

February 8, 1915

Covering letter from Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General, Department of Indian Affairs transmitted a letter handed to Mr. H. S. Clements, M. P., and by him forwarded to me. "It will be highly useful to me to receive a report from your Anthropological Division on this document and dealing generally with the question of the potlatch."

addressed to R. G. McConnell, Esq., B. A.  
Deputy Minister of Mines  
Department of Mines, Ottawa

COPY $\frac{1}{2}$

Alert Bay, B. C.  
Jan. 28th, 1915

H. S. Clements,  
House of Commons  
Ottawa.

Dear Sir,

We the Indians of Alert Bay and Fort Rupert are sending you these few lines to ask you to remember on Jan 12th. we had a meeting at Mr. Chamber's store. We told you that our Indian Agent Mr. Halladay is trying to stop us from giving away money and blankets etc., to other Indians, which we all know is good for every Indian and which we know is called a potlatch by a Chinook word for give and therefore we want to explain to you that potlatch is not gambling, drinking, or other things which is against the law. But potlatch or give and feast is a good thing for us all, it helps every Indian, it helps people that are not able to get work, for there is not much work for us to do except going to canneries to fish, and that's only a month and a half, six or seven weeks and that could not keep our living for the year round, remember as I told you that our money just goes round and round to us Indians. A Chief when he knows that he has lots of money or blankets, and other Indians has none he thinks to himself, well, it would not ~~do~~ do to keep my money or blankets and let my Indian friends go starving, and another rich Chief would do the same and so it goes on to other people who ever gets lots of money or blankets.

When we give a potlatch we insure for our lives and our children when we get old and unable to work for our selves. Coppers which we think has not been explained to you.

When a man has lots of money and blankets he thinks to himself, well I don't want to loose my money, it may be lost by fire and other ways, I'll buy a copper with my money and it will be safe, and this will show you that our coppers is our safty-banks for nobody else but the owner could sell it.

Fort Rupert Coppers.

32

(names of ~~24~~ coppers and their equivalent in blankets follows:

total ~~105,174~~ blankets in all

115,494

Alert Bay Coppers

(names of 18 Alert Bay Coppers worth 84,790 blankets)

There are lots of other things that we use in potlatch and feast that I haven't told you, but the coppers is the main thing that troubles our mind, for we have been told by our

I. Agent that these coppers has no value although he has often seen Indians when they are ~~xxx~~ paying for these coppers.

I have not told you the coppers of the other tribes:--

These are the names of tribes of Indians on this Agency. (13 names follow)

Good bye, and hope you had a pleasant trip,

Yours truly,

Charles J. Nowell,

Alert Bay.

NE: 20 coppers and a fragment were among the confiscated goods coming to the National museum in 1922