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*“The Canoe Rocks – We Do Not Know  
What Will Become of Us”*

*The Complete Transcript of a Meeting  
Between Governor John Green Brady  
of Alaska and a Group  
of Tlingit Chiefs, Juneau,  
December 14, 1898*

EDITED BY TED C. HINCKLEY

**T**he Tlingit Indians of southeastern Alaska were preeminently a maritime people. As the Plains Indians had mastered the horse for purposes of wide-ranging war and peaceful commerce, so had their northern counterparts created a culture tied to their magnificent sea-going canoes. By 1898 the “Tlingit canoe” had been rocked by decades of stormy acculturation. Western culture had arrived in the late eighteenth century. European iron cutting tools had at first given the Indian even greater power over the luxuriously wooded Alexander Archipelago. Ineluctably, however, the white man’s diseases, his superior technology, and his cultural ego subdued the indigenes’ war-like propensities. When America acquired the far north territory in 1867, the fighting edge of the once proud Tlingit had been dulled, if not ruined.

From the outset it was appreciated that the native population of Alaska should be treated differently than had been America’s Far West aboriginals. The Russians had intermarried with the indigenes, particularly the Aleut. Furthermore, the “Russian American Company . . . con-

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sidered the great mass of the natives as individuals rather than tribes.” The United States continued this policy.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1870s, stateside reservations and the entire Indian annuities program were coming under heavy fire. Alaska would be spared these institutions. An administrative vacuum was created after the federal government chose to overlook or suppress Alaska’s native customs, laws which had enforced contracts, and dealt out punishment for offenses among themselves. Sadly, rapacious traders and the usual dirty social grease, which commonly lubricated white-red relations, moved into this void. Missionaries, a United States Naval gunboat, and a District governor without sufficient staff, mobility or even policy guidelines somehow tried to insulate the culture shock.

The Klondike rush of 1898 created a genuine crisis for the Tlingit people in the northern part of the Alexander Archipelago.<sup>2</sup> Because of the boom in the nearby Yukon Territory, the region from Juneau north to Dyea and Skagway was flooded by a torrent of gold-hungry miners. Included in this flow of humanity were what the governor described as “gamblers, thugs, lewd women from the worst quarters of the cities of the coast.”<sup>3</sup> If the presence of this avaricious mass were not serious enough, many gold-seekers, low on funds, cut directly into the Indian economy. Captain R. T. Yeatman, United States Army, reported in July 1898, “The Indians are . . . wholly unlike any others on the continent. The men are ready to work and not at all warlike.” He went on to protest the forcible removal of Indian homes, the fencing in of land on which the Indian had planted potatoes, and the way Indian freighters were being excluded not merely from work but from using the Chilkat trail itself. “People from all

<sup>1</sup> A reasoned summary of how one Alaska Governor viewed the natives’ legal position is Lyman E. Knapp, “A Study upon the Legal and Political Status of the Natives of Alaska,” *American Law Register*, XXX (May 1891), 325–39. This question, as just about everything else dealing with Alaskan history, demands examination of James Wickersham, *A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature, 1724–1924* (Cordova, Alaska 1927). In their *Annual Reports* (included in Secretary of Interior’s *Annual Reports*), each District governor devotes space to the condition of the territory’s natives. For a good collection of historical documents dealing with the Tlingit in the Juneau region, see: Vol. II, *Proceedings of the Alaska Boundary Tribunal . . .* (Washington, D.C. 1904).

<sup>2</sup> Probably the preemptive treatment of the Klondike gold rush will remain Pierre Berton’s accurate and delightfully written *The Klondike Fever* (New York 1958).

<sup>3</sup> Carl L. Lokke, *Klondike Saga: The Chronicle of a Minnesota Mining Company* (Minneapolis 1965), 37.

parts of the world," he observed in summary, "have rushed in hoping to make a fortune in a short time, and that too, by most any means."<sup>4</sup>

Alaska's Governor John Green Brady faced an impossible task. Like many a public official before him, about the best he could do was to dampen the fires of public unrest. This document makes him appear rather stern and unbending in the face of the Tlingit requests. In truth, Alaska's natives never had a better friend. A New York City orphan who had been spurred on by the encouragement of such men as Charles Loring Brace and his Children's Aid Society, Brady had ultimately become a graduate of Yale and Union Theological Seminary. His ministry had carried him from Alaska missionary work to businessman, to judgeship, and finally to District governor in 1897. He was painfully familiar with what his fellow whites thought of Alaska's indigenes. To abate the WASP's carry-over stereotype of the degraded Far West Indian, Brady urged everyone to refer to the Tlingit as Alaskans or Alaskan natives. By word and deed he did all he could to distinguish them from their south-side counterparts. His intent was obvious. America's red men had been smashed and then pauperized. In Alaska the natives must be assimilated — and as equals. As missionary and later as judge, Brady had fought for everything from desegregated schools to Indian property rights. He had no illusions about an easy assimilation. Nevertheless, an Alaskan apartheid policy, whether urged by red or white, was anathema to him.

For all his good intentions and enlightened actions, the governor was a creature of his age. A degree of WASP presumptiveness peeks out in his own assertion that the Russians "did not consider them [Tlingits] as civilized people; not as people who could read and write and could not do anything." Brady was well aware that the Russians had created some native schools and employed Indians in numerous capacities. Now he sought to justify the present tumultuous state of affairs by denegating the Russian regime. When he told the chiefs, "You must decide yourselves," he really meant they could either accept a secure second-class citizenship which many a white would have gladly extended them, or keep their present unique status with all of its tension-ridden, bicultural ambiguities.

To fortify their pleas, the red conferees were no less prone to hyperbole and hypocrisy. And pleas they were. As Chief Kah-du-shan stated, and others repeated, white people "have the power." When the chief

<sup>4</sup> Captain Yeatman to Adjutant General, Department of the Columbia, July 4, 1898; National Archives, Interior Department, Territorial Papers, Alaska; Microfilm 430, Roll 5.

opined, "We are very poor now," he really meant that relative to the whites they were poor. Native witchcraft, infanticide, slavery, and inter-clan killing had been outlawed by the Yankee. Chief Koogh-see frankly admitted, "I have seen how white men live and like it very much." Like every member of the human family, the Indians wanted the best of the old and the new. On one hand, "return our creeks and the hunting grounds that white people have taken from us"; on the other, "tell white people to pay us for ground." Fundamentally the governor was correct. Jack Williams and his peers were "not thinking rightly." It was vain for them to dream of enjoying the full socio-economic benefits of the American way of life while we could "live by ourselves and have our property and homes where the white people could not bother us."

This December 14, 1898, meeting was the culminating conference in a series of consultations, initiated among the Indian villages on the first of the month by Frank Grygla, a special agent of the General Land Office. The actual concentration at Juneau had occurred because "many of the Indians were brought here by the Marshal as witnesses against parties of selling or distributing alcoholic liquors to the natives." While Brady had talked with a number of the chiefs prior to the fourteenth, he now invited all the Tlingits to gather at Juneau's public schoolhouse "to make their grievances . . . known in public in order to put them down in writing and present them to the Hon. Secretary of the Interior."

