

A

HISTORY

OF

THE WRONGS OF ALASKA.

AN APPEAL

TO THE

PEOPLE AND PRESS OF AMERICA.

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AN APPEAL
TO THE
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SAN FRANCISCO, January 1875.

Inasmuch as the hope of receiving redress of the Government has hitherto been disappointed and all appeals to the same which have been made during the last six years in behalf of the cause in which we now raise our voice again, have been left unheeded; and a flagrant stain on the honor of our free country, which could be wiped out by one word of the Congress of the United States, is suffered to exist—a monument of the shame of America—we now address ourselves to the people, in the heart of which, love of freedom, patriotism and justice still live, and to its mighty voice and champion, the Press, and appeal to them to take up this cause which ought to concern every citizen that loves his country. We speak of the serfdom of the civilized inhabitants of St. George and St. Paul Islands in Alaska, and of the fur-seal monopoly that has been granted by the Government.

The wrong that has been done is so great, the violation of the principles of Republicanism and the Constitution of the United States so flagrant, and the corruption that has been connected with this disgraceful affair so glaring, that, were the circumstances as well known throughout America as they are to people on the Pacific Coast, it would have been struck down long ago, and would have shared the fate of the Credit Mobilier.

We will therefore give briefly a history of the wrongs of Alaska, in which we will strictly adhere to the truth, avoid all exaggeration, and will be just to all; and in order that this history may be universally known, it will be sent in thousands of copies to all parts of the Union and to every leading paper in the United States.



A HISTORY OF THE WRONGS OF ALASKA.

THE RUSSO-AMERICAN COMPANY.

Alaska was discovered about a century ago by Russian fur-hunters, who sailing east from the coast of Siberia, first came upon the Aleutian Archipelago, which they took possession of in the name of the Czar.

Having established themselves on these islands, and having thoroughly subjected and Christianized the docile natives, they pushed further east, found and explored the extensive coast of the mainland, and, after many hard fights with the warlike tribes of these regions, established posts along the Behring's sea and the North Pacific.

The Russian Government had granted to these early adventurers especial rights in regard to the countries which they had discovered for the crown, and thus was the foundation laid of that tremendous concern, the Russo-American Company, that held undisputed sway over Alaska till it was purchased by the United States.

This Company enjoyed, under the suffrage of the Emperor, the most positive power, and over half a century ruled the country with an iron rod; having absolute right over it, and everything in it, except the unexplored regions of the far interior, and the many tribes of free savages that recognize *no* master. The sole object of this Company was the fur trade, and as it was constantly fearful that the attention of the Russian Government might be excited, it strictly forbade the search after minerals, allowed no enterprise except those connected with the fur trade, stifled immediately any reports of discoveries, permit-

ted no outsider to remain in the country, and guarded the latter with a jealousy equal to that of our Chinese neighbors. Of the imperial commissioners who were, from time to time despatched to this far-away piece of the Czar's dominions, several suddenly died on their way home through Siberia, while most of them were dealt with according to the American style, that is, they returned richer and happier men, and reported everything as desired. Finally the Government at St. Petersburg became disgusted, and sold Alaska to the United States. The insurmountable barrier that had walled it in so long fell on the day when

THE STARS AND STRIPES

Ascended that old flag-staff at Sitka, and the Territory was thrown wide open to every energetic individual. There now commenced a time such as had never been seen in Alaska before, vessel after vessel laden with merchandise, left the Golden Gate and shaped its course for the new acquisitions; trading and fishing stations arose everywhere on the coast; a fleet of gallant schooners cruised on the cod-banks; gold, copper, and coal were discovered at many localities, and the sails of American ships whitened every sound and bay. There was no doubt that Aliaska was in a fair way of being developed, and all those engaged in the Territory were convinced of the fact. It was about this time when a party of capitalists proposed to stock the Alaska peninsula with sheep and cattle, when there was a plan of establishing a settlement of New England fishermen at Kinai, and when an Eastern firm made preparations for ship-building at Sitka.

But the people that had chanced their time and capital, and often enough their personal safety, in Alaska, that were preparing the way for civilization and development, and fondly believed themselves under the protection of a free and just government, did not know that corruption stalked almost undisguised through the Congressional halls at Washington; that the representatives of the people were ready for personal gain to violate the sacred principles of our Constitution, to ignore the rights of the people, and to pollute the fair name of America with an indelible stain. A cloud arose that nipped the beginning development of Alaska in the bud, and put an end to all enterprise except the fur trade of one rich and powerful company.

Although our space is limited, we must go a little into details to make the circumstances fully comprehensible, and to show how the ruin of Alaska was wrought.

The Russo-American Company had at the time of the transfer the following property that had to be disposed of: A large number of ware-store and dwelling-houses at Sitka and Kodiak, and all their forts and stations on the islands and on the main land; an enormous stock of goods, representing a capital in proportion, and a fleet of steamers and sailing vessels. All this was to be sold, and Prince Maksoutof, former Governor of Alaska and President of the Company, was intrusted with the business.

He had not long to wait for a customer, for a number of capitalists of San Francisco had formed themselves into a trading company and hastened to make overtures to the Russian Prince.

The concern that thus sprang into existence was the firm of

HUTCHINSON, KOHL & CO.

This Company proposed to buy the whole property as it stood, ships, stations and goods, and their offer was eagerly accepted by Maksoutof. What the arrangements were, what price was paid, has never leaked out, but it is known that everything was sold at a ruinous figure; that Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., cleared over \$500,000 on the transaction, and that Prince Maksoutof returned to Russia with a fortune. This, however, does not concern us or the public, but there was immediately inaugurated a system of suppression and high-handed outrages by Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., with the assistance of this Russian Prince and by Federal officers which deserves our closest attention, while a number of fraudulent transactions showed that the new and powerful but entirely unprincipled concern, was capable of any action, no matter how lawless and contemptible, to approach the object which it was aiming at, which was nothing less than the *monopolization of the entire territory of Alaska.*

INTIMIDATING THE NATIVES.

As soon as said sale between Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., and the Russo-American Company had been effected, the representatives

of the former and Prince Maksoutof started on a tour along the coast of the territory, for the purpose of transferring the various stations and the property belonging thereto. Wherever they went, the Prince, of whom they stood in mortal fear, announced to the natives that Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., had taken the place of the Russian Company; had the same absolute power; had complete jurisdiction over them, and that if they would dare to trade with any other parties they would be punished in the most severe manner.

Placards in the Russian language, which made known the decree of the Prince, were hung up at all stations, and the Aleuts and ignorant Russians were threatened with imprisonment, and corporal punishment, if they would dare to break the commands.

These poor people, although they were Christians, and of average intelligence, of course thought all this was true, especially as American officers (to their shame be it said) used their official position and authority to furthermore intimidate these natives and represent to them Hutchinson, Kohl & Co. in the same manner as Maksoutof and his Russian officials had done.

The natives thus imposed upon were the civilized and Christian Aleuts and Creoles along the coast and on the Aleutian Islands (for the spirited savages of the interior and the Alexander Archipelago cared as little for the prince as they did for Brigham Young); and so great was the terror that the former had been inspired with, that it was at first with the greatest difficulty, and at many places impossible, to induce them to trade with other parties, or if so, only secretly and under cover of night.

CHEATING UNCLE SAM.

A little stroke of business was also indulged in by this happy combination of this princely Russian and these republican Americans, by which the government of the United States was cheated out of a large amount of, then, very valuable property. The accounts of the Russian company being somewhat obscure to the Americans, Prince Maksoutof claimed nearly all the government buildings as company's property and delivered them to Hutchin-

son, Kohl & Co., and thus the Government had frequently to buy back what was already its rightful property.

These things happened during the years 1867 and 1868. It was also about this time that Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.'s steamer *Fideliter*, which was an English vessel, was fraudulently brought under the American flag, through the assistance of Collector Dodge at Sitka, for which she has since been confiscated by the Government.

MAKING WAR UPON ENTERPRISE.

While Hutchinson, Kohl & Co. were thus ruling the Aleuts by false representations and tyrannical treatment they also found means to severely annoy and often crush the other traders and fur companies that were also engaged in the territory. As the restless energy of most of these parties at once forbade all hope of driving them out of the field by fair means, unfair and corrupt ones were immediately resorted to, and it was principally through the assistance of the United States Revenue officers that this was accomplished. Of course it is hard to prove that these officers were hired, but their favoritism was so undisguised, and the rewards, which they received for their services, so openly distributed, that there can be no doubt in this matter. The most zealous revenue officials, in the interest of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., were: *W. S. Dodge*, Collector at Sitka; *Samuel Falconer*, Acting Collector at Sitka (afterwards in the employ of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.); *Mr. H. H. McIntyre*, Special Agent of the Treasury Department (now General Agent of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., or the Alaska Commercial Co.); *Wm. Kapus*, Collector of Sitka (afterwards General Agent of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., or the Alaska Commercial Co.); *General Miller*, Collector of San Francisco (now President of the Alaska Commercial Co.), and several others.

In those days Sitka was the only port of entry in Alaska, and all vessels coming to the territory had to enter and clear at that port before they could proceed on their voyage. There also existed a law prohibiting the introduction of liquors, arms and ammunition into the country (except under severe restrictions), making them articles of contraband; and there had been adopted, by the Secretary of the Treasury, a great number of special reg-

ulations in regard to Alaska, which were of the most unpractical and conflicting nature, and seemed to have no other object than to throw obstacles in the way of the trade.

These circumstances now afforded the revenue officers the most welcome opportunities to annoy whomsoever they pleased, and this they did with a vengeance.

FAVORITISM SHOWN TO HUTCHINSON, KOHL & CO.

While Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.'s vessels left San Francisco without difficulties, came to Sitka, entered, cleared and departed without hindrance, without search, and without delay, the other parties had to undergo a perfect ordeal of tribulations before they got out of the clutches of these Federal officers. At San Francisco the trouble generally commenced, and, thanks to Collector Miller's kind efforts, it was connected with nearly as much trouble to clear a vessel for Alaska as if she had been suspected of being a pirate, intending to start on some filibustering expedition.

