Fort St. James 1806-1914: A Century of Fur Trade on Stuart Lake

By Jamie Morton 1988

Microfiche Report Series 367
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Introduction

This report is intended to provide a narrative framework for the history of the North West Company and Hudson’s Bay Company trading posts on Stuart Lake in north central British Columbia. Since the original initiative towards a National Historic Park on the site began in 1969, the lack of such a narrative history has compromised development and interpretation. Included in this report, as appendices, are summaries of structural information relating to the three posts built and occupied prior to the construction of the 1880s post. The remaining historic structures on the site are remnants of the latter post.

The terminal date of this report, 1914, was chosen as it signalled the end of the "traditional" fur trade on Stuart Lake. With the coming of a nearby railway, the adoption of a cash system, and the economic disruption of the First World War, the Hudson’s Bay Company operations on the site after that time resembled those of any other merchant in a remote village in the province. Within this chronological framework the report is intended to address the primary theme of the park, approved by the Director of the National Historic Parks and Sites Branch on January 23, 1981:

The role of Fort St. James in the fur trade history of the Pacific Slope.

In addition to the present work, three other historical studies could prove useful. First, there is a body of structural information assembled by George Ingram and Mary Cullen in the early 1970s, in support of the architectural rehabilitation of the site, together with some later additions by Bill Yeo. This material, currently a series of draft
reports concerning each of the structures of the 1880s post, should be pulled together in a cohesive form, to provide a basic reference source for the physical makeup of the last Fort St. James. Secondly, due to the constraints of the narrative history, the role of the Carrier people in the fur trade has not been enlarged on. Such a report is, however, slated as a future project. Finally, a site history may prove useful, providing the background of the development of the National Historic Park, as opposed to that of the Hudson’s Bay Company post.
Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the many people who have assisted in the preparation of this report. The majority of the notes used were those gathered over many years by other Canadian Parks Service historians, particularly Tom Tanner, George Ingram, Mary Cullen, and Bill Yeo. The existence of this enormous body of previously gathered material both simplified and complicated the task of preparing a cohesive narrative.

Thanks are also due to the staff of the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives and the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, where most of the additional research required was done.
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Chapter 1: 1784-1806

The Fur Trade Comes to New Caledonia

By the time the land-based fur trade in British North America had reached the Rocky Mountains in its push west, it was largely in the hands of two companies.

The first was the Hudson’s Bay Company, which was chartered by Charles II in 1670. As part of its charter, the H.B.C. was granted "Rupert’s Land", a region defined as that drained by waters flowing into Hudson Bay.

The overall management of the H.B.C. was also set out in the terms of its charter. Its headquarters were in London, with a policy making body comprised a governor, deputy governor, and a committee of seven members. The directors were also required to be stockholders, and they were appointed by, and responsible to, the entire group of stockholders.

Through its first century, the H.B.C. stayed largely within the precincts of Rupert’s Land, maintaining trading posts on or near the coast, to allow easy maritime supply from England. The major competition for the H.B.C. in this period came from the French, who were based on the St. Lawrence, and opposed the Company with both economic and military measures. The French viewed the English company as a major economic threat to the north. As well as providing another market for furs that would have otherwise ended up on the St. Lawrence, the English presence interfered with the monopoly on the fur trade that the French otherwise would have enjoyed.1

The French regime ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763,

1. This precis is largely based upon John S. Galbraith, The Hudson’s Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-1869, New York, Octagon Books, 1977, pp.3-5.
eliminating this particular competition. However, a new class of independent British merchants arose, based in Montreal, following the conquest as economic imperialists. These individuals largely inherited the existing French trade patterns, outfitting individual expeditions to push into the wilderness west of the Great Lakes. As the Montreal traders established posts in the interior, the Hudson's Bay Company became concerned, and began its own push to the interior. In 1774 it opened Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan River, the first of many inland posts designed to compete with the Montreal traders.

The internal competition between this latter group created problems of security in the Indian territory, as well as raising tariffs, the standard prices paid to the natives for their furs. Eventually a number of business agreements were entered by these individual traders, to increase security and increase profits. The first large partnership was founded in 1779, and lasted for several years. The still larger partnership comprising the original North West Company was formed in 1784. Although the original agreement of this company was only intended to last for five years, the advantages were evident, and the partnership was reconstituted and enlarged in 1787 and 1790. By this time the N.W.Co. was the dominant force in the western fur trade conducted out of Montreal.

The partners in the North West Company were divided into two distinct groups on geographic bases. In Montreal were the agents of the Company, responsible for the marketing of the fur returns, and the purchase of the "outfits", the year's supply of trade goods, required for the operation of the various posts and trading districts to the west. The chief Montreal agents of the North West Company were McTavish, Frobisher & Company, largely made up of expatriate Scots.
The second group of partners were the bourgeois, or wintering partners, who were responsible for the direction of the trade proper in the west. The ongoing management of the posts, districts, and the Indian trade was in the hands of these partners. Each year in the summer the Montreal agents, and as many of the wintering partners as were available, would hold a meeting of the "Proprietors of the North West Company". It was at this rendezvous that the management decisions were made for the operations of the Company for the next year. At first the depot for this rendezvous was Grand Portage. The boundary settlement between the U.S.A. and British territory left this place in the United States so the depot was moved to Kamanistiquia, in British territory. In 1807, by a resolve of the wintering partners, this difficult name was changed to Fort William.

In time, the region around Lake Athabasca became the richest fur district for the North West Company. The supply of this region, along with the others to the far west, was a major problem for the N.W.Co. Unlike the H.B.C., which through its control of Hudson Bay had cheap maritime transportation almost into the centre of Rupert’s Land, the N.W.Co. had to bring in its outfits and take out its returns by way of difficult and lengthy canoe routes through Fort William. For this reason, the N.W.Co. devoted a great deal of effort to exploration. The goal of this exploration was to secure easier and cheaper supply routes to its existing trading districts, particularly Athabasca, as well as to develop new trading areas (figure 1).

The first, and probably best known of the explorers of the N.W.Co. was Alexander Mackenzie. He, and the N.W.Co. explorers who followed him, were in search of both better routes through the mountains, and possible maritime supply routes from the Pacific Coast for Athabasca and any new districts to the west. On his first voyage of 1789 Mackenzie
found and followed the river which was to bear his name to the Arctic. However, in Company terms this was a failure, as it provided no alternate supply route. After wintering on the Peace River in 1792-93, he set out on his second expedition in May. It took him through parts of the district later known as New Caledonia to the Pacific at Bella Coola. Although a major achievement, this difficult route was not suitable to replace the existing ones to Athabasca, and so not immediately useful to the N.W.Co. Over the next ten years, a number of N.W.Co. parties continued to explore routes to the west. In 1797 James Finlay followed Mackenzie's route up the Peace River, and explored stretches of the Finlay and Parsnip Rivers. In 1800-1801 David Thompson and Duncan McGillivray explored into the Rocky Mountains from their base at Rocky Mountain House, on the upper North Saskatchewan River.

In 1805 a new phase of development began west of the mountains (figure 2). Simon Fraser (figure 3), a partner in the North West Company, at the meeting of the Proprietors that summer, was apparently assigned the task of extending the trade of the Company to the other side of the Rockies. In the fall of the year Fraser, with clerks John Stuart (figure 4) and James McDougall and about 20 men, established a post at Rocky Mountain Portage, at the foot of the Peace River Canyon. Stuart was left in charge of this post, and Fraser, with McDougall and the interpreter "La Malice" retraced Mackenzie's route up the Peace River, following the Parsnip


3. Jean Baptiste Boucher, also known as "Waccan", who with his descendents, was to be a fixture on the scene in New Caledonia for the rest of the 19th Century. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, hereafter cited as H.B.C.A., B.188/z/1, pp.2-5, lists among the personnel of New Caledonia in outfit 1825 "Bouche dit Lamallice J Bte", and his son "Boucher J Bte fils ".
River at Finlay Forks. Entering the Pack River from the Parsnip took the party to Trout Lake, later known as McLeod Lake. They received a positive reception from the Sekani Indians they found there, so a post was established. It was left under the charge of Boucher and 2 men. Fraser and McDougall returned down the Peace River, eventually to winter at Dunvegan, on the other side of the mountains in Athabasca department, where they met with Archibald Norman McLeod, a senior partner in the Company.

In the spring of 1806 McDougall examined the territory to the west, the lands of the Carrier Indians, some of whom had already visited McLeod Lake to trade with the representatives of the N.W.Co. On May 14 Fraser, at McLeod Lake, received his first report of Stuart Lake:

...he went to the Carriers land and saw about fifty men on the borders of about 3½ days march from Trout Lake, but the distance was long and intricate by water. The above Lake, he says, empties its waters into the Columbia by a small River, which is reported to be navigable. Fish abounds in the Lake at certain seasons of the year, and animals of the fur kind are plenty, but large animals are scarce. The natives resemble the Ehipewcans (Chippewyans) in their language and manners.

While Fraser was at McLeod Lake, a number of Carriers from Stuart Lake had arrived to trade. Their descriptions of their home agreed with McDougall's favourable report, and "enticed us to come here (Stuart Lake) as the most proper place for forming establishments". On June 23 Fraser and Stuart set out from McLeod Lake, taking a circuitous route to

5. ibid., p.181.
6. ibid., p.230.
the southeast. They followed the Parsnip River to the height of land, and eventually crossed over to the McGregor River, a tributary of the Fraser. They descended the Fraser (which was believed to be the upper Columbia) to the mouth of the Nechako River, and followed it in turn to the mouth of the Stuart River, finally arriving at Stuart Lake on July 26, 1806. This circuitous water route was chosen rather than the much quicker overland route used by McDougall in order to fulfil the part of Fraser's charge that involved exploration of the upper Columbia (actually Fraser).

When Fraser and his party arrived on Stuart Lake, most of the elements of the Indian trade were already in place in the district, in that the natives valued European goods and were willing to supply furs and provisions in exchange for them. The metal goods Fraser found among the natives on Stuart Lake had probably been traded through native middlemen from the coast; they were unlike the goods of the N.W.Co., but had acquainted the natives with their utility. The concept of debt had already been introduced into the district, whereby the natives were given goods on credit, which they would pay for with the proceeds of their hunt. The first known example of this practice in the district is found in John Stuart's journal kept at Rocky Mountain Portage House, in the entry for January 31, 1806:

...the Indians were equipt to go far to Hunt the Beaver. they got on Credit Tranches axes Ammination Knives &c... 8

The Carriers from Stuart Lake were already involved in this system of debt prior to the arrival of the N.W.Co. at

7. ibid., pp.204-231; the journals and letters of Simon Fraser contain detailed descriptions of the voyage and route, which have not been repeated here.
their home. Two Carriers paid "21 skins Credit as part payment of what they had from Mr. McDougall at the Beaver River (Rocky Mountain Fort), and the others that did not owe traded about 9 dozen skins". These natives also arranged to supply Fraser with provisions when he arrived at Stuart River, on his pending trip to Stuart Lake. The setting up of a post on Stuart Lake was a mutual action on the part of the North West Company and the natives. The latter had "enticed" Fraser to come to their lake, and the Company welcomed the prospect of many furs supplied by natives who were more than willing to be involved in the debt system, and the changes to their subsistence patterns implicit in that system.

Chapter 2: 1806-1821

The Founding of Stuart Lake Post

Simon Fraser and his party arrived at Stuart Lake on July 26, 1806. Their first reaction to the region was disappointment. Fraser wrote to the "Gentlemen Proprietors" of the North West Company in August 1806:

It is a fine large Lake, But since we arrived here, my ideas are far short of what Mr. McDougall's account of it would lead [me] to expect. In the Spring of the year when he was here, everything had a flourishing appearance - there were plenty of fish and fowl, and some meat and they told him that Beaver were plenty likewise. Since our arrival here we have seen upwards of 50 men - all in a starving state. Notwithstanding [this] they affirm Beaver to be plentiful at some distance from the Lake, But there are none as far as I can learn near the Borders.

They say there are large sturgeon in the Lake, But that they are not possessed of the means of catching them. We caught a small one in one of our nets which convinces me of their being large ones. The Indians also state that there are plenty white fish unconnu [inconnu] some trout carp Jub, &c. in the fall of the year. Of all this we saw but very few as yet. The character that I can give of them is that they [the Indians] are a large Indolent thievish set of vagabonds, of a mild disposition. They are amazing fond of goods which circumstances might lead one to imagine that they would work well to get what they seem to be so fond of. But then they are independent of us, as they get their
necessaries from their neighbors who trade with the Natives of the sea coast.

We are now busy building [the post later named Fort St. James], and as soon as the salmon comes up and we can collect a few, which I suppose will be between the 20th and 25th of this month, I propose to continue my route down to the Borders of the Atnah tribes Lands...¹

Fraser also made evident in his letter to the "Gentlemen Proprietors" the need for both outfits of goods and clerks if the trade in this region was to be pursued to any extent. Fraser definitely thought the area was worth exploiting:

I cannot form any ideas of what returns will be made in this quarter for this year [but] I immagine that they will in no wise be considerable. But notwithstanding I think they will be worth the pursuit, as the Indians are numerous and the country not destitute of beaver. A little from each would make considerable returns. Provisions are another object of consideration, for want of which the people will always be ill of [off], for sending out the returns, and I see no means of procuring any, excepting dried salmon which is but poor stuff, and it is a doubt to me if a sufficiency of that same can be procured.²

In the first month that Fraser spent on Stuart Lake, the issues which would continue throughout the active life of the fur trade post were already evident. The district had a large

² ibid., p.233.
enough population of fur-bearing animals to make it profitable, and potentially enough native hunters to supply the furs to the Company. However, the logistical problems involved in operating in the area were formidable. It was difficult to get goods to the district due to the length of the supply routes; provisioning was a problem both for the natives and the traders; the natives were often unwilling or unable to hunt (usually due to starvation); and all these factors made it difficult to staff New Caledonia.

Operations

Fraser remained in charge of New Caledonia until 1809, although his main responsibility for that period was exploration. In August 1806, after construction had started on the post on Stuart Lake, Fraser and Stuart intended to proceed down the Fraser River to the Atnah Indians' territory. However, the party at Stuart Lake was in a "starving state" and unable to assemble any provisions for such an expedition. The fur trade was likewise unproductive; the post had collected "only a little better than a pack of furs and expectations we have none". 3

Through August Fraser postponed his intended explorations of the river which later bore his name because of the shortage of provisions. On the 28th of that month he sent Stuart, Boucher, and a servant to explore "Nat-leh" or Fraser Lake. 4 On September 3 Fraser set out to meet Stuart at the fork of the Stuart and Nechako Rivers, leaving the post on Stuart Lake in the charge of two of the men. 5 Stuart's report on Fraser

3. ibid., p.235.
4. ibid., p.237.
5. ibid., pp.238,244.
Lake was so positive that Fraser decided to establish a new post there. The natives supported this decision by giving Fraser "plenty of dried salmon and encouragement that they would make plenty furs when the salmon time would be over". Fraser took five men to Fraser Lake, leaving only one to assist Stuart at Stuart Lake, where he remained in charge.\(^6\)

The greatest problem in operating the district that year was the lack of trade goods; the supplies had not arrived from the east in the fall as expected. Fraser considered this "a considerable loss to the Company, and a severe blow to our discoveries."\(^7\) With the shortage of provisions, many of the goods which were available in the district had to be used to trade for food with the natives. Fraser wrote from the post on Fraser Lake:

I have not as yet traded many [dried salmon] but I must soon begin and the few goods I have will all go. I am at a loss how to pay them.\(^8\)

The supplies from the east finally did arrive, but so late in the season that the damage already had been done to the year's returns. Fraser anticipated some repercussions in January 1807:

The Company probably will blame us both as they will be highly Disappointed in their expectations concerning this Country. We are highly unfortunate every thing has been against us since Last Spring, & nothing was of so much detriment as the Canoes arriving so very late in the fall.\(^9\)

\(^6\) ibid., p.242.
\(^7\) ibid., p.244.
\(^8\) ibid., p.241.
\(^9\) ibid., p.246.
The tariff on these goods sent to New Caledonia was set at the meeting of the proprietors of the North West Company in July 1804. At Kamanitiquia, "Twenty three per cent advance on the Montreal Cost of all goods without reserve" was to be added on. In "Athabasca & Dependencies", including New Caledonia, various percentages were to be added to the cost and advance at Kamanitiquia, depending on the class of goods. Dry goods, such as bales, cassettes, gun cases, knives, hats, and baskets of kettles were advanced 80%. Gunpowder was advanced 170%, tobacco 210%, iron works 230%, "high wines" 420%, and shot and ball 490%. The average advance for all classes of goods was given as 130%, and the average "Freight of each Piece indiscriminately" to Athabasca was £14.16.0 Halifax Currency. It may be noted that the additional tariff over Kamanitiquia prices recommended for Athabasca related primarily to the shipping weight of articles, and whether or not they were considered luxuries.

By the beginning of February 1807, Fraser was formulating plans for exploration of the Fraser River, which he then believed to be the Columbia. He intended to set out from Stuart Lake, so wished to bring the required supplies to that post from Trout Lake (later known as McLeod Lake), where the outfit from the east was stored. Fraser believed that the best option was to bring the goods over across the ice rather than waiting for the spring thaw. It was thought that the outfit for Stuart Lake could be brought at the same time. Fraser also suggested the idea of a cache of equipment and provisions for the proposed exploration, to be assembled at the confluence of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers.

Apparently Fraser remained at Fraser Lake for most of this winter; however there was an exchange of clerks, with

Stuart going to McLeod Lake early in the new year, and James McDougall taking his place at Stuart Lake. Under McDougall things had got out of control at McLeod Lake, with the interpreter Jean Baptiste Boucher (also known as Waccan and La Malice) gaining "an ascendency over Mr. McD." Fraser remove McDougall and sent Stuart in to straighten up the resulting problems.

In February 1807 Fraser sent instructions to McDougall at Stuart Lake that the men should not be allowed to trade privately with the Indians, and on carefully packing and storing the furs on hand. He wanted the furs sent to McLeod Lake as soon as possible, either by return of the men from that post delivering the supplies to Stuart Lake, or by men he proposed sending over from Fraser Lake.

In the fall of 1807 two clerks arrived with the outfit from the east, in response to Fraser's earlier requests. A new post, Fort George, was established at the mouth of the Nechako River, the site proposed for the cache some months earlier. Hugh Faries, one of the new clerks, was assigned the charge of this post, while Jules Quesnel, the other newcomer, was to accompany Fraser and Stuart on their exploration of the Fraser River the following spring. Fraser, Stuart, and Quesnel, accompanied by 19 N.W.Co. men and 2 Indians, set out from Fort George on their exploration of what they believed to be the Columbia River on May 28, 1808. The expedition proved that this river was not the Columbia, as it fell into the Pacific some three degrees north of where the mouth of that river was known to be. Fraser also discovered that in the Fraser Canyon "navigation was absolutely impracticable", so that in some places they needed to travel by land:

12. ibid., p.249.
13. ibid., pp.254-255.
14. ibid., p.23.
As for the road by land we scarcely could make our way in some parts even with our guns. I have been for a long period among the Rocky Mountains, but have never seen any thing equal to this country, for I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human being should venture. 15

Fraser arrived back at Fort George on August 6, 1808, and seems to have continued on almost immediately to Athabasca, where he arrived by September 21, presumably to report to the partners in the department on his findings. 16 He wintered at the Rocky Mountain Portage, as related by Daniel Harmon, who met him while at Dunvegan on May 16, 1809:

In the morning, Messrs. Simon Frazer and James McDougall and company, arrived, in four canoes. The former gentleman came from the Rocky Mountain Portage, which is about one hundred and eighty miles, up this River [the Peace]. The later is from New Caledonia, on the west side of the Rocky Mountain, which is distant from this, about four hundred and fifty miles. After passing the most of the day with me, they continued their route toward the Rainy Lake. 17

After arriving at Fort William, Fraser took a year’s furlough, and was then posted to the charge of the Mackenzie River district. The management of New Caledonia seems to have devolved onto John Stuart, whom Harmon entertained at Dunvegan two months after Fraser had passed through. This party had come to get goods for New Caledonia, and returned directly to

15. ibid., pp. 61, 109, 96.
16. ibid., p. 39.
the west. Harmon greatly enjoyed Stuart's company, with much rambling and conversation in addition to the business of the Company.  