John G. Brady would remain in office until March 1906. Proof of his unrelenting efforts to secure justice for the native population may be found in his correspondence and annual reports.<sup>5</sup> Albeit, the lot of the panhandle native would not be radically altered. Fortunately for them, the Klondike flood had a rapid ebb. By 1900 the white flotsam and jetsam had either washed back home or engulfed Nome's golden beach. Governor Brady could take little satisfaction in this. What had been a red-white problem now became an Eskimo-white culture collision.

Administering the nation's largest territory was a Herculean burden. Surely one of the most enigmatic questions was the challenge of maintaining human equality among diverse peoples so subject to abrupt movement. To the Tlingit it had all been reminiscent of a rocking canoe. Gov-

<sup>5</sup> The sons and daughters of John Green Brady have given their father's papers to his beloved alma mater, Yale University, where they may be profitably used in the Beinecke Library. Other Brady manuscript materials may be found in The Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; Sheldon Jackson Collection, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton; and at the National Archives, Seattle Depository.

ernor Brady may have wondered if he had not become the proverbial sorcerer's apprentice. The transcript follows.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The document here printed and related correspondence are located in the National Archives, Interior Department, Territorial Papers, Alaska; Microfilm 430, Roll 5, Frame 651 ff. The document is typewritten and is reproduced here verbatim. The official 1898 government interpreter, George Kostrometinoff, well understood the District's Yankee, Tlingit, and Russian-American elements. His translation is about as precise as could have been obtained.

*Chief Kah-du-shan, from Wrangel:*<sup>1</sup> Long time ago before the white people came to this country, Thlingit had laws and at every village there was a chief, some villages two or three chiefs.<sup>2</sup> Now around Wrangel we have names of different mountains, different creeks, bays, points, all have names. Around Taku the Thlingit gave names to different points, islands, mountains, as well as Chilkat and other places. Three principal rivers in this country through which the natives of the country would go into

<sup>1</sup> The town of Wrangell, begun as Fort Dionysius in 1834, was constructed by the Russians to block the encroachment of the Hudson's Bay Company traders. Five years later the Russians leased part of southeastern Alaska (now loosely referred to as the panhandle) to the British. Fort Dionysius became Fort Stikine. With the American purchase of Alaska in 1867, a military post was created here called Fort Wrangell. By the end of the 1870s, the town no longer "boomed" from the series of mild gold rushes that had occurred to the east up the Stikine River in British Columbia. By 1890 Wrangell had become a somnolent village of 316 residents. Clarence L. Andrews, *Wrangell and the Gold of the Cassiar: A Tale of Fur and Gold in the Cassiar* (Seattle 1937) is a generally reliable introduction to Wrangell's nineteenth century history. Extensively used throughout this paper is the splendid *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names* compiled by Donald J. Orth, (Washington, D.C. 1967). Consisting of over one thousand pages of detailed information, Orth's tome is indispensable to the student of the forty-ninth state's history. Information on Wrangell may be found on pages 1060-61.

<sup>2</sup> Among the Tlingit of southeastern Alaska there were no chiefs, if the term implies absolute chiefship. Writing in the 1880s Albert P. Niblack declared, "The head of that household in the village, which through inheritance, wealth, numbers, and influence, predominates over the others, is nominally chief of the village." Besides the principal chief, villages contained various petty chiefs, men who ranked as "the heads of the other principal clan totems or households of the village." Albert P. Niblack, *The Coast Indians of Southern Alaska and Northern British Columbia*. The U.S. National Museum Report of the year ending June 30, 1888 (Washington, D.C. 1890), 250.

interior are Stickeen River, Taku River and Chilkat River.<sup>3</sup> The Sitka Tlingit as well as Hoonah and they go to Yakutat.<sup>4</sup> Ever since I have been a boy I have heard the names of different points, bays, islands, mountains, places where Tlingit get herring, hunting and make camps, that is why I think this country belongs to us.

Long, long time ago before white people came to this country our people lived here at certain places where they went hunting and fishing. When the Russians were here, they did not have any stores in the interior, but they used to trade with our people here (means on the coast).<sup>5</sup> I was a boy when this country was purchased, and soldiers came here to Wrangel and to Sitka.<sup>6</sup> There was a captain by name of Smith who told us that Americans had purchased this country. Then the business men followed the soldiers. They commenced to trade with our people. Our people did not object, did not say any thing to them.<sup>7</sup> By and by they began to build canneries and take the creeks away from us, where they make salmon and when we told them these creeks belonged to us, they

<sup>3</sup> These three rivers, the Stikine, the Taku, and the Chilkat, cut across the panhandle. The Stikine slices through the coast range not far from Wrangell, the Taku north of Juneau, and the Chilkat near the northern tip of Alaska's famed Inside Passage. Orth, 919, 944, and 210.

<sup>4</sup> Sitka, located on Baranof Island and like Wrangell to the southeast and Juneau to the northwest, is situated within the Alexander Archipelago. In 1898, Sitka, as it had been under the Russian flag, was still Alaska's capital. The Hoonah Indian village was located on Chichagof Island, an insular body lying immediately north of Baranof Island. Yakutat Bay faces the Gulf of Alaska and marks the geographical limit of not only the Tlingit Indian societies but the entire Northwest Coast culture. Tom McFeat, ed., *Indians of the North Pacific Coast: Studies in Selected Topics* (Toronto 1966), vii; and Philip Drucker, *Cultures of the North Pacific Coast* (San Francisco 1965), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Although exaggerating the Russian accomplishment, a fine summary of the Russian chapter of Alaska history is Hector Chevigny's *Russian America: The Great Alaskan Venture, 1741-1867* (New York 1965). The capacity of the Hudson's Bay Company to out-compete the Russian traders throughout southeastern Alaska has already been noted. In fact as early as the 1820s, Russia's American enterprise had begun to slump. Kah-du-shan's people, like aboriginals almost everywhere, found the white man's trade goods irresistible. Because the Tlingit were magnificent canoeemen, the Russians found it both safer and easier to let the natives come to them and thus failed to push an aggressive interior trade.

<sup>6</sup> At its peak the United States military force assigned to the District was composed of six companies. Originally five "forts" were created: Tongass, Wrangell, Sitka, Kenay (some 100 miles up Cook Inlet), and Kodiak Island. The official United States Army Alaska publication, pamphlet number 355-5, *Building Alaska with the U.S. Army, 1867-1962* (Seattle, Washington 1962), is quite useful as an introduction to the varied duties which the Army has historically borne in the Great Land.

<sup>7</sup> In truth the enterprising Yankee merchant accompanied the troops. Although the 1867-1868 Sitka boom soon wilted, a residue of traders hung on. See Ted C. Hinckley, "The United States Frontier at Sitka, 1867-1873," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, LX (April 1969), 57-64.

would not pay any attention to us and said all this country belonged to President, the big chief at Washington.<sup>8</sup>

We have places where we used to trap furs; now the white man get up on these grounds. They tell us that they are hunting for gold, but the judges and governor tells them to look for gold. We know that the white people get lots of gold money out of these places as well as out of the Yukon River. Here at this place as well as other places they take our property, take away ground, and when we complain to them about it, they employ a lawyer and go to court and win the case.<sup>9</sup>

There are animals and fish at places where they make homes. We are not fish. We like to live like other people live. We make this complaint because we are very poor now. The time will come when we will not have anything left. The money and everything else in this country will be the property of the white man, and our people will have nothing. We meet here tonight for the purpose for you to write to the chief at Washington and to let them know our complaint. We also ask him to return our creeks and the hunting grounds that white people have taken away from us.

