

Delegation of Naas River tribes who claim for the injunction on three towns \$5,000 to each town, payable every twelve months.

## How the Potlatch Works.

IN connection with the Indians' defence of the Potlatch I give below a verbatim report of a complaint made by W..... F....., a Christian Indian of L...-K..... It speaks for itself and shows why the Christian community is against the Potlatch. —ED.

**I** COME before you to make a complaint, because I am being very much persecuted concerning the death of my uncle, G..... of Git.....

I really belong to the Git..... tribe of which my uncle was chief, but I have been living for some years at L...-K.... mission. My uncle's house was burned at Git..... two years ago, and I then invited him to come and live with me, to which he agreed. He then went up to Git..... to bring down his things, but the people there took him against his will and performed halaid upon him, so that he could not move after that for fear of breaking the Indian law which they put on him, thus my purpose concerning his welfare came to naught, because they tied him up hard and fast to their potlatch law. They then persuaded him to rebuild his house, and helped him by free labour. Two years after that, his canoe capsized on his way up the river, and both he and his wife were drowned. Immediately on hearing this I left L...-K.... and went up to Git..... where I organized a party to go out and search for the body. Chief W..... then called me into his house and made a speech to me, urging me to accept my late uncle's chieftainship and paper of authority—a piece of moose skin with my uncle's name on it. They then performed halaid upon me, and acknowledged me as rightful heir to my uncle's position in their village. The party I had sent out searched the river two days, and on the third day returned without having found anything. I then paid them all for their time, so much a day, spending altogether \$150.00. After that I remained in my uncle's house, and in a short time they called upon me to make a potlatch. They threatened to put me out and take the house from me if I refused. I replied that I would not potlatch, because the Agent had already proclaimed the law against it on the river. But I promised to respect my uncle's dignity, and said I would erect a marble monument to him in the village. But they rejected my proposal, because I would not potlatch. And now they have given me notice to quit But I

I do not intend leaving the house, for the potlatch has no longer a right to tyrannize over one's private family affairs. And now they have agreed to deprive me of my chieftainship by a general vote of the tribe, and offer it to my cousin who, they say, is willing to make potlatch. But I choose to stand upon my rights within the law, and I say that as government has seen fit to prohibit potlatch it should support me now in my position. I make this complaint so that if there be trouble about it on the river you may know how the case stands.

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT made one month after the above (Decr. 1898).

ON Tuesday evening last I was in my house at Git..... when two men came for me to attend a council meeting of the chiefs. I accompanied them to W.....'s house. When I had entered and taken a seat W..... addressed me thus, "I spoke to you when you first came up in the autumn saying you are the rightful heir to your uncle's chieftainship. I say the same thing to you again now. But if you wish to take the title and position of your uncle you must give up Christianity and civilization, and come back to heathenism." Chief A..... also spoke to me, saying, "I say the same thing to you now, that you must give up religion and civilization and come back to be a heathen and make a potlatch." Chief M..... also said the same thing, and N.... and G.... A... G.... then stood up and opened a paper from which he began to read or pretend to read, saying, "Any person coming to this village for the purpose of settling must do so by making a potlatch, and if he deceive the people of this place by not doing so he shall be cast out forthwith. And any person found causing excitement in this place shall be cast forth, thus saith the great lawyer's law and the government and the Queen. For we have heard that you, W.... F...., are going to place a teacher at this place to teach our children and thus cause trouble and excitement." To all this I tried to reply wisely. A..... again spoke, saying, "If you will give up Christianity and return to the potlatch we will fire off our cannon for four days and nights, and you shall be our king in this place. If you promise to do so it will be quite enough, we will do it merely on your promise." Then G...g... arose and said, "And after you shall have made your potlatch we will all arise like one man and become Christians." To this I also replied as wisely as I could, declining to have anything at all to do with breaking the law, for I know that although the government takes no notice of these people breaking the law, yet I do not think I should escape.