Stuart and Faries, with four canoes, passed through Dunvegan again in late May 1810 en route to Rainy Lake with the fur returns of New Caledonia. On October 6 they returned on their westward voyage, this time with some letters for Harmon:

...one of which is a joint letter, signed by three of the partners, requesting me to go and superintend the affairs of New Caledonia; or, if I prefer it, to accompany Mr. Stuart, as second in command to him, until the next spring, at which time it is presumed, that I shall have learned sufficient of the state of things in that country, to assume the whole management myself. As Mr. Stuart has passed several years in that part of the country, the information which his experience will enable him to afford me, will be of great service. I prefer, therefore, accompanying him, to going alone, especially in view of the late unfavourable reports from that country, in regard to the means of subsistence.  

Rather than acting as Harmon's mentor for a relatively brief period, Stuart was assigned for a longer period to New Caledonia, and given new responsibilities. At the annual meeting of the Proprietors of the Northwest Company in July 1812 John Stuart (then in Athabasca) was appointed to the charge of the "Department of New Caledonia" and instructed to coordinate his "Plans & Operations" with the managers of the Columbia Department. The following year Stuart was assigned 100 shares in the N.W.Co. "conformable to a Resolve passed in

18. ibid., pp.146-147.
In November 1810, shortly after arriving at Stuart Lake, Harmon sent Jules Quesnel, with 10 men and a "small assortment of goods", to re-establish the post on Fraser Lake. Harmon himself went to Fraser Lake the following month, but the post there was only operated through the winter, and was abandoned in April 1811. Harmon remained at Stuart Lake through the summer of 1814, towards the end of that period accompanied by "ten persons". In the fall of that year, Harmon sent Mr. La Roque and several men to "re-establish the post at Frazer's Lake" yet again. A few days later, Stuart directed Harmon to assume management of Fraser Lake himself, and to send La Roque and some of his men to the Columbia. It seems that Stuart based himself at Stuart Lake at this time; he definitely spent the summer of 1815 there, and apparently remained there through the spring of 1816, when he left the district. According to Stuart's own claim of some years later, the highest production of furs from New Caledonia under N.W.Co. control was in 1816, when 100 packs were shipped. Harmon engaged a new clerk in the spring of 1816, James McDougall's brother George, who had deserted from the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vermilion, and then had come to visit his brother in New Caledonia. When Stuart left, Harmon assumed charge of the district, and remained in that position until leaving in the spring of 1819. In 1821, when Stuart was commenting on the management of the district since his departure, he was positive about McDougall's operation of the Stuart Lake post, but critical of Harmon's overall direction. Stuart claimed
that the district had not been conducted according to the rules and regulations (which included tariffs and other information) he laid down when he left. Hugh Faries apparently had been appointed to replace Harmon on the latter's departure.\textsuperscript{26}

N.W.Co. strategy in New Caledonia was further affected on October 3, 1817, when the post on Fraser Lake was "consumed by fire". The loss of the facility and already scarce trade goods had the potential to disrupt a substantial part of the trade of the district. Fortunately, "most of the property which was in it, was saved." This post was rebuilt and back in operation soon thereafter, certainly before the winter of 1818-19.\textsuperscript{27}

Fort George, established in 1807 as a base for Fraser's exploration, had been abandoned after 1808, but was re-established in October 1820, a week after the outfit (now shipped from the Columbia) had arrived at Stuart Lake:

Mr G McDougalls Outfit being made up he embarked in the evening with 6 men in his Canoe to establish the Forks of Fraser's River, the natives of that place being promised a Fort there several years past.\textsuperscript{28}

The process of opening this post seems to have dragged on, as in 1822 Stuart referred to Fort George as re-established in June of 1821.\textsuperscript{29}

The problem that Fraser had with a lack of trade goods continued throughout the period the N.W.Co. operated at Stuart

\textsuperscript{26} H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.36, January 27, 1821; H.B.C.A., B.188/b/1, p.27, Stuart to G. McDougall, October 1, 1821.

\textsuperscript{27} D.W. Harmon, A Journal, op. cit., pp.226, 229.

\textsuperscript{28} H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.26d, October 26, 1820.

\textsuperscript{29} H.B.C.A., D.4/116, fos. 51-53, Stewart(sic) to Governor and Council, April 27, 1822.
Lake. The post journal from the summer of 1820 contains several comments on the lack of goods, and the economic ramifications of this lack:

...for as the Natives far & Near Know our poverty, tho' they have Furs they will not come in with them. 30

In addition to the shortage of goods for trade, 1820 was a year when the salmon failed. This failure would lessen the time the natives could spend hunting, and force the N.W.Co. to trade some of their few goods for provisions rather than for furs. The returns of 1820 were also reduced by an outbreak of "meazles & Dissentery" among the natives that summer and fall. 31 These factors resulted in the last N.W.Co. outfit being one of the least successful, with only 73 packs of furs sent out to the Columbia. 32 Faries left New Caledonia in April 1821, even before the results of the year were known. George McDougall wrote:

I have little reason to think Mr. Faries will leave this Department with regrets for ever since he took the management of it, on his arrival in fall of 1819 he has been Baffled & Disappointed in most of his undertakings, and God knows the present year has given him many Moment, with such miserable beings as he has, the most of his men having been laid up part of the Winter,... 33

Stuart had arrived back in the district in January, by way of the Columbia, and reassumed responsibility for the district when Faries left. 34 Under Stuart's leadership the

30. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.16, August 14, 1820.
31. ibid., p.17d, August 23, 1820.
32. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/1, pp.3d-4d, Stuart to Garry, April 20, 1822.
33. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.49, April 16, 1821.
34. ibid.
summer brigade of 1821 again went to the Columbia to pick up the next year's outfit. The inventory of Stuart Lake Post was begun on April 14, probably to assist the recently-arrived Stuart determine precisely what would be required in the next outfit.  

Although the vast majority of the New Caledonia outfit was received at Fort George, acting as the depot, a number of items were added at the other Columbia posts en route Fort Nez Percé, Fort Okanagan, and Spokan House all provided goods for Stuart Lake. A notable addition sent in that year to the latter post was a full complement of blacksmith's tools, including 1 small anvil, 1 bellows mounting, 1 vice, 1 file, and 1 pair of pincers. This suggests that the N.W. Co. had decided it was more economical to produce ironwork in New Caledonia than to ship it in over such long distances.

During this period, the business of New Caledonia and the post on Stuart Lake was determined primarily by the environment. The N.W. Co. had an ongoing problem maintaining enough stock to allow a viable trade, due to the distances involved in supplying from their Montreal base. In addition, the chronic problem of provisioning stood in the way of exploration or expansion of the network of posts, and interfered with the natives' hunting activities. Although the posts on Stuart Lake and McLeod Lake were continuously operated, the other establishments seem to have been seasonal or occasional in nature.

Constant attempts were made to address these problems. Different routes and strategies were planned and adopted to ship the outfits in and the returns out. The Company established a fishery in the district to alleviate dependence on native supplies, and agricultural efforts increased, but

35. ibid., p.47d, April 14, 1821.
36. H.B.C.A., B.188/d/1, "Distribution of New Caledonia Outfit 1821".
with marginal results. The debt system was extended to attempt to get the natives to hunt in a pattern that related to the trading aspirations of the N.W. Co. Throughout the period, the men who played the major role in shaping the development of the district were first Simon Fraser, and secondly John Stuart. The latter, in particular, was largely responsible for the district as it existed at the time of the amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. As the partner responsible for the direction of the area, he acted both as the viaduct for the information proceeding to the partners in the east, and also as the arbiter of how the district would operate internally. His decisions were eventually formalized in his 1815 rules and regulations for the district, which served as the operational framework well into the Hudson's Bay Company period in New Caledonia.

The Indian Trade

When Fraser's party first arrived on Stuart Lake, all the elements required for a successful Indian trade seemed to be in place. The natives were "amazing fond of goods", and already had some European articles in the form of spoons and metal pots which Stuart had observed on an excursion up either Fraser Lake or Stuart Lake, as well as some muskets on Stuart Lake. Fraser commented on the difference between the metal items in the Indians' possession and those of "this place"; possibly the former were objects of Russian or American manufacture which had been traded in from the coast. 37

In spite of their desire for European goods, the natives

seemed unwilling to perform to the expectations of the Company. The debt system was introduced to oblige them to hunt and supply furs to the post at which the advances were given. The intention was to make them dependent on the available trade goods, as an incentive to provide the N.W.Co. with the furs it desired.

In a letter to Stuart of September 29, 1806, Fraser suggested some problems with the natives of Stuart Lake:

I am sorry to hear of the Indians of your place having been so troublesome and rogish [roguish] in our absence. They imposed greatly on the men to be sure. I certainly approve of the method you took to punish them and to restore the articles they had stolen. They are a thievish forward inconsiderate set of bagabonds [vagabonds], of course they require to be kept at a proper distance.38

At some point in the winter of 1806 a number of the Stuart Lake natives, including "Qwa" and "le Gourmand" had come to Fraser Lake, either in search of salmon ("they have ate up all the salmon these of this place had") or simply following Fraser. By February Fraser had managed to send them back to Stuart Lake; they intended to trade for more salmon at "Steela".39 When this group arrived back at Stuart Lake, they tried to mislead McDougall concerning trading values. Fraser sent some advice in February 1807:

The Gourmand that says that I give the goods for so very little in return, ask him what he got from me. The day before he went away he asked me for something of every article I was possessed of, but I refused him everything. They are sweet mouths,

38. ibid., p.240.
39. ibid., p.253.
thieves, liers, and in short have every bad quality, therefore you have no occasion to believe them. It matters very little whether a person is hated or beloved by them, as they are a lazy set of vagabonds. Qua owes 8 skins from this place, Le Traiteur 3 do. & his big Brother 6 do. & LaVielle Naschoes mother 5£. 40

Harmon first arrived at Stuart Lake in November 1810, as second in command to Stuart in New Caledonia. He described the location of the native village relative to the post:

At the distance of about two hundred rods from the fort, a considerable river runs out of the lake, where the Natives, who call themselves Tâcullies, have a village or rather a few small huts, built of wood. At these they remain during the season for taking and drying salmon, on which they subsist, during the greater part of the year. 41

The natives themselves were on the other side of the lake, where Harmon found about a hundred poorly clothed people, who appeared to be in "wretched circumstances" but still seemed "contented and cheerful". 42

In January 1811, at Fraser Lake, a young native cut through a parchment window into Harmon’s room while the latter was sleeping and stole some clothing. Some other natives returned the property, and in light of the age of the thief, and the safe return of the clothing, no punishment was meted out. Harmon thought that nearly all the Carrier were "addicted to pilfering" but that not many of them were daring

40. ibid., pp.254-255.
42. ibid., p.161.
enough to steal from the white men. 43

In July 1811, back at Stuart Lake, Harmon dealt with 5 Secanies [or Sekanis], who were travelling to Fraser Lake to "take a scalp or two". He successfully discouraged them from their plan with an economic argument:

...should they, in the fall, bring in an hundred scalps, they could not, with them all, procure a pint of rum, or a pipe full of tobacco; but, if they would bring beaver skins, they would be able to purchase the articles which they would need. 44

Two months later "Quâs" [also referred to as Kwah or Qua], the chief of the local village, attempted to influence the dealings between the N.W.Co. and another native, to whom Harmon had refused goods on credit. The decision to withhold credit was based on two assumptions; first, that the man would never pay for the goods; and second, that Quâs wished to demonstrate to the rest of the natives that he had great influence over the Europeans, "which would be prejudicial to our interest, if he should effect it." Quâs then made some veiled threats, which Harmon attempted to ignore. The confrontation continued in the store, with Quâs requesting a piece of cloth for a breech cloth. He refused every piece that Harmon offered:

This persuaded me, that his only object was to provoke me to quarrel with him. I, therefore, threw down the cloth, and told him, if he would not have that, he should have this, (meaning a square yard stick which I had in my hand) with which I gave him a smart blow over the head, which cut it, considerably. I then sprang over the counter, and

43. ibid., p.164.
44. ibid., p.169.
pelted him, for about five minutes, during which time, he continually called to his companions, all of whom had knives in their hands, to come and take me off. But, they replied that they could not, because there were two other white people in the room, who would prevent them. It was happy for us that these Indians stood in such fear of us; for there were only four white men, at this time in the fort, and they could easily have murdered us. 45

Quâs ultimately accepted the humiliation by declaring himself as Harmon's "wife", having been treated in the same way that he would treat one of his four wives if they were to "behave ill". With the acceptance of this punishment by the most prominent of the Carrier, the paternalistic role of the European was further institutionalized in the attitudes of both the natives and the N.W.Co. men.

After the company New Year's dinner in 1812, Harmon entertained some of the natives in the Hall:

After our repast was ended, I invited several of the Sicanny and Carrier chiefs, and most respectable men, to partake of the provisions which we had left; and I was surprised to see them behave with much decency, and even propriety, while eating, and while drinking a flagon or two of spirits.

After they had finished their repast, they smoked their pipes, and conversed rationally, on the great difference which there is, between the manners and customs of civilized people, and those of the savages. They readily conceded, that ours are superior to theirs. 46

45. ibid., pp.174-175.
46. ibid., p.179.
Harmon described two other incidents involving friction with the natives and the methods used for resolving these situations. In 1813 he, Stuart, and an interpreter were threatened by 80 or 90 armed natives at Fraser Lake, through the actions of the interpreter's wife, who was a native of that place:

By mild measures, however, which I have generally found to be the best, in the management of the Indians, we succeeded in appeasing their anger, so that we suffered no injury; and we finally separated, to appearance, as good friends, as if nothing unpleasant had occurred. Those who are acquainted with the disposition of the Indians and who are a little respected by them, may, by humouring their feelings, generally, controul them, almost as they please. 47

The other incident noted took place in 1817, and again somewhere in the vicinity of Fraser Lake:

I have just returned from a neighbouring village, where my interpreter gave one of the natives a decent drubbing, for having stolen from us. Soon after, the Indian who had been beaten, with a number of his relations, flew to arms, and surrounded our camp; but they proceeded at first no farther than to gesticulate in a threatening manner. This I permitted them, for a short time, to do, when I ordered my men to load their guns; though I was determined that they should not fire, unless it became a matter of necessity. I then told the Natives that we were prepared to defend ourselves,

47. ibid., pp.188-189.
and, if they intended to fire upon us, to begin; or otherwise, to walk off, and lay aside their arms, which if they would not do, we should fire upon them. They concluded to retire, and shortly after came back without their arms, and began to trade, as if nothing had happened. 48

The trade in 1820 was further affected by an outbreak of "meazles & Dissentery" among the Indians in New Caledonia. By November of that year it was noted that the natives at Fraser Lake were "falling off very fast". 49

In this period the relationship between the natives and the N.W.Co. was in a tentative stage. The symbiosis required for the successful pursuit of the fur trade had not yet developed, as both parties tried to follow their own agendas, with the N.W.Co. attempting to control the natives' lifestyle in order to induce them to produce more furs, while the natives were anxious to obtain European goods by any means possible. The confrontations produced by this relationship were resolved by the threats implicit on both parts; if the natives were disturbed enough they would supply no furs, and if the traders were injured or robbed, there would be some immediate retaliation, but more seriously, the possibility of no more goods sent into the district.

Transportation

A large part of Fraser's charge when he first entered New Caledonia was exploration. In the context of the fur trade, exploration had two goals. The first was to find districts

48. ibid., pp.223-224.
49. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, pp.17d,29, August 23, November 19,1820.
that contained populations of fur-bearing animals, as well as natives who were amenable to hunting them in return for manufactured goods. The second was to find and establish viable supply routes to connect these new trading territories with the economic centres of the fur industry.

Fraser had been unable to proceed with the second part of this process due to the shortage of provisions and goods until 1808. His exploration of the river which later bore his name proved it to be neither the Columbia nor a viable link between New Caledonia and the Pacific Ocean. This meant that the supply route via Peace River to the east remained the only option open to the North West Company, and New Caledonia remained effectively a district of Athabasca Department.

Concurrent with Fraser's forays into New Caledonia along the Peace river, David Thompson of the N.W.Co. was pushing across the continental divide further south, into the Kootenay region. He established Kootenae House, the first post in the Columbia basin, in the summer of 1807. For the next two years Thompson explored, traded and established posts in the Kootenay and upper Columbia drainages.

Thompson was assigned to the Columbia again at the meeting of the partners of the N.W. Co. in July 1810. It has been suggested that this posting was in response to the intended enterprise of John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company at the mouth of the Columbia. Thompson's schedule, as stated by himself, was to be "at the Pacific Ocean before the month of August" 1811. He was aware on his descent of the Columbia in July 1811 of the arrival of "the American ship" at the mouth of the river. This evidence, together with that offered by Washington Irving concerning Thompson's trip, has led to a conclusion that Thompson's goal was to establish a British

post at the mouth of the Columbia in advance of the American company. However, Thompson's own stated schedule, in spite of his knowledge of the American expedition, casts some doubt on this conclusion. In any case, Thompson descended the length of the Columbia, arriving at Astoria on July 15, 1811, and met his object of exploring the river "in order to open out a passage for the interior trade with the Pacific Ocean."
He passed the mouth of the Okanagan River on July 6 on his downstream voyage, and of course again while proceeding back to the interior.

Thompson started back up the river with a Pacific Fur Company party led by Robert Stuart and Alexander Ross, who set up a post at "Oakinacken" on September 1, 1811. Ross was left to trade, while Stuart headed a smaller party to the north in search of the headwaters of the Okanagan River. They returned to Ross' post on March 22, 1812, having reached the source of the Okanagon, and crossed the height of land to "Thompson's River, or rather the south branch of Frazer's River", where they had passed the winter amongst the "She Whaps" (Shuswap) Indians.

In May 1812 Robert Stuart returned to "Cumcloups" (later Kamloops) on the Thompson River to establish a Pacific Fur Company post. By the end of the year Laroque was operating a N.W. Co. post in opposition to Stuart "at She Whaps".

By this time, there was a viable transportation route known to the employees of the N.W. Co. between Thompson River and the Columbia. Combined with the information gathered by

52. ibid., pp.358, 339 footnote #2, 344-345.
54. ibid., pp.215,222.
Fraser on his explorations, this provided the knowledge required to link New Caledonia to the Company posts on the Columbia, as well as to the Pacific (figure 2).

