

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FUR TRADE  
OF THE PACIFIC NORTH WEST  
ON ANGLO-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS  
PROCEEDING FROM THE UKASE OF 1821 TO THE TREATY OF 1825

by  
Nicholas Ignatieff



A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements of a  
Master of Arts degree  
University of Manitoba  
September, 1963

## PREFACE

This dissertation primarily concerns the influence of the two great monopoly companies of the Pacific North West upon their governments in the conventions of 1824 and 1825. However, the course of study led the author to undertake a general description of the fur trade of the Pacific North West, and a broad treatment of the negotiations arising from the Imperial ukase of 1821. Important elements in the discussions had not previously been examined together, and there was a need to recast superficial explanations of Russia's position in her negotiations with Great Britain.

It must be added that the Alaska boundary dispute of 1903, which collected so much primary material, did not in itself induce the author to study its progenitor. The dispute sprang from a confusion over the usage of terms, and from an ignorance of geography; it was settled by the influence of power; and a restoration of the historical framework does not clarify the issue.

In this study I have received generous assistance from the John W. Dafoe Foundation Fellowship and the Ewart Memorial Fund. The Hudson's Bay Company kindly permitted me access to their micro-filmed archives. My thanks are extended to Miss Margaret MacKenzie of the Elizabeth Dafoe Library, and to Rosalind C. Anderson, and to Professor W. L. Morton for his inspiration and counsel.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Preface . . . . .	iv
Introduction . . . . .	1
Chapter	
1. The Hudson's Bay Company: Post Union Reorganization and Pacific Coast Policy . . . . .	6
2. The Hudson's Bay Company: Expansion in the New Caledonia and the Mackenzie Districts . . . . .	31
3. The Russian American Company: Patterns of Trade and Relations with the Russian Government . . . . .	52
4. The Russian American Company: Problems of Trade and the Increase of Activity in the North Pacific . . . . .	73
5. Diplomatic Negotiations on the Russian Ukase September, 1821 to January, 1824 . . . . .	89
6. Diplomatic Negotiations on the Russian Ukase January, 1824 to the Conclusion of an Anglo-Russian Convention . . . . .	113
Appendix A . . . . .	139
Appendix B . . . . .	143
Bibliographical Note . . . . .	149
Bibliography . . . . .	152
Maps . . . . .	end pocket

## ABBREVIATIONS

- A.B.T. (U.S.) Appendix to the Case of the United States. Vol. II of Alaska Boundary Tribunal Proceedings. Washington: 1904.
- A.B.T. (British) Appendix to the Case of His Majesty's Government before the Alaska Boundary Tribunal. Vol. II of Alaska Boundary Tribunal. London: 1903.
- A.S.P.F.R. United States Congress. American State Papers, Class 1, Foreign Relations (second series). Vols. 4 and 5. Washington: 1858.
- Bagot Papers Private Papers of Sir Charles Bagot to be found in the National Archives of Canada.
- C.R.M. "Correspondence of the Russian Ministers in Washington 1818-1825", American Historical Review, Vol. XVIII, No.'s 2 and 3 (January and April, 1913), pp. 309-345 and pp. 535-563.
- F.O. Sup. Great Britain. List of Documents from the Foreign Office Relating to the Alaska Boundary 1821-25. Foreign Office supplementary II. (Found in the National Archives of Canada under designation M.G. 12 c/8)
- F.T.&E. Fredrick Merk. Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal 1824-25. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931.
- H.B.A. Hudson's Bay Company Archives. (To be found on microfilm in the National Archives of Canada)
- H.B.R.S. Hudson's Bay Record Society.
- H.B.S. Hudson's Bay Company Series. (Twelve volumes concerning the history of the company published from 1938 to 1949 by the Champlain Society in association with the Hudson's Bay Record Society)
- Russian America Eight microfilm reels of material, assembled and translated for H. H. Bancroft by Ivan Petrov, concerning the Russian colonies in the north Pacific, held in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

## INTRODUCTION

The Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1825, which is the subject of this inquiry, has been regarded as but one phase in the Anglo-American struggle for the North American Continent.<sup>1</sup> However, the two commercial institutions involved, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Russian American Company, exerted a major influence on the diplomatic negotiations. Nor can one overlook Russian dreams of an American empire, or the Pacific commerce from which those ambitions arose.

It was the perseverance of Vitus Behring in the 1720's and 30's that introduced Russian vessels to the Pacific Ocean. In 1741 Capt. Chirikov made landfall on the American coast at 55°. In the following decades Siberian merchants began to reach out from the ports of Petropavlovsk and Okhotsk, to seek furs on the neighbouring groups of islands. From 1742 to 1765 no fewer than thirty-five voyages were made by private Russian traders.<sup>2</sup> By the 1790's, a few companies of considerable size had emerged to dominate this trade, and in the process had extended their operations along the Aleutian Islands and the Alaska coast. The largest of these rivals, the Shelikhov-Golikov Company and the Mylnikov Company united in 1797 to form the basis of the Russian American Company, created by decree of 1799, with a monopoly of the trade in the North Pacific.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>S. R. Tompkins, "Drawing the Alaska Boundary", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, (March, 1945), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>S. R. Tompkins and Maxl. Moorhead, "Russia's Approach to America", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XIII, 1949, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup>S. B. Okun, The Russian American Company, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 38.

The first European power on the Pacific was, of course, Spain. Her empire did not produce bustling competitive enterprise, but it overshadowed all others in its government-supported expeditions of discovery. Reports of the Russian voyages in the North Pacific inspired a series of expeditions north from California between 1774 and 1790.<sup>1</sup> Spain charted most of the west coast of North America up to the Russian settlements in the Gulf of Alaska. However, when her authority chanced to clash with Great Britain over the Nootka affair, Spain's influence in Europe was approaching total eclipse. With the Nootka treaty and the later one negotiated between John Quincy Adams and Don Luis de Onis y Gonzales in 1819, Spain's pretensions on the Pacific were amputated at 42°.

England's renowned seamanship was never better proved than by the exploits of her navigators in the Pacific in the 18th century. Only two large-scale expeditions were dispatched to the North Pacific coast, those of Cook and Vancouver, but their accurate description of the long and tortuous coastline, added much to the weight of British claims in the area. Captain Cook's voyage contributed further to British interests in the area when his sailors happened to discover the high economic value of the sea otter.<sup>2</sup> This induced the South Sea Company and several other English concerns to begin extensive trading along the coasts in the late 1780's and early 90's.<sup>3</sup> The great wars in Europe soon mobilized all available vessels and left this field clear for the adventurous skippers from New

---

<sup>1</sup>Tompkins and Moorhead, loc. cit., p. 255.

<sup>2</sup>T. A. Rickard, "The Sea Otter in History", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XI, (1947), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-27. Rickard gave a list of the English traders who appeared on the coast following the publication of Cook's journals in 1784.

England. These men found that a few hundred dollars of scrap iron, roughly manufactured into weapons and utensils for the natives on the north-west coast, brought in furs worth thousands of dollars in Chinese goods at Canton.<sup>1</sup>

In Russian America, the newly formed monopoly, under the governorship of a shrewd and determined Siberian merchant Alexander Baranov, began to push its hunting operations southeast along the Alexander Archipelago. These culminated with the establishment of Novo Arkhangelsk of Sitka (henceforth referred to as Sitka) in 1805.<sup>2</sup>

However, the fierce native tribes in the area were already accustomed to trading for American arms and goods. The Russians sold their fur to the Chinese through the only port of entry permitted by the Emperor, a small border town in Northern Mongolia by the name of Kiakhta. The American traders made use of the Russian exclusion from the great Chinese port of Canton to monopolize Pacific commerce during the Napoleonic wars.

Because they suffered acutely from periodic shortages of supplies, the remote Russian Pacific settlements grew to depend upon buying goods from Yankee skippers. In an unsuccessful attempt to escape from this unprofitable necessity, Governor Baranov dispatched an expedition to found an agricultural colony in California and later attempted to win control of the northern Hawaiian Islands. With the combined Russian and

---

<sup>1</sup>T. A. Rickard, "The Use of Iron and Copper by the Indians of British Columbia", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. III, (1939), pp. 30-35.

<sup>2</sup>S. R. Tompkins, "After Behring: Mapping the Pacific", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XIX, (1955), p. 6. Tompkins observed that, faced with the foreign competition, Baranov extended his operations down the coast, and in 1799 established a post named St. Michael six miles north of the present site of Sitka. This was captured by the Koloshi in 1800, regained by Baranov in 1804, and rebuilt on its present site in 1805.

American assault on the fur resources of the north-west coast, the quantity of the skins began to fall off rapidly from 1815 on. This led to Tsar Alexander's famous ukase of 1821 prohibiting foreign commerce on the coast north of 51° N. Latitude.

Meanwhile in the interior of British North America, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company entered on the bitter final decade of their competitive struggle. The North West Company was in complete control of the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains, with the exception of Astor's attempt to exploit the Columbia. The East India Company had a monopoly on imperial trade to Canton and had no interest in the market there for fur from the north-west coast.<sup>1</sup> The Nor'Westers could not help being attracted by the profitable trade at Canton, and so were forced to operate through private American intermediaries who took roughly half the proceeds. The expanded Hudson's Bay Company inherited this arrangement, saw its impracticality, and attempted unsuccessfully to arrange a profitable agreement with the staid East India Company. As a result, despite the visions of a developed general trade in the Pacific held by Governor George Simpson, the Hudson's Bay Company could not begin to match the profits of the American freebooters, following their path of gold from South America and the north-west coast to Hawaii and China.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Evidence of Charles Grant in the Third Report from the Select Committee Appointed to consider of the means of improving and maintaining the Foreign Trade of the Country, (1821), p. 321. Grant said of the fur trade to China, "I believe the importance of the fur trade has been very much mistaken; it is not important, never has been, nor is now a trade of any importance." Neither the Hudson's Bay Company, the American traders nor the Russian American Company, would have agreed with Grant.

<sup>2</sup>K. W. Porter, John Jacob Astor: Business Man, Vol. 2, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), pp. 662-665. Porter described the trading pattern of the American vessels in the Pacific.



This did not mean that the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company were blind to territorial advantage on the north-west coast of the Pacific. During the negotiations resulting from the Russian ukase of 1821 they made the case for their advantage quite clear to the Foreign Office, as did the directors of the Russian American Company on the other side, though with different results.

In the end the negotiations concerning rearrangement of influence in the north Pacific were overshadowed by the effect of the rash of European revolutions on Tsar Alexander's Holy Alliance. For St. Petersburg, the Balkans and the Black Sea were always of more importance than the Pacific Ocean. Yet the final treaty was not, as it has been portrayed, a defeat for Russia. The victory belonged to John Quincy Adams of the United States, and the defeat to George Canning of England. Canning had a myriad of diplomatic entanglements to unravel as he withdrew his country from Europe, nor could he afford to alienate the United States. This state of affairs, added to several misconceptions and minor blunders by the Foreign Office, heightened by a general ignorance of the geography involved, produced the final Anglo-Russian treaty, whose delayed explosion at the beginning of the twentieth century caused such distress to Canada.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY: POST UNION REORGANIZATION AND PACIFIC COAST POLICY

By February, 1822, word of the Russian ukaze had been received in Fenchurch Street and the matter duly considered. The Governor and Committee wrote to Governor Simpson, ordering him to extend the company's establishment as far to the north and west in New Caledonia as might be both practicable and profitable. They planned thereby to secure as much territory as they could to protect themselves against Russian encroachment, and hoped that their claims would receive the full support of the British government.<sup>1</sup>

This was easier said than done. The Hudson's Bay Company had experienced a decade of the most bitter competition, from which it was fortunate to emerge a going enterprise. Alexander Colvile doubted at times in 1820 that the company could keep solvent until the North West partners' agreement expired, two years later.<sup>2</sup> Within the new company ill feeling was aroused by Simon McGillivray, a representative of the old Montreal interests, who attempted to wield his influence at the irregular council at Fort William in 1821 to settle scores with his old enemies.<sup>3</sup> This was partly corrected at the subsequent meeting at Norway House, at which the Chief Factors and the new Governor of the northern department combined in

---

<sup>1</sup>Hudson's Bay Archives [hereafter cited as H.B.A.], Reel 40, A6/20, Governor and Committee to George Simpson, February 27, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>E. E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870, (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1959), II, p. 395.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 412.

support of Nicholas Garry to reduce the influence of McGillivray.<sup>1</sup> But if the old three-cornered factional strife among the Hudson's Bay Company, the North West Company agents and their wintering partners died quickly after the union, the personal animosities remained alive for many years.

Owing to this ill feeling, the leadership of the reorganized company had to be changed. William Williams, governor of the northern department, who had made himself unacceptable to most of the new partners<sup>2</sup> by his partisan role in the conflict with the North West Company, agreed to transfer his jurisdiction to the southern department. The immense and vital northern department was put under the control of the inexperienced but aggressive George Simpson.

On the other hand, the united company was now free of competition over most of the vast extent of its domains. The government, relieved by the merger, had rewarded it with the right of exclusive trade west of the Rocky Mountains. The London stockholders of the company, whose faith had not been shaken by the years of trial, were now justifiably confident of the future, despite the distant rumblings of Russian expansion in the north-western corner of the continent.

i. The company possessed three truly 'frontier' departments in the north-west: the Mackenzie, the Columbia and New Caledonia, all of which were ultimately concerned with the Russian claims. The instructions mentioned above, issued on February 27th, 1822 to extend trade "to the west

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.; see also Minutes of the Council Northern Department of Rupert's Land, 1821-31, ed. R. H. Fleming. Introduction by H. A. Innis (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1940), p. xvi. [Hereafter cited as H.B.S., III].

<sup>2</sup>Rich, op. cit., p. 414.

and north from Fraser's River in Caledonia", were concerned only with New Caledonia, and there the company's plans were handicapped by a number of limitations peculiar to the region and its inhabitants.

The coastal range formed an insurmountable barrier to the ocean, while the canyons of the lower Fraser blocked the natural water route to the coast. The Selkirk and Rocky Mountains isolated the department from the prairies to the eastward and necessitated that supplies be brought up through the Peace Pass or by horse from the Columbia. The interior plateau was carved by narrow valleys with rapid streams and long lakes<sup>1</sup> of great depth generally aligned on a north-south axis. Westward penetration was made more difficult by the fact that in more than 1,000 miles of coast line from the mouth of the Columbia to the latitude of Sitka, only four navigable rivers fall into the Pacific: the Fraser, Skeena, Nass and Stikine. The headwaters of the Skeena and Nass were removed from the centre of operations in New Caledonia at Fort St. James on Stuart Lake, and the country in between was extremely rugged. When Fort Kilmaurs was established on Lake Babine in 1822, one final obstacle remained to prevent descent to the ocean: this was the Indian.

Daniel Harmon, from his long experience in New Caledonia, judged the Beaver and Sekani to be a quiet and inoffensive people, and the Carriers a docile tribe, albeit prone to take murder lightly.<sup>2</sup> The Journals of John Stuart, William Brown, and William Connolly substantiate

---

<sup>1</sup>W. G. Kendrew and D. Kerr, The Climate of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1955), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Sixteen Years in the Indian Country: The Journal of Daniel Harmon 1800-1816, ed. W. Kaye Lamb (Toronto: Macmillan, 1957), pp. 123 and 130.

Harmon's observations. They prove that the Indians of New Caledonia were usually afraid to attack the white man. But they also indicate that murder and skirmishes among the natives themselves, which often presented the same barrier to trade, were too common to be noteworthy.

The Indians closer to the coast were still less amenable. These tribes, such as the Atenas described by Harmon,<sup>1</sup> and the trading Nahannies by Samuel Black,<sup>2</sup> appear to have been stronger, more aggressive and better armed than the tribes of the interior of the district. They were determined to maintain their own monopoly of the fur trade by preventing coastal traders from reaching inland, or the Hudson's Bay men from reaching towards the coast.

Then there were the coastal tribes themselves. Ruled by an aristocratic slave-owning nobility, well armed and possessing magnificent war canoes, they were formidable enemies. The evidence of treachery and violence with which they had met the white man's attempts to profit from them, was a grave reality to those trading along the coast from Fort George to Sitka. The officers of New Caledonia had full reason to believe, as John Stuart maintained,<sup>3</sup> that they would be nudging a hornets' nest if they attempted to establish themselves closer to the coast.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>2</sup>Black's Rocky Mountain Journal, 1824, ed. E. E. Rich. Introduction by R. M. Patterson, (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1955), p. lxxiv. [Hereafter cited as H.B.R.S., XVIII].

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 1M223, B/188/6/1, John Stuart to William Brown, November 29, 1822.

<sup>4</sup>Rich, op. cit., II, p. 609. Also Archibald McDonald, Peace River, A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific by the Late Sir George Simpson, ed. Malcolm McLeod, (Ottawa: J. Durie, 1872), p. 112.

Possibly even more compelling opposition lay in the economic advantages of the native traders. William Brown, who bore brunt of their competition, stated they could obtain their goods at low prices from coastal vessels for fur, and could successfully dispose of old and tattered European goods to the upland Indians. They could work their own craft up river, understand the language, needed no expensive provisions and could make use of native customs of flattery and present-giving.<sup>1</sup> Another great advantage which the native traders possessed was that when the salmon did not migrate as far upstream as usual, hungry Indians were forced to bring their furs down to them in exchange for their winter's food.<sup>2</sup> Brown used these facts to illustrate their danger to the whole Babine trade, and to argue for a post at the forks of the Skeena. His superior, John Stuart, realized the prohibitive expense involved in competing with such adversaries.

The New Caledonia or Columbia department in the early years of the united company was little prepared for an aggressive campaign of expansion. The fur trade in the Columbia from 1818-1822 was so unprofitable, and the difficulties of operation so great, that there was a strong pressure on the committee to abandon the country altogether.<sup>3</sup> The demoralization of the personnel west of the mountains was a further serious weakness.<sup>4</sup> The

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 1M776, B11/e/2, p. 20, William Brown, Babine Report on District, 1826, April 15, 1826.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 1M15, B/11/a/1, William Brown, Babine Post Journals, January 1st, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>Fredrick Merk, Fur Trade and Empire. George Simpson's Journal, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), p. 343; J. H. Pelly to the Lords on the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade, February, 1838.

<sup>4</sup>Fredrick Merk, Albert Gallatin and the Oregon Problem, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 3.

company's prime concern was to reorganize the fur trade east of the mountains. Though it also sought to increase its scant knowledge of the trans-mountain country, the company was forced to leave the management of the trade there to former Nor-Westerners. Generally suspicious of the new regime and uncertain of their own position, these men were poor vehicles for a policy of expansion.<sup>1</sup>

However, great reforms in the northern department were badly needed if the company was to regain the financial resources which could support expanded trade. For a decade business had been forgotten in the struggle for victory. Both companies had taken on many more men than simple trade required. Both had encouraged the Indians to adapt to conditions of competitive trade, to demand easy credit, and high fur prices.<sup>2</sup> This in turn had led to reckless exhaustion of fur resources by the hunters.<sup>3</sup>

The reform of these evils had to be undertaken at the same time as the unsettling administrative process of remaking the two old institutions into one. The quantity of spirits imported was quickly reduced; after 1826 no liquor was allowed north of Fort Cumberland,<sup>4</sup> a hardship on both officers and natives.<sup>5</sup> This measure was undertaken apparently less because of moral scruple, than because of the rise of the price of spirits.<sup>6</sup> According to Father Morice it failed to keep New Caledonia dry.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 3. See also Rich, op. cit., II, p. 469.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M42, D4/86, Governor Simpson to Governor and Committee [hereafter cited as Gov. & Comm.], August 1, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>Rich, op. cit., II, p. 469.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 478.

<sup>5</sup>H.B.S., III, p. lxi.

<sup>6</sup>Rich, op. cit., II, p. 476.

<sup>7</sup>Rev. A. G. Morice, The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, (Toronto: Will Briggs, 1904), p. 114.

The decimation of beaver, especially in the Athabaska district, led to the imposition of controls on summer hunting and the killing of cubs, as well as the initiation of a quota system and complete withdrawal from certain areas.<sup>1</sup> Of course this too caused unrest among the Indians. Rich attributed the murder of Guy Hughes and his men in 1823 in the Peace River district, to these restrictions.<sup>2</sup>

One of the spheres most obviously requiring the accountant's shears was that of personnel. The number of men in the service was greatly reduced, as was the number of dependents flourishing on the company's largess.<sup>3</sup> Though it was realized that men's wages and the price of necessary goods could not be put out of balance, the committee was determined to reduce the wages of its non-commissioned employees. Eventually the Governor reassured the Canadians that a drop in prices would neutralize the effect of a cut in wages, and managed to reduce the salaries of the northern department by £4 to £5,000 in 1825-26.<sup>4</sup> Here again the economies entailed dislocation and unrest.

One of Simpson's dominant characteristics was a hard-headed accountant's eye for details and figures. It was therefore natural for him to discover that the ordering of excessive stocks of goods by field officers was adding substantially to the company's capital expenditure.

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.S., III, p. xxv.

<sup>2</sup>Rich, op. cit., II, p. 474.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 482.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 483.



Post managers were required to reduce their safety margins of supplies<sup>1</sup> and to forego the "extraordinary predilection for European provisions" which the Governor found particularly in the Columbia department.<sup>2</sup> He ordered that the total number of employees there be reduced from 151 to 83, and the outfit sent inland be cut from 645 to 200 pieces.<sup>3</sup>

Governor Simpson realized as clearly as Harold Innis in this century, that the key to his operations was transportation. He was certain that York boats would prove to be much more economical vehicles than canoes. The Canadians were thus required to adapt to this cumbersome craft.<sup>4</sup> Simpson also studied the main routes in use to ascertain if new water or overland detours could be found to save time and costs.<sup>5</sup> The transportation of goods to New Caledonia underwent considerable change in these years. The summer of 1822 saw the last brigade to New Caledonia from Fort George by the Columbia route, overland from the Okanagan River to Fort Alexandria and onto the Fraser. The next season the supplies came by canoe from Hudson's Bay via the Peace River. But Simpson proposed an alternative supply route from Fort York to New Caledonia: one not using the Methye Portage and the Peace River, but rather the Saskatchewan to Edmonton,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 490.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.S., III, p. xxxiii; also Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. xxxiv; also Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, p. 72. Simpson stated that "Everything appears to me on the Columbia in too extended a scale except the trade."

<sup>4</sup>Rich, op. cit., II, p. 487. By 1825 it was realized that York boats were too slow to be able to make a return trip between York and Athabaska in one season, so part of the outfit continued to be carried in canoes.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 488; also Merk, Fur Trade and Empire [hereafter cited FT&E], pp. 349-50.

overland to the Athabasca, and thence via the Yellowhead Pass to the waters of the Fraser system. In the course of his visit to the Pacific coast in 1824-25, the Governor cast this plan aside in his enthusiasm for a supply route up the Fraser River. However, at the council meeting in the summer of 1825 it was decided that the 1826 outfit would go up the Columbia and overland to Fort Alexandria and the Upper Fraser as in the days before the union.<sup>1</sup>

These alterations in the established pattern of trade were substantial enough to dominate the concern of employees of all ranks. West of the mountains, these economies and reforms were in large measure responsible for preventing the desired expansion.

A further hindrance to efforts to extend the trade toward the coast was the perennial shortage of moose hide or "leather", (used by the natives for clothing). Brown complained that the native traders had better quality than he, and he repeatedly requested a supply of fine dressed moose skins. Having just returned from a short visit to the Indian villages 'below' Lake Babine in January, 1823, Brown noted that while the European goods that reached them from the coast were of the coarsest quality, "Their leather is what the people here speak of as being good and cheap".<sup>2</sup> Obviously to compete the company needed this greatly desired commodity. Later that winter, when he received some skins from Fort St. James, Brown commented that it would enable him to satisfy the Indians, who had been

---

<sup>1</sup>FT&E, p. 76, footnote 133.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel IMi5, B/11/a/1, William Brown, Babine Post Journals, January 5, 1823.

most annoying with tales of the fine leather they received from the coast.<sup>1</sup> But in his spring report to Governor Simpson, Brown explained that the disappointing returns of the Babine district were due largely to the shortage of leather, it being one of the few things the Indians needed and could be encouraged to go trapping for.<sup>2</sup> In his district report for 1824-25 William Connolly stressed the need for more supplies of leather if the good will of the Indians was to be maintained.<sup>3</sup> Brown declared at the end of the following summer, that the Indians had been more turbulent than ever before, chiefly because of the company's inability to supply them with the necessary skins.<sup>4</sup> To this Connolly replied rather testily that Brown had received over half the leather for the whole department and that Indian unrest had not been reported in the remaining areas.<sup>5</sup> However, the next month, in a letter to McLoughlin, he admitted that for the last two years he had been unable to get any reasonable supply of leather, and added he feared a shortage of that "indispensable article" would greatly dislocate the trade of the department during the year.<sup>6</sup>

In his report on the Babine district in the spring of 1826, Brown stated that the Babines west of Fort Kilmaurs would trade for leather or

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM15, B/11/a/2, William Brown to John Stuart, Babine Post Journals, March 27, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M52, D4/118, William Brown to Governor Simpson, April 25, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM782, B/88/e/3, William Connolly, St. James Fort Report District, n.d. spring, 1825.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM224, B/188/b/4, Brown to Connolly, October 8, 1825.

<sup>5</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM129, B/188/a/5, William Connolly to William Brown, Fort St. James Post Journal, October 30, 1825.

<sup>6</sup>H.B.S., III, p. 106, footnote 2.

not at all, and that because he had been given only small quantities of poor skins since 1823, at least two-thirds of the furs of his hunters went to the sea coast. The weary Chief Trader stated that the shortage of leather made it useless to attempt to extend the trade down the 'Simpson's' river (Skeena).<sup>1</sup>

Another factor that consistently prevented expansion was the shortage of men. In December, 1822, William Brown complained that plans for an expedition to the Chilcotin country, preparatory to opening establishments there, had to be abandoned, because so few men had been sent in that fall. An expedition to the Atnahs west of Lake Babine to determine if a post should be set up amongst them, also became impossible. Brown stated that these important enterprises had to be foregone in order to get the furs and winter provisions of 6,000 salmon, to Fort McLeod. Brown was anxious to lead a party the following summer to gain information of the country toward the sea but John Stuart disapproved: first, because he felt the party must be too small to bring any advantage, second, that the expenses would outweigh the returns and, third, that the committee and council would object to it "as contrary to the plan of economy they wish to establish".<sup>2</sup>

A month later Stuart wrote to Simpson acknowledging his promotion to Chief Factor and a position on the council. But it was in a melancholy mood that he stated the number of men required to operate Brown's new post in the Babine country might well force him to leave the fur catch inland, "a circumstance of all others I would wish to avoid". He requested that

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM776, B/11/e/2, William Brown, Babine - Report on District, April 15, 1826.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM15, B/11/9/1, Brown to Simpson, Babine Post Journal, December 3, 1822.

he be relieved, as he felt no longer equal to the rigours of the department and, one gathers, to the stringencies of Simpson's economizing.<sup>1</sup> Stuart's strong feelings about the existing responsibilities of the department leave no doubt of his opinion about Brown's plans for exploratory expeditions and new establishments.

But the Governor did not agree that the establishments in New Caledonia were undermanned. In December, 1823, he sent the following devastating reply:

The general out door opinion is that a larger complement of men was given to the department last year than necessary; but if you make up the 150 packs, and extend the trade agreeable to your expectations and intentions (of which Stuart had neither), and from your well known enterprise and perseverance I have no doubt these desirable objects will be accomplished, there will be no room for further remarks on that head [sic].<sup>2</sup>

It must be added that while Simpson strictly limited the number of employees, he made a point of encouraging the officers to remain at their assigned posts for a goodly time to prevent the continual reshuffling of posts that disorganized the old Nor'Westers.<sup>3</sup> He was also responsible for introducing some extremely able men west of the Rockies such as McLoughlin, Ogden and Black.

Apart from the dislocation of supply routes, shortage of men and of leather, the outstanding disability of New Caledonia lay in the conflict of personalities.<sup>4</sup> The dominant figure in the country since its original

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM223, B/188/b/1, Stuart to Simpson, January 4, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M3, D/4/3, Simpson to Stuart, December 17, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>John Hussey, The History of Fort Vancouver and its Physical Structure, (Washington State Historical Society, 1957), pp. 19-20.

<sup>4</sup>John S. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 126.

establishment had been John Stuart, who could with honesty describe the department as "a child of my own rearing".<sup>1</sup> As a veteran Nor'Wester, Stuart was not happy with the rigid discipline of the new concern. In a letter to Brown in the fall of 1822 he stated that he now realized the difference between being a partner in the late North West Company and a Chief Factor in the new Hudson's Bay Company: "The one was something, but the other is a name without substance . . . nothing more than the servant of the company, whose orders he must implicitly follow." He also resented being left on his own, to accomplish what he felt to be impossible tasks with the men at hand without counsel by the Governor.<sup>2</sup> In this letter shadows of bitterness and jealousy appear, for Stuart noted that unlike himself Brown seemed to have received a large bundle of mail and perhaps possessed more information than he did.

It was unfortunate that this deputy, though like all the officers in New Caledonia an old Nor'Wester,<sup>3</sup> was a particularly willing servant of the new company. William Brown appears to have been an aggressive and ambitious man anxious to win a position for himself by carrying out the Governor's directions. He was determined to take a party of men to explore to the west toward the ocean, and herein he ran counter to the wishes of Stuart. Bad feeling rapidly developed between the two men during the winter of 1822-23; Stuart demanded that all correspondence within the department receive his approval while Brown complained bitterly

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM223, b/188/b/1, John Stuart to Nicholas Garry, April 22, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM223, B/188/b/1, Stuart to Brown, November 7, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>H. A. Innis, "Rupert's Land in 1825", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 7, No. 4 (December, 1926), p. 306.

that he had been deliberately supplied with a defective whipsaw!<sup>1</sup> Another source of ill will may have sprung from the refusal of Brown's request to be allowed to visit York Factory in 1824.<sup>2</sup> He may have resented the fact that Stuart made the trip east each summer, and was able to put his account of their disputes before the Governor and Council in person. In the fall of 1824 Stuart was finally allowed to take a less demanding position, and was posted to the Saskatchewan district.

There are no surviving records of the department in the winter of 1823-24, and this may be due to the "serious differences and insubordination", said to have existed in the department, which the council severely condemned in July, 1824.<sup>3</sup> In the following winter William Connolly, late of the Lesser Slave Lake District, served jointly with William Brown, as senior officer in New Caledonia. However, Brown remained attached to the Babine Post while Connolly supervised the remainder of the department. Brown's refusal to delegate the leadership of his exploration down the Skeena the following summer<sup>4</sup> and his continual criticism of the shortage of leather seems to have produced decidedly cool relations with Connolly. Undoubtedly the promotion of Connolly to the rank of Chief Factor in July, 1825, did nothing to soothe Brown's temper. When the rotation of furlough fell to Brown in 1826, he accepted this opportunity to withdraw, and thereafter disappears from the council records.

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM15, B/11/a/1, Brown to Stuart, February 10, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M52, D/4/118, Brown to Simpson, April 25, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.S., III, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup>Brown suffered a severe attack of rheumatism that confined him to bed for most of the summer.

