

10-1918

### Minthorn Letters

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Document No. 23  
Folder No. 252

40 - Sept 1915

From original document.

Statement in handwriting of Dr. H. J. Minthorn.

K

(In September 1915 the superintendent took possession of the doctor's office and residence, removed all the medicine from the dispensary - about 350 bottles, surgical, dental and optical instruments, surgical dressings, battery, medical books and journals, bottles, corks, paper and tin boxes, stove, cupboards, tables, chairs and other furniture, throwing them promiscuously in boxes in an unused, leaky building, and proceeded to overhaul, change and fit<sup>it</sup>/up for his own use.) This building with garden attached, together with the clearing of the ground, which contained many large stumps and fruit trees and gooseberry and other bushes, was all at my own personal expense and cost not less than        dollars and taken by the superintendent without giving me notice or opportunity to care for the contents of the building.

L

The same is true of the other building used as day school, Wednesday evening meeting, Juvenile Sunday School and to house a collection of relics and files of papers, journals and other literature, some of the files extending back as much as 20 years, all piled promiscuously in an unused room, the furniture taken out of the school room and Juvenile Sunday School room necessitating me to hold the school and Juvenile Sunday School in my dining room and eating in the kitchen. There is no apparent reason for this action, as there is much more room in the Government school house than can be needed for the number of children there are in the village.

(The following comments appear as marginal notations in Mr. Minthorn's handwriting on circular letter of October 2, 1915, addressed to "the Mayor and Council of Annette Islands Reserve and to the Inhabitants of the Town of Metlakantla" and signed by Franklin K. Lane, which is not copied here for the reason that we have copies of same already in the files. Attached to this is also a printed page from the Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1908, re the desperate condition of the Metlakantlans because of the fish trap situation.)

See copy of letter to Mr. Duncan sent to you some time ago in which it is stated that the peoples' houses also belong to the U. S.

Seizures  
of  
Property  
Canneries  
Missions

2. Here you will see that the Govt. claims that the cannery &c. belonged to the Community and therefore can be taken from the Mission and given to the Govt. School and not only has the Sect. taken the Mission property & given it to the Govt. School but he has allowed white men to take four fishing sites & build traps on them which was never done before. If the natives have community rights in the Island certainly none were so valuable as these fishing sites a good statement of the case is in the clipping below from the Commissioner of Education's report for 1908 seven years ago and things are much worse now but Mr. Duncan kept the traps away from Annette Island until the Commissioner of Education took charge and put the Supt. of the School in charge.

The treaty with Russia required the U. S. to respect the individual rights of the natives to the soil & their houses none of them up to this time have ever had anything more than such promises as this.

COPY

Metlakatla, Alaska.

Oct. 2 1911.

Mr Wellcome,

London, England.

H

Dear Sir,

Mr Tuncan has shown me your Cablegram from which I infer two things, viz: that you are interested in his welfare and that you wish to be informed as definitely as possible in regard to the circumstances, Mr Tuncan is greatly pleased to have received your cablegrams and I see that they have done him good already. Mr Tuncan has outlived most of his friends and acquaintances of his age and being isolated from the world and remaining here so constantly, he has had to bear his troubles alone, so that your interest in his affairs means much more than would attach to such a circumstance under other circumstances. He has been here constantly for four years and during all of that time has been harassed by the agent of the Government in charge of the School here, and he has not seen or had an opportunity to talk with any one but those who seem to be determined to despoil him of his property and drive him away from here, I am sure you can render him a great service and I believe you will, not only that but what has been done here is disgraceful to our Government and in violation of every principle of honesty and fairness as regards the rights of individuals and I do not think the case is understood by the Secretary of the Interior as it really is. I have been informed that the Secretary is disposed to do everything in his power to aid the Natives and no one who knows Mr Tuncan's work will for one moment deny that the same thing is true of him, and further, that he has given the most efficient and practical aid to the Natives belonging to this Mission that has been given to any of the natives of British Columbia or Alaska, his church, school, cannery, sawmill, store and other industries such as carpentering, blacksmithing, machinist, steam boat Pilots and Engineers and other industries connected with the Cannery were all schools fitting the people for every day life. The following clipping from the Progressive, a Ketchikan newspaper, of Oct. 4th '11 shows the general public opinion in regard to Mr Tuncan's work and the Natives belonging to it:-

"Metlakahtlan is second officer on City of Seattle".

"Progressive Metlakahtlans are found with good positions everywhere," said a man when the steamer City of Seattle came in to-day, and he pointed out that the second officer of the crew was a Metlakahtlan. A young man of less than thirty years of age. The young man was a student in Father Duncan's school, and apparently benefitted by his education."