It had been decided by the summer of 1812 that some consolidation of N.W.Co. operations in the New Caledonia and Columbia departments should take place. In the annual meeting of the partners at Fort William:

...it was determined the Agents should write to Mr. John Stewart now at Athabasca, that he is appointed by the Company to take charge of the Department of New Caledonia & combine his Plans & Operations with the Gentlemen on the Columbia, & that Mr. Stuart is to proceed next spring as early as possible down to the Sea, there to form a junction with Mr. J.G. McTavish and meet the ship intended to come to the Columbia. 55

Stuart departed Stuart Lake on his voyage to the sea on May 13, 1813, as described by Daniel Harmon:

In the early part of the day, Mr. J. Stuart, accompanied by six Canadians and two of the Natives, embarked on board of two canoes, taking with him a small assortment of goods, as a kind of pocket money, and provisions sufficient for a month and a half. They are going to join Mr. J.G. McTavish and his company, at some place on the Columbia River; and to proceed with them to the ocean. Should Mr. Stuart be so successful as to discover a water communication, between this and the Columbia, we shall, for the future, obtain our yearly supply of goods by that route, and send our returns out that

way, to be shipped directly for China, in vessels which the company, in that case, design to build on the North West coast. 56

On September 25 three letters from Stuart, the last of which was sent from "O-ke-nâ-gun Lake", were delivered to Harmon by an Indian courier. Stuart had received a great deal of assistance from the natives along the route. The major impediment encountered was the need to pack overland on horses some 150 miles between the Fraser River and Lake Okanagan. Stuart was remaining at Okanagon until such time as canoes were completed, as he knew that with a few portages, they could reach the Pacific by water, in an estimated twelve or fifteen days. 57

In September the amalgamated Stuart and McTavish parties arrived at Fort Astoria, the Pacific Fur Company post at the mouth of the Columbia (figure 5). The Astorians had recently been informed of the destruction of their supply ship, the Tonquin, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. This loss made it impossible for them to dispose of the fur returns they had gathered over the two years since their arrival on the Columbia. In addition, the McTavish party had brought from Canada a letter informing the Astorians that the ships Isaac Todd and Phoebe had sailed from London in March 1813 with letters of marque and orders from the British government to seize Astoria. The post had been represented to the British Admiralty as an American colony, and was to be seized as part of the hostilities of the War of 1812. On the other hand, the N.W.Co. party encamped near Astoria had next to no provisions, and found the wait for the British ships intolerable. The N.W.Co. representatives proposed to purchase the whole establishment from the Astorians, and the Astorians, under the threat of the imminent arrival of the British vessels, were

57. ibid., pp. 198-199.
interested in selling their property rather than having it seized. The value of the goods and furs in the post was finally settled on by both parties, and the bargain was signed on October 23, 1813:

The gentlemen of the North West Company took possession of Astoria, agreeing to pay the servants of the Pacific Fur Company (the name which had been chosen by Mr. Astor) the arrears of their wages, to be deducted from the price of the goods which we delivered, to supply them with provisions, and give a free passage to those who wished to return to Canada overland. 58

Through the purchase of the Pacific Fur Company assets, the North West Company acquired the primary post on the Columbia, with two years worth of fur returns and a stock of trade goods, as well as their posts in the interior. John Stuart, and Mr. McKenzie of the Pacific Fur Company were sent to these inland posts at the end of October, in order "that the latter might make over to the former the posts established on the Spokan and Okenakan." 59 In December, Captain Black of the British sloop-of-war Racoon arrived at Astoria, and formally took possession "of the establishment and of the country in the name of His Britannic Majesty". 60 At the same time, the post was renamed Fort George to reflect its new political status as property of the British crown rather than Astor's company. The Isaac Todd finally reached the Columbia in the spring of the following year:

The Isaac Todd which sailed from England in 1813 and arrived at the Columbia River in April 1814 was the

59. ibid., p.145.
60. ibid., p.150.
first Ship that took any Produce of the North West Company's trade collected on the West side of the Rocky Mountains and carried it to China from whence she brought a Cargo of Tea to England for account of the East India Company.61

At least some of the goods brought by that vessel were received at Stuart Lake on October 18, 1814, as described by Daniel Harmon:

This afternoon, I was agreeably surprised by the arrival of Mr. J. La Roque and company, in two canoes, laden with goods, from Fort George, at the mouth of the Columbia River, which place they left, the latter part of last August.62

Although La Roque's party brought goods from the Columbia, most of the New Caledonia outfits were still brought from the east. Harmon noted the arrival of the Rainy Lake brigade on November 7, 1813 and October 29, 1814. On May 2, 1818 Harmon saw off some of the party for the east:

Expecting that the ice in Peace River will soon break up, I have sent off the last of our people who are going to the Rainy Lake; and by them I have forwarded, as usual, my accounts of the place, and letters to my friends below.63

The brigade of that year arrived back on November 7. Harmon's journal records the problems encountered with the eastern route:

63. ibid., pp.199, 205, 227.
Today our people returned from the Rainy Lake, and say that, on account of the large quantities of ice that was drifting in Peace River, they were obliged to leave the greater part of the goods, which they had on board of the canoes, but a short distance this side of the Rocky Mountain Portage. We shall be obliged, therefore, to bring these goods on sledges, drawn by dogs from that place, which is distant from this, about two hundred and eighty miles.  

Harmon left the district with the 1819 brigade, departing McLeod Lake on May 8:

Yesterday, the most of our people embarked with the returns of this place, in three canoes; and a few hours hence, I shall, with my family, proceed in another, which will be pushed on by six Canadians.

Harmon reached Rocky Mountain Portage six days later, having been held up by ice in the Peace River, and finally arrived at Fort William on August 18.

The reasons for the continued use of the eastern route rather than the Columbia are not evident, but probably relate to the dispute over sovereignty in the Columbia District. Although the holdings of Astor's company were purchased by the North West Company, the post was also seized by Captain Black as an act of the War of 1812. This resulted in what was termed "the present State of uncertainty" by the partners of the N.W.Co. at their council of 1814, at which time they also expressed interest in some arrangement "with an American

64. ibid., p.229.
65. ibid., p.232.
The Treaty of Ghent, signed on December 24, 1814, ended the uncertainty, but not to the advantage of the British interests on the Columbia, as it stipulated a return to the status quo prior to the war, with no specific mention of Astoria. After some abortive American efforts to take possession of the post, a joint British-American expedition was made, on board a British sloop of war, the Blossom, and on October 6, 1818, the post was formally surrendered to J.B. Prevost, representing the American government. Although under the flag of the latter country, the post was to be "occupied and protected" by the North West Company. In the same year, the Anglo-American Convention was accepted, by which joint occupation of the Oregon Territory was accepted by both parties. From the time that these political questions were resolved, it would have taken the N.W.Co. approximately two years to arrange the change to the different supply route, suggesting why the Columbia supply route was adopted again in 1820.

In that year the brigade went out to the Columbia on June 1, under the direction of Hugh Faries. The outfit arrived back at Stuart Lake on October 20, 1820, as described by James McDougall:

...Mr Faries & my Brother arrived from the Columbia in a Boat & 2 very Crazy Canoes manned by 19 men & loaded with an enormous outfit, say 89 Pieces. Mr Faries going off at the time he did when the waters at their very height was so unfortunate as to loose

68. Message from the President of the United States ... relating to an establishment made at the mouth of Columbia River, Washington, Gales & Seaton, 1823, p.7.
two of his men on his way going down a dangerous Rapid when the Canoe was sunk in a Whirlpool and out of three men in it only one escaped by fortunately getting hold of a Log of Wood that happened to be drifting down at the time every thing else in the Canoe went to the Bottom, and Mr Faries’ own Canoe was nigh sinking also, in fact he had the utmost misery and trouble to get to Okanagan, being obliged to leave his Canoes a long distance on this side of the Portage at which place he and his people were out of their visions, entirely ignorant where to find it or Indians to give them any provisions to continue & having no news of the man that Mr LaRoque had promised should come to meet him on Frasers River about that time, fortunately by striking out from the River they discovered a few miserable Atnahs who assisted him to get to Mr LaRoques place where he found some women who informed him of the Rascally Indians having murdered the man that had been left there and who wished very much to do the same to Mr Faries & Party seeing them so ill armed & certainly annoyed him for eight Days successively very much however starvation made those Rascals go out of the way which gave Mr Faries an opportunity of continuing on his way but my Brother retarding to arrive at Okenagan with the other Columbia Gentry he continued down the River to the next post for the Columbia Gentry not being punctual they were obliged to make two trips to Ft. George from that place on account of New Caledonia Outfit,...

In spite of the problems encountered with high water, hostile Indians (in contrast to Stuart’s experience of 1813), and the lack of knowledge of the route, the brigade took

70. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.25d, October 20, 1820.
substantially less time for the round trip than those which went to Rainy Lake.

The final returns of the North West Company from New Caledonia went out by the Columbia route, under the direction of John Stuart.

The main innovation in transportation into New Caledonia in this period was the turn towards the west, and the attempt to integrate that district with Columbia District. The attempt to find viable routes to the Pacific had been begun by Fraser and Thompson, and the answer had ultimately been provided by 1812, through the explorations both of N.W.Co. and Pacific Fur Company employees. However, due to outside influences, the more convenient and quicker route to the Columbia was not adopted to supply New Caledonia until 1820.

Transportation: Methods

The initial foray into New Caledonia was largely performed in birch bark canoes, and this seems to have been the preferred mode of transportation for some time thereafter. On the initial voyage of exploration in 1806, there were numerous incidents of canoes being damaged. The repairs always fell to "Mr. Stuart's lot, there being no other person that can do it." 71

Canoes were built in the district almost immediately; Fraser chastised McDougall for not getting "Canoe Bark Risen" at McLeod Lake in the summer of 1806, and sufficient birch bark had been located at Fraser Lake to build a canoe by early

Bark canoes were still built in the final year of N.W.Co. operation at Stuart Lake. From April 14-25, 1820 three such vessels were constructed, probably to carry out the returns, and a year later, 6 fathoms of bark for canoes was gathered by two employees.  

Other watercraft were used in addition to the bark canoes. In the spring of 1820 a "large Wooden Canoe" was purchased from the natives for a blue cloth capot. Presumably this was a dugout canoe; it was intended for fishing on Stuart Lake. A month later a dag was traded for a "Pine Canoe", as the wooden canoe had proven too heavy to paddle far enough out to set the willow nets used. This lighter canoe was probably one of the spruce bark canoes like that observed by Alexander Mackenzie among the Sekani in 1793. In October 1820 "the Boat" was sent down to the forks to pick up a load of dried salmon; it contained 2200 fish on its return. A boatbuilder, Thomas Hodgson, had been sent into New Caledonia by the N.W.Co. in 1819. However, he had probably been unable to do a great deal of work, as his tools were held up in Athabasca until after the amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company. The last New Caledonia inventory taken prior to the amalgamation, in the spring of 1821, listed "1 Boat" in the department.

Although watercraft were used in the summer, the freezing of the rivers and lakes in the district made them useless in the winter months, when most of the transportation was

72. ibid., pp.239,253.  
73. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, pp.1-3, 47, April 14-25,1820, April 6,1821.  
74. ibid., p.4, May 5, 1820.  
75. ibid., p.8, June 13, 1820.  
77. ibid., pp.26d,28, October 26, November 8, 1820.  
78. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, pp.7d-8, Stuart to Leith, April 5,1822.  
79. H.B.C.A., B.188/d/1, New Caledonia Department Inventory, Spring 1821,p.5.
overland. Year round trails connected Stuart Lake to McLeod Lake and Fraser Lake, but they were used most in the winter. Harmon described a trip made in November and December 1811, to recover goods which had been left near McLeod Lake due to the freeze-up of the Peace River at the end of October:

Our goods were drawn on sledges by dogs. Each pair of dogs drew a load of from two hundred, to two hundred and fifty pounds, besides provisions for themselves and their driver, which would make the whole load about three hundred pounds. I have seen many dogs, two of which would draw on a sledge, five hundred pounds, twenty miles, in five hours. For a short distance, two of our stoutest dogs will draw more than a thousand pounds weight. In short, there is no animal, with which I am acquainted, that would be able to render half the service that our dogs do, in this country, where the snow is very deep in the winter season. They sink but little into it, in following a person on snow shoes.80

There were hazards involved in winter travel. On one trip to McLeod Lake in May 1812, Harmon lost one of his men, who fell through the ice while crossing a small lake on a sledge. Harmon himself had problems on the return trip with maintaining progress through soft, 3 foot deep snow, and with getting lost after dismissing his guide near Stuart Lake.81

Sledges were probably built at Fort St. James throughout the N.W. Co. period. The post journal of March 1821 described Waccan building them. The process involved squaring, knifing, and bending wood, and then "embarring" the sledges.82

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81. ibid., p.185.
82. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, pp.43d-44, March 6-15, 1821.
Horses were not generally used for transportation in this period, with the exception of the overland portion of the route to the Columbia. It is unknown if these animals were kept by the Company or simply bought or rented from the natives when required; the latter is the most likely, as the route was only used on three or four occasions.

Provisions

When Fraser first arrived at Stuart Lake he found the natives there in a "starving state". The N.W.Co. party was soon in the same condition, forcing them to postpone further exploration for that summer. Fraser wrote to James McDougal at the end of August, enlarging on the situation:

We have subsisted chiefly upon berries since that time. Tho we have always had seven nets in the water and properly attended, they produced nothing excepting a few carp and unconnu(inconnu), and of that same but seldom. Cowa(Kwah) gave us about a dozen Beaver and a few Rabids(rabbits) and having been in daily expectation of the salmons arriving, naturally led us to be able to procure a sufficiency of that fish for our voyage. But now the season is so advanced and no salmon arrived that I dont expect any this year, and the Indians say it does not come up every year.

Daniel W. Harmon arrived at Fort St. James on November 7, 1810, having left Fort McLeod on November 3, in company with

83. W. Kaye Lamb, Journals of Simon Fraser, op. cit., p.235.
84. ibid., p.237.
The following August, he was subject to the problems of food supply at Fort St. James:

Our whole stock of provisions in the fort, for ten persons, consists of five salmon, only. It is impossible, at this season, to take fish out of this lake or river. Unless the salmon from the sea, soon make their appearance, our condition will be deplorable.86

As a temporary expedient, all the inhabitants of the post were sent to "Pinchy" to gather berries. However, by August 22 the salmon run had begun, and by the beginning of September, the "common salmon" was abundant:

They weigh from five to seven pounds. There are, also, a few of a larger kind, which will weigh sixty or seventy pounds. Both of them are very good, when just taken out of the water. But, when dried, as they are by the Indians here, by the heat of the sun, or in the smoke of a fire, they are not very palatable. When salted, they are excellent.87

Harmon and his men attempted to augment their diet that year by fishing for trout, which were taken in "considerable numbers" with "set hooks and lines". They also planted potatoes and "barley, turnips &c. which are the first that we ever sowed, on this west side of the mountain." These crops were planted in May, but no reference was made to harvesting them in the fall; it is unknown whether or not they were successful.88

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86. ibid., p.170.
87. ibid., p.170-171.
88. ibid., p.167.
By October 21, there were 25,000 salmon in the store at Stuart’s Lake, and Harmon had sent some people to "take white fish". Each man was to be allowed four salmon per day as provisions. The fishermen were successful, and caught 7,000 whitefish of 3 to 4 pounds each, using nine 60 fathom nets.\(^89\)

Harmon noted the start of the salmon run in 1812 on August 15, and in 1813 on August 12. On the latter occasion he pointed out the dependency of all inhabitants of the country on this resource:

\[\ldots\text{for the stock of provisions which we have in the fort, is sufficient, but for a few days, and the Natives, for some time past, have greatly suffered for the want of food.}\(^90\)

In 1814, Harmon remarked on the fluctuating nature of the salmon run, which had started on August 5. He expected the run to last until the end of September, but that year it was a small run; Harmon thought they were numerous every second year:

\[\text{We have had but a few salmon in this river, during the past season. We hope, however, that a kind Providence has sent them to some of our neighbouring villages, where we shall be able to purchase what will be necessary, in addition to the whitefish which we expect to take, for our consumption, during the ensuing winter.}\(^91\)

Throughout the year, until the next salmon run, both the N.W. Co. men and the natives travelled around the district in

\(^89\). ibid., pp.177-178.
\(^90\). ibid., pp.187, 194.
\(^91\). ibid., p.204.
search of food, with the Europeans attempting to purchase it, and the Carrier breaking up into smaller groups and moving to the various outlying lakes in the area in the hope that fish would be available. The problem was finally alleviated by the salmon run which began on August 13, 1815. Two months later, three large sturgeon were taken "in nets made for the purpose, of strong twine". In 1815, 1816 and 1817 further references were made to agriculture, and gathering wild fruit and berries during the summers:

We have taken our vegetables out of the ground. In consequence of the very dry summer, they have yielded but poorly. There were months, during which not a drop of rain fell. - Fruit of all kinds has been uncommonly abundant this season. 

In 1818, the last fall that Harmon spent at Fort St. James, the salmon began to run on August 6, but they were "not very numerous." In June of that year, 21 large sturgeon had been caught in Stuart Lake. In September, he described the state of agricultural operations at the post:

A few days since, we cut down and threshed our barley. The five quarts, which I sowed on the first of May, have yielded as many bushels. One acre of ground, producing in the same proportion that this has done, would yield eighty four bushels. This is sufficient proof that the soil, in many places in this quarter, is favourable to agriculture. It will probably be long, however, before it will exhibit the fruits of cultivation. The Indians, although they often suffer for the want of food, are too lazy to cultivate the ground. I have frequently tried to prevail on some of them to hoe and prepare a piece

93. ibid., pp.226-227.
of ground, promising them that I would give them potatoes and turnips, with which to plant it; but I have not succeeded. 94

The post journal of 1820 records the continuing agricultural efforts of the N.W.Co. By May 10 the ground was prepared and 5 kegs of potatoes planted; the following week the ground was hoed and dug for the crops of onions, carrots, beets and turnips. At the end of May the barley, peas, beets and cabbage were up, but not the onions and carrots. At the end of July the potatoes were in flower, but the turnip crop had been destroyed by flies. On August 22 the ripe crop of barley was cut. 95

The salmon that provided most of the post’s food was in short supply in 1820. In the spring verveaux and nets were employed by Company men in search of sturgeon, trout and carp. They were apparently not successful, as they approached the natives seeking fresh fish on May 16. This overture was also unsuccessful, leaving the men of the post "really starving with the Salmon we have". 96 Two weeks later the outlook remained grim; until the salmon run started "we must entirely depend upon kind Providence and the Natives for our Subsistence". The same day a large sturgeon was taken, providing 212 lbs. of meat after cleaning, which alleviated the situation somewhat. 97 However, the anticipated salmon run failed that summer. Qua and most of the other Indians had "gone below to spear Large Salmon as there is no small" by September 12, when a run started in the Stuart River. 98 This run probably did not produce many salmon, as by November 1700 whitefish had been taken and dried at the fishery "at the

94. ibid., p.228.
95. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, pp.4-17, May 9-August 22, 1820.
96. ibid., pp.1-4d, April-May, May 16, 1820.
97. ibid., p.6, June 1-2, 1820.
98. ibid., p.22, September 12, 1820.
Life at Stuart Lake Post

On July 15, 1806, the Proprietors of the North West Company determined the salaries of their employees in the Athabasca Department, which included New Caledonia. These were somewhat more generous than those of the districts closer to the supply depots. The basic salary for bowmen and steersmen was set at 600 livres, and that for midmen set at 400 livres. In addition, they were given allowances of "Equipments". For "bouts", or steersmen and bowmen, and for "milieux", or midmen, this included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipments of Bouts</th>
<th>Equipments of Milieux</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Blanket 3 pr</td>
<td>1 Blanket 3 pr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2½ &quot;</td>
<td>1 2½ &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pr Leggins</td>
<td>2 pr Leggins</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Bracelets</td>
<td>2 Shirts</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Shirts</td>
<td>2 Bracelets</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Handfrs</td>
<td>2 Handfrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Canots Tobc</td>
<td>3 Canots Tobc</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 La: Knives</td>
<td>2 Large Knives</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 small Do</td>
<td>2 small Do</td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ d Beads</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ d Vermillion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...Rocky Mountains F.P.

99. ibid., pp.28-29, November 8, 19, 1820.
Wages and Equipments as above - except that the Milieux have 50r more wages - or 450r. 100

The N.W. Co. men in New Caledonia were therefore given some extra benefits in terms of salary and allowances in return for the remoteness of their posting.