The conflict of personalities, bad temper and low spirits was undoubtedly aided by the climate of the country which was condemned by most of the officers. The prevailing diet of dried salmon and cold water was extremely unpopular both for the lack of variety and its powerful "medicinal" effect.<sup>1</sup> The Governor himself confided to the committee that "the service there is the most painful and harrassing in North America".<sup>2</sup>

It must be concluded therefore that the policies of the company west of the Rocky Mountains laboured under a number of heavy disabilities.

ii. Company policy concerning the three frontier regions was slow to emerge, for in London financial crisis had been replaced by 'reorganizational disorganization'. The Pacific coast was the most difficult area for the directors to come to grips with, for its geography and trading methods were equally strange to them. By studying their correspondence, the evolution of company intentions and motives can be traced, and its response to Russia's claim revealed.

At the first council meeting of the northern department at Norway house in mid-August, 1821, John Haldane, John Dugald Cameron, James McMillan and one former company man, John Lee Lewes, were appointed as officers to the Columbia department. They were asked to make detailed reports on the possibilities of the coastal trade.<sup>3</sup> At the same time in London, an

---

<sup>1</sup>John McLean, Notes of a 25 year's service in the Hudson's Bay Territories, ed. W. S. Wallace, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1932), p. 186. McLean noted bitterly that dried salmon had the effect on most people as if they were fed upon Glauber salts.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., August 31, 1825.

<sup>3</sup>Rich, op. cit., II, p. 569.



influential group of opinion strongly recommended that the company should simply abandon the Columbia department.<sup>1</sup> John Henry Pelly stated that this advice was rejected for fear that the company's honour would be compromised. On February 27th, 1822, however, the Governor and Committee advised Simpson that though the district might not be profitable, it might well be a wise policy not to abandon it, but to hold it "with the view of protecting the more valuable districts to the north of it".<sup>2</sup> A little more than a month later John Lewes sent a report to Simpson which forecast increasing returns for the Columbia, since the administration had been reformed and new areas harvested.<sup>3</sup> Possibly with this in mind, in mid-July Simpson wrote to J. D. Cameron stating that the Honourable Committee desired trade to be extended as far north "as there is a probability of doing so with advantage", to offset Russian claims. He apparently envisaged the establishment of permanent posts, for he stated that it was probable they would gain government support for claims to territory "occupied by trading posts".<sup>4</sup> In August the council of the northern department recommended that the Columbia trade should be kept up "by way of barrier and check to intruders, even admitting it should afford no profit".<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>FT&E, p. 343. J. H. Pelly to the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade, February, 1838.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, Af/20, Gov. & Comm. to George Simpson, February 27, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>FT&E, p. 176. John L. Lewes to Simpson, April 2, 1822.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M3, d4/1, Simpson to J. D. Cameron, July 18, 1822.

<sup>5</sup>H.B.S., III, p. 415. Governor Simpson to Gov. & Council of S. Dept., August 30, 1822.

In September the Governor and Committee dispatched the brig Lively to the Columbia and with it a letter to Haldane and Cameron informing them of the Tsar's ukase and asking for all possible information of the Russian activities and establishments on the coast. The letter indicated that the company had acquired a new broader perspective on their operations in the Pacific, as it inquired about the feasibility of marketing other local produces besides fur, such as salmon. It also considered the possibility of employing a vessel to collect furs and obtain supplies along the Pacific coast.<sup>1</sup> Abandonment was no longer a question.<sup>2</sup> But the letter to the officers of the Columbia department did not make it clear whether this was due to the necessity of withstanding the Russian threat, or simply a new optimistic appraisal of the possibilities of Pacific commerce.

In January, 1823, William Brown made a brief visit to the lands to the west of Babine Lake and noted in his Journal the necessity of supplanting the coastal Indian's inland trade in skins and European goods before it became too large to stop.<sup>3</sup> Brown concluded that this demanded action from the interior. An easier solution was projected to the world in 1822 by two widely circulated periodicals, the North American Review and Quarterly Review. This was the location of a coastal post supplied by sea from Fort George at the mouth of the Nass River.<sup>4</sup> In fact both

---

<sup>1</sup>John Hussey, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, Gov. & Comm. to John Haldane and J. D. Cameron, September 4, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM15, B/11/a/1, William Brown, Babine Post Journals, January 5, 1823.

<sup>4</sup>The Quarterly Review, Vol. XXVI, October and January, No. LII, (London: John Murray, 1822), p. 346; also "Examination of the Russian Claims", The North American Review, Vol. XV, New Series, Vol. VI, (Boston, 1822), p. 396.

articles assumed that by the time of publication, the company would have established such a station.

However, Governor Simpson's report to the Governor and Committee in June, 1823, though confident of the department as a whole, reported that no progress had been made along the coast. He said that repeated attempts had been made by Mr. Cameron to extend the trade into the rich country along the coast to the northward, but that these had been wholly without success on account of the "implacable revenge" of the natives for a supposed outrage committed on them by the whites some years before.<sup>1</sup> The letter from which Simpson received this information was considerably stronger in its statement of the facts. Cameron had declared that "Establishing posts to the northward is out of the question, unless supported by a strong force, which would incur an expense that the best trade made that way would not defray".<sup>2</sup> John Hussey, who describes the drive up the north-west coast as half-hearted, concludes from this letter that it was so, because the officers were intimidated<sup>3</sup> by the Indian opposition.

Undoubtedly the opposition of the Indians, expressed in sudden outbreaks of violence, did prevent expansion up the coast by foot or canoe. It must also be added that the route from Fort Vancouver to the Fraser River was over particularly harrowing terrain.<sup>4</sup> The question that

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., June 23, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M52, D4/117, J. D. Cameron to Gov. & Council, March 30, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>Hussey, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>B. A. McKelvie, Fort Langley: Outpost of Empire, (Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1957), pp. 21-23.

must be asked is why the company did not station a vessel on the coast, for the Americans had proved that it was possible to trade profitably even with Indians of known malevolence under the protection of boarding nets and grape shot.

In September, 1822, the committee was still requesting information on the feasibility of such an enterprise. Such a request could not have reached the Columbia before the spring of 1823 and a reply could not have been in the committee's hands before the fall of 1823. Indeed if an answer was sent on the Lively it did not reach London until sometime after March, 1824.<sup>1</sup> By the end of February, 1825, the issues arising from the Russian ukase had been settled. On the second of June, 1824, the Governor and Committee sent instructions to Simpson which indicated strongly that though an Anglo-Russian treaty had not yet been signed, they expected shortly that Britain would obtain access to the coast, at least as far as Sitka. Indeed the terms of the Russian-American Treaty signed on April 5 (17), 1824, which restricted the Russians' territorial claims to 54°40', were a clear forecast in themselves. In the June letter the committee recommended the extension of the sea otter trade, as the East India Company had found a ready market for the skins in China. They informed Simpson that they had bought the William and Anne and would despatch her earlier than usual so that she would have time in the summer of 1825 to open trade with the Indians of the coast to the northward.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, Gov. & Comm. to Governor Simpson, March 12, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, Gov. & Comm. to Governor Simpson (official), June 2, 1824.

There are several possible reasons for the delay in consigning a vessel to the north-west coast until the summer of 1824. It might have been that the company did not wish to send off a vessel until their relations with Perkins and Company of Boston and the East India Company had been clarified concerning their trade at Canton. Another reason might have been simply that the committee did not wish to charter another vessel for such lengthy service at the prevailing high rates and were not immediately prepared to purchase a ship.<sup>1</sup>

However, the most relevant question is whether the company deliberately delayed sending a vessel to expand the coastal trade until the national sovereignty of the region had been clarified. W. Kaye Lamb in his introduction to McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver letters implied that the company did hesitate while the negotiations continued, during which all that they were able to do was gather information and plan.<sup>2</sup> John Hussey adopted this view, but concluded that the company was sure of the results of the negotiation by March 12, 1824, and so felt at last that they could expand along the coast freely.<sup>3</sup>

It states that negotiations were then under way between Britain and Russia with respect to the coast and that though the committee hoped that "the valuable part will be secured to this country", they felt that

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., paragraph 55. Here one must note that the post-war slump in shipping charges due to the inundating wave of wartime transport vessels, was coming to an end.

<sup>2</sup>McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters First Series 1825-38, ed. E. E. Rich. Introduction by W. Kaye Lamb, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1941), p. xix. [Hereafter cited as H.B.S., IV].

<sup>3</sup>Hussey, op. cit., p. 22.

"the actual occupation by traders will go far to establish the rights of the respective nations".<sup>1</sup> This reveals clearly that in March the company did not hold to a policy of 'wait and see', but sought rather to actively influence the treaty by expansion along the coast.

There remains the possibility that in the fall of 1823 the company was temporarily delayed from coastal activity by the threat of the Russian ukase itself and the news that a Russian naval vessel was patrolling the coast to enforce it, and had actually intercepted an American trader. Rich notes that the company was not displeased to have other foreign traders excluded from the coast but does not mention how seriously the company itself took the presence of the Russian sloop in 1823. However, the Russian foreign minister in July, 1822, confronted with the threat of war, had offered quiet assurances to the Americans that the regulations of the ukase would not be enforced.<sup>2</sup> In June of the following year the Foreign Office delivered a note to the chairman of the Shipowners Society reassuring him that the Russians had pledged not to molest vessels sailing off the north-west coast.<sup>3</sup> As the company would certainly hear of this, it appears unlikely the delay was due to fear of Russian intervention.

Their slow start seems rather to have been due to practical difficulties. Harold Innis in his introduction to the Minutes of the Council of the Northern Department, stated that the possibility of competition on

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, Gov. & Comm. to Governor Simpson, March 12, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>John Hildt, Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States with Russia, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1906), p. 166.

<sup>3</sup>Great Britain, Correspondence Respecting the Russian Ukase of September, 1821, No. 6225 (Printed for the use of the Foreign Office, June 1892), p. 37, Foreign Office to Shipowners Society, June 27, 1823.

the coast at this time was limited by the drain of the competition in the interior regions, and by Simpson's demands for the most economical use of men.<sup>1</sup> The protests against the shortage of men in New Caledonia have already been mentioned. As it was in that department, so in the Columbia the transportation of supplies and returns was the greatest consumer of time and man power.

This does not explain the fact that the heavy exploitation of the Snake country was carried on by free trappers,<sup>2</sup> not regular company men, nor the fact that all that was required for the coastal trade was a vessel, sailors and one experienced company trader. However, in the light of the later debate over the merits of the coastal trade versus land based ports between Simpson and McLoughlin,<sup>3</sup> it is possible that much thought was given to a purely vessel-based trade. Nor indeed would it have been nearly as useful as permanent establishments in the matter of asserting sovereignty.

It appears likely then that the general stress on other areas of the trade and the heavy emphasis on economy of operation were responsible for stifling the expansion on the coast at that time. The committee's original notification of the Russian threat, advising northward extension, was twice qualified: "as may be practicable, if there appears any reassuring prospect of doing so profitably".<sup>4</sup> In Cameron's letter to the Governor

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.S., III, p. lxix.

<sup>2</sup>Rich, op. cit., II, p. 573.

<sup>3</sup>Donald C. Davidson, "Relations of the Hudson's Bay Company with the Russian American Company in the North West Coast 1829-67", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 1 (January, 1941), pp. 33-38.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, Gov. & Comm. to Governor Simpson, February 27, 1822.

and Council in March, 1823, the point he emphasized was not that Indians prevented the establishment of trade to the northward, but that the expense of supporting an undertaking with such opposition would make it uneconomic.<sup>1</sup>

Even the letter of the committee to Simpson in March, 1824, which openly encouraged expansion to prevent Russian claims to the mainland included the phrase "as may be practicable".<sup>2</sup> In the committee's official letter to the officers of the Columbia department in July of that year when the William and Anne was about to sail to survey the coast, the company added the stricture:

However it may be desirable to extend the trade of the Department . . . it cannot answer to extend the trade to parts of the country where a loss is likely to be incurred.<sup>3</sup>

The committee's desire for economy in this sphere was fully shared by the council, for Simpson reported that at their July meeting it was adjudged that beneficial as it would be to enforce British claims by actual occupation, this would remain both dangerous and unprofitable for some time to come.<sup>4</sup>

Galbraith implied that a further reason for the cautious pace of coastal development was the failure of the company's attempt to enter the

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M52, D4/117, J. D. Cameron to Gov. & Council, March 30, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, Gov. & Comm. to Governor Simpson, March 12, 1824.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/21, Gov. & Comm. to Officers of Columbia Department (Official), July 22, 1824.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., August 10, 1824.



China market.<sup>1</sup> The committee was confronted with the need to escape the depressed London fur market, a 25% service charge on the Columbia returns to Perkins and Company of Boston, and the closure of the Russian fur market.<sup>2</sup> It was to avoid these circumstances that it had attempted to persuade the East India Company to give it free access to Canton. The East India Company did agree to carry furs from London to Canton and dispose of them there, but it retained its monopoly of the export of Chinese goods to England. These restrictions plus a drop in fur prices in China finally caused the abandonment of the scheme.

Though Galbraith seems to antedate by a few years the connection between the company's coastal expansion and the China trade, the ill success of the China venture could not help but dampen the company's Pacific operations. As, no doubt, did the collapse of the barrelled salmon project due to spoilage in transit, and the failure of a steady coastal supply line between California and the Columbia.

So it was that the determination to protect the interior from Russian claims, by expansion on the coast, came to naught. But while Simpson's report to London in August, 1824, is hesitant about the practicality of coastal extension, at Hudson's Bay House premature forecasts of Russia's diplomatic retreat had brought new vigour to plans for the north-west coast. For this reason the William and Anne was bought and

---

<sup>1</sup>Galbraith, op. cit., p. 123. He interpreted this attempt as "an effort to expand the market for furs from the Pacific coast and thereby provide a profitable basis for the extension of posts into new areas". As this statement is in close proximity to a reference to the committee's instructions of February 27, 1822, it appears that Galbraith's statement concerned the years 1822-23. It is, however, truer of Governor Simpson's visions of 1825-26, than the Governor and Committee's plans for 1822-23.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.S., III, p. lxxiii.

sent out just when at York Factory gloomy prognostications were being made for the region. Simpson waited for London's news for as long as he could reasonably, and then bolted off on his record journey to the Columbia, where he conceived an enthusiasm for the land west of the Rocky Mountains greater than that of his directors. In fact after the Governor had taken the reins of the department in his own hands, in his March dispatch he commented that commerce on that side of the mountains had been "much neglected", that the "enterprising spirit" of the British merchant was conspicuously absent there, and expressed his mortification at seeing American and Russian merchants benefitting from a trade which by rights should be British, on grounds "equally presumptuous and untenable".<sup>1</sup> Simpson's eagerness to move the main depot to the lower Fraser River reveals his growing interest in the coastal trade.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter the department emerged into the brightest light of the Governor's reforming zeal; which was soon to reveal the full weakness of the Russian American Company's position on the coast.

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., March 10, 1825.

<sup>2</sup>FT&E, p. 75.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY: EXPANSION IN THE NEW CALEDONIA AND THE MACKENZIE DISTRICTS

The instructions sent to Simpson in February, 1822, made no distinction between the coast and the interior. Yet there are clear grounds for treating the two separately, for the expansion in New Caledonia was closer to the traditional trading pattern and methods of frontier areas than was the north Pacific coast. We must now consider the efforts of the company to extend towards the coast and the Russian possessions from the north-west corner of New Caledonia.

i. At the end of July, 1822, Governor Simpson replying to the committee's instructions of February 27th reported that a post in the Babine country would be established that season.<sup>1</sup> In October, having returned with the supplies from the Columbia, William Brown set off to the north end of Babine Lake, where he built the company's most westerly establishment. Thus far Brown was fully in accord with John Stuart's views of exploitation of the department's fur resources. Stuart held that New Caledonia was not well stocked "with beaver or other fur bearing creatures" though some were to be found scattered all over the district. Yearly increases could be obtained by good management, but too much should not be attempted, and in particular, expansion into new areas must be gradual. He believed that

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.S., III, p. 344. Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., July 31, 1822; see also H.B.S., III, p. 17, Minutes of Council, July, 1822: ten more men were sent to man two canoes in addition to the thirty-four men, two interpreters and officers already attached to New Caledonia.

one post should be well established before another was begun, so that too many people were never dependent on the resources of an area unable to maintain the newcomers adequately without causing hardship to the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Though Stuart seems to have agreed with the establishment of the Babine Lake post he may well have been disturbed by a note he received from the Governor before he started on his return journey from the council meetings at York Factory. Simpson stated that the supply of men was considered sufficient for the purpose of extending the trade and maintaining the business. The committee, he added, was desirous that expansion should occur if there was any reasonable prospect of doing it profitably, as the Russians were extending their claims, and the British government would probably support the company's claims where posts were erected. Imperial considerations were impinging on Stuart's established notions of the trade. The letter concluded with what must have been the most dismal note of all for Stuart; that a very considerable reduction of men and clerks was intended throughout the country.<sup>2</sup> This determination to expand, allied with the determination to reduce the establishment to a minimum was a prime cause of the conflict over the extension of trade west of Lake Babine, and of its eventual failure.

Brown had only been in the Babine country for six weeks when on a visit to Fort St. James, he suggested to Stuart that if he could be supplied with six men next summer he would attempt to discover the land between the Babine and the ocean. This was the beginning of a lengthy

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM223, B/188/b/1, John Stuart to Nicholas Garry, April 22, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM23, B/188/b/2, Governor Simpson to John Stuart, July 12, 1822.

correspondence during the week these two gentlemen visited each other. Stuart answered that he would consider the proposal, but was of the opinion that the Governor and Committee would object to the expense of such an undertaking.<sup>1</sup> On the same day Brown set forth his plan in a formal letter to Stuart, stating that the trip would serve to keep the Indians at Fort Kilmaurs quiet in their absence, that it might obtain some furs, but most important it would supply knowledge of a country about which they were then ignorant. Stuart replied that he felt no advantages would be derived from such explorations that would be equal to the expense. He described the impossible demands that would be made on the department, suffering as it did from a shortage of man power, and judged that though exploration might be valuable, economy was obviously the order of the day.<sup>2</sup> He concluded earnestly that he hoped that Brown would take over the department next spring as he was confident that he was equal to that charge, and as "it will release me from a long imprisonment in New Caledonia". The following day, Brown wrote Stuart, and ignoring his conciliatory tone, declared that he was sorry to see they differed so greatly on his proposals, for he felt the discoveries were a primary object of the committee, Governor and Council.<sup>3</sup>

On December 2nd, Stuart wearily replied that he wished Brown had stayed his hand because of the merits of Stuart's arguments rather than on his authority. He stated, as though it were commonly known, the fact

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM15, B/11/a/1, Brown, Babine Post Journal, November 27, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM223, B/188/b/1, Stuart to Brown, November 29, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM15, B/11/a/1, Brown, Babine Post Journal, November 30, 1822.

that the Russians had establishments on the coast, and that the Americans were most successful in the trade there also. He reasoned that it would be most dangerous at that time for the company to lure the coastal Indians to trade with the interior, or to open any communication with the sea, as it would open a path for the opposition into the company's territories, as surely as Charles XII once drew the Russians upon Sweden and as the North West Company drew to the Hudson's Bay Company upon themselves.<sup>1</sup> In assessing the company policy in this sphere Malcolm McLeod asserted that though the coast range presented a formidable barrier to the company they could have penetrated it if they had wished either from east or west, but they desired instead to protect the interior trade from foreign exploitation and maintain a "real Chinese wall of Separation".<sup>2</sup>

But one senses that Stuart was using this argument as an elaborate excuse to counter Brown's appeals on their own ground. The meat of his argument lay near the end of his letter when he said that, like Brown, judging from the caliber and quantity of men sent to the region last season, he might conclude that discovery and a sudden extension of trade were the company's primary aims, but the means supplied this year and the removal of so many qualified for the task, rendered such an object altogether impossible.<sup>3</sup>

The following day in a letter to the Governor, Brown described his ideas and Stuart's objections to them, stating that he had reluctantly given

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM223, B/188/b/1, Stuart to Brown, December 2, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>Archibald McDonald, Peace River, A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's to the Pacific by the late Sir George Simpson in 1828, ed. Malcolm McLeod, (Ottawa: J. Durie, 1872), p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM223, B/188/b/1, Stuart to Brown, December 2, 1822.

up his plans for next summer;<sup>1</sup> he intimated, however, that he was awaiting the Governor's vindication. Brown's short trip a month later to his closest Indian neighbours to the west, convinced him of the urgency of intercepting the trade of the Indian middlemen with the inland tribes before it got too strong.<sup>2</sup> The correspondence between Brown and Stuart in February and March, 1823, makes it obvious that personal antagonism had arisen between them.

Besides this personal conflict Brown's plans were disturbed by the fact that in the summer of 1823 the returns of New Caledonia were to be taken out, as in the early years of the department, via the Peace Pass to Rupert's Land. Stuart expected this operation to be an unduly arduous one, and in the event he believed that he had been proven correct. For he had the temerity to record in his report to Simpson that, "In my opinion the alteration that could prove most beneficial to New Caledonia in the way of collecting returns and extending the trade would be to resort to the old channel of having the country supplied from the Columbia!"<sup>3</sup>

By the end of the summer of 1823, Brown had not yet reached the Pacific, though from Indian reports he was fairly certain of the general course of the Skeena. Unfortunately at this point the trail of information ends, until the spring of 1825 when again William Brown was planning a summer expedition to the coast. One is again forced to explain the apparent absence of activity, particularly in the summer of 1824.

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM15, B/11/a/1, Brown to Simpson, Babine Post Journal, December 3, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Brown, Babine Post Journal, January 5, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM782, B/188/e/1, John Stuart, St. James Fort Report in District, July 7, 1823.

Stuart, despite his desire to be free of New Caledonia, was re-appointed as Chief Factor there at the council meeting in July, 1823, so he and Brown were required to pass another year together. "Serious differences and insubordination"<sup>1</sup> were understood to have developed among the gentlemen in the department, and this in itself may account for the absence of a Journal or report from the Babine country for 1823-24 or for the winter of 1824-25. In any case at the council meeting in July, 1824, John Stuart was appointed to the Saskatchewan district. Chief Trader William Connolly was moved from the Lesser Slave Lake district to New Caledonia to share the management of the department with William Brown. (It is worth noting that Brown was not promoted to a Chief Factorship or the sole command of the district.) The seventeenth paragraph of the minutes of council condemned the unrest among the officers in the department and started an investigation into its causes.<sup>2</sup>

No further light can be shed on the affairs of the Babine district before the spring of 1825 save that the returns for 1824 were the best between 1822 and 1825, which might well indicate that the task of transportation in the summer of 1824 was greater than ever.

A letter from the Governor reveals clearly the company's past lack of overall policy and direction west of the mountains. On April 4, 1825, Simpson wrote to Brown from Okanagan, stating that with the help of some of the gentlemen during the winter, he had prepared a scheme for remodelling and extending the business on the west side of the mountains. He added that

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.S., III, Minutes of Council, p. 75, July, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 75-6.



he rejoiced to find that Brown was preparing to take a voyage of discovery towards the coast, and said that it was most important that a friendly understanding be reached with the natives as:

tis probable the Committee will direct that Posts be settled both in the interior and on the coast as far north as the British territorial rights extend which we suppose to be to or about Latitude 60, and that a coasting trade will be entered into by shipping in connection with our inland business.<sup>1</sup>

He thereupon expressed his great concern for Brown's success in this most important mission.

The date of this letter tends to contradict Harold Innis' simple statement that while the trade east of the Rockies was being nurtured back to health, a vigorous policy of expansion was followed in the west because of the need to counter Russian and American expansion.<sup>2</sup> It shows that previous orders to extend trade in that direction had been largely pious hopes, and that previously Simpson himself had taken no real interest in them. The Governor's reference to 60° N. Latitude as the probable limit of the coast as well as the interior, is puzzling, for it suggests that Simpson was unaware of the Anglo-Russian negotiations that had occurred in March and again in August of the year before.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps it was but a general statement, meaning a limit of 60° N. Latitude inland and possible coastal trading rights to 60°. But by that date he should have been in little doubt as to the firm Russian demands for a southern boundary at 55°

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M3 and 3M4, D4/5, Governor Simpson to William Brown, April 4, 1825.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.S., III, p. lxiv.

<sup>3</sup>Simpson did leave York Factory before the autumn supply vessel and it is possible though unlikely that he had received no dispatches from London before April, 1825.

N. Latitude. The enthusiasm of his letter might have been a reflection of the foreign office's false optimism of June and July, 1824.

Simpson's report to the Governor and Committee of August 31, 1825, contained another surprising statement. In referring to Brown's proposed expedition, he stated that it could not be far to the coast, where from Indian reports he would find an establishment of white men, whom Simpson was sure were Russian.<sup>1</sup> This is a belief Brown did not share, nor is it to be believed that the foreign office did so. Yet it seems to have been a consistent misapprehension on the Governor's part, for a year earlier on August 10, 1824, he wrote that Fort Kilmaurs could not be far removed from "some of the Russian settlements on the coast".<sup>2</sup>

The dispatch of August, 1825, also contained Simpson's own explanation of the failure to extend the trade in New Caledonia, which he considered a great field for expansion. He stated that expansion was impossible while it continued to be supplied from York department, as nearly the whole year was occupied with the problems of transportation. The fruit of Simpson's winter west of the Rockies, is apparent in his concluding words on the subject:

The unceasing laborious duties of the people added to the privations to which they were exposed from the poverty of the country in the means of living rendered the service the most painful and harassing in North America and operated as a check to enterprise and exertion.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., August 31, 1825.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., August 10, 1824. It is probable that the Governor and Committee were wise enough not to forward Simpson's view on this matter to the foreign office.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M43, D4/88, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., September 1, 1825. N.B.: This is the same letter as the one found in A12/1, Reel 195, dated August 31, 1825.

Brown's long awaited expedition of the summer of 1825 was abandoned after repeated postponements throughout the summer, because Brown suffered an acute attack of rheumatism. He refused to allow the party to go off under the command of his subordinates Messrs. Yale, Pambrun and Ross which greatly irritated William Connolly,<sup>1</sup> and brought the censure of the council upon both Connolly and Brown.<sup>2</sup> In the spring of 1826, probably goaded by McLoughlin's urgent appeal to the officers of New Caledonia for information on the easiest and the safest communication between their country and the sea coast,<sup>3</sup> Brown descended the Skeena River to its forks and there obtained definite reports of the navigability of the stream.<sup>4</sup> During that season a post was established north of 56° N. Latitude on Bear Lake from which the Skeena flows.

In 1826 also the supply route for the department was once again directed toward the Columbia, and this practical alliance made formal by the combination of the New Caledonia and the Columbia departments into one Columbia department comprising all the land west of the Rockies south of the Arctic Ocean. Despite increasing interest in the region the fact remains that the Anglo-Russian treaty of February, 1825, was agreed upon before the company could penetrate to the west of Fort Kilmaurs.

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM224, B/188/b/4, William Connolly to John McLoughlin, November 30, 1825.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.S., III, Minutes of Council, pp. 145-146, June, 1826.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM224, B/188/b/4, John McLoughlin to the Officers of New Caledonia, October 12, 1825.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM776, B/11/e/2, William Brown, Babine - Report on District 1826, April 15, 1826.

ii. The efforts to counter Russian claims north of the Peace River pass are best described in the context of the Mackenzie Basin. This sphere was the third main area of company activity arising from the Russian territorial claims. It was also, with the Columbia and Caledonia departments, the third great frontier district containing large untouched resources of fur.<sup>1</sup> John Galbraith in his treatment of the company's participation in the Anglo-Russian dispute omitted specific reference to this sphere, though he referred to some of the relevant correspondence.<sup>2</sup> Professor Galbraith might well have been correct to do so, for it is impossible to prove definitely whether the explorations undertaken were because of the Russian claims or exclusively due to concerns of the fur trade. This uncertainty is not due to lack of documents. As shall be seen, it arises from the hidden motives behind them.

In September, 1822, John Henry Pelly wrote to George Canning freely setting forth the claims of the company in north-west America. In describing the establishments in New Caledonia, he stated that an extensive trade was carried on with the Indians from 60° N. Latitude to the mouth of the Fraser River and between the Rocky Mountains and the coast.<sup>3</sup> This grandiose claim was followed by the remark that, as the company had posts down the Mackenzie to 66° 30 N. Latitude, and was trading with the Indians to the west of the river, he trusted the government would support the British fur industry there. Such strenuous and

---

<sup>1</sup>A. S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, (London: Thomas Nelson, 1939), p. 705.

<sup>2</sup>Galbraith, op. cit., p. 447, footnotes 32 and 36.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A8/1, Pelly to Canning, September 25, 1822.

imaginative lobbying seems to substantiate the belief of Malcolm-Smith, that one of the company's prime purposes in the treaty was to protect her Mackenzie River trade.<sup>1</sup>

During the winter of 1822-23 Governor Simpson journeyed to the Athabasca district and while there directed his interest particularly to the affairs of the Mackenzie River district, which he recognized as offering the greatest field for profitable expansion.<sup>2</sup> He arranged to have a clerk in the district, Mr. John M. McLeod, take a small party into the country to the west in the summer of 1823.<sup>3</sup>

This was also the season in which he composed his instructions to Peter Warren Dease to investigate the country north of New Caledonia in which the Finlay River took its rise. In September, 1823, he revealed to Colville that in fact he had considered this venture for the past two years, but had not succeeded in procuring any one to undertake it.<sup>4</sup> Simpson believed that there was a river running parallel to the Mackenzie on the west side of the mountains, and he wished Dease to ascend the Finlay to its source, portage to Bear Lake and follow this river. His motives for planning such an exploration are not clear. In his introduction to Black's Journal, Raymond Patterson mentioned that a desire to impress the government with the company's zeal in exploring and securing the continent for Great Britain played some part, as did the need to forestall Russian penetration.

---

<sup>1</sup>E. F. Malcolm-Smith, The Life of Stratford Canning, (London: Ernest Benn, 1933), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>FT&E, p. 204, Simpson to A. Colville, September 8, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 203.



But both he and Rich attributed the genesis of the expedition to Simpson's conviction that the exhausted state of the Athabasca district demanded the extension of trade into unexplored areas.<sup>1</sup>

However, the instructions did not reach Dease until he felt it was too late for him to complete the whole journey that season, so he did not embark.<sup>2</sup> At the council meeting in July, 1823, Simpson prevailed upon the reluctant veterans of the old Hudson's Bay Company to admit as officers Peter Skene Ogden and Samuel Black, notorious hell-raisers of the days of strife. Simpson was certain that he could keep them out of harm's way. Ogden, he dispatched to the Columbia, a nest of Nor'Westers, to assist in preparing the Snake River expeditions. Samuel Black had no sooner been admitted than he was given charge of the expedition up the Finlay planned for the next year.<sup>3</sup>

In London Nicholas Garry was labouring over the draft of lengthy epistle which might well have startled the Governor. Garry was attempting to convince John Lock of the East India Company of the wisdom of removing the restrictions that their monopoly in the Canton market imposed on the profitable disposal of British furs there. He based his argument on the premise that the real reason Russia imposed prohibitive duties on the importation of beaver and otter from England in 1822, was to give the Russian American Company a chance to establish itself as a major supplier of land

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.S., XVIII, p. xlviiii; see also, Rich, op. cit., II, p. 572.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.S., XVIII, p. L.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. L.

fur. The market in question was not of course the domestic Russian market but the one in northern China, to which the Russians had transported most of the fur they used to import from England. Garry stated that the Russian restrictions were a further proof that there was a real demand for land fur in China, and he entreated the East India Company to come to an agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company which would be of profit to them both, and preserve the Pacific fur trade from the Americans and Russians.