There are three other Metlakahtlans at the present time holding U.S. licences as Pilots, three as Engineers. Five are now or have been operating Sawmills, one is a millright in a sawmill; one is a machinist and one a cannery manager; twelve are or have been merchants and more than twenty have been leaders in the church work in conducting religious Services and teaching in the Sunday School, including several women and four have been Teachers in the day schools. This is a good record of efficiency and it would be very strange if some ambition and selfishness had not also been awakened and such has also been the case. The cannery Manager hoped to control the cannery, the saw mill men the Sawmill, &c &c., and the sooner the better and a few out of this number have in this way been used by the Sup't Et-al to try to make the Secretary believe that Mr Duncan stood in the way of their progress, but of the fifty I have mentioned not more than five belong to this class and now that the Sup't Et-al have been in virtual control for more than two years and have not done anything with the Industries except to compel their suspension and have at the same time farmed out to white men the fisheries about the Island so that the fish that used to go to supply Mr Duncan's cannery are now diverted to other canneries, even these five men are not so enthusiastically in favor of the Sup't as they were as it seems very evident that neither the five or any one else except the Sup't are likely to profit by the change but on the contrary every one in the village is feeling the pinch of hard times since the industries have been stopped & the fisheries turned over to outsiders, and so far no one but the Sup't. has profited by the change as he has moved into one of the houses that he took from Mr Duncan he is now saving the rent that he formerly paid, but it has a still more important meaning.

Seizures of  
Property

Industries  
 If a secular Government can take forcible possession of the property of a Christian Mission and Church here in this country what rights can a Christian Mission expect to have in other countries. But to enable you to understand how this came about will require quite a long explanation, but I may say that it came through three conditions.

Schools  
 1st. Mr Duncan, as you know, has worked independently, that is there has been no organization back of him and it has been a matter for conjecture what would become of the work and property when he died and there have been several interested parties, the five among the number, keeping an eye on things; but when the U.S. Gov't put a school here and gave the Sup't of the school authority that Mr Duncan had before exercised, it was only natural for such a man as he is to wonder how far he could exercise this authority and seeing (as it seems to me he thought he did) the defenceless situation of Mr Duncan and also that on account of his age he must probably soon relinquish the management of the property, he conceived the idea of taking it from him and proceeded to do so nearly two years before the Gov't issued any formal claim to it, in fact it seems to me that the formal claim was only an act of confirmation of what had already been done, a kind of Ex Post Facto law, all of this you will see from the copies of papers sent you by Mr Duncan. In this connection I will try to show you how he (the Sup't) brought himself to do what he did. Mr Duncan had I think at two different times, allowed some of the natives to invest small amounts in the financing of the Industries, also I think some eastern people had invested some money (much more than all that the natives had invested); as the business prospered Mr Duncan paid all of this money back with interest but I think he retained the name of the Corporation (The Metlakatla Industrial Co.) and may possibly use it yet sometime also he had made a will and named three of the natives as Administrators leaving the property conditionally to the natives, now how much of this Corporation business and how much of the meaning of the will the natives really understood or misunderstood and how much of the understanding or misunderstanding was modified and directed by designing persons to get them to believe that, the property which was to be or would sometime be theirs, was already theirs and had always been theirs because it was their work that produced it &c &c, a la Socialism &c &c, I do not know. But this was the road that was traveled, and right here I want to say that if things are

allowed to remain as they now stand until Mr Duncan dies these people, the Sup't Et-al and the Sup't Et-al speaking for the five and similar ones, if there are any, will say that Mr Duncan was trying to claim personally what belonged to the natives and it was only the virtuous and energetic and timely action of the Sup't Et-al that had compelled him to disgorge a part of it, so, as I see it, Christianity has an interest in the case as it will be discredited if Mr Duncan is not vindicated.

The natural conclusion following what I have said is that an unbiased investigation should be ordered to be made here which up to this time has been refused and as the Gov't Officers from the Sup't here up to the Secretary of the Interior have in the development of the condition existing here step by step all been more or less committed to the idea of the community ownership and implicated in taking the property forcibly without any justification in law, and also without giving Mr Duncan a hearing or an opportunity to furnish proof of the falsity of their position, it is of no use to appeal to the Interior Department, they are not likely to authorize an investigation that will surely show them to be in the wrong; they may do as they have done - send some one here to hear one side but not give Mr Duncan a chance to face his accusers and disprove their charges. Mr Duncan has asked for the copies of evidence upon which he has been compelled to accept their judgment but never has been able to obtain them. Now you will be able to get such investigation as will give Mr Duncan a fair opportunity to state his case I do not know.

2nd. The second condition complicating the case is the ownership of the land and that is really what the Sup't Et-al rests their case upon now, they claiming that as the Government owns the land so the Gov't also owns the buildings. I am not a lawyer but it seems to me when Mr Duncan entered upon his work here with the full consent, knowledge and hearty approval of the Gov't, the Gov't should not now claim a forfeiture of the interest he has in his improvements made wholly at his own expense. Any way this idea of basing a claim upon the buildings on account of the Gov't ownership of the land was not put forward until two years after the Sup't Et-al had begun to take possession and there are well established methods constantly followed by which Christian Mission are allowed to either own or occupy in perpetuity land belonging to Indian Reservation and there never was a Mission work more deserving of the application of this rule than is Metlakatla.

Also the law setting Annette Island apart as a reservation was not passed until four years after Mr Duncan came to Metlakatla, so that they trying to claim buildings that were erected before the law was passed another Ex Post Facto Law.

