

LOWER FRASER AGENCY,
NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C., 15th August, 1884.

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

SIR,—I have the honor to submit the following Annual Report and tabular statement in connection with the Indians of this Agency, for the year ended 30th June, 1884; also, a list of Government property in my charge, on the same date.

Since my last annual report, my agency has been extended on the Harrison River, so far as to include Pemberton Meadows. I visited the different villages in this new district, in June last. The Indians at each village gave me a hearty welcome; they were glad to have an agent appointed to look after them. I found that they are not as comfortably situated as the generality of Indians are in other parts of this agency. Their houses, which are chiefly made of sawed and split cedar boards, are not, by any means, well or neatly built. Their land, from Douglas Lake to Pemberton Meadows, is of a very inferior quality. They have a few small patches of potatoes planted on each reserve. These Indians inform me that Mr. O'Reilly, Indian Reserve Commissioner, had given them all permission to plant as many potatoes as they wanted at Pemberton Meadows. Although the distance is great, and the communication difficult, they have taken advantage of the privilege and planted several acres. This land at Pemberton is of such excellent quality that, with very little labor, the Indians raise abundance of potatoes and other vegetables, also large quantities of hay. They have large numbers of cattle and horses. Communication with any market place is very difficult, therefore they cannot dispose of their stock or produce to any advantage. They have no means of getting any money, except what they receive for furs they get during the winter. They kill their surplus cattle, use a portion themselves, and divide the remainder among their friends. At each village they have a church, and are very much attached to their religion, which is exclusively Roman Catholic. His Lordship, Bishop Durian, and one of his clergy, pays them quarterly visits. Among the different bands in this district I find that there are twelve persons entirely blind. Blindness is rare among Indians in any other part of this agency. Upon investigation I find that they have increased in population within the last four years. This present year appears to be a remarkably sickly one for the Harrison River District Indians. There are at present nine of them in this city, who came down to procure medical treatment. They are good and moral Indians; their sickness is no fault of their own. The Indians all along the Fraser River, from Yale to New Westminster, have more land under cultivation this year than they ever had before. They have broken several acres of new land; they have made considerable progress in building new houses, and repairing old ones. In Chilliwack District they have done some very useful road and bridge making on their reserves. They are at present engaged dyking a grass reserve of 160 acres, set apart as a common for the different bands of that district, by the late Indian Reserve Commissioner, Mr. Sproat.

I visited the place on the 1st of this month, and staked the dyke lines for them, and settled other matters between them and white men who own the adjoining lands to this grass reserve. When well dyked, it will be excellent hay land.

A number of American citizens came across the boundary line to Sumas early last spring, and took an Indian boy, fifteen years old, belonging to the Sumas Band, from his house and lynched him, and left his body hanging to a tree, almost in sight of the Indian village. This outrage, committed by white men, on what the Indians considered an innocent boy, enraged them dreadfully. They assembled in large numbers at Chilliwack with muskets, pistols and ammunition, determined to cross over to the American side and to shoot or hang the first white men they met. I was informed of their intention by the Indian constable at Chilliwack, and two of the chiefs sent their sons to inform me. I arrived at the meeting place on the 7th of March. Some of the most determined men among them were much disappointed