To impress Mr. Lock with the interest and determination with which the Russians were pursuing land fur and thereby to heighten the scent of profit, Garry cleverly portrayed the Russian government's exploratory activity in the area as an expansionist scheme at the behest of the Russian American Company.<sup>1</sup> He felt free therefore to tell Lock of an expedition sent through Behring Strait to the mouth of the McKenzie River in order to take possession of all the country between the Rocky Mountains and the coast.<sup>2</sup> In an undated letter of the same month, Garry expanded further on the scope of Russian ambitions, and the speed and system with which they were being pursued! He again cited Kotzebue's voyage into the Arctic Ocean, referred to Russian plans to purchase California to serve as a supply depot and naval dockyard, and conjured the image of a vast Pacific

---

<sup>1</sup>See below Chapter IV, part ii. The Russian company did participate in this activity, but the purpose was solely one of discovery and navigation.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 48, A7/1, Nicholas Garry to John Lock, July 15, 1823. Galbraith claimed in a reference to this letter that it was not sent, and assumes that a similar letter, of the same month, but no exact date, was dispatched. However, as the undated letter ends suddenly in mid course, it may be that it was a draft copy and the letter of July 15 was the one, if any, actually sent. It is noticeably more moderate in the manner of its exposition.

empire endangering all British interests and none so much as the East India Company.<sup>1</sup>

Garry's tale is given substance by the fact that in 1823 the Russian historian, Vassili Berg, in a work on the north Pacific, stated that because of the exhaustion of the sea otter the Russian American Company must turn to an exploitation of land fur in the interior of America.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that Garry had seen a copy of this sent by one of their Russian agents. Correspondence from Messrs. J. Thompson and T. Bonar was received at that time. Galbraith found Berg's work in the Hudson's Bay Company records.

However, there are a number of reasons for discounting Garry's description of this Russian threat. He was clearly trying to build an argument that would convince the East India Company to give the Hudson's Bay Company a privileged position in the China trade; an argument that would gain greatly from the implication of Russian interest in the area. It is also true that in the spring of 1823 the voyage entrusted to Kotzebue was changed from one of scientific discovery into the Arctic Ocean to one of patrol duty on the north-west coast. If the company had received a copy of Berg's history it is also possible that they knew of Kotzebue's change of plans and the end of the Russian threat to the MacKenzie.

The actual nature of the Russian threat in the north-west will be considered below in the fourth chapter, but it was the popular conception of it that influenced the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company, here under

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 48, A7/1, London locked private letter book 1823-24. A few sentences in this document bear striking resemblance to those of Garry's letter of July 15, 1823. See also Reel 48, A7/1, "Considerations of the Rights of the Russians to their Various Settlements on the Coast of the Pacific", no author or date.

<sup>2</sup>Galbraith, *op. cit.*, p. 123.



consideration. L. P. Kirwan gave credence to the threat in his history of polar exploration, and produced contemporary evidence to show that it was also feared in England in the 1820's.<sup>1</sup> He stated that a desire to offset Russian plans was a factor that influenced the Admiralty Board to make funds and ships available for Arctic exploration.<sup>2</sup>

It is hard to be certain that such motives were not present in Governor Simpson's mind when he planned Black's expedition. In September, 1823, Simpson sent off a letter to the committee from York Factory informing them of Mr. Black's proposed journey, to be undertaken the following summer. He spoke of the unique prospects for extension of trade in the Mackenzie district, and added that ample men and goods had been furnished for that purpose.<sup>3</sup> But in the fifth paragraph he spoke of another expedition which he considered to be of greater geographical importance and of more interest to the English public, planned for the west coast of Hudson's Bay north of Churchill.<sup>4</sup> This seems to indicate that in the fall of 1823 Simpson did not share Nicholas Garry's anticipation of a Russian coup on the Mackenzie.

---

<sup>1</sup>L. P. Kirwan, The White Road: A Survey of Polar Exploration, (London: Hollis & Carter, 1959), p. 77. See below Chapter IV, part ii. See also The Quarterly Review, Vol. XVII, No. 35, (1818), p. 219. In this article John Barrow stated that the Russians had been considering the value of a north-west passage for some time, and that it would be mortifying if they were the first to discover one successfully. See also ibid., Vol. XXVI, No. 52 (1822), p. 343. This article which may have again been the work of John Barrow recounted the growth of Russian arctic exploration with particular mention of the Vasilev expedition of 1818-21. Though the article condemned Russia for an imperialistic attempt towards the Mackenzie valley, it was not optimistic of Vasilev's chances of success in the expedition.

<sup>2</sup>Kirwan, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A/12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., September 8, 1823.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

However, Captain John Franklin was not one to let the Russian menace pass unnoticed. At the end of November after scarcely three months of marriage to the poetess Eleanor Porden,<sup>1</sup> he wrote to John Barrow offering himself as leader of an expedition by land to the mouth of the Mackenzie and from thence westward around the Alaska coast to Kotzebue's Sound. He stated that such an expedition would in no way be replaced by the expedition Captain Parry proposed to lead the following spring to seek the north-west passage. To make his point he emphasized that his expedition would be the most efficient way of preventing the encroachments of Russia into the rich fur country of the Mackenzie. Like Garry more than four months before, he made free use of the threat proposed by Kotzebue's expedition. He referred as well, to letters to Barrow from Admiral Krusenstern which said freely to admit Russia's desires to increase her fur trade and empire in north-western America.<sup>2</sup>

Rumours of Russian danger to the Mackenzie seem to have spread rapidly, for three days after Franklin's letter to Barrow, John Henry Pelly also wrote to him on that subject. He approved of the government's intention to send a party along the north coast by land, and suggested that it proceed down the Mackenzie and then to the west, as it might be the means of preventing a claim to that part of the continent by Russia. It is quite possible that Pelly sincerely desired a government party to protect British claims to the region. The agreement of time and subject

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard J. Cyriax, Sir John Franklin's Last Arctic Expedition, (London: Methuen, 1939), p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 50, A8/1, Captain John Franklin to John Barrow, November 26, 1823. Franklin also mentioned his pleasure that Krusenstern himself recommended the course which he proposed!

between Pelly's note and Franklin's, suggest that Franklin may have recruited the former as a spokesman. Pelly's anxiety may be indicated in a letter he wrote to Canning a few months later just before Britain began negotiations with the Russians.<sup>1</sup> The boundary he proposed, deprived the Russians of all mainland south of the Lynn canal, but thereupon proceeded north till it met the great mountain range dividing the waters, and followed its crests to the Arctic Ocean. As the range was known to terminate not far from the Mackenzie's mouth, it would seem that Pelly feared the company was being hard pressed by the Russians in that region.

This fear may have been transmitted to Governor Simpson; it would at least account for an odd discrepancy which occurred in Samuel Black's instructions between September, 1823, and July, 1824. In September, 1823, Black merely was instructed to ascend the Finlay to its source and proceed in a north or north-westerly direction as far as was practicable, and thereupon to re-cross the mountains so as to fall back to the Mackenzie River.<sup>2</sup> On July 25th, 1824, of that month Simpson wrote and ordered Black to regard the Frozen Ocean as the limit of his explorations. He stated that he expected Black to beat the Franklin expedition to the arctic regions.<sup>3</sup>

However, in the Governor's report to the committee the following month he mentioned that the Franklin expedition would be of great political and commercial advantage.<sup>4</sup> Though he dealt with Black's trip at considerable

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A8/1, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, January 8, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M42, D4/86, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., September 8, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M43, D4/87, Minutes of Council, July, 1824. See also H.B.S., XVIII, p. liii. It is to be noted that Black had departed before receiving these instructions.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., August 10, 1824.

length, Simpson appeared only to be concerned with the potential value of the furs.<sup>1</sup> The final authority on this confusing matter is Black's own record of his trip. In it he revealed no interest in descending towards the coastal regions, in the Russian sphere, and stated clearly that his principal motive was to discover beaver.<sup>2</sup> When Simpson was reporting the outcome of the expedition to the committee, he made no mention of important new geographical knowledge, or even of Black's failure to reach the Arctic. He merely observed that the country had proved barren and unproductive, and would not be employed further.<sup>3</sup>

With his lengthy report of August, 1824, the Governor forwarded the Journal of John M. McLeod's "Jaunt of Discovery", westward from the Mackenzie into the Nahanni country in the summer of 1823. He mentioned to the committee that its purpose had been to ascertain the country's resources and the feasibility of extending trade there. McLeod's Journal does not seem to have survived, though A. S. Morton gave a brief description of his progress.<sup>4</sup> Raymond Patterson, the modern voyageur through the country, calculated that McLeod had successfully crossed the Mackenzie Mountains.<sup>5</sup> Simpson judged from the Journal that the difficult terrain would prevent the opening of an establishment in the area, though he hoped relations with the more distant tribes could be profitably extended. Obviously he saw nothing of international significance in the expedition.

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.S., XVIII, p. liv.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., August 17, 1824, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., August 31, 1825.

<sup>4</sup>A. S. Morton, op. cit., pp. 705-6.

<sup>5</sup>R. M. Patterson, "Land River Voyage", The Beaver, Outfit 285 (Spring, 1955), p. 26.

It may well be as the intertribal Indian unrest that the Mackenzie district had experienced in 1823-24, died down and the returns showed increasing promise, the company's anxieties just evaporated naturally. The department was certainly solidly established with posts down the Mackenzie nearly to the Arctic Circle and increasing intercourse with the territory on its flanks. Then too by the fall of 1824 all fear that Captain Kotzebue would suddenly appear before Fort Good Hope in a gun boat, must have been relieved by news of his detour.

Interest in the success of Captain Franklin's expedition remained high. But this was because of personal friendships for a group of men with which the company's officers had been closely connected along its route. Peter Warren Dease accompanied Franklin as an experienced person with natives, dependable in any difficult situation. Simpson, who judged that Captain Black's ambition was such that he feared an attempt on Franklin's life, begged Franklin to let Dease attend his person closely.<sup>1</sup> However, as with the Russians on the Mackenzie, this threat failed to materialize and the department continued to pursue quietly its determined search for skins.

In assessing the effect on the Anglo-Russian negotiations of this activity in north-western America, one cannot neglect the sequence of the events. By the end of March, 1824, Charles Bagot, the British minister at St. Petersburg, had become fully aware of the Russian determination to win a territorial boundary settlement at 55° S. Latitude.<sup>2</sup> The news of the

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M4, D4/5, Governor Simpson to Captain Franklin, July 10, 1825. Franklin's expedition was expected to remove the last evidence of factiousness among the Mackenzie River tribes: possibly another reason for the inclusion of Dease.

<sup>2</sup>National Archives of Canada, Bagot Papers, Vol. XXIII, Charles Bagot to George Canning, March 29, 1824.

final Russian demands reached England by the middle of April. Almost immediately the Hudson's Bay Company must have appraised of the fact that Russia no longer advanced claims south of 55° N. Latitude. Such information should have been available to the council, meeting at York Factory in July. Therefore it appears that the activities of the summer and fall of 1824 were the last that could have been planned under the threat of Russian claims to 51° N. Latitude. By that time little expansion had been undertaken. The preliminary examination of the coast by the William and Anne was still a year off. William Brown had yet made no significant advance down the Skeena. Samuel Black was only just setting off up the Peace River for the upper Finlay country. Franklin's expedition along the coast west of the Mackenzie, was still in the planning stage. The only voyage that had been accomplished towards the Russian country was John McLeod's; the only one that seems not to have been in the least interested in Russian claims. Even then Simpson did not forward McLeod's Journals to London until August, 1824.

The Hudson's Bay Company did not actively challenge the Russians when their claims seemed to extend right down to Vancouver Island, and there is no evidence that the company even contemplated efforts to counter the Russian position north of 55° N. Latitude, despite their demands to the foreign office.<sup>1</sup>

If it is asked whether the normal expansion of the company's trade contributed to Britain's position in the Anglo-Russian negotiations, again the answer is largely in the negative. The coastal trade was not begun

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A8/1, J. H. Pelly to G. Canning, January 16 (24), 1824.

until 1825, and then most timidly. After the establishment of Fort Kilmaurs in 1822, New Caledonia did not expand to the north-west until 1826. In the Mackenzie the only notable exploration was McLeod's, the results of which were not known till the fall of 1824. They were in any case of little significance compared to the travels he and Robert Campbell undertook in the following decade. Of all the expeditions for fur trade or empire Samuel Black's might have made the greatest impact on the Russian negotiations. But Black had not been instructed to descend to the coast, and what is more, news of his discoveries could not have reached Europe until months after the treaty had been signed.

While it cannot be denied that whatever claims Great Britain had in north-western America were due to the Hudson's Bay Company, it is apparent that the company made no active attempt to keep the Russians off the continent south of 60° N. Latitude. Though a much stronger commercial enterprise than its Russian counterpart, the Hudson's Bay Company was prepared like them, to rely on the strength of its lobby and the skill of its government's negotiators!

---

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix A.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE RUSSIAN AMERICAN COMPANY: PATTERNS OF TRADE AND RELATIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT

The Alaskan headquarters of the Russian American Company were sixty-five miles from the mainland on an island nearly one thousand miles north of Fort George. Governor Simpson, who visited it in 1842, stated that the establishment at Sitka possessed "an air or appearance of grandeur and consequence which does not become, and is not at all suitable, to an Indian Trading Post".<sup>1</sup> But Sitka had also to serve as the bastion of Russia's American empire. The prime question of this chapter is whether the Russian American Company was merely a monopolistic trading enterprise or really a mask for imperial expansionist designs. A brief investigation of the nature of the company's trade will give fuller perspective to the problem.

By 1819, after its first twenty years, the Russian American Company had established seven permanent posts on the islands in the north Pacific and ten permanent stations on the continental coast.<sup>2</sup> These were strung out along the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, on Kodiak Island, and along the shore of the Gulf of Alaska, with the headquarters at Sitka and with the isolated Ross settlement thirty miles from San Francisco Bay on the

---

<sup>1</sup>Galbraith, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>S. B. Okun, The Russian American Company, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 55; see also, The Bancroft Library, Russian America, reel p-K-3, Captain V. M. Golovnin, Review of the Russian Colonies in Russian America, Part II of material for the History of the Russian Settlements on the shores of the Eastern Ocean, (1861), p. 5.



coast of California. With the exception of Ross, a predominantly agricultural operation, the other posts were bases for the hunting of furs.

Like the Hudson's Bay Company, the Russian company used natives to do its hunting. The stoical Eskimos of the Aleutian Islands served in a modified form of slavery; the women were utilized to pick berries, to fish, and some to live with the Russian hunters, while the men were herded to sea in fleets of kayaks to chase the sea otter.<sup>1</sup> In theory the Aleuts received a small sum for each of the precious skins, but in practice this was uncertain, and they lived in acute scarcity.<sup>2</sup>

When, in 1804, Governor Baranov was faced with diminishing numbers of sea otters in the Gulf of Alaska, accompanied by a serious shortage of supplies, he initiated the arrangement of lending the Aleuts to Yankee traders to hunt otter off the Oregon and California coasts in return for a share of the profits.<sup>3</sup> Such manipulation of human beings in the fur trade was not far removed from the traditional practice in Siberia of extorting an annual tribute of fur from the native tribes. But the Russian American Company inherited the Aleuts from the numerous private

---

<sup>1</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 203. As a Marxist historian, Okun describes the Russian American Company's exploitation of natives in the harshest light.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 202; see also, Russian America, reel P-K-3, Captain Golovnin, Review of the Russian Colonies in Russian America by Captain Golovnin, Part II of material for the History of the Russian Settlements on the shores of the Eastern Ocean, (St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Marine Ministry, 1861), pp. 139-143; and also, Russian America, reel P-K-3 Captain A. Lazareff, Extracts from the Description of a Voyage around the World by Captain Lazareff on the sloop Ladoga 1822-24, Part 4, Section 4 of materials for the History of Russian Settlements on the shores of the Eastern Ocean, (1861), pp. 98-99; and also Tompkins, "After Behring: Mapping the Pacific", pp. 4-5. Tompkins gives a vivid description of the system of using hostages to ensure total obedience.

<sup>3</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-1. Tikmenev, Historical Review of the Origins of the Russian American Company and its Doings up to the Present Time, Trans. Ivan Petrov, (1861), p. 101.

concerns that preceded it, and thus it was natural that it would adopt this most economical method of securing skins. The large establishments of dependents in the colonies, both Russian Aleutian and Creole, were also a source of profit for the company. Wages were paid in coupons redeemable only at the company's stores, where the prices were raised to take advantage of a captive demand. In 1824 the internal trade at Sitka amounted to 155,000 rubles; by 1825 it reached 190,000 rubles.<sup>1</sup>

The Aleuts were not the only natives on the coast however, for in the Alexander Archipelago were found the notorious Tlingit tribes, referred to by the Russians as the "Koloshi". They were also a sea-going people, skilled at hunting the sea otter. The Koloshi were well armed through trade with American trading vessels, and often pirated the timorous Aleuts as they scoured the seas in their skin craft for the sea otters. Governor Muraviev wrote in 1823 that the depredations of the Koloshi that year had rendered all but the fur seal hunt a failure. He added that, as the Koloshi cured the otter skins themselves, it would be more economical for the company to buy the skins from them, rather than to hunt otter themselves; but that this was impossible as they were unable to give the Indians the goods for which they usually sold their furs.<sup>2</sup>

For this reason the company depended on its own 'employees' to hunt its fur, though occasionally it attempted, for strategic reasons, to out-price the American shippers for the trade of the Koloshi.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-3, K. Khlebnikov, Letters of K. Khlebnikov on America, Part III of material for the History of the Russian Settlement on the shores of the Eastern Ocean, (St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Navy, 1861), p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 208; see also Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 241.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 351.

The sea otter for many years was the backbone of the Russian trade, because it fetched up to 124 rubles (approximately \$25.00) in trade at Kiakhta.<sup>1</sup> Second to it in importance was the fur seal which was also hunted by the Aleuts, either from their Bidarkas or on the rocky shores. Though not one-tenth the value of the sea otter, several hundred thousand were caught each year.

The company also obtained a number of land furs, though by primitive methods. It employed Russian hunters, usually shanghaied from Okhotsk for at least a seven-year term. Sables were trapped, land otter, lynx, fox, wolverine, mink and beaver were shot or holed with dogs.<sup>2</sup> The beaver were procured mostly from Indians in the Gulf of Kenai, who, it was said, proceeded inland in the autumn as far as 200 or 300 versts "to distant prairies" to trap them.<sup>3</sup>

Once caught, the furs had to undergo a lengthy journey to be converted into cash returns. The only immediate market, one whose legality was periodically denied, was the trading of skins to foreign traders in return for supplies, trading goods and sometimes the vessel itself. About 20% of the furs from the colonies were exchanged for goods and supplies with foreign merchants.<sup>4</sup> Often these transactions were arranged so that the foreign traders assumed the company's transportation obligations by delivering supplies and skins across the north Pacific to Okhotsk and Kamchatka.

---

<sup>1</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

The periodic round-the-world exploratory and supply expeditions to the company's territories, often returned to Kronstadt laden with furs for the European, Russian, Constantinople and probably the Chinese markets.<sup>1</sup> Russia's exclusion from the great trading centre of Canton, the most logical emporium for Russian furs, compelled it to travel roundabout routes to reach the Chinese market. Like the Hudson's Bay Company, it was forced to use American intermediaries when possible. In 1806-7 Rezanov had attempted and failed to win entry to Nagasaki, and in 1814 Baranov tried to establish a market for fur in Manila and also failed, due to lack of business houses and facilities for the exchange of goods.<sup>2</sup>

The route which bore more than half of the company's peltry was the arduous one through Siberia.<sup>3</sup> From Sitka and Kodiak the furs were conveyed by ship to Okhotsk. From there they were carried largely by pack train or sledge, to a mushrooming village on the Chinese border south of Lake Baikal.<sup>4</sup> Kiakhta was the only place that the Chinese Emperor allowed the Russians to trade, and so while the Americans could ship their furs swiftly to the China market, the Russians, forbidden access to Canton, had to spend many months hauling the furs into the heart of Siberia, over

---

<sup>1</sup>H. H. Bancroft, History of Alaska 1730-1885, (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1886), p. 527. He states the "Kutusov" returned to St. Petersburg in 1822 with a cargo valued at over 1,000,000 rubles; see also Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-4, K. Khlebnikoff, Biography of Alexander Andrievitch Baranov, Governor of the Russian Colonies in America, (St. Petersburg: Navy Printing Office, 1835), trans. Ivan Petroff, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., reel 48, A7/1, Nicholas Garry to John Lock, N.D. (possibly July, 1823). Garry describes the route: from Petropavlovsk 1,000 versts across the sea to Okhotsk then 1,200 versts to Yakutsk then 2,800 versts to Irkutsk and 498 versts to Kiakhta. From there the furs usually went 1,528 versts to Canton. The distance from Petrapavlovsk to Canton by land was 8,280 versts.

1,000 miles from Canton.<sup>1</sup> At Kiakhta during the peak season from November to March, the furs were exchanged for teas, silks and other Chinese merchandise; but still no cash returns were secured by the Russian American Company.<sup>2</sup> The Chinese goods were then shipped 480 miles to Irkutsk, and on 1,720 miles to Tobolsk, and from there 1,370 miles to the great August fair at Nishney Novogorod, from which the remainder passed 750 miles to St. Petersburg.<sup>3</sup> Though the Chinese demand for furs at Kiakhta was great enough to ensure a high evaluation of the skins, transportation costs were staggering.

The vast distances to be covered created a formidable problem for the supply of goods as well as the marketing of produce. There were three means by which the colonies were supplied. The traditional route was from St. Petersburg overland to Okhotsk, 4,000 miles as the crow flies and on, more than 2,500 miles, to Sitka. Tikmenev refers briefly to cannon for fortifications and slips and anchors being hauled 1,000 versts on Yakout pack horses from the Lena River to the ocean.<sup>4</sup> The time, effort and expense involved in this route are readily apparent. Its uncertainty was heightened by the treachery of navigation between Okhotsk and Sitka, and by the inadequacy of the company's seamen and their vessels. Thus the

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to the Governor and Committee, March 10, 1825, paragraph 44. George Simpson concluded that with such a route it would be impossible for the Russians to compete with the Hudson's Bay Company in the Chinese market.

<sup>2</sup>The evidence of William Tate, Third Report of the Select Committee Appointed to consider of the Means of Improving and Maintaining the Foreign Trade of the Country, (1821), p. 363.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 363; see also Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>4</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 104; see also Mairin Mitchell, The Maritime History of Russia 848-1948, (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1949), p. 2378. Mitchell quotes an officer of the Russian American Company that 14,000-15,000 pack horses were required to carry provisions to the Russian settlements on the Pacific.

company seems to have welcomed the idea of regular voyages around the world, which could bring cheap supplies to the colonies in less than a year's time. This route, however, was subject to interference by foreign powers in time of war, and demanded a heavy capital outlay with a large element of risk, rendering impossible a regular annual expedition.<sup>1</sup>

The expense and the danger of such voyages were heightened by the directors of the company who attempted to profit by outfitting the vessels themselves.<sup>2</sup> The voyages were under the immediate control of the management of the company, which could, as it did in 1823, state that the allowance for supplies had been used in the previous year, and decide to send no supplies the following year.<sup>3</sup>

It was this kind of management that drove the colonial governor to make use of the foreign trading vessels for supplies. They had several advantages over the other two channels of supply: first, they were regularly in the vicinity of the colonies, second, the diversity and quality of their merchandise was not equalled by the goods sent from Russia, and third their supplies of food were often a necessity. Lastly, the cost of their merchandise was at least half that of the supplies sent out from Russia.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 71. He cites the operations of V. Kramer in regard to the outfitting of the "Yelizaveta" in 1822 or 1823.

<sup>3</sup>Bancroft, op. cit., p. 537; see also Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 370.

<sup>4</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-3, Captain V. M. Golovnin, Review of the Russian Colonies in Russian America, Part II of Material for the History of the Russian Settlements on the shores of the Eastern Ocean, (St. Petersburg, 1861), p. 163.

It was the unceasing ambition of the colonial governors that the company become self-sufficient in the Pacific Ocean. This goal was thwarted by the fact that the fertile Amur River valley had been lost to the Chinese by the treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689.<sup>1</sup> This river was the key to Russian exploitation of the Pacific, as an access to the China market, as an easier supply route to Europe and specifically as an agricultural base to supply the north Pacific colonies. There were only three alternatives to the Amur as bases of supply: the Columbia, California and the Sandwich Islands. Lewis and Clarke had arrived at the Columbia shortly before Rezanov was driven past the seething waters at its mouth in 1806. Fort Ross was established on the California coast in 1811, and eventually helped to supply Sitka for many years. But the shortage of trained personnel, and the growing opposition of the Mexicans as well as the United States, induced the Russian government to forbid the necessary expansion there for largely diplomatic reasons.<sup>2</sup> The attempt to establish a foothold on the northern Hawaiian Islands in 1816 failed, initially due to the over-exertions of the company's emissary Dr. Sheffer, and thereafter because of the government's fear of diplomatic embarrassment.

The traditional lack of initiative of Russia's marine, both commercial and military, gave the company no basis on which to establish efficient sea transportation links. The quality of officers and ships depended on rarely found foreign experience. As a result the company

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert J. Kerner, Russian Expansion to America: Its bibliographical foundations, Bibliographical Society of America Papers, Vol. 25, pp. 111-112.

<sup>2</sup>C. A. Manning, Russian Influence on Early America, (New York: Publishers, 1953), p. 96.

lost a great number of vessels on the sea between Okhotsk and Sitka, at the cost of untold supplies, furs and promising personnel.<sup>1</sup> In the end Governor Baranov and Governor Muraviev were forced to depend on the New England traders. Even when the supplies were relatively plentiful, from 1818 to 1822, the company was forced to purchase more than 300,000 rubles worth of goods from English or American ships.<sup>2</sup>

Possibly the most important determinant of the company's trading pattern was the decimation of the sea otter. In the years preceding the formation of the monopoly, the animals were hunted with abandon along the Aleutians and around Kodiak Island and the Gulf of Kenai. As Governor of the new concern, Baranov undertook to extend the hunting operations to virgin territory.<sup>3</sup> Peak returns were attained in 1805 and 1806 with the early exploitation of the Alexander Archipelago.<sup>4</sup> With the foreign competition, by the 1820's, the archipelago produced only a few hundred skins

---

<sup>1</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., pp. 103 and 236. He states that voyages from Okhotsk to the colonies were unduly long and hazardous for want of better sailors and navigation. See also Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 224-225. Mitchell quotes several contemporary sources which testify to the poor quality of the company's seamanship in the north Pacific. He states that there were instances of a vessel taking more than three years to cross from Kodiak to Okhotsk.

<sup>2</sup>Bancroft, op. cit., p. 538.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 72. He records that in 1795 Baranov complained of foreign competition and feared the establishment of foreign ports between the Gulf of Kenai and Nootka, and resolved to form a settlement on that coast at the first opportunity. See also, Russian America, reel P-K-3, K. Khlebnikoff, Letters of K. Khlebnikoff on America, Part III of Material for the History of the Russian Settlements on the shores of the Eastern Ocean, (1861), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Khlebnikoff, op. cit., p. 70. He mentions that in 1805 the Americans obtained 8,200 sea otter and the Russian American Company 4,628.



a year.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1804, Baranov sent off his Aleuts on expeditions to the California shore. There for awhile the sea otter were more plentiful, though the southern waters did not produce so valuable a pelt.<sup>2</sup> By the time of the treaty negotiations the otter were no longer the mainstay of the trade. The herds of fur seal had also diminished, though they replaced the sea otter as the most important factor in trade. In 1808 the company placed a hunting limit at 40,000 seal per year.<sup>3</sup> During the years Russia and the European powers were occupied with the Napoleonic wars, American vessels continued to exhaust the fur resources of the north-west coast. By the 1820's it had become obvious that the trade in land furs should be expanded to provide additional incentive for the Chinese to barter at Kiakhta. In view of the plans to augment the fur trade with furs from the interior of North America, it is necessary to study the relationship between the trade of the Russian American Company and the aggressive designs of the Russian government, as well as the administrative links between them.

Two Soviet works in this sphere which are available in English translation have presented the company as the tool of the government. M. A. Sergeyev in his introduction to Russian Voyages Round the World stated that the government formed a strong monopoly in order to expand

---

<sup>1</sup>S. R. Tompkins, Alaska, p. 134; see also Bancroft, op. cit., p. 540; and Khlebnikoff, op. cit., p. 12. He states that from 1815 to 1818 only 108 sea otter were purchased from the Koloshi.

<sup>2</sup>Khlebnikoff, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 244.

its holdings in the north Pacific and to withstand the foreign competition prefigured by Vancouver's voyage.<sup>1</sup> S. B. Okun stated in his well-documented study of the Russian American Company that from its birth, the company was "controlled and directed" by the government.<sup>2</sup> It is not clear how Okun reached this conclusion in the light of his description of the Shelikov's eager courtship of Count P. A. Pahlen, one of the most influential courtiers with the unstable Emperor Paul,<sup>3</sup> in order to win for their company the highest goal of capitalist enterprise - a state monopoly.

The formation of the company was, in fact, a coup by a highly organized business group. But Alexander I soon came to the throne, and his personal interest in the concern coincided with its gradual absorption by the state. In Article 12 of the charter of 1799, the position of "Protector" of the company was established and was filled by N. P. Rezanov who was soon promoted to be Court Chancellor to Tsar Alexander.<sup>4</sup> Initially the Tsar bestowed his favour on the operation by investing 10,000 rubles to create public confidence, and thereafter he approved the granting of several large loans on the Imperial Bank.<sup>5</sup> In 1804, a provisional committee with powers equal to the General Assembly of Stockholders was established to consider matters of political delicacy in the company's affairs.<sup>6</sup> Its three members were to be stockholders; two chosen

---

<sup>1</sup>N. Nozikov, Russian Voyages Round the World, ed. M. A. Sergeyev, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1944), pp. viii-ix.

<sup>2</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-44.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>5</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-4, Historical Review of the Russian American Company from 1799-1863, trans. Ivan Petroff. Compiled by the Department of Imperial Domains, n.d., p. 5.

<sup>6</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 95.

by the company's directors and one appointed by the Minister of the Interior.<sup>1</sup> The merchants on the board blindly agreed to the formation of this body, and its positions were duly given to the Minister of the Navy, N. S. Mordvinov, the Assistant Minister of the Interior, Count P. H. Stroganov and an important official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Privy Councillor I. A. Weidemeyer.<sup>2</sup>

The 'Provisional' Committee of 1804 was the beginning of what Okun described as the "transformation of the company from a commercial organization into a direct agency of the Crown".<sup>3</sup>

In September, 1811, the Minister of the Interior suggested to the Tsar that the government should maintain much closer supervision of the company. The Tsar replied with a ukase (dated December 15, 1811) stating that it should be the duty of the Minister of the Interior to keep in the closest touch with the company's enterprises, and to demand of its administrator detailed information of all their transactions, since the company was of great importance to the country at large.<sup>4</sup>

During the company's first decade the nobility in the governing board began to eliminate those of merchant class from the important posts

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>2</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-6, Report of the Committee on Organization of the Russian American Colonies, trans. Ivan Petroff, (St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Department of Foreign Commerce, 1863), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>4</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 241; see also Okun, op. cit., p. 98.

in the administration.<sup>1</sup> The directors were dominated by nobility of the capital city, who thought first of their own profit, and knew or cared little for the maintenance of the trade in the north Pacific colonies.<sup>2</sup> This kind of leadership led to Kozodaviev's memorandum of September, 1811 and control by the Ministry of Interior. Shortly afterwards, in October, 1813, the special committee on political matters was transformed into a permanent council.<sup>3</sup> Despite regulations that one of the three members be changed each year, government appointees from related departments always dominated the body.<sup>4</sup> For a time the two pincers of government political and financial control did not apply sufficient pressure to change the company's 'method' of operations.