Fisheries  
Canneries

Fish Traps

claims

3rd. The third condition complicating the situation is that changes have taken place making it less profitable to conduct the industries than formerly, salmon are no longer available for a supply for the cannery and for this reason employment cannot be provided here as formerly for the people, this condition is largely due to the Sup't Et-al having allowed fish traps to be constructed which catch the fish and take them to other canneries, so that while claiming to have an interest in the natives they are allowing them to be despoiled. This, together with the fact that, as will be seen by the enclosed Circular (No 3.), the Government lays claim to even the homes of the people giving only vague promises of ever giving them a title to them is causing much discontent which coming at a time when they are without employment and have earned the least for their summer's labor on account of their inability to compete with the fish traps with their out of date appliances for fishing makes a critical situation and requires more now than perhaps ever before the very help that the Mission has always given them, instead of as has been done, crippling the work of the Mission by taking from it the means used heretofore to furnish employment and to help them to help themselves.

Now in conclusion, what can be done to remedy these conditions.

Investigation

FIRST: a fair investigation will set at rest, any misunderstanding there is, if there really ever was any, about Community interest in the Property although Mr Duncan will in any event leave it all to be used in some way for the benefit of the people.

Land Titles

SECOND: the Government instead of taking possession of the property of the Mission, should make the mission some kind of a title to the land and also do the same for the people for their homes.

Removal of  
Fish Traps

Education

THIRD: the white people who have built the traps adjoining Annette Island should be made to remove them and the industries should be inaugurated again and the people should as they would then have the benefit of both the Mission and Government School, as they do not need to be in conflict and whatever discord there has been between them has been due to



the Soviet State trying to forcibly appropriate the property of the Mission. Still another thing should be done, Mr Duncan should provide for the operation of the Mission work in the event of his death which probably would be best done by making some already existing organization his heir. I have written all this in hopes that it may help you to help Mr Duncan, please consider it strictly confidential in every sense of the word, and at an early day I will write more in reference to plans for remedying the situation that can be carried out with the help and cooperation of the friends of the Mission.

Respectfully,

(86) E.J. Minthorn.

Ketchikan,

Alaska.

Nov. 1 1918.

H

Mr. Wolcott,  
London,  
Eng.

Dear Sir,

In my letter of Oct. 11 I stated that I would write more about a plan to remedy matters here. The first step is very evident, viz: that there should be an impartial investigation. Mr. Claxton Com. of Education is solely responsible for all of the trouble. He sent his Agents here and forcibly took possession of Mr. Duncan's property. They came without any process of law or even any credentials to show who they were. There being no civil authority here, not even a Magistrate, Mr. Duncan could do nothing but remonstrate; the Agent then went to Ketchikan fifteen miles distant to get a warrant claiming that Mr. Duncan should be put under bonds to keep the peace, or in other words to peacefully allow him to take his property. The Judge declined to grant his demand and he had to be satisfied with getting Mr. Claxton to have threatening letters written to Mr. Duncan, stating that if he did not cooperate with the Agent he would be removed from the Island. The Agent continued to appropriate whatever he saw that he wanted for two years before any reason was given why he considered that he had a right to help himself to everything in sight; a letter was then sent claiming that as the land belonged (1) to the Government so he, being an Agent of the Government could take and in fact owned not only Mr. Duncan's buildings but the people's houses. This creating some dissatisfaction with the people, another was sent stating that everything was for the people (2). Hence it will not help matters for some one to be sent from the Bureau of Education.

Such a plan as this I think would be fair for all parties. The Bureau of Education has very publicly claimed Mr. Duncan's property and is in (not legal) possession of it now (the buildings). Let a Bill be introduced to Congress to pay Mr. Duncan \$25,000 for it and the Bill be referred to a Committee who will send some one to investigate. In the meantime that the Agent of the Bureau of Education here be instructed not to interfere with Mr. Duncan or his property pending the result of the investigation.

1.

Or any other plan that will secure an investigation and suspension of activities by the Agent here until the result of the investigation is known. Mr Duncan employed a lawyer here and tried to get an injunction or in some way stay proceedings until he could find out what to do. The lawyer claimed to have made an effort and informed him that it was a political affair and that the Secretary of the Interior was backing it and that he might as well butt against a stone wall and advised him to go to Washington, which, of course, he could not do. He then went to see Governor Strong, Governor of Alaska, with a similar result. There being no other source to which he could apply and having written the Sec. of the Interior with no other result than the replies, copies of which you have, amounting to an order to submit or leave the Island, he has been at a loss to know what to do and I hardly need say is very greatly distressed. Mr Duncan knows nothing about politics having never lived in the States, but I am sure you do understand that the sure way to get justice done in this case is to enlist the interest of some influential Republican like Hon. Jos. Cannon, U.S. Senator from Illinois who has been here and I think not only can, but will see, that the process of despoiling Mr Duncan and the Metlakatla Christian Mission is stopped until an impartial investigation is made.

I do not suppose Mr Lane the Sec. really knows anything about Mr Duncan or the case but leaves it all to Mr Claxton, the Alaska interests being a very small part of the Interior Dept. Mr Claxton, the Commissioner of Education has to deal wholly with Statistics, except in the Alaska territory he has executive power. He may be, and likely is, competent in the statistical work but his little opportunity to exercise authority in Alaska has gone to his head and he has no sense of honesty to counter-balance it. The Judicial and Executive officers in Alaska being the appointees of the Sec. of the Interior did not want to go against their own Dept., as they would have to do if they had entertained Mr Duncan's case, and so put him off by telling him that it was a political case and to go to Washington. Another thing influencing them, and especially Mr Claxton, is Mr Duncan's age (84) and his defenceless position in having no organization back of him and in not being acquainted outside of Alaska which makes it absolutely certain that his case is hopeless against Mr Claxton, unless someone intervenes to help him - which I hope you are going to do - and with this in mind I will say for your information in regard to Mr Claxton who is

Criticizes  
Claxton



really the man that you will have to defeat and who alone (I think) is to blame for the injustice being done Mr. Luncan although his agent here has been very brutal in carrying out his instructions.