Of course we are not as powerful as white people. We have no soldiers. We have no strength. We ask the big chief at Washington as children ask their fathers. The missionaries and teachers tell us that no one but God make the people. We know that the same God made us.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The extraordinary canning industry mushroomed during the 1880s and 1890s. As had happened so many times before under different circumstances in different climes, at first there seemed to be so much of the natural resource that none need worry about its exhaustion or primacy of claim. Modern technology and an omnivorous market quickly put the lie to such callowness. By the mid-1890s, the Alaska Packers Association had been formed, and the seasonal onslaught on the salmon had indeed begun to threaten the simple, unexploitive cycle of the Indian economy. See, for example: Tarleton H. Bean, *Report on the Salmon and Salmon Rivers of Alaska* . . . , June 9, 1890, 51st Cong., 1st sess., H. Mis. Doc. No. 211; A. H. Garland to Secretary of the Interior, January 28, 1889, National Archives, Interior Department, Territorial Papers, Alaska, M-430, Roll 1; John T. Brisbane to Department of Interior, January 9, 1889, *ibid.*; William Vilas to John T. Brisbane, January 23, 1889, *ibid.*; H. M. Kutchin to Secretary of the Interior, August 31, 1899, *ibid.*, Roll 6.

<sup>9</sup> Unlike the "easy-pickings," placer mining never would assume a fraction of the proportions that it did in California's Mother Lode country. Most of Alaska's gold would be secured only after heavy capital investment in machinery. Clearly such costly quartz mining prohibited native ownership. Parenthetically, there still does not exist a solid study of Alaska's mining history. In fact a whole raft of excellent Ph.D. dissertations are yet to be written on this subject. For an authoritative opener see *Blazing Alaska's Trails* by the mining expert Alfred Hulse Brooks (Caldwell, Idaho 1953).

<sup>10</sup> First Russian Orthodox priests, then American Roman Catholics, and particularly Presbyterian missionaries, attempted to evangelize the Tlingit. The Presbyterian



And the God placed us here. White people are smart; our people are not as smart as white people. They have a very fine name; they call themselves white people. Just like the sun shining on this earth. They are powerful. They have the power. They have men of wars.<sup>11</sup> It is not right for such powerful people as you are to take away from poor people like we are, our creeks and hunting grounds. Among our people we have chiefs. We have nice people, that is why I think the white people are our chiefs.

Long time ago our fathers used to tell children who was the chief and what happened long time ago and that is why we know how the chiefs are made and what our ancestors used to do. Present are Johnson, Koogh-see, and another young man who are chiefs, and also old man by name of Shoo-we-Kah. We do not ask the whole of Alaska. We simply ask the President to give us a ground where we can raise vegetables and places where we can hunt and prepare fish. We do not want all these things we ask for by force. We have eyes, and we have sense. We see you are powerful. We do not want to be angry with you. We want to be friends with you. We simply ask you to give us all these things. What I am saying to you now are the words of our people of a great many different villages, Taku, Sitka, Chilkat, and other places. We get married, take wives from one village to the other, and what I am saying to you now are the words of our Thlingit.

*Chief Johnson (Yash-noosh) from Juneau, Chief of the Takou [sic] Tribe:* What Kah-du-shan has said he told you the truth. We have not

effort, initiated in 1877, devoted far more time, treasure, and talent to the socio-economic problems of native acculturation than it ever gave to "saving souls." By 1898 significant numbers of panhandle natives were nominal Christians, and had various relations with missionaries in school, in church, and in a variety of civic activities. When the missionary told them that in the sight of God they were the equal of the white man, they believed him. Detailing the Presbyterian beginning in southeastern Alaska is Sheldon Jackson, *Alaska, and Missions on the North Pacific Coast* (New York 1880). Jackson's *Annual Reports* as general agent of education for Alaska are most helpful sources on native-white interaction. They may be found in the *Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Education* (Washington, D.C. 1885-1910).

<sup>11</sup> The army had proved largely useless as a police agency in Alaska. The Alexander Archipelago demanded an amphibious force which it obtained when the Navy took over in 1879. After the Organic Act of 1884 and the creation of a civil administration, the U.S.S. *Pinta*, with a marine guard, continued to sail the littoral reminding red and white alike of Uncle Sam's power. Clarence L. Andrews, *The Story of Alaska* (Caldwell, Idaho 1953), 140.

talked to you for long time, for many years. We have not said anything to you since Russians lived in this country.<sup>12</sup> All the people would like to say something to the governor. We are perfectly willing to give this country Alaska to you. We know this is our country. How long we have been living here we do not know, very long time.

I do not know whether the lawmaking people living at Washington get any pay — the man who teach the people to be good. We do not know anything about the United States law, the law that the governor knows. Things that I am saying now did not used to happen in olden days. The government now sells land. Our people we have simple patches of ground raising vegetables and place where our people go hunting; creeks where they fish, we want you to give them back to us. We never had any trouble with the white people of America. We love you as children love their parents. Now we know that the United States have a great deal of trouble with Indians in the states about the land. We never had that trouble with you.<sup>13</sup> We are perfectly willing that you should have Alaska. We did not know that the Russians sold this country; of course we know it now. When the American soldiers came to this country, that was the first time that we heard that this country was sold by the Russians. The Indians in the States made great deal of trouble for you about the land. We never make any trouble. We love you. We love you as our friends. The Thlingit are getting poor because their ground is taken away

<sup>12</sup> Brady must have understood this to be exaggeration and over-simplification. Almost every governor of the District, including himself, had made a point of journeying to the native villages and speaking with the Tlingit on their home ground. Sometimes the governors came in anger, but usually they came in peace to show the flag and to listen to native grievances.

<sup>13</sup> Yash-noosh spoke the truth. The United States had never had to confront a desperate and determined resistance from the Tlingit as it had from the hard-pressed Plains Indians of the late nineteenth century. However there had been trouble, for example at Sitka in 1868, at Wrangell in 1869, and at Killisnoo in 1882. Fortunately such pathetic altercations as these produced few casualties and left minimal scars. The vast domain of the Plains Indians had long shielded them from the white man's avidity for land titles, ecological transformation, and town building. The marine world of the Alexander Archipelago had likewise been spared, not because it was difficult to reach, but because it was not predisposed to agricultural development. As the waterborne fur traders had shown, it was easy to penetrate. Long before the American purchase of Alaska, the fearsome Kolosh, as the Russians called the Tlingit, had been incapacitated from opposing western society. While Russian, British, and American bacilli had not decimated them as horrendously as it had the Mandan Indians, etc., it had so devastated the Tlingit as to blunt any fighting edge they might have brandished after 1867.

from them. We ask you to give to the Tlingit the places that brought us food. If you refuse to do that, then our people will starve. All these people came here for the purpose to tell you what they want so you can tell the chief in Washington. We have not been talking to you for long time, but now we are compelled to talk to you because white people are taking all those places away from us. Places where we used to make food. I like to say more but I would not say anything now as several people here present who would like to talk to you.

*Chief Koogh-see from Hoonah:* We would like to ask governor question, Why the people get arrested and tried in court?