In the north Pacific Baranov was still more concerned with the survival of the colonies than their profit. In the spring of 1807, only the timely arrival of an American trader, Captain Winship, prevented a major attack by the Koloshi on Sitka, which might well have destroyed the establishment.<sup>5</sup> Shortly after Rezanov's death the directors wrote Baranov

---

<sup>1</sup>Manning, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>This general condemnation is substantiated by Okun who devoted part of a chapter to a detailed description of their incompetence and venality. He stated that from 1808 to 1820 the directors approved the expenditure of 2,312,318 rubles on supplying and maintaining the colonies and 4,696,364 rubles on the upkeep of their own office in St. Petersburg! Okun, op. cit., pp. 61-67. It must be admitted that as a Marxist historian, Okun may have been unduly antagonistic to these aristocratic capitalists, yet he was not so toward the merchant capitalists, and fully documented most of the charges he made. Clarence Manning made use of his judgments frequently in his work Russian Influence on Early America.

<sup>3</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>5</sup>Hector Chevigny, Lord of Alaska: Baranov and the Russian Adventure, (New York: The Viking Press, 1942), p. 226.

urging him to speedily implement Rezanov's plans of expansion to the Columbia, California and the Sandwich Islands.<sup>1</sup> However nothing was done to provide the aging Governor with the means of realizing these visions. After the Treaty of Tilsit between France and Russia, the British Navy stood guard to prevent Russian vessels leaving the Baltic, cutting off the most direct connection with the north Pacific. This blockade also prevented the dispatch of a successor to Baranov. In August, 1809, the Governor was forced to deal with a planned insurrection at Sitka which further demoralized him.<sup>2</sup> In the summer of 1810, he was cheered by receiving news that General Koch had been appointed to replace him, only to learn in 1811 that he had been killed on route to Sitka.<sup>3</sup> Then in January, 1813, he received word that another replacement, Borno-  
volokov, had been lost in the wreck of the Neva under Mt. Edgecumbe, almost within sight of Sitka.<sup>4</sup> For six years his personal misfortunes, neightened by the isolation and neglect of the colonies, had driven the Governor deeper into drink and lassitude.<sup>5</sup>

In the winter of 1814, he was further tried, by the presence of Captain Lozarev in the frigate Suvarov. The Captain took a patronizing attitude toward the Governor and disobeyed his orders; he finally sailed away for Russia without warning and without dispatches or mail. It was the charges and countercharges between these two men that finally goaded the directors into preparing an expedition in 1817 under Captain Hagemeister, to report on the administration of the company's colonies, and to

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

replace Governor Baranov. The administration of the colonies was transferred from merchants into the hands of naval officers,<sup>1</sup> so that the government might obtain a more complete control of the company's activities. Though the principal of profit remained the company's fundamental motivation, Hagemeister undertook to give its operations a more 'European' form.<sup>2</sup> Fixed wages (generally 20% lower) replaced the old system of "half shares", but the system of inescapable debt to the company's stores seems only to have grown worse.<sup>3</sup> The change of administration replaced "boisterous immorality and brutality" with "decorum and virtue", but the "vigor and simplicity" were sacrificed.<sup>4</sup> The influx of "near-sighted and precise bureaucrats" seemed to spell the end of the company's visions of a Pacific trading empire.<sup>5</sup>

A temporary palliative was found when Captain Hagemeister decided not to remain at Sitka for a term as governor, and appointed as interim administrator, Baranov's son-in-law Lieutenant Yanovsky. But the directors did not wish to prolong the connection with the much maligned Baranov and in 1821 replaced Yanovsky with Captain N. N. Muraviev who possessed the necessary 'family' lineage.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>4</sup>S. B. Tompkins, Alaska, p. 150. <sup>5</sup>Manning, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>6</sup>Bancroft, op. cit., p. 534. This is the interpretation which Bancroft suggested on this matter. He also implies on p. 539 that Muraviev was replaced by Christiakov in 1824 because he had been unjustly blamed for the relatively low fur returns of 1822-23.

It was under the aegis of Governor Bancroft that Kuskov, the assistant manager of the colonies began to build Fort Ross on the Californian coast in 1811,<sup>1</sup> as were the efforts of Dr. Scheffer to establish a base in the Sandwich Islands five years later.<sup>2</sup> The government seems to have had no hand in either of these expansionist projects. Indeed in February, 1818, the Tsar instructed Nesselrode to refuse an offer by King Tomari to place himself under the protection of Tsar Alexander because of the difficulties it would involve.<sup>3</sup> In 1824, Dimitri Zavalishin returned to St. Petersburg from a visit to California, and submitted to the Tsar a memorandum proposing Russian acquisitions in northern California.<sup>4</sup> Alexander turned the matter over to Nesselrode of the foreign office and Mordvinov for the company. The latter supported Zavalishin's plan completely; the former felt that though Russian pretensions in the area were legitimate, they would be inconvenient. After the Russian-American and Anglo-Russian treaties of 1824 and 1825, the company undertook on its own, to send Zavalishin to Fort Ross to develop and expand it. A farewell banquet was given the adventurer, at which Speransky spoke enthusiastically of the plan and Pierre de Poletica became convinced of its value.<sup>5</sup> Despite

---

<sup>1</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 156-7; see also A. G. Mazour, "Dr. Yegen Scheffer: Dreamer of a Russian Empire in the Pacific", The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. VI, (1937), pp. 16-19.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 160-161.

<sup>4</sup>A. G. Mazour, "Dimitri Zavalishin: Dreamer of a Russian American Empire", The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. V, (1936), p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 32; see also Manning, op. cit., p. 96. Manning states that Krusenstern, the elder statesman of Russian navigators, wanted the Tsar to give active support to Spain in her South American colonies in return for recognition to the Russian claim to San Francisco and Fort Ross.

such support, the Tsar did not give permission for Zavalishin's departure. As in the past, concern over Russia's relations with America and Britain prevented colonial expansion.

Governmental influence was apparent, however, in the round-the-world voyage of Captain V. M. Golovnin who was sent to investigate the company's north Pacific settlements in the years 1817 to 1819. While Captain Hagemester seems to have been under instructions from the Governing Board of the company, it is probable that Golovnin was in closer touch with the small permanent council, which was controlled by the government departments. Golovnin was very critical of the old regime under Baranov and seems to have indicated that the changes instituted after his retirement were not sufficient. However, the main emphasis of his report was on the necessity for governmental action to defend the Russian settlements in the north Pacific from foreign penetration.<sup>1</sup> In a later work he stated that the government's interest was due to three factors: desire to extend their possessions in the Pacific, desire to extend trade with China and Japan, and desire to obtain an outlet for the potential resources of Siberia.<sup>2</sup>

It may be wondered why the government did not at this juncture take over the company outright. The Tsar was said to have been asked this question, and to have replied "No, no. It costs me now 300,000 rubles to look after Kamchatka. If I should attempt to take America under my care it would require a million."<sup>3</sup> He pursued instead less direct methods of guidance and restraint.

---

<sup>1</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-3, Captain V. M. Golovnin, Review of the Russian Colonies in Russian America, (St. Petersburg, 1861), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>F. A. Golder, "The Attitude of the Russian Government toward Alaska", The Pacific Ocean in History, ed. H. M. Stephens and H. E. Bolton, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1917), p. 273.



As the government and the Navy started to exert their control over the company, forces within the directorate began to apply pressure in the opposite direction. Simultaneously the concern of the stockholders at the plight of the company began to change to irritation with its management.<sup>1</sup>

After the Napoleonic war, commerce in Russia was depressed. The 'recession' was aided by the Russo-Prussian convention of 1818 which gave foreign goods access to the domestic market and allowed goods free transit to the Asiatic market.<sup>2</sup> This treaty lasted until 1823 and resulted in loss of confidence of foreign capital, and a drop in exchange rate which caused considerable discontentment in business circles.<sup>3</sup> In 1822 a new high tariff policy was initiated which handicapped merchants who had adjusted to the previous system. The Decemberists were aware of their feelings and sympathized with them. In their efforts to make further contacts within the merchant class they infiltrated the management and directorate of the Russian American Company.<sup>4</sup> The profit-seeking urban aristocracy, which seems actually to have comprised the governing board, shared the Decemberists anti-government feelings.<sup>5</sup> The government's desire for administrative reforms when added to its conciliatory foreign policy in the Far East, endangered the security of these parasites and aroused their opposition.

---

<sup>1</sup>Okun, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-2. He states that in 1819 only eighteen people were present at the shareholders' meeting: ten were high government officials and only eight were of the merchant class. Yet on p. 69 he affirms that these meetings were unruly and the stockholders were angry at the directors.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 106.

The stockholders' complaints of the company's direction were legitimate. In the year 1818-19, the company paid dividends of 155 rubles on a 500 ruble share, but in 1820-21, the dividends fell to 82 rubles and from 1822 to 1826 payment of dividends was withheld.<sup>1</sup> The round-the-world expeditions, fitted out between 1819-21 to the immense profit of some of the individual directors, cost the company a ruinous 2,400,000 rubles.<sup>2</sup> The temporary prohibition of foreign trade in the north Pacific also added to the loss. The stockholders' meetings became tempestuous, and the company resorted to censorship of all information on the Russian colonies to quiet the reports of irregularities.<sup>3</sup> Eventually a two-man committee of investigation into the company's affairs was appointed, but by intensive lobbying and pressure, the directors avoided open condemnation or the attachment of financial responsibility for their misdeeds.<sup>4</sup> In the midst of this travail the directors seem to have bribed Alexander's favourite General Abakcheyev with 100,000 rubles,<sup>5</sup> and given each one of themselves a bonus of 100,000 rubles!<sup>6</sup>

Ironically, the criticisms made by the stockholders were opposed by the Decemberist martyr Ryleyev, who also led the attempt to cover the company's transgressions by imposing censorship of all information on the Pacific colonies printed in the press.<sup>7</sup> With him were associated such

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-69; see also Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 425. He states that the company paid no dividend in 1822-23 but did pay \$33.60 a share in 1824-25 and \$27.66 in 1826-27. The writer has no means at hand of ascertaining which source is accurate.

<sup>2</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71.

Decemberist sympathizers as V. I. Prokofyev, manager of the company's Moscow office,<sup>1</sup> N. I. Kusov, Mayor of St. Petersburg, elected a company director in 1824,<sup>2</sup> the aforementioned D. I. Zavalishin<sup>3</sup> and G. S. Batenkov who almost succeeded Muraviev as Governor of the north Pacific settlements.<sup>4</sup> Upon the death of Tsar Alexander there occurred the abortive revolution of December 14 (30), 1825. Tsar Nicholas carefully questioned all the participants and found strong evidence that the company headquarters at 72 Moika Street had been a centre of revolutionary planning and agitation for the Northern Society.<sup>5</sup> He is said to have remarked acidly to one unfortunate employee, Orest Somov, "You've collected some fine company there."<sup>6</sup>

However, the Russian American Company was a more fitting target for mirth than scorn: with its collection of capitalist revolutionaries, its inspired feather-bedding grafters and improbable routes of trade. Yet the wasted skill and courage of some of its employees and the forbidding climate of the north-west coast quickly conjure up a grimmer prospect.

The Pacific colonies never recovered from the failure of their early attempts to become self-supporting. Thereafter they were at the mercy of fur cycles and foreign traders. The government's reforms of the company's management could not prevent the consequences of its impossible logistics.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 105. Ryleyev became headquarters' manager of the company in 1824.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 111, (see above p. 67.)

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 112; see also Tompkins, Alaska, p. 149.

<sup>6</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 113.

The ukase of 1821 and the negotiations proceeding from it, appear to have produced ill will between the company's revolutionary directorate and the government: first because of the economic hardships the colonies underwent due to the prohibition of foreign trade at Sitka, and second because of the government's territorial and commercial concessions to Great Britain and the United States. The former will be described below in relation to the ukase,<sup>1</sup> while the latter is rightly part of the negotiations themselves.<sup>2</sup> But first it is necessary to consider in more detail the circumstances behind the promulgation of the ukase.

---

<sup>1</sup>See below Chapter IV, part iii.

<sup>2</sup>See below Chapter VI.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE RUSSIAN AMERICAN COMPANY: PROBLEMS OF TRADE AND THE INCREASE OF ACTIVITY IN THE NORTH PACIFIC

Having dealt with the growing link between the Russian American Company and the government, it is necessary to investigate the effect of the trade problems of the company on Russian activity in the north Pacific. The company's problems were legion. Its maritime fur resources had dwindled rapidly, its method of processing skins was terribly wasteful,<sup>1</sup> the supply of goods uncertain and expensive, the officers unzealous, foreign competition relentless, and the fierce Koloshi implacably hostile. Instead of declining, however, Russian activity in the north Pacific seemed to increase. Though this increase was more apparent than real, it drew exaggerated respect from various contemporary writers in England and America; some warned fearfully of the Russian menace, others preferred Tsarist imperialism to American expansionism.<sup>2</sup> Though it was not possible for the Russian empire to achieve the tasks envisaged for it by its critics, it is none the less valuable to study the exact extent of their 'commitment' in the area.

i. There are three prime reasons for this apparent increase in activity, of which the disappearance of the sea otter is possibly the most

---

<sup>1</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 208. From 1804-1812 over a million fur seal pelts were spoiled.

<sup>2</sup>The Quarterly Review, Vol. XIX, No. 38, (1818), p. 177. A reviewer of Sir Robert Wilson's sketch of Russia's power, fairly gloated at the prospect of the 'Yankees' awakening to find "bearded men with green jackets and bayonets" entrenched along the Pacific coast from California to the Arctic.

important.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1806, Rezanov wrote to St. Petersburg that the company could not subsist on the fur trade alone, and must cultivate a general trade in the Pacific.<sup>2</sup> But by 1818, the situation was much more serious. From 1812 to 1817 only 1,000 sea otter were caught by the hunters stationed in California and Fort Ross, and shortly thereafter all hunting from that station was abandoned in favour of agriculture.<sup>3</sup> The general trade which Rezanov had encouraged could not be achieved due to the impossibility of obtaining access to a major Oriental port. Both Nagasaki and Canton remained closed to Russian vessels. As a result the company could not use sandalwood or South American metals to barter for Chinese goods, but was forced to continue to deal at Kiakhtha in fur: the only easily transportable produce,<sup>4</sup> and one that was rapidly diminishing. One must consider whether the company seriously attempted to find an alternate source of fur in the interior of North America, and whether this was the key to the ukase of 1821, the subsequent treaties, and possibly other ambitions, less publicly expressed.

---

<sup>1</sup>North American Review, Vol. XV, New Series, Vol. VI, (October, 1822), p. 372. The scarcity of sea otter on the north-west coast was remarked upon, and it was stated that the sea otter would probably become as rare there as they were in the Kamchatka and the Aleutians, due to the Russians indiscriminate slaughter of the old and cubs alike.

<sup>2</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>3</sup>Khlembikoff, Baranov, p. 147.

<sup>4</sup>Evidence of William Tate, Third Report from the Select Committee on Foreign Trade (1821), p. 362. Tate said that along with furs Russians bartered half tanned leather, some coarse Russian cottons and an increasing supply of manufactured British cotton and wool.

As mentioned above, Nicholas Garry tried to convince John Lock that the Russian American Company was indeed attempting to tap the fur resources of the interior of America.<sup>1</sup> Vasili Berg, the contemporary Russian historian and critic of the company affairs, asserted the necessity for embarking on such an enterprise.<sup>2</sup> But the success of such an undertaking depended on two general considerations: the market for land furs in China, and the feasibility of operations in North America.

The material for a market study of land furs in northern China in the second decade of the nineteenth century is strictly limited, yet some clues can be found. The Russians from 1817 to 1822 imported, on the average, 5,200 beaver and 7,400 otter a year, all of which according to the Hudson's Bay Company, found their way to Kiakhta.<sup>3</sup> Then in 1822 Russia imposed a prohibitive tariff on the import of British furs; according to Nicholas Garry, this was an effort to encourage the Russian American Company to supply the China market on its own by hunting in North America.<sup>4</sup> At this time it was reported that there was a severe shortage of sable in Siberia which had disrupted the market at Kiakhta.<sup>5</sup>

But though the Russian supply of fur was obviously short, it is not certain that the Chinese demand for it remained high or, if it did, whether it was not filled by American firms at Canton. William Tate

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 48, A7/1, Nicholas Garry to John Lock, July 15, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>Galbraith, op.cit., p. 124.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, William Smith to T. H. Perkins and Sons, April 19, 1823.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 48, A7/1, Nicholas Garry to John Lock, July 15, 1823.

<sup>5</sup>Evidence of William Tate, Third Report from the Select Committee on Foreign Trade, (1821), p. 302.

testified that the Chinese of the northern provinces regarded both coarse cloth and furs as necessities of life.<sup>1</sup> In the fall of 1822, Perkins & Sons reported to the Hudson's Bay Company that the average yearly demand for beaver skins was 12,000-15,000 skins of which the American traders obtained 3,000-5,000 from the north-west coast.<sup>2</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company made a determined attempt to capture the Chinese land fur market from the Russians, and in April, 1823, William Smith reported that they had sold 16,650 beaver pelts at \$4.00 each.<sup>3</sup> Smith deduced that since the Hudson's Bay Company obtained 73 rubles for a prime beaver in St. Petersburg, the Russians must receive much more than that to pay transportation expenses to China and clear a profit.<sup>4</sup> None the less, at that very time in Canton, James Goddard reported that beaver and otter were still selling for only \$4.00 a skin (roughly 20 rubles scrip) due to an over-abundant supply.<sup>5</sup> Three years later William Smith indicated that the prices of the land furs were still unsatisfactory, and suggested that the cost of transportation to the centre of demand in the northern provinces might be preventing the Chinese from paying more.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 363.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 48, A7/1, Perkins & Sons to Hudson's Bay Company, September 10, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 28, A5/7, William Smith to John Haldane, April 4, 1823.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, William Smith to T. T. H. Perkins & Sons, April 9, 1823.

<sup>5</sup>H.B.A., Reel 48, A7/1, James Goddard to Colville Sutting, April 9, 1823. Goddard's statement may have referred to market conditions at the time of the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company's one large shipment of 16,650 pelts.

<sup>6</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/21, W. Smith to Messrs. A. S. Johnstone, March 31, 1826.



If the Hudson's Bay Company expressed dissatisfaction at receiving 20 rubles for its prime beaver and otter, one can only imagine what the Russian American Company thought at having to accept eight rubles worth of tea for its otter skins at Kiakhta.<sup>1</sup> At such prices it must be concluded that the Russian company would keep her share of the market. It is probable that the competitive market for teas at the fair of Nizhni Novgorod and in St. Petersburg would have made the venture profitable for the company. The company imported 30% of all the Chinese tea that entered Russia in the final years of its existence, deriving an income from it amounting to twice that of its furs.<sup>2</sup> Okun mentions in his comments on the decline of the company's fur trade in China in the 1840's and 50's, that previously only the expensive furs such as the sea otter, had failed to find a large market. It would appear, therefore, that the company did indeed establish a steady trade in land furs at Kiakhta.<sup>3</sup>

The second consideration involved in harvesting land fur for the Chinese market, the feasibility of operating in the interior of North America, was less favourable. The two factors which acted to prevent Russian penetration of the continent were those which at the same time prevented the Hudson's Bay Company from reaching out to the Pacific coast: the terrain, and the natives.

---

<sup>1</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 266.

<sup>2</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 226.

One important element which is easily overlooked, was the climate which was unremittingly depressing. Captain Golovnin commented that "not a week passes here without at least four or five rainy days, and generally it pours down like a flood." He observed that Sitka was situated at the locus of the hunting areas but added "in all other respects the place is almost insupportable".<sup>1</sup> Ceaseless rain all along the coast, luxuriant impenetrable undergrowth, and a coastal fringe of ice fields and mountain masses falling steeply into deep fiord-like arms, all served to prohibit penetration to the interior.

Something has already been said of the company's relations with the Koloshi. Golovnin commented in his Review of the Russian Colonies published in 1861 that "not so very long ago no single Russian dared to go fifty steps outside Fort Nova Archkangelski unarmed".<sup>2</sup> On a voyage to Russian America from 1822 to 1824 Captain Lazarov told of a Captain Young employed by the company as master of a brig, who became so frightened over four cannon shots from the fort on a jaunt for firewood, that the ship's boat had to return with him.<sup>3</sup> From these reports one could be justified in setting Russian America's continental boundary at either fifty steps or four cannon shots east of the Sitka bastion. Governor Muraviev had the wisdom to allow Koloshi to settle on their old grounds under the walls of the Russian fortifications and in range of their cannon,

---

<sup>1</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-3, V. M. Golovnin, Extracts from a Description of a Voyage around the World by Captain Golovnin of the Sloop Kamchatka 1817-19, Part IV, Section 3 of Material . . . (1861), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-3, V. M. Golovnin, Review of the Russian Colonies in Russian America by Captain Golovnin, (1861), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>Russian America, reel P-K-3, Capt. A. Lazarov, Extracts from the Voyage around the World by Capt. A. Lazarov on the Sloop Ladoga 1822-24, p. 96.

in order to maintain closer surveillance over them.<sup>1</sup> The settlement was none the less in a constant atmosphere of siege. The colony could not afford to send out any significant number of men to explore the interior or even sail into the sounds to trade, for fear of weakening the headquarters or of being attacked themselves.<sup>2</sup> These were the factors that effectively prevented any Russian penetration of the continent, and made groundless the statements of those people on both sides of the Atlantic who hoped to profit from a Russian 'scare'.

ii. The second main factor for the apparent increase in Russian activity on the coast was a more legitimate cause for western anxiety: this was the exploratory activity that seems to have sprung in part from the expiration of the company's 20-year charter on July 8, 1819. Golovnin's expedition of 1817-18 was undertaken, on the Tsar's orders, to investigate the company's operations with a view to the renewal of the charter.<sup>3</sup> On July 31, 1819, the company's privileges were extended for a year to enable the Minister of Interior to gather information on the company and to make recommendations to the Tsar,<sup>4</sup> and a committee was formed for that purpose.

---

<sup>1</sup>Lazarov, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>2</sup>Captain Lutke, Extracts from the writing of Capt. Lutke during his journey on the sloop Seniavin 1826-29, Part 4, Sec. 5. of materials for the History . . . (1861), p. 132; see also Khibnikoff, Baranov, p. 157. He too stated that the danger of exploration necessitated the weakening of the forts or vessels on the coast.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 251; see also The Quarterly Review, Vol. XVIII, No. XXXV, (October, 1817), p. 219. The Quarterly Review was sure that Golovnin was attempting to anticipate England in discovering the north-west passage.

<sup>4</sup>S. R. Tompkins, "Drawing the Alaska Boundary", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, (March, 1945), p. 4.

Captain Golovnin's report was one of the key factors. According to a letter of Alexander Kashevarov to Captain Etholen, a final paragraph of the report which stated that recently under Captain Hagemeister conditions in the colonies had improved, was only added after the most urgent solicitations of the company's governing board.<sup>1</sup> Equally important must have been a shrewd distribution of company money as in the bribery of the influential Arakcheyev.<sup>2</sup>

As the issue grew critical the directors began to initiate a spate of exploratory activity to enhance the prestige of the company in the eyes of the government.<sup>3</sup> Golovnin records that the expense of fitting out the round-the-world hydrographic expeditions in 1803, 1806, 1813 and 1816 was shared equally by the company and the Russian government.<sup>4</sup> This was convenient for the government and gave the company assurance of continued government support; it was in fact a similar device to Shelikov's promotion of missionary work among the Aleuts in the founding years of the company.

---

<sup>1</sup>Bancroft, Alaska, p. 531; see also Correspondence of the Russian Ministers in Washington 1818-1825, American Historical Review, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, (January, 1913), p. 341, Nesselrode to Tuyll, July 13, 1822 (O.S.) In this letter nearly a year after the renewal of the charter, Nesselrode implied that the company's treatment of the natives was currently being investigated, and requested that if Tuyll discovered any information on the subject he was to inform the government so the Tsar could use "L' autorite toujours benveillante", to stop any inhumane treatment.

<sup>2</sup>Okun, op. cit., pp. 105-6.

<sup>3</sup>Bancroft, Alaska, p. 525; see also Russian America, reel P-K-6, Report of the Committee on Organizations of the Russian American Colonies, (St. Petersburg, 1861), p. 44. This also mentioned the increased attention paid to exploration in the north of the company's territories at this time.

<sup>4</sup>Golovnin, Review of the Russian Colonies, p. 132.

The explorations around the time of the charter renewal and the ukase were merely an intensification of this. The country north of Cook's Inlet was explored by Malakhof who claimed to have reached a river similar in description to the Yukon.<sup>1</sup> The Vasilev expedition to the East Cape from 1818 to 1821, attempted unsuccessfully to find open seas north of the Behring straits.<sup>2</sup> In 1821 Captain Khromchenka and Lieutenant Elotin were sent out in the Golovnin and the Baranov with instructions to explore the east side of the Behring Sea between Bristol Bay and Norton Sound.<sup>3</sup> By this date, however, the government had decided to renew the company's charter for a further twenty-year period. After the granting of the charter, the exploration of the north Pacific continued. In 1826, Captain Lutke left Russia on an expedition to explore the north coast of the Alaskan Peninsula, and in 1828, Hagemeister led an expedition into the Behring Sea, while H.M.S. Blossom under Captain Beechey was still in that region.<sup>4</sup>

The most interesting Russian 'designs' on the American continent took place behind closed doors in St. Petersburg. In 1823, a Decemberist, Lieutenant V. P. Romanov, presented two plans of strategic expansion to the Chief of the Navy Staff.<sup>5</sup> The first envisaged a voyage up the Mednaya

---

<sup>1</sup>Bancroft, op. cit., p. 525. Bancroft minimized his achievement and said the account of the river was probably due merely to Indian report.

<sup>2</sup>The Quarterly Review, Vol. XXVI, No. LII, (1822), p. 343. The review indicated that though the expedition was very poorly equipped, it harboured dangerous imperial designs. See also, L. P. Kirwin, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., pp. 292-293; also Bancroft, op. cit., p. 546.

<sup>4</sup>Bancroft, op. cit., p. 547.

<sup>5</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 111.

or Copper River, whose mouth is near the present town of Cordova, across the interior to the Arctic and Hudson's Bay. The project was referred to the Russian American Company and apparently won its support, only to be turned down by the government.<sup>1</sup> The second, more practical plan, was for an expedition along the north-east cape of Alaska to join up with the proposed Franklin expedition. Ryleyev was most enthusiastic about this endeavour, not only because it might add to the company's prestige, but also because contacts might be developed with the Hudson's Bay Company and a new branch of the business developed.<sup>2</sup> In 1824, the Imperial Chancellor Count Rumyantsev, proposed to finance such an expedition, and wrote to Governor Muraviev of his ideas. He said the instructions would be similar to those of Kotzebue's in 1815 and Vasiliev's in 1818, to go through Behring straits and follow the coastline to the east. He felt the voyage should continue along the coast east of the mouth of the Mackenzie River. He considered that since Captain Franklin would not start west from that river before 1826 or 1827, their expedition should not start before that time. "If it should happen that both expeditions meet, the glory of the success of the enterprise will belong to both Russia and England." From the Chancellor's letter, one must conclude that he had no ambitions to establish a prior claim of discovery to the country west of the Mackenzie, but simply to maintain Russia's honour by being in the forefront of exploration of territory at her own back door.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 111; see also Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., pp. 296-7.

Unfortunately when the beneficent Runyantsev died shortly afterwards, his heir refused to sanction the bequest of 20,000 rubles. As the government failed to assist the venture, it came to naught.<sup>1</sup>

Russian voyages of exploration to the north Pacific seem to have been undertaken for many reasons: for the glory of the company, empire or Tsar, for the practical value of improving navigation, for contributions to scientific understanding; indeed for every conceivable motive apart from the much talked of imperial expansion towards the heart of the continent.

iii. The third reason for Russian activity on the north Pacific was the decline of trade due to foreign competition. Baranov estimated that six to ten foreign traders plied the coast each year, often getting 2,000 skins or more each in return for weapons and liquor.<sup>2</sup> As has been described above, the unlimited trading on the coast encouraged relentless hunting which resulted in the disappearance of the most valuable furs from the Alexander Archipelago. Furthermore, what fur there was, went to the foreigners who had accustomed the Koloshi to varieties and quantities of goods which the Russian company could not offer. This in turn served to maintain, if not heighten, the animosity between Russians and the Indians. On May 17, 1808, Count Runyantsev, then foreign minister, lodged a formal protest concerning American depredations on the northwest coast, to Mr. Levett Harris, American Consul in St. Petersburg.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>2</sup>Khlebnikoff, Baranov, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>Tompkins, Alaska, p. 126.

In 1810, the matter was raised unsuccessfully with the State Department by the Russian Consul General to the United States, Dashkov; in St. Petersburg the young John Quincy Adams fended off similar protests at about the same time.<sup>1</sup> The mission of John Jacob Astor's son-in-law, Adrian B. Benton, to St. Petersburg in 1811, concerned an agreement between Astor and the Russian American Company which the Russians hoped would discourage the independent Yankee traders.<sup>2</sup>

The European war forced Baranov to depend even more upon what supplies he could muster in the Pacific. This did not spare him, at war's end, an order from the company directors to cease most dealings with foreign traders.<sup>3</sup> He complied as far as was possible, and in 1816 only bought supplies from one of the fifteen vessels which anchored at Sitka.<sup>4</sup> At the same time in St. Petersburg, the company appealed unsuccessfully to the government to prohibit the foreign vessels from trading, not with the company, but with the natives along the coast.<sup>5</sup> Golovnin returned to Russia in 1819 with a keen sense of the devastating impact of the "contrabandists", and wrote in his report that if the Tsar had known the situation he would surely have acted, since "a far seeing and careful government could not have refused to comply with the request (for the prohibition of foreign trade)".<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 190.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 262.



In August, 1820, the company itself issued an order forbidding all trade with foreigners in the colonies. Increased representations from the company resulted in the Tsar's ukase of September 4-16, 1821<sup>1</sup> which prohibited foreign vessels from approaching nearer than 100 Italian miles from the coast, and redefined the company's territories to extend 4° further south to include the coast almost to Vancouver Island. It was this ukase which brought the matter of a territorial division in the north Pacific to the capitals of Europe. Russian activity in the region of course became more highly suspect.

Activity did increase, for the Tsar dispatched the frigate Apollo to patrol the forbidden zone. In 1822, the frigate intercepted and impounded the brig Pearl from Boston, and thereby created considerable ill will for Russia around the Pearl's home port, though completely failing to stamp out the illegitimate trade with the natives.<sup>2</sup> The following year the frigate Cruiser and the sloop of war Ladoga were dispatched to guard the coast, though by then their instructions were to restrict their operations to the latitude in which the company enjoyed the exclusive right of trade.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>"Correspondence of the Russian Ministers in Washington 1818-25", American Historical Review, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, (January, 1913), p. 337. Nesselrode to Tuyl, July 13, 1822 (O.S.) In the same letter the foreign minister stated that the government had initially asked the company to prepare a report on the measures that could be taken to preserve peace in the colonies on the north-west coast, and that the ukase was the result of this submission. See also, S. F. Bemis, John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy, (New York: Alfred Knoff, 1949), p. 494. Bemis implied that the ukase was the product of Russian anxiety at the movement in the U.S. congress to establish settlements on the Columbia River. He did not give his authorities for this.