I met Mr. Claxton in Seattle last summer when on his way up here and talked with him - the substance of his conversation led me to believe that he considered Mr. Luncan in his dotage and in the way of progress, and he seemed to have in mind a plan for eliminating him and taking possession of his property.

Seizure of Property  
He came up here, took the locks from the doors and put on other locks and when he returned to Washington D.C. Mr. Luncan recd. the letter, a copy of which he has sent you. Mr. Luncan refused to have anything to do with him because he had not furnished any evidence of authority to displace him, put another person in his place and take possession of his property. He has claimed to have acted in the interest of the natives but has let white people take possession of four fishing sites and construct traps taking the fish to distant canneries. The value of these fishing sites to the natives was many times the value of Mr. Luncan's buildings that he took and promised them - also the cannery here has no value without the fishing sites to supply it with fish.

Fish Traps  
Politics  
Mr. Luncan had always prohibited the erection of fish traps and has letters to show that the U.S. Marshal had stopped their construction at his request, proving that Mr. Claxton purposely allowed their construction. I have been told by an U.S. officer when I mentioned this to him that the wrong, if any, would be laid to the Republicans as Mr. Claxton was a hold-over from the Republican Administration. I infer that the Democrats would not be sorry to see him removed for that reason and because it would make a place for a Democrat: but being a Southerner they do not want to move against him as most of their votes come from the South.

In trying to get an investigation, you might get some help from the Republican State Central Committees - Chas. E. Moores of Portland Or. is Chairman of the Oregon State Central Committee - You might ask Mr. E.C. Hoover of the Red House, W. London, Ang. Norton St. (also of the Belgian Relief), he worked for several years in the same office with Mr. Moores. He might also give you ideas about Cal. congressman and perhaps others that would help.

If an investigation cannot be obtained in any other way ~~Investigate~~ why not get some well known newspaper correspondent to come here from some of the substantial families or journals and interview the Govt. Agent here and leading natives, also leading citizens of Ketchikan and perhaps the Governor of Alaska and others and take copies of letters, etc. and publish it. One advantage of this is that there need be no delay about it, which is important as Mr Duncan may not live long under the strain of so much unavoidable worry, for instance, just to-day the Agent set some men at work at his lawmill, where he has several hundred dollars worth of property that cannot, under any circumstances, be called Real Estate which is defined in the Secretary's letter as Land and Buildings and fixtures.

Sawmill

Mr Duncan asked him for a copy of his authority, which he declined to give, and told some of the natives that he would have the U.S. Marshal here tomorrow.

All of which is very distressing to Mr Duncan who continues his work as usual, as far as he is able, preaches three sermons each week, teaches school, has a Juvenile Sunday School and a Sunday School teachers meeting.

Education

(In regard to the Juvenile Sunday School, I think Mr Duncan has conducted in for over fifty years, it was in operation twenty years ago when I was here with an attendance of fifty and over - since I have been here this time, the Agent here took all the seats and other furniture out of the room where it was held and has started some kind of a gathering in the Govt. School house at the hour at which the Juvenile Sunday School was held.) Mr Duncan preaches morning and evening and cannot change the time.

Church

The attendance now at the Sunday morning service is well over one hundred (up to 130), probably the largest of any Church in Alaska.

Mr Claxton's course here is disgraceful to the Government he represents, outrageous towards Christianity as well as discreditable to common decency and honesty.

I have been here four times, the first time two years 20 years ago, the second time one year ten years ago, the third time two months (last May and June) and now and I feel sure his action here is not approved by but few of the natives and none of the white people in Alaska, or almost none, and I do not think anyone living in the States who knows any-

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thing about the case would sanction what he has done. The  
ad. + Congressional Act for the Government of Alaska especially  
Congress provides that Missions shall have six hundred and forty acres  
of land and be protected in the possession of it and their  
buildings and other property.

I will write more at an early date.

Respectfully,

(SA) H.J. Winthorn.

(File Nov. 20, 1915)

1915

11-26

Document No. 26

Folder No. 252

B. of E., Al. Div., 1915-1916. Folder 6

(Minthorne group)

Edmund Verney  
Mayor

B. A. Haldane  
Secretary

Edward Benson  
Treasurer

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

COUNCIL ANNETTE ISLAND RESERVE

H

Metlakatla, Alaska.  
Oct. 5, 1915.

Mr. Chas. D. Jones,  
Teacher in Charge,  
Bureau of Education,  
Metlakatla, Alaska.

Dear Sir:

leath of  
aura.  
Dundas You are acquainted with the fact that little Laura Dundas died last Monday morning. It seems extremely pitiable that this little one died through lack of medical care and the bitterness of heart of an old man. At least this is the complaint that was laid before Mayor Verney at his home last evening by the following parties Jacob Scott, Theodore Dundas and Philip Johnson.