At the meeting of the Proprietors in July 1806, policy was formulated with respect to country liaisons between N.W. Co. employees and native women:

It was suggested that the number of women and Children in the Country was a heavy burthen to the Concern & that some remedy ought to be applied to check so great an evil, at least if nothing effectual could be done to suppress it entirely. - It was therefore resolved that every practicable means should be used throughout the Country to reduce by degrees the number of women maintained by the Company, that for this purpose, no Man whatever, either Partner, Clerk, or Engagé, belonging to the Concern shall henceforth take or suffer to be taken, under any pretence whatsoever, any woman or maid from any of the tribes of Indians now known or who may hereafter become known in this Country to live with him after the fashion of the North West, that is to say, to live with him within the Company's Houses or Forts & be maintained at the expense of the Concern. 101

The Proprietors of the Company were to be held responsible for the behaviour of all of their employees, and were subject to a fine of £100 Halifax Currency in the event

100. W.S. Wallace, North West Company Documents, op. cit., p.213.
101. ibid., p.211.
of a transgression. The only exception allowed in these liaisons "after the fashion of the Country" was if the woman was the "Daughter of a white Man".102

At the time this resolve was made, at least two of the men, Boucher and St. Pierre, were keeping native women, probably Sekanis from McLeod Lake.103 Fraser wrote to James McDougall in January 1807 concerning the latter's problems with native women kept at McLeod Lake:

Regarding what you say about the woman that Bugni has, I am noways apprehensive that the Company can put their resolve in execution. But then it was wrong of you to have given him leave to take her, you Knew full well that she was taken from St. Pierre last spring, merely to give up the Custom of taking any more women from the Indians, and that he was promised that no other Frenchman would get her.104

In December 1806 Stuart had congratulated McDougall on entering the "Matrimonial State", and was glad to hear that the "Children" were well taken care of under McDougall's protection. The following month Fraser directed him to give "the Children" anything they were "in want of" and to charge it to Fraser's account.105 Although not clear, the implication is that the "Children" were Fraser's, and possibly McDougall was their new stepfather. By February 1807 Fraser had "once more entered upon the matrimonial state" and thought that Stuart "would have a hearty laugh if you heard of our Courtship".106 It is unknown if there were any daughters of white fathers at Fraser Lake at that time, so it is quite

102. ibid.
103. W. Kaye Lamb, Journals of Simon Fraser, op. cit., pp.216,246.
104. ibid., p.246.
105. ibid., pp.245,248.
106. ibid., p.250.
possible that Fraser himself was acting contrary to the Company edict.

Daniel Harmon had a country wife already when he arrived in New Caledonia. The daughter of a Canadian father and a Snare Indian mother, she had been offered to and accepted by Harmon in the fall of 1805, when she was about fourteen years old. Although initially he had intended to leave her in the country when he eventually returned home, by the time he did leave in 1819 he had decided to take her and their children east with him. This decision was based partly on the obvious emotional attachment that had been formed over the years, and partly on Harmon’s new-found Christianity developed in his years in New Caledonia. In 1811 Harmon sent his three year old son George east with the brigade, in order to receive an "English education" in the United States. Unfortunately, George died in March 1813, a loss which struck Harmon and his country wife extremely hard. Harmon gave a glimpse into his family life in the summer of 1816, by which time he had decided it was safer to educate his children in New Caledonia:

I now pass a short time every day, very pleasantly, in teaching my little daughter Polly to read and spell words in the English language, in which she makes good progress, though she knows not the meaning of one of them. In conversing with my children, I use entirely the Cree, Indian language; with their mother I more frequently employ the French. Her native tongue, however, is more familiar to her, which is the reason why our children have been taught to speak that, in

108. ibid., pp.119, 230-231.
109. ibid., pp.165, 199-201.
preference to the French language. 110

Although country wives were not uncommon in New Caledonia, even in the first years of N.W.Co. occupation, it seems that no Carrier women were kept until somewhat later. Harmon noted the event on February 18, 1811:

Baptiste Bouché, my interpreter, has taken the daughter of one of the Carrier chiefs, as a wife. She is the first woman of that tribe, ever kept by any of the white people. 111

Apparently Boucher had relieved himself of the earlier liaisons he had made at McLeod Lake by this time. By November of the following year Harmon noted the complement of servants and wives on his arrival back at Stuart Lake:

This afternoon Mr. Stuart and myself, with our company, arrived at this place, where both of us, God willing, shall pass the ensuing winter. With us, are twenty-one labouring men, one interpreter, and five women, besides children... 112

Harmon reflected on the life of the management class in New Caledonia in 1813:

No other people, perhaps, who pursue business to obtain a livelihood, have so much leisure, as we do. Few of us are employed more, and many of us much less, than one fifth of our time, in transacting the business of the Company. The remaining four fifths are at our own disposal. If we do not, with such an opportunity, improve our understandings, the fault

110. ibid., pp.218-219.
111. ibid., p.165.
112. ibid., p.188.
must be our own; for there are few posts, which are not tolerably well supplied with books. These books are not, indeed, all of the best kind; but among them are many which are valuable. If I were deprived of these silent companions, many a gloomy hour would pass over me. Even with them, my spirit at times sinks, when I reflect on the great length of time which has elapsed, since I left the land of my nativity, and my relatives and friends, to dwell in this savage country.113

In Harmon’s case, the time for reflection resulted in his rebirth as an avid Christian, complete with a set of resolutions to live by. The solitude also made him come to appreciate his friends and colleagues in the country, particularly John Stuart and James McDougall, with whom he shared an "intimate and endearing friendship".114

Not everyone shared Harmon’s proclivity for quiet reflection and philosophical conversation. The labourers of the Company were in many cases denied these pleasures through illiteracy, and indulged in simpler pleasures, particularly at celebrations such as New Year’s. Harmon described his first New Year’s celebration in New Caledonia, at Fraser Lake in 1811:

This being the first day of another year, our people have passed it, according to the custom of the Canadians, in drinking and fighting.

Some natives who remained at the post to watch the proceedings were frightened by the celebration, which was reportedly their first exposure to intoxication, and ended up hiding under beds and elsewhere to protect themselves from the

113. ibid., p.192.
white people. At Stuart Lake on January 1, 1812, some of the natives were invited to participate, as described earlier, after Harmon and McDougall had dined with all the men in the hall. Harmon passed the holidays in 1815 in company with Stuart and McDougall at Stuart Lake Post. 115

No special celebrations took place on Christmas day 1820, but the men were given "a little flour, Pease, & Sugar with a few quarts Barley" as extra rations for the day. 116 The New Year's Feast was held almost a month later, when all the men in the district could be gathered together at Stuart Lake:

...they were called in & got each their drams & Cakes, then got each a Pint Rum, 1 lb Flour, Grease, & 3 large Beaver among them with Potatoes & fish, they drank and eat all Day, some got as drunk as pipers but behaved well, In the Evening they had a dance in the Hall but there being few they drank little having only emptied 2 flacons of Rum & 1 of Shrub after the Ball was over Messrs Stuart & Faries gave them a two Gallon Keg of Rum to drink to the Company's health, so that they have had this Day 6 Gallons... 117

Conclusions

In this period the North West Company set the overall operational strategy followed throughout the years that the area remained primarily a fur-trading preserve. Much of this direction originated in the ideas and actions of one

116. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.31d, December 25,1820.
117. ibid., p.35, January 22,1821.
individual, John Stuart. It is not clear whether the principles that he advocated, such as the merging of the New Caledonia and Columbia districts, were his own initiative or simply orders from the meetings of the proprietors in the east. However, through his presence in the district and perserverance into the 1820s, he played the largest part in determining how the fur trade in the area operated for most of the 19th century.

Perhaps even more significant to the development of the district was the location and environment. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the logistical problems of operating in this area were formidable, particularly for a Montreal-based organization dependent on overland transport. Combined with the meagre food resources of the region, and the less than eager response from the natives, the enterprise was a difficult one for the traders from Canada.
While Stuart and the brigade were en route, they had not yet heard the momentous news of the amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company. The latter company had had little direct impact on New Caledonia, but the commercial battle between these organizations had been raging for some years. The unrestrained competition began in 1811, and focused on the Selkirk settlement in the Red River Valley. The Earl of Selkirk, allied with the H.B.C., was granted a huge tract of land for his settlement, which the North West Company saw as a threat to their trade. Their retaliation was answered by the Selkirk-directed H.B.C, which by the latter part of the decade was determined to crush the N.W.Co. in its productive Athabasca Department. Throughout this phase, the H.B.C. remained in better economic shape than its rival.

An overture by the N.W.Co. to purchase a controlling interest in the H.B.C. had been rejected in 1818, but with the death of Selkirk in 1820, the cumulative effect of the various political and economic pressures was felt. The N.W.Co. was in dire financial straits, the H.B.C. was in an advantageous position in terms of amalgamation, and the Colonial Office wanted to end the violent commercial battle in British North America.

The coalition took place on March 26, 1821, under the name of the Hudson’s Bay Company. An incentive to union from the British government was a grant of exclusive trading privileges with the natives in British North America west of Rupert’s Land. This license was granted to the new Company on December 5, 1821, for a period of 21 years.

The capital of the two companies was combined, and the
trade was to be supervised by the Governor and Committee in London, advised by a board of four members, two selected by each company. In North America, there were to be two governors, one based at York Factory for the Northern Department, and the other at Moose Factory for the Southern Department. New Caledonia fell within the jurisdiction of the former area.\(^1\)

By the Deed Poll of March 26, 1821, the total gains of the Company were to be divided into 100 shares, of which 40 shares were to be given to the chief factors and chief traders—the equivalent of the N.W.Co.'s wintering partners. The Deed Poll also stipulated that the mandate of the Company was the fur trade, rather than colonization.

The 40 shares for the field officers were in turn divided into 85 shares, of which 50 were given to former N.W.Co partners, and 35 to H.B.C. men. The N.W.Co ended up with 15 chief factors (30 shares) and 17 chief traders (17 shares) and the H.B.C. with 10 chief factors (20 shares) and 11 chief traders (11 shares). Seven shares were reserved for old servants, for 7 years.\(^2\)

By a new agreement in 1824, the former N.W.Co partners received stock in the H.B.C. rather than shares of profits, and the joint advisory board was eliminated. This confirmed again the dominance of the H.B.C.\(^3\)

The management of the Northern Department was the responsibility of a Governor (and President of Council), who

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from the time of the merger was George Simpson (figure 6), and a Council consisting of not less than 7 chief factors. All the functional decisions pertaining to the operation of the fur trade were made by the Governor and Council.  

As part of the reorganization, the London Committee set new salary restrictions, with Canadians to be paid 400 livres for milieux or middlemen, and 600 livres for boutes, and Europeans £15 for labourers and £22 10s for boutes. It was intended to eliminate the gratuity of "equipment" that had formerly been granted by the N.W.Co. The reduction in wages was accompanied by a reduction in the price of goods purchased by H.B.C. servants in the Company's sale shops. Salaries were also set for clerks and tradesmen in the service.

Operations

At the first council of the amalgamated Company, held at Norway House on the 11-13 August, 1821, the fifth resolution appointed John Stuart as Chief Factor and William Brown as Chief Trader to the district of New Caledonia. Two letters had already been sent to Stuart from Fort William on July 17, 1821. The first of these enclosed the commission appointing him a Chief Factor, and the second told of the amalgamation of the two companies, enclosing a deed of release that Stuart was to sign in his capacity as a wintering partner of the North

West Company to approve the arrangements. 7 On August 13, Simpson wrote to Brown, enclosing his commission as Chief Trader and assigning him to New Caledonia under Stuart. 8

By the end of October Brown had arrived at McLeod’s Lake, with Stuart’s "woman", who had accompanied him from St. John’s (later Fort St. John). She, together with her cassette of possessions, was to be sent on to join Stuart. 9

...Mr. Brown took across the Rocky Mountains with him Messrs. McBean, Yale & Dogharty with sixteen men, so I trust there will be no complaints for want of means of extending our trade in that quarter, indeed it is only there and in McKenzie’s River that I see any large field for the augmentation of our returns,... 10

At McLeod Lake Brown met Mr. Fleming, a young clerk, and Mr. McDougall:

...the Discoverer of the Indians of this vicinity, and has almost been a Constant resident amongst them for this last fifteen years so that he is thoroughly master of the language and business of this quarter. Besides he is steady, perservering and interested, which qualities being added to his other abilities and information, renders him truly valuable in this quarter. 11

At the same time that Brown was proceeding to the

11. ibid., fo.55, Brown to Simpson, November 4, 1821.
district, Stuart was on his return trip with the brigade from the Columbia. On this trip he established the new post of Alexandria on the Fraser River, and on his departure from that post left extensive instructions for its operation with Thomas Hodgson, the servant temporarily in charge.\textsuperscript{12}

The H.B.C. management of New Caledonia and Stuart Lake Post was largely determined by the situation, men, goods and procedures that they had inherited from the N.W.Co.. In fact Stuart had written to George McDougall in October 1821 concerning tariffs stating that "in short the rules and regulations of 1815 to be in force and strictly adhered to".\textsuperscript{13}

The next month Stuart wrote to John McDonnell expressing his opinion of the coalition of the two concerns:

\begin{quote}
The constitution established is that of the old N.W. Co. engrafted on the Hudson's Bay Charter, and it is admirably calculated to extend the trade and carry it on to advantage and though it is not likely that you should ever have become a partner of the old N.W.Co. it will be your own fault if you have not a share in the Hudson's Bay Company: but what pleases myself most is to have our old rivals if not foes converted into staunch friends & you may rest assured that those who exerted themselves equally to promote the Interest of the late partners of that concern now no more & now that we are friends we ought to study to forget that ever we were enemies & I feel particularly happy in Colleague (meaning Brown) whom I find to be a Gentleman of respectability, considerable talents, great application & much more your real friend than ever he appeared to be your enemy...\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} H.B.C.A., B.188/b/1, p.26, Stuart to Hodgson, October 15, 1821.
\textsuperscript{13} ibid., p.27, Stuart to G. McDougall, October 1, 1821.
\textsuperscript{14} ibid., p.30, Stuart to J. McDonnell, November 11, 1821.
In February 1822 the name Fort St. James was first used on correspondence originating at Stuart's Lake. In March 1822 Stuart was so dissatisfied with the Carrier and their limited production of furs that he contemplated closing the post. The threat of closure was delivered to the Carrier the same week. James McDougall advised against closing the post, to which Stuart replied that it was up to the Carrier and their production of furs until the spring. By the time the summer arrangements were set in April, Fort St. James was among the posts that were to remain open, with George McDougall in charge. Later that month Stuart made it clear that he was aware of the need to maintain continuity in the dealings of the Company with the Carrier:

...I feel somewhat interested, in having the trade continued in the manner that appears to me the best calculated to promote the Interest of the Company and the comforts of the natives, for in reality their interest is so much interwoven, that what would be prejudicial to the one would be so to the other.

In the same month, Stuart made the arrangements to transport out the returns of the first Hudson's Bay Company outfit; "Mr Brown will accompany me to the Columbia, from

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15. ibid., p.5d, Stuart to Leith, February 25,1822. The name may have been chosen for many reasons, but the recorded day of Fraser's initial visit to Stuart Lake is given as July 26,1806. In the calendar of saints, July 25 is St. James' day, so allowing for an error of a day in recording events, or explorer's licence, this seems the most likely origin of the name.


17. ibid., p.24, Stuart to McDougall, April 8,1822.

18. ibid., pp.3d-4d, Stuart to Garry, April 20,1822.
which place we get our outfit..." 19 This followed the N.W.Co. routine, but Stuart also stated that he thought that the supply route via the Columbia was the best, and saw as his final responsibility in New Caledonia the establishment of effective transportation between that district and Columbia district. Stuart was pleased with the returns of the year, which he thought might be as high as 108 packs of furs and 6 kegs of castoreum. He stated the previous highest production of the district to have been 100 packs in 1816, and the returns of the previous outfit to have been only 73 packs. 20 The final returns of the outfit turned out to have been 103 86 pound packs and 6 kegs of castoreum. Fort George produced 9 49/86 packs, Alexandria 12 54/86 packs, Fraser Lake 20 packs, McLeod's Lake 26 packs, and Fort St. James 34 69/86 packs. The partial packs were calculated as fractions of a whole, 86 pound pack. For convenience in shipping, fur returns were sent out as packs of approximately this size, and goods were sent in as "pieces" of the same size. This allowed a modular approach to loading canoes, boats, and pack animals. The returns of Fort St. James (valued in Made Beaver, the standard of exchange for the H.B.C., nominally the value of one prime winter beaver skin) broke down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Skins</th>
<th>Valuation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Fine Beaver</td>
<td>751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Do Do</td>
<td>270</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Common Do</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Do Do</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cub Do Do</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Dssd Do</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Do Do</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Robes</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair Beaver Mitts</td>
<td>15 1/2</td>
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19. ibid.
20. ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pounds Beaver Cuttings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine Cased Otters</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm Do</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- Split Do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martins(sic)</td>
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<td>Minks</td>
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<td>9 2/3</td>
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<td>201 1/2</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small &amp; Cub Ditto</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Large Grisly Bear Skins</td>
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<td>Total Furs</td>
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<td>Kegs Castoreum</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2233 5/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packs Weighing each 86 lbs</td>
<td>34 69/86</td>
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</table>

In April 1822 Stuart also determined the summer arrangements for the posts in New Caledonia. Of the 8 gentlemen and 32 servants in the district, 3 gentlemen and 21 servants were to proceed to the Columbia, with the remainder distributed between four establishments. Fort George was to have 1 gentleman and 3 servants, Fraser’s Lake 1 gentleman and 3 servants, McLeod’s Lake 1 gentleman and 2 servants, and Fort St. James 1 gentleman and 5 servants. When the brigade returned to Alexandria, they were to be met by George McDougall and 3 men from Fort St. James. Of the 24 men then

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available 7, with 2 gentlemen, were to be left at Alexandria while the other 17 were needed to man 1 boat and 2 canoes on the voyage back to Fort St. James. After the arrival of the brigade Brown and 1 other gentleman were to take 12 men and "form Establishment" (later known as Fort Kilmaurs) on "McDougall’s Lake" (Babine Lake). The men returning in the fall from the east with the "Factory" party were to be distributed throughout the district as required. John McDonell was appointed to the charge of the district during the time that Stuart was absent with the brigade.

Even before Stuart had planned the brigade of 1822, the Governor and Committee of the Company had decided that in future, Norway House would be the depot for New Caledonia:

It will be necessary to have a depot at Norway House for the Outfit of the Posts in New Caledonia and McKenzie’s River, and the goods for these Countries will have to be transported to Norway House in the preceding autumn or on the first opening of the navigation as may be found most practicable and convenient:...Hitherto New Columbia (sic) has been supplied with goods by way of the Columbia, but from all the information which we are at present possessed of, we consider that it will be better to outfit that Country from York in the mode mentioned above as well as to bring out the returns by that route.

The Governor and Committee wished to reduce their efforts on the Columbia, as they held out no great hope for it becoming profitable, but saw its role more as "protecting the

22. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/l, pp.8-9d, Stuart to Leith, April 26, 1822.
23. ibid., p.33, Stuart to McDonell, May 1, 1822.
more valuable districts to the North of it". 25

Stuart wrote to the Governor and Council of the H.B.C. in April 1822 giving a summary of the operations of the district:

Trade: ...This year Considering the disadvantages the Department lies under from its local situation and the Want of Dogs, the returns are really good, and could I flatter myself with the idea that the superintendance of the whole was in proportion to the cause I have of being pleased with the Gentlemen with whom I have the honour to cooperate (sic), you might rest satisfied that justice has been done the Concern...

Transportation: ...We go this year as last, to the Columbia for our Outfit and it will be for you to Consider and determine from what quarter this Department will in future receive its necessary supplies. Either quarter will be attended with difficulties and great expenses, and I will not presume to give an opinion...

This part of the Country never much abandoned (sic) in Beaver or other animals of the fur kind but they are to be found all over, and when well Conducted, the Department Continued to yield a yearly increase of returns from its first establishment to the present moment, and unless too much is attempted it will Continue to do so for years to come. In all new Countries the trade must be extended gradually, and one Post ought to be firmly established before another is attempted in the same quarter was it nothing else to great an influx of people sent into

25. ibid.
the Department in one year before provisions is made for them cause the Natives to starve and we would starve with them, while one Faux pas committed would destroy the fruits of years of well conducted labour, and in making the selection of Gentlemen required particular care ought to be taken that none but persons of principles are sent us. ...

