

Captain Irving, the present manager of the Canadian Pacific Steamboat and Navigation Co., an experienced and able navigator on this coast, who navigated the Stikine for two years when business commenced in that district in 1873-74, states that the depth of water from the mouth of the river to Buck's, 30 miles up, is from 6 to 8 feet at low water, easily navigable for steamers drawing less than six feet, thus affording on the river an available British port, to which goods from Victoria and the other ports of British Columbia could be forwarded without transshipment, and under the Treaty with free navigation for purposes of commerce, avoiding all question of expense, delay, or irritation with the American authorities at Fort Wrangel. Captain Irving was himself subjected to the most arbitrary and inexcusable imposition by the Custom House officers at Fort Wrangel, resulting in the illegal seizure of his steamer and the loss of several thousand dollars, for which he had ultimately to seek redress in the Courts of the United States.

At this place called Buck's, 30 miles up the river, in 1876, a French Canadian, named Choquette, carried on a very large trade with the Indians of the neighbourhood, who, from old associations with the Hudson's Bay Company, preferred dealing in British goods. The extent of Choquette's business may be estimated from the fact that from one firm alone in Victoria his purchases amounted to \$25,000 annually, and his sales several times in one day alone to a single Indian would amount to \$1,200 in blankets, by way of barter, a blanket, from the old Hudson's Bay Company's custom, being a unit of value.

It was the policy of the American authorities to divert this trade to the American markets, and, in October, 1876, Choquette was served with an official notification from the Custom House authorities in Alaska, to remove from his place of business or pay American duties on his stock, giving him until the spring of 1877 to obey.

To see more immediately the application of this circumstance, it is to be mentioned that in 1875, to avoid difficulties likely to arise from this undefined boundary, it had been agreed between the Custom House authorities of the United States at Alaska and the Dominion authorities of British Columbia, but without any direction or sanction from the Dominion Government, to establish, pending or until a final settlement, a conventional line, crossing the river about two miles below "Buck's," which up to that time had been recognized as admittedly within British territory; and in the vicinity, not far from Buck's, Mr. Hamley, the Collector of Customs for British Columbia, had stationed a revenue officer, Mr. Hunter, to collect the Dominion duties.

Finding, after a short time, that in so extremely isolated a position, it would not be safe for a revenue officer with moneys collected to remain, or reasonably concluding so from the reputation of the Indians and the dangerous characters resorting to the mines, Mr. Hamley deemed it prudent to remove his officer to Glenora, the head of boat navigation on the river, where a vigorous settlement had sprung up, and where the duties collected in the seasons of 1875 and 1876, extending from June to September, amounted to nearly \$10,000.

In making this removal, Mr. Hamley did it for the protection of the public funds and the safety of the public officer. It is presumed, however, that the local American authorities regarded it, or assumed to regard it, as an admission or abandonment, and immediately claimed the boundary line to be 30 or 40 miles further up the river, or about 60 from its mouth, and accordingly served Choquette with the notification above-mentioned.

It is proper here to observe that Choquette's case was, by letter dated the 16th October, 1876, communicated by Mr. Justice Gray, the Judge of the Supreme Court who had been holding the Assizes at Cassiar, to the Dominion Government, and an arrangement was made between Canada and the United States, by which the threatened action of the American authorities at Alaska was stayed.

Thus we have the fact, not only that there is a good trade on the Stikine, but that there are facilities for preserving and extending that trade within the power of the Dominion Government, while there is danger of losing it by delay in effecting a settlement of the dispute as to the boundary.

Other important considerations are also involved, which may have to form the subject of negotiation, rather than the demand of right.

Under the Treaty of Washington, in 1871, it was questioned whether the right of navigation of the Stikine had not been narrowed:

By the Convention of 1825, between Russia and Great Britain, in force at the time of the transfer to the United States, there was no express limitation as to the purpose for which the navigation was to be used.

By the Treaty of Washington, made since the transfer, it was expressly limited to commerce. This raised the question as to the right of the Dominion Government to transport criminals arrested or convicted through that part of the Stikine undoubtedly within American