

INDIAN OFFICE,
VICTORIA, 22nd November, 1882.

The Right Honorable
The Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honor to submit the following General Report on Indian affairs in the Province of British Columbia, for the year 1881-82.

During the past season visits of inspection have been paid to the six Agencies, and also to some portions of the Province not included in these limits.

I have already had the honor of forwarding to you, Reports with tabular statements, from the different officers under my direction, and from which may be observed the progress or otherwise, of the Indians composing their respective charges.

With few exceptions the marked improvement noticed in the condition of the various bands last year is continued in this, and while the surroundings of some limits still have demoralizing effects upon them—speaking generally—great contentment prevails among both coast and interior Indians, and there are no complaints of any consequence to bring to your notice.

In those parts of the Province where Crown lands were available for reserve purposes, a general feeling of satisfaction exists as to the justice and fairness with which the Government is disposed to treat the Indians.

The visit of His Excellency the Governor-General and Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise, to this Province, has caused intense gratification to the Indians who were fortunate enough to participate in the many loyal demonstrations afforded the distinguished visitors.

The happiness and honor accorded their leading men by the privilege of shaking hands with the "Big Chief," or their gracious recognition by the illustrious daughter of their "Great Mother," made the occasion one never to be forgotten by them.

The poet hath it that "Kind words are more than coronets," but at His Excellency's and Her Royal Highness' reception at New Westminster, where there were three thousand natives assembled from various parts of the Province, the Indians had both—hence their joy was complete, and soon telegraphed, in their own peculiar way, to distant kinspeople who had not the good fortune to be present.

Subsequently the Governor-General, during a journey inland, met many interior chiefs who were kindly permitted to make their wants and desires personally known. Happily these were few and unimportant, in the section of country visited by His Excellency, so that nothing occurred to mar the good feeling and loyalty with which the Indians appeared so anxious to mark the occasion.

Agreeably to an arrangement with the senior naval officer on the station, I embarked on H.M.S. "Rocket"—Lieut. V. B. Orlebar, commanding—on the 18th June, for the purpose of visiting that portion of the Fraser River Agency which includes the coast line from Burrard to Bute Inlet.

The Indians living within these points are Roman Catholic, and their favorable condition affords the best evidence of the success which has attended the efforts of the Roman Catholic Missionaries to improve and civilize them. They have discarded the old mode of living in large and unhealthy rancheries, and, for the most part, have houses cleanly kept and comfortable in appearance. In contrast with the majority of other tribes in the Province, I noticed a large number of healthy looking children, and was informed that it was not unusual for a family to consist of five or six.

While nearly all other coast Indians are decimating, these people are now increasing their own population. There are many expert mill hands among them and they derive no inconsiderable amounts in cutting and supplying logs.

Being capital sailors they have no lack of employment as deck hands, and during the salmon season both men and women command the highest wages at the Fraser River canneries.