This is their story: One week ago last Saturday little Laura Dundas daughter of Benj. Dundas Jr. was taken sick. The father called on Mr. Duncan Monday morning and begged him to permit his doctor Dr. Minthorne visit the sick child. Mr. Duncan told him he was not one of his people and that he did not know him. Mr. Duncan then showed Mr. Dundas the door telling him as he passed out in sneering tones that he had better go to his friend the Government teacher for help- the child continued to grow worse in spite of the aid the teacher did lend and on Saturday took a decided turn for the worse Mr. Dundas went again to get Dr. Minthorne but direct and not by way of Mr. Duncan's place.

Dr. Minthorne responded immediately but as soon as he saw the child he said it was too late.

He seemed very angry that he had not been called sooner. Mr. Dundas told him how it was and of course he understood but said nothing. It is a standing rule that patients must get Dr. Minthorne's aid through

Dr. Minthorne's Statement (File Nov. 20, 1915)

STATEMENT OF DR. H. J. MINTHORN (Subsequent to 11-20-15)  
Re: Death of Laura Dundas.

My attention having been called to a copy of letter dated October 5, 1915, directed to Chas. D. Jones, Teacher in Charge, Bureau of Education, Metlakantla, Alaska, signed by B. A. Haldane, Secretary of Council of Annette Islands Reserve, and which letter deals with the death of Laura Dundas, (and I am asked to make a statement in reference to the case.)

On September 29, 1915, about 6 o'clock P.M. Mrs. Solomon Dundas informed me that Laura Dundas, daughter of Benj. Dundas, Jr., was very sick. I went at once to see her, and found her in convulsions. I asked the mother of the child when she began to have convulsions, and she said about 10 A.M.

I asked her if they had given her anything at that time and she said, yes, a short time before she began to have the convulsions. I inquired what they had given the child and she said she did not know, that it was something that Mr. Jones had directed them to give her, and which they had been giving her.

I did the best I could for the child, but she did not regain consciousness, and died the next day, but a few days after the child died, Mr. Jones asked me if I thought she had typhoid fever, and I said no.

Sometime in November I received a letter, of which the following is a copy -

Department of the Interior,  
Bureau of Education,  
Washington.

November 20, 1915.

Dr. H. J. Minthorn,  
Metlakantla, Alaska.

Dear Doctor Minthorn:

A report has come to me that when Benjamin Dundas requested Mr. Duncan to let you attend his daughter Laura he refused the request, but that you did visit her later upon the direct request of her father. I wish to thank you for this. I am astonished at the reported action of Mr. Duncan and can hardly believe it is true.

I am enclosing a copy of a letter, which I am today sending to Mr. Duncan. I shall, of course, be glad for you to remain at Metlakantla and help these people with your medical skill, on



As to the letter of October 5th, which, now for the first time, comes to my knowledge, I will say that I do not believe that Jacob Scott, Theodore Dundas or Philip Johnson, who it is claimed first told the story, could possibly know anything of any importance about the case. They do not converse in English, and I can see no way in which they could have any first hand information, although they are made to say that Mr. Duncan caused the death of the child.

So far as the death of the child is concerned it may have been caused by either of several things. It is sometimes very difficult to ascertain the cause of a death.

As to the statement that there was any understanding between myself and Mr. Duncan that people were to get his permission for me to attend them, there is not the slightest foundation for it, and the letter itself shows that the people writing it did not believe it, for they say that I went immediately when summoned, which I always did.

That Mr. Duncan was in any way to blame for the death of the child I do not believe, neither do I believe that he has any bitterness in his heart toward anyone, much less the sick. Benj. Dundas had been pointed out to me by him, as in need of help, when suffering from an unhealed wound, when I first came here in May 1915, and when I was making inquiries as to what cases there were at that time.

(Mr. Duncan paid me and furnished medical and surgical supplies, paid consultation fees, and for surgical operations and hospital expense when necessary, in addition to my salary, for every one needing them, sometimes amounting to large sums. He considered this part of his duty as a Missionary, and did it cheerfully. He visited the sick and poor, and assisted them financially, freely, when they were in need, and still continues to do all of these things.)

I look upon this statement as only one of the many attempts to create dissension here, and to discredit Mr. Duncan and his work. They seem to all originate in one source, although the author of them has a crafty way of making it appear that they come from other sources.

As this letter (of Oct. 5, 1915) from the Council to Mr. Jones gives some light on the source of the opposition, I will notice some of the statements. Then, perhaps at the risk of being a little tedious, I will call attention to some things in connection with the persons making the statements, and lastly to the statement itself as indicating the probability of some one being partly responsible for it who does not ostensibly appear. I am making this lengthy statement for the reason that it now appears to me for the first time that it is the policy of the Govt. in reference to Metlakatla to turn the management of their affairs over to the people & give them a free hand in the management of their own affairs except all statements that appear to emanate from them and delegate authority to them to carry out (?) their policies - and I think these communications No. 1-2 & justify me in

I hope I duly appreciate this courtesy and will say that I am confirmed in my belief that the U. S. Govt. will not fail to do justice by the very least of its citizens and give every one their day in court - not only that but I also realize that in this particular instance Mr. Duncan who has in the past been able to dominate the situation here and obtain in the face of persistent opposition of selfish and interested parties both whites and Indians results that have been surprising to all beholders is now old and is no longer equal to the tasks that he willingly without any hope of personal reward set for himself and accomplished in his prime.

