

(g.) A letter, dated 3rd September, 1887, from the law firm of Drake, Jackson & Helmcken, of Victoria, containing additional information relating to the same.

From the above mentioned papers, it appears that on the 6th of August, 1887, the Canadian schooner "Alfred Adams," whilst engaged in catching seals in the open sea, more than fifty miles distant from the nearest land, was forcibly seized by an armed vessel of the United States, her ship's papers taken, her cargo of seal skins, thirteen hundred and eighty-six (1,386) in number, together with all her arms, ammunition and fishing implements transferred to the United States cutter, and her captain ordered to proceed with sealed orders to Sitka and to deliver himself, his vessel and men, into the hands of the United States marshal at that place.

This treatment of the "Alfred Adams," whilst peaceably pursuing her lawful calling on the high seas, is but a repetition of the unjustifiable seizures of Canadian vessels made by the United States authorities in Behring Sea, and which have been dealt with at length in previous reports to Council.

The Minister, therefore, does not consider it necessary in this instance to traverse the ground already so fully covered and recommends that a copy of this report, with the papers attached, be forwarded to Her Majesty's Government for their earnest and immediate consideration, and that a copy thereof be sent to the British Minister at Washington, together with the sealed letter given by Captain Shepard to the master of the "Adams," with the request that it be forwarded to Mr. Secretary Bayard. With reference to the attached papers "E," "F" and "G," the Minister observes that, from the first, "E," it appears that inquiries made by the Collector of Customs at Victoria, B.C., in July last, resulted in his obtaining the information that Judge Dawson had, up to that date, received no orders for the release of the Canadian sealing vessels seized in 1886, that the vessels had not been sold and remained still under seizure, and that Judge Dawson when questioned as to the report that a telegram had been sent to him by the Attorney General of the United States ordering the release of the vessels, had replied that he had heard of this report before but that nothing of the kind had reached either himself or the United States marshal at Sitka. The paper marked "F" purports to be a copy of a telegram dated 26th January, 1887, from the United States Attorney-General Garland to Judge Dawson ordering him to release the vessels seized in August preceding, and of order founded thereon from Judge Dawson to the United States marshal at Sitka, bearing date 19th February, 1887, directing him to release the "Carolina," "Onward," "Thornton," and "San Diego" together with all their tackle, apparel, skins, guns, ammunition, small boats and everything pertaining to said vessels. The third paper marked "G," is a copy of a letter from the law firm of Drake, Jackson & Helmcken, of Victoria, B.C., to the Minister of Justice, informing him that they are advised that a telegram was received by Judge Dawson from the United States Attorney General ordering the release of the vessels above referred to, that Judge Dawson did issue an order accordingly, but that he afterwards rescinded the order on the assumption that the telegram was a forgery and that since "no official letters of any sort, either confirming the telegram or respecting the affair has been received at Sitka."

The Minister observes that if the information conveyed in the above mentioned papers is correct, of which there appears no reasonable doubt, it reveals a state of affairs by no means satisfactory.

On the 3rd of February, 1887, Mr. Secretary Bayard informed the British Minister at Washington, that "orders have been issued, by the President's direction, for the discontinuance of all pending proceedings, the discharge of the vessels referred to, and the release of all persons under arrest in connection therewith." A telegram in accordance with Mr. Bayard's communication appears to have been sent to Alaska, and an order based thereon to have been issued by the district judge, but to have been afterwards rescinded, and no further action has been taken up to date of latest information. Meanwhile the vessels remain under seizure, the seal skins are forfeited, and the property of Canadian citizens forcibly withheld from them under circumstances which involve very great loss and damage.