This was, however, nothing compared with the annoyances that commenced when the ships arrived at Sitka. Here they were often detained for days and weeks, without a shadow of a cause; vessels, of which there could not be the slightest doubt that they had, in every respect, complied with the revenue laws, were searched from deck to keelson; lighters were hauled alongside and every package was taken out, and then, if nothing could be found against them, they were reluctantly allowed to re-load their cargoes and depart. The more anxious these parties seemed to be to reach their trading-grounds, the longer were they generally kept at Sitka, the confusing revenue regulations serving the officers as ample excuse for their arbitrary measures.

But those that got off with delays and annoyances only, fared comparatively well, for a number of vessels were actually seized on the most flimsy pretext and, in charge of revenue officers, sent back to San Francisco. In every case, as soon as a hearing could be had, these vessels were released by the courts, but the voyages were broken up; enterprises had to be abandoned, and failures and ruin came over the owners and share-holders.

ONE OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS CASES

Is that of the ship *Caesarowitch*, which on March 24, 1869, was seized by Collector Falconer, at Sitka, and was sent back to San Francisco in charge of a Lieutenant of the revenue cutter *Reliance*. She arrived in San Francisco April 18th; the case was heard in the District Court on April 20th, and at once dismissed, and a few days later the good ship was again on her way to Alaska. The damage done to the owners by this little trick, was estimated by outsiders at at least \$100,000, and the former commenced suit against the Government for double that amount. This little affair broke Mr. Falconer's back; he lost his position, but he at once received a profitable situation with Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., as a reward for his services.

The cases of the *General Harney*, the steamer *John L. Stephens*, the *Lewis Perry*, the *Alaska*, and other vessels were all of a similar kind, and against none of them could a case be made out.

But while Hutchinson, Kohl & Co's ships went always scot free, it must not be supposed that their undisturbed holds never contained any of the contraband articles; on the contrary, arms, ammunition and liquor reached their stations in abundance, and they openly flaunted into the faces of their rivals the advantages which they enjoyed.

Our space permits us not to refer to all cases and incidents which we have recorded in connection with these matters, but we will briefly relate *one occurrence* which particularly illustrates to what members of the firm of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., stooped to injure those who traded in Alaska:

In the Spring of 1868 the steamer *Constantine*, belonging to Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., sailed from Sitka to Victoria, carrying a number of passengers and some freight, among the latter several lots of furs belonging to traders at Sitka.

When the steamer reached Plumper Pass, not far from Victoria, she struck upon a rock and knocked a hole into her bottom, but sustained no serious damage, as she lay in a calm, river-like channel high out of the water, and had settled down on the reef on an even keel and in an easy position. The passengers,

some of whom were ladies, remained on board till assistance came from Victoria; the ship, too, was hauled off after a few days, and she was soon as good as ever.

But some of the members of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., who had been on board, and who were now in Victoria, asserted that most of the freight, and especially the skins, which had a value of about \$8,000 to \$10,000, had been lost, and in spite of numerous protests of the owners, assured that nothing had been saved. Mr. D. Schirpser, who had shipped a lot of fine skins, and who had come down on the *Constantine*, in vain appealed to Captain Kohl, Mr. Hutchinson, and Mr. Boscovitch, all members of the firm, and finally gave up all hope of recovering his property.

But one day when Mr. Schirpser managed to get into the back yard of Mr. Boscovitch, who had a tobacco business at Victoria, he there discovered his casks and packages of furs, still having his name on them, stowed away under a shed. Mr. Schirpser had Mr. Hutchinson immediately arrested, who had to give bonds to the amount of \$10,000, but he afterwards concluded to have the case brought before the Courts of San Francisco, but while he was on his way down, Boscovitch telegraphed to the Company, and they immediately settled with Mr. Martin, (partner of Mr. Schirpser in San Francisco) who had heard of the wreck, but knew no details, for about one-quarter the value of the skins, and when Mr. Schirpser himself arrived he found his way to justice cut off.

A PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION.

The traders and business men who were interested in Alaska, and who were thus beset on all sides, and had in vain sought redress from the Government, finally joined hands for mutual protection against the warfare that was carried on against them by Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., and their allies, the revenue officers, and in 1869, formed "The Alaska Traders' Protective Association," Mr. C. J. Janson, President, which on May 3d organized and adopted the following resolutions:

"WHEREAS, For more than a year past, the commerce of Alaska, with its great natural wealth and resources, has been monopolized by one firm, to the prejudice of the public interests, and in manifest disregard and violation of the legal rights of the citizens of the United States, and especially of the merchants of San Francisco. And

WHEREAS, The revenue officers of the Federal Government in Alaska have persistently used, and still continue to use their power, authority and influence to assist a monopoly, and to crush out and drive away from that territory all other traders. And

WHEREAS, The said firm, possessing a monopoly, favored by the revenue officers, has been allowed to control the trade of Alaska, to the exclusion of all other traders. And

WHEREAS, Treasury and Custom House regulations, and military orders have been made and enforced, to destroy the public trade with Alaska, by burdening it with enormous restrictions, impossible of observance, which said firm has been permitted, and is still allowed to utterly disregard. And

WHEREAS, The ships and steamers sent by merchants of San Francisco to Alaska for the purpose of trade, have been repeatedly seized, and their cargoes confiscated, without due process of law, and in violation of law. And

WHEREAS, Merchants in Alaska engaged in trade, have been illegally seized, imprisoned, and their property taken from them for the purpose of expelling them from the said territory, thereby to leave the same under the control of said monopoly. And

WHEREAS, The corruption of Government officers in Alaska, and the ignorance of the Government at Washington in reference to affairs in that territory, are such that redress or protection from these quarters now seems hopeless. And

WHEREAS, It seems impossible by individual action to exert any influence with the Government, to secure justice and break down and destroy said monopoly,

Therefore, We, merchants and citizens of San Francisco interested in the trade of Alaska, have formed and united ourselves into an association, to be called "The Alaska Traders' Protective Association," for the protection and enforcement of our rights in and to the trade of said territory.

ADOPTED, San Francisco, May 3d, 1869."

Then follows the Constitution, which is of no interest.

Here the whole tale of lawlessness, violence and corruption, that would have disgraced Mexico, is told in a few words; comment is unnecessary.

But it was to come

A GREAT DEAL WORSE THAN THAT,

And the public were soon to find out that this concern of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., that had trampled under foot everything, that had the name of justice, fairness and humanity, that had been the worst enemy of the new territory—was to become the especial favorite of the Government; that for its sake the rights of American citizens were to be disregarded, and that for its sake the constitution of the United States and the settled policy of our country were to be violated.

We will explain how this happened.

THE FUR SEAL ISLANDS.

In the Behring Sea lie the two small islands St. George and St. Paul, which are inhabited each by a community of Christian and fully civilized Creoles and Aleuts. Of all the wealth in furs that the whole immense territory of Alaska produces, these two islands furnish over half; for here assemble every Spring the precious fur-seals in countless numbers, haul up in immense rookeries on the shore for breeding purposes, and remain till late in Autumn. These seals are very easily taken, as it is only necessary to drive a number of them inland, for a mile or two, and there kill them with clubs. It was natural that, as soon as the territory was opened to the Americans, a number of companies should immediately dispatch their ships to these mines of wealth; and in 1868 we find Taylor & Bendel, Williams & Havens, Parrot & Co., Captain Morgan, Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., and others, having stations on these islands and energetically engaged in taking skins; and, strange as it may seem, in spite of the obstacles thrown into the way of the other parties, Hutchinson, Kohl & Co. were among the last that arrived; which shows with what energy the former were possessed.

This year, 1868, was a golden one for the inhabitants of St. George and St. Paul; the rival companies strove for their favor; every man, woman, and half-grown child found the most profitable employment, and the coveted luxuries of the Americans, as clothing and dresses, groceries, implements of all kinds, ornaments, musical instruments, etc., which these parties furnished them, as well as the treatment which they received and the liberty which they enjoyed, made their life happy and comfortable.

ATTEMPTING SPECIAL LEGISLATION.

But this was not to remain so, long; the arch-enemies of Alaska were plotting to get these islands into their sole possession, and how well their deeply-laid plan succeeded has been shown by subsequent events. It became soon evident, already as early as 1868, that Hutchinson, Kohl & Co. not only controlled the revenue officers in Alaska and the collector of the port of San Francisco (who is now the president of the Alaska Commercial Co.),

but that they had also gained a great influence at Washington ; that deep games were being played in our national capitol, and that the Executive and Treasury departments, as well as Congress, were discriminating in favor of said concern.

The most shrewd and wily members of the company came to Washington, backed by unlimited funds to gorge the greedy vultures that hover around our seat of government, and immediately such shameless lobbying and intrigues were set in operation that even the old war-horses of the lobby were astounded. As if touched by magic, we see suddenly a number of senators and members of the Administration assume the championship for Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., and soon it was reported that the fur-seal islands were to be leased to them, to the exclusion of everybody else.

When the first rumor of the intended lease of said islands and their inhabitants to a mercantile firm got abroad, it was not believed that such a violation of the letter of law and the spirit of our free country would be attempted. People knew that they were living in the United States of America and not in Turkey, and that a President stood at the head of the nation and not the Shah of Persia ; but when the infamous scheme assumed more form, and when Senator Cole, of California, actually introduced his villainous bill in Congress, there arose an outcry against it, so loud and distinct that any Administration, but that then at the helm at Washington, would have heard and respected it.

GENERAL OPPOSITION.

Not only was the matter daily discussed by the press and universally condemned, not only were the frauds, the corruption and the misrule in Alaskan affairs, again and again exposed, and denounced in the most severe language, but all classes of citizens, especially on the Pacific Coast, raised their voice against this gigantic scheme. The Chambers of Commerce of San Francisco and several Eastern cities held special sessions and protested against it, and these as well as the most influential merchants of San Francisco repeatedly memorialized President Grant and Congress, and appealed to their sense of justice, their patriotism and their duty.

QUOTATIONS TAKEN FROM THE PRESS AND GENERAL PROTESTS.