<sup>2</sup>Manning, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>3</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 373.

At this point the government's plans began to crumble. They had apparently foreseen that if foreign pressure was acute, compromises might have to be made, but little did they expect the heated criticism the ukase soon received from the Russian American Company! The company's trading problems were not simple, for while foreign traders exhausted the furs and reduced the profit, only these traders could keep the colonies adequately supplied. Muraviev was forced to send ships to California, where in 1823 he obtained goods from two foreign captains, and to the Sandwich Islands, where in 1824 he obtained supplies in addition to further purchasing in California.<sup>1</sup> His position, however, was desperate, and he bombarded the directors with requests for supplies, and warned of the danger of an uprising of the dreaded Koloshi, who bitterly resented the Russians for cutting off their lucrative trade with foreign vessels.<sup>2</sup>

In 1822, consideration began to be given to abandoning Sitka in favour of re-establishing a headquarters at Kodiak.<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Yanovsky, Muraviev's predecessor stated that all the furs caught by the company in the vicinity of Sitka did not amount to one quarter of its upkeep. Governor Muraviev supported this plan and in 1825 the general shareholders unanimously resolved to remove the company's main establishment to St. Paul's harbour on Kodiak.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Khlebnikoff, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup>Manning, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup>Tompkins, "Drawing the Alaska Boundary", p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>Tikmenev, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-290. The construction at Kodiak progressed only slowly and in 1832 the original order was finally revoked.

In the meantime the directors finally grasped the seriousness of the colonies' position and petitioned the Tsar to amend the ukase to permit foreign vessels to enter Sitka.<sup>1</sup> At the end of 1823 one of the company's directors, I. V. Prokofyev (the Decemberist) attributed the decline of the company's business entirely to the prohibition of foreign trade in the colonies and the unremitting efforts of a few directors to economize the company's operations.<sup>2</sup> Such representations must have aided the efforts of the American negotiator, Middleton, to win commercial access to the port of Sitka. On March 27 (O.S.), 1824, the Tsar finally altered his policy, allowing free entrance to Sitka and freeing the company from the obligation to supply Okhotsk and Kamtchatka.<sup>3</sup> Whether the victory belonged to Henry Middleton or to the Russian American Company it is impossible to say. But as Captain Golovnin later reflected in the long run the vital trade with foreigners was ruinous to the company.<sup>4</sup>

It would appear despite manifestations to the contrary that Russian activity in the north Pacific was no serious threat to the western hemisphere. The Russian American Company was the only body strong enough to attempt to realize the dream of a Russian America. The decline of the company's trade due primarily to mismanagement, foreign competition and exhaustion of fur resources, was in fact the death knell of the Russian

---

<sup>1</sup>Manning, *op. cit.*, p. 109. Manning stated that the high minded Decemberist Ryleyev at first firmly demanded that no concessions be made to the company's officers in the colonies.

<sup>2</sup>Tikmenev, *op. cit.*, p. 374. This latter day opposition to the ukase did not prevent the company from vehemently attacking the treaties of 1824 and 1825 which retracted its provisions.

<sup>3</sup>Manning, *op. cit.*, p. 110; see also Tikmenev, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

<sup>4</sup>Captain Golovnin, *Review of the Russian Colonies*, p. 163.

Pacific empire. The vociferous appeals it was to make to the Tsar on behalf of its interests during the course of the negotiations with Britain and the United States, was not a sign of its influence, rather a symptom of its decay.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS ON THE RUSSIAN UKASE SEPTEMBER, 1821 TO JANUARY, 1824

The Russian minister in Washington, Pierre de Poletica transmitted a copy of the ukase to John Quincy Adams in mid-February, 1822, accompanied by a warning that vessels sailing from United States ports after July 1st could not lawfully pretend ignorance of the regulations.<sup>1</sup> Two weeks later the Secretary of State responded to these pretensions with a message of polite surprise.<sup>2</sup> This formal exchange began a course of complex negotiations which lasted for more than three years (ranging between Washington, London, Verona and St. Petersburg) until England finally resolved to meet Russia's amended territorial demands.

Before investigating the negotiations further, the attitude of the United States towards the north-west coast must be described. American interest in the Pacific north-west was focussed on the maritime fur trade referred to above. New England vessels dealing in furs, sandalwood and Chinese goods dominated commerce on the west coast of the continent.

The United States was also gradually extending itself across the continent. Though there remained more than one thousand miles between the fringe of American settlement and the Pacific coast, many individuals like John Quincy Adams and John Floyd foresaw American dominion over the

---

<sup>1</sup>A.S.P.F.R., Vol. V, p. 856, Poletica to Adams, January 30 (February 11), 1822.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 861, Adams to Poletica, February 25, 1822.

shores of the western ocean. Some like President Monroe and Thomas Hart Benton believed that a separate fraternal republic would emerge there.<sup>1</sup> While the North West Company and later the Hudson's Bay Company were claiming the fur resources of the land south of the Columbia, in Congress John Floyd led a group of mid-western politicians in an attack upon the policy of the Monroe administration towards the north-west coast. In January, 1821, Floyd tabled the alarming conclusions of his committee on the expediency of occupying the Columbia, which even the aggressive Adams described as a "tissue of errors . . . nothing but the fire can purify [it]."<sup>2</sup> On February 26th, 1822, Floyd succeeded in getting the House to carry a resolution asking about the recent foreign claims on the Pacific coast. In December, 1822, his bill on the Oregon territory was introduced. Throughout these debates Floyd and Benton implied that Adams had been weak in handling Britain's pretensions in the west.<sup>3</sup> The Russian ukase merely supplied them with another tail to pin on Adams. Adams viewed this as one manifestation of an organized attack upon his public reputation by supporters of Henry Clay.<sup>4</sup> Adams' presidential prospects for 1824 demanded that he answer this challenge for the support of the mid-west. The Secretary of State was inclined to look upon political competition as conspiratorial, and upon its agents with contempt. His

---

<sup>1</sup> S. F. Bemis, John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy, (New York: Alfred Knoff, 1946), pp. 529-530.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 488; see also L. B. Shipee, "The Federal Relations of Oregon", Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. XIX, No. 2, (June, 1918), pp. 115-116.

<sup>3</sup> Bemis, op. cit., p. 496.

<sup>4</sup> F. Merk, Albert Gallatin and the Oregon Problem. A Study in Anglo-American Diplomacy, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 33.

ire was roused by Jonathon Russel's resurrection of the charges that Adams had been willing to give Britain access to the Mississippi. From February to August, 1822, this controversy raged with Adams diligently composing weighty refutations of this unprincipled attack. In the end he triumphed in what appeared to him another phase of Clay's campaign to weaken his western support.<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 1822, pressure upon the Secretary of State was applied from another source. The New England merchants appear to have received the ukase of 1821 with nonchalance, but twelve months later when the order was still being enforced and negotiations not yet underway for a settlement, they began to stir. In October, 1818, William Sturgis, their doughty spokesman, published a detailed refutation of the Russian claims in the North American Review.<sup>2</sup> During the winter of 1823 rumours began to be received that Russian naval vessels had ordered the Boston trader Pearl off the north-west coast. New England newspapers loudly protested the indignity of this action. In May, 1823, Senator James Lloyd of Boston addressed a note to the President calling for the protection of American rights on the Pacific coast.<sup>3</sup> Monroe gave it to his Secretary of State to answer. Adams seems to have taken the opportunity to release his pent up frustration on the matter in a strong assertion of his convictions. He had initially tried to pursue a policy of marked moderation toward the

---

<sup>1</sup>Bemis, op. cit., pp. 498-499.

<sup>2</sup>William Sturgis, The Quarterly Review, Vol. XXVI, October, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>Bemis, op. cit., p. 514.

Russian pretensions, for he valued the traditional Russian-American friendship, particularly as the Tsar was sitting in judgment on the Anglo-American dispute over slaves removed in the late war.<sup>1</sup> However, the loss of political support in the mid-west and New England, and the continued attacks in Congress from Clay's supporters, forced Adams to postpone no longer and to make his colours known.<sup>2</sup> The platform the administration adopted was that of the western politicians,<sup>3</sup> but it was not alien to John Quincy Adams. Only a few years before he had successfully obtained a renunciation of all Spanish claims on the Pacific coast north of 42° N. Latitude. In January, 1821, in two heated interviews with Stratford Canning he had expressed his ignorance of any justifiable British claim to the north-west coast.<sup>4</sup> So it was with personal conviction as well as for political expediency that in his reply to Senator James Lloyd, Adams stressed the need for a prompt settlement of Russia's pretensions, a firm stand with Britain for the watershed of the Columbia River, the early establishment of a government station on the Columbia, and a statement that colonization by European powers on the continent was no longer to be tolerated.<sup>5</sup> Within the limits of peaceful diplomacy this was the policy that the American government continued to follow throughout the negotiations on the Russian ukase.

---

<sup>1</sup>T. A. Bailey, America Faces Russia, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), p. 34. Adams' patience was rewarded for on April 22, 1822, the Tsar rendered a decision wholly in favour of the United States. Russia had also brought pressure to bear upon Spain to finally ratify the Adams Onis convention of 1819.

<sup>2</sup>Bemis, op. cit., pp. 496, 498, 512, 516.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 516.

<sup>4</sup>Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, ed. C. F. Adams, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1875), Vol. V, pp. 248-9.

<sup>5</sup>Bemis, op. cit., p. 515.



Following the initial exchange of notes Pierre de Poletica sent Adams an elaborate explanation of the Russian claims, based on Russian discoveries, the failure of interested cabinets to protest the Emperor Paul's original charter of 1799, and the recent depredations of the Russian American Company's territories.<sup>1</sup> When Adams proved unreceptive to these arguments Poletica referred to the "authentic fact" that in 1789 the Spanish packet St. Charles under Captain Haro found in latitude 48 and 49 eight Russian establishments of twenty families or 462 inhabitants in all.<sup>2</sup> William Sturgis soon pointed out in the North American Review, that Poletica had misread Haro's account, which had reported Russian settlements in 58° and 59° N. Latitude.<sup>3</sup> In the same letter Poletica threatened that American commerce north of 51° would run into trouble for which it would have only itself to blame. Two weeks later Poletica announced that he was returning to Russia on a leave of absence which he expected to become permanent. He had apparently been well liked in Washington and made a particularly favourable impression on the President.<sup>4</sup> With Poletica, Adams sent a note to Tsar Alexander stating his desire to maintain their friendly relations but firmly asserting the American position.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 32-36, Poletica to Adams, February 28, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>A.S.P.F.R., Vol. IV, p. 863, Poletica to Adams, March 21 (April 2), 1822.

<sup>3</sup>North American Review, Vol. (October, 1822), p. 384.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 39-40, Adams to Middleton, May 13, 1822; see also John C. Hildt, Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States with Russia, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1906), p. 163.

<sup>5</sup>J. C. Hildt, op. cit., p. 163; see also A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 39-40, Adams to Middleton, May 13, 1822.

In St. Petersburg, before receiving his instructions from Adams, Middleton had privately protested against the ukase.<sup>1</sup> On July 24, 1822, hearing that the Tsar was leaving soon for Vienna, Middleton urged Capodistrias to reach a decision on amending the ukase, and threatened to present a formal note on the subject. Capodistrias replied that such a course was neither politic nor necessary as the Tsar "a déjà eu le bon esprit de voir que cette affaire ne devrait pas être poussée plus loin."<sup>2</sup> Adams' note had apparently made its impact along with Castlereagh's mild note of protest to Count Lieven the preceeding January, for three days later at a meeting with Nesselrode and Capodistrias, the American minister was assured that the objections of the United States would be considered, and Baron Tuyll was dispatched with full powers to deal with all relevant matters.<sup>3</sup> Orders were sent to the Russian patrol vessels on the northwest coast not to prosecute the regulations more than a few leagues from the shore and to remain in the latitudes in which the Russian American Company actually exercised its rights.<sup>4</sup> In effect the ukase was suspended.

Russia was in an awkward position. Tsar Alexander was the leader of the reaction against the wave of revolutions, and he was a firm believer in the right of intervention to maintain international order.<sup>5</sup> In the fall

---

<sup>1</sup>Hildt, op. cit., p. 164.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 42-43, Middleton to Adams, August 8, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 43; see also A.B.T. (British), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 122-123, Nesselrode to Lieven, June 26 (July 8), 1822.

<sup>5</sup>Some Official Correspondence of George Canning, ed. E. Stapleton, Vol. I, George Canning to Viscount Cranville, January 10, 1825. He quoted Stratford Canning, "The Emperor would have no objection to help us in Ireland, so general and purely philanthropic are his principles of occasional intervention with unruly subjects, whether of his friends or neighbors."

of 1822 Europe was to meet at Verona to consider the problem of restoring the monarchy in Spain, a project which Alexander was determined to see accomplished. The Tsar was also opposed to the budding republics in South America, though he appears to have been uncertain of the chances of intervention there.<sup>1</sup>

The Greek revolution was perhaps the most difficult question of all, for though the Greeks were revolutionary they were of the Orthodox Church and were revolting against the despised Turkish empire. Russian influence in Greece, coupled with her recent occupation of Bessarabia would leave her in a strong position to make a move on Constantinople and the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. In the spring of 1822 Russia had urged the Holy Alliance to entrust her with the restoration of order in the Balkans.<sup>2</sup>

In each of these three areas of unrest Russia was faced with the likelihood of British opposition, and the possibility of war. Alexander had a difficult game to play and was anxious to maintain friendly relations with the United States, which had become an important maritime power. He could not afford to unduly antagonize either the United States or Britain over the relatively minor question of jurisdiction on the north-west coast of America.

Russia was not, however, considering a capitulation. The foreign ministry requested the Russian American Company to prepare a statement of the measures which Baron Tuyll could propose to the United States government

---

<sup>1</sup>Dexter Perkins, "Europe, Spanish America and the Monroe Doctrine", American Historical Review, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, (January, 1922), pp. 214-6.

<sup>2</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 83.

to protect the company's source of revenue and to ensure peace on the coast. The Russian government considered that such an agreement would enable them to withdraw the ukase. The company was also asked to specify its areas of hunting and fishing, the latitude judged to be the furthest limit of Russian territory, and all the information available on the Hudson's Bay Company stations on the coast.<sup>1</sup> Nesselrode also ordered Lieven to find out the extent of the British claims and the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company on the British government.<sup>2</sup> Tuyll was ordered to proceed without delay to Washington, to make known the suspension of the ukase, to decide which of the two parties it would be wiser to approach first and then to concert on measures to prevent further disputes.<sup>3</sup> Capodistrias wrote to Tuyll stating that in recent talks with Middleton he received the impression that the Americans would accept the boundary deemed suitable by the company, and, in their desire to keep commerce open, would grant the guarantees requested by the company.<sup>4</sup> For some reason, however, Tuyll did not proceed on his mission to America but dallied in England, thereby incurring the wrath of his government.<sup>5</sup> When in mid-April, 1823, he did take over in Washington, talks with the Duke of Wellington at the Congress of Verona had altered Russia's plans, and he had merely to enquire whether Adams would allow Middleton to negotiate in St. Petersburg.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 40-41, Guriev to Muraviev, July 18 (30), 1822.

<sup>2</sup>A.H.R., pp. 336-42, Nesselrode to Tuyll, July 13 (25), 1822.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 336-42.

<sup>4</sup>C.R.M., pp. 344-5, Capodistrias to Tuyll, July 13 (25), 1822.

<sup>5</sup>C.R.M., p. 345, footnote 66.

<sup>6</sup>A.S.P.F.R., Vol. V, p. 435, Tuyll to Adams, April 12 (24), 1823.

The British government had reacted with deliberation. On receiving a précis of the ukase from Bagot at the end of October, 1821, Castlereagh had asked the King's Advocate to offer judgment on the Russian claims.<sup>1</sup> Shortly thereafter the whaling firm of Enderby and Mellish wrote to the Board of Trade protesting the Russian negotiations. Their note stated that it had recently been discovered that the east coast of the Behring Sea around 47° N. Latitude abounded in sperm whales and that if protection was received, a great number of British whalers planned to set sail for these regions shortly after January 1st, 1822.<sup>2</sup> On January 7th, the Board of Trade forwarded this note to the foreign office. A few days later Londonderry sent Lieven an official note of provisional protest concerning the ukase. It was not till the end of March, six months after the ukase, that the foreign office received notice from the Hudson's Bay Company protesting the Tsar's order; and likewise the claims for American territory up to 53° N. Latitude put forward by John Floyd's committee.<sup>3</sup> Apparently neither the British nor Russian governments believed the matter to be pressing. Bagot is reported to have confided to Middleton "I suppose we must let the matter die away, provided they will consent to leave the ukase a dead letter, we need not insist that this man [Alexander] shall eat his words."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 102, Christian Robinson to Londonderry, November 20, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 104, Messrs. S. Enderby & Son and Mr. Mellish to the Board of Trade, November 27, 1821.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 106-7, J. H. Pelly to Londonderry, March 27, 1822; see also H.B.A., Reel 50, A8/1, J. H. Pelly to Bathurst, March 22, 1822.

<sup>4</sup>Bemis, op. cit., p. 498, Middleton to Adams, August 8 (20), 1822.

In July, Sir James Mackintosh, philosopher and a member of parliament from the city, raised the question in the House of Commons, by asking if the foreign secretary had received a copy of the ukase and whether he was prepared to protest it. Londonderry replied that the terms of the document were not acceptable, and that they had offered "to enter into an amicable explanation with a view to a friendly arrangement".<sup>1</sup> Mackintosh's questioning may have induced the government to take the matter further, for before his death Londonderry wrote out instructions that at Verona the Duke of Wellington should obtain a distinct explanation from the Russian government as to a means of settling their differences on the north-west coast.<sup>2</sup> In mid-September, Lieven met with Wellington to give him a verbal explanation of the ukase and notify him that it was not intended to carry it out "in its extended sense". The Duke noted that this was a far from satisfactory solution and determined to pursue a written alteration at Vienna later in the autumn. He desired to be informed whether Britain had any claims to territory on the north-west coast and also the opinions of 'civilians' on Russia's maritime pretensions. A few days later he recorded that Lieven had told him confidentially that Russia and the United States were going to treat on this matter so if Britain had any claim she should bring it forward lest she be shut out by a Russian-American agreement.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Great Britain, Debates of the House of Commons, Series 2, Vol. VI, (July 5, 1822), col. 1511-1512.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 107-8, Bathurst to Wellington, September 14, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 108-9, Memorandum by Wellington, September 11, and September 16, 1822.

Possibly in response to the Duke's request at the end of the month, J. H. Pelly sent the new foreign secretary, George Canning, a brief history of the progress of the British fur trade on the north-west coast with the positions of company posts in the region. The observations given showed an approximately constant error of one degree too far north and two degrees too far to the west. One would be inclined to attribute the error to insufficient accuracy of instruments or sightings if Pelly had not included the following broad if not dishonest statement.

An extensive trade is carried on with all those Indian tribes which inhabit the country from about 60° N. Latitude as far south as the mouth of Fraser's River, which is in about 49° N. Latitude, and between the Rocky Mountains and the sea.<sup>1</sup>

This was speedily forwarded to Wellington, and with such ammunition in his pocket it is no wonder the Duke chose to base his argument more on occupation than on the disputable claim of first discovery.<sup>2</sup> At the end of November, Lieven gave Wellington a memorandum in reply. He passed polite judgment on Pelly's claims to occupy from 49° to 60° N. Latitude between the Rockies and the coast.

Russia will not speak of the settlements which may exist between the forty-ninth and fifty-first parallels, but as to the others she does not hesitate to admit that she is still in ignorance of their existence, at least so far as their touching the Pacific Ocean is concerned.

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 109-110, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, September 25, 1822; see also H.B.A., Reel 50, A8/1, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, September 25, 1822. In a private note of the same date Pelly enclosed a map of North America, and a memorandum on the Russian claims, based on the correspondence between Adams and Poletica in April and March, 1822. It puts forward the nine points the Russians used to justify their positions and refuted each in order.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 113-4, Wellington to George Canning, November 28, 1822. This meeting occurred on October 17, 1822.

He proposed that the limits of their respective territories be settled by friendly negotiation but did not admit in the least that Russia's maritime claims were unjustified. Wellington was forced to reply that this did not constitute proper grounds for discussion, suggesting in turn that Russia admit readiness to negotiate on the whole subject. Later that same day it was agreed that negotiations would be initiated on that basis.<sup>1</sup> This being decided, Nesselrode wrote to Tuxill from Verona in mid-December informing him that Bagot would be empowered to confer in St. Petersburg and since proposals should not be made to one country in ignorance of those made to another, he asked that Middleton be similarly empowered so that the talks could be co-ordinated.<sup>2</sup> Finally on January 31, 1823, a year after Londonderry's initial gesture towards discussions, Lieven sent Canning a formal invitation to treat upon the ukase in St. Petersburg. Because of Tuxill's delay a similar approach to the United States was not made until mid-April, 1823.

In St. Petersburg meanwhile Bagot remained largely uninformed on the north-west coast affair. On January 19th he received copies of Wellington's instructions and dispatches on the ukase.<sup>3</sup> A month later his authorization to enter discussions on the ukase arrived, but no mention was made of the territorial dispute.<sup>4</sup> At the beginning of March, Bagot wrote to the foreign office to enquire whether he was to seek a

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 115-6, Lieven to Wellington, November 11 (23), 1822; see also Ibid., pp. 116-7, Wellington to Lieven, November 28, 1822; and Ibid., p. 117, Wellington to George Canning, November 29, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>C.R.M., pp. 539-541, Nesselrode to Tuxill, December 2 (14), 1822. Nesselrode seems to have favoured the prospect of negotiating jointly with America and Britain.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. Sup. George Canning to Bagot, December 31, 1822.

<sup>4</sup>S.R. Tompkins, "Drawing the Alaska Boundary", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, (March, 1945), p. 6.



line of demarcation or common occupancy, and whether Russia's claims for a 'mare clausum' were subjects for discussion.<sup>1</sup> A few weeks later he obtained his full powers to negotiate on the ukase but with no further instructions enclosed.<sup>2</sup>

British shipping interests had not forgotten the question. On May 21st, Sir James Mackintosh questioned Canning about the matter, and received the reply that, "negotiations were still pending, and in activity at the court of St. Petersburg".<sup>3</sup> The Shipowners' Society itself appealed to the foreign secretary to alleviate their fears for the safety of their shipping.<sup>4</sup> At this time Charles Bagot wrote a note to Canning stating again that he only delayed in bringing the matter up with Nesselrode for lack of information on the subject. He added that Nesselrode desired to wait to have the assistance in the negotiations of Poletica, who was expected in the capital immediately.<sup>5</sup> Not till mid-July did the apologetic Canning dispatch further instructions to Bagot.<sup>6</sup> He offered a series of reasons for the delay: he was constantly occupied in parliament, he had received news from Lieven of instructions to suspend the ukase, news of events in Spain must undoubtedly have been reaching Bagot via Paris, for six weeks their own direct communication with the British ambassador in Madrid had been broken, and finally information that the United States desired to negotiate on the ukase jointly with Britain

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 119-120, George Canning to Bagot, February 25, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>Great Britain, Debates of the House of Commons, Series 2, Vol. IX, (May 21, 1823), col. 387-388.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 121, George Lyall to George Canning, June 11, 1823.

<sup>5</sup>Bagot Papers, Vol. XXII, Bagot to George Canning, June 2 (14), 1823.

<sup>6</sup>George Canning and his Friends, ed. Joscelyn Bagot, (London: John Murray, 1909), Vol. III, p. 178.

necessitated a delay while Rush received instructions.<sup>1</sup>

This news had reached Canning on June 12th in a letter from his cousin Stratford, at that time British minister to Washington.<sup>2</sup> Stratford's note stated that Adams offered the suggestion of joint negotiations to the British on approval, and added that Adams had denied any American territorial claims on the north-west coast as high as 51° N. Latitude.<sup>3</sup>

Much time and good will was lost over the question of Anglo-American joint negotiations with Russia, and possibly considerable territory as well. In this side issue, Stratford Canning's note played a large role. He actually described Adams' offer as being "to act in the proposed negotiations on a common understanding". If this was intended to convey that an understanding be reached with the United States beforehand, George Canning did not read it thus. In relaying the news to Bagot he referred to the proposal as "to join . . . in bringing forward some proposition for the definitive settlement of this question with Russia".<sup>4</sup> Canning seems to have believed that Russia's territorial pretensions could have no interest for the United States and thus would be solved by Britain and Russia separately while Britain and America, being in total agreement on Russia's maritime pretensions, could act together in St. Petersburg to quietly effect an alteration of the ukase.

---

<sup>1</sup>F.O. Sup., George Canning to Bagot, July 12, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 120-121, Stratford Canning to George Canning, May 3rd, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 123, George Canning to Bagot, July 12, 1823.

A more blatant error was committed when Stratford recorded that Adams' claims did not extend to 51° N. Latitude. The full revelation of American pretensions was thus delayed until December. This was so because the foreign secretary remained unaware that Richard Rush was empowered to discuss these pretensions with him, despite his cousin's intimations that such was the case.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of these misconceptions was that Britain made no effort to reach agreement with the United States on their respective limits on the north-west coast, before confronting the Russians. At the end of December, 1823, Canning warned his cousin against dealing with Russia without a prior understanding with the United States, and also stated the impracticability of a tripartite agreement.<sup>2</sup> Stratford also observed that the wealth of the Columbia was a much more important goal than a few degrees of coastline far to the north. When J. H. Pelly complained to Bathurst of the Russian ukase and Floyd's bill on settling the Columbia, he gave considerably more emphasis to the danger of the latter.<sup>3</sup> However, the foreign office's sudden appraisal of the extensive American claims and the non-colonization principle in President Monroe's message of December 2nd, prevented hope of amicable settlement. The way was left open for the United States to weaken Britain's position by an early agreement embodying Russian territorial claims.

---

<sup>1</sup>F.O. Sup., Stratford Canning to George Canning, June 6, 1823; see also A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 144, George Canning to Bagot, January 15, 1823. Here Canning stated his ignorance of Rush's powers on the north-west coast, and concluded that Rush must not have been instructed to invite such negotiation in London if Britain would have preferred it to be conducted in St. Petersburg.

<sup>2</sup>Tompkins, loc. cit., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 50, A8/1, J. H. Pelly to Bathurst, March 22, 1822.

It is probable that Anglo-American concord on territorial delimitation would have been difficult to obtain and there exists, in any case, some evidence that the American government was primarily concerned about Russia's claims of maritime jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup> At the end of June, 1823, the cabinet ordered Adams to suggest to Russia a tripartite joint occupation based on Article III of the convention of 1818.<sup>2</sup> Upon finishing his instructions to Middleton a few days later, Adams observed that, "I find proof enough to put down the Russian argument, but how shall we answer the Russian cannon?"<sup>3</sup>

However, a few weeks later the secretary of state revealed his territorial aspirations in an interview with Tuyl in which he emphasized that the continent was not to be the subject of European colonization.<sup>4</sup> The following week Adams sent off full instructions to both Rush and Middleton. To both, the secretary of state inveigled against European colonies on the continent. Middleton he empowered to propose joint trading rights for ten years in exchange for a separate territorial delimitation at 55° N. Latitude.<sup>5</sup> Rush was instructed to try and reach an understanding with Britain on their respective claims and to propose a continuation of their joint access agreement. With a view to a permanent line of demarcation Rush was to put forward the plan that the United States

---

<sup>1</sup>B. P. Thomas, Russian-American Relations, 1815-1867, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1930), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Adams, Memoirs, Vol. VI, (June 28, 1823), p. 158.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., (July 1, 1823), p. 159.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., (July 17, 1823), p. 163.

<sup>5</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 47-51, Adams to Middleton, July 22, 1823.

would agree to limit its settlements to south of 51° N. Latitude, if Britain would limit herself to north of that line and to the south of a Russian boundary of 55° N. Latitude.<sup>1</sup> Whether maritime or territorial considerations had precedence in Adams' judgment is ultimately of little significance. Paramount was the fact that unlike the harassed British foreign secretary, Adams considered the issues on the north-west coast of great importance.<sup>2</sup> He began his instructions to Rush by declaring that:

This interest is connected, in a manner becoming from day to day more important, with our territorial rights; with the whole system of our intercourse with the Indian tribes; with the boundary relations between us and the British American dominions; with the fur trade; the fisheries in the Pacific Ocean; the commerce with the Sandwich Islands and China; with our boundary upon Mexico; and, lastly, with our political standing and intercourse with the Russian empire.<sup>3</sup>

George Canning was increasingly worried at the prospect of foreign intervention in the Spanish colonies. Possibly he deliberately refrained from bringing up the north-west coastline issue, as he realized that the 1818 convention had five years till its expiration and did not wish to antagonize a potential ally against Europe.<sup>4</sup> On August 22nd, he proposed to Rush that the two countries make a joint declaration and a common stand against foreign intervention in the Spanish colonies.<sup>5</sup> Four days later

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 52-56, Adams to Rush, July 22, 1823. Rush was allowed if necessary to accept 49° N. Latitude as a boundary limit.

<sup>2</sup>Adams, Memoirs, Vol. VI, (July 31st, 1823), p. 166. Here he remarked that the most important labour of the month has been the preparation of instructions for Middleton to Rush.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 46-52, Adams to Rush, July 22, 1823.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 146, George Canning to Bagot, January 15, 1824.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Rush, Memoranda of a Residence at the Court of London, (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), p. 412.

Rush received a note pressing more urgently for a common stand on the Spanish colonies, in the light of intelligence that France planned to convene a congress to consider intervention in the colonies as soon as the monarchy was restored in Spain.<sup>1</sup> Throughout September, Canning continued to discuss the matter with Rush almost until the very day in early October on which he delivered the "Polignac memorandum". At no time was the north-west coast raised, though on October 8th, Canning apologized for the delay in the Anglo-American discussions on a number of matters outstanding between the countries.<sup>2</sup> He suggested that they could begin between Rush and Stratford Canning and Huskisson at the end of November, but did not then apparently realize that the Americans intended to discuss the north-west coast boundaries. On December 12, Canning announced that these talks could not be undertaken till after the Christmas holidays.<sup>3</sup> When on January 21st, 1824, preliminary talks were held to plan the order of discussions, Canning had already discovered their differences of opinion and withdrawn his proposal of joint negotiations. Rush did not present the American claims on this matter until April 1st and 2nd, two weeks before the Russian American convention was signed, while the British argument was not given until June 29th long after Bagot's negotiations had ground to a halt. Rush observed that for the first time he realized the "surprising extent" of the British claim.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 418.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 446-7.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 467.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 593 and 599.