*Governor Brady:* For violating the laws that we have on our books.<sup>14</sup>

Yes, I heard that our people get arrested and tried in court because they broke law. I was not quite sure, that is why I asked the question. It is true what Kah-du-shan has said; we believed that Alaska belongs to us. In all this country long time ago before we ever saw white men, our fathers and grandfathers told us we owned it. In those days we had our own customs. We believed and done things our way in those days, but lately missionaries came here and commenced to tell us different. They tell us that everything that is on this earth, wood, water and everything else, is created by God. The trees grow for the purpose that we can make use of them and make houses of. And different animals were created by God for purpose of giving us clothing and food. Now deers [sic] is made for purpose to eat, bears and other animals also. Now you see up to the present time blankets are made out of martin skins. That is the kind of blankets we used to have long time ago out of links [sic], fox, and

<sup>14</sup> The great bulk of these cases were violations of the law, induced either directly or indirectly by the red man's classic curse — firewater. In Alaska it was called, among other things, hoochinoo. "A couple of swigs and a man will try to climb a tree like a squirrel. A few more and he will either want to wrestle a brown bear or kill his in-laws." For people suffering from culture shock, it provided a means of escape and of course only furthered their social demoralization. Both Brady and Koogh-see understood this. Appalled by the problem and inured by years of dealing with it, they tactfully skirted the social nightmare that had brought such ignominy to the once-proud Tlingit. Edwin M. Lemert, *Alcohol and the Northwest Coast Indians* (Berkeley 1954); Morgan B. Sherwood, "Ardent Spirits: Hoch and the *Osprey* Affair at Sitka," *Journal of the West*, IV (July 1965), 301-44.

bear. God made the rivers for the purpose that we drink the water, and he also made fish for to go in the river. We have been living here a long time. Our ancestors used to live here and had possession of different creeks and different places. Since white men came to this country, things have changed. They take these things away from us for the purpose of enriching themselves. There are lots of things here which white men can make money out of.<sup>15</sup> There is lots of gold in this country. We do not know anything about mining. White men can mine. We do not want them to interfere with us. We make our living by trapping and fishing and hunting, and white men take all these places away from us; they constantly interfere with us.

Now not very far from the place where I live is Lituya Bay, where our people, our ancestors, used to go hunting for sea otters and hair seals. Now that place is taken away from us. Great many schooners going there. White people are there now.<sup>16</sup> These white men, when they make camp, they make lots of smoke. That scares animals, sea otters especially. That ground is very good for sea otter hunting. We went up there, 20 or 30 canoes and hunted around all summer and did not get any. The smoke scares the animals away.<sup>17</sup> And when we talk to those white men, they say that country does not belong to us, belongs to Washington. We have nothing to do with that ground.

All our people believe that Alaska is our country. I have been down to Seattle and Tacoma. I have seen very nice towns. I have seen how

<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the white man had made money since the purchase three decades earlier. By 1898 the gross value of any two-year salmon pack easily matches the \$7,200,000 purchase price paid Russia. Measured merely by receipts to the federal government from Alaska revenues, the territory had met its purchase price by 1900. O. P. Austin, comp., *Commercial Alaska in 1901* (Washington, D.C. 1902), 3939.

<sup>16</sup> Lituya Bay, facing on the Gulf of Alaska and near the northern end of southeastern Alaska, had long been a center for vessels engaged in fur-hunting as well as fishing. Today it is a part of Glacier Bay National Monument. Orth, 589.

<sup>17</sup> Koogh-see's pleas reveal that as late as 1898 the aboriginals, no different than people the world over, were reluctant to confront ecological reality. Alaska's sea otter were not so much being driven away as rapidly approaching extermination. The sea otter's lovely pelt had created an insatiable world market. Only by the narrowest of margins did nature not find itself the goose that laid the golden egg. Although the Alaskan fur seal would never come so close to annihilation, its existence was likewise threatened. In fact during the closing decades of the nineteenth century the conservation questions surrounding Alaska's fur seal embroiled a number of Pacific powers, particularly Canada and the United States, in a protracted dispute. An introduction to the problem can be found in Henry W. Elliot, *Our Arctic Province: Alaska and the Fur Seal Islands* (New York 1886), and C. C. Tansill, *Canadian-American Relations, 1875-1911* (New Haven 1943).

white men live, and I like it very much. Now supposing I come back here and tell my people, the leading men such as Kah-du-shan, to go down to Seattle and Tacoma. I have seen white men raising at those towns all kinds of fruit and vegetables. Suppose I tell those people to go with me on certain days to burn certain ground and next day same thing and third day same thing and destroy all these things, don't you suppose the white people would say something to us if we destroyed all these grounds by fire and get on places where white people goats and other animals and commenced to shoot them?<sup>18</sup> That is why I ask you, governor, to return all these things which white men took away from us. Creeks, for instance, where we make dry fish, places where we trap. We make our living altogether by trapping and hunting, and I ask you to give all those places back. And if white men should like to take possession of any of those places, we should like to ask you to tell them to not take them for nothing, but to pay for them.

*Chief Kah-ea-tchiss, from Hoonah:* Ever since I have been a little boy, I have heard of the white people. I heard that the Russians lived in Sitka. Thlingit by the name of Lin-ko-lich came over to our place and told us about it. Our people have a language of our own, and this man Lin-ko-lich acted as interpreter. This Lin-ko-lich told us that the white people came here it would be much better for us. We have found out at last. We know how it is now. We believe now Lin-ko-lich every thing he said. He said there will be no fort or blockade [sic]. The Thlingit are not going to kill any white people.<sup>19</sup> They are going to be friendly with them.

Our ancestors used to deal in furs. They had blankets made out of different furs. We are different from them. We dress different. Now our fathers told us where they used to go and hunt the sea otter. This man

<sup>18</sup> Precisely what burning the chief is alluding to is impossible to determine. Forest fires in the damp Alexander Archipelago are not easily created. Judging from the repeated reference to the white man's annoying smoke, it may well be that the growing density of people and their refuse smoke, around both settlements and the seasonal fish canning sites, is what agitates the Indians. At that time there was no real fear of any threat to the panhandle's ground cover.

<sup>19</sup> Chief Kah-ea-tchiss speaks the language of a new generation. Friendly reconciliation to the white invader was his only sensible alternative. Three generations earlier, unbroken by white man's disease, the proud, warlike Tlingit evidenced quite a different reaction to the presence of western peoples. A sudden 1802 amphibious attack by Tlingit had smashed Russia's infant colony at Sitka. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Alaska, 1730-1885* (New York 1960), 401-13.

who spoke before me said the truth. They used to go to a place called Lituya Bay. Used to get lots of the otter there for making clothes and blankets. I have got a paper here that I would like the governor to see and also a medal that my ancestors got from the Russians. (Document in Russian language, dated July 23, 1840. Small silver medal.)<sup>20</sup>

I feel very bad now the way the white men treat us. I would like you to tell white people to pay us for the ground. When a man goes in a store and buys different things, he pays for them. He does not take those things for nothing when he leaves the store. That is why I should like you to tell your people to do the same thing to us. When we tell the white people to pay for this ground, they refuse to make any payment for the ground and say this land belongs to Washington; we have nothing to do with it.