We will quote a few of the expressions made in regard to this matter by California papers. In a long article, headed: "Monopolizing Alaska," in the *Bulletin*, Jan. 23, 1869, we find:

"Hutchinson, Kohl & Co. having, however, secured for themselves, under a Republican Government, all the privileges enjoyed by a Company that was one of the worst representatives of Russian serfdom," etc.

The *Daily Herald*, January 29, 1869, in speaking of Senator Cole's bill, says:

"The bill is utterly indefensible."

The *Daily Morning Call*, February 18, 1869, brings an article headed, "Gigantic Scheme to monopolize the fur trade of Alaska," from which we extract the following:

"The bill introduced by Mr. Cole, in the Senate of the United States, to prevent the extermination of fur-bearing animals in Alaska, embodies a scheme for the wholesale appropriation of all the resources of that region, by a handful of capitalists, such as cannot but excite public indignation."

The *Bulletin*, February 25, says:

"Now it is better that every fur-bearing seal in Alaska should be destroyed within the next twelve months, than that such a monopoly as this, proposed in Congress, should ever be perpetuated in the new Territory."

From the *Chronicle*, January 29, 1869, we quote:

"The merchants of San Francisco, whose interest would suffer severely by the successful passage of the 'Monopoly-Bill,' have concluded to memorialize Congress against its passage, and we have been shown the document, which bears the signatures of many of our most prominent commercial firms."

The *Alta California*, January 30, 1869, after having commented upon Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.'s doings in Alaska, continues:

"But a bolder step became necessary to protect them against the restless enterprise of American citizens, and accordingly they have applied to the Congress of the United States for such a charter."

And again, in the same article, we find:

"A proposition so monstrous has never been made to any Congress."

And again:

"These wretched Aleuts are handed over, body and soul, to the tender mercies of a single, grasping firm, to have and to hold in a worse than Russian serfdom, by the legitimate successors of the imperial monopoly, which has just been routed out of its strong-hold of power by the (nominal) dawning of Republicanism in the hitherto benighted regions of the North."

And in a letter to the *Bulletin*, dated Washington, March 26th, 1869, we find :

“ For some time the pressure brought to bear on the House Committee, to induce favorable action on the Senate bill, has been exceedingly heavy, and the efforts of the would-be monopolists have been of a nature so earnest and persistent as to excite surprise, even among the habitues of the Capitol, who were most accustomed to witness displays of desperate lobbying—surprise, however, which was dissipated when the magnitude of the coveted prize was placed in view.”

While thus the press not only of California, but of the Eastern States as well, condemned this monstrous scheme, the Chamber of Commerce and the most influential citizens of San Francisco took the most active steps to prevent the passage of the bill. A memorial to Congress was prepared by San Francisco merchants, January 28th, 1869, which reads as follows :

“ We, the undersigned merchants of the city of San Francisco, California, specially interested in the trade of Alaska, and also interested for the honor of our country in the estimation of the civilized world, and anxious to save the inhabitants of Alaska from a slavery inconsistent with our Federal Constitution, and opposed to a ruinous monopoly, destructive not only to the interests of trade, but obnoxious to our free institutions, do solemnly protest, in behalf not only of ourselves and of the Pacific Coast, but of commerce, humanity, justice, and an enlightened public policy, against the passage of the Bill now before the Congress of the United States, and introduced by Senator Cole, of this State, entitled ‘ An Act to prevent the extermination of fur-bearing animals in Alaska, and to protect the inhabitants thereof.’

“ We, in common with all the citizens of the Pacific, feel a deep interest in the newly acquired Territory of Alaska, and see in its great natural resources a legitimate source of wealth to enterprising merchants and traders, and we are unwilling that the whole trade of this vast region should be monopolized by one firm, whose only claim to public consideration is the large fortune it has made in that Territory, and its persistent and too successful endeavors to discourage and destroy competition.

“ While the helpless inhabitants of Alaska are unable to memorialize your honorable body for themselves, and plead in their own behalf, we, as a matter of justice and humanity, protest in their name against the attempt now being made through this Bill to reduce them to a condition of vassalage to one company, from whom we believe they have already suffered much.

“ All of which is respectfully submitted.

“ Agapius Honcharenko, Taylor and Bendel, E. Tibbey, John Parrott, Louis B. Parrott, Alsop and Co., W. H. Ennis, H. Cohen, S. Martin, Langley, Crowell and Co., A. S. Rosenbaum and Co., L. E. Heck and Co., Fordham and Jennings, Wellman, Peck and Co., Mitchler and Kessing, Irvine and Co., Wilmerding and Kellogg, A. Walker, L. N. Handy and Co., Pioneer American Fur Company, Smith and Kittredge, N. B. Edgerly and Co., Jacob Deith, Coffin and Patrick, Elisha Higgins, G. H. Collins, A. Crawford and Co., Charles Hare, Wright and Browne, L. W. Williams, W. B. Holcomb, George M. Josselyn, C. J. Hansen, Cox and Nichols, J. and J. Spruance, W. W. Dodge and Co., Lynde and Hough, George Hughes, George L. Debrow, R. H.

Waterman, L. H. Bonestell, B. H. Freeman, R. Pestein and Co., I. Shirpser, Samuel Adams, C. W. Hane, Wheelan and Co., Adolph Muller, F. H. Rosenbaum and Co., Frederic Clay, Dodge, Bros. and Co., George W. Stewart and Co., James N. McCune, Fargo and Co., Josiah Stanford, L. L. Treadwell, Hobbs, Gilmore and Co., H. Liebes and Co., Pacific Fur Emporium, T. Bearward, W. O. Gray, Marsh, Pillsbury and Co., James R. Kelly, R. B. Swain and Co., E. A. Fargo.

“San Francisco, California, January 28th, 1869.”

Another memorial to President Grant, which was prepared in June, and very extensively signed, contains still more urgent language; it reads:—

MEMORIAL

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE TERRITORY OF ALASKA, BY MERCHANTS AND CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

Your petitioners, merchants, bankers and business men of the city of San Francisco, engaged or deeply interested in the trade of Alaska, and in its development, respectfully submit the following Memorial for the consideration of the executive of the United States, trusting that it will be favorably regarded and acted upon.

The condition of affairs in Alaska, from the time that Territory was ceded to the United States, has been, and still continues to be, highly prejudicial to the rights of the citizens of the Pacific Coast, and especially of this city, interested in its commerce, and, we deeply regret to say, disreputable to the United States Revenue officers in that Territory, and unfortunate for the true interests of our Government therein.

We will not weary you with lengthy details, but respectfully submit the following facts, of which we have been informed, and which we believe to be true. They are within the personal knowledge of some of your petitioners.

The trade of Alaska, or, at least, that portion of it which relates to the killing of seals and the acquisition of their skins, has been, from the first, controlled by the firm of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., to the exclusion of other merchants and traders, who profess the same legal right in that Territory.

The said firm has been permitted to control the action of United States Revenue officers in Alaska, to secure its interests and break down and expel all competitors.

Mr. Samuel Falconer, Special Deputy Collector at Sitka, is an agent of said firm. In confirmation of this statement we submit the following extract from the *Alaska Herald*, published in this city, of May 1, 1869:

“Hutchinson, Kohl & Co. imagine that all Russian America is their empire. A few weeks ago Mr. Falconer, the agent of this firm in Alaska, also Deputy Collector at Sitka, seized the schooners *Alaska* and *Lewis Perry*, not for the violation of the law, but to prevent these traders from doing business in their empire.”

Nearly every sutler attached to the United States military posts in Alaska is an agent or employee of said firm. The six citizens permitted by law to

remain upon the Islands of St. Paul's and St. George's, a United States military reservation, are all connected with said firm. Other officers of the Federal Government in Alaska, if not in the actual employ of said firm, are, at least, attached to it in interest by corrupt means.

The natural consequence of this deplorable condition of things is, that the said firm controls almost the whole Revenue service of this Government in Alaska, and that the Revenue officers use their power, authority and influence, in many cases, corruptly to advance the interests of said firm, and crush out all competition, thereby leaving the whole trade of Alaska, or the most valuable portion of it, with said firm.

Said firm has been repeatedly permitted to openly violate or disregard the Treasury and Custom House regulations and military orders, affecting the trade of Alaska, while the same have been enforced against all others with undue rigor, in violation of their true spirit and intent. All but the agents and employees of said firm have been expelled from the United States military posts in Alaska.

Steamers and ships belonging to citizens of San Francisco, lawfully engaged in trade with Alaska, have been seized by United States revenue officers, in said Territory, in the interests of said firm, and for its benefit, without due process of law, and in violation of law.

Even vessels attached to the Revenue service of the United States have been used by said firm for the transportation of its property, while the expense of the same was paid out of the public treasury.

Upon the Islands of St. George and St. Paul, said firm, through its agents in sutlerships attached to the United States military posts, has been permitted to monopolize the trade in the fur seals, only found on said Islands, to the exclusion of all other citizens.

We respectfully submit, that the monopoly of the trade of Alaska, possessed by the said firm, is in violation of our laws, and of the spirit of our institutions, and is in gross violation and disregard of the rights of your petitioners, in common with all other citizens of the United States in said Territory, and that we feel deeply aggrieved thereby. We respectfully pray that such measures may be taken by this Government as will put an end to said monopoly, and admit all other citizens of the United States to equal rights, and participation in the trade of Alaska.

We further submit, that the natives of Alaska are ignorant of the United States laws and Treasury regulations for that Territory, because the same have not been published in their language—the Russian—which nearly all the Alaskians can read and write.

We respectfully recommend that the same be published in the *Alaska Herald*, a newspaper printed in the Russian and English language in this city, in the Russian language, and also printed in that language, for gratuitous distribution among the five thousand natives of Alaska, who, we are informed, can read. We further respectfully submit, that said laws and regulations are not known and understood by the people on this Coast, and respectfully recommend that the same be published in one or more of the public newspapers of this city.

Your petitioners pray that an investigation may be ordered, forthwith, into the administration of the Revenue laws and regulations in Alaska, and that all officers in the employ of, or receiving pay from said firm of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., be forthwith discharged from the public service, and be succeeded by faithful and disinterested men, who shall be free from the corrupt

influences of said firm, and abstain from administering their offices, and wielding their power and authority for its benefit. That all the sutlers now attached to United States military posts in Alaska, being all, or nearly all, in the employ of said firm, be forthwith discharged, and superseded by disinterested men.

