

LETTER
OF
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

COMMUNICATING

Correspondence relative to contemplated arrangements for the temporary subsistence of the native population of the islands St. Paul and St. George, Alaska.

FEBRUARY 5, 1869.—Read, ordered to lie on the table, and be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 5, 1869.

SIR: I transmit herewith copies of a correspondence in relation to contemplated arrangements for the temporary subsistence of the native population of the islands of St. Paul and St. George, Alaska, who will probably be reduced to want by the execution of the sixth section of the act approved July 27, 1868.

No legislative provision has been made for the government of the territory recently acquired from Russia, nor has the care of the Indians residing within its limits been confided to any of the executive departments. As the Indian tribes are, by existing laws, under the general supervision of the Secretary of the Interior, it would seem to be his duty to invite attention to the necessitous condition of any portion of that population. Acting upon this impression, I have the honor to present the subject for the consideration of Congress, and to suggest the propriety of such legislation as in its wisdom may be deemed expedient.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. H. BROWNING,
Secretary.

Hon. B. F. WADE,
President pro tempore of the Senate.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 4, 1869.

SIR: I transmit herewith a copy of a letter I have this day received from the Secretary of the Treasury, under date of the 3d instant, respecting the probable occurrence of suffering and want among the natives residing on the islands of St. Paul and St. George, near the coast of Alaska.

I cordially concur in the suggestion expressed in that letter, and respectfully request that in the event of the occurrence of such a state

of facts, you will cause a supply of clothing and provisions to be furnished the natives on those islands until other provision shall be made by Congress for their care and subsistence.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
O. H. BROWNING, *Secretary.*

Hon. JOHN M. SCHOFIELD, *Secretary of War.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 4, 1869.

SIR: I have received your letter of the 3d instant, with enclosures from the Secretary of War, respecting the probable occurrence of suffering and want among the natives residing on the islands of St. Paul and St. George, Alaska, who, by the sixth section of the act approved July 27, 1868, are deprived of the occupation of seal-hunting, which has hitherto been their chief means of subsistence.

I now enclose for your information a copy of a letter I have addressed to the Secretary of War in relation to the subject.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
O. H. BROWNING, *Secretary.*

Hon. HUGH McCULLOCH,
Secretary of the Treasury.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *December 3, 1869.*

SIR: Referring to my letter of yesterday respecting the protection of the fur seal in Alaska, I have the honor now to suggest that there are on the islands of St. Paul and St. George, as I understand, some 200 natives, whose sole subsistence has been drawn heretofore from the proceeds of seal-hunting and the supplies furnished by the Fur Company in exchange for the skins. The traffic in skins being prohibited, the natives must necessarily lack the medium of exchange with which to procure subsistence and clothing, and unless the government shall intervene to relieve them they will inevitably suffer from destitution and starvation. I have the honor, therefore, to request that the military authorities in the Territory be authorized, in case such a state of facts shall at any time be found to exist, to issue rations and clothing so far as may be necessary.

Very, &c.,

H. McCULLOCH,
Secretary of the Treasury.

Hon. J. M. SCHOFIELD,
Secretary of War.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *February 3, 1869.*

SIR: Herewith I have the honor to transmit a copy of a letter this day addressed to the Secretary of War, in the course of a correspondence in respect to contemplated arrangements for the suppression of the illegal killing of fur seals in Alaska, under the provisions of the sixth section of the act of July 27, 1868, whereby the responsibility of executing the law is thrown upon this department. Military assistance has been invoked for the execution of the law in the islands of St. Paul and St.

George, where, as I am advised, some two hundred natives live, whose sole dependence has been hitherto seal-hunting and trading with the skins. This resource being taken away, it is feared suffering and starvation may ensue, requiring prompt furnishing of supplies. Your department not yet having agencies established there, and the military being present with the means of relief at hand, I have thought it necessary to call the attention of the Secretary of War to the matter, and shall be glad if you will, if you think proper, express to him your concurrence in the suggestion. The sealing season begins in April, and the distance of the locality from Washington renders prompt action indispensable. It is necessary, therefore, to rely as far as possible upon means now ready in the Territory. There is no time to inaugurate a separate system.

Very respectfully,

H. McCULLOCH,
Secretary of the Treasury.

Hon. O. H. BROWNING,
Secretary of the Interior.