Now in early days we used to kill lots of sea otter at Lituya Bay; now we kill but very few. The white people makes lots of smoke, and smoke drives sea otter away from those grounds. Lots of schooners are going to that bay and different boats. The sea otter are scared and keep away from those grounds. We would like the white people to pay us a little for going into that bay.

*Chief Shoo-we-Kah, from Juneau:* Much has been said by the white chiefs to our people, but nothing has been accomplished, and now we want to talk good so it will have some weight to do some good. In the beginning of this place (Juneau) I was here all by myself. Only one house and I was living in that house. Dick Harris is here, and Joe Juneau is another who knew me at that time.<sup>21</sup> After that I went over to Sitka, and on arrival there the head man at the town of Sitka called me over to his house. That chief gave me a paper which I have in my pocket. (Letter of recommendation given by Mr. Bean, dated 1880.) I give you that for purpose that you would not think I was not telling truth. He said then that white people will come to your place and that "I want you to take good care of them. White people will do the same thing to you. They will look after you. Not only yourself but all your friends." Right

<sup>20</sup> Like the French, British, and American governments, the Russians found it convenient to authenticate and formalize their relations with the North American aboriginals by the use of engraved medals.

<sup>21</sup> Dick Harris and Joe Juneau were the prospectors who in 1880 discovered gold at what is today Alaska's capital. They had drifted north looking for the proverbial lucky strike. Harris had earlier mined in Colorado and Montana, while Juneau had been caught up in the 1849 rush to California. R. N. DeArmond, *The Founding of Juneau* (Juneau 1967), 40ff.

there on the beach in front of the town now I had a garden, and on that clear place white people camped. Now you have heard today the complaints of several of our people. They claimed that the white people imposed upon them and I would like to ask you today something to help us. Here in the basin (Near Juneau) I discovered a fine rock and made a mark on that rock and afterwards took white people there and showed them the place. When I was doing that I thought white people would take good care of us, to look after us and especially take good care of me when I got old. But white men did not do as I expected. Now with us Thlingit, when a chief want to pay a certain man a piece of ground, he says, you take this ground and take possession of it. White men do not do that. We are at a loss to know what to do. Now I ask you to appoint a certain man at a certain village, here or at Taku, or any other place, and that he must look after that village.<sup>22</sup> I know that down below (the states) that a man possessed a certain property, and another man comes along and wants that property, he pays for it. We built this house and paid money for it. We paid for everything in this house, and take good care of this house. And in different villages here our people have property just like this house, and I would ask you to take good care of it and see that no one interferes with it. All I ask you is to take good care of us. Now we do not know what we are to do as we are like a certain man in a canoe. The canoe rocks; we do not know what will become of us.

One white man by name of Tom made good deal of trouble for me, and there is certain creek here that I claim and he camped there and took possession of it, cut trees down and does not pay me anything.

<sup>22</sup> Actually this had already been done. District Governors John H. Kinkead, Alfred P. Swineford, Lyman E. Knapp, James Sheakley, as well as John Green Brady, all had followed the precedent established in the Far West territories and had employed native police. They were usually respected people in their particular villages. However, because whites could usually disregard the native policeman's power, their stature, and thus their effectiveness among their own people, was badly handicapped. Poor communications with the District's authorities further eroded their usefulness. William T. Hagan, *American Indians* (Chicago 1961), 137-38. The "Alaska Governors' Papers" located at the National Archives Depository, Seattle, Washington, probably has the largest mass of manuscript material on Alaska's native police. It was inevitable that a territory as vast as the Great Land could never enjoy the kind of prompt and equitable judicial cloak which covered other western territories. Alaska's whites, it should be noted, were no less distressed by inadequate civil machinery. The standard account of their struggle for a more responsive government both in the territory and in relation to Washington, D.C., is Jeannette Paddock Nichols, *Alaska: A History of Its Administration, Exploitation, and Industrial Development during Its First Half Century under the Rule of the United States* (Cleveland 1924).

Our people have dogs. We keep them for hunting purposes. I have dogs also and white men kill Dogs [sic]. Those dogs are worth about \$20. That is what miners going into Yukon pay. I have taken words of chief at Sitka here is the paper which you saw. I was the first one who made friends with white men here. Now I feel very bad because white men took possession of my property and that is not the way to do. (Refers here to property on creek near Basin back of Juneau.) I cannot fish there. Of course the white man chop wood there, and I want that white man to pay for that property. I have been in the dark. Very dark now. Give me light, that is what I ask of you now, so that I can see. White men came here promiscuously. I never stopped white men coming in this place. Lots of timber here; I never stopped them from cutting timber. Everything that I possess I give to the white people, now I am an old man and have not anything left.

Some of my people do not behave themselves, especially on Christmas and will get to fighting. They get clubs and sticks and strike each other with clubs and some strike with knives. I want that to be stopped. Long time ago when I was a little boy white man found this country by name Mr. Daub. This white man by name of Daub, he made a chief here of one of my ancestors. Now I have taken his place and got his name.<sup>23</sup> Whenever that steamer came here, our people would put good dress on, and especially our chief would put nice things on, a cap and good clothes and come on board that steamer. I like you to appoint some chief here to represent all our people. I ask you to help me and do what I request you to do to appoint some chief here.

I was policeman at one time and was discharged without receiving any pay; that is why none of my friends and relatives are policemen now. I worked very hard.<sup>24</sup> You talk lots; white people promise much but do

<sup>23</sup> Today's WASPs flagellate themselves before aboriginal Americans for "forcing the Indian to assume an anglicized name." It is true that white American Protestant missionaries usually insisted that Tlingit children schooled under their charge assume "Christian names." In fact what the missionaries really were trying to accomplish was a speed-up of the native acculturation. They presumed that if they wore an "American label," the native would more quickly speak English, acquire skills useful in a white world, go to court when a merchant tried to cheat him, and just generally be "a more responsible citizen." Chief Shoo-we-Kah subconsciously bespeaks the indigenes' ambivalence on this matter when he says, "Now I have taken his place and got his name."

<sup>24</sup> An examination of the records makes it clear that the governors did sincerely try to reimburse the Indians. Indeed, Governors Swineford and Knapp had to push quite hard to secure federal assurance for such compensation when it had been funded for over a decade southside. No doubt Shoo-we-Kah's duties were particularly onerous



not derive any benefit from it. I want to ask all the white men present here to tell me what you are going to do in the future and how are you going to keep us.

*Chief Ah-na-tilash, from Taku:* I have lived a good many years. You see I am old man now. Russians used to be here. Russians used to be in Sitka. They never used to treat Thlingit like they are treated now. They did not do anything to the ground like the white people do now.<sup>25</sup> White people take the ground away from us. When Vice President was here, I went to him and complained to him and told him how the Thlingit are treated here.<sup>26</sup> I asked Vice President also to give the same town what the President had. When we have trouble with the white people about the ground they get very angry and want to fight us. Now we want you, governor, to put a stop to that. Now salmon runs up the Taku River, and this salmon our people get for food. Now white people come early in the spring there before the ice breaks to catch fish there. There is no store there, and Taku people make their living by catching salmon. If I was living at Taku now, I think I would starve because on the account of

because he had to labor in vain separating his Juneau fellows from hard liquor. It was also a dangerous business in Juneau. Six years earlier Dr. J. E. Connett had been tarred and feathered for interfering with the nefarious traffic. Another white, a teacher named Charles H. Edwards, had been killed. Little wonder that Shoo-we-Kah be-moaned his intoxicated people who "strike each other with clubs and some strike with knives." Gov. James Sheakley, *Annual Report of the Governor of Alaska, 1892* (Washington, D.C. 1893), 17-18.