Your petitioners further recommend and pray that no person, other than natives of Alaska, be permitted to engage in the trade of said Territory, unless he first file his declaration of his purpose so to do, with Collector of this port, that no vessel be permitted to clear for Alaska, or enter any of its ports, or touch at any portion of its Territory, without first having obtained a clearance from the Custom House of San Francisco direct for Alaska, and the filing in said office of a declaration by the owner or master of such vessel that the same will engage in the trade of Alaska. Several vessels have sailed from Siberia to Alaska, loaded with opium and other goods, upon which heavy duties are imposed, and by going direct to Sitka and clearing there for this city, as though their cargoes were the products of Alaska, have escaped the payment of duties upon their cargoes, thus defrauding the revenue of the United States of large sums, which, we believe, amount in the aggregate to more than two hundred thousand dollars. That no vessel be permitted to engage in the fur seal trade of Alaska, without a clearance from the Custom House at San Francisco, and a declaration by the owner or master thereof, filed therein, of intention to kill or purchase fur seals, or to do both. That none but citizens of the United States be permitted to engage in the trade or fisheries of Alaska.

Your petitioners would further respectfully recommend and pray, with respect to the fur seal trade of Alaska, that laws be passed, and in the meantime Treasury regulations be promulgated, prohibiting the killing of seals upon the Islands of St. George and St. Paul by any but natives of Alaska, and except from September to November of each year, and that only a certain number per annum on each island be killed, that it shall be unlawful to kill female seals, or pups under one year of age. That every sealskin, before its sale, be exhibited to a United States Inspector, to be appointed on each of said Islands for such purpose, who, if the same appear to have been killed in violation of law, shall confiscate the same for the public benefit, and fine or punish, in such manner as may be prescribed, the person exhibiting the same; that said skins be sold to traders in the presence of such Inspectors, and that the time of sale by the natives, the purchaser thereof be required to pay such Inspectors such Government tax as may be imposed for each skin, and, after such payment the said skins shall be stamped or branded by such officers.

We respectfully submit, that at present, no person other than United States troops and Revenue officers, and agents to said Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., are permitted to reside or land upon either of said Islands, or to purchase sealskins procured thereon, and that, consequently, said firm possesses a monopoly of said trade, to the manifest prejudice of the public, and to the detriment of the public revenue, which loses the sum that might with competition be collected on said skins.

We respectfully recommend and pray that some one place on each of said Islands may be designated as a public market, in which citizens of the United States may be permitted to reside and purchase said sealskins, during a certain season to be designated for the sale of the same; and that the purchase of such sealskins in said markets may be thereon open to the competition of citizens of the United States. Or, that the right to purchase said sealskins upon said Islands, each separately, be sold at public auction in San Francisco, to the responsible bidder who offers the highest sum thereof, and that no person or firm be permitted to purchase such franchise for more than one of said Islands; or that sealed bids for the sale of such franchise be received by the

Collector of this port, or the Treasury agent of the United States in this city.

We respectfully request that an answer to this memorial be forwarded to the

SAN FRANCISCO, June 15, 1869.

The Chamber of Commerce, at regular and special sessions, discussed the matter most earnestly, and at a meeting held on February 22, 1869, the President was instructed to telegraph to our delegates in Congress, requesting them to unitedly use their influence to at least delay action upon the subject of a disposition of the fur-seal interest of Alaska.

At this meeting a petition of Aleuts to the Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco was received, imploring the same for aid and protection against oppression by Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.

Soon after a special meeting having been called for the purpose, the Chamber of Commerce memorialized Congress, asking equal rights for all parties, and at the same time protection to the fur-bearing animals, and a bill in regard to Alaska was prepared by the former, and submitted to the latter, which, if it had been adopted, would have solved the problem to everybody's satisfaction.

But amidst all this storm of indignation and protests, the President of the United States and the Congress, then in session, exhibited the utmost disregard for the wishes of the people so unmistakably pronounced.

The interest of the whole Pacific Coast, the clamor of the entire press, the loud voice of the public, and the plain letter of the Constitution of the United States were outweighed by the influence of one concern, that came prepared with unlimited funds which it distributed with a lavish hand. It was coolly resolved that the principal wealth of Alaska should be handed over to Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., and that the unfortunate Aleuts of St. Paul and St. George should be delivered into their hands; but as this could not be done without Congress having regularly acted upon it, a plan was devised which would enable Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., to enjoy in the meantime all the privileges which they coveted.

FAVORITISM SHOWN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO HUTCHINSON, KOHL & CO.

This was done in the following manner: In order to prevent the speedy extermination of the fur-seals, it was resolved that the Government itself should take charge of the islands till Congress had acted upon the matter, and that no more seals should be killed than were needed for the support of the inhabitants, say from 2,000 to 3,000, [so far so good, a most excellent measure; but now comes the real object] and that all parties, then having stations on the islands, should be driven off, except Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., and Williams & Haven, the latter of which had consolidated with the former.

Collector Miller, of San Francisco, received therefore a dispatch signed by Secretary McCullough, and dated Washington, February 13, 1869, which says:

“ Steamer *Alexander*, [belonging to Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.,] may clear in ballast with sea-stores direct for St. Paul and St. George, to remove property of owners, and part of their employees; send with her two trustworthy inspectors to remain on said islands, and prevent landing of any person or merchandise until relieved by Lincoln.”

Thus Hutchinson, Kohl & Co's vessel was commissioned to do the Government's work, and General Miller who soon after resigned his collectorship to become President of the Alaska Commercial Company, was entrusted with the selection of two trustworthy inspectors. Of course these orders were only a form, the real intention was that Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., should take immediate possession of St. Paul and St. George, and when Col. Frank W. Wicker, then Collector of Alaska, and Mr. Vincent Colyer, visited the islands during 1869 as special agents of the Government, they found, that instead of 3,000 seals altogether, over 60,000 seals had been killed on St. Paul alone; and when Col. Wicker made a report of the fact to the Government, he was immediately relieved. The skins were of course appropriated by Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.

During the same year, when Mr. Thomas Taylor, of the firm of Taylor & Bendel, of San Francisco, touched at the islands in his

schooner, *Page*, to look after his property, which his employees had been forced to abandon, he found that his buildings had been appropriated by the Government, and he was peremptorily ordered to leave.

THE LEASE.

When the chances of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., of getting possession of the fur-seal islands became almost a certainty, not only Williams & Haven had joined them, but Collector Miller [who is a special friend and favorite of Gen. Grant, and who had served the Company so well and his country so badly] resigned his collectorship of the port of San Francisco to become President of this enlarged concern which now called itself "The Alaska Commercial Company." In the meantime while the lobbying at Washington went bravely on, it had been decided that said islands were to be leased, but in order to preserve at least an appearance of fairness, not to the Alaska Commercial Company, but to the highest bidder; but that this was nothing else but a blind to satisfy and appease the public subsequent events have sufficiently proven.

Congress passed an Act entitled:

AN ACT TO PREVENT THE EXTERMINATION OF FUR-BEARING ANIMALS IN ALASKA.

[APPROVED JULY 1, 1870.]

The principal provisions of the Acts are the following:

No more than 100,000 seals a year are allowed to be killed on both islands together (75,000 seals on St. Paul Island, and 25,000 on St. George Island), under pain of forfeiture of the lease.

Terms of the lease twenty years from May 1, 1870. The yearly rental to be *no less* than \$50,000 per annum.

The lease to be made immediately after the passage of the Acts—to the best advantage of the United States—to proper and responsible parties, having due regard to the interest of the Government, the native inhabitants, the parties heretofore engaged in the trade and the preservation of the seal fisheries.

The wording of the Acts clearly indicates that the lease should go to the highest responsible bidder filling the conditions and

qualifications required by the Acts. This seems also to have been the opinion of Secretary Boutwell, but the Alaska Commercial Company insisted that the Lease Act was passed for their special benefit. They were so importunate that the Secretary of the Treasury felt induced to apply to the Attorney General for advice.

This application was made in a letter under date of July 2, 1870, to the purport that the lease should be awarded to the highest responsible bidder, to the best advantage of the United States, according to the wording of the Act.

The Secretary of the Treasury then issued the following advertisement, dated July 8, 1870:

ADVERTISEMENT.

“The Secretary of the Treasury will receive sealed proposals until 12 o'clock, noon, Wednesday, the 20th of July inst., for the exclusive right to take fur seals upon the Islands St. Paul and St. George, Alaska, for the term of twenty years from the 1st day of May, 1870, agreeably to the provisions of an Act approved July 1, 1870, instituted: ‘*An Act to prevent the extermination of fur-bearing animals in Alaska.*’

“In addition to the specific terms prescribed in the Act, the successful bidder will be required to provide a suitable building for a public school on each Island, and to pay the expense of maintaining a school therein for not less than eight months in each year, as may be required by the Secretary of the Treasury.

“Also to pay the natives of the Islands for the labor performed by them as may be necessary for their proper support, under regulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.”

The remaining Alaska traders, though having strenuously worked against the Lease Act while it was pending, knew full well that the lease in such hands as those of the Alaska Company would be equivalent to a monopoly of the whole of Alaska Territory, and also equivalent to their gradual ejection from it.

They were consequently compelled, in order to save their investments, to compete for and bid on the lease.

The 20th day of July was the last day of receiving bids. On that last day the Treasury Department issued a singular memorandum, which we subjoin.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, }
July 20, 1870. }

“Memorandum in reference to bids for the exclusive right to take fur seals upon the Islands St. Paul and St. George, read before the persons present at the opening of the bids at 12 o'clock noon, July 20, 1870.

First. The successful bidder will be required to deposit security within three days to the amount of \$50,000 in lawful money or bonds of the United States, for the due execution of contracts, agreeably to "An Act to prevent the extermination of fur-bearing animals in Alaska." Approved July 1, 1870.