Posts: Of the five Establishments now Formed one of them McLeod Lake was founded in 1805, two others Frasers Lake and this place in 1806, another Fort George a place where I had wintered in 1807 preparatory to my first voyage to the Pacific Ocean was re-established last June and the other Alexandria altogether a new establishment was formed on my return from the Columbia in Sept. and on my return from the Columbia this year another Establishment making in all six will be made at McDugalls Lake a place we have been in the Habit of frequenting in Winter for eight years back and it will be for your Consideration to point out what other improvements are to be made and when... 26

In this report Stuart went on to express his desire to leave New Caledonia the next year, and recommended that both higher salaries and greater quantities of "Stores" be granted to employees in the district. This had been the practice of the N.W.Co., to compensate for the fact that "the very living is so bad" on the west side of the mountains. 27

As already stated, the operations of the H.B.C. in their first year at Fort St. James were really an extension of the N.W.Co. procedures developed over the preceding decade. This

27. ibid.
may have been in a large part due to the fact that the
district was under the direction of Stuart, a former partner
in the N.W.Co., but the underlying problems in operations also
remained the same. New Caledonia was a harsh environment to
survive in, both for the natives and the fur traders, with
provisioning being particularly difficult. The fur returns
were related directly to the food supply; if the natives were
starving, they were more concerned with finding food than with
hunting beaver for the Company. The good returns of the first
H.B.C. outfit were probably due to the fact that 1821 saw a
heavy run in the four year spawning cycle of the sockeye
salmon. As the heavy run was always preceded by a small run,
an explanation is offered for the smaller returns of the final
N.W.Co. outfit. It is unlikely that a 25% increase in returns
would result from the amalgamation of the companies alone, as
there seems to have been no real change in the management of
the district.

The problem of transportation also loomed large; there
was simply no easy way to supply the needs of the district and
to bring the returns out. Stuart clearly believed the
Columbia route to be the best one, but was unwilling to
advocate it too strongly to the H.B.C. management. Stuart
also thought that it was important to keep good men in New
Caledonia, even at the expense of higher salaries and
increased provisions, in order to maintain continuity in
dealing with the natives. He considered this essential for
effective operation of the district.

At the council of July 1822, the appointments of Stuart
and Brown were confirmed. Stuart was also directed to send
out the New Caledonia returns of the next season to Norway
House, where the District outfit would be waiting. This was
the first really significant operational change initiated by
the Hudson's Bay Company. The gentleman "coming out to
transact the business of that District" was to be at Fort
Chipewyan by June 1, in order to travel east with the "Athabasca Light Canoe". The manpower for the district was also set for the following year: 41. That in addition to the thirty four men, exclusive of Officers and two Interpreters, all presently attached to New Caledonia, it is considered that ten more (men) to man two Canoes will be sufficient for carrying the necessary supplies for that District and for the establishment of the Babine Country, according to the statement and information produced by Mr. James McDougald. 29

Simpson wrote to Stuart that this was an adequate complement of men for the existing trade, and would allow the trade to be extended, "if there appears any reasonable prospect of doing so profitably." This desired expansion of the trading district was intended as a response to the attempts of the Russian American Company to "set up claims on the North West Coast as low as Latte. 51". Simpson thought that the British government would support the H.B.C. in the possession of these territories in opposition to the Russian interests. 30 Simpson also wanted to cut the expenses of all districts through reducing the number of employees:

It is intended that a very considerable reduction should be made in the establishment of Men and Clerks throughout the Country, and a list of the former whose services can be dispensed with is herewith forwarded; those of that description whose contracts do not expire next Season will be permitted to retire and their wages paid up till the

29. ibid., p.17.
expiration of their Contracts, those who are retained if their Engagements expire next season may be re-engaged for three years on the terms affixed to their names in that List. 31

Stuart was instructed that 4 clerks, James McDougall, J.M. Yale, John McDonnell, and W.S. McBean, and 1 apprentice clerk, Thomas Williams would be the total required for New Caledonia. 32

James McDougall, and the party from York Factory carrying these instructions arrived back in the district in the latter part of October, after an arduous trip. McDougall wrote to Simpson from McLeod Lake, where he had learned that the prospects for this outfit were not as good as those of the last. He also anticipated some problems associated with the plan to take the brigade to the east:

By Mr. Stewarts account of the Route to the Columbia it is Plain he will not like after so much trouble to open that communication to see it broken up at the moment it proves practicable and easy - there will be so many more men going out with the returns on account of the new Plan of going for our Outfit to Norway House, that we will want assistance from the Peace River Gentlemen, at least five canoes will be wanted at the other end of the Rocky Mountain Portage & Provisions to cross it. 33

As anticipated, Stuart was unhappy with the cutbacks in personnel as well as the change in the supply route for New Caledonia. He wrote comments to his correspondents in the

31. ibid.
32. ibid.
district such as "Mr. Smith writes me, that such as never crossed the Rocky Mountains are the best qualified to judge what is required." Stuart estimated that the cost of supplying the district from the Columbia would be "fully 50 per cent cheaper" than from York Factory. He also considered that one of the reasons given for ending the use of the Columbia route, "exposing this quarter to Poachers", was spurious. His problems in carrying out these management directives, which he considered wrong, were compounded by the almost total failure of the Fraser River salmon run in the autumn of 1822.

With the change in transportation, a large number of pack horses were no longer required in the district. These had been kept at Alexandria, but now five of them were to be sent to "the upper country" and the rest to Thompson's River.

Brown, with a clerk, an interpreter, and 11 men, had set out on October 10 to found the "Babine Establishment". However, the proposed exploration of the Babine River out to the coast and that of the Chilcotin area did not take place, apparently as a result of lack of enthusiasm on the parts of both Brown and Stuart, and the shortage of manpower in the district. Simpson instructed P.W. Dease, from Fort Chipewyan, to carry out explorations of "the Country laying to the westward of the Rocky Mountains north of Babine Lake." This had still not been done at the end of March 1823 due to the season and depth of snow.

34. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/3, p.9, Stuart to Cameron, November 5, 1822.
35. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/2, p.10, Stuart to McIntosh, January 5, 1823.
36. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/2, p.32, Stuart to G. McDougall, November 5, 1823(sic), the year should be 1822; ibid., pp.35-36d, McBean to Stuart, November 16, 1822.
38. ibid.; H.B.C.A., B.188/b/2, pps.6-9, various correspondence between Stuart and Brown.
In spite of the failure of the fisheries Stuart, in a letter to George Simpson, estimated that the returns for the year would be between 105 and 110 packs. In response to questions about the salaries he had allowed, Stuart claimed that in the absence of stipulated salaries for New Caledonia he hired at the "usual terms", apparently dating back to 1808. This was consistent with his thoughts that some monetary incentive was required to keep useful employees in New Caledonia, but contrary to Simpson’s push for greater economy.

The returns had not been affected more heavily by January largely due to the "quantity of Salmon of last year" remaining in the district, but long-term damage was anticipated:

...the scarcity of Provisions prevailing to such extent both among the whites & natives will be very Injurious to the Returns and I apprehend greatly that we will this ensuing summer feel the effects of the Winter.

The failure of the salmon affected the New Caledonia trade in many ways. The natives of the Skeena moved to Babine Lake for the winter, where Brown complained of their paying higher than the H.B.C. for those salmon which were available. This commerce also made the Babine Indians aware that they could get higher prices for their furs from coastal Indian middlemen on the Skeena than from the New Caledonia H.B.C. posts. O'Doherty, the clerk in charge of McLeod's Lake, had barely enough salmon to see his employees through the winter, "so that in the event of starving Indians making their appearance, of which there is every probability, I will find

41. ibid., fo.22, J. McDougall to Simpson, January 7, 1823.
42. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/2, pp.9-9d, Brown to Stuart, January 17,1823.
myself awkwardly situated." John McDonell, at Fraser's Lake described the situation at that post in March:

There are a number of Wretches here, that are real objects of Pity. They are so reduced by starvation as to be scarcely able to crawl, and they never fail to gather that part of the Salmon tails which the Dogs cannot eat, and seem pleased when they are allowed to take them - to such miserable objects, it is impossible (even in the present low state of the store) to refuse a Salmon occasionally and this is a source of considerable expense, and it would not (but for their good disposition) be surprising if they attempted to take by force or stratagem what they are so much in want of—... 44

In May 1823 Stuart left Fort St. James under the charge of James McDougall, and set out for Norway House, hoping that he would not be returning:

It (New Caledonia) is now in a flourishing state and will continue to improve progressively as during the different periods of my administration if the measures then adopted are continued and though I now leave it I feel convinced that the Summer returns will far exceed any thing ever produced before, and were not some of the ablest hands in it now leaving the Departt I could answer for the winter in proportion to that of the Summer... 45

Business continued under McDougall's direction at Fort St. James throughout Stuart's absence. The inventories were completed by May 21, and the following week was devoted to

43. ibid., p.38, O'Doherty to Stuart, January 21,1823.
44. ibid., p.26, McDonell to Stuart, March 6,1823.
agricultural pursuits. 46

While Stuart was away, the problems anticipated in the winter due to the scarcity of salmon began to manifest themselves, and his hopes of heavy summer returns began to look unlikely. In July McDougall recorded the dispersal of the local Carrier:

As all the Indians here are Starving - The most of them left the village to go in different directions and will not return till Salmon time. 47

He was also unable to use Indian labour to haul earth at that time, as the Indians were starving and he could not supply them with provisions. 48

Meanwhile, Stuart arrived at Norway House on June 23, where he was greeted by Simpson, who apparently was able to smooth the former's ruffled feathers, as well to get him to return willingly to New Caledonia:

The Governor and most of the other Gentlemen I found here and could I flatter myself with the Idea that the former Gentleman was but half as well satisfied with me as I have cause to be pleased with him, it would not only, in a manner, console me for the misery and anxiety I have so long experienced in the Indian Country, but be a stimulus to those wanted exertions, for which I am now but little fit. 49

Stuart prepared a report on the district of New Caledonia

46. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, pp.4-5, May 21,26,1823.
47. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, p.11d, July 13,1823.
48. ibid., July 14,1823.
49. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/3, p.18, Stuart to George McDougall, June 27, 1823.
for Simpson and the Council. Some excerpts from this report
give an idea of how the district functioned in the early years
of Hudson’s Bay Company operation:

2nd. Navigable Rivers, Lakes, means of Transport &c
...the present means of transport is the usual route
to Athabaska, then up Peace River to Finlay’s
Branch, from thence up the Parsnip River nearly one
half to its source, we then enter a small River
issuing from the right leading to McLeod’s Lake and
there the navigation terminates the property being
from there conveyed in winter across land to the
different establishments....

4th Animals of all Kinds, Fur Bearing &c
There are but few animals of the large kind to be
met with in New Caledonia nor are those of the Fur
Kind either very numerous but they are to be met
with in every part of the Country. That is Beaver,
Otters Musk Rats, Minks Fishers Martens Lynx
Wolvereens, two species of Wolves, Bears Black Brown
and Grisly, and ermine...

Disadvantages of the Department.
The greatest of many disadvantages New Caledonia
lies under is the difficulty of access, more time
and labour being required to convey the goods
required from Fort Chipewyan to the first
Establishment, McLeod’s Lake, where the navigation
terminates, than from Norway House to Fort
Chipewyan; from McLeod’s Lake to Saint James the
next Establishment, the distance across land is not
less than 100 Miles and the other Establishments is
from 60 to about 330 Miles distant from Saint James
and as the navigation terminates at McLeod’s Lake,
the other establishments must receive their supplies
from there across land in winter, an immense labour
and when added to the burden of conveying the
returns to the place of embarkation and collecting
provisions, leaves not a moment to the people, in
fact so hard is the labour, that when added to the
bad living, scarcely anything but dried salmon of
the worst quality, seldom any man, even the most
robust, without destroying his constitution, can
remain in New Caledonia more than two or three
years...

Means of Subsistence &c.
New Caledonia being nearly altogether destitute of
large animals, both the Natives, and Traders live
entirely upon fish, which are of various kinds; but
the principal food and the only one on which
dependence can be placed is what Vancouver calls the
Kamschatka salmon, which in September up the
different Rivers in such numbers that in plentiful
years the Natives may in the space of a month catch
and dry a sufficient quantity to last them until
that time the year following. In their natural
state they are very palatable and may average ten
Pounds in weight, but when dry they have little more
substance than a piece of rotten wood and do not
exceed a pound in weight. The usual allowance for a
man is four, but as all hands are constantly
employed throughout the winter either in quest of
Furs, in collecting provisions and carrying the
goods to the different establishments and the
rations to the place of embarkation, a circumstance
that renders dogs absolutely necessary the average
allowance for a man and his dogs may be reckoned at
eight...

whenever Salmon fails, and they are never abundant
two years following all fails, and both the Natives
and Traders may be said rather to exist than to live, for so scarce are animals that excepting at the public feasts given in honor of the dead, nine tenths of the Natives do not taste meat perhaps not once in ten years and such miserable stuff is dried Salmon in that part of the Country that it ruins the constitution of the most robust and the very best of our Men are every spring so much reduced that two of them cannot perform the ordinary labour of an ordinary man; nor is it better with the officers, and no one that can avoid it will be disposed to remain in that quarter...

State of the Trade.
...of late years rather improving and there is an increase in the returns of the present year of better than one third on what they were in 1821 and as far as I can judge it has in a great measure altogether risen from the facility of getting the Country supplied from the Columbia which mode was adapted in 1820. From that quarter even the most distant establishment received their supplies by water, not later than the middle of October, leaving a sufficient time for collecting the necessary provisions required for the winter, previous to the navigation being closed in, affording the means of afterwards having the people in exploring the country & in trading excursions to the distant villages, thereby getting acquainted with the different Indians and preparing them for having establishments in their own country....

Suggestions in regard to alterations, Improvements &c.
Supply from the Columbia.
This said to be attended with great expenses but I
cannot perceive it. The party going to the Columbia for the goods would be fed chiefly on salmon, the natural production of N.C. and it would cost to District 500 per cent less than their maintenance will cost on the East side of the Mountains and it has been proved last summer that the New Caledonians of themselves without any assistance from the Columbians could go to and bring their outfit from Fort George, but that channel being as I conceive definitely abandoned it will be unnecessary to advert to it...

In this report Stuart described the lack of competition in the area as the only advantage of the district. He also reported the number of employees for the last season as 56, made up of 1 chief factor, 1 chief trader, 8 clerks, 3 1/2 halfbreed interpreters, 2 Indian interpreters, 1 boatbuilder, 4 bowsmen, 7 steersmen, and 29 middlemen. The number of women and children (officially) maintained at H.B.C. posts was relatively low; 3 halfbreed women, 2 native women, and 3 children.

The council of 1823 determined that Split Lake would be the depot for New Caledonia for the next year, as the distance to York Factory was perceived to be shorter via the "Burnt Wood Carrying Place track" rather than via "Cumberland and the Winnipeg". Simpson hoped to run the brigade directly to York Factory at some time in the future. The New Caledonia arrangements for the rest of Outfit 1823 were also set, including the reappointment of John Stuart in charge of the district:

50. That the Outfit for New Caledonia District

already transported to Norway House & consisting of 100 pieces be conveyed thither in 5 Canoes manned by 26 men.

60. That a Canoe and eight men be provided to convey J. Stuart from hence to New Caledonia together with any additional pieces he may require to complete his Outfit.


62. That the following constitute the summer establishment in New Caledonia District, vizt.

1 Clerk & 4 men for Alexandria
1 do. 1 Interpreter & 3 men for Fort George
1 do. 1 do. & 1 do. for Frazers Lake
1 do. & 1 do. for St. James’s River
1 do. & 5 do. for Kilmaurs
1 do. & 1 do. for McLeods Lake

That a new establishment ensuing summer be made among the Chilcoten Tribes, say about 150 miles N. West of Frazers River, and that two Clerks an Interpreter & five men constitute such summer establishment. 53

The clerks appointed to New Caledonia that year were listed as; James McDougald, George McDougald, John McDonald, W.S. McBean, James Murray Yale, John Todd, and Donald McKenzie. 54

54. ibid., p.54.
Stuart and his party, in two canoes, arrived back at Fort McLeod on October 25:

...and subsequently the Western Caledonia Brigade consisting of seven Canoes including the two first - thirty six men, an Ample Outfit, and a good supply of Dogs - Also two Gentlemen are come in besides Mr. Stuart and my Brother (George McDougall). ...  

The "Ample Outfit" included 18 bales of goods, 1 case of knives, 3 cases of ironworks, 2 cases of guns, 4 kegs of "Crash Sugar", 4 bags of flour, and 5 rolls of twist tobacco which had been sent from York Factory to Norway House the previous fall.

Stuart was now based at McLeod Lake, the logical mustering point for the returns when an eastern depot was used. It became the de facto district headquarters. There were some difficulties implicit in this. The transportation from McLeod Lake to the other district posts involved more overland shipping than from Fort St. James. Extra manpower was required at McLeod's Lake, where provisions were even scarcer than on Stuart Lake. Six men were to have wintered at Fort St. James, but in November Stuart sent three more men from McLeod's Lake due to a shortage of provisions at the new headquarters. Shortly after his arrival back in the district, Stuart wrote to James McDougall requesting the post journal and summer accounts from Fort St. James. McDougall was confirmed in the charge of Fort St. James through the winter, and instructed in the only material changes to the management of the district:

57. B.188/a/2, pp.26,28d, November 3,25,1823.
...the Council has restricted all the Districts from making advances inland to any indebted men - to above one fourth the amount of his Wages - Mr. Brown and I have resolved that in this District, all the advances will be made at this place [McLeod's Lake] alone and that no other place will get Credit for any advances made in Winter, nor is any Gentleman to absent himself from his Charge, without leave of absence, previously obtained...

Some of the reasons for Stuart's improved outlook on New Caledonia were revealed in a letter to him from Simpson. The district had been allocated more resources, in return for Stuart's promise of increased returns:

The general out door opinion is that a larger complement of men was given to the Department last year than necessary; but if you make up the 150 packs, and extend the trade agreeable to your expectations and intentions, (and from your well known enterprize and perserverance I have no doubt these desirable objects will be accomplished) there will be no room for further remarks on that head.

McDougall needed axes and tobacco at Fort St. James that fall, and Stuart sent a blacksmith "in lieu of Axes". The building program that Stuart had initiated in the spring was continued into the winter by McDougall, but had been slowed down by the limited manpower available to him during the summer and fall, as well as the failure of the salmon run. A store and gentlemen's dwelling house were the only buildings

58. ibid., pp.23-23d, November 3, 1823, copy of letter Stuart to J. McDougall, October 26, 1823.
60. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, p.23d, November 3,1823, copy of letter Stuart to J. McDougall, October 30, 1823.
of the "New Fort" erected, although neither of them was ready for use. McDougall decided as a temporary expedient to repair the buildings of the old fort and to occupy it for the winter instead.\(^61\) When the blacksmith completed the axes required, McDougall wished to keep him at work "to make the necessary Irongs for the Gates of the new Fort and some other things which I think will be wanted". This would allow the construction of the new fort to proceed in the spring.\(^62\)

In March 1824 the Governor and Committee wrote to Simpson concerning the Russian threat on the coast, and the measures they advocated to combat it:

The Russians are endeavouring to obtain all that Coast & the subject is now under discussion between the two Governments. We hope that the valuable part will be secured to this country, but the actual occupation by traders will go far to establish the rights of the respective nations which is an additional inducement to extend the posts westward towards the coast from New Caledonia, and if possible to establish upon the coast as far North as may be practicable.\(^63\)

Stuart wrote another district report in 1824 from the perspective of McLeod's Lake, with few substantive changes from those he had prepared at Fort St. James. He repeated his opinions in much the same way as in earlier years. Stuart believed the main advantage of the district to be the lack of competition. The disadvantages he saw as more numerous; supplying the district, the distribution of goods within the

\(^{61}\) ibid., pp.30-31, December 2, 1823, copy of letter J. McDougall to Stuart, November 17, 1823.

