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HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TO LORD CLARENDON.

HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE,

*February 28th, 1854.*F. O.
Russia
Domestic.
Vol. 452.
1854.
February 28.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to enclose copy of a letter which has been received from the Russian American Company.

It would be satisfactory to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company if some such arrangement as that suggested could be made, as it would relieve them from anxiety and risk.

The Russian American Company have a considerable military force, as well as several armed vessels, at their establishment of Sitka, which they also employ in the prosecution of their trade with the Indians. The Hudson's Bay Company have only servants employed in their trade with the Indians, and dispersed over the country, and they have large depôts of goods at Vancouver's Island and at their establishments on the coasts of the mainland, without military or other sufficient protection against foreign attack, excepting that which is afforded by Her Majesty's cruisers.

Having communicated these facts, I am instructed to submit the matter to the consideration of your Lordship and Her Majesty's Government, and shall feel obliged by the communication of your Lordship's determination that the Hudson's Bay Company may be enabled to give an answer to the letter of the Russian American Company.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,

A. COLVILE,

Governor.

The Right Honourable

The Earl of Clarendon,

&c., &c., &c.

ENDORSED—Hudson's Bay Company.

D. 28th *February*, 1854.,

„ 2nd *March*.

[1 ENCLOSURE.]

Letter from the Russian American Company suggesting strict *neutrality* between that and the Hudson's Bay Company in case of a war between Great Britain and Russia.

1854
(26)

2

F.O.
Russia.
Vol. 452.

ENCLOSURE IN LETTER OF 28TH FEBRUARY, 1854.
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TO LORD CLARENDON.

[COPY.]

à Messieurs les Directeurs de la Compagnie
de la baie d'Hudson.

Direction Supérieure de la
Compagnie Russe Americaine,
St. Petersburg.

2/14 *Fevrier*, 1854.

No. 111.

MESSIEURS,

Lors de séjour à Sitka de Sir George Simpson parmi les discussions qui ont eu lieu au sujet de l'arrentement d'une partie de notre territoire par la Compagnie de la baie d'Hudson, s'est élevé la question de la possibilité d'une rupture entre l'Angleterre et la Russie. Sir Simpson fut de l'avis, qu'en cas de guerre, il servit de l'intéret de nos deux Compagnies, et conforme au but principal de leur existence, qui consiste dans la propagation du Christianisme, et dans le développement de la civilisation parmi les tribus des sauvages, de reconnoître la neutralité des possessions des deux Compagnies sur la cote Nord-Ouest de l'Amerique.

Les circonstances politiques actuelles nous obligent de nous adresser à la Direction de la Compagnie d'Hudson en la priant de vouloir bien nous informer, si elle regarde comme possible de solliciter l'agrément de son Gouvernement à la neutralité reciproque des possessions et des navires des deux Compagnies sur la cote mentionnée.

Si la Compagnie d'Hudson compte obtenir de la part de son Gouvernement le consentement à cette proposition, nous sommes persuadés que notre Gouvernement donnera aussi son approbation à la susdite neutralité, aux memes conditions qui lui seront accordées par le ministère Anglais. Il est évident, que toute collision entre les Européens dans ces contrées pourrait amener des suites nuisibles au bien-être des indigènes et l'affaiblissement, si non l'annulation de l'influence Européene dans ces régions.

Nous comptons Messieurs sur votre prompte et cordiale réponse, en vous priant d'agréer les assurances de notre considération toute particulière.

Président de la Compagnie W. POLITXOWIXY.

Members { N. KONSSOW,
Ct. ETHOLIN,
B. WRANGELL

DRAFT—LAW OFFICERS.

F. O. *March 10th*, 1854.F. O.
Russia
Domestic.
Vol. 453.
1854.
February 28.

GENTLEMEN,

I am directed by the Earl of Clarendon to transmit to you a letter from the Hudson's Bay Company, respecting a proposal made by the Russian American Company, that in case of war between the Governments of England and Russia a state of reciprocal neutrality should exist with reference to the two companies; and I am to request that you will take this subject into your consideration, and favour Lord Clarendon with your opinion as to the answer which should be returned to the letter from the Hudson's Bay Company.

ENDORSED—Hudson's Bay Company.

Proposal for neutrality with Russian American Company.

LAW OFFICERS TO LORD CLARENDON.

DOCTORS' COMMONS,

March 20th, 1854.F. O.
Russia
Domestic.
Vol. 453.
1854.

MY LORD,

We are honoured with your Lordship's commands signified in Mr. Addington's letter of the 10th inst., stating that he was directed to transmit to us a letter from the Hudson's Bay Company respecting a proposal made by the Russian American Company, that in case of war between the Governments of England and Russia, a state of reciprocal neutrality should exist with reference to the two companies; and to request that we would take this subject into our consideration, and report to your Lordship our opinion as to the answer which should be returned to the Hudson's Bay Company.

In obedience to your Lordship's commands, we have taken into consideration the letter from the Hudson's Bay Company, and have the honour to report:—

That, we are of opinion that under the peculiar circumstances of the case, your Lordship will be justified in consenting to the proposed arrangement being entered into between the two companies, and, in causing the necessary instructions to be conveyed to Her Majesty's naval officers and others, not to commit hostilities on land within the Russian dominions on the coast of America.

We beg to suggest, however, that the Hudson's Bay Company should be informed that the proposed neutrality will, as far as Her Majesty's Government is concerned, be territorial only, and confined to the land, and that its operations will not extend to the high seas, but that all Russian vessels and goods thereon, whether the property of the

Company, the Government, or of individuals, and whether going to or from the possessions of the Russian American Company, will be liable to capture by Her Majesty's ships, and that the coasts and ports of those possessions will be liable to naval blockade.

We have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servants,

J. D. HARDING.

A. G. COCKBURN.

RICHARD BETHELL.

To the Right Honourable
The Earl of Clarendon, K.G.,
&c, &c., &c.

ENDORSED—Law Officers.

D. 20th March, 1854.

Conditional assent to proposal of Hudson's Bay Company.

DRAFT TO ADMIRALTY.

(Confidential.)

F. O. March 22nd, 1854.

F. O.
Russia
Domestic.
Vol. 453.
February 28.

MY LORDS,

I transmit to your Lordships herewith a copy of a letter from the Hudson's Bay Company, inclosing a copy of a letter from the Russian American Company, suggesting that an arrangement should be entered into for a state of neutrality being observed as regards the possessions and ships of the Hudson's Bay and the Russian American Company on the north-west coast of America.

March 22.

I also enclose a copy of the answer which has been returned to the Hudson's Bay Company, and in conformity with what is stated in that answer I am to signify to your Lordships Her Majesty's pleasure that instructions should be given to Her Majesty's naval officers and others not to commit hostilities on land within the Russian dominions on the coast of America.

C.

ENDORSED—Correspondence with Hudson's Bay Company.

Instruction as to Russian dominions on American coast.