Second. It being apparent from the language employed in the Act afore said, that it was the intention of Congress to give a preference to the Alaska Commercial Company in the award of their contracts, I think it proper to state, before the bids are opened, that the contract will be awarded to the said Company if their proposal shall be not more than ten per cent. below that of the highest bidder.

Third. No bid will be accepted unless made by a responsible party, acquainted with the business, or skilled in kindred pursuits to such an extent as to render it probable that the contract will be so executed as to secure the results contemplated by the lease."

The Secretary then proceeded to open the bids, of which there were fourteen.

The lowest bid was that of the Alaska Commercial Company, amounting to \$65,000—rental a year—and the highest bid that of Louis Goldstone, for a combination of various San Francisco firms, amounting to a yearly rental of \$227,500.

The principal parties in the combination of firms for whom Goldstone had made the bids, was the firm of Taylor & Bendel, one of the most respectable and prominent houses of San Francisco that had been engaged in the Alaska trade from its opening, and having the additional advantage over the Alaska Commercial Company of prior occupation. The inquiries immediately instituted by the Government in Washington, through the agency of Custom House Collector Phelps, of San Francisco, as to their standing and responsibility, were of a character in every way satisfactory.

Notwithstanding this and the great discrepancy in the bids, the Alaska Commercial Company entered various protests, which were referred by Mr. Boutwell to the Attorney General. Then Mr. A. T. Ackerman, who heard arguments on both sides, and under date of July 29th, decided in favor of Goldstone and associates.

After the delivery of Mr. Ackerman's opinion, it was everywhere taken for granted the lease would be awarded to Goldstone. Nobody had any doubt of it. All obstacles had been removed, and all protests done away with.

On July 30th Mr. Goldstone consequently called at the Treasury office for the lease, but to his utter astonishment and consternation he was informed that the lease had been awarded to the Alaska Commercial Company, on the terms of his own (Goldstone's) bid. The communication was made by acting Secretary William A. Richardson, whose face in giving the information was crimsoned with shame. Mr. Boutwell had secretly left for Massachusetts.

Thus it came to pass that the scheme succeeded; that slavery and bondage, for the abolishment of which, a few years before the best blood of America had been sacrificed, was here restored and was openly sanctioned by Congress, that free and liberal America had granted a monopoly of trade, and was placed on a footing with the most despotic of the powers of Europe, Russia, and that Christian communities together with their two islands were leased to the Alaska Commercial Company for twenty years. Alas! Alaska was then indeed an appropriate term.

ACCUSED OF BRIBERY.

If the prize that the Alaska Commercial Company had thus gained was enormous, it can be imagined that a tremendous sum had to be sacrificed to satisfy the political cormorants, and the press in those days made the most sweeping charges against members of Congress and members of the Administration, and there was an ugly rumor that the brother-in-law of the President, Mr. Dent, had been made a partner of the concern at the eleventh hour.

STATE OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE FUR-SEAL ISLANDS.

Although the Alaska Commercial Company has ever since the wretched people of St. George and St. Paul were delivered into their hands, asserted that the latter are well satisfied with their condition, and that they are as happy as the day is long; yet the meager news that, in spite of the vigilance of the Company, have reached San Francisco, tell a different tale, and they are so restricted by the terms of the lease that they are in nothing else but a state of bondage and slavery.

The inhabitants of these islands are shut off from communication with the outer world like a colony of convicts, as no vessel is permitted to touch at, or no person allowed to land on their soil, except those belonging to the Alaska Commercial Company. They are not allowed to leave the island without permission. They are forced to accept 40 cents per skin, which are worth from \$10 to \$20 each at London, and they must pay for the commodities of life what the Alaska Commercial Company demands of them. And if we consider that they are brought into this condition by the Government of the United States, which has the sacred duty to protect the personal liberty of every individual within its domains, we cannot imagine a more flagrant case of the violation of the principles of Republicanism than that which here presents itself.

Considering furthermore the course which Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., which is now the Alaska Commercial Company, have ever pursued since their name has been known, how little they have respected what humanity, law and justice demands, we are forced to believe that the condition of the inhabitants of St. George and St. Paul is not such as they represent, and that the latter deeply feel their degradation and long for the light of freedom which sheds its rays everywhere, within the wide boundaries of our country, except at this benighted spot, has been shown by that touching appeal, which after many obstacles finally reached the ears of the American people, but only to be left unheeded by those parties that wielded the power and that held the remedy in their hands, but whose interest was at stake.

THE SUPPRESSED PETITION.

We refer to the famous petition of the inhabitants of St. George's Island, which can not be read without a feeling of regret, shame and indignation, and the history of which, briefly given, is as follows:

When the fur-seal islands had been about a year in possession of the Alaska Commercial Company, there arrived in San Francisco a native of the island of St. George, by the name of Peter Rupi, who brought to Agapius Honsharenko, editor of the *Alaska Herald*—a paper published in San Francisco—a petition written

in the Russian language, which had been drawn up by the same Aleuts who once before appealed to the Chamber of Commerce, and which had been signed by all the leading men of said islands.

The following is the petition translated into readable English:

THE SUPPRESSED PETITION.

We, the undersigned natives of St. George Island, Alaska, and citizens of the United States, by virtue of Treaty Stipulations, feeling aggrieved at the mismanagement of the affairs of this Territory, resulting in serious grievances to us, availed ourselves of the medium of a petition to the General Government, in the hopes of accomplishing through such means, such reforms in the management of Alaskan affairs as would tend to ameliorate the unhappy condition in which we found ourselves placed.

This petition was framed in 1869, and was entrusted to the care of our countryman, I. Archimandritoff, to be forwarded to the proper authorities at Washington for their action thereon in our relief; but we are sorry to say it never reached its destination. Again we prepared the petition, and this time to assure its delivery to the authorities at Washington, we entrusted it to Mr. N. Buynitski, a United States official from Washington, at the time present on the Island. This officer received the petition in 1870, and promised faithfully to present the same to the authorities at Washington; but on his return amongst us in the year 1871, we were again destined to disappointment, for on our urgent inquiry as to what had been done with our petition, we received no answer. We have, in view of these facts, been forced to the conclusion that our petition to ensure us the redress of our grievances addressed to the Supreme authority at Washington, has been suppressed.

Now, therefore, we, the undersigned, forward for publication in the *Alaska Herald* a copy of the said suppressed petition, in hopes that it may, by that means, reach the ear of the General Government, and the proper authorities thereof, at Washington.

PETITION.

ST. GEORGE ISLAND, Alaska, August 5, 1871.

We, the undersigned natives of St. George Island, Alaska, and citizens of the United States, consider that we have been treated by the United States Government without due consideration to our wants and necessities.

That we can read and write and are capable of holding correspondence with the Government.

That Government, without consulting us, or understanding our situation, wants, and necessities, leased the Island on which we live, for twenty years, thereby virtually sentencing us to a twenty years imprisonment.

That we recognize by this act, that we have been reduced to a species of slavery, and that we are compelled to labor and to receive therefor *only* forty cents per fur seal skin, or 50 cents per day for labor—when we can procure it—an amount entirely inadequate to our wants, and which leaves us dependents and paupers, checking our prosperity, and impeding the progress of our civilization.

That in consequence the education of our children, a privilege secured to other citizens of the United States, must be abandoned. Morally, religiously, socially and commercially, our destiny is in the hands of the lessees of the Government.

We are the slaves of these lessees, and at their mercy.

We are shut out from all intercourse with other portions of the Republic, and are consequently debarred from improvement by mutual correspondence with sister communities, and from learning through such intercourse, how to advance in the common civilization of our country.

Even merchants and traders are excluded from our shores by these lessees, and competition is thus cut off, and we are dependent only on the mercies of our masters. The employees of the Company (lessees of our Island) often beat and violently assault us, threatening to drive every Aleut from the Island, and that they have that power, through this

lease obtained by them from Government, at a cost of many thousand dollars. These employees are careless and indifferent about the fur-seal,—our *only* resource and support for ourselves and families. The lessees are permitted to kill 25,000 per annum. When we bring them skins, they select only the first class skin, and order us to take the rest out of their sight. By this means, out of one hundred skins, about 75 are purchased by them, and the rest, 25 skins, have to be thrown into the sea. The rejected skins which are cast into the sea and destroyed, would find a ready sale with other outside traders who are eager to purchase them; and thus are the fur seals gradually disappearing; our labor is partially lost, and 25 per cent. of the wealth of our industry is lost to us, because no one is allowed to visit our shores to trade with us, but the lessees of our Island, whom we are compelled to regard in the light of masters and even tyrants.

In conclusion, we beg respectfully of the United States Government, and of our fellow citizens all over the Republic, to regard us not as wild Indians; we are not such, but as fellow citizens, struggling to advance in civilization, and to become worthy to be esteemed as fellow citizens of the Republic.

PETER REZANTZOW,	ALEXIS GALAMIN,
ANDRONIC REZANTZOW,	GABRIEL GALAMIN,
NICIPHOR VECULOW,	BORIS GALAMIN,
PETER RUPI,	ALEXIS USTUGOW,
ALEXIS SHVETCOW,	BARPHOLOMEUS MALOVANSKI,
EGOR KOLECHOW,	IVAN SHEIN,
IVAN PHILEMONOW,	IVAN POPOFF,
SABBA KOLECHOW,	ALEXANDER USTUGOW,
JOB PHILEMONOW,	SEBASTIAN MERCURIEW,
ZACHAR USTUGOW,	NEOPHIT SHVETCOW,
PLATON VECULOW,	JOSEPH SHVETCOW,
CIPRIAN MERCURIEW,	NICHOLAS USTUGOW,
PETER CHLEBOW,	PHOCA SHEIN,
USTIN SHVETCOW,	IVAN AKUPSKI.
SEMEN PHILEMONOW,	

This petition created a sensation in California as well as in the East, and was a bombshell to the Alaska Commercial Company.

Again did the press raise its voice in behalf of these unfortunate Aleuts; again was the unconstitutionality of the lease held up before the public, and again were justice and fairness demanded. But once more did the storm of indignation break upon the stoical front that the government presented; the Alaska Commercial Company declared the petition a fabrication, and probably spent another cool \$50,000 where it did most good, and that ended the matter. The Government did not take the slightest notice of the petition, and the Alaska Commercial Company has been careful that not another one should leave the island again.