<sup>25</sup> There is no question whatever that on one count the Russians bested the Yankee. By the time the Russians had established themselves in southeastern Alaska at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they had familiarized themselves with Alaska's native people. Although their earlier advance across the Aleutian Islands had been frequented by bloody acts, they often accepted some responsibility for their Aleut progeny. The Russians, like the French, were far more successful in genuine racial assimilation. The American prospector certainly was not reluctant to cohabit with a teenage native girl (be she Indian or Eskimo), but he was less inclined to accept the full paternal responsibility that such a liaison might demand. That Ah-na-tilash is exaggerating the Russian accommodation with the Tlingit is best attested to by the well-maintained stockade with which the Russians separated themselves from the adjoining Indian ranch at Sitka. The late Hector Chevigny's *Lord of Alaska: Baranov and the Russian Adventure* (Portland, Ore. 1951), is a superbly narrated account of the Slav-aboriginal fusion.

<sup>26</sup> By the mid-1890s Alaska's famed Inside Passage had created an annual tourist traffic approaching two thousand visitors. Vice-president Adlai E. Stevenson's visit endorsed this swelling business. It also recognized the more serious Alaska-Canada diplomatic problems that remained unresolved. Gov. James Sheakley, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1896*, III (Washington, D.C. 1896), 193.

salmon. The white men here sell our ground to other white people and we have a great deal of trouble about it. There are lots of good places down below; we do not want those kind of white people here. We do not want them to come up here and interfere with us. When I was young I used to go very often. I was well off then and did not have so much trouble as I have now. Now I am old and have a good deal of trouble with white people and have not so much money as I had then. We have a great deal of trouble about the creeks and ground, and they have a great deal of trouble, and I ask you to put a stop to it. Also that another Thlingit from Taku if he was here would say the same thing to you. I am very glad indeed to be present here and talk with you. I know most of the Thlingits here have something to say to you.

*Charley, of Juneau:* I would like to say a few words to you but would like to know first what these people are talking about. I was present and heard some man talking but in the beginning did not know what Indians wanted here and did not know what they were talking about.

*Mr. Grygla:* Chief Johnson asked us personally to be present at a meeting to hear about complaints of the Thlingit and hear what they all had to say.

*Charley:* Our people have a great deal of trouble now, especially on the other side (Douglas Island).<sup>27</sup> The company there have a village where the people live and when they want the ground, they simply move us from one place to another. Now our people had several creeks around here where they used to prepare food for the winter. Now all the creeks are claimed by the company (Treadwell Gold Mining Company).<sup>28</sup> Of course our people feel very bad the way the white men act. They never tell us what they are going to do. White men go and do without notifying us or tell us what to do, and they put notices on the premises. And if you

<sup>27</sup> Douglas Island was separated from Juneau by Gastineau Channel. The site was famous for the vast open-pit mining operations which it had spawned. The area surrounding these mines had been stripped of its forest cover. Nature was supplanted by stamping mills, miners' homes and the usual refinery sprawl. Orth, 283, and R. N. DeArmond, *Some Names around Juneau* (Sitka 1957), 44–45.

<sup>28</sup> By this time Treadwell, the company town on Douglas Island, supported one of the largest stamping mill works in the world. Unfortunately no more than a couple of dozen Indians had found regular employment there. John Green Brady, *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1897* (Washington, D.C. 1897), 192–99.

make a complaint and go into court, we are notified that it is too late now, that the paper is recorded and nothing can be done. That is why all our people feel very bad, and I am afraid we will have some trouble about it by and by. Of course you have heard a great deal from people here about the complaints and troubles; about the customs and different things and I ask you to help us to make us feel good and try to do something for us so that we can be better and feel better. Of course we do not know what we are going to do but would like to hear from you.

*Jack Williams, of Juneau, talks with the help of Fred Moore as interpreter:* The reason why I want Fred to translate my talk to the governor is that I want my people to hear what I have to say. It is wanted by the town that our people should make a complaint before you. We have the same flesh as those Indians living down below in the states and we know that the government of the United States has provided food, clothing, houses for them in every year. And sometimes the railroad company want to build their road through the land of the natives, and the owners make agreement with the natives that they have free travel if they give land to the company. So that the owners give free rides.<sup>29</sup> It is quite a distance away from our people to those people down in the States. The places which we are living in now we hear the white people call it the territory of Alaska, and those people living down in the states, the white people call it the states. We are not like those people. They are supported by the government of the United States, and this is the first opportunity we have had to make our complaints before the government of our needs. When we were small our fathers and uncles used to tell us about the great chiefs and high class of people and we used to believe them; and since we became old we find it out the difference between our chiefs and the white people's chiefs. We know which ones have the power. We know that Alaska was purchased by the American people from the Russian, and now days the white people has come up here to settle among our villages. When these white people first came around our villages we were glad to see them. We knew they would give us some work to do. They employed us for a short time, then all at once we find out that great many white people rushed here and took our work, and we did not know which way to

<sup>29</sup> The federal government over the years had found it cheaper to buy off the western Indians with annuity goods than to wage war against them. Likewise the Central Pacific's early practice of offering free rides to chiefs had kept the peace. However, while we can chuckle over the latter, the annuity goods policy of the Indian Bureau was a mixed blessing.

turn to give us employment.<sup>30</sup> And when we could not find anything to do, we go out hunting after bear; fish for halibut. Then also these white people took it away from us, these our hunting grounds. We are now bringing before you our condition, and we would submit to you for we do not know which way to turn. We would like to know from the government what we should do for our living, and how we are going to get it. We sometimes think that the best thing that the government can do for us is to select two places where we could make our homes as the people do at Port Chester near Metlakahtla.<sup>31</sup> Sometimes I go down to Seattle, and I always feel proud when I stop at Port Chester to see those people away from trouble. The white people does not bother them, and they have nice homes. I hear what the other people was saying in their complaints before the governor this evening. We have seen how the white people have treated our people sitting here. So it comes in my mind how these people become civil people, those living down at Port Chester with Mr. Duncan. So we think that if the government should do with us the same as with the people down at Port Chester, give us two places where we could live by ourselves and have our property and homes where the white people could not bother us.

*Governor John G. Brady's Address to the Thlingit at the Pow-Wow in the Public School House, Juneau, Alaska, December 14, 1898.*

I am very glad that you are thinking, but what I have heard here tonight it is in my mind to say that there is trouble ahead for them if they

<sup>30</sup> Jack Williams may be referring to the backwash of dispirited Klondike gold seekers from the jumping off points at Skagway and Dyea.

