

Stikine 27th April 1842<sup>1</sup>

From Sir George Simpson to  
John McLoughlin Esq.

DEAR SIR

On arrival (from Taco on the Evening of the 25th) off the little Anchorage at this place, my mind was filled with apprehension that all was not right, by observing that both the English and Russian Flags on the Fort were half mast high, and that Mr. John McLoughlin, the Gentleman left in charge, did not appear on the platform; the stillness that prevailed on shore,—one man only belonging to the Establishment having made his appearance at the gate, evidently showing that there was a mournful tale to relate, and on landing, I was more shocked than words can describe to learn that Mr. McLoughlin was no more, having fallen on the night of the 20/21 Instant in a drunken fray, by the hand of one of his own men. I shall not here distress you by a detail of the occurrences of that memorable and fatal night, for which I

D. 4/27, fos. 41-42d. This is the copy in Simpson's Outward Letter Book.

must refer you to the accompanying Depositions of Philip Smith, Thomas McPherson, Benone Fleury and George Heron. From all I can collect, the whole conduct & management of Mr. McLoughlin were exceedingly bad, and his violence when under the influence of liquor, which was very frequently the case, amounting to insanity. A scene, which no pen can adequately describe, appears to have been enacted within the Fort on the night in question, when this unfortunate young man was hurried into eternity by a gunshot wound from one of his own men,—this dreadful act being done, I firmly believe, under the influence of terror, as a measure of self preservation. By the depositions you will observe that several shots were discharged, but I have not been able to ascertain to a certainty by whom that, which was the cause of the death of the deceased, was fired; yet my belief is, that it was done by Urbain Heroux. The occurrence having taken place within Russian Territory, no legal steps against the parties can be taken by me; but my belief is, that any Tribunal by which the case could be tried, would find a verdict of “Justifiable Homicide”. The man, Urbain, whom I suspect of having fired the fatal shot, will be removed forthwith from the Establishmt. and in the meantime conveyed to Sitka; and Peter, the Iroquois, is to be sent by the *Cowlitz* to Ft. Vancouver in irons, to be forwarded to Canada, as a worthless character and not to be re-admitted to the Service.

I have placed Mr. Dodd, chief Mate of the *Cowlitz* in charge of the Fort, for which he appears well qualified, with a respectable young man, George Blenkinsop, one of the Sailors, to act in the capacity of assistant. Mr. Dodd has been engaged for a term of 3 years from 1st June proxo. at a salary of £100 pr. annum and Blenkinsop for a like time from same date, at a salary of £30 for the first year, £40 for the second and £50 for the third, with an understanding that they may hereafter return to the marine if they wish to resume their profession. The business of the post seems to have been very badly conducted, to which I in a great degree ascribe the unfavorable state of the trade and the poorness of the returns. I have given Mr. Dodd a few instructions for his guidance. My

arrival here with the Russian Steamer and the *Cowlitz* was most opportune, as the Indians, who are collected to the number of about 2000 in the neighbourhood (watching the Ullochan Fishery) were talking of attacking the Fort, which in the disorganised state of the people, without a head, they thought would be an easy capture; but I consider it due to the people to say, that as a body, their conduct throughout has been fully better than could have been expected under such inhuman treatment as they were frequently exposed to.

On examining the Furs, it was found that a pile of Bear Skins had become heated to such a degree, that if left a few more days undisturbed, they would have caught fire. The returns, with the exception of a few damp skins are packed up and forwarded p. *Cowlitz*, as p. packing List and a very few otters and Russian Furs sent to Sitka, as p. List. Mr. McLoughlin's private property is packed up and forwarded to Vancouver, and his private papers separated from those that appear, on a very superficial examination, to be public, forwarded with his baggage. The accots. I fear, are in a very irregular state, but Mr. Dodd is instructed to look into them, to take an Inventory of the place, and to report fully to you on all things. The man from Taco (Corbin) is left here, and the complement of the Establishment in all is .  
The *Cowlitz* sails tomorrow morning for Fort Simpson, and I start at same time for Sitka. This letter will be left open for the perusal of Mr. Work, who is instructed to forward it to you. The better to explain the affidavits I forward also a plan of the Fort with notes.

I remain dear Sir

Your Mo. obedt. humble Servt.

(sigd.) GEO SIMPSON