\(^{62}\) ibid., pp.31-32, copy of letter McDonald to Stuart, December 1, 1823.

\(^{63}\) H.B.C.A., D.5/1, fo.104, Governor and Committee to Simpson, March 12, 1824.
district in winter, and the "thieving nature" of the Indians.  

Simpson was disappointed by the returns outfit 1823, as there had been no increase. He attributed the poor results primarily to the disruption in the district resulting from the murder of two Company servants at Fort George while James Yale, the clerk in charge, was absent from his post. As a result Fort George had been abandoned, and some uncertainty existed between the H.B.C. employees and the natives.

The council of July 1824 appointed William Connolly, a chief trader, to New Caledonia in the place of John Stuart. Brown, who remained in the district, was directed to "pursue his discoveries to the North West of the Babine Country", while Connolly was to "manage the business of the rest of the Department". The outfit for that year comprised 130 pieces in 6 canoes, manned by 36 servants. The issue of insubordination in the district of New Caledonia was also raised, without any conclusion other than a statement that "every justifiable means for supressing" such problems among the Company employees should be used.

On August 15, 1824, shortly after completing the "business of the season" at York Factory, George Simpson set out to visit the Columbia Department, on the direction of the Committee. After crossing the Athabasca portage Simpson's party met a group of free Iroquois. Based on information they provided, Simpson proposed a new brigade route in his journal:

64. H.B.C.A. B.119/e/1, McLeod Lake Report on District 1824.
66. ibid.
68. Frederick Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, op. cit., p.3.
My plan would therefore be to forward the New Caledonia outfit in two Boats & thirteen men in company with the Saskatchewan Brigade; from Edmonton cross over to Fort Assiniboine in three or Four Days then proceed in two Boats to Henry's House in the mountain in Ten Days; thence by Horses to Buffalo Dung Lake (1 pipe across) in Two Days; thence by Land or Water to the head of Fraser's River in Three Days and thence by a fine bold stream to the different Posts. The returns to be taken out in like manner. The only objection appears to be the risk of damaging the Furs in the transport by Horses... 69

By November of 1824, after reaching the mouth of the Columbia River, Simpson changed his opinion concerning the supply route for New Caledonia. His new plan was predicated on the assumption that the Fraser River was navigable for its full length, ignoring the earlier exploration of that river by Fraser and Stuart:

...I would establish the principal Depot at the Mouth of Frazers River from whence a Vessel for China would sail annually with the returns, where the Coasting Craft would recieve their outfits and deliver their returns and from whence all the posts of New Caledonia would be outfitted likewise those of Thompson's River Spokan Nez Percés Flat Head and Coutonais also Fort George if we are allowed to occupy a Post on the Columbia...

The great advantage of outfitting New Caledonia from this side instead of from York Factory is that the

69. ibid., p.37.
business can be done with greater facility and less expense. According to the present mode of conducting the affairs of that District there are upwards of Sixty officers & men employed therein whereas little more than half that number would answer every purpose if Frazers River was its Depot on account of the labour in Land and Water transport that would be saved and by substituting Boats for Canoes. A Sum amounting to 25 p Cent on the value of the returns would likewise be saved as the damage sustained in transport as the business is now conducted reduces their value in that proportion at the very lowest calculation.  

He also concluded that the trade on the west side of the Rockies could be lucrative, if some reorganization took place:

The trade of this side the mountain if sufficiently extended and properly managed I make bold to say can not only be made to rival, but to yield double the profit that any other part of North America does for the Amount of Capital employed therein but in order to turn it to the best advantage New Caledonia must be included and the coasting trade must be carried on in conjunction with the inland business.

Simpson’s plan also involved stringent economy measures, with staff cuts and an emphasis on making the posts to the west of the mountains self sufficient, eliminating the heavy cost of importing food and other maintenance items. This decision by Simpson set the future direction of New Caledonia. Rather than being viewed as an extension of the Athabasca, it would now be linked with the Columbia district. The corollary of this decision was that Fort St. James would re-assume its

70. ibid., pp.75-77.
71. ibid., p.72.
role as the depot for the district, again relegating McLeod Lake to a secondary role.

The Governor and Committee fully approved Simpson's plan to attach New Caledonia to the Columbia department, and extend the coastal trade, but decided against the direct trade with China he also proposed. It was thought that the furs from these districts were not desired in the China market, and that the East India Company would not sanction the H.B.C.'s efforts in the Orient. The administrative combination of the district of New Caledonia to those of the south would soon affect the role of Fort St. James.

For the winter of 1824 it remained in a secondary role, with James McDougall in charge and responsible for the Indian trade. Five additional men were assigned to the post; 1 blacksmith, 1 carpenter, 2 sawyers, and 1 man building sledges and showshoes for the whole district.

Simpson, who passed the winter at Fort George on the Columbia, wrote to Brown describing his plans for the district in the spring of 1825. He wanted Fort George (Columbia River) to be the depot for "the whole of the business of the west side" initially, until a new depot was established at the mouth of the Fraser River in the fall of 1826 or 1827. However, he did not consider it advisable to "make any change for the current season in the mode of conducting the New Caledonia transport business". Simpson also thought the number of clerks in New Caledonia was excessive. Shortly thereafter, he proposed that the interim depot be at the new post of Fort Vancouver (figure 7), further up the Columbia, rather than at Fort George. This was approved by the

72. ibid., p.266
73. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/3, p.38, November 9, 1824.
Committee in February 1826.  

The total returns of the district of New Caledonia for outfit 1824 were 128 packs. Fort St. James produced 21 packs, the lowest number of the 5 posts in the district.

The 1824-1825 report on the district gave the number of employees in New Caledonia; 2 chief traders, 7 clerks, 4 interpreters, 1 guide, and 46 canoemen or labourers. The dependents in the district consisted of 7 women, 4 boys, and 8 girls. From the complement of employees 1 chief trader, all the clerks, 3 of the interpreters, and 18 men were to stay inland through the summer, with the rest travelling out to the depot with the brigade. The men staying inland at Fort St. James were to continue construction of a new fort, along with 3 new canoes for the district.

By this time leather was seen as an invaluable item of trade, with an estimated 500 to 600 mooseskins saleable in the district. The leather was a valuable trade item, but more importantly (to the H.B.C.) allowed the natives to produce the moccasins they needed to hunt in winter. These skins were to be packed into the district by natives engaged for the transport.

The "most important Duties" in the winter were the transportation of goods, fur returns, and salmon back and forth between the various posts. Generally, dog sledges served for this hauling, but Connolly wanted 30 horses to take over the land transport between Stuart Lake and McLeod Lake.

The 1825 Resolves of the Council of the Northern Department appointed Connolly and 3 clerks, James McDougall,

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75. Frederick Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, op.cit., p.266.
P.C. Pambrun, and J.M. Yale to Fort St. James. Brown remained in charge at Fort Kilmaurs, on Babine Lake. Fort St. James would have a clerk and 3 men as staff for the summer. The New Caledonia returns were to be taken to Fort Vancouver in the spring of 1826, where the 1826 outfit would be waiting. The outfit for 1825 consisted of "108 pieces in 6 canoes manned by 32 men including the Guide." The leather for outfit 1826 was to be picked up in the "Rocky Mountains" from Saskatchewan district. The 30 packs of leather were to be transported by 2 employees "with Indians".

Chief trader Brown, with the clerks James and George McDougall, and W.S. McBean, were to leave the district in the spring of 1826. The council also appointed John McLoughlin (figure 8) to the "direction of affairs in the Columbia".78

Simpson wrote to McLoughlin immediately after the meeting of the council, as the two men were to decide the specific arrangements for the western districts. Simpson wanted between 80 and 100 horses sent to Alexandria in anticipation of the next year's brigade. Four boats were to be provided for the use of the New Caledonia brigade at Okanagan. The "Express Craft" from east of the mountains in the fall of 1825 was to carry some leather for New Caledonia, to be forwarded in the spring to Alexandria.79

Connolly prepared to visit the Chilcotin district at the same time, with the intention of establishing a post there the following autumn. Meanwhile Brown continued with the exploration of "the country between Babine Lake and the Coast".80

80. H.B.C.A., D.4/10, fos.22d-64d, Simpson to Governor and Committee, August 31, 1825.
When Connolly returned with the brigade, he brought 300 skins of leather, of which 70 were required for Company employees, and the rest for the Indian trade. The summer returns for the district had amounted to 53½ packs by the end of October, with 11 of those produced by Fort St. James. Connolly found a lack of trade goods in the district on his return:

From the small quantity of Goods remaining on hand in the spring, a General scarcity prevails throughout the District. Large requisitions are in consequence demanded for each Post which amount altogether to upwards of 30 pieces and which I will endeavour to fulfil. The transportation of this property will be greatly facilitated by the Horses, ten in number, which were sent Hither by Mr. McDougall for that purpose.  

Connolly also brought back with him a list of 17 rules for the operation of the district, presumably as a replacement for Stuart's regulations of a decade earlier. These district rules, based largely on convention and practice, were to be replaced by the "Standing Rules and Regulations" of the Northern Department in 1828, which brought uniformity to the trading operations of the Company throughout its territories.

James McMillan had examined the country "between the Athabasca and heads of the Frasers River", and decided it was a practicable route for shipping leather. Connolly suggested that rather than establishing this new route, the expense be lowered by "forwarding the supplies of leather required for this District from the Saskatchewan by the Columbia people to Okanagan." He requested 400 dressed skins, 30 parchment skins, 2000 fathoms of pack cord, 30 lbs. of sinews, and 20

82. ibid., pp.38-41, November 14, 1825.
lbs. of babiche for snowshoes for outfit 1826, with an increase to 500 dressed skins the next year.  

Outfit 1825 was successful overall; the trade at Stuart Lake "turned out very well." The summer returns had been good, and the rebuilding of the dilapidated post had turned out as well as could be expected. A shortage of leather in the district had compromised the returns to some extent, particularly at Babine. Connolly saw the new brigade route valuable not only because of the savings of expense and time compared to the eastern route, but because the natives could now be equipped at an earlier date for the lucrative autumn hunt. However, he considered the impending loss of the McDougalls a hard blow to the operation of the district. Connolly apparently managed to forestall their departure; George, with 3 men, was appointed to the charge of Fort St. James for the summer of 1826.

Although the main brigade set out for Fort Vancouver on May 5, 1826, a substantial party also left for York Factory. James McDougall and 8 men left Fort St. James on the same day, and met Brown and McBean at McLeod Lake. From there the whole expedition set out for York Factory. Connolly briefly described the party for Fort Vancouver:

The Brigade Consists of Myself and two Clerks with 24 men and 68 horses. And loadings of 83 Packs of Furs 6 Kegs Castoreum and 15 Bales of dry Salmon, besides our voyaging apparatus.

The outfit sent back for New Caledonia was 120 pieces,

83. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/4, p.22, Connolly to the Chief Factors and Chief Traders Saskatchewan District, February 5, 1826.
86. ibid., p.1, May 5, 1826.
87. ibid., p.6, May 10, 1826.
made up of:

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Including Summer Mens Orders
Copper Kettles
Guns
Irons
Sundry Goods
Traps
Beaver Shot
Ball
Flour
Gunpowder
Tallow
Brandy
Spirits
Salt
Butter
Twist Tobacco.

On September 7, the brigade reached Alexandria, where 12 pieces of goods were left as the year's outfit, and on September 23, the main outfit of 102 pieces arrived back at Fort St. James. With the successful use of this route after the brief period of disuse, the basic pattern was set for the operation of the District of New Caledonia for the next three decades.

The Indian Trade

when Stuart established Alexandria on his way back to New Caledonia in the fall of 1821, he left detailed instructions

88. ibid., p.22, July 5, 1826.
89. ibid., pp.40,47,53, September 7,10,23,1826.
with Thomas Hodgson, the servant placed in charge of the post. These instructions give a good idea of his ideas concerning the management of the Indian trade in the H.B.C.'s first years in New Caledonia:

The Indians you will find troublesome and they are a beggardly set constantly asking for one thing or another, but then little notice need to be taken of such, further than to tell them that there are plenty of such things as they ask and that you will dispose of it to such as will bring you immediate payment, little need be given for nothing it seldom answers a good purpose and often encourage laziness but they ought now and then to be indulged with a pipe of Tobacco to smoke while in the House and occasionally a little might be given to good hunters, that pay a debt of old standing. Several of the Indians owe, but then the principal of giving debts is bad and ought to be avoided, excepting perhaps occasionally to one whom it is known will pay. Affability goes far towards gaining the good will of an Indian and they ought never to be harshly used unless they misbehave themselves then indeed it will be proper. All endeavours ought to be used towards keeping them a hunting and every encouragement given to Beaver hunters. They may be plainly told, that though there is Salmon, unless there is Beaver also the Establishment cannot be kept up. Several of the Indians have put Guns and other things apart in the Store with their names on, and they ought to be reserved for them, but not delivered until the payment is brought. You are well acquainted with the nature of Indians and many things will naturally occur to you not necessary for me to mention, and while you keep in view the necessity of being saving of the Company's property
and the policy of encouraging Beaver hunting, always paying according to the Tariff prices for what you receive, you cannot much err. You will keep a minute Journal of the daily occurrences, also an account of all gratuities and to whom given, and the daily expenditure of Salmon will be entered in the Price Book, conformable to the method of last year. In short every expense however trifling attending the Establishment ought to be marked down somewhere and the people remaining with you will regain few advances if any it will be probably leather.  

As part of their directions to Simpson in February 1822, the Governor and Committee in London suggested some changes in the Indian trade. These changes were a product of the end of competition in the trade, as the H.B.C. now had exclusive rights to trade with the natives:

We think it will be proper to prevent the Indians from desponding, under the idea that they will suffer from the total absence of competition among the traders, to amend the standard of trade, and to make it more favorable to them by 20 or 25 percent on the present rate. At the same time the system of presents to Indians should be abandoned, except under very special circumstances... 

It was thought that by increasing prices for furs, and eliminating the "presents and treats" which were given regardless of production, the natives would be encouraged "to be industrious in hunting." The H.B.C. also intended to phase out liquor as an article of trade.

92. Ibid.
Although the competition between the N.W.Co. and the H.B.C. had not extended to New Caledonia, this change in policy would have affected the operation of the Indian trade throughout the whole of the new monopoly.

By March 1822 Stuart had reached a point of total frustration with the Carrier around Fort St. James. He considered closure of the post, largely to punish the natives:

...for a sixpence I would abandon Saint James & leave it to time and their own reflection to teach the Carriers of its vicinity how to value a Fort. I am not sudden in forming resolutions though frequently not long in determining and if you can convince me that the Indians of Nacuslah for these five years back have of their own hunt averaged five Packs yearly, I am willing to own myself a Dunce and unaquainted with the best method of promoting the Company's Interest in New Caledonia, but if it be true that the Indians of this place Kill no more Beaver than I imagine, they of themselves cannot be worthy of a Fort...if in the fall on account of the transportation and Babine Country it is found necessary to reestablish this place, the Indians from feeling its want in Summer will be taught to appreciate its value...  

Throughout the summer, Qua and his brother Hoolson, with their families, were the only Carrier in the "village". McDougall described some of the dealings with the natives at this time, in which the debt system featured strongly. A man called Cadunda, who travelled 3 days to reach Fort St. James, brought skins and meat to pay his existing debt. His gun had

93. ibid., p.23, Stuart to J. McDougall, March 13, 1822.
94. ibid., p.13d, August 9, 1823.
burst firing at a beaver, so he had neither a gun nor a steel trap to pursue the hunt. As no old guns were available to lend to him, the H.B.C. allowed him a "fine gun" on debt. It was unusual to let a native incur such a high debt, but the Company based such decisions on economic necessity:

It makes him a high debt and I certainly would not have let him have the Gun on debt had I seen any prospect of his doing anything without it - Gave him four Measures Ammunition Gratis - and he went off quite Satisfied. 95

In August, Hoollson was given a large snare and 4 small measures of ammunition as a prize for the first fresh salmon of the season to be brought to the fort. 96 In the same month, Teluah paid his existing debt of 5 1/2 "plus", or made beaver, and being a "good Pay" was given a 3 point blanket on debt. He also traded some berries for tobacco, and was given 2 measures of powder "gratis". 97

Still in August 1823, McDougall offered his perceptions of Qua's character. At Fort St. James Qua and his family seem to have comprised the closest approximation of the "home guard" of natives which usually associated themselves with Company posts. In fur trade society, this immediate contact with the source of imported goods, and consequent role as middlemen, was the natives' quickest route to wealth, prestige, and power:

He is really such a Beggar that I believe it is impossible to come to the house without wanting something But on the other hand he is an industrious Indian and the poor fellow has worked hard to put

95. ibid., p.11d, July 14, 1823.
96. ibid., p.13d, August 10, 1823.
97. ibid., p.14, August 15, 1823.
the Weir in order, which is hard labour when the water is so high and by his good example the other Indians are induced to work, but unless he began not one would do anything and though he is in want he is too poor to buy...  

Shortly after the start of the salmon run that year, McDougall also commented on the issue of the control of fish supplies at Fort St. James. He was concerned about the dependence of the H.B.C. on the natives for their provisions, and thought that the Company should more directly control the production of food.

Among the articles brought with the 1823 outfit to Fort St. James was a "fine gun" intended for Qua and offered to him on debt of 60 skins. This was considered a privilege as generally a native would have to pay at least half the value in advance. Qua was also given a 2 1/2 point blanket on debt "for his favourite Wife". However, he and his brother were given a "severe set down" for wanting so much for free and never being satisfied with what they were given. They were described as being good hunters but "infamous Rascals"

In September 1823, James Murray Yale left Fort George in the charge of 2 servants. In his (unauthorized) absence, two natives killed the servants, and took away an Indian woman who had been living with Yale at the post. James McDougall referred to this as "the worst thing that could have befallen New Caledonia and it will require many years to recover from such a calamity." These killings stemmed from threats made

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98. ibid., p.14d, August 19, 1823.
99. ibid., p.14d, August 20, 1823.
100. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, p.25, November 9, 1823.
by one of the servants about exposing "familiarities" between Yale's woman and one of the natives, who had "formerly been the lover of Mr. Yale's woman." The servants were killed to silence them. 102

This killing had a major impact on the district for some years. The Company wished to find and to deal with the killers in kind, but was unsuccessful. This affected the natives of Fort St. James in two ways. First, it made them more forward or aggressive, seeing that the Europeans were not omnipotent. Secondly, it raised a level of anxiety in the Carrier's minds, as their own ideas of justice involved retribution on the clan or kinship group, rather than just the guilty individual. 103 They were living in expectation of some wholesale actions of revenge from the Hudson's Bay Company.

This muddying of the relationship which had developed compromised the trade, and the returns of outfit 1823 did not increase as expected over the previous year. As a punishment to the natives associated with Fort George, that post was abandoned:

...the well-disposed Indians have been called upon for their assistance, but they are not inclined to raise hands against their countrymen altho they deprecate their conduct very much, and in the meantime the Establishment has been abandoned. 104

The Governor and Committee wrote to Simpson, suggesting that the Council investigate the possibility of implementing a policy which would prevent the repetition of such problems:

...some general regulation... for the conduct of the people in New Caledonia where the natives are numerous and may be dangerous if our people do not conduct themselves prudently.