No one realizes this to the same extent as his enemies do and to the hope of accomplishing their ends they now add also the hope to revenge themselves upon him in his old age & declining powers for all the defeats they suffered at his hands. They are without compunctions of conscience or shame. They have no mercy and will leave no means untried to accomplish their selfish ends. They are also found everywhere when any one seeks to uplift the lowly and help the poor and defenseless - No one knows this better than the Secretary of the Interior whose Department of Indian Affairs on more than a hundred reservations in the United States stands constantly between the greedy & selfish whites often aided by Indians against their own people in the hope of gain but also between the Indians and people of their own race who through established customs & practices have preyed upon their own people through ignorance, superstition & hereditary native chieftainships, medicine men - community ownership of property - Debasing customs and ceremonies all of which have had to be opposed by the Indian Dept. in its work for the protection and uplifting of the natives - The means which have been Education, promotion of industrious habits & frugality, morality and the development of character in which work the assistance of the Christian mission has been welcomed and the School House, the Church, the shop and the farm have all stood for uplifting the people and all have been violently opposed because they were effective & helped the people to withstand the persistent efforts of greed & selfishness.

All of these conditions exist today and probably always will and in greater or lesser degree are found here at Metlakatla & whether one or the other shall prevail will decide the fate of this little community as it does also the fate of nations. There is nothing small about the questions here for they are the questions that concern the race and whoever has to do with them is to that extent dealing with the world's welfare & destiny.

Shall Truth or Falsehood, selfishness or benevolence prevail? Shall virtue or vice be rewarded & whatever relation Mr. Duncan ever sustained to these questions or whatever responsibility he ever was under to these people now in the absence of any adequate provision for a successor passes to the Govt. It may be delegated by the Govt. to the people but in case of failure of that expedient it comes back to the Govt. in the end and in my answer to the question propounded to me I shall not try to hide my convictions on these questions but at the same time I shall with my very best endeavor try to be truthful

I will say that so far as I can see there is no foundation for such a conclusion. It would be just as reasonable and just as much justified by the statements of the three men named to say that she died of too much medical attention - as a matter of fact she may have been given something to eat that caused her death or the medicine may have been given in a larger dose than directed.

Both of these very frequently happen among the natives - and there are other ways still in which her death might have been brought about. (But the plain intent of this statement is to try to make a case against Father Duncan and in doing this no attempt is made to even state facts since there were three persons and only three persons that knew the facts in reference to Mr. Duncan's alleged action in the case, viz. Benj. Dundas, Father Duncan and myself, and no evidence is given by either of them or anything to show that either of them were given an opportunity to testify - very certainly I was not although it is asserted that I worked under a standing rule laid down by Mr. Duncan.)

(All of the foregoing statement, including quoted material, with the exception of letter of Nov. 20, 1915, which is typewritten, is written in the handwriting of Dr. H.J. Minthorn.)

Metlakatla Alaska Nov. 22, 1915.

Mr. Wellcome,  
London, England.

Dear Sir:

I said in my last that I would write more & I think this will be all that I will have to say although it seems as though there is much more that ought to be said. The United States stands among the foremost of the nations as favoring mission work & in its Governmental relations has insisted that other Governments shall afford protection to missions, yet here where a mission has been conducted with marked economy & efficiency for fifty eight years doing educational work that it was the place of the Govt. to have sustained during twenty years of that time thus saving the Govt. at the present rate of expenditure on the same school more than fifty thousand dollars--yet the United States comes in & takes possession of the mission buildings & other improvements, has thrown the furniture out of the room used by the mission for a juvenile Sunday School and is holding some kind of a meeting in the Govt. school bldg. at the same hour (3 P.M. Sunday) when the juvenile Sunday School was held--and has allowed if not actually caused to be conducted a public dance hall on Wednesday evening while the Mission prayer meeting is being held just across the street.

Regardless of the time and place a public dance hall at any time & place where young people congregate at night without any restraint and out from under the care of their parents and elders is to say the least not civilizing (civilizing) in its influences and was never thought of until the place was placed under the control of an agent of the Govt. here.

I have had ten years experience in the U. S. Indian Govt. Service & I speak from experience when I say that there is nothing else not even whiskey that has done the Indians so much harm as public dance halls. To realize the truth of this it must be remembered that Indians always and only come in contact with what is called civilized life on the frontiers of what is called civilization where miners, fishermen, lumbermen &c. are the prevailing classes nearly all men and the Saloon, the Gambling Hall, the Dance Hall & the Bawdy-house are the most conspicuous institutions in every frontier town.

It is especially so in Alaska and there is nothing in all the world more sure than that the public dance hall inaugurated here will do infinite harm to this people. Education is a necessity in this age of the world but there is no

Seizures of  
Property

Dancing

they go during the Summer months seeking employment and they will not fail to be initiated into the various forms of vice connected with them and venereal (disease) will be the rule among them as it is in many native communities in Alaska.

It is to be remembered that they have only recently been even taught the virtue of chastity and now to be taught to disregard the very things they have been led to consider of the very highest importance both in morals and common honesty will most likely so confuse them in regard to right and wrong that they will not know what to believe.