<sup>31</sup> The story of how the missionary William Duncan took a band of unassimilated Tsimshian Indians and built Metlakatla in British Columbia and then New Metlakatla in Alaska is high drama. Most modern anthropologists would agree in part with Jack Williams. Certainly the most humane form of acculturation is that which is slow and above all rigidly controlled. Duncan had been extremely autocratic. His native police promptly jailed liquor dealers and anyone else who threatened the English village decorum which he had so laboriously instituted. But New Metlakatla was situated on a tight little island without white man's mines, mills, canneries, or commercial communities. By the 1890s Alaska's panhandle Indians would no more have accepted the straight-laced regime of the far-sighted Duncan than does New Metlakatla's population today. Introductions to the Duncan saga are John W. Arcander, *The Apostle of Alaska: the Story of William Duncan of Metlakahtla* (New York 1909) and Henry S. Wellcome, *The Story of Metlakahtla* (London 1887). Orth, 636, explains spelling changes of Metlakatla.

entertain such notions as they have expressed here. I am glad to know they are thinking and am sorry that it has not begun several years ago. Many expressions have been given here if entertained are bound to wind up in trouble to them.

When the United States bought this country of the Russians, they paid \$7,200,000. They made a law or treaty — a great law — between the United States and Russia. I will only read one section so that you can hear what they had to say about the people in the territory. (Section of the treaty read.)<sup>32</sup> It was agreed between the United States and Russia that the former should accept the uncivilized tribes, but the Russians who wanted to live here should be under the protection of the United States. The uncivilized tribes shall be subject to land laws and regulations as the United States may choose to adopt from time to time for the aborigines. The Russian people regarded the Thlingit as savages, as sort of wild men who could not be trusted. (Diagram showing Sitka blockaded to prevent attacks of the Thlingits.) Some of those pieces and spikes are there yet so that the Thlingits could not climb over the blockade [sic]. I have some as curiosities [sic]. Ask them if I am not telling the truth. When an Indian went there with furs, they had a little hole in the fence, and the Indian would stick the furs through it. Now we see the condition of these people when the United States bought this country. They did not consider them as civilized people, not as people who could read and write and could not do anything. Now the United States has treated them kindly and proposes to treat them well.

The Russians had some reason to be afraid of them. They killed all but two one time at Sitka.<sup>33</sup> The Russians were afraid of them. The Thlingit have not always been kind and loving and good. They have been bad just like the whites have been bad. It is nearly twenty-one years since I came to Alaska, and it was then that I saw the Thlingit for the first

<sup>32</sup> Governor Brady probably read part or all of the following: Rights of inhabitants in ceded territory. The inhabitants of the ceded territory, according to their choice, reserving their natural allegiance, may return to Russia within three years; but if they should prefer to remain in the ceded territory, they, with the exception of uncivilized native tribes, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States, and shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion. The uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may from time to time adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes of that country. "The Treaty of Cession," Article III, in Thomas H. Carter, *The Laws of Alaska . . .* (Chicago 1900), xxxviii.

<sup>33</sup> This was the devastating 1802 massacre.

time. Some of these boys here tonight were babies then — little bits of fellows. If I had the picture of old Sitka to show you the houses and the stockade you could see the difference of the Thlingit then and now. The Indians had very few cabins and clothes. They had very few shoes and blankets. It was very seldom that they had a pair of shoes. They were buying molasses then. They sold their furs for molasses. Nearly every week in Sitka the first year I was there, there was a murder.<sup>34</sup> There was one chief, a brother of Koogh-see who went across to the island and got into a fight with one Indian, who bit one cheek off, and another fellow took a spade and chopped him on the head.

Now today you go to Sitka and see how those people are living and see what kind of houses they have; see how they look and behave. Are they the same kind of people? There is \$100 in that ranch now for every 50 cents when I came there. And I would say that if some of those people were here tonight, they would not talk like these people here. I know that the Thlingit are better off today than they ever were before in their lives. I know that Yash-noosh there has handled more money and has been more of a man than any of his uncles.

Now take 50 years ago — 40 years ago — could his uncle have gone down to Fort Simpson without a fight?<sup>35</sup> Now the United States, after it bought Alaska, did not pass any laws for a number of years.<sup>36</sup> They simply sent soldiers here. I often think a wrong was done to the Thlingit. It was not until 1884 that the United States made a civil law for Alaska, but it was very careful in that law to say that any lands occupied by natives or claimed by them should not be disturbed in their possession.<sup>37</sup> Now it is my duty; it is the duty of every government official to see that law is obeyed. But I am afraid that the Thlingit are entertaining wrong

<sup>34</sup> Although this is mild exaggeration, if there was not a murder nearly every week, there was a violent row in the native quarter almost every week. *Reports of Captain L. A. Beardslee, U.S. Navy, Relative to Affairs in Alaska . . .* (Washington, D.C. 1882), and William Gouverneur Morris, *Report upon the Customs District, Public Service, and Resources of Alaska Territory* (Washington, D.C. 1879). Molasses formed a base for the outlawed hoochينو.

<sup>35</sup> Fort Simpson, present-day Port Simpson, lies in British Columbia across from Pearse Canal, a natural water passage which marks Alaska's southeastern tip. At one time Canada had two Fort Simpsons, thus the name change.

<sup>36</sup> As a generalization this was correct.

<sup>37</sup> To be more precise, the Organic Act of 1884 declared "That the Indians or other persons in said district shall not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or now claimed by them but the terms under which such persons may acquire title to such lands is reserved for future legislation by Congress . . ." Nichols, 415.

notions of how much land they own. Right here they need a little instruction. Koogh-see he has been down below and has seen fruit and vegetables growing. He said what would the white people say if the Indians would come down there and burn the ground and kill the white people's goats. Now Koogh-see is not thinking rightly. He is not thinking correctly. Those places that he saw and admired so much is the result of a great deal of work. God did not make the fields and did not make all the roads, but he made the men, and men had to do all the labor. Now if any Thlingit in this country goes and does likewise and by his labor makes fence, improves ground and builds a house, it is the duty of every official to see that he is undisturbed.

Now it is a different thing if there is a stream here and the ground around it. The Indian cannot claim the whole district. (Diagram showing creek and district.) The government does not for a moment recognize all that ground [as] his. The government so far has sold very little ground in Alaska. The laws remain yet to be made. We have a mining law that has been in use in Alaska, and anybody can buy and placer or quartz mine. Anybody can buy a mine. But the law of other kinds of land is not in force yet. And that is why it is important that we have an understanding with the Thlingit. The question is, Do you wish to be put on an island and not abandon your old customs? Do you wish to be citizens of the United States and have their protection? It is for you to say. Shall we, for instance, take a large island like Admiralty Island (draws map of island on board). Shall we take the different tribes and place them on the island and let them live by themselves and not be disturbed and have agents over them to keep them straight? Or do you wish to obey the white men's laws; have all the privileges that he has. Which do you want?

It says in this law that the uncivilized natives will be under the laws of the uncivilized tribes in this country. The laws that will be passed by Congress will depend very much what Mr. Grygla, myself and others will recommend. This is plain talk, and I hope they have not misunderstood me. I have made them a study and know that the best way is to talk plain. I am satisfied that wrongs have been done by fishermen in canneries by damming up streams, but we could not get vessels to go around to them.<sup>38</sup> They will be protected as far as the fish is concerned.

<sup>38</sup> The Governor meant exactly that. In 1889 Congress had begun legislation to regulate salmon fishing and canning in Alaska. Somehow the inspector was expected to cover over 4,375 miles in a season. As Brady had complained his first year in office, "There is no boat of any kind belonging to the fish inspector . . . Is it any wonder that not a single person has been prosecuted . . . by reason of complaint and evidence furnished by an inspector?" Brady, *Annual Reports* . . . 1897.