We exclaim, again: *Alas, Alaska!*

ONE MORE EFFORT.

It was now evident, beyond all doubt, that, although the general Government was fully acquainted with every detail of this disgraceful affair, no redress could be obtained at Washington; still, one more effort was made by the indignant citizens of San Francisco, and, in February, 1872, the Senate of the State of California was memorialized and implored to use its influence with the Government of the United States in behalf of this cause. We give here the memorial:

MEMORIAL

TO THE HONORABLE THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA:

The memorial of the undersigned citizens of the United States, and merchants and traders of the city of San Francisco most respectfully represents:

That whereas, The purchase of the Territory of Alaska by the United States Government, at a cost of over \$7,000,000, paid out of the public treasury, was a national act, the purpose of which was the acquisition of territory with a view to the eventual carving out therefrom of a State or States for admission into the Union, with power reserved in the general Government intermediate such acquisition, and the ultimate object for which all territory is acquired, to exercise such authority over the same as a wise and prudent administration should dictate.

And whereas, the isolated position of Alaska, and the peculiar resources of that territory, render the inhabitants thereof singularly dependent on commerce for the supply of most of the necessaries of life, without which they must be abandoned to the most pitiable privations and be reduced to the most urgent distress.

And whereas, in view of the above facts, a wise and prudent administration of the affairs in the government of said territory would dictate that trade and intercourse between said territory and the rest of the Republic should be guaranteed free, uninterrupted and untrammelled, and every facility should be afforded by the general Government to promote such intercourse for the mutual benefit of all citizens of the Republic, and for the development of such resources as may lie dormant in that distant territory.

And whereas, the entire Pacific Coast is immediately interested in the promotion of such trade and intercourse with Alaska, and especially the State of California, whose position and resources and commercial facilities eminently design it to be the purveyor to the wants of its fellow citizens in Alaska, and the magazine from which may be drawn such supplies as may be required by them and not afforded in their latitude.

And whereas, the Congress of the United States, in the exercise of its legitimate authority, given under paragraph 3 of Section VIII of Article I of the Federal Constitution, which empowers Congress "to regulate commerce among the several States," etc., has unwisely, injudiciously and imprudently, and in the absence of all knowledge of the wants, rights and desires of the people of that territory, and by undue influence and corrupt practices of parties personally and pecuniarily interested, seeking to betray the interests of said people, and to mislead and deceive the general Government, made a certain contract with the Alaska Commercial Company, in the nature of a lease of the important islands of St. Paul and St. George in Behring Sea, the said islands being the only known home of the fur-seal in America.

And whereas, by the terms of said contract, or lease, Congress has surrendered to the said Company, for a period of twenty years, the entire resources of the said islands, together with the inhabitants thereof, in their foreign intercourse and the entire regulation of the trade therewith, and has invested the said Company with such arbitrary privileges and powers as to virtually give to said Company a monopoly of the entire resources and commercial interests of the said territory, thereby shutting in the inhabitants thereof from all intercourse, through the medium of commerce, with their fellow citizens elsewhere in the Union except through the agents and employees of the said monopoly.

And whereas, by the terms of the said contract or lease the Congress of the United States has abdicated in favor of said monopoly that portion of the sovereign power of the Government of the United States which can rightfully be exercised by Congress alone.

And whereas, the executive branch of the general Government, through its officers and agents, thereto prompted by like undue influences and corrupt practices and means, has been led to sustain and support the said monopoly in the illegal exercise of its unconstitutional privileges and powers; in that

It has surrendered itself, through its Revenue officers in Alaska, to the control of this monopoly.

It has permitted Federal officers to act as agents of the said monopoly.

It has permitted Federal officers to become stockholders in said monopoly.

It has suffered the said monopoly, from time to time and on repeated occasions, to violate with impunity the customs, regulations and military orders affecting trade with Alaska, by the laxity and collusion of its agents, acting in the double capacity of Federal officers and agents of the said monopoly, while the said regulations and orders were rigorously and arbitrarily enforced against other merchants and traders, to a degree in violation of the spirit and intent of the same.

It has caused steamers and vessels to be illegally seized and sold by its officers in Alaska at the dictation of the said monopoly, and upon pretended infractions of the said regulations and orders, solely for the purpose of impeding commerce, driving out competition with said monopoly, and to suppress trade with the people of Alaska, and have thereby entailed great loss to the commercial interests of California, and subjected the merchants of this State to great cost and expense in contesting false and frivolous charges preferred by executive officials acting in the said double capacity as Federal officers and agents of the said monopoly.

It has, through its agents on this Coast, prostituted its powers at the dictation of, and in the interest of, said monopoly, to hedge in, confine, and cripple the rights and privileges of the salmon and codfish fleets of this State, sailing in Alaskan waters, by forbidding the bartering of merchandise, even for necessary supplies, while the same officials have permitted the fishing vessels of the said monopoly to exercise unrestricted trade with that territory.

It has suffered its revenue cutters, while in public service and under public expense and pay, to be used by the said monopoly for the transportation of the effects of said monopoly.

And whereas, the executive branch of the general Government, by the acts aforesaid and otherwise, has abdicated that portion of the sovereign power and authority which can rightfully be exercised by the executive of the Government alone, acting through agents and officers exclusively devoted to the duties of their respective offices, in favor of the agents of said monopoly, claiming to act under the double capacity of agents for both the Government and said monopoly.

And whereas, the legitimate consequence of said abdication, by the Legislative and Executive powers of the general Government, and the delegation of these powers to the said monopoly its agents and officers, has been an almost total suppression of trade and commerce with every portion of Alaska, so that intercourse with the people and inhabitants of that territory is rendered difficult and expensive if not impossible; the productions of the said territory have been locked up, and the large commercial interests of the Pacific Coast, and of this State in particular, suffer and decline, while the inhabitants of Alaska have been, by the action of the general Government, consigned to a species of slavery for the term of twenty years; they are thus held as prisoners, virtually chained and manacled, without having committed any breach of the laws or been found guilty of having committed any crimes. This is a violent usurpation of the sacred guarantees of the Constitution. The people of the United States have shed their best blood and hampered themselves with debt, to give freedom to four millions of slaves. Now, by a strange coincidence, they find that they have paid over \$7,000,000 for Alaska, one direct result of which has been the enslavement of a portion of its inhabitants. Such a gross insult to the American spirit of liberty deserves to be blotted from the records of our national life which it has disgraced. In this age, when the watchword is the Universal Brotherhood of Man, when the Africans, the Chinese and other nations, long held in servitude, are feeling the glorious impulses of freedom as known to the citizens of the American Republic, is it not a shame and a crime that the foul spot of serfdom and slavery curses Alaska? Surely the action of Congress in legislating away the lives and liberty of the Alaskans to a soulless monopoly must arouse in the hearts of the American people a public sentiment which will immediately annul such a piece of barbarous legislation.

Now therefore, we, the undersigned, being personally cognizant of the above facts, and sincere in the deductions derived therefrom, would, in view thereof, most respectfully petition your honorable bodies in joint convention, by concurrent resolution, address the Congress of the United States, at its pres-

ent session, petitioning that Honorable Body, in the interests of your memorialists, and of the merchants, and traders, and commerce of San Francisco, the Pacific Coast and the entire nation, and in the interests of humanity and progress, of right and justice, and in vindication of the integrity of our institutions which denounce all efforts at the enthrallment of the people or any portion thereof, to annul the said illegal and unconstitutional contract or lease above mentioned, and to open up Alaska to free and unrestricted commercial intercourse, subject only to such wise and wholesome general regulations of trade as will act and be binding upon all alike; and, as a preliminary to such a step, praying that a Commission be appointed by Congress, at its present session, to investigate the evils which attend the management of Alaskan affairs, and the infractions of the terms of the said contract or lease by the said Alaska Commercial Company, said commission to be composed in whole or in part of merchants of San Francisco.

A. Crawford & Co., Johnson, Nickerson & Veasey, Lynde & Hough, Morgan & Co., Thomas J. Foster, John H. Carmany & Co., Sherwood, Buckley & Co., Thomas Burden, J. Sturtevant, J. Marks, S. Folpe, Thomas W. McCalum, A. C. Nichols & Co., H. Horst, Starr & Little, James R. Finlayson, D. Beadle, Charles Hare, S. M. Holderness, David Shirpser, Sam. P. Holden, M. J. Kelly, Charles J. Janson, Royal Fisk, And. Welch, A. C. Rand, Jacob Schreiber, W. A. Hughes, Wm. H. Rouse, J. M. Hixson, A. W. White & Co., Hill, Slopt & Co., A. Palljes, J. H. Harn, James Cormack, Jr., W. J. Loury, C. F. Bassett, Adam Booth & Co., S. Levy & Co., J. Green, John Laws, Duff & Co., Lowry & Wightman, Wm. Kibbe Benjamin, S. M. Henry & Co., P. B. Smith, H. F. Baker, Heywood & Hendley, Dakin & Libbey, Brous & Perkins, Littlefield, Webb & Co., H. K. Cummings, A. A. Haseltine, J. W. Wolf, George E. Cole, J. Scott, James Rope, D. B. Stewart, C. McCann, R. D. Thilpoll, L. E. Noowan, R. E. Haseltine, C. R. Jones, G. S. Rogers, John Bills, Wm. Chipman, Wm. Fullard, T. J. Parker, W. Robbins, Geo. E. P. Hunt, Francis P. Devine, B. H. Madison, Geo. W. Boyd, Wm. DeWitt, John C. Gunn, Henry Dneyer, Henry Anderson, L. S. Allen, George Charles Lester, H. Heine, John McPherson, R. D. Rhafon, G. D. Plato, John H. Druhe, O. J. Preston, James McLoughlin, H. Applebee, Peter Muhelson, Thomas Bewick, and 300 others.

Now, what was the fate of this memorial? It was presented to the California Legislature by Senator Perkins, on February 9th, 1872, and referred to the Committee on Federal Relations. General Miller immediately interviewed this committee and pronounced the statements set forth in said memorial as false, and his word outweighed the signatures of hundreds of the best citizens of San Francisco, and said honest committee refused to forward the memorial to Congress.