They also recommended that quarrels be avoided rather than resolved through resorting to force, and that punishment of the guilty parties be carried out by the "Chiefs of their own tribe." 105

By the summer of 1825, the Council acquitted Yale of his part in the murders. Simpson, wrongly as it turned out, thought that the negative impact of the event was over:

The district however I am happy to say is now in as tranquil a state as any in the Country and the conduct of the murderers so much reprobated by the whole of the natives who seem well disposed that no further serious apprehensions are entertained. Mr. Chief Factor Connolly I am happy to say appears satisfied with the conduct of the people, and does not think that any Regulations are necessary to insure their good behaviour beyond those established in the service generally. 106

At the same time, Connolly was emphasizing the essential nature of leather as a trading commodity, in spite of the problems of supply. He thought it was needed at every post, but particularly those where the natives could not provide themselves with "shoes" (moccasins). If the material for these was not provided by the H.B.C., the natives could not "consequently hunt." 107 Brown thought the leather was even

106. H.B.C.A., D.4/10, fos.22d-64d, Simpson to Governor and Committee, August 31,1825.
more valuable at Babine, where it was purchased as an item for distribution at the natives' mortuary feasts. He thought that at Fort St. James no more than $\frac{1}{6}$ of the leather actually was traded for furs, so presumably the rest was distributed as gratuities.\(^{108}\) A shortage of leather hurt the district in outfit 1825, with only enough available to supply moccasins, and no extra for the luxury trade.

At the same time he noted this problem, Connolly saw a potential benefit to the trade in the future because of the new supply route from the Columbia:

...the means it will afford of equipping the natives at a much earlier period will enable them to take full advantage of the most favorable season of hunting, which will no doubt add considerably to their success...\(^ {109}\)

The growing dependency of the natives on the imported goods of the H.B.C. is shown in these references, as well as the increased part the Company played in determining the seasonal round of the Carrier. The natives now were incurring heavy, and ongoing debts to the post. As well, they needed to be "outfitted" with leather and other requisites to take advantage of the "most favorable season of hunting" as perceived by the H.B.C. men.

As a reflection of these social changes, the settlement patterns of the Carrier began to change. Qua's presence in the "village" near Fort St. James has already been noted. His "old village" was described in 1826 as located about a day's travel down the Stuart River towards the Fraser.\(^ {110}\)

\(^{110}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/8, p. 52, September 22, 1826.
reference serves to illustrate the developing symbiosis between the natives and the H.B.C. The village at Fort St. James, previously a seasonally occupied fishing site, had now taken precedence over the traditional villages of the Carrier.

However, in spite of the increasing dependency of the natives on the H.B.C., and the Company’s continuing reliance on the Carrier for furs, the relationship between the two groups remained unstable twenty years after the founding of the first posts. The base of the problem seemed to lie more in the different mores of the two groups than in any basic economic problem. In the case of the Fort George murders, a lack of prudence in dealing with native women was the cause, but the revenge cycle set up by this event was to have repercussions for several years. The early years of the Hudson’s Bay Company regime in New Caledonia were typified by this instability in relations with the natives, as the monopoly determined its policies and the second generation of Carrier entered the fur trade economy.

Transportation

As has been discussed, the immediate impact of coalition on transportation in New Caledonia was the decision of the Governor and Committee in London to supply the district from the east. Norway House became the depot for the district for 1823, with Split Lake serving that role the next two years.

Throughout this period Stuart continued to press for supply of the district from the Columbia, rather than from the east. The decision of the London Committee had been based on reports of the Columbia district as a losing proposition. However, after Simpson’s 1824 trip and report, it was accepted
that the business in the territory west of the mountains could be lucrative, particularly if the region was operated as one unit. This simply confirmed what the N.W.Co. had discovered four years earlier, and vindicated Stuart's conviction.

The route of the 1823-1825 brigades has been noted above (figure 1). Of particular relevance was Stuart's statement that the section of the route from Fort Chipewyan to McLeod Lake required more time and labour than the section from Fort Chipewyan to Norway House, which was performed in company with the Athabasca brigade. The other problem inherent in supplying from the east was that transportation from McLeod Lake to the other district posts was overland, and generally done in winter by dog sledge. From McLeod Lake to Fort St. James took 5 days with loaded sledges in good conditions. From McLeod Lake to Babine took 10 days, to Fraser Lake 8 days, and to Alexandria 20 days. In response to this, Connolly asked for 30 horses to operate on the portage between McLeod Lake and Fort St. James. He estimated this trip to take 7 to 8 days. From Fort St. James all the other district posts could be reached by water, thereby simplifying the transportation within the district.\textsuperscript{111}

Connolly's request was turned down because supply from the Columbia was re-implemented, and all horses in the department were committed to other transportation. With the brigade again coming up the Fraser River, Fort St. James returned to its role of district depot. However, Simpson directed McLoughlin to assemble 70 horses with pack saddles and fittings at Thompson River, and to send them to Alexandria in the fall of 1825 for the use of the 1826 brigade.\textsuperscript{112}

Many of the horses sent in that fall died due to the severity of the winter and the depth of snow. Connolly wrote

\textsuperscript{111} H.B.C.A., B.188/e/3, Fort St.James Report on District 1824-1825.
\textsuperscript{112} H.B.C.A., D.4/5, fos.22-32, Simpson to McLoughlin, April 10,1825.
the gentlemen in Columbia District requesting more, to bring the total up to 75. If Company horses were not available, he thought they could be obtained from the natives. 113

Yale brought the 29 available Company horses from Kamloops, and hired 20 more at a cost of 8 skins each from natives en route to Alexandria. 114 Combined with the 14 horses which survived in New Caledonia, and 5 hired from natives in that district, there was a total of 68 horses available. This was considered barely adequate to carry the returns and provisions of the brigade. 115

On May 5, James McDougall and 8 men set out for York Factory, by way of the Athabasca, while the same day Connolly himself led the brigade for Fort Vancouver (figure 9). On the first leg, to Alexandria, the Columbia brigade was transported in three canoes. 116 They reached Alexandria on May 8, and two days later set out for Thompson River:

The Brigade Consists of Myself and two Clerks with 24 Men and 68 Horses. And ladings of 83 Packs of Furs 6 Kegs Castoreum and 15 Bales of dry Salmon, besides our voyaging apparatus—For the greater Convenience of Travelling, the Brigade was subdivided into twelve Brigades of two men each, with from five to six horses each.... 117

This division was to avoid confusion, and to allow easy identification of men responsible for injuring horses. After 10 days overland, the brigade reached the Thompson River.

113. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/4, p.30, Connolly to Chief Factors and Chief Traders, Columbia District, March 5, 1826.
114. "Skins" was a term used interchangeably with M.B. or "made beaver", and so a reference such as this means "8 made beaver worth of trade goods".
116. ibid., pp.1-2, May 5, 1826.
117. ibid., pp.3, 6, May 8, 10, 1826.
where they were met by a party from Kamloops with 2 canoes and 10 horses. The next day, May 21, 12 pieces and 2 men per canoe were sent to Kamloops, and the main body arrived at that post on May 23.  

Archibald McDonald provided 1500 dried salmon to serve as provisions for the New Caledonia men for the rest of the trip down. On May 25 and 26 the combined horse brigade of New Caledonia and Thompson River departed from Kamloops, and arrived at Okanagan on June 3. From there, 4 days later, they set out in 6 boats, each manned by 7 men and carrying a load of 35 pieces. This fleet arrived at Walla Walla the next day, and at Fort Vancouver on June 16.  

After transacting their business at the depot, the inland brigade set out on July 5, with 9 boats each carrying 44 pieces and with a 6 man crew. The New Caledonia and Thompson River brigades separated from the southern brigade at Walla Walla. The former groups departed that post on August 2 in 4 boats, each with 6 men and 36 pieces, exclusive of provisions. On August 10 they arrived at Okanagan, where they were met by James Douglas, who had earlier proceeded to Walla Walla to collect horses, which he brought overland to Okanagan to meet and supply the brigade.  

At Okanagan 6 bales of damaged dry goods, 4 kegs of tallow, 1 case of ironworks, and 1 bag of shot were added to the outfit. On August 14 the 80 loaded horses and 24 men of the brigades set out. They reached the Thompson River 10 days later, and Kamloops the day after that. On August 26 the New Caledonia brigade left Kamloops, and arrived at Alexandria on September 7.  

119. ibid., pp. 15-21, May 25-June 16,1826.  
120. ibid., pp.21-29, July 5-August 10,1826.  
121. ibid., pp.30-40, August 14-September 7,1826.
At that post the goods were unpacked, with the 12 pieces comprising the Alexandria outfit put aside. On September 10, 4 canoes left Alexandria, one carrying Connolly and Douglas with 6 men and 18 pieces, and the others carrying 5 men and 28 pieces. They arrived back at Fort St. James on September 23, the round trip having taken approximately 4½ months. The eastern party had returned by way of the "Columbia Portage" with the Columbia party, and from there to the head waters of the Fraser, finally arriving at Fort St. James on November 3, for a round trip time of 6 months. Even without the easier, water borne supply routes connecting Fort St. James to the other district posts, the advantages of the Columbia route were evident.

The successful use of the Columbia route connecting the depot on the Columbia to New Caledonia paved the way for the operation of the latter district over the next thirty years. In relative terms, this route provided fast and inexpensive access to the interior, making operations economically viable, and determining the yearly round of activity for the mature fur trade in the district.

Transportation: Methods

Included in Stuart's instructions to Thomas Hodgson, the servant left in charge of the new post of Alexandria in the fall of 1821, was information which suggested that most of the labour expected of the men related to transportation:

... with regard to the local arrangements of the

123. ibid., p.81, November 3,1826.
place and the labour to be done, I will simply observe that every man must have a good pair of Snoe Shoes & two trains [dog sledges] & that if you could at an early period have a Dozen spare trains in readiness, it would answer a good purpose, every man ought also to have two or three Dogs...

In April 1822 a reference was made to a boatbuilder, Hodgson, presumably the same man mentioned above, who had been sent into New Caledonia in 1819 by the N.W.Co., but had been unable to work as his tools had been held up in Athabasca for the whole time since.

A number of horses were still kept at Fort St. James in 1823. In August of that year 600 "bundles" of hay had been cut and stacked, while another 300 were not yet dry enough to stack. The hay was intended for the livestock of the post, which included some horses:

[the men were] in search of the Horses, the two Geldings one of whom I intend for Kilmaurs [Babine Lake], the Stallion being so wicked that he will not allow them come within sight of the mares and they have now got out of the way & cannot be found.

As well as chasing horses, the men of the post caulked and pitched the Fort St. James boat during the summer of 1823. The complement of watercraft on the New Caledonia district inventory the following May was "1 Boat" and 2 "Wooden Canoes". These vessels would have served most of

125. ibid., pp.5d, Stuart to Leith, February 25,1822.
127. ibid., p.10d, July 1,1823.
128. ibid., p.10d, July 1-2,1823.
129. H.B.C.A., B.188/d/5, Fort St. James Accounts, p.32d, "Stock on hand May 1824"
the summer transportation needs of the district.

In the fall of 1823, work proceeded on various aspects of transportation. In November, a "new Track" or road was completed "from this to the first little Lake". From that month into December, the necessary articles for winter travel were prepared. McDougall himself "Knifed & Bent 2 Pair of Snow Shoes", and because he did not want to make new sledges, ended up repairing old ones and making a horse train. One of the servants did most of the rest of this work, "putting Bars to Snow Shoes", arranging old sledges, and preparing wood for 15 new sledges, which were thought to be enough for the winter.

In the district inventories for the following spring the "stock on hand" included 33 dogs, used to pull the sledges, 10 "Horses & mares" and 1 two year old colt. Summer transportation was served by 1 boat and 2 "Wooden Canoes" listed on the same stock list. Many of these animals and watercraft would have been kept at Fort St. James, although McLeod Lake was the depot and hub of transportation in that year.

The 30 horses Connolly requested for the McLeod Lake-Stuart Lake transportation were not provided, because Fort St. James again became the district headquarters and distribution centre. The large number of horses required for the Columbia brigade, as has been seen, were maintained at Alexandria, or the posts in Thompson River and Columbia Districts.

Presumably the dog sledges already in use performed most

131. ibid., pp.27-31, November 21-December 2,1823.
132. H.B.C.A., B.188/d/5, Fort St. James accounts, p.32d, "Stock on Hand May 1824".
of the winter transport between posts in this period, in the absence of the requested horses. It was still most convenient to transport goods and returns within the district by water. The earlier return of the brigade from the Columbia would give a longer period of time when the water on the rivers and lakes remained open, facilitating this local transportation.

Three new canoes were to be constructed at Fort St. James in 1825. Probably of birch bark construction, and destined for Babine, Fort St. James, and Alexandria, these may have been the same ones used to transport the brigade in 1826, capable of carrying 5 men and 28 pieces each.  

Provisions

In his instructions to Hodgson at Alexandria in the fall of 1821, Stuart included a brief note concerning rations for the men:

The usual rations is four Salmon to a man and they may be given half thick and half thin...  

In this first year of H.B.C. operation of Stuart Lake Post, little had changed from the previous year. Some agriculture was planned for the summer of 1822, but although "two assortments of Garden Seeds" had been sent to Athabasca for New Caledonia, Stuart only wanted turnip seeds, as he knew they would produce a crop. The salmon run in the fall of 1821 had been a good one, and 60,000 salmon were stored at the

135. ibid., pp. 6d-7, Stuart to Faries, February 25, 1822.
various posts by the end of October. However, the run the next fall was almost non-existent:

...never in New Caledonia were they known to have failed to such a degree, as they have done this year all over, and at this place the other Fish have failed to as great a degree as the Salmon, I had a considerable number of Indians from different parts fishing at this place, but they could not subsist themselves, much less supply me, and are now all dispersed. I am not easily discouraged, but really this year I, for the first time, feel anxious how to procure the means of living, and if we succeed it is more than I expect.

In May 1823 "No pains" were spared to "till the ground well" to plant 8 1/2 kegs of potatoes, and "a piece of ground" was ploughed for barley. In spite of the efforts made, agriculture remained marginal, and dependence on the salmon continued.

The use of McLeod Lake as the district headquarters in this period created a distribution problem for provisions:

...in years of scarcity at SL [Stuart Lake]; which frequently occur, provisions must be forwarded from the Babines and Fraser L not only for the use of that Esta. [establishment], and for the genl. transportation to and from McLeods Lake but also for the maintenance of the last mentioned place throughout the winter, for the support of the people whilst they are all assembled there in the spring

136. ibid., pp.7d-8, Stuart to Leith, April 5, 1822.
137. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/2, p.10, Stuart to McIntosh, January 5, 1823.
previous to their Depart for the Depot and for the voyage from there to Dunvegan.  

This supply problem was largely eliminated by the use of the Columbia supply route, as fewer supplies were needed at McLeod Lake, and the supply routes between the other district posts were substantially easier.

Life at Fort St. James

In response to questions from George Simpson concerning the salaries allowed in New Caledonia, Stuart responded in defense of his following the "usual terms" for New Caledonia, established during the N.W.Co. regime:

I cannot suppose that any one will remain on the same terms allowed in other parts of the country, nor would it be fair in any one that know the difference to ask them - The voyage from Fort Chipewyan alone is attended with more misery and requires more time than from York Factory to that place, while the winter labours is more than double what it is in any other part that I know & the living no more to be compared to what it is in other parts than Roast beef is to soupe maigre and the terms allowed by the North West Company was never less than two hundred livres in addition to the Athabasca wages.  

For Stuart, some adjustment was necessary in going from a partner of the North West Company to a Chief Factor of the

Hudson’s Bay Company. He now found himself in the role of a paid employee responding to arbitrary orders from management that had never so much as seen the district. This lack of autonomy and the frustration it brought about were demonstrated in his growing enmity with Chief Trader Brown, a former H.B.C. man. In spite of Stuart’s blandishments to John McDonnell on Brown’s arrival, Stuart grew to feel that Brown had preferential status, more autonomy, and was somehow closer to the halls of power. The situation was not helped by Brown’s negative reports to the Council concerning Stuart’s management of the district. As already described, Simpson eventually succeeding in placating Stuart, and making him feel a part of the decision-making process.

The new year was celebrated at Fort St. James more than a month late in 1824, on February 7 and 8, as that was when most of the men were gathered together at that post. On the morning of the 8th the men were:

...invited into the Hall and treated with Shrub, Spirits and Cakes after which I presented them with a Keg of reduced Spirits in Mr. Stuart’s name to drink to the Company’s health, they then retired to their Houses and sometime after invited me to partake of their Breakfast which I did and after they had sung a few songs I left them to themselves—...

The rest of the day and the next one were spent in drinking and revellry, with a dance in the hall each evening,

141. H.B.C.A., B. 188/b/2, pp.7-8, Stuart to Brown, November 29,1822; ibid., pp.8-9, Stuart to Brown, December 2,1822; H.B.C.A., D.4/117, fos.17-21, Stewart (sic) to Simpson, January 4,1823; H.B.C.A., B. 188/b/3, p.12, Brown to Stuart, April 24,1823, etc.

142. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, p.44, February 8,1824.

Shrub was a punch of rum, lime juice, molasses, and other ingredients common in the fur trade.
for those that were still capable of dancing. The month before, McDougall had written that he did not want Qua and the other Carrier around when the men were drinking, so presumably this proscription still applied in February.

The Fort George murders in 1823 re-opened the whole question of Company employees' involvement with native women, but as already mentioned, no new regulations were introduced to control this. The Council at its meeting of 1825 exonerated Yale with "no satisfactory evidence having been produced that such accident was attributable to him."

The former N.W.Co. staff in New Caledonia was all affected by the coalition. Stuart had lost autonomy, the servants had lost wages, and the clerks were feeling left out of promotion. James McDougall wrote to Simpson to determine his status, and received nothing in return except a reminder that promises made by the N.W.Co. did not apply, and that he had no prior claim to advancement. The contracts of both McDougalls expired in 1825, and the Council wanted them sent back to York Factory, to retire or to accept new postings.

Connolly regretted their pending departure, and managed to postpone it. They were the only gentlemen, along with J. McDonnell, who could speak the Carrier language, and this alone made them essential in Connolly's mind. Although ordered out by Council, James was kept in charge of Stuart Lake, in the place of the ill Pierre Pambrun. George also remained in the district.

In the case of illness, such as Pambrun's, it was

143. ibid., February 8-9, 1824.
144. ibid., January 8, 1824.
147. R. Harvey Fleming, Minutes of Council, 1821-1831, op. cit., p. 121.
necessary to travel to Fort Vancouver for attention. He was taken down with the 1826 brigades but was left there for treatment on its departure. 149

Conclusion

This short period was an important one, as it set out the basic strategy for New Caledonia and Fort St. James for the next three decades. As a result of Simpson's trip to the West, and his decisions concerning the amalgamation of New Caledonia with the Columbia department, the interior of the area was brought more in touch with the coast. More importantly for Fort St. James, the reassumption of the Columbia supply route, and the post's location on the Fraser watershed, put it again in the pre-eminent position in New Caledonia. Rather than remaining a subsidiary post of McLeod Lake, as it had when the eastern supply route was used, it became the depot and headquarters for the district.

After the London and York Factory management of the Hudson's Bay Company made their attempts to rationalize the operation of the districts west of the mountains, they eventually returned to the framework developed by the North West Company. Ultimately, the man most familiar with the conditions and problems inherent in New Caledonia, John Stuart, was proven correct in his unwavering conviction of how the operations of the district should be conducted.

149. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/8, p.21, July 5, 1826.
Chapter 4: 1826-1858

New Caledonia Flourishes

The three decades that followed the resumption of the Columbia route to supply New Caledonia saw the fur trade in the district flourish. Although many changes took place in this period west of the Rockies, largely as a result of international politics, these had little direct impact on Fort St. James and the surrounding posts. The activity on Stuart Lake still centered on the problems of the native trade, transportation, and food supply, as had been the case since the post's foundation. Transportation into the district changed radically, but only on the leg of the brigade route south of Thompson River. This had little impact on the actual operation of Fort St. James and New Caledonia, other than changing the schedule of brigade departure and arrival slightly.

