

The chief, Ce-who-latza, gave me an opportunity, on two evenings, of addressing the chiefs and headmen of the different tribes. I did my best to point out to them the folly and the injury to themselves in so many ways of these gatherings, telling them that unless they themselves took measures to stop them the Government would be compelled to do so. One chief made a long speech, saying how wrong it would be for the Government to prevent these gatherings, when relatives from a distance met each other, and the old and destitute were feasted. Fortunately, on my way to the potlach I had called at several villages and was able to say that this was not the case, but that the old and destitute had been, in every band, left at home to starve, having neither food nor fuel left them; and being able to give the names of old people left in this condition, I had quite the best of the argument; and I afterwards learned that my word had done considerable good, by causing many to think of the "potlaches" in a way they had never done before; but the influence of the old men is very great, and although they cannot help seeing the rapid decrease of their tribes, they will not take the trouble or do not wish to look for the cause.

Several gangs of Indians are engaged in lumbering for the different saw-mills, others take contracts on the public roads, or to clear lands for white settlers, so that although the Fraser River canneries are not employing much labor this year, the Indians will actually derive a benefit from the circumstance, as they will be compelled to seek employment nearer home, and thus be better able to look after the crops on their reserves, which will, in the end, pay them better than constant wandering from place to place does.

The clearing done by the Dominion Government last year on the Cowichan River has very much improved the reserve, by preventing, in a great measure, the waste land which was constantly going on.

Location tickets have been issued to twenty-three of the more advanced Indians on this reserve, and many more are now anxious to secure them.

At my last visit to the fishing stations on Saturna and Pender Islands, I found them entirely deserted, owing to the fact that a party of some fourteen Cowichan Indians are holding a reign of terror in the vicinity. Several of them are charged with murder, others with breaking gaol and other serious offences. They are residing on the United States islands in the neighborhood, and being well armed with repeating rifles, have more than once attempted the lives of other Indians who are witnesses against them, and they are a constant source of uneasiness to the sheep farmers on these islands.

I regret very much to have to report that at the present time there are no successful Indian schools carried on in the whole of this Agency. Efforts are occasionally made by the clergy of the different denominations to educate the native children, but with little or no success, and there is little hope of much improvement in this respect, till the parents see the advantages of education and compel their children to attend the schools. This state of things is very much to be regretted for unless the children are educated, they will naturally receive the superstitious teaching of the old people, and these superstitions are a continual cause of the decrease of population.

The Soughees Band, at Victoria have elected a council to take the authority out of the hands of the old chief, who has always been a strong supporter of all old customs. These men now apply for a school on their reserve, and say they will compel the attendance of the children.

During the year many convictions have been made under the liquor clauses of the Indian Act, and with your approval, the moiety of the fines received by me have been expended in the relief of the destitute and aged, and in the purchase of tools, &c., for the different bands.

No murders of white men have taken place within the last three years, and in the whole Agency the Indians have been remarkably peaceful. With the exception of offences committed under the influence of liquor, no serious crimes have been committed, but there are constantly a very large number of disputes about land and property of all kinds, and the Indian office is often crowded for days together while settling troubles of this kind.