THE RESULT OF THE LEASE.

From the day the lease was signed the doom of Alaska was sealed. Baffled and cut off on all sides, the dismayed firms and individuals that followed their various pursuits in the country, were forced to withdraw one after another; the plans then under consideration were abandoned, and to-day there are hardly any white men in the territory but the employees of the Alaska Commercial Company.

It seems strange at the first glance, that the lease of two small islands should stop the development of the whole immense territory, but it is not more so than that the possession of a narrow thread of land through a country should give a railroad the power to lord it over cities, counties, and States.

On said two islands—St. George and St. Paul—the wealth is heaped up on the beach in the form of millions of fur-seals, worth from \$10 to \$20 each, and without exertion, the Alaska Commercial Company makes here alone about \$1,000,000 clear profit per year. (The dividends of the Alaska Commercial Company for 1873 reached \$1,300,000). Now, with such tremendous riches at its command, it is an easy matter for this Company to crush any enterprise in the rest of the whole territory, which it claims as its own dominion, and where enough natural dangers and difficulties await the trader, fisherman and explorer, without those prepared for them by an overwhelming monopoly.

As already the old tyrannical Russian Company correctly anticipated that enterprise, discovery and development of the territory would interfere with their fur-trade, would attract the attention of outsiders and would curtail their privileges, so has also the Alaska Commercial Company made it its principle to exclude every body but itself from Alaska, and has therefore declared war against every thing that looks like enterprise, exploration, discovery, immigration and development; and as already explained, through the means of the tremendous wealth and other advantages, furnished to it by the lease of the fur-seal islands, has already succeeded in making itself the master of the whole Territory.

To give a striking proof how, since the advent of the Alaska Commercial Company the trade with the Territory has almost entirely ceased, we will give the lists of the vessels that cleared for Alaska during the months of February, March and April, respectively, in 1869 and 1874.

GREAT DIMINUTION OF TRADE.

We will say, as an explanation, that the spring and early summer is the time when most ships sail for Alaska. They go up in Spring and return in Fall, as during the Winter the coasts of Alaska are the most dangerous localities in the world.

VESSELS CLEARED FOR ALASKA IN

1869.

Feb. 3. Schr. Idaho, *Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.*
 Feb. 7. Schr. Legal Tender, Alsop & Co.
 Feb. 7. Barque Cyane, Pickett & Co.
 Feb. 13. Stmr. John L. Stephens, Hollanday & Brenham.
 Feb. 16. Barque Frances Palmer, C. J. Janson.
 Feb. 24. Schr. Lewis Perry, Tilby.
 Feb. 27. Barque Washington, N. Bichard.
 Mar. 5. Steamer Alexander, *Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.*
 Mar. 6. Schr. Luella, Malovansky.
 Mar. 7. Schr. Alaska, Lynde & Hough.
 Mar. 7. Schr. General Harney, F. G. E. Tittel.
 Mar. 10. Steamer Constantine, *Hutchinson, Kohl & Co.*
 Mar. 10. Schr. Alice, Malovansky & Co.
 Mar. 11. Ship Cesarewich, Ice Co.
 Mar. 26. Schr. Lizzie Shea, Murdock.
 Mar. 26. Brig Victoria, Wright & Bowne.
 Apr. 2. Schr. Page, Taylor & Bendel.
 Apr. 7. Brig Commodore, Parrott & Co.
 Apr. 17. Brig Olga, Ice Company.
 Apr. 18. Schr. T. L. Steele, Pioneer Am. Fur Co.
 Apr. 18. Barque Peking, Ice Co.
 Apr. 18. Schr. Fanny, W. N. Shelby.
 Apr. 27. Schr. Lizzie, C. I. Janson.
 Apr. 27. Barque Atalanta, Pope & Talbot.

1874.

Feb. 6. Frances Palmer, Janson.
 Feb. 17. Wm. Sutton, *Alaska Com. Co.*
 Mar. 6. W. H. Stevens, *Alaska Com. Co.*
 Mar. 7. Schr. Urania, Shirpser.
 Mar. 18. Steamer Alexander, *Alaska Com. Co.*
 Apr. 17. Schr. Eustace, *Alaska Com. Co.*
 Apr. 18. Barque Cyane, *Alaska Com. Co.*

This list does not include the fishing vessels.

We see that, while during the months of February, March and April, as many as 24 vessels sailed for Alaska in 1869, of which only 3 belonged to Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., and 21 to other parties. During the same months in 1874 only 7 vessels cleared for the territory, of which 5 belonged to the *Alaska Commercial Company*, and only 2 to other firms, or 18 less than in 1869.

Do not these figures tell a serious tale? Does it not prove that we can safely assert that the interest of the whole Pacific Coast has been injured by the lease; that the Alaska Commercial Company has a monopoly over the whole Territory of Alaska, and that it has killed its trade?

Most positively does it prove all this, and this state of affairs has long been feared and predicted by the Press, by the merchants and by the general public of the Pacific Coast, as we have already circumstantially explained in the foregoing pages.

THE COMMENTS OF THE PRESS.

We will again quote a few of the many papers and authors, that have recognized the fact, and have discussed the matter.

In a work entitled, "Hidden Treasures, or Fishing Around the North-west Coast," a very able little work, by J. L. McDonald, we find the following:

"The villainous law, passed ostensibly for the protection of fur-bearing animals, should have been more justly entitled: 'An Act to Enslave the People of Alaska, to Obstruct the Fisheries, and to Check the Development of the Northwest Coast.' By the terms of this Act the inhabitants of St. Paul and St. George and *the adjacent islands* are strictly walled in, being forbidden any intercourse with 'the rest of mankind;' they are forced by necessity to sell their products to the Company, and to receive such considerations in return as this soulless monopoly may see fit to give. The obstructions which the Fur Company has in former years thrown in the way of individual traders and fishermen in those regions, are very well known. The subsidized Federal officers in the interests of the Company, have given much trouble to private enterprises; several vessels have been seized on very flimsy pretexts, and sent for trial to San Francisco. In every instance those vessels have been liberated, and the masters and supercargoes exonerated by the courts. Voyages have thus been broken up, heavy losses have fallen upon humble adventurers, failures have followed, and peaceful commerce has been seriously obstructed. Several suits for heavy damages are now pending in the courts on the North Pacific Coast, against the Revenue officers formerly serving on the coast of Alaska."

And again in the same book:—

"Sincerely believing that the 'Fur Franchise' in Alaska is obstructive to the development of the vast resources latent in those regions, subversive of the best interests of the people of that Territory, and embarrassing to the traders and fishermen in and around those shores, we most earnestly ask Congress to repeal that odious measure, and let 'justice be done though the heavens fall.'"

The *Sacramento Reporter*, July 8, 1870, says:

"Gradually this firm, or company, threw off all cloak, openly claimed a monopoly, and warred upon all traders."

From the *Chicago Tribune*, January 4, 1873, we take:

"It practically holds the same relation to Alaska that the old Russo-American did, and that the Hudson's Bay Company does to the adjoining British Possessions. It has rivals in the trade, but they are gradually disappear-

ing under the treatment known in California as 'the little game of freeze-out.' The Company is reported very wealthy, and can afford to undersell and overbuy its rivals, until they have to give up the losing game. It is accommodating, even generous, when its own interests are not at stake. It discourages everything which tends to the development of the country, such as exploration, immigration, etc., because a settled Territory produces no furs. If a man is bound to go there, and it cannot help it, it is then full of accommodation, and helps him all it can during his stay there, and hastens his departure."

This is an extract from an article by Mr. Harrington, Astronomer in the United States Coast Survey, who had been a year in Alaska.

But of the greatest weight are the words of a distinguished officer of the United States Army, General Jefferson C. Davis, commanding the Department of Alaska. He says :

"Since the declaration of Congress, at its last session, of St. Paul and St. George's islands as special reservations of the Government, they have been under the control of officers of the revenue service, sent there for the purpose of executing the laws prohibiting the landing at or killing of fur-seals upon them. During my official visit there, in the beginning of the present summer, and whilst engaged in investigating the affairs of the natives, as well as the manner in which the troops had performed their duties, I learned that, under one pretext and another, privileged parties had been permitted to land and remain on those reservations, and had been allowed to kill the animals at pleasure. During last summer at least 85,000 seals were killed on the two islands ; probably more than that number. The pretexts under which this was authorized was that of enabling the natives to subsist themselves without expense to the Government. In an economical point of view this would seem quite right ; but the facts are that the natives are cooped upon these islands, where they are compelled to work for those private parties or starve ; in other words, *they are to-day in a complete state of slavery*. Competition in trade has been universally established, and is now pretty well understood by the natives and traders throughout the country ; wherever the former can paddle his canoe, or the latter penetrate with his goods, such is the case. *These isolated islands of St. Paul and St. George in Behring Sea, the richest possessions in natural wealth, considering their small area on the continent, form the only exceptions.* The natives are peaceful, honest, and capable of transacting ordinary business quite well, and would doubtless improve themselves if they had a fair chance, *but their present complete enslavement and robbery, by an unscrupulous ring of speculators, will ever prevent such progress.*"—Report of Brevet Maj. Gen. Commanding Department of Alaska, to Secretary of War, August 20, 1870.

CONCEALING THE TRUE VALUE OF ALASKA TERRITORY.

In order to stifle the interest that the public took in Alaska, and to prevent, as much as possible, that the same should be made the object of American enterprise, the Alaska Commercial Co. has always been very anxious to have Alaska represented as a very undesirable and inhospitable country, without charms of

any kind, and its fur-trade as throwing off but a limited profit—exhibiting in this respect again the same spirit as the old Russian company.

The Government officials, who in various capacities were sent out from time to time to Alaska, and who were generally won over to private interest, before they even left San Francisco or Washington, gave therefore always the most unfavorable account of the country; while men, whose honor and integrity cannot be doubted, represent the country as it is, so far as they know it; such men are Secretary Seward, Professor Davidson of scientific fame, General Jefferson C. Davis, former Military Governor of Alaska, Vincent Colyer, and Dr. W. H. Dall of the United States Coast Survey.