*File D*  
For instance every one here knows that Mr. Duncan bought and paid for with his own money the property the Govt. has taken from him without any process of law or chance to defend himself--also the Govt. has sent a statement here to the effect that all the houses, industrial improvements machinery &c belong to the U. S. What encouragement is there for the people to do anything when they are told this and the Govt. officers take whatever they want and put it to their own use.

But I will not go into this for it is all shown by the Dept. letters. The only way things can ever be set any ways near right here is for the case to be allowed to go before the Dept. of Justice, then if the Govt. can take the property of a mission it will at least seem to be sanctioned by law. As it now stands it looks simply like a strong arm method.

(Signed) H. J. Minthorn.

(Copied from a letter in Mr. Minthorn's handwriting--CRS)

Document No. 28

Folder No. 252  
Netsikahtla, Alaska.

15  
12-16

(Postmark Dec., 28th, 1915)

Letter dated 12-16-1915

H

Mr. A. A. Belloc, London, Eng.

Dear Sir,

Your letter to Mr. Duncan was read to me - I think perhaps something I have written has given a wrong impression and this may also. It is very difficult to give an idea by writing of the situation. - (Mr. Duncan could not undertake to get the information you ask for or any paper signed by the natives giving authority. First of all Mr. Jones, the Govt. Agent in charge here, could not allow it, he even locked him out of the cannery where he went every day to take exercise, he also shut him out of his school room, and the Juvenile Sunday School out of their room and Mr. Duncan now conducts his School and Juvenile S.S. in his dining-room and eats in his kitchen.) Then Mr. Duncan preaches three times each week, has school 6 hours each day, 5 days in the week and Teachers Meeting and his Juvenile S.S. which is a lot of work for a man of his age. He could not undertake anything more.

It is not the loss of the property that he cares about so much and he will never try to get it back but hundreds of people gave money towards the work of this mission, now the Govt. has not only taken the property but eliminated the mission.

This is all shown in the Government letters sent you and copies enclosed. I have Report but two leaves out of the Report of Indian Commissioners 1889 (please return) which shows how people contributed - and every Excursion Steamer that landed here in the summer for many years, gave from ten to fifty dollars. Mr. Duncan thinks it is due (to) these people and him that it should be known that the Govt. has taken all this money (represented in the buildings etc.) and put it to the uses of the Govt.

and given it to its favorites, and given the best of the Community property to white people, all to the infinite detriment of the natives and over the protest of Mr. Duncan. He thinks that a very important principle has been violated viz. that money, given by friends of and believers in missions, has been, without their consent, taken and put to other uses and the Mission eliminated.

Dr. Claxton said in a printed statement in the 'Portland Evening Telegram' Aug. 11, 1915 that all of the buildings were Govt. owned but Mr. Duncan would be allowed to live in the cottage occupied by him. Dr. Claxton did not need to do this as the Act of May 17-1884 provided for allowing missions to hold property and the Act of March 3, 1891 making Annette Island a reserve, put it on the same ground as the other reserves where missions hold property and also placed the people where they could have had their land in Severalty instead of which Dr. Claxton takes all under an old Common law Statute for the U.S. Govt. See report of Com. Ind. Affairs 1891 page 73, and proceedings Mohonk, Con. 1894 - page 100 & 101.

I suppose if Japan had taken the property of an American Christian Mission and put it to the uses of the Japanese Govt. there would have been a lot said and probably something done about it. The case is no different here as the Govt. did not invest one dollar in the property it has taken and Mr. Duncan paid the Govt. taxes as much as \$ 800.<sup>00</sup> per year. Then the Govt. Agent here has been very ugly to Mr. Duncan and violent and insulting and by his talk and example has antagonized the work of the Mission and misrepresented Mr. Duncan and his work to the Secretary of the Interior & Dr. Claxton has been worse, for he has insinuated to Mr. Duncan that it would be better for him to leave here; but all of the things they have done would weary you if I tried to tell them but here is a sample - the Agent here has a man here that he wishes to put in Mr. Duncan's place, first ~~then~~ they tried to get the natives to sign a blank petition to the Sec. and let them

put in the heading after but that failed. Then when Mr. Duncan talked of going to Seattle and Portland to consult with his friends, the man moved here it is said with the intention of taking possession in Mr. Duncan's absence and holding the place and the Church etc., but as this became known to Mr. Duncan, he did not go. Now the City Council which is under the control of the Agent has elected Elders for the Church and state that if Mr. Duncan will not go to the Dance Hall and publicly acknowledge those men as elders of the Church, they will turn him out and put the other man in his place.

Now I suppose you will think that my advice is not worth much in this case; but I will say again as I said before, that I think it will be best remedied by getting these facts and others in a reliable form from here and make them very conspicuous in the public prints and get some influential Republicans to make a point of bringing the matter to the attention of the Sec. or the Pres. or Congress if necessary and have the whole matter put on a right basis, first of all reverse what Dr. Claxton has done and if possible get him and Mr. Beattie, the Supt. of Education for S.E. Alaska and Mr. Jones, the Agent, removed from the control of things. Dr. Lopp, the Agent at Seattle for Education in Alaska, I do not think is unreasonable and might be left.