In the autumn of 1823 the Russian capital was preoccupied with affairs in the Balkans. In October, when Anglo-Turkish talks on Greece broke down completely, Tsar Alexander set out for a secret meeting with Emperor Francis of Austria to confer on the Greek crisis. There he proposed a general European conference on the Greek question in St. Petersburg for the following year.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of August, Bagot hearing of the imminent departure of the Emperor and his entourage, questioned Nesselrode to find out if this would delay negotiations on the ukase, and at the same time informed him of the intention of America and Britain to act jointly when Middleton's instructions arrived. Nesselrode welcomed this intelligence, as it appeared to offer the most dignified manner of achieving a modification of the original claims. Bagot was in turn pleased to report that Nesselrode much preferred a definite territorial settlement to joint occupancy, and agreed that this was a matter for Britain and Russia to settle separately since it did not concern the United States.<sup>2</sup> In a private note to Canning in the same post, Bagot reported gleefully that Nesselrode "hates Middleton and Jonathon comme de raison, and he has fairly acknowledged to me that he is delighted to have us to protect him against them and to keep them in order".<sup>3</sup> Indeed in Middleton's dispatch to Adams of mid-November he betrayed more than a trace of antagonism towards Poretica.<sup>4</sup> As it turned out, however, Bagot was closer to the truth of the

---

<sup>1</sup>A. Lobanov-Rostovsky, Russia and Europe 1789-1825, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1947), p. 423.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 126-7, Bagot to George Canning, August 19 (31), 1823.

<sup>3</sup>Tompkins, loc. cit., p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 58, Middleton to Adams, November 1 (13), 1823.

matter when he observed that Middleton did "not seem at all desirous of pressing hardly upon the subject", and would be largely satisfied with any public disavowal of the pretensions in the ukase.<sup>1</sup>

After three months Middleton finally received Adams' instructions of July 22 on October 16 (28). They were so much more extreme than Bagot had expected that he in turn refused to negotiate without new instructions from Canning.<sup>2</sup> Middleton asserted none of the three powers had an absolute claim to the coast south of 61° N. Latitude but that as heirs to the Spanish title, the American claim was the best. He therefore assumed the right to share in the territorial division and proposed that this be followed by a joint agreement on free access for trading and fishing purposes. Yet Middleton appears to have got along well with Bagot and commented cheerfully in mid-December "Neither he nor I foresee any difficulty in reconciling and adjusting the interests of our respective countries upon this question."<sup>3</sup> Bagot was not sure whether to side with America or Russia or neither, and stated that he would be unable to decide until he discovered whether Britain's principal object was "to secure the fur trade on the continent for the Hudson's Bay Company or to secure to ourselves a share in the sea otter trade with China--or to secure both!" He feared that given free access to British territory American traders would speedily put the British out of the sea otter trade.<sup>4</sup>

---

1823. <sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 126, Bagot to George Canning, August 19 (31),

1823. <sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 130, Bagot to George Canning, October 17 (29),

1823. <sup>3</sup>A.S.P.F.R., Vol. V, p. 449, Middleton to Adams, December 1 (13),

1823. <sup>4</sup>Bagot Papers, Vol. XXIII, Bagot to George Canning, October 11 (29),



Poletica, though not empowered to conclude agreements with Bagot or Middleton, continued actively to collect information from them of their governments' position.<sup>1</sup> He prepared himself for these talks in several conversations with Count de Lambert, a government appointed representative for the interests of the Russian American Company. From these interviews he emerged satisfied that the company would be entirely protected with a boundary at  $54^{\circ}$  N. Latitude and an eastern boundary of longitude leaving the Mackenzie River outside Russian territory. He recorded that Lambert was eager for a fixed degree of longitude to be settled upon as a legal barrier to incursions of the Hudson's Bay Company. The company of course firmly rejected any concessions to foreign trade or navigation within Russia's boundaries.<sup>2</sup>

By coincidence at approximately the same time, Bagot seems to have turned to the idea of a meridian of longitude as the most efficient boundary to limit Russia's eastward pretensions. He felt  $139^{\circ}$  Longitude would be a practical choice as it would make the latitude of the boundary  $59 \frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  N., and preserve the entire archipelago for Britain.<sup>3</sup> At the end of October Bagot proposed to Poletica a line through Cross Sound in approximately  $57 \frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  N. Latitude [sic], up the Lynn canal, and northward along 135th meridian.<sup>4</sup> He discovered at that time Russia's extreme reluctance to accept any latitude north of  $55^{\circ}$ , but he was none the less convinced

---

<sup>1</sup>F.O. Sup., Bagot to George Canning, October 5, 1823. Bagot complained of Poletica's lack of powers. He said that it enabled him to extract information without having to make definite statements on Russia's position.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 137-8, Poletica to Nesselrode, November 3 (15), 1823.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. Sup., Bagot to George Canning, October 5, 1823.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 131, Bagot to George Canning, October 17 (29), 1823. Bagot apparently did not realize that  $135^{\circ}$  W. Longitude would deprive Britain of part of the Mackenzie delta.

that it was the 'new' American pretensions that were liable to create difficulties in the negotiations with Russia.<sup>1</sup>

Canning received this warning on November 17 but did not interrogate Rush on the American pretensions until December 12th, when he apparently began to consider new instructions for Bagot. On December 17th, Rush appeared at Canning's country estate, Gloucester Lodge, to inform the foreign secretary of his country's position. The fact that Canning was in bed with a severe attack of gout must have done nothing to lessen the bite of Rush's words. A map was spread on the bed covers and the American minister made his case and left a brief memorandum, with Canning only remarking that the claim was beyond anything England had anticipated.<sup>2</sup> The next day Canning sent a familiar note to Rush asking what the United States intended by limiting Britain south of 55° N. Latitude; did they intend to stipulate in favour of Russia against Britain? Rush could only reply "it was even so".<sup>3</sup> A few days later, news of Monroe's presidential message burst on Westminster.

The origin of the statement in this message declaring against European colonies on the American continents has been much debated by scholars. Dexter Perkins stated it originated in fear of Russia's expansion in the north-west and European intervention to the south and Adams' concern to protest American commercial not territorial interests, because colonial systems meant commercial exclusion.<sup>4</sup> His critic, Edward

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>Rush, op. cit., p. 468.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 469.

<sup>4</sup>Dexter Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine 1823-26, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), p. 17.

Tatum, asserted that like Adams' famous Independence Day address of July 4th, 1821, the President's message was largely a justifiable attack on Britain.<sup>1</sup> Frederick Merk judged that the non-colonization principle had emerged as much in response to Britain as to the Russian ukase. He observed that by the fall of 1823 the suspension of the ukase was known and that Adams' dictum was an unrealistic attempt at territorial containment of British North America.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Richard Rush, who had no instructions on the message, told Canning that he was convinced it could not be directed against Britain and implied it was a counter balance to Russia's maritime pretensions of the ukase of 1821.<sup>3</sup> Canning obviously felt as Bagot did, that whether or not it was a reaction to Russian claim, it was as extreme and objectionable as the ukase itself.<sup>4</sup>

On January 2, 1824, Rush met Canning once more at Gloucester Lodge. When confronted with Rush's staunch support of the non-colonization principle and American claims to 51°, he stated that he must either send him a formal note on the President's message or decline joint negotiations on the Russian ukase. They both tentatively agreed the latter would be the better course - Canning presumably because he desired to avoid a dispute, Rush largely to avoid challenge to the principle.<sup>5</sup> On January 5th, it was definitely agreed to proceed separately at St. Petersburg.

---

<sup>1</sup>E. H. Tatum, The United States and Europe 1815-23, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936), pp. 204 and 249.

<sup>2</sup>F. Merk, Gallatin, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 147, George Canning to Bagot, January 15, 1823.

<sup>4</sup>George Canning and his Friends, ed. Joscelyn Bagot, pp. 209-210, Bagot to George Canning, January 9, 1824; see also F.O. Sup., George Canning to Sir Charles Stuart, January 9, 1824.

<sup>5</sup>Rush, op. cit., pp. 471-3.

Thus after infinite delay and vacillation due to other foreign pressures, politics and slow communications the ukase was about to be confronted. Britain was preparing to negotiate without having first come to terms with its major rival, and was to pay the consequences.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS ON THE RUSSIAN UKAZE, JANUARY, 1824 TO THE CONCLUSION OF AN ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION

As the new year brought increased hope for the consummation of talks on the issue, the two great companies involved exerted increasing pressure on their governments.

At the end of 1823 director Prokofiev wrote to the council of the Russian American Company, claiming that the government's prohibition of foreign trade was injurious to the business of the company.<sup>1</sup> Later in the winter the directors petitioned the Tsar to amend the ukase to permit the entrance of foreign vessels to Sitka.<sup>2</sup> On January 8 (20), 1824, Count N. S. Mordvinov wrote privately to Nesselrode stating that the delay in reaching a settlement worked great economic hardship on the Russian American Company and also provoked the ire of the natives.<sup>3</sup>

In England at the end of November, J. H. Pelly had written to John Barrow of the Admiralty taking note of the proposed voyage of exploration along America's arctic coastline, and proposing that it be directed down the Mackenzie River to protect the Hudson's Bay Company from Russian encroachment.<sup>4</sup> In the same month the Shipowners' Society

---

<sup>1</sup>Tikmenev, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

<sup>2</sup>Manning, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup>Okun, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 50, A8/1, J. H. Pelly to John Barrow, November 29, 1823.

wrote to the foreign secretary hoping for an early settlement of the issue.<sup>1</sup> In mid-January John Barrow warned Canning to object strenuously to any Russian claim that would make Behring Straits a 'mere clausum'. This would be particularly important if Parry's voyage was successful in finding a north-west passage, for then the Hudson's Bay Company's furs could be shipped to Canton via the Mackenzie River.<sup>2</sup> On January 8th, Pelly addressed a note to Canning describing the company's establishments on the Mackenzie, and stating that company traders were extending their posts farther north in New Caledonia that season. Pelly rejected Russia's claim to any part of the continental coastline, but suggested a southern boundary at the north end of Chatham Straits in 58° N. Latitude, with an interior boundary located between the coastline and 100 miles inland. The territory between the Rocky Mountains and that boundary was to remain open to the traders of both nations.<sup>3</sup> Should the foreign office find it desirable to establish a definite inland limit, he suggested a line due north of Chatham Straits, though he observed that the meridian north of Mount St. Elias would be more successful in preventing collisions between the traders of the two countries!<sup>4</sup>

The above was forwarded to Bagot along with his instructions for negotiation separately from the United States, and a copy of Faden's map

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 142, Shipowners' Society to George Canning, November 19, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. Sup., John Barrow to George Canning, January 14, 1824.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 149-50, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, January 8, 1824. Pelly's exact boundary proposals are poorly expressed but from Canning's letter to Bagot of January 15th, one learns that he was prepared to accept abboundary from 56° N. Latitude up Chatham Straits.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 149-50, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, January 8, 1824.

on which were marked the Hudson's Bay Company posts and the boundaries favoured by the company.<sup>1</sup> Canning commanded that the maritime claims be disavowed, and proposed on the territorial question a boundary giving Russia Baranov Island and extending from 56° N. Latitude up Chatham Straits and the Lynn Canal to longitude 135°.<sup>2</sup> He recognized the fact that the United States was willing to grant Russia's claim to 55° N. Latitude, but felt that her demands for joint occupancy would prevent such an agreement.<sup>3</sup> In a private note to Bagot, Canning said that while he hoped Bagot would be grateful for not having to work with the Americans, none the less their countries remained on the "amicablest of terms". On the subject of Henry Middleton he warned, in a whimsical manner,

Be kind and courteous to that gentleman.  
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes  
Feed him with apricots and dewberries.<sup>4</sup>

Stratford Canning, fresh from several years in Washington, wrote the day after in a less playful mood,

I see that you are about to plunge into your north-west negotiations, and congratulate you most heartily on having at least to swim in that element without an attendant Yankee offering a cork-jacket and watching his opportunity to put your head under water.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (Brit.), p. 65, Hudson's Bay House to George Canning, January 16, 1820. Pelly considered this the most accurate map of the region.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 147-8, George Canning to Bagot, January 15, 1824; see also F.O. Sup., George Canning to Bagot, January 13, 1824.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 146, George Canning to Bagot, January 15, 1824.

<sup>4</sup>George Canning and his Friends, ed. Joscelyn Bagot, p. 215, George Canning to Bagot, January 22, 1824.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 221, Stratford Canning to Bagot, January 23, 1824.

Middleton's rapid settlement with the Russians did succeed in putting Bagot's head under water despite Bagot's own expectations to the contrary.<sup>1</sup>

When on January 28 (February 9), Middleton received the surprising news that Anglo-American unanimity was lost, he concluded that Russia would be considerably more adamant in their pretensions in the north Pacific.<sup>2</sup> He had waited for Bagot to receive new instructions since November and so was determined to proceed forthwith. His first act was, however, to inform both Bagot and Nesselrode that he would vociferously protest any attempt to reach a territorial settlement without American participation, since the United States and Britain had concurrent rights and claims.<sup>3</sup> He reported that Nesselrode had at first seemed to regard the territorial question as the concern of Britain and Russia alone, but that a few days later on February 6 (18), he had willingly agreed to separate discussions.<sup>4</sup> On Saturday evening February 9 (21) negotiations began at Nesselrode's house. Middleton submitted a project offering, in effect, a territorial boundary at 55° N. Latitude in return for free trade on the coast outside occupied areas.<sup>5</sup>

Bagot had had his first conference with Nesselrode on the preceding Monday, February 4 (16).<sup>6</sup> He was certain that American attempts to divide

<sup>1</sup>Bagot Papers, Vol. XXIII, Bagot to George Canning, February 17, 1824. Bagot reflected that the original invitation to negotiate jointly had been a "base plot". He continued "but the trick has failed . . . I shall conclude certainly speedily, and I think satisfactorily, our separate arrangements and Adams may bellow as much as he pleases."

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 68, Middleton to Adams, February 25 (March 8), 1824.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 70-1, Middleton to Adams, April 7 (19), 1824.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 82-3.

<sup>6</sup>There exists considerable doubt as to whether this date February 16, was in the Julian or Gregorian calendar. From available sources the author, unlike the A.B.T. has concluded that it was Gregorian. This would mean that Bagot met with the Russians before Middleton, not afterward.



the coast between Russia and themselves could not succeed. Bagot relished the thought of the failure of the United States, not because of Middleton with whom he was on good terms, "but on account of the perfidious Adams". He concluded that "there now does appear to me to have been a business in this business on the part of Adams which nobody but Adams was capable of".<sup>1</sup> He informed Nesselrode of Middleton's protest against a separate agreement, but they decided to continue since the United States would still be free to bring forward its own pretensions in a separate treaty. Nesselrode agreed that it was to Russia's advantage only to discuss American claims after settling on a boundary with Britain, therefore he desired a quick settlement with Bagot.

Bagot initiated discussions by remarking that he understood Russia's principal object was to protect her "fisheries" and establishments on the coast. British aims he said were to protect the posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, to guard the Mackenzie River valley, and to secure the mouths of rivers serving as an opening for the fur trade on the Pacific. To this end he closed the first meeting by proposing the boundary Canning had suggested, up the Chatham Straits and the Lynn Canal, but with the northward projection moved west to 140° W. Longitude from 135°. <sup>2</sup> Oddly enough no mention was made of a retraction of Russia's maritime claims.

A week later the Russians countered with a proposed boundary at 54° 40' N. Latitude and along the Portland Canal to "the chain of mountains parallel to the sinuosities of the coast [sic]" to 139° Longitude.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Bagot Papers, Vol. XXIII, Bagot to George Canning, February 17, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 154. Bagot to George Canning, March 17 (29), 1824.

<sup>3</sup>This chain of mountains was purely imaginary. Captain Vancouver while cruising the coast mistook the mountainous coastline before him for a chain of mountains running parallel to the shore. In reality the entire Lisière is a large mass of mountains and icefields projecting often fifty miles or more inland. The later dispute over this boundary originated in Vancouver's concept of a definite coastline and a single mountain chain.

They offered in return free navigation of the rivers entering the sea and free access to Sitka.<sup>1</sup> Bagot found this boundary entirely unsatisfactory on two counts: first, because in ceding the coast from 54°40' to 56° his maps showed that he would probably deprive the Hudson's Bay Company of free access to the Babine country via Simpson's River; and second, because Russia had no settlements on the coast south of 56° N. Latitude. He exceeded his instructions to propose instead a line around the north end of the Prince of Wales Island to the mainland and north along the coast ten marine leagues from the shore as far as 140° Longitude.<sup>2</sup> However, the Russians refused to modify their position from a boundary up the Portland Canal and along the chain of mountains to 139° Longitude.<sup>3</sup>

Their resistance may have been stiffened somewhat by a letter from Count Mordvinov offering strong opposition to the idea of "a little strip of no consequence, thirty or forty versts in width". He argued that the Russian American Company needed an expanse of forests, plains and mountains on which to support itself, and then reminded Nesselrode of the thoughtless cession of the Amur valley to China.<sup>4</sup> Mordvinov likewise argued against conceding to foreigners the right to trade with the natives, though he appealed to have the port of Sitka opened forthwith.

Determined to make one further attempt to reach agreement Bagot offered Russia Prince of Wales Island and a border of 54°40' offshore and

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 158, February 12 (24), 1824. The concession of access to Sitka may have been influenced by the Russian American Company's pressure to have the port opened.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 159.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 152-3, Mordvinov to Nesselrode, February 20 (March 3), 1824.

56°30' on the coastline with the lisière to be formed as before.<sup>1</sup> On March 17 (29) the Tsar's plenipotentiaries gave him the Tsar's decision. They claimed that Prince of Wales Island was useless without a portion of the coast behind it, and hoped that the cabinet in London would instruct Bagot to accept Russia's proposals.<sup>1</sup> Bagot was forced to refer the whole matter back to London for new instructions. He suggested to Nesselrode that the British government might leave the territorial question unsettled for the time being, and that attention be devoted instead to the more urgent matter of the maritime pretensions. Bagot was taken by surprise when Nesselrode failed to see the necessity of agreement on the maritime questions. He was forced to explain again that this was Britain's primary concern, and she understood that Russia had already undertaken to withdraw her pretensions.<sup>3</sup> It would appear to an observer that Bagot had rather slighted this 'urgent' question by omitting to raise it in the body of his discussions.<sup>4</sup>

In a private note to Canning, Bagot gave vent to his frustration at failing to bring home this treaty by accusing the Russian government

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 163.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 165.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 156-7, Bagot to George Canning, March 17 (29), 1824.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 75 and 77, Middleton to Adams, April 7 (19), 1824. Indeed if one is to believe a remark by Henry Middleton, Bagot's attitude to maritime rights on the north-west coast was quite at odds with the reassurances of the foreign office to the Board of Trade and Shipowners' Society. Middleton reported that at his fourth meeting with the Russian delegates, he was assured that England was willing to give up the right of trading to Russia's coasts and was later assured by Bagot that this was so. Middleton concluded that England's aims were to obtain abandonment of the maritime pretensions, and to win a favourable territorial settlement, but not free trading rights. He suspected they would rather be able to close their own shores than win access to others.

of a "huckstering and pedlarlike character" and by ridiculing their claims. He was confident that Nesselrode by himself would have been more tractable, for Poletica was consistently uncompromising in the matter. Both men he felt, were under the domination of the Russian American Company and Admiral Mordvinov.<sup>1</sup>

It is apparent that Bagot did not realize the cause of the Russians' unyielding position. He firmly believed that they had failed in their attempt to play off Middleton and himself against each other, and he stubbornly refused to admit that Middleton was engaged in fixing a boundary with Russia.<sup>2</sup> Nesselrode explained the Russian stand in a note composed on the same day. He regarded the Anglo-American joint occupation agreement of 1818 to be clear evidence that Britain was unsure of her own rights. Beyond this was the paramount fact that the United States had agreed to 54° 40' N. Latitude, and hence Russia would accept no other line from Britain.<sup>3</sup>

Middleton was considerably more interested than Bagot in the maritime question. At his second meeting with the Russian plenipotentiaries, he was forced to state plainly that his offer of 55° N. Latitude was fully dependent on the disavowal of the maritime clause of the ukase and the adoption of free commercial rights.<sup>4</sup> At the next meeting three days later, Middleton conceded to the Russians the whole of the Prince of Wales Island

---

<sup>1</sup>Bagot Papers, Vol. XXIII, Bagot to George Canning, March 29, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 174, Nesselrode to Lieven, April 5 (17), 1824.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 73, Middleton to Adams, April 7 (19), 1824.

and a boundary at  $54^{\circ}40'$ .<sup>1</sup> With this exception the entire negotiations from February 20 (March 3) onwards, were concerned with rights of trade.

The discussions of February 23 (March 8), revealed Russia's dislike of any plan of joint occupancy such as Middleton had been instructed to propose.<sup>2</sup> The American minister decided to suggest free trading access for a period of ten years, and at the fourth conference on March 8 (20), Nesselrode indicated this might be accepted if a prohibition of the trade in weapons and spirits could be agreed to. There followed a delay of two weeks due, to the illness of Tsar Alexander, and Middleton supposed, to give time for consultations with the Russian American Company.<sup>3</sup> On March 27 (April 8), the Tsar issued a ukase restoring the right of foreign vessels to trade with the Russian American Company at Sitka.<sup>4</sup> The remainder of the meetings from March 24 (April 5) to the formal signature of the Russian American convention on April 5 (17), were occupied by detailed discussion on the scope of the clause prohibiting the trade of liquour and firearms.

Middleton's treaty was not an unqualified victory, for though he prevented the free access clause from being definitely limited to ten years, the lack of unanimity forecast that in ten years' time American rights on the coast would be cancelled. None the less Middleton used his position *vis à vis* Britain most skilfully, being clearly aware of the need to reach settlement first.<sup>5</sup> He thereby enabled the United States to come

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>5</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 78, Middleton to Adams, April 7 (19), 1824.

home a clear winner in the three horse race, and for it received the commendation of President Monroe and his cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

In London Bagot's unhappy news had been received at the foreign office on April 13, and forwarded immediately to Hudson's Bay House. On April 19, Pelly wrote to Canning that the Russian proposal for a boundary along 54° 40' N. Latitude, the Portland Canal and the range of mountains parallel to the coast (contradictory to Bagot's opinion) secured the necessary objects of the company. He recommended that the lisière not extend more than a stipulated number of leagues from the coast. In conclusion he affirmed the committee's desire to promote a good understanding between British and Russian subjects in those regions.<sup>2</sup> The next day Canning wrote to Bagot that he had obtained the fur company's consent "to close with the Russian proposal", but would not give final instructions to sign until he had heard from Lieven.<sup>3</sup> From the Russian minister he expected to find out whether it would be more expedient to send the negotiations back to St. Petersburg or to conclude them in London.<sup>4</sup>

With the dispatch of this note a curtain of parliamentary activity descended over the foreign secretary, temporarily excluding consideration of the north-west coast. This largely concerned the recognition of the Spanish colonies as well as Irish affairs and the Catholic emancipation

---

<sup>1</sup>Adams, Memoirs, Vol. VI, (July 31, 1824), p. 403.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (Brit.), pp. 78-9, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, April 19, 1824. The company was not unaware of the profitable business that lay in supplying the Russian settlements.

<sup>3</sup>George Canning and his Friends, ed. Joscelyn Bagot, p. 233. George Canning to Bagot, April 20, 1824.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (Brit.), p. 79, George Canning to Bagot, April 24, 1824.

question. At the end of May, Canning sent a note to Bagot apologizing that he had not been able to get "two days together" to prepare his instructions. He promised to send them the following week, but then hesitated and admitted he might have to use the Whitsun holidays.<sup>1</sup> In fact it was not until July 12th that the instructions and a draft convention were dispatched to St. Petersburg.

The attention of both the foreign office and the Hudson's Bay Company was held by the continuing Anglo-American talks. On May 26th shortly before Middleton stated the American case on the Columbia question, Pelly wrote to Canning to suggest that the lisière granted Russia should be limited to ten leagues from the coast. The body of his letter, however, expressed anxiety over the effect of these negotiations on the Columbia problem. He implied that (like Stratford Canning) he had originally counselled the foreign secretary to placate the United States by agreeing to a 55° N. Latitude boundary with Russia, in the hope of a more favourable agreement on the Columbia. However, the situation had been altered by the Russian American convention whose territorial settlement perpetuated the unwarranted American claims on the coast. Pelly now advised that Britain cling to her rights on the coast until a favourable agreement be obtained with the United States as well as Russia.<sup>2</sup>

A week later the Governor and Committee of the company sent a private dispatch to George Simpson informing him that negotiations were

---

<sup>1</sup>George Canning and his Friends, ed. Joscelyn Bagot, p. 239, George Canning to Bagot, May 29, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (Brit.), pp. 80-1, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, May 26, 1824.

underway between Russia and the United States and Britain and Russia. They stated that it was "extremely desirable" that the most full and correct information on the country west of the Rockies be transmitted for the information of the foreign secretary. They also inquired as to whether there were any navigable rivers which fell into the sea north of the Columbia,<sup>1</sup> possibly foreseeing stubborn opposition to a Columbia boundary.

Canning found that the American position on a boundary with Britain was intransigent. Rush again proposed that Britain limit herself to the coast between 51° and 55° N. Latitude.<sup>2</sup> The foreign secretary commented to the British commissioners that though both sides realized that there was no immediate necessity for taking up this problem, Britain had been ready to receive the United States' suggestions cordially, but had been met with territorial claims as extravagant as maritime pretensions of Russia's ukase.<sup>3</sup>

To prevent the Russian government becoming too restless at the delay in the final settlement of this nagging issue, Canning wrote a placatory note to Lieven at the end of May.<sup>4</sup> In it he announced that Britain would shortly instruct Bagot to agree to Russia's final offer, with the

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, Gov. & Comm. to George Simpson, June 2, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>Rush, op. cit., pp. 592-7, Rush to Adams, August 12, 1824. Rush mentioned that possibly through some accident, he had not heard from Middleton during the course of negotiations in St. Petersburg and only learned of the treaty recently through the kindness of Lieven.

<sup>3</sup>Some Official Correspondence of George Canning, ed. E. Stapleton, (London: Longmans, 1887), Vol. II, p. 77, George Canning to Stratford Canning and Huskisson, May 31, 1824.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 179, Lieven to Nesselrode, May 21 (June 2), 1824. Lieven stated he would have been "inconsolable" about the long delay if he could not now report Britain's desire to come to terms.



provision that the extent of the lisière be accurately defined, a more westerly degree of longitude north of Mount St. Elias be obtained, along with precise terms of access to coastal rivers and trading privileges equal to those given other nations.<sup>1</sup> Lieven transmitted this information to St. Petersburg and commented that Canning had "exerted himself very faithfully to satisfy us completely", but that "he had to struggle against a violent opposition on the part of the companies interested".<sup>2</sup> Canning was apparently just as successful in maintaining an image of diplomatic impartiality as was Nesselrode, who had appeared to Bagot as similarly well-intentioned but beleaguered by special interests.<sup>3</sup>

The delay in the preparation of the actual instruction continued, due possibly to the preparation of Britain's counter argument against the United States' claims in the north-west boundary discussions. At the end of June, Canning notified Bagot that he had put the drawing of the convention into "good hands".<sup>4</sup> This was a reference to Lord St. Helens whose hand Canning judged, "has not lost its cunning altogether though thirty-five years have passed since it settled the dispute at Nootka".<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (Brit.), p. 81, George Canning to Lieven, May 29, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 180, Lieven to Nesselrode, May 21 (June 2), 1824.

<sup>3</sup>See above, page 119.

<sup>4</sup>George Canning and his Friends, ed. Joscelyn Bagot, Vol. II, p. 246, George Canning to Bagot, June 29, 1824.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Vol. II, p. 265, George Canning to Bagot, July 29, 1824.

Finally on July 12th, the instructions and convention were finished. Canning stated that only two points remained to be settled by Bagot: the specific limitation of the lisière and the extent of time for which the reciprocal right of free trade would operate.<sup>1</sup>

Canning now regarded success in the matter as almost a foregone conclusion. He commented to Bagot that,

It has been submitted to both the furry and the finny tribes--the Enderby's, the Pelly's and the Barrow's . . . It is of immense importance to have this convention signed and to bring the ratifications home with you. We shall have a squabble with the Yankees yet in and about those regions. But Russia will be out of it, which is as well for herself as for us--indeed better.<sup>2</sup>

His expectations of agreement were heightened by the fact that the Russian ambassador himself was consulted in the preparation of the instructions. Lieven's observations on the width of the lisière and the British demand to assure safe access to the Arctic Ocean through the Behring Straits, did not dispel the aura of success.<sup>3</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company wrote to J. D. Cameron on the Columbia and informed him that they soon expected to have the coast exclusively as far as the Portland Canal, and the right to ship goods from any place between there and Mount St. Elias.<sup>4</sup> It was with high expectations therefore, that the negotiations

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 181-2, George Canning to Bagot, July 12, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>George Canning to his Friends, ed. Joscelyn Bagot, p. 265, George Canning to Bagot, July 29, 1824.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (Brit.), p. 91, George Canning to Bagot, July 24, 1824.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/21, Gov. & Comm. to J. D. Cameron, July 22, 1824.

returned to St. Petersburg.

During the interval in Russia strong opposition to the Russian-American treaty had been expressed by representatives of the Russian company. A week after the convention was signed, Nesselrode wrote an explanatory letter to Mordvinov to try and forestall their criticism. He pointed out that the Russian claims from the Polar Sea to  $54^{\circ} 40'$  had been given formal recognition, and Fort Ross not compromised. The Americans had bound themselves to ask permission before landing at Russian settlements and had agreed to prohibit the trading of arms and liquor to natives. Though it had been necessary to allow the Americans free rights of trade on the coast it was only for ten years. Nesselrode observed that it was better to grant formal permission than to be forced to accede to a practice that Russia could not prevent.

On the current negotiations with Britain the foreign minister took a somewhat sterner position. He reminded Mordvinov, that dedicated though the government was to the company's welfare, "it must not be forgotten that there may exist other most important necessities and interests of state which may impose very grave duties on the government".<sup>1</sup> Nesselrode stressed that the boundary agreed upon would be drawn to prevent collisions, and would entail some sacrifice on both sides. He stated plainly that Russia had no justifiable claims to extend her territory to the midst of the Rockies.

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 166-9, Nesselrode to Mordvinov, April 11 (23), 1824; see also Okun, *op. cit.*, p. 93. Okun implies that these other interests were Russia's concern over Greece and her desire to maintain good relations with England on that account. See also, A. G. Mazour, "The Russian-American and Anglo-Russian Conventions 1824-25; An Interpretation", *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. XIV, (1945), p. 303.

Despite Nesselrode's arguments, the period from April 5 (17) to May 10 (22), between the signature and ratification to the convention with America, was full of appeals from the company. Ryleyev wrote to Finance Minister Kankrin to warn of intensified foreign competition and the probable alienation of the natives.<sup>1</sup> D. I. Zavalishin prepared a memorandum which foresaw the convention leading to the end of Russian rule on the north-west coast.<sup>2</sup> A month later the board of directors of the company presented a statement to Finance Minister Kankrin on the probable consequences of the ratification of the convention with the United States, which Kankrin in turn forwarded to the foreign minister.<sup>3</sup> During the summer the Tsar responded to the company's appeals by establishing a special commission to consider their complaints of the Russian-American convention.<sup>4</sup> The conclusions of this body were favourable to the company. Its report stated that the United States could claim no trading rights to eastern Siberia, the Aleutians or Kuriles, and furthermore that their privileges extended only to the disputed territory on the north-west coast between 54° 40' and 57° N. Latitude.<sup>5</sup> It was apparently on the suggestion of this body that Baron Tuyll made an approach to Adams before the American ratification of the treaty. The secretary of state advised the embarrassed minister that no public declaration be made of the proposed modifications, but he seems to have quietly ensured their implementation.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Okun, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>3</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 92-3, Kankrin to the Directors of the Russian American Company, September 4 (16), 1824.

<sup>4</sup>Tikmenev, op. cit., p. 271.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>6</sup>Adams, Memoirs, Vol. VI, (December 16, 1824), pp. 435-7; see also S. R. Tompkins, "Drawing the Alaska Boundary", p. 21.