All these distinguished persons speak of the astonishing mildness of climate of certain portions of Alaska, of the rankness and luxuriousness of the vegetation, of the density and extension of the timber lands, of the indications of minerals, of the magnitude of the fur trade, and of the incredible abundance of aquatic life.

REPORT OF HENRY W. ELLIOTT.

The last official report, submitted to the Government, is that of Mr. Henry W. Elliott, Special Agent of the Treasury Department, which, we are sorry to say, is in direct contradiction to the statements made by such persons as we have just named. Mr. Elliott has publicly claimed, this winter at Washington, that he knows more about Alaska than any one person, that he had been in the Territory before the transfer to the United States, and many years since, and that he is the only person qualified to judge what that country needs. Let us see what right Mr. Elliott has to these claims :

During the year 1865 Mr. Elliott, then an employee of the telegraph company that attempted to establish a line from America to Europe via Siberia, was stationed at Puget Sound, about eight hundred miles from the Southern boundary of Alaska, and never approached it nearer than that until the year 1872, when it had been five years American territory.

On the strength of this, Mr. Elliott asserts that he has been in Alaska before the American advent. We will now show what experience he has had in the country since :

Mr. Elliott went first to Alaska in the Spring of 1872 in a subordinate position, being assistant to Captain Bryant, who was then the Government agent on St. Paul, the largest of the fur-seal islands ; where he, Mr. Elliott, married a native girl. Mr. Elliott remained on the island about one year, returning in 1873, without having seen anything of the rest of the immense territory, except the little Aleut-village Illiuliuk on Ounalaska island, where he touched on his way up and down. After his arrival at Washington he published a work on the habits of the fur-seals, and made himself conspicuous by preferring charges against Captain Bryant, who, by the way, had proved himself not very pliable in the hands of the Alaska Commercial Co., and consequently was anything but popular with them.

With a strong breeze of powerful influence, we now see Mr. Elliott sailing into a position specially created for him, and for which an appropriation is set aside by Congress. He was appointed a Special Agent of the Government to investigate the resources of the fur-trade, and the condition of the natives of Alaska, and last May he set sail in the revenue cutter *Reliance*, which had been placed at his service for this purpose.

Mr. Elliott proceeded first to Sitka, on Baranof Island, thence to Ounalaska Island, thence to the two fur-seal islands St. George and St. Paul, thence to St. Matthews' and lastly to St. Lawrence Island, staying only a few days at each place, and returning via Ounalaska to San Francisco, where he arrived again in September. That is to say Mr. Elliott having landed on six of the countless islands of Alaska, and having never set a foot on or even been in sight of the main land, has now submitted a circumstantial report on the Territory to the Government.

If we bear in mind that Alaska has as much area as one quarter of the whole United States, and a coast line of 10,000 miles; that it is fringed by thousands of islands, and that it is inhabited by hundreds of tribes of aborigines, belonging to three distinct stocks of men, and speaking many different languages, it becomes

plain that it requires years of travel, exploring and study to become acquainted with the subject upon which Mr. Elliott has reported, after a few months' pleasure-cruise in the North-Pacific and the Behring Sea; after having landed on said six islands, and after having seen a few hundred Aleuts of the three thousand civilized and the fifty thousand savage inhabitants of Alaska.

Mr. Elliott's report is now just such as the Alaska Commercial Company desires, and might be mistaken for a statement written by a member of that Company.

ELLIOTT'S RECOMMENDATION IN FAVOR OF THE ALASKA COMMERCIAL COMPANY.

Mr. Elliott very minutely describes scenes and people which he has never approached within five hundred or more miles, and represents the whole Territory a desolate and barren mass of basaltic rock; where no white man, not even the hardy Iclander, would live without being forced. He says the climate is fearful, and that no vegetable, not even the potato, will flourish under its frowning sky; that all its resources, the timber, the fisheries, and even the fur trade are vastly overrated, and that there is but one praiseworthy institution in the whole country, and that is the Alaska Commercial Company.

He is of the opinion that in order to give this poor but honest Company a chance to make a little money, and the seals getting too thick on the Islands anyhow, the former should be allowed to take 150,000 skins instead of 100,000, as stipulated by the lease; while he also gently hints at his own merits in bringing these facts to the cognizance of the Government.

The aim and purpose of such arguments are too transparent to need comment, and although we have no doubt that it does not pay for Mr. Elliott to have any different views, yet we are surprised to find him so little shrewd as to come out with such undisguised and clumsy praise of the Alaska Commercial Company, which lets at once the cat out of the bag.

But we must admit that we admire Mr. Elliott's cheek, not only in asserting that he knows more of Alaska than any one

man, but in submitting to the Government a report, so weak and absurd, and so full of mistakes and misstatements, that we cannot accept them all as having been made through his ignorance of the country.

We should have thought that Mr. Elliott would have posted himself a little on the subject that he was going to report upon, by reading the excellent books that have been published on Alaska, and avoid such blunders as will neither do him or the Alaska Commercial Company any good.

Considering that the Government has the very best means to get reliable information about Alaska, and could, for instance, utilize the experience of Dr. W. H. Dall, (who, since 1865, has been nearly every year in the Territory surveying and exploring), and still persistently selects men of little experience to get its advice and information from, the question naturally suggests itself: Are really correct and true statements and reports in regard to Alaska wanted, or only such as will serve certain purposes?

A CURSORY DESCRIPTION OF THE RESOURCES OF ALASKA.

Of course we must abstain from giving a description of such a Territory as Alaska, which covers an area larger than the Territories of California, Oregon, Nevada, Utah and Arizona together, but a few statements in regard to its climate, etc., will perhaps not be lost.

The climate of Alaska, (excepting that portion which lies within the Arctic circle,) and especially that bordering on the North Pacific Ocean, is varying, according to latitude and local geographical conditions, equal to that of North Germany, Scotland and Scandinavia. This country is traversed by large navigable rivers, with many tributaries, has beautiful forests, and millions of acres adapted to agriculture and grazing, and when we mention that during the Summer the plains and valleys are waving breast high with grass and rank vegetation, while the air is laden with the fragrance of the wild flowers; nothing more need to be said of its fertility. Game of all kinds is abundant everywhere. On the Aliaska Peninsula herds of reindeer are found at all seasons

of the year, and the fisheries are not insignificant, as Mr. Elliott thinks, but immense, for the codfish abounds everywhere on the coast; large schools of herring fill the bays, and the dense masses of salmon that during the running season, crowd up even the smallest stream, must be seen to be appreciated. As a matter of course, a rough winter follows the delightful Summer, but along the coast the former is tempered by the influence of warm currents of the sea, that here course along the American Continent.

There is not any doubt that rye, barley and oats, as well as all kinds of vegetables can be raised there as easily as in Northern Europe or the State of Maine, and that for stock-raising the country is particularly well adapted.

To show that the potato will grow very well in Alaska, contrary to Mr. Elliott's statements, we will illustrate by examples: During 1868 and 1869, a man by the name of Doyle used to supply the town of Sitka with green peas, string beans, and all other kinds of vegetables, which he raised on a small island in the harbor; the same were also grown in the military garden at that place. The Russians always raised their own vegetables, including cabbage. The same man, Doyle, raised small quantities of barley and wheat, as an experiment, at Kinai, which grew up rank and tall, filled well and ripened completely. At Kodiak, and on the Aleutian Islands, the vegetables grow enormously large, though their flavor is a little coarse, and even at Northern St. Michael, in latitude 64, turnips and potatoes for the use of the fort are successfully raised.

But it is especially cod-fishing, the canning, smoking and salting of salmon, lumbering, ship-building, mining and the fur-trade, that will bring people to Alaska and will induce capitalists to invest their money in it, and if the lease should be abolished and free competition opened once more, there would soon spring up an era of enterprise and activity throughout the Territory, which would surpass that of any former epoch, and ten ships would sail for our beautiful Northern Empire for every one that now shapes its lonely course to its deserted coasts.

THE REMEDY.

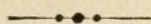
And now we ask, how long is this burning shame of leasing civilized creoles, and of granting monopolies to continue, in open violation of the Constitution? how long shall this immense territory, that belongs to the people and not to President Grant, nor to the Alaska Commercial Company, be practically the property of a few wealthy individuals, and how long shall we be obliged to bow our heads with shame before the more liberal nations of Europe, that have abolished slavery, monopolies, and royalties of trade?

The history of the wrongs of Alaska, which the foregoing pages contain, and which we submit to the public, although it is necessarily brief and incomplete, is a true and just statement of these events. It has not been written with a view of injuring personally the members of the Alaska Commercial Co., but simply to expose the unconstitutionality and the injustice of the Alaska business; and as said company is so deeply implicated in it, and has been the direct cause of all this wrong and misrule, we had to strike at it with all our might.

Still we did forbear to give many examples and statements of cases of cruelty and oppression, and other condemnable actions, which would implicate personally members and employees of said company, but we will not hesitate to give them publicity if this cause demands it.

As Congress has reserved, in the bill in regard to this lease, the power to repeal the same at its pleasure, and as this lease has already been violated and fully forfeited, especially by killing more seals than are therein stipulated (only the best skins being shipped, and the rest rejected and thrown into the sea), we have no doubt that the first Congress of the United States, to which this matter will be presented in the proper light, will at last do justice to all—will abolish the lease, and adopt a plan in regard to Alaska similar to that proposed by the Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco several years ago, a plan that would make of Alaska what it was originally intended to be—a vast tributary to the wealth of our nation.

And once more before we close, we call upon the people and the press of America, in the name of humanity, patriotism, and the public interest, to use all their influence to have a law repealed that does injustice to thousands of citizens, that has killed a large portion of the trade and enterprise of the Pacific Coast, and that has delivered into bondage whole communities of civilized human beings, that feel their situation deeply, and are capable of drawing up such touching petitions as we have given.



PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE ANTI-MONOPOLY ASSOCIATION OF THE
PACIFIC COAST.

CHAS. LEEGE, *Secretary.*

Communications must be addressed to P. O. Box No. 218.