So far as what Koogh-see says, one of his ancestors sold all that Lituya Bay country to the King of France and by the bargain his own ancestors made he really has no right to it.<sup>39</sup> Now about that matter of the sea otter around the coast. The sea otter is run out for the reason that the Thlingit never spare them. They never hunt in such a way as to save the young.<sup>40</sup>

In your country I was very glad to see the Hoonas. They are very nice, clean race of people. I was up there twenty years ago with Glan-ole. His chief and I know they are better off many times over today than then. One of the great things that has helped them is that missionaries have gone amongst them and taught them things. But as a people they have not had any pride, for they have allowed their girls to be bought by every white man that has gone up there. It is very difficult for nice, healthy young men to get a good healthy wife. Lots of these young men have to take women for wives who have been living with white men and are diseased, and if they have children, they are diseased. Such men as Yashnoosh and other chiefs are to blame. I know that from Sitka 50 girls have come over here and died here. Many of their parents came with them and took them around to the miners and tried to sell them.<sup>41</sup> Now if they continue this thing, they are doomed as a race. These are things to think about that concern yourselves most intimately.

Mr. Waldsley writes me that he must have protection down here. He says the Indians persist in getting drunk, and I will now have to ship in Chinamen to do the work at Clawala.<sup>42</sup> How much has he spent, money going out to the Thlingit? He spends from \$12,000 to \$14,000

<sup>39</sup> The historical legality of the French purchase of Lituya Bay was questionable, to say the least. However, the French explorer La Pérouse had designated it "Port des Français," while whalers had known it as "Frenchman's Bay." Clearly the governor was engaging in the kind of disputation learned from years as a District judge. Orth, 589.

<sup>40</sup> Here again the governor was being firm. He was also being rather unfair. He well knew that until western man came along, plenty of sea otter existed to meet native needs. Whether it was modesty or merely that he did not wish to appear soft, the governor for some reason did not mention the closing recommendation in his first *Annual Report*. "As the Secretary of the Treasury has the authority to confine the hunting of these animals strictly to the natives, it is recommended that he issue the necessary orders to secure this end." Brady, *Annual Reports . . . 1897*, 208.

<sup>41</sup> This was the unhappy truth. Aspects of this exploitation are recounted in Jackson, *Alaska*, 217ff., and S. Hall Young, *Hall Young of Alaska: The Mushing Parson* (New York 1927), 169.

<sup>42</sup> Orth's *Dictionary* lists no Clawala. What is probably intended is Klawock, a Tlingit village located on the west shore of Prince of Wales Island. The community was indeed in social disarray. In 1890 it boasted a population of 261; ten years later it had fallen to 131 inhabitants. Orth, 527-528.



each year. Those Thlingit have got just as good brain as the Chinamen. They know how to do the work. But they insist on getting drunk. He will have a pile of fish, and they will spoil because the Thlingit are drunk. Mr. Spoon tells me he has the same trouble. He will have to employ Chinamen next year.<sup>43</sup> Now I do not want the Thlingit to tell me they are poor and cannot earn a living in this country. Every Thlingit can earn a living like I can.

I used to keep store in Sitka. When I started in Ho-Ka sold me twenty-one cords of wood. I paid \$2.25 per cord in trade. The price of flour at that time was \$2.50 a bag. The price of sugar was 20 cents a lb. The price of a can of milk was 40 cents. I am satisfied that for the last eight or ten years the price of the same kind of wood has not been less than \$5 a cord. Today it is \$6. You can get the same kind of flour for \$1.40 a bag; you can get 16 lbs. of sugar for \$1, and everything else in the same way. And yet it is harder to buy cord wood today than twenty years ago. These are facts. I am not guessing at any thing. These are facts. It will not do for any of these men to talk to me as they have. They must think I am a fool.

Now I tell them that I am glad they are thinking, but they must be careful to think on what is right, and what is accurate and true. Now I propose to help them all I can. They will get their rights, and if any appropriates a piece of land, I will see that he holds it. If they want to become citizens of the United States, then I will advocate that. If they do not want that and want to be put off on some island by themselves, I will do that. But the time has come; it is now the turning point in their lives as a people; they will have to think. I would like to have a longer time to talk. I have not said near what I had in mind to say to them, but they can see that I am in earnest. I am not fooling with them; I am telling them the truth. The land commissioner has decided that the Indian can take up a quartz claim, record it and hold it. I thanked him for his decision, and when I was in Washington I told him that I thought that was the way to decide. There are many other things that I had in mind but will stop now. (*Interpreted to the Thlingit by Fred Moore.*)

<sup>43</sup> Just as Chinese labor had been utilized in the fish canneries during the 1870s and 1880s on America's contiguous Pacific Slope, so was it employed in Alaska's mining and fish processing enterprises. The annual summer employment of Chinese workers imported from San Francisco would continue well on into the twentieth century. No different than the West Coast mining fraternity, Treadwell's white workers literally drove out the industrious Chinese in 1886. Ted C. Hinkley, "Prospectors, Profits and Prejudice," *The American West*, III (Spring 1965), 59-65.

*Mr. Frank Grygla's Address to the Thlingit at the Pow-Wow in the  
Public School House, Juneau, Alaska, December 14, 1898.*

When I first came to Alaska eight years ago and went to Sitka, Governor Brady introduced me to the Chief of the Thlingit and took me down to the Indian village to show me how they were progressing and improving. Now this was done for the purpose so that when I returned to Washington I could impress on the minds of the Senators and lawmakers of the United States that the Thlingit should not be confused with the Indians of the western states. Governor Brady always considered the Thlingit the equal of the white man if they were educated and cared for. That is if they wanted to be educated and cared for.

Now if it is your intention to class yourselves with the western states Indian it is all right, but I think it is a dishonor to you and against your own interests. We think the Thlingit almost equal to the white men, but if you do not want to be educated, we cannot help you.

I was astonished and surprised when I returned to Alaska this year and see [saw] what the Thlingit have accomplished in eight year's time. When I first saw them their houses were like the tents of white men just coming to locate a city and when I see them now, they have houses like the white men have after being in a city ten years. I was surprised when Governor Brady showed me how they improved and advanced when they tried. Now if you want to take advantage and advance yourselves, all the officials and missionaries are willing to help you. I only add what the governor told you to think for yourselves but in the right way. Now I as the official agent am sent by the government to look after several matters, and the governor kindly assists me to see to it as the head of the government for Alaska that we have the evidence to report to Washington on this question.

You must decide yourselves whether you are to be classed as aborigines like the wild men of the West, but do not ask us afterwards what we should do. You must think for yourselves and decide whether you want to be American citizens or want to live in your old customs. You must conclude on that. You should take advantage while the governor is in Juneau and decide what to do and select another night and ask for the kindness of his presence and advise them, for he is going away and will not have another chance for a month or two to talk with you.

*Governor Brady:* It is quite possible that the government will order me to Washington. If I go it will be soon after New Year.<sup>44</sup> (*Interpreted to Thlingit by Fred Moore, Native.*)

<sup>44</sup> Governor Brady had long been familiar with the native grievances voiced at this December 14, 1898 gathering. Nevertheless his 1899–1900 *Annual Report* (Washington, D.C. 1900), 33–34 put special emphasis on precisely those issues raised at the schoolhouse conference.