

COPIES of DESPATCHES and other PAPERS relative to *Vancouver's Island*.

— No. 1. —

Copy of a LETTER from *H. G. Ward, Esq., M.P., Secretary to the Admiralty, to B. Hawes, Esq., M.P.*

Sir,

Admiralty, 12 February 1849.

With reference to a precept of the House of Commons, dated the 16th August last, that an humble address be presented to Her Majesty that She will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before the House copies or extracts of certain despatches relative to Vancouver's Island, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit to you, for the information of the Earl Grey, copies of the correspondence required, so far as this department can supply the same.

I am, &c.

B. Hawes, Esq.
&c. &c. &c.

(signed) *H. G. Ward.*

— No. 2. —

Copy of a DESPATCH to the Admiralty from Rear-Admiral
Sir George Seymour.

Her Majesty's Ship "Collingwood,"
Valparaíso, 8 February 1847.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to enclose a letter from Commander Gordon, of the "Cormorant," transmitted to me through Captain Duntze, of the "Fisgard," who had, in consequence of my orders to ascertain whether coals could be supplied in sufficient quantities for the use of steamers on Quadra or Vancouver's Island, sent the "Cormorant" up the straits which separate Vancouver's Island from the main land of North-west America, to examine the localities in which coal had occasionally been obtained by the Hudson's Bay Company's vessel from the Indians.

I am happy to find, from Captain Gordon's report, that there is every appearance of ample supplies of excellent coal being obtainable near a good anchorage, which is accessible from the northward round Cape Scott by sailing vessels, and through the more difficult channels by which the "Cormorant" passed from the southward, by steam-vessels or small craft.

I have the satisfaction of hearing from that officer a favourable account of the ports of Vancouver's Island, which he visited in the "Cormorant," on the southern and eastern sides. They are in general thickly covered with pine timber, and the soil appeared preferable to that near Paget's Sound.

I also enclose a copy of a letter which Captain Duntze received from the board of management of the Hudson's Bay Company, with their opinions of the mode of bringing the coal-mines into operation, under the direction of their own officers, should supplies be required for the use of Her Majesty's steamers.

As I withdrew the "Cormorant" from the north-west coast, on hearing of the arrangement of the Oregon question, I presume none will be required, under present circumstances, for Her Majesty's service, as the freight of coals to other parts of this station would be less expensive from England.

The coal-mines, however, will add very much to the future value of the British possessions on the north-west coast, and contribute the means to extend their commerce, and to facilitate their defence, as California and the neighbouring countries become of more consequence, and acquire additional population.

On these grounds it may, however, be worthy of the consideration of Her Majesty's Government whether any steps may with propriety be taken to secure these mines for the public interests.

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