
ORDER IN COUNCIL

RELATING TO ILLICIT LIQUOR TRAFFIC ON THE NORTH-WEST COAST.

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Certified copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honourable the Executive Council, approved by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor on the 18th January, 1894.

The Committee of Council have had under consideration a communication addressed to the Honourable the Attorney-General by the Honourable Levi W. Myers, United States Consul at Victoria, dated January 10th, 1894, representing that citizens of south-eastern Alaska had recently made complaint that intoxicating liquors are smuggled into that territory in large quantities from Fort Simpson; that these liquors are sold to and consumed by Indians and indigent whites, greatly to the detriment of the public peace and the advancement of the entire community in civilization; and further, that the source of supply being outside the jurisdiction of the Alaskan authorities, they are powerless to grapple with it, but must look to the Government of this Province and of the Dominion of Canada for the relief sought; and stating that the officials of Alaska will be glad to co-operate in any effort made to curtail the hurtful traffic.

In connection with the above communication, the Committee remark that the cause of complaint is not confined only to the neighbourhood of the boundary line between Alaska and this Province, but is existent and has been for years, throughout the whole north-west coast of the Province, the inlets upon which and the islands adjacent thereto, inhabited by large numbers of Indians, having always afforded a home for those engaged in illicit liquor traffic.

The Committee also remark the great expense and trouble occasioned the Province in the administration of justice and the preservation of order among the Indians located upon that coast, and in this connection would advert to the expedition dispatched last March, upon the Dominion Government Steamer "Quadra," to allay a threatened uprising and tribal war between the Oweekayno, Bella Coola, and Kimsquit tribes.

The Honourable the Attorney-General also informs the Committee that not only do rumours of uprisings and complaints in regard to the liquor traffic and general order among the Indians frequently appear in the public press, but that the same are from time to time forwarded to his Department.

In connection with all the above matters, the attention of the Committee has been called to the basis of the agreement which resulted from the conference of the late Honourable John Robson with the Dominion authorities, on his mission to Ottawa in October, 1887, under which the cost of the administration of justice and the preservation of peace among the Indians was assumed by this Province. In partial performance of this agreement, the "Indian Act" was amended in 1888, by the addition thereto of section 132, and an Order was passed thereunder by His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, on the 12th day of March, 1888, directing that after the month of October, 1887, the moieties of liquor fines which, under section 94 and sub-section 2 of section 100 of the "Indian Act," chapter 43 of the "Revised Statutes of Canada," are payable to the Receiver-General on account of the band in respect to one or more members of which the offence of selling an intoxicant was committed, be, in the case of British Columbia, paid over to the Treasurer of that Province.

Certain matters, however, though their performance was not definitely promised by the Dominion authorities, remained open to further discussion, and were promised due consideration, and prominent among them, in relation to the circumstance above detailed, was the proposition to place a Federal Revenue Cutter in the waters which wash the north-west coast of the Province, for the prevention of illicit liquor traffic and the protection of our fisheries.

The Committee consider that the time has now arrived when the cost of carrying out its share of the above arrangement has reached such proportions that the further consideration by the Dominion of matters previously left in abeyance, with a view to their immediate performance, is absolutely indispensable if the Province is still to undertake the duties above mentioned.

It is to be remarked that almost the entire annual expenditure incurred in the district north of Comox, is caused by the presence of Indians, and the necessity of the appointment of constables and other officers to preserve order among them.

That the privilege of receiving the moieties of fines levied under the "Indian Act" is no compensation, for this is evident, as it is estimated that the cost to the Province merely for the maintenance of prisoners convicted under the Indian Act to the payment of a fine, but who undergo imprisonment in default of payment, greatly exceeds all fines levied and paid under the said Act.

Viewing the whole facts of the case, the Committee are of opinion that the only condition upon which the Province can continue to annually expend large sums in districts entirely inhabited by Indians, is the assumption by the Dominion authorities of the duty of patrolling the waters of the North-West Coast of this Province, and would urge that immediate steps be taken for the purchase and equipment of a vessel suitable for that service, and which should be of such a build and speed as to cope with the well designed craft which are employed in illicit trade in these waters.

The Committee advise that a copy of this Minute (if approved) be transmitted to the Honourable the Secretary of State for Canada, for the information of the Dominion authorities.
Victoria, 17th January, 1894.

A. CAMPBELL REDDIE.

Deputy Clerk, Executive Council.

(Receipt of the above was acknowledged by the Secretary of State on the 27th of January, 1894.)

VICTORIA, B. C.:

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