The Russian government was of course most concerned with the Greek question and the European conference which met in St. Petersburg in June to consider it. The assembly made no progress and recessed until the following winter.<sup>1</sup> The Russian foreign minister looked forward confidently to having settled their difference with England on the north-west coast before that time. It was therefore a considerable shock to both sides when after two meetings the talks again collapsed.

With the advantage of hindsight it is not difficult to see why each sides' hopeful expectations were misplaced. In Canning's draft convention Britain acceded to the major Russian demands on a territorial boundary, but stipulated three sizable concessions in rights of trade: perpetual access of British commerce to Sitka, perpetual right of navigation to trade along the coast of the lisière to 60° N. Latitude and finally reciprocal rights to visit for a number of years all the other parts of their respective holdings on the coast of the continent.<sup>2</sup> On the first two points the Russians absolutely refused to consider perpetual rights. They proposed instead a limit of ten years though admitting, particularly in the case of access to Sitka, that they would support a renewal. Russia argued successfully that the United States had just as much right as Britain to obtain privileges equal to other foreign nations. As Russia had only granted ten year terms to America she could not grant more to Britain.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Lobanov-Rostovsky, op. cit., p. 423.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 190, Bagot to George Canning, August 12, 1824.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 201, Nesselrode to Lieven, August 31 (September 12), 1824.

Russia rejected firmly the third point by which Britain strove to gain certain access to the Behring Straits, stating that the negotiations were not concerned with territory north of 60° N. Latitude.<sup>1</sup> All these objections were embodied in a Russian counter project which Bagot found clearly in conflict with his instructions. In a private note to his foreign secretary he expressed the opinion that "You have as much chance of getting Moscow ceded to Great Britain as of inducing this country to yield upon the three points."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Bagot wondered whether Russian opposition to Britain's demand for perpetual rights of trade to 60° N. Latitude, was not justified. Nevertheless, Bagot attributed the intransigence shown by Nesselrode and Foletica to the clamour of protest raised by the Russian American Company against the convention with the United States.<sup>3</sup> Bagot concluded his letter by declaring how much he regretted his failure to obtain a settlement of the issue both on public and personal grounds, as he would have ended his stay in St. Petersburg "handsomely" by concluding a treaty of such magnitude and importance.

Canning's immediate reaction to Bagot's information was to request that Lieven write hastily for powers to conclude the treaty in London.<sup>4</sup> He stated that he was anxious to reach a settlement before parliament met for he feared to confront them without an agreement, so often had false

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Bagot Papers, Vol. XXIII, Bagot to George Canning, August 24, 1824.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 206-7, George Canning to Lieven, September 12, 1824. The following day Canning wrote with similar instructions to Mr. Ward the new British minister to St. Petersburg.

promises of hope been held out to them. Once more Canning began to re-draft the proposed treaty with the venerable Lord St. Helens. On October 19, the foreign office sent some papers received from Lieven on the north-west coast issue, to John Henry Pelly for the company's observations.<sup>1</sup>

The following day a reply was received stating that the company felt that the difference between the Russian and the British project was not sufficient to warrant rejection. Pelly did make it clear, however, that the company would have much preferred a boundary between the islands of the archipelago and the mainland, and that even now, they would gladly forego the ten year trading rights to the coast to attain it. If such a boundary was not possible, the company desired that British privileges be equal to those granted the United States and that the lisière be limited to ten leagues in depth.<sup>2</sup>

Canning's plans to settle the north-west coast problem quickly in London, were altered by increasing controversy on the Greek revolution. As mentioned above, Russia planned to reconvene a conference of the major nations on the matter. Britain had agreed to send Stratford Canning for the discussions. Then the Greeks themselves learned of the project, and in fear appealed to Britain for protection. The cabinet thereupon decided that Britain could not rightfully attend the conference.<sup>3</sup> This created a situation Canning described as "full of peril and plague", for England

---

<sup>1</sup>Some Official Correspondence of George Canning, ed. E. Stapleton, p. 177, George Canning to Liverpool, October 17, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 50, A8/1, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, October 20, 1824.

<sup>3</sup>S. Lane Poole, The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning, (London: Longmans Green, 1888), Vol. I, pp. 341-2.

had placed herself in the centre of a maelstrom. France and Russia supported the Tsar's conference completely, Austria appeared to, but expected it to fall. Lieven had the strongest instructions to solicit England's cooperation, while the powers of Europe were prepared to blame England for any failure of the conference.<sup>1</sup> The Tsar accused George Canning of longstanding sympathy for the revolutionary spirit.<sup>2</sup> It was to remove these misconceptions and to clarify her position, that the cabinet decided not to cancel Stratford Canning's planned visit to St. Petersburg that winter. While there, though boycotting the conference, he could discuss the matter privately, and also settle the dispute arising from the ukase of 1821.<sup>3</sup>

By December 8th, Stratford Canning's instructions were prepared for him.<sup>4</sup> His cousin stressed that the question of a territorial settlement on the north-west coast had only been proposed to facilitate the withdrawal of the offensive pretensions of the ukase with less appearance of concession by Russia. Therefore though the territorial limits could be postponed indefinitely, the maritime pretensions must continue no longer. The foreign secretary appears finally to have realized the importance of the Russian-American convention. He felt it best to use its first two articles to define their required rights of navigation, for as he remarked,

---

<sup>1</sup>Some Official Correspondence of George Canning, ed. E. Stapleton, p. 177, George Canning to Liverpool, October 17, 1824.

<sup>2</sup>Lane-Poole, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 342. The Tsar conceived a more favourable opinion of Canning in 1825 from the reports of Countess Lieven; see also Lobanov Rostovsky, op. cit., p. 425.

<sup>3</sup>Lane-Poole, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 342.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 208-212, George Canning to Stratford Canning, December 8, 1824.



"Russia cannot mean to give to the United States of America what she withholds from us; nor to withhold from us anything that she has consented to give to the United States." In fact by this date George Canning seems to have been quite content with the hope of obtaining what the Americans had gained. His only limiting stricture to Stratford was that he reject Russian arguments that the boundary of the lisiere be described solely by a distance of ten leagues from the coast. He stipulated that where the mountains ran closer than ten leagues to the shore they should form the boundary.<sup>1</sup>

On January 7th, 1825, Stratford left Vienna for St. Petersburg, apprehensive that he would receive an unpleasant reception in Russia on both the Greek and north-west issues unless he was suddenly authorized to join the conference.<sup>2</sup> He proceeded via Warsaw and Riga because a specially warm season had made the more direct routes hazardous. Only when two hundred versts from his destination was he able to exchange his carriage for a sleigh. In a letter to his mother, possibly reflecting upon Napoleon's fate in Russia, Stratford stated "to the wayfarer's eye the whole scene was sepulchral, blank, motionless and silent".<sup>3</sup> He arrived in St. Petersburg at the end of January, and soon afterwards had his first interview with Nesselrode.

The foreign minister stated that he was prepared only to discuss the north-west coast not Greece, to which Stratford was forced to accede.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 210-211.

<sup>2</sup>Lane-Poole, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 352, Stratford Canning to George Canning, December 30, 1824; see also ibid., p. 354.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 355, Stratford Canning to his mother, February 8, 1825.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. Sup., Stratford Canning to George Canning, January 28 (February 9), 1825.

However, a scant two weeks after the British envoy presented his project at the initial meeting on January 31 (February 12), he was able to sign the final agreement on February 16 (28). In this space of time Stratford was able to convince the Russians reluctantly to abandon an unrestricted boundary of the lisiere along the mountain crests in favour of one along the mountain tops not exceeding ten leagues from the coast. He managed to extend the northward boundary from Mount St. Elias two degrees to the west to 141° Longitude, and to extract from the Russians a denial of any exclusive claims to the navigation of the Behring Straits.<sup>1</sup> Stratford was pleased with his work and commented benignly that the Russians had been disposed to deal with "fairness and liberality".<sup>2</sup> Indeed he seems to have formed an affection for the Russian people generally, and in turn to have been well received in both St. Petersburg and Moscow.<sup>3</sup>

The Russian negotiators were also pleased to reach agreement, though they were considerably aggravated by Stratford's refusal to concede a boundary simply following the mountain chain.<sup>4</sup> Their satisfaction arose partly from the fact that in the main their original demands had been accepted but also because it was in the midst of the conference on the Greeks' war of independence.<sup>5</sup> This was a matter of vital interest

---

<sup>1</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), pp. 223-4, Stratford Canning to George Canning, February 17 (March 1), 1825.

<sup>2</sup>A.B.T. (Brit.), p. 130, Stratford Canning to George Canning, February 17 (March 1), 1825.

<sup>3</sup>Lane-Poole, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 373-380; see also E. F. Malcolm-Smith, The Life of Stratford Canning, (London: Ernest Benn, 1933), p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>A.B.T. (U.S.), p. 227, Nesselrose to Lieven, March 13, 1825. Nesselrode went so far as to prepare a formal note to draw attention to Stratford's unconciliatory stand on the issue.

<sup>5</sup>Okun, op. cit., pp. 85 and 93. Okun indicates that the pressures of this conference added to England's position of influence in the Mediterranean, made Russia extremely vulnerable to British claims on the north-west coast. It must be remembered, however, that Russia in fact made few concessions to Great Britain.

to Russia demanding the most rigorous negotiations,<sup>1</sup> particularly because Russian spirits were becoming increasingly inflamed against the Turks.<sup>2</sup>

Tsar Alexander gave evidence of desiring an immediate end to the north-west coast controversy. On February 17th the directors of the Russian American Company sent a memorandum to Finance Minister Kankrin dealing with a project to build fortresses along the Mednaya River far inland to the Rocky Mountains.<sup>3</sup> S. B. Okun noted that these were intended to delimit the territorial concessions made to Britain in the negotiations.<sup>4</sup> The directors demanded that as both the Hudson's Bay Company and themselves were attempting to expand to the Rockies, the government should protect the company by stipulating a boundary along the Rocky Mountains. On February 15 (27), Kankrin forwarded this to Nesselrode with the comment that he found this representation "worthy of consideration". On February 20 (March 4), four days after the signing of the convention, Kankrin made a notation on the memorandum that his judgment had been too hasty. A strong message had been received from the Tsar himself ordering the construction of the fortresses to be ceased immediately, and stating that the company's

---

<sup>1</sup>Lobanov-Rostovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 424-5. On March 13, 1825 a compromise protocol was drawn up which failed to include the necessary articles to compel Turkey to negotiate a settlement in Greece.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 420.

<sup>3</sup>Okun, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-5. Okun gives the date of this letter as February 17th but fails to indicate the calendar. It is his habit to use the Julian calendar and only supply its Gregorian equivalent when the event involves 'European' countries. However, if February 17 is in the Julian calendar, it means that the company wrote their demands the day following the conclusion of the treaty. Then the finance minister agreed with their demands nearly two weeks after the treaty had been signed. As this is highly improbable, the author has assumed the correct date of the letter to be February 5 (17).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 114.

boundary demands were not conformable either to their rights or to the circumstances of the region. Kankrin was ordered to reprimand them for the impropriety of the proposal itself and its form of expression, "so that they should henceforth submit unquestioningly to the orders and views of the government without overstepping the bounds of the merchant class".<sup>1</sup>

This judgment, which would not have been out of place on the lips of Stalin in the last years of the N.E.P., clearly marked the difference between the Russian company's relationship to its government, and the Hudson's Bay Company's to its government. The Russian American Company had received much economic and political assistance from the government according to its current usefulness and the influence of its directors, but the government was fundamentally an autocracy so when circumstances so demanded, it did not hesitate to assume dictatorial control over its 'private' enterprise.

The company, particularly as it was constituted on the verge of the Decemberist revolution, did not willingly accept such dictation. The Decemberist, D. I. Zavalishin stated the company's case in a bitter attack on the Anglo-Russian convention. The concession of two degrees of longitude, and free navigation of the inland waters, appeared to Zavalishin to leave Britain the real masters of the land. To make the best of the situation he suggested that the company should immediately expand the number of its settlements and to undercut the prices of English merchandise

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

by aggressive trading south of 54° 40' N. Latitude.<sup>1</sup> These were the militant visions of a revolutionary; impossible to implement with the inadequate resources remaining to the company after twenty wasted years.<sup>2</sup>

The Hudson's Bay Company, whose governors had played such a large part in the formulation of the British position, displayed remarkably little interest in the outcome of the negotiations. In early June, they forwarded its contents to George Simpson without comment.<sup>3</sup> Simpson merely observed that its terms "appear favourable", and expressed the hope that His Majesty's ministers would be equally watchful of the British interests against the unwarranted claims of the United States.

The company was fortunate that its territorial claims were under the supervision of George Canning. He was fully aware of the potential of the trade of the Pacific North West, once the East India Company's monopoly at Canton expired.<sup>4</sup> He went so far as to express shame at being a member of the cabinet that had approved the restoration of Fort Astoria in 1818<sup>5</sup>. Above all, as was proved by Britain's negotiations with America on the Columbia River, he was determined not to yield British advantage on the Pacific coast.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>Manning, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/21, Gov. & Comm. to George Simpson, June 3, 1825.

<sup>4</sup>Some Official Correspondence of George Canning, ed. E. Stapleton, Vol. II, p. 62, George Canning to Liverpool, June 24, 1826.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 72-4, George Canning to Liverpool, July 7, 1826.

Despite Canning's intentions, however, the Anglo-Russian convention cannot be considered to have been a triumph of British diplomacy.<sup>1</sup> The treaty did eliminate the threat of Russian expansion to the interior of the continent, and the possibility of the Behring Straits being closed. It did ensure the Hudson's Bay Company access to the coast, open the archipelago to coastal trade for ten years and safeguard the Mackenzie valley from Russian expansion.<sup>2</sup> But the fact remains that the Russian position in the Pacific was extremely weak while British military and commercial power was ascendant. With this fundamental advantage the foreign office should have been able to obtain a boundary that limited Russia to the islands of the Alexander Archipelago. There were two prime reasons for its failure to achieve this. The foreign office failed to realize that the Russians could obtain a favourable territorial settlement from the Americans who eagerly granted it at the expense of Great Britain in exchange for maritime rights that Russia could hardly deny. More important possibly was the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company did not penetrate the area sufficiently to give Great Britain an insurmountable claim to the coastline of the lisière. This was partly due to the exhaustive reorganization that preoccupied the company following the union of 1821. Nor should one overlook the series of frustrations that thwarted Chief Trader William Brown's explorations to the Pacific coast in 1823, 1824 and 1825.

---

<sup>1</sup>Archibald McDonald, Peace River, A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to Pacific by the Late Sir George Simpson in 1828, ed. Malcolm McLeod, (Ottawa: J. Durie & Sons, 1872), p. 112. McLeod offered the most original judgment on the convention discovered by the author. "It was a single intelligent mind, Lord Loughborough, that in 1824-5 when the Russian claim was advanced, saved us any Pacific coast at all, so the story runs." Loughborough was an old Tory general who at that time served as Lord Lieutenant of Fifeshire!

<sup>2</sup>Malcolm-Smith, op. cit., p. 91.

## APPENDIX A

### THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AS A SOURCE OF GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON THE NORTH-WEST COAST

If the company had little success in expanding their operations to meet the Russian claims between 1822 and 1825, there was one area in which the wintering partners were of the greatest use to the British negotiations. In January, 1822, Nicholas Garry sent a map of North America to John Barrow at the Admiralty, and enclosed the journal of Daniel Harmon with its description of the country west of the Rockies.<sup>1</sup> When the Governor and Committee wrote to inform the officers of the Columbia of the Russian claims, they mentioned that the matter was being considered by His Majesty's ministers, and ordered them to ascertain the number and size of all Russian vessels seen on the coast and whether they had any fixed establishments thereon.<sup>2</sup> Obviously this information was intended eventually for the foreign office.

In the same month Pelly wrote to Canning and in setting forth the company claims, described the locations of the company establishments west of the Rockies. With a private note he sent a map of North America and a memorandum citing the authorities from which his observations were taken.<sup>3</sup> In January, 1824, Pelly sent a copy of Faden's map to Canning

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel 28, A5/16, Nicholas Garry to John Barrow, January 18, 1822.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, Gov. & Comm., Babine Post Journals, January 5, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A8/1, J. H. Pelly to George Canning, September 25, 1822.

remarking that it was probably the most accurate available.<sup>1</sup>

In the meanwhile information began to sift out of New Caledonia. William Brown having just returned from a journey to the Atnah Indians, noted in his journal on January 5, 1823, that though the Indians wished to make it appear there was a European establishment at the forks of the Skeena, he ascertained that there were no European settlements either there or at the mouth; there being only a trading vessel plying the coast.<sup>2</sup> As this journal was forwarded to Simpson in the spring, its information could well have been in London by the autumn.

However, Brown's opinions were not shared by his superior, the venerable John Stuart. In a letter to Brown in December, 1822, he took it as proven that a chain of mountains extended along the whole of the north-west coast close to the sea. He also stated that it was a well established fact that there were permanent Russian establishments on the coast, as well as many American adventurers.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned above, Governor Simpson appears to have shared this belief as late as August, 1825.<sup>4</sup>

In Brown's report on the Babine district, written not later than the spring of 1823, he reiterated his belief that there were no European posts on the Simpson's river, inland or at the sea. But he did state that there was a trading establishment, probably Russian, further to the

---

<sup>1</sup>See Chapter VI; and also end pocket.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM15, B/11/a/1, William Brown, Babine Post Journals, January 5, 1822.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM223, B/188/b/1, J. S. Stuart to William Brown, December 2, 1822.

<sup>4</sup>See above, page 38.



north at the mouth of a large river descending from an extensive lake.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to say, with the confused state of geographical knowledge in that quarter in those years, whether these tales related to the Nass or to the Stikine River. The estuaries of both seem to have been centres of trade for coastal vessels, though at neither were there permanent posts.

London's demands for more geographical knowledge continued. In November, 1823, William Smith, secretary to the committee, added a note to a dispatch to the Columbia, asking how far the map attached to Harmon's journals could be considered correct. He asked for all additional information they possessed, saying that it was desired to fill in on the map the positions of the rivers and establishments on the west side of the mountains as quickly as possible.<sup>2</sup> Yet a year later Governor Simpson complained to McMillan that they still had obtained no knowledge of the country or its inhabitants north of Puget's Sound from their own observations, despite the fact that the establishment was fourteen years old and three-fourths of the returns came from the quarter.<sup>3</sup> Four months later he announced in a letter to the Governor and Committee, that as he still had not seen a map of the country even approximately accurate, he was enclosing a sketch of the territory west of the Rockies, and apologized for not having been able to get it to them sooner.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>H.B.A., Reel IM776, B/11/e/i, William Brown, Babine Report on District, 1823.

<sup>2</sup>H.B.A., Reel 40, A6/20, William Smith to Officers of the Columbia Department, November 14, 1823.

<sup>3</sup>H.B.A., Reel 3M3, D4/5, Governor Simpson to McMillan, November 17, 1824.

<sup>4</sup>H.B.A., Reel 195, A12/1, Governor Simpson to Gov. & Comm., March 10, 1825.

This ignorance is all the more surprising in the light of the articles which appeared in the North American Review and the Quarterly Review in 1822, mentioned above. Both accurately describe the confluence of both the Nass and Skeena rivers while the American periodical gives a judicious estimate of navigation on the Skeena.<sup>1</sup> The Yankee traders sailing out of Boston (where the North American Review was published) were obviously the most informed sources on the nature of the coast north of Vancouver Island. Nevertheless, the company, with its hold on the lower Columbia, the Babine country and the Mackenzie basin, was the major source of the foreign office's information on that corner of the globe.

---

<sup>1</sup>The North American Review, 1822, p. 396.

## APPENDIX B

TREATIES AND CONVENTIONS RELATIVE TO THE NORTH-WEST  
TERRITORIES OF NORTH AMERICA.

(1.)

*Convention between Great Britain and Spain, (commonly called the  
NOOTKA TREATY,) signed at the Escorial, October 28th, 1790.*

ARTICLE 1. The buildings and tracts of land situated on the north-west coast of the continent of North America, or on the islands adjacent to that continent, of which the subjects of his Britannic majesty were dispossessed about the month of April, 1789, by a Spanish officer, shall be restored to the said British subjects.

ART. 2. A just reparation shall be made, according to the nature of the case, for all acts of violence or hostility which may have been committed subsequent to the month of April, 1789, by the subjects of either of the contracting parties against the subjects of the other; and, in case any of the said respective subjects shall, since the same period, have been forcibly dispossessed of their lands, buildings, vessels, merchandise, and other property, whatever, on the said continent, or on the seas and islands adjacent, they shall be reestablished in the possession thereof, or a just compensation shall be made to them for the losses which they have sustained.

ART. 3. In order to strengthen the bonds of friendship, and to preserve in future a perfect harmony and good understanding, between the two contracting parties, it is agreed that their respective subjects shall not be disturbed or molested, either in navigating, or carrying on their fisheries, in the Pacific Ocean or in the South Seas, or in landing on the coasts of those seas in places not already occupied, for the purpose of carrying on their commerce with the natives of the country, or of making settlements there; the whole subject, nevertheless, to the restrictions specified in the three following articles.

ART. 4. His Britannic majesty engages to take the most effectual measures to prevent the navigation and the fishery of his subjects in the Pacific Ocean or in the South Seas from being made a pretext for illicit trade with the Spanish settlements; and, with this view, it is moreover expressly stipulated that British subjects shall not navigate, or carry on their fishery, in the said seas, within the space of ten sea leagues from any part of the coasts already occupied by Spain.

ART. 5. As well in the places which are to be restored to the British subjects, by virtue of the first article, as in all other parts of the north-

western coasts of North America, or of the islands adjacent, situate to the north of the parts of the said coast already occupied by Spain, wherever the subjects of either of the two powers shall have made settlements since the month of April, 1789, or shall hereafter make any, the subjects of the other shall have free access, and shall carry on their trade without any disturbance or molestation.

ART. 6. With respect to the eastern and western coasts of South America, and to the islands adjacent, no settlement shall be formed hereafter by the respective subjects in such part of those coasts as are situated to the south of those parts of the same coasts, and of the islands adjacent, which are already occupied by Spain: provided, that the said respective subjects shall retain the liberty of landing on the coasts and islands so situated for the purpose of their fishery, and of erecting thereon huts and other temporary buildings serving only for those purposes.

ART. 7. In all cases of complaint or infraction of the articles of the present convention, the officers of either party, without permitting themselves to commit any violence or act of force, shall be bound to make an exact report of the affair and of its circumstances to their respective courts, who will terminate such differences in an amicable manner.

(2.)

*Convention between the United States of America and Great Britain,  
signed at London, October 20th, 1818.*

ARTICLE 2. It is agreed that a line drawn from the most north-western point of the Lake of the Woods, along the 49th parallel of north latitude, or, if the said point shall not be in the 49th parallel of north latitude, then that a line drawn from the said point due north or south, as the case may be, until the said line shall intersect the said parallel of north latitude, and from the point of such intersection due west along and with the said parallel, shall be the line of demarkation between the territories of the United States and those of his Britannic majesty; and that the said line shall form the northern boundary of the said territories of the United States, and the southern boundary of the territories of his Britannic majesty, from the Lake of the Woods to the Stony Mountains.

ART. 3. It is agreed that any country that may be claimed by either party on the north-west coast of America, westward of the Stony Mountains, shall, together with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free and open for the term of ten years from the date of the signature of the present convention, to the vessels, citizens, and subjects, of the two powers; it being well understood that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the two high contracting parties may have to any part of the said country, nor shall it be taken to affect the claims of any other power or state to any part of the said country; the only object of the high contracting parties, in that respect, being to prevent disputes and differences among themselves.

(3.)

*Treaty of Amity, Settlement, and Limits, between the United States and Spain, (commonly called the FLORIDA TREATY,) signed at Washington, February 22d, 1819.*

ARTICLE 3. The boundary line between the two countries west of the Mississippi shall begin on the Gulf of Mexico, at the mouth of the River Sabine, in the sea, continuing north, along the western bank of that river, to the 32d degree of latitude; thence, by a line due north, to the degree of latitude where it strikes the Rio Roxo of Natchitoches, or Red River; then, following the course of the Rio Roxo westward, to the degree of longitude 100 west from London and 23 from Washington; then crossing the said Red River, and running thence, by a line due north, to the River Arkansas; thence following the course of the southern bank of the Arkansas, to its source in latitude 42 north; and thence, by that parallel of latitude, to the South Sea; the whole being as laid down in Melish's map of the United States, published at Philadelphia, improved to the 1st of January, 1818. But, if the source of the Arkansas River shall be found to fall north or south of latitude 42, then the line shall run from the said source due south or north, as the case may be, till it meets the said parallel of latitude 42, and thence, along the said parallel, to the South Sea; all the islands in the Sabine, and the said Red and Arkansas Rivers, throughout the course thus described, to belong to the United States; but the use of the waters and the navigation of the Sabine to the sea, and of the said Rivers Roxo and Arkansas, throughout the extent of the said boundary, on their respective banks, shall be common to the respective inhabitants of both nations.

The two high contracting parties agree to cede and renounce all their rights, claims, and pretensions, to the territories described by the said line; that is to say, the United States hereby cede to his Catholic majesty, and renounce forever, all their rights, claims, and pretensions, to the territories lying west and south of the above-described line; and, in like manner, his Catholic majesty cedes to the said United States all his rights, claims, and pretensions, to any territories east and north of the said line; and for himself, his heirs, and successors, renounces all claim to the said territories forever.

(4.)

*Convention between the United States and Russia, signed at St. Petersburg, on the 17 of April, 1824.*

ARTICLE 1. It is agreed that, in any part of the great ocean, commonly called the Pacific Ocean, or South Sea, the respective citizens or subjects of the high contracting powers shall be neither disturbed nor restrained, either in navigation or in fishing, or in the power of resorting to the coasts, upon points which may not already have been occupied, for the purpose of trading with the natives; saving always the restrictions and conditions determined by the following articles.

ART. 2. With the view of preventing the rights of navigation and of fishing, exercised upon the great ocean by the citizens and subjects of the high contracting powers, from becoming the pretext for an illicit trade, it is agreed that the citizens of the United States shall not resort to any point where there is a Russian establishment, without the permission of the governor or commander; and that, reciprocally, the subjects of Russia shall not resort, without permission, to any establishment of the United States upon the north-west coast.

ART. 3. It is, moreover, agreed that hereafter there shall not be formed by the citizens of the United States, or under the authority of the said States, any establishment upon the north-west coast of America, nor in any of the islands adjacent, *to the north* of 54 degrees and 40 minutes of north latitude; and that, in the same manner, there shall be none formed by Russian subjects, or under the authority of Russia, *south* of the same parallel.

ART. 4. It is, nevertheless, understood that, during a term of ten years, counting from the signature of the present convention, the ships of both powers, or which belong to their citizens or subjects, respectively, may reciprocally frequent, without any hinderance whatever, the interior seas, gulfs, harbors, and creeks, upon the coast mentioned in the preceding article, for the purpose of fishing and trading with the natives of the country.

ART. 5. All spirituous liquors, fire-arms, other arms, powder, and munitions of war of every kind, are always excepted from this same commerce permitted by the preceding article; and the two powers engage, reciprocally, neither to sell, nor suffer them to be sold, to the natives, by their respective citizens and subjects, nor by any person who may be under their authority. It is likewise stipulated, that this restriction shall never afford a pretext, nor be advanced, in any case, to authorize either search or detention of the vessels, seizure of the merchandise, or, in fine, any measures of constraint whatever, towards the merchants or the crews who may carry on this commerce; the high contracting powers reciprocally reserving to themselves to determine upon the penalties to be incurred, and to inflict the punishments in case of the contravention of this article by their respective citizens or subjects.

(5.)

*Convention between Great Britain and Russia, signed at St. Petersburg, February 18, 1825.*

ARTICLE 1. It is agreed that the respective subjects of the high contracting parties shall not be troubled or molested in any part of the ocean commonly called the Pacific Ocean, either in navigating the same, in fishing therein, or in landing at such parts of the coast as shall not have been already occupied, in order to trade with the natives, under the restrictions and conditions specified in the following articles.

ART. 2. In order to prevent the right of navigating and fishing, exercised upon the ocean by the subjects of the high contracting parties, from becoming the pretext for an illicit commerce, it is agreed that the subjects

of his Britannic majesty shall not land at any place where there may be a Russian establishment, without the permission of the governor or commandant; and, on the other hand, that Russian subjects shall not land, without permission, at any British establishment on the north-west coast.

ART. 3. The line of demarkation between the possessions of the high contracting parties, upon the coast of the continent, and the islands of America to the north-west, shall be drawn in the manner following: Commencing from the southernmost point of the island called Prince of Wales's Island, which point lies in the parallel of 54 degrees 40 minutes north latitude, and between the 131st and the 133d degree of west longitude, (meridian of Greenwich,) the said line shall ascend to the north along the channel called Portland Channel, as far as the point of the continent where it strikes the 56th degree of north latitude. From this last-mentioned point, the line of demarkation shall follow the summit of the mountains situated parallel to the coast, as far as the point of intersection of the 141st degree of west longitude, (of the same meridian.) And, finally, from the said point of intersection, the said meridian line of the 141st degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean, shall form the limit between the Russian and British possessions on the continent of America to the north-west.

ART. 4. With reference to the line of demarkation laid down in the preceding article, it is understood —

1st. That the island called Prince of Wales's Island shall belong wholly to Russia.

2d. That whenever the summit of the mountains which extend in a direction parallel to the coast, from the 56th degree of north latitude to the point of intersection of the 141st degree of west longitude, shall prove to be at the distance of more than ten marine leagues from the ocean, the limit between the British possessions and the line of coast which is to belong to Russia, as above mentioned, shall be formed by a line parallel to the windings of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom.

ART. 5. It is, moreover, agreed that no establishment shall be formed by either of the two parties within the limits assigned by the two preceding articles to the possessions of the other; consequently, British subjects shall not form any establishment either upon the coast, or upon the border of the continent comprised within the limits of the Russian possessions, as designated in the two preceding articles; and, in like manner, no establishment shall be formed by Russian subjects beyond the said limits.

ART. 6. It is understood that the subjects of his Britannic majesty, from whatever quarter they may arrive, whether from the ocean or from the interior of the continent, shall forever enjoy the right of navigating freely, and without any hinderance whatever, all the rivers and streams which, in their course towards the Pacific Ocean, may cross the line of demarkation upon the line of coast described in article 3 of the present convention.

ART. 7. It is also understood that, for the space of ten years from the signature of the present convention, the vessels of the two powers, or those belonging to their respective subjects, shall mutually be at liberty to frequent, without any hinderance whatever, all the inland seas, the gulfs, havens, and creeks, on the coast, mentioned in article 3, for the purposes of fishing and of trading with the natives.

ART. 8. The port of Sitka, or Novo Archangelsk, shall be open to the commerce and vessels of British subjects for the space of ten years from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of the present convention. In the event of an extension of this term of ten years being granted to any other power, the like extension shall be granted also to Great Britain.

ART. 9. The above-mentioned liberty of commerce shall not apply to the trade in spirituous liquors, in fire-arms, or other arms, gunpowder, or other warlike stores; the high contracting parties reciprocally engaging not to permit the above-mentioned articles to be sold or delivered, in any manner whatever, to the natives of the country.