Then have all the land on the Island that any of the people want to own individually surveyed, and allotted to them. Then have all the Mission property as far as the title is concerned put in the ownership of some Church as shall be selected by Mr. Duncan and the natives. church members, but to be under the control of Mr. Duncan during his lifetime. (This would probably be the Protestant Episcopal Church) Bishop Rowe of Alaska, James I think. Then have the owners of the fish traps to either get off the Island, or stay under a contract to furnish the fish caught in the traps to the cannery here. The cannery could then be leased and the income go for the support of the Mission as Mr. Duncan intended.



Then, as the Govt. school would continue, have the Government to inaugurate a demonstration farm instead of trying to crowd the Mission out of work that it has conducted successfully for 28 years. This farm to undertake the raising of crops that would probably be adapted to the soil and climate and also of Goats, Hogs, Cattle, etc.. This is the only Indian Reserve in Alaska and if properly managed it, with a good Government School, would be of great benefit to the natives who are now greatly handicapped by the lack of education. especially speaking English, lack of Medical, Surgical and Hospital advantages and permanent homes and protection from a class of unprincipled white people. All of this can be easily accomplished, as the U.S. Govt. stands for that kind of policy and not for vandalism, such as Dr. Claxton has inaugurated here. The people here also would enthusiastically support such a programme here.

Respectfully,

(signed) H.J. Minthorn.

(Drafted, but not sent.)

Metlakatla, Alaska.

Dear 30th 1915.

Dr. Lopp,

Agent for Education in Alaska.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Benson delivered your message to me, and I think I ought to give some reason for not wishing to do anything.

Mr. Duncan to  
leave Metlakatla

1st: As I understand Mr. Duncan, he has fully determined to leave here.

2nd: It is not good business to invest money without any voice in the management of the business.

3rd: Promises made and assurances given by one Government administration are not binding upon another administration. See Commissioner of Education Dawson's Annual Report 1887, pages 20, 21, 22, and compare with action of present commissioner.

Missions

4th: Property given solely for Mission purposes and often attended with great self-sacrifice, and always sacredly devoted to purely missionary purposes, as was all of Mr. Duncan's property,

Seizures of  
Property

should not be taken by or given to the Government. I consider it a betrayal of a sacred trust to do

Mr. Lopp, 12-30-15

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for missions might fall into the hands of its enemies.

6th: There has been sent here a legal decision to the effect that the land and all improvements are the property of the U. S. and control will be taken by the Commissioner of Education. Thus all individual incentive to progress and improvement is removed.

Property  
Cost

7th: There is a laxness in enforcement of legal and moral restraints. Several burglaries have occurred recently amounting to several hundreds of dollars, and no official effort has been made to detect and arrest the burglars.

Immorality

Public Dance Halls have been opened and are encouraged, and religious observances discouraged.

Dancing

8th: There is favoritism in administration; certain persons can always get a hearing which is not permitted to others.

Favoritism

9th: The administration does not observe its own rules of action after publicly promulgating them.

Rules &  
Regulation

10th: Following this, I give ten reasons why I do not think the persons entrusted with the business will be successful:

Fisheries

1 The fisheries have been given to other

Mr. Lopp, 12-30-15

-page 3-

payment of their debts.

- 4 Lack of experience in so large a business, especially in selling the product to good advantage.

- 5 Any business of any importance cannot succeed in Metlakatla without the

Testimony

indorsement of Mr. Duncan, as long as he is within the reach of the persons with whom the managers seek to do business, and he will not indorse people who have already repeatedly failed.

- 6 All business men who are likely to have dealings with the managers already know that the Government took possession forcibly and without any consideration for the parties who furnished the money to build the Cannery: and hundreds of Christian people who contributed this money do not approve of the action of the Government in taking the property without consulting them, so that the business will start with a serious handicap.

Seizures of  
Property

Bookkeeping

- 7 Inability of the natives to do the book-keeping for so extensive and complicated a business.

- 8 The time is unpropitious for a new venture on a large scale. The world is in a state

Mr. Lopp, 12-30-15

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of unrest and uncertainty.

9. The Cannery Building, the wharf, the warehouse, the pipeline, are all old and very extensive, and expensive repairs will have to be made, all on property with an uncertain title.

10. The machinery in the Cannery is antiquated. Better methods and different machinery will have to be used to be able to compete with other canneries. The natives are not informed as to these conditions, and are not sufficiently advanced to get in line and keep in line with their competitors.

Mr. Lopp, 12-30-15

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OBJECTS OF THE METLAKATLA CHURCH AND MISSION.

The object of the Metlakatla Church and Mission shall be:

1. The preaching of the Gospel and teaching of the doctrines of Christianity.
2. Promotion of fellowship and love among its members, and between its members and all other people.
3. For mutual helpfulness among its members, and the extension of the same to all others as far as practicable.
4. To safeguard the spiritual and physical well-being of its members and others, especially the young.
5. For the inculcation and encouragement of industry, economy and honesty, and efficiency in business habits and practices, for the purpose of encouraging co-operative action in business, promotion of industries by co-operation of labor and capital.

(Copied from a typewritten document. -- CRS)

NOTE: In the upper left-hand corner, first page of this document, is a notation. in Mr. Wellcome's handwriting, as follows: