Simcoe and since, I have not learned that they need fresh supplies. ✓

Considering the number of Indians and the goods already distributed, I should think the Yakimas would require yet more assistance before the coming of the first frosts, as some of them are greatly impoverished by having their cattle and horses driven off and sold by Indians connected with Major Barnett's expedition ddddddddddddddd as last summer, while those stolen from were really a friendly and

friendly and as good as those who depredated upon them.

The Klickitats residing near this agency are not so well provided for this winter as I hoped they would be. This is mostly attributable to the fact that during the hostilities of last summer between the ~~Soldiers~~ soldiers and the Indians of the upper country, the Klickitats, like frightened partridges, would not venture ~~xxx~~ far out from the agency to hunt and to get berries and roots, lest they should be pounced upon by the soldiers and chastised with the hostiles. Many of the Klickitats by reason of their hostilities in 1855 got such a ~~bad~~ bad name that they are extremely wary lest they should do something that would again make the whites think them unfriendly. In addition to this they were as fearful of the hostile Indians coming down upon them and stealing the few horses they have, as they were of offending the whites.

Lately, however, some of them have dispersed to their old hunting grounds and are killing game to supply their larders and the white settlements. Those left at the agency are very poor and destitute and hungry and I have directed the smallest possible issues of provisions and clothing to save them from starving and freezing.

Very Respectfully

Your Obt. Servant

R.H. Lansdale

Indian Agent, W.T.

Col. J.W. Nesmith

Supt. Ind. Affairs, Salem, Oregon.