

GOVERNOR BLANSHARD TO EARL GREY.

3

No. 4.

(Copy).

VANCOUVER
ISLAND.Victoria, Vancouver Island,
July 10th, 1850.

Sir,

I beg to enclose a copy of a Letter I addressed to J. S. Helmcken, Esq., Medical Officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, at Fort Rupert, appointing him to act as Magistrate, provisionally; this is the only appointment I have yet made in the Colony, for as there are no independent settlers, all cases that can occur, requiring magisterial interference, are disputes between the representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company and their servants. To appoint the former Magistrates, would be to make them Judges in their own causes, and to arm them with additional power, which few of them would exert discreetly. Mr. Helmcken has only recently arrived in the Colony from England, he is therefore a stranger to the petty brawls that have occurred, and the ill feelings they have occasioned between the Hudson's Bay Company and their servants; from this and from my knowledge of his character I have great confidence in his impartiality, his situation too as Surgeon renders him more free from the influence which might be exercised over another servant of that Company.

No. 4

It is moreover highly desirable that there should be a resident Magistrate at Fort Rupert, as the miners and labourers there have shown a disposition to riot, which if not checked may lead to serious consequences, the Indian population being numerous, savage, and treacherous; and the distance from Victoria and total want of means of communication between the two places increases the inconveniences. I would strongly recommend a duty to be imposed on the importation and manufacture of ardent spirits, as their introduction tends to demoralize the Indians to a most dangerous degree, but I conceive I have not the power to impose such duty, free Trade having been declared here, without further instructions, which I would request on this point at your Lordship's earliest convenience.

I may here mention that the accounts which have been published in*, respecting the barbarous treatment of the Indian population by the Hudson's Bay Company, are, both from my own personal observation, and from all I have been able to gather on the subject, entirely without foundation. They are always treated with the greatest consideration, far greater than the white labourers, and in many instances are allowed liberties and immunities in the Hudson's Bay Company's establishments that I regard as extremely unsafe. No liquor is given them by the Company on any pretence, but it is impossible to prevent their obtaining it from the merchant vessels that visit the Coast.

* See in original.

I remain, &c.,

(Signed) RICHARD BLANSHARD,
Governor of Vancouver Island.

ENCLOSURE IN No. 4.

Governor Blanshard to Mr. Helmcken.

(Copy).

Victoria,
June, 22nd 1850.

Sir,

You are hereby appointed to act as Magistrate and Justice of the Peace, for the protection of and preservation of order amongst Her Majesty's subjects, in and about Fort Rupert, and in the adjoining District of Vancouver Island, subject always to Her Majesty's approval of your appointment, when your Commission will be formally made out and forwarded to you, till which time this Letter shall be a sufficient warranty for your acting as Magistrate of the District, and exercising all powers that belong to that office.

Enclosure.

I remain, &c.,

(Signed) RICHARD BLANSHARD,
Governor of Vancouver Island.