ART. 10. Every British or Russian vessel navigating the Pacific Ocean, which may be compelled by storms or by accident to take shelter in the ports of the respective parties, shall be at liberty to refit therein, to provide itself with all necessary stores, and to put to sea again, without paying any other than port and lighthouse dues, which shall be the same as those paid by national vessels. In case, however, the master of such vessel should be under the necessity of disposing of a part of his merchandise in order to defray his expenses, he shall conform himself to the regulations and tariffs of the place where he may have landed.

ART. 11. In every case of complaint on account of an infraction of the articles of the present convention, the civil and military authorities of the high contracting parties, without previously acting, or taking any forcible measure, shall make an exact and circumstantial report of the matter to their respective courts, who engage to settle the same in a friendly manner, and according to the principles of justice.

(6.)

*Convention between the United States and Great Britain, signed at London, August 6th, 1827.*

ARTICLE I. All the provisions of the third article of the convention concluded between the United States of America and his majesty the king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, on the 20th of October, 1818, shall be, and they are hereby, further indefinitely extended and continued in force, in the same manner as if all the provisions of the said article were herein specifically recited.

ART. 2. It shall be competent, however, to either of the contracting parties, in case either should think fit, at any time after the 20th of October, 1828, on giving due notice of twelve months to the other contracting party, to annul and abrogate this convention; and it shall, in such case, be accordingly entirely annulled and abrogated, after the expiration of the said term of notice.

ART. 3. Nothing contained in this convention, or in the third article of the convention of the 20th October, 1818, hereby continued in force, shall be construed to impair, or in any manner affect, the claims which either of the contracting parties may have to any part of the country westward of the Stony or Rocky Mountains.



## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

This note gives the main sources which have been consulted and is intended to serve as a guide for reading on the subject.

The material found in the Bancroft library on eight reels of microfilm under the title "Russian America", was collected from archives in St. Petersburg and Sitka by Ivan Petrov, one of H. H. Bancroft's many assistants. Petrov extracted portions of relevant material and translated them, it is said, with abandon.

The microfilmed archives of the Hudson's Bay Company in Ottawa are a vast mine of well organized source material both on the Pacific North West, and the company's relations with the British government.

The official correspondence of the negotiations leading to the convention of 1824 and 1825 is reproduced in extenso in the appendices to the American and British Cases of the Alaska Boundary Tribunal. While one cannot be ungrateful for such acts of providence it is a great pleasure to turn to the Bagot Papers held in the National Archives of Canada. This is the private correspondence to and from Charles Bagot, full of useful information interspersed with pithy barbs at the nefarious 'Squinty Adams' and other members of the contemporary diplomatic circle. Unfortunately few letters between the Russian ministers and the British embassy are preserved therein. Stapleton's collection of George Canning's official letters adds to the body of the correspondence between George

Canning and his minister in St. Petersburg. Captain Bagot's George Canning and his Friends and Stanley Lane-Poole's Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning both add a considerable number of relevant private letters to the diplomatic correspondence.

The American position in the negotiations is clearly revealed by three works: John Quincy Adam's Memoirs, Richard Rush's Memoranda of a Residence at the Court of London, and the fourth and fifth volumes of the American State Papers for Foreign Relations. A valuable critique is offered by J. C. Hildt's study of Russia-American relations in this period.

Fortunately the record of Russian opinion is available in the American Historical Review which published the "Correspondence of the Russian Ministers in Washington 1818-1825". This is partly offset by the failure of Nesselrode's published papers to include anything at all on the subject.

The distance over which the negotiations occurred necessitated the exchange of written instructions and reports. However, all the important exchanges between the fur companies and their governments occurred within their capital cities, usually person to person. This may explain the comparative shortage of written communications between them. As mentioned above, the subsequent involvement of the Russian American Company in the Decemberist plot probably led to the destruction of many records.

The trade of the Hudson's Bay Company to the west of the Rocky Mountains is illustrated in Frederick Merk's Fur Trade and Empire as well as by numerous published journals of fur traders of that region.

The maritime fur trade of the north-west coast is described in several articles listed in the bibliography. K. W. Porter's biography of John Jacob Astor and Michael Greenburg's study of the opening of the China trade describe the Pacific trade in the broader pattern of world markets.

In conclusion it must be stated that the author's greatest disability has been his lack of knowledge of the material available in Russian owing to his ignorance of that language.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Bancroft Library, Russian America, (microfilm).  
Material collected for H. H. Bancroft from  
Russian sources on the Russian American colonies.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives (microfilm).

National Archives, Canada, Bagot Papers, Russian  
Correspondence.

PUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES

Alaska Boundary Tribunal: boundary between the Dominion of Canada and the Territory of Alaska. 3 Vols. London, 1903.

Alaskan Boundary Tribunal Proceedings. 7 Vols. Washington, 1904. U.S. 58 Cong., 2d sess., S. Doc 162.

Bagot, Capt. Joscelyn. George Canning and his Friends. 2 Vols. London: John Murray, 1909.

Beechey, Capt. F. W. A Narrative of the Voyages and Travels of Capt. Beechey R.N. to the Pacific and Behring's Straits performed in the Years 1825, 26, 27, and 28. Compiled from Robert Huish. London: W. Wright, 1836.

Black's Rocky Mountain Journal 1824. Ed. E. Rich. Introduction R. M. Patterson. London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1955.

Canning, George: Some Official Correspondence 1821-27. 2 Vols. Ed. with notes by Edward J. Stapleton. London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1887.

Certain Correspondence of the Foreign Office and of the Hudson's Bay Company copied from the original documents. Ed. Otto C. Klotz. Ottawa, 1898.

"Correspondence of the Russian Ministers in Washington 1818-25", American Historical Review, Vol. XVIII, No's 2 and 3 (January and April, 1913), pp. 309-345 and pp. 535-563.

Corney, Peter. Voyages in the North Pacific: Narrative of Several Trading Voyages from 1813 to 1818, between the North-west Coast of America, the Hawaiian Islands, and China, with a description of the Russian Establishments on the North-west Coast. Honolulu H.I.: Thos. G. Thrum, 1896.

Franklin, John. Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Shores of the Northern Polar Sea in the Years 1825-27. London, 1828.

Great Britain. Correspondence respecting the Russian Ukase of September, 1821 (No. 6225). Printed for the use of the Foreign Office, June, 1892.

---

List of Documents found among Foreign Office Papers relating to the Alaska Boundary. Foreign Office Supplementary II. (Found in the National Archives of Canada under designation MG 12 c/8).

\_\_\_\_\_. Debates of the House of Commons (Series 2). Vols. 1-17. 1820-1827.

\_\_\_\_\_. Third Report from the Select Committee Appointed to Consider of the Means of Improving and Maintaining the Foreign Trade of the Country. July, 1821.

The Journal of John Work. Eds. S. Lewis and P. C. Phillips, Cleveland Arthur H. Clark, 1923.

Kotzebue, Otto von. A New Voyage Round the World in the Year 1823, 24, 25 and 26. 2 Vols. London: Henry Colburn & Richard Bentley, 1830.

\_\_\_\_\_. Voyage of Discovery in the South Sea and to Behring's Straits in Search of a North-East Passage Undertaken in the Years 1815, 16, 17, and 18 in the Ship Rurick. Sir Richard Phillips & Company, 1821.

John McLean's Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory. Ed. W. S. Wallace. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1932.

McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters 1825-38. Ed. E. E. Rush, Introduction W. Kaye Lamb. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1941.

Memoirs of John Quincy Adams. Ed. Charles Francis Adams. 12 Vols. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1875, Vols. 5 and 6.

Merk, Frederick. Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal 1824-25. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931.

Minutes of the Council, Northern Department of Rupert's Land, 1821-31. Ed. R. H. Fleming, Introduction H. A. Innis. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1940.

Nesselrode, Count Charles Vasilievitch. Lettres et papiers du Chancelier de Nesselrode, 1760-1850. 11 Vols. Ed. Count A. de Nesselrode. Paris, 1908-12, Vol. 5 and 6.

Parry, Capt. W. E. Journals of the First, Second and Third Voyages for the Discovery of a North-west Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific in 1819, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25. 5 Vols. London: John Murray, 1828.

Quennell, Peter. The Private Letters of Princess Lieven to Prince Metternich 1820-1826. London: John Murray, 1937.

"Report of Thomas Hart Benton and Charles Floyd on United States' Occupation of the North-West Coast", Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. VIII, (March and December, 1907), pp. 51-75 and pp. 290-294.

Rezanov, N. P. The Rezanov Voyage to Northern California in 1806. Trans. Thomas C. Russel. San Francisco, 1926.

- Rush, Richard. Memoranda of a Residence at the Court of London. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845.
- Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia. Ed. E. E. Rich. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1947.
- Sixteen Years in the Indian Country: The Journal of Daniel Harmon in the Indian Country. Ed. W. Kaye Lamb. Toronto: Macmillan, 1957.
- Sturgis, William. "Examination of the Russian Claims to the North Coast of America", North American Review, Vol. XV, (October, 1822), pp. 370-401.
- United States Congress. American State Papers, Class I, Foreign Relations (second series). Vol. 4 and 5. Washington, 1858.

## MONOGRAPHS

- Andrews, C. L. Sitka, the chief factory of the Russian American Company. 3rd edition. Caldwell, Idaho, 1945.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Story of Alaska. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1943.
- Bailey, Thomas A. America Faces Russia: Russian American Relations from Early Times to our Day. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950.
- Bancroft, H. H. The History of Alaska 1730-1885. The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. XXXIII. San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Company, 1886.
- Bell, James Christy. Opening a Highway to the Pacific 1838-46. Studies in History, Economics and Public Law. Ed. by Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University. Vol. XCVI, No. 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1921.
- Bemis, Samuel Flagg. John Quincy Adams and the Foundations of American Foreign Policy. New York: Knopf, 1949.
- Brebner, J. B. The North Atlantic Triangle. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945.
- Brooks, Philip Coolidge. Diplomacy and the Borderlands: The Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819. University of California Publications in History. Vol. XXIV. Berkeley, 1939.

- Burt, A. L. The United States, Great Britain and British North America from the Revolution to the Establishment of Peace after the War of 1812. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.
- Canada's Alaskan Dismemberment: An Analytical Examination of the Falacies Underlying the Tribunal Award. Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.: Charles Thonger, 1904.
- Chevigny, Hector. Lord of Alaska: Baranov and the Russian Adventure. New York: The Viking Press, 1942.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Lost Empire: The Life and Adventures of Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944.
- Dall, William H. Alaska and its Resources. Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1870.
- Davidson, George. The Alaska Boundary. San Francisco: Alaska Packers Association, 1903.
- Davidson, G. C. The North West Company. University of California Publications in History, Vol. VIII, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1918.
- Dunn, John. History of the Oregon Territory and British North American Fur Trade. London: Edwards & Hughes, 1844.
- Galbraith, John S. The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-1869. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957.
- Glazebrook, G. P. de T. Sir Charles Bagot in Canada. London: Oxford University Press, 1929.
- Golder, F. A. Guide to Materials for American History in Russian Archives. Washington D. C.: Carnegie Institute, 1917.
- Greenberg, Michael. British Trade and the Opening of China 1800-1842. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951.
- Greenhow, Robert. Memoir, Historical & Political on the North-west Coast of North America and the Adjacent Territories. Washington: Blair and Rives, 1840.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The History of Oregon and California and the Other Territories on the North-west Coast of North America. 3rd edition. New York: D. Appleton, 1845.
- Hildt, John C. Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States with Russia. John Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science Series XXIV, Nos. 5-6. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, May-June, 1906.



- Hussey, John A. The History of Fort Vancouver and its Physical Structure. Washington State Historical Society, 1957.
- Innis, H. A. The Fur Trade in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.
- Irving, Washington. Astoria. New York: The Co-operative Publication Society, (N.D.)
- Keenleyside, H. L. Canada and United States. Some Aspects of Their Historical Relations. 2nd Edition. New York: Knopf, 1952.
- Kirwan, L. P. The White Road: A Survey of Polar Exploration. London: Hollis & Carter, 1959.
- Lane-Poole, Stanley. The Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe. 2 Vols. London: Longmans Green, 1888.
- Lobanov-Rostovsky, Andrei A. Russia and Europe 1789-1825. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1949.
- Malcolm-Smith, E. The Life of Stratford Canning. London: Ernest Benn, 1933.
- Manning, Clarence A. Russian Influence on Early America. New York: Library Publishers, 1953.
- Marriott, J. A. R. Anglo-Russian Relations 1689-1943. London: Methuen, 1944.
- \_\_\_\_\_. George Canning and his Times: A Political Study. London: John Murray, 1907.
- Mavor, James. An Economic History of Russia. 2 Vols. Toronto, 1914.
- Mazour, A. G. The First Russian Revolution 1825: The Decembrist Movement, its Origins, Development, and Significance. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1937.
- McDonald, Archibald. Peace River. A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific by the late Sir George Simpson in 1828. Ed. Malcolm McLeod. Ottawa: J. Durie & Son, 1872.
- Merk, Frederick. Albert Gallatin and the Oregon Problem: A Study in Anglo-American Diplomacy. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Middleton, K. W. B. Britain and Russia: An Historical Essay. London: Hutchinson & Company (N.D.)

- Mitchell, Mairin. The Maritime History of Russia 1848-1948. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1949.
- Montgomery, Richard G. The White Headed Eagle. John McLoughlin: Builder of an Empire. New York: Macmillan Company, 1935.
- Morice, Rev. A. G. The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia. Toronto: William Briggs, 1905.
- Morton, A. S. A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71. London: Thomas Nelson, 1938.
- Nozikov, N. Russian Voyages Round the World. Ed. M. A. Sergeyev, trans. Ernst and Mira Lesser. London: Hutchinson & Company, 1945.
- Okun, S. B. The Russian American Company. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951.
- Perkins, Dexter. The Monroe Doctrine 1823-1826. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932.
- Petrie, Sir Charles. George Canning. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1932.
- Phillips, Paul. The Fur Trade. 2 Vols. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961.
- Porter, K. W. John Jacob Astor, Business Man. 2 Vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931.
- Raeff, Marc. Siberia and the Reforms of 1822. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956.
- Rich, E. E. The History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870. London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1959.
- Ross, Alexander. Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River. London: Smith Elder & Co., 1849.
- Sage, W. N. Sir James Douglas and British Columbia. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1930.
- Schnitzler, J. H. Secret History of the Court and Government of Russia under the Emperors Alexander and Nicholas. 2 Vols. London: Richard Bentley, 1847.
- Stanley, A. P. Stratford de Redcliffe 1786-1880. Ed. Arthur P. Stanley. London: J. Murray, 1881.

- Stapleton, A. G. The Political Life of the Right Honourable George Canning from his Acceptance of the Seals of the Foreign Office in September 1822 to the Period of his Death in August 1827. 3 Vols. 2nd edition. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1831.
- Tatum, Edward Howland. The United States and Europe 1815-23. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936.
- Temperley, Harold. The Foreign Policy of Canning 1822-1827. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1925.
- Thom, Adam. The Claims to the Oregon Territory Considered. London: Smith Elder and Company, 1844.
- Thomas, Benjamin Platt. Russo American Relations 1815-1867. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1930.
- Tompkins, Stuart Ramsay. Alaska: Promyshlennik & Sourdough. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952.
- Traites avec L'Angleterre (1801-1831). Vol. XI of Recueil des Traites et Conventions Conclues par La Russie avec Les Puissances Etrangeres. Publie par F. de Martens. St. Petersburg, 1895.
- Wagner, Henry R. The Cartography of the North West Coast of America to the Year 1800. 2 Vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937.
- Webster, C. K. The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh. London: G. Bell, 1958.
- Wickersham, James. A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature 1724-1924. Cordova, Alaska, 1927.
- Wilson, Robert Thomas. A Sketch of the Military and Political Power of Russia in the Year 1817. London: James Ridgway, 1817.

## ARTICLES

- Andrews, C. L. "Russian Plans for American Dominion", Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVIII, (April, 1927), pp. 83-92.
- Crawley, C. W. "Anglo Russian Relations 1815-1840", Cambridge Historical Journal, Vol. III, No. 1, (1929), pp. 47-73.
- Davidson, Donald C. "Relations of the Hudson's Bay Company with Russian American Company in the North West Coast 1829-67", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. V, No. 1, (January, 1941), pp. 33-38.

- Eliot, T. C. "The Surrender at Fort Astoria in 1818", Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. XIX, No. 4, (December, 1918), pp. 272-82.
- Ford, W. C. "John Quincy Adams and the Monroe Doctrine", American Historical Review, Vol. VIII, (1903), pp. 41-4.
- Golder, Frank A. "The Attitude of the Russian Government toward Alaska", The Pacific Ocean in History. Ed. H. Morse Stephens and Herbert E. Bolton. New York: Macmillan Company, 1917, pp. 269-275.
- Hines, Clarence. "Adams, Russian and Northwest Trade 1824", Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXXVI, (1934), pp. 348-358.
- Hodgins, Thomas. "The Alaska Boundary Dispute", Contemporary Review, Vol. LXXXII (July-December, 1902), pp. 190-206.
- Howay, F. W. "An Outline Sketch of the Maritime Fur Trade", Canadian Historical Association Annual Reports, (May, 1932), pp. 5-14.
- Innis, H. A. "Peter Pond and the Influence of James Cook on the Exploration of the Northern Interior of America", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 3rd Series, Section 2 (May, 1928), pp. 131-141.
- "John Tod: 'Career of a Scotch Boy'", ed. Madge Wolfenden, The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVIII, (1954), pp. 133-238.
- Judson, Katherine B. "The British Side of the Restoration of Fort Astoria", Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. XX, (1919), pp. 243-260 and pp. 305-330.
- Kernier, R. J. "Russian Expansion to America", Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, Vol. XXV, (1931), pp. 114-5.
- Lingelback, Anna Lane. "Huskisson and Board of Trade", American Historical Review, Vol. XLIII, No. 4, (July, 1938), p. 769.
- "The Log of the Caroline", ed. H. F. MacNair, Pacific North West Quarterly, Vol. XXIX, No. 1, (January, 1938), pp. 61-84 and pp. 167-200.
- Mazour, A. G. "Dimitri Zavalishin: Dreamer of a Russian Empire", The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. V, (1936), pp. 26-37.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Doctor Yegor Scheffer: Dreamer of a Russian Empire in the Pacific", The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. VI, (1937), pp. 15-20.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Memoirs of California by K. T. Khlebnikov", The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. IX, (1940), pp. 308-336.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Russian American and Anglo-Russian Conventions 1824-25: An Interpretation", The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. XIV, (1945), pp. 303.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Russian American Company: Private or Government Enterprise?", The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. XIII, (1944), pp. 168-173.
- Patterson, A. M. "Liard River Voyage", The Beaver, Spring, 1955.
- Perkins, Dexter. "Europe, Spanish America and the Monroe Doctrine", American Historical Review, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, (January, 1922), pp. 207-218.
- "Peter Pond and the Overland Route to Cook's Inlet", ed. R. H. Dillon, Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Vol. XLIII, No. 4, (October, 1951), pp. 324-329.
- The Quarterly Review, Vol. XVIII, 1817.
- The Quarterly Review, Vol. XIX, 1818.
- The Quarterly Review, Vol. XXVI, 1822.
- "Remarks on the Asiatic Policy of England and Russia", The Pamphleteer. London, Vol. XXV, 1825, pp. 10-32.
- Richard, T. A. "The Sea Otter in History", The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XI, (1947), pp. 15-32.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Use of Iron and Copper by the Indians of B.C.", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. III, (1939), pp. 25-50.
- Shaw, Reginald. "Sir John H. Pelly, Bart., Governor, Hudson's Bay Company, 1822-1852", British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XIII, (1949),
- Shipee, L. B. "The Federal Relations of Oregon", Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. XIX, Nos. 2, 3, and 4 (June, September and December, 1918).
- Sturgis, William. "The Northwest Fur Trade", ed. F. W. Howay, The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. VIII, No. 1, (January, 1944), pp. 1-27.
- Tate, Merze. "Great Britain and the Sovereignty of Hawaii", The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. XXXI, (1962), pp. 327-348.
- Tompkins, S. R. and Moorhead, M. L. "Russia's Approach to America: Part I From Russian Sources 1741-61, Part II From Spanish Sources 1761-75", The British Columbia Historical Quarterly, Vol. XIII, (1949), pp. 55-67 and pp. 231-255.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Drawing the Alaska Boundary", Canadian Historical Review,  
Vol. XXVI, No. 1, (March, 1945), pp. 1-24.

\_\_\_\_\_. "After Behring: Mapping the North Pacific", The British Columbia  
Historical Quarterly, Vol. XIX, (1955), pp. 1-55.

MAP 1



**Map**  
of  
**NORTH AMERICA**

from  
20 to 80 Degrees North Latitude

**Exhibiting**  
THE  
recent

**DISCOVERIES, GEOGRAPHICAL and NAUTICAL;**

*Drawn chiefly from the Authorities*

of

M. DE HUMBOLT. LIEUT. PIKE, MESS<sup>rs</sup>. LEWIS and CLARKE.

SIR ALEX. MACKENZIE. M<sup>r</sup>. HEARNE. COL. BOUCHETTE.

CAPT<sup>ns</sup>. VANCOUVER, ROSS, PARRY & FRANKLIN.

*also describing the*

**BOUNDARY LINES between the TERRITORIES**

**of**  
**Great Britain & Spain**

*with the*

**UNITED STATES.**

LONDON

Published by *Ja. Wyld, successor to W. Fisher N. 5. Cheesing Crofs*

Geographer to His Majesty.

and to H. R. H. the DUKE OF YORK.

June 1<sup>st</sup> 1824





Arctic Circle

encampments

Slave River

Mountain Indians

Loucheux

Inland Indians

GREAT SL

NORFOLK STRAIT

CORNWALL

ATE-NAS INDIANS

YAKIMA

WATER

DOG KUBA INDIANS

Tza-dene or B INDIANS

High River

Kootanie Indians

Nootka Sound

THE GULF OF GEORGIA

Company

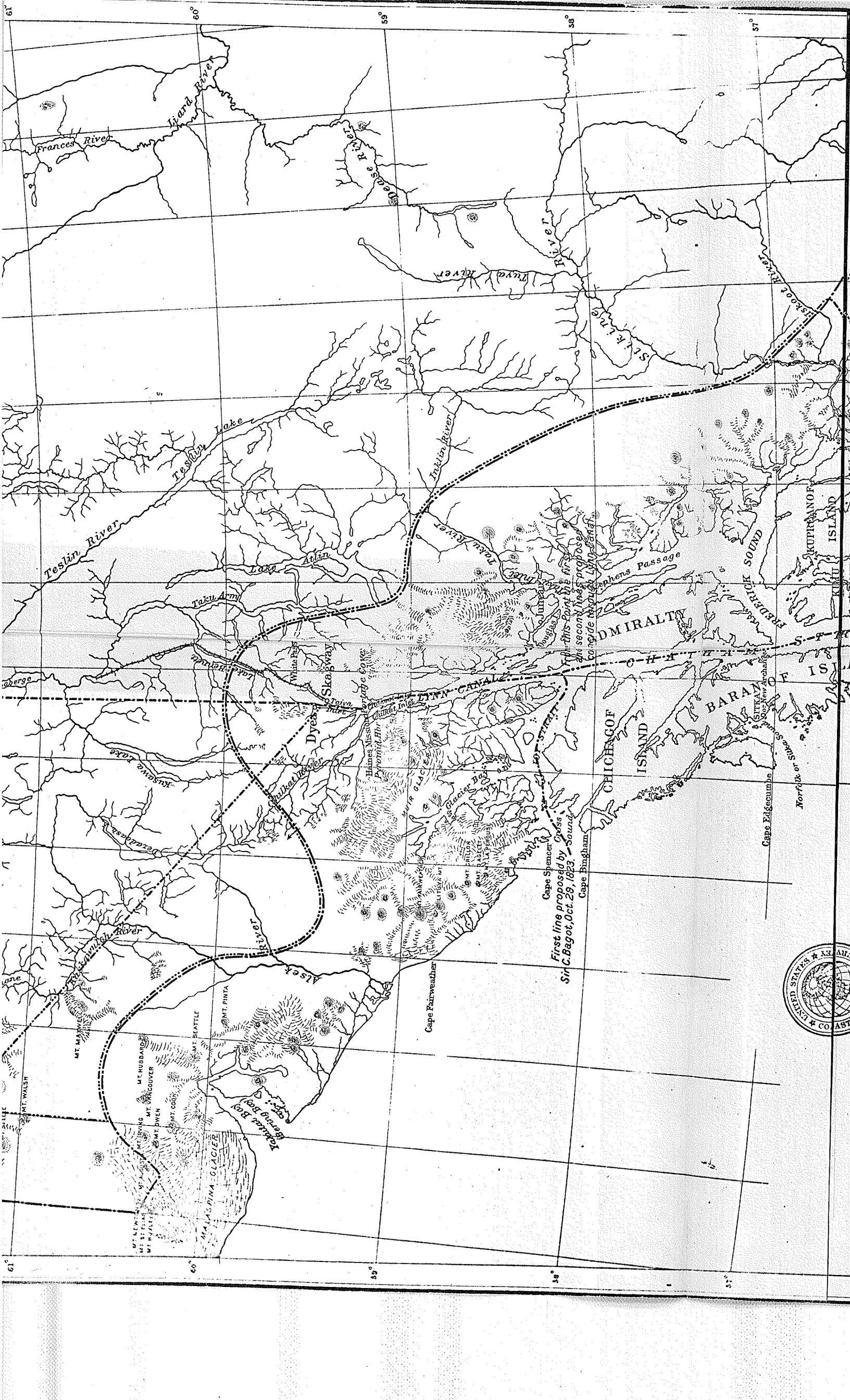
Kootim in Ind.

Columbia River

Flat River

THE RIVER

MAP 2



Frances River

Hard River

Moose River

Yukon River

Stikine River

Chukchee River

Teslin River

Teslin Lake

Taku Lake

Taku River

Taku Arm

Skegway

Dyea

CHUKCHI CANAL

ADMIRALTY

CHICHAGOF ISLAND

BARANOF ISLAND

FREDERICKSON ISLAND

KUPRIANOFF ISLAND

Muskog Lake

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Strait

Chukchi Pass

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Chukchi Bay

Cape Spencer  
 First line proposed by  
 Sir C. Bagot, Oct. 29, 1823 - Sound

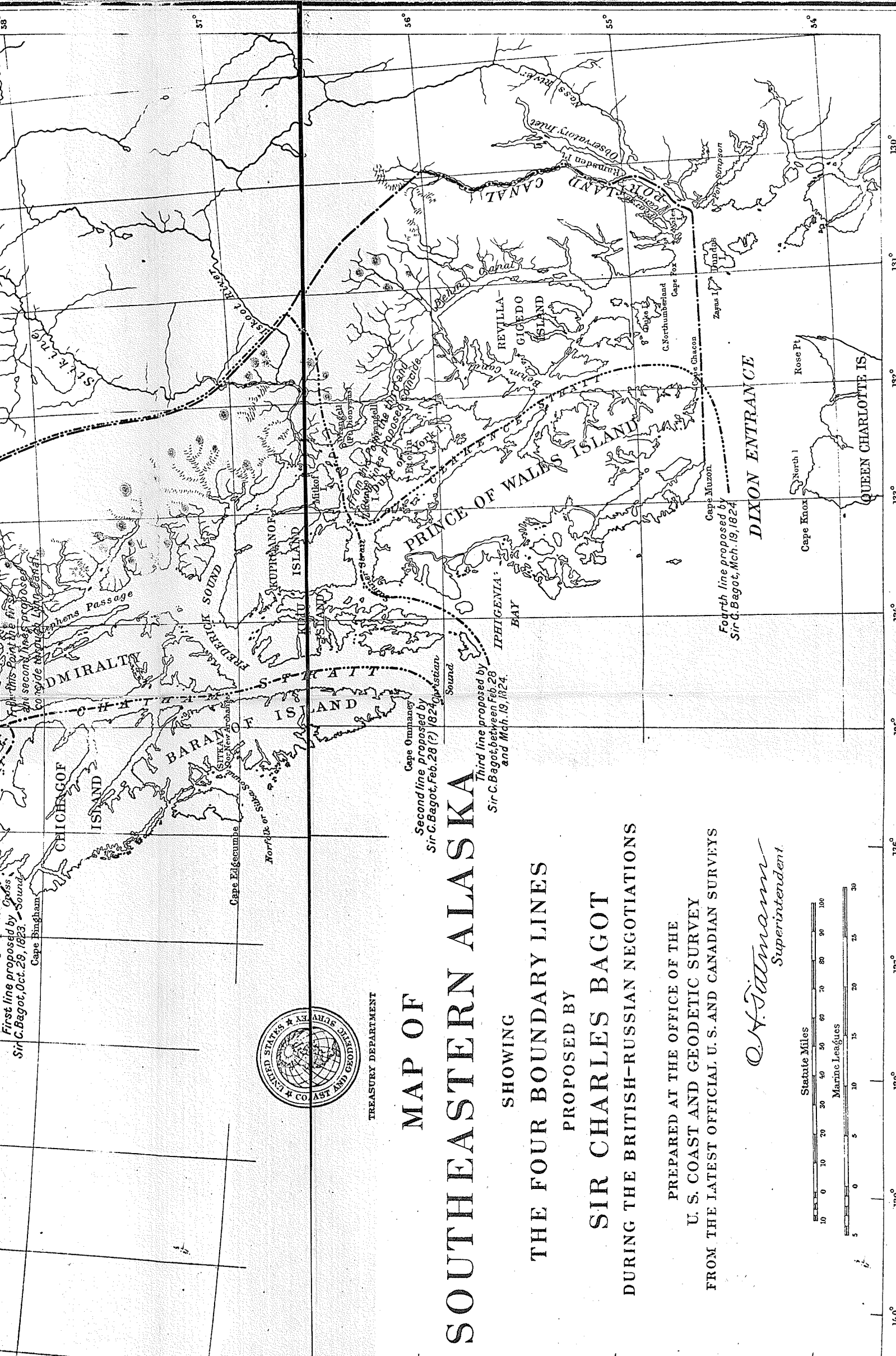
Cape Bingham

Cape Fairweather

Cape Edgecumbe

Norfolk or Norfolk





First line proposed by  
 Sir C. Bagot, Oct. 28, 1823.  
 Cape Bingham

This point is the  
 second line proposed  
 to guide navigation  
 Cape Stephens Passage

Cape Ommaney  
 Second line proposed by  
 Sir C. Bagot, Feb. 28 (?) 1824  
 Christian Sound

Third line proposed by  
 Sir C. Bagot, between Feb. 28  
 and Mar. 19, 1824.  
 Iphigenia Bay

Fourth line proposed by  
 Sir C. Bagot, Mch. 19, 1824  
 Cape Muzon  
 Cape Chacon



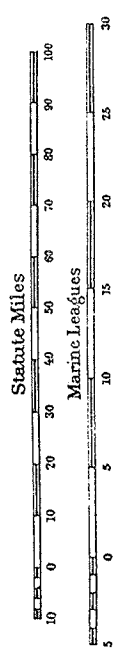
TREASURY DEPARTMENT

# MAP OF SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA

SHOWING  
 THE FOUR BOUNDARY LINES  
 PROPOSED BY  
 SIR CHARLES BAGOT  
 DURING THE BRITISH-RUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS

PREPARED AT THE OFFICE OF THE  
 U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY  
 FROM THE LATEST OFFICIAL U. S. AND CANADIAN SURVEYS

*O. A. Silliman*  
 Superintendent



140° 139° 138° 137° 136° 135° 134° 133° 132° 131° 130°

58° 57° 56° 55° 54°