By 1826 the amalgamated Hudson's Bay Company had established most of the business conventions that it was to follow through this period. The decision to combine the operations of the districts west of the Rockies was made, and implementation begun. The seminal figure in these changes was George Simpson, who based his decisions on information gained on his 1824 voyage to the Columbia. His intimate knowledge of the business of the districts under his control allowed Simpson "virtually to write for the governor and committee the dispatch they would send him for the forthcoming year." ¹ Simpson dominated the Council of the Northern Department, where he met each summer with the available commissioned officers. This Council decided the strategy and operational details of the trade for the next outfit, or business year, which ran from June 1 to May 31 of the following year.

¹ John S. Galbraith, The H.B.C. as an Imperial Factor, op. cit., p.18.
Although the London Governor and Committee were the final authorities, Simpson's proximity to the fur trade regions and distance from London allowed him great authority. Such a central dominant figure directing the fur trade was in direct contrast to the system under the North West Company regime, where the wintering partners and Montreal agents were all involved in the decision-making process.

Through much of this period, a second level of external direction existed west of the mountains, initially in the person of John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver, and later in the form of a "Board of Management". After 1846 two of the three members of this board, James Douglas and Peter Skene Ogden, had served at Fort St. James. The decisions that were made by the board concerning New Caledonia were based on direct experience of the conditions in the district.

The beginning of this period was defined by the functional consolidation of the western districts, and it ended with the revocation of the Hudson's Bay Company's exclusive license to trade with the natives of the department.

Operations

While the 1826 brigade was on its way to and from the Columbia, business had not gone well in the district. The summer returns that year were the worst ever, with only 6½ packs traded at Fort St. James, and 26 packs for the district as a whole. The natives attributed the low returns to unusually high water levels in the spring.² Shortly after the arrival of the district outfit at Fort St. James, the post

² H.B.C.A., B.188/a/8, p.53, September 23, 1826.
outfits for Fraser Lake and Babine were sent out by canoe. The returning canoes from each of the posts were to bring a load of salmon for Fort St. James.3

At the meeting of the Council of the Northern Department held that June at York Factory, William Connolly was confirmed in the charge of New Caledonia, with Joseph McGillivray replacing William Brown as chief trader. The clerks assigned to the district were P.C. Pambrun, J.M. Yale, John McDonell, John Tod, James Douglas (figure 10), George McDougall and Charles Ross. The actual posts within the district that these men were assigned to were to be determined by Connolly. Eight men also were to be sent into the district, increasing the establishment to 42, of whom 24 were to transport the 1827 brigade, 15 were to remain inland, and 3 were to establish a post in the Chilcotin territory.4 The "winter arrangements" set by Connolly had James McDougall and James Douglas as the clerks assisting him at Fort St. James, together with 12 men. Alexandria, with its new importance as a result of the Columbia brigade, had McGillivray, 2 clerks, and 15 men. McLeod Lake now had a clerk and 2 men, Fraser Lake had a clerk and 9 men, and Babine had a clerk and 6 men.5

The Council also determined that the Saskatchewan District should supply the leather for New Caledonia as far as Tête Jaune Cache by the end of September in both 1826 and 1827. The requisition for the first year included 500 dressed skins, 30 parchment skins, 2,000 fathoms of pack cords, 30 lbs. of sinews, and 70 lbs. of babiche. The second year the number of dressed skins was to be increased to 800.6

3. ibid., p.59, September 27, 1826.
5. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/8, p.88, November 6, 1826.
The business arrangements of New Caledonia were to be brought more in line with those of the Columbia District. Property and inventories would be valued according to the Columbia schedule, as the higher 70% advance on prime cost previously in effect in New Caledonia resulted in fewer sales to servants. With the contact with the south increased, the price of goods in the sales shops would decrease to 50% above prime (prime cost was usually determined as the actual wholesale cost of the goods and shipping). The accounts of New Caledonia were also to be "closed and transmitted" to York Factory "in the same manner and on the same principle as those from the Columbia District." 7

A general direction for the development of New Caledonia was outlined in the fall of 1826, with major emphasis placed on the need to develop fisheries so the district could become self-sufficient in provisions. In the Babine district, trade with the "Simpsons River Indians" merited further development. The men at Alexandria were given the task of exploring the Fraser River as far as the rapids. Connolly also directed the staff of this post to visit the villages of all the natives who traded there, to advance them the goods they required for the fall hunt. Alexandria was also the post assigned to contact and develop a trading relationship with the Chilcotin Indians. The instructions for Fort St. James reflect the general trend in the district:

At this Post the chief duties are to attend more closely to the Indians than hitherto - and to furnish assistance wherever it may be required - From the scarcity of salmon, the Fisheries in this Neighbourhood require attention, and I hope will assist us to weather out the Winter - ... 8

7. ibid., p.145.
8. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/8, pp.91-92, November 6,1826.
Most of the 1826 outfit came from the Columbia, but the leather requisitioned for the equipment of the men and the native trade was available only from the east side of the mountains. The quantity received in New Caledonia in November included 475 dressed skins, 55 parchment skins, 360 pounds of pack cords, and 30 pounds of sinews. Although slightly less than the requisition, these quantities were considered adequate for the year. However, there was a complaint that all the skins were charged to New Caledonia at the high price of large dressed skins.9

In spite of the bad start to outfit 1826, the final production of the district for the year was 125 packs of furs. A summary of these furs and those for outfit 1827, when the returns fell off by 20 packs, was listed in the "Comparative Statement of the Returns of the Different Posts in New Caledonia for the Years 1826 and 1827":

### Stuarts Lake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1827</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bears Blk: Large</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Large</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grizzled Large</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Large Fine</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Com</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coating lbs.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6¼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castoreum</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats Cased</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. ibid., p.155.
The number of packs produced by the other district posts in these outfits were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>McLeod Lake</th>
<th>Babine</th>
<th>Fraser Lake</th>
<th>Alexandria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foxes Silver Grey</td>
<td>21½</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martins Prime</td>
<td>1324</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minks</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musk Rats</td>
<td>1149</td>
<td>682</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otters Large Fine</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolvereens</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martins Common</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packs of 85 lbs Wt</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accounts for outfit 1826 show that the New Caledonia returns were valued at £11,239/4/1, with an apparent "gain" or profit of £8,459/9/6. Two years later the New Caledonia returns were valued at £12,476/19.  

The Council of July 1827 kept the staffing arrangements for New Caledonia the same, with the addition of James McDougall back on strength. It also accepted Stuart's earlier recommendation and paid a £2 per year premium to the men above the Columbia wages. As with the supply route issue, the solutions developed by Stuart and the Northwest Company were

11. H.B.C.A., B.188/d/12, pp.28-28d; B.223/d/18, throughout.
proven to still be applicable to the problems of New Caledonia.

This Council also kept the requisition of leather from the Saskatchewan District the same size for 1828 as the preceding year, to be delivered to Tête Jaune Câche by the end of October. The accounts of New Caledonia and Columbia Districts were to be combined as "one complete set", to be forwarded by express canoe early enough to arrive at Edmonton prior to May 10.\(^\text{13}\)

In 1828 the Council allocated 10 new men to New Caledonia, giving a total complement of 52. The gentlemen remained the same, and one interpreter, Joseph Charles, was added to the establishment, but apparently never reached the district.\(^\text{14}\) The leather arrangements for 1829 were the same as for the previous year, as was the accounting. The Columbia District was to supply to New Caledonia the "requisite Horses and appointments &c. to effect the transport" of the 1829 brigade.\(^\text{15}\) Perhaps the single most important change for the fur trade as a whole made by this council was the introduction of the "Standing Rules and Regulations", which specified the general terms of operating the trade. These regulations specified salaries, tariffs for servants, treatment of natives, and many other aspects of the business. The Council's intention was to simplify and standardize some aspects of the trade, so the Council would be relieved of making new resolutions each year on every topic.\(^\text{16}\)

Immediately after this Council, George Simpson left for an inspection of the districts west of the mountains, visiting Fort St. James for the first time. He informed the Governor

\(^{13}\) ibid., p.187.  
\(^{14}\) ibid., pp.212-213,431.  
\(^{15}\) ibid., pp.213-214.  
\(^{16}\) ibid., pp.218-231.
and Committee that New Caledonia comprised 6 posts, which produced 130 packs per year. The gross value of these returns was £12,000, while the expenses of the district were about £3,000, for an apparent profit of £9,000. In Simpson’s opinion, this profit could potentially be brought up to £10,000-£12,000, but no higher. Fort St. James itself produced about 25 packs of furs yearly, for returns of about £2,000. Simpson wanted Fort George reopened, but the main effect of his visit was to confirm what Fraser had discovered 20 years earlier, that the Fraser River "can no longer be thought of as a practicable communication with the interior". He continued in his report:

I shall therefore no longer talk of it as a navigable stream, altho’ for years past I had flattered myself with the idea, that the loss of the Columbia would in reality be of very little consequence to the Honble. Coys. interests on this side of the Continent; but to which I now, with much concern find, it would be ruinous, unless we can fall upon some other practicable route.

As a result of this conclusion the new post of Fort Langley, near the mouth of the Fraser River, did not become the depot for the interior as envisioned by Simpson in 1824, but Fort Vancouver would retain its paramount role in the supplying of the district of New Caledonia.

In June 1829 the Council resolved that 10 Canadians were to be sent to New Caledonia. There were substantial changes that year among the gentlemen assigned to the district. Connolly remained in charge, but was now to be assisted by two

chief traders, A. Fisher and J.E. Heriott. The clerks were to be John Tod, P.C. Pambrun, J. McDonell, G. McDougall, C. Ross, and W. McGillivray. James Douglas was to be sent to the Columbia "with the utmost expedition" as he was appointed to the position of accountant at Fort Vancouver. 19

Connolly was instructed to extend the New Caledonia trade to the west and north, in order to prevent furs from the district reaching the Russians or Americans on the coast. All the other operational instructions remained the same, with the exception of the leather arrangements. The quantity was cut back somewhat, to 650 dressed Moose skins, 100 lbs. babiche snares, and 2,000 fathoms of pack cords. To this was to be added a "sufficient quantity of Grease to make up 50 Pieces in all". The New Caledonia leather was now to be assembled at Dunvegan, on Peace River, rather than at Tête Jaune Câche. 20

The returns of outfit 1829, a year which had an abundant salmon run, were substantial. The furs produced by Fort St. James included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>1386</th>
<th>172</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>21</th>
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19. ibid., pp.244-245.
20. ibid., pp.245-246.
Fraser Lake produced nearly as much fur, and the value of McLeod Lake's production also exceeded £2,000, but Fort St. James was the largest producer in the district. As a whole, the returns of the district were valued at £11,453/17/1.  

The Council of July 1830 assigned Chief Factor Peter Warren Dease to New Caledonia, where he was to take charge of the district the following spring, when Connolly would come out and attend the Council of 1831. The leather and business arrangements otherwise were to remain the same for the district. The "winter arrangements" for 1830 specified the postings of the gentlemen in New Caledonia. Connolly and John McDonell were the men in charge at Fort St. James. Dease was assigned to Fraser Lake, while Alexandria had Chief Trader Fisher. The other posts were under the charge of clerks. I fact Dease remained with Connolly at Fort St. James to learn the operation of the district. Fort George and Babine post were both re-established that fall, with good returns from the former and poor returns from the latter, while Chilcotin post

22. ibid., pp.263-264.
23. ibid., p.263.
was to be abandoned in the spring of 1831 due to a shortage of gentlemen. Operations at Connolly Lake and McLeod Lake posts continued successfully.\textsuperscript{24}

In April 1831 the charge of New Caledonia officially passed from Connolly to Dease. Connolly left Fort St. James on April 20, 1831, en route for McLeod Lake and York Factory.\textsuperscript{25} In his last outfit the district had produced 150 packs of furs. Connolly's performance had pleased George Simpson, who expressed his hope that Dease would carry on management of the district in the same manner.\textsuperscript{26}

The Council meeting of 1831 determined that 8 men, 2 clerks, and 2 postmasters were to be sent into New Caledonia. The quantity of leather requisitioned for the following year was cut back, with only 530 moose skins appearing on the list. Otherwise, the same arrangements were specified for the district.\textsuperscript{27}

Dease, meanwhile, went out to the Columbia with the returns, and arrived back at Fort St. James on September 14 with the clerk Mr. Annance and "four Bark canoes heavily laden with merchandize for the trade." Five canoes had left Alexandria, but one had been lost on the way. Over the next few days the outfits for the other district posts were assembled and sent out.\textsuperscript{28} Two months later the party transporting leather from Peace River arrived. The horses carried 12 packs of leather, cords, babiche and parchment and 4 bags of grease, while the men's loads consisted of 61 large and small moose skins. The leather was sorted and dried after

\textsuperscript{24} H.B.C.A., D.4/125, fos.23-26, Dease to Governor and Council, April 19, 1831.

\textsuperscript{25} H.B.C.A., B.188/a/16, p.22, April 20, 1831.

\textsuperscript{26} H.B.C.A., D.9/19, fos.2-3, Simpson to Dease, July 2, 1831.

\textsuperscript{27} R. Harvey Fleming, Minutes of Council, 1821-1831, op. cit., pp. 282-283.

\textsuperscript{28} H.B.C.A., B.188/a/16, p.41d-42, September 14-17, 1831.
being unloaded at Fort St. James.  

The returns of outfit 1831 were down substantially over the previous year. The New Caledonia brigade carried out 104 packs of fur, and 6 kegs of castoreum.

Simon McGillivray carried out some explorations in 1833 to add to the information gathered by Brown in 1825 concerning the viability of the Babine route to the sea. In spite of finding the Babine River impassable for navigation, McGillivray believed the route could be a usable one with some more development.

The 1833 shipment of moose skins to New Caledonia depleted the store of this item in Athabasca; the moose were almost hunted out, and it would be necessary to turn to the Saskatchewan Department for leather in the future.

The district returns for outfit 1833 amounted to about £11,000, with expenses of £3,000, and an apparent gain of £8,000, comparable to those of the 1820s. In his 1834 report on the district, Dease reported that the returns were better at Fort St. James, along with the Chilcotin, Alexandria, and McLeod Lake posts. He expressed a need for a blacksmith, good "boutes", and wanted extra summer men to carry out the "complete repair" of Fort St. James. While Simpson approved of Dease's management of the district, he only sent in six men that year to replace those retiring. No blacksmith was forthcoming, and Dease was advised to train his own boutes chosen from the ranks of the middlemen already in

29. ibid., p.36, November 13-14, 1831.
30. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/17, pp.3-4, May 5-9, 1832.
34. H.B.C.A., B.188/e/5, Report on District, 1834.
New Caledonia. 35

A new Deed Poll in 1834 replaced that of 1821, and removed the stipulation of a set number of chief factors. The number of chief factors decreased as a result, offset by a larger number of chief traders. Innis, in The Fur Trade in Canada, described this move as a way of concentrating authority. Simpson and a relatively small number of chief factors could now largely control the Council of the Northern Department, and in turn decide the future of the fur trade throughout the west. 36

Due to ill health, Dease applied for and received furlough in 1835. Peter Skene Ogden (figure 11) was appointed to take over from him in New Caledonia. 37 Shortly before his departure Dease reported to the Council in February 1835 on the state of the district. Salmon had been plentiful that winter, but the natives' feasts had kept them from the hunt. The Carrier were also trading with the natives on the coast, as they could purchase goods more cheaply there than in New Caledonia. 38

The London management of the H.B.C. rejected the proposal to connect New Caledonia with the coast through the Babine route, as they considered the existing supply route from the Columbia adequate. On the question of competition they suggested:

...it would be safer from opposition, and be less likely to excite any feeling on the part of the Russian Company if you endeavoured to intercept the trade of furs from the Interior to their ten leagues

of Country on the Coast, by extending your posts from the Interior, rather than by establishments supplied from the Coast.\textsuperscript{39}

The district returns were down in both outfits 1834 and 1835, in the latter year due to "failure of the salmon fishery" and an "unfortunate detention of the leather on its way from Jaspers House." Chilcotin Post was closed due to trouble with the natives of Fraser Lake and the Chilcotin but Simpson wanted it reopened. Simpson also advised Ogden that he believed it would be safer and more profitable to attempt to expand the New Caledonia trade northward, rather than west towards the coast.\textsuperscript{40}

The leather party's "unfortunate detention" due to the early onset of winter had a profound impact on the district. Simpson ordered Ogden to maintain a full year's supply of leather in New Caledonia to avoid such problems, and to bring the leather into the district earlier in the season by a different route, until such time as the leather was again available from the Peace River District.\textsuperscript{41} In 1836 the New Caledonia party picked up the leather at Jaspers House in August, and took it to New Caledonia via the Columbia and Okanagan, rather than by the Fraser.\textsuperscript{42}

In 1838 James Douglas wrote to Simpson describing the continuing competition from native traders. At the existing tariff in New Caledonia, the Bella Coola were able to buy up all the furs of the Chilcotin and take them to Fort McLoughlin, on the coast, where they were sold to the H.B.C. at higher prices. About 40% of the returns of Fort McLoughlin

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39} H.B.C.A., D.5/4, fo.104, Governor and Committee to Simpson, March 4, 1835.
\item \textsuperscript{40} H.B.C.A., D.4/22, pp.35d-37, Simpson to Ogden, June 27, 1836.
\item \textsuperscript{41} H.B.C.A., D.4/22, fos.28d-34, Simpson to McLoughlin, June 25, 1836.
\item \textsuperscript{42} H.B.C.A., D.5/4, fos.224-225, Rowand to Council, January 4, 1837.
\end{itemize}
were received in this fashion. Douglas thought this problem could be counteracted by greater effort in New Caledonia, or possibly changing tariffs. 43

The Hudson's Bay Company and the Russian American Company, after some years of negotiations, came to terms in February 1839 on a contract that effectively ended the competition between the two concerns. This agreement also terminated the symbiosis that had developed between the Russians and the American free traders. The latter group had supplied the Russians with goods and produce in exchange for the support and safe shelter of the settlements in Alaska. In one move, the trade on the coast was left in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company. With the elimination of the Russian and American competition on the coast, native middlemen could no longer purchase and resell at a profit the furs produced by the natives of New Caledonia. The terms of the contract specified that the H.B.C. would lease the coastal strip on the mainland north to Cape Spencer for ten years, beginning June 1, 1840, at a yearly rent of 2000 land otter skins. The Russian American Company also had the option to buy 2000 additional otter from west of the mountains, and 3000 from the east at favourable prices. The H.B.C. also agreed to provide the Russians with various country-produced foodstuffs, and to transport from Britain to Alaska the manufactured goods desired by the Russian company at the rate of £13 per ton. 44

The New Caledonia beaver returns fell in outfit 1839, but there was a compensatory increase in the returns of "small furs" in the district. Recruits expected that year had not been sent, but 5 men were to be sent from the Columbia that fall, possibly with 2 Orkney fishermen and a blacksmith among them. It was intended to supply the New Caledonia leather

from Peace River again. The increased load of furs sent from the east side of the mountains as part of the settlement between the H.B.C. and the Russian American Company played a part in making this decision. Additionally, there were the problems already mentioned obtaining the leather in the Saskatchewan district, and transporting it to New Caledonia.\textsuperscript{45}

The returns of outfit 1840 decreased slightly due to the failure of the salmon, and the subsequent starvation of the natives as well as the Company men. The early onset of winter the previous autumn held up the leather shipment from Dunvegan, also hurting the trade.\textsuperscript{46}

The minutes of the council of the Northern Department for 1842 included the information that New Caledonia was considered part of the Columbia Department, under the management of John McLoughlin.\textsuperscript{47}

Peter Skene Ogden, in his "Notes on Western Caledonia", prepared in 1842 as a guide for his successor in charge of the district, outlined some of the fall routine, including the leather trip:

On your arrival here in the Fall no time should be lost in despatching the different Outfits to the out Posts, there is so little dependence to be placed on the Men when without a Gent(lemen) in fact now I have generally requested the Gent(lemen) in charge of Posts should it not cause any derangement in their affairs to be here from the 12th to 15th Septr -- about the usual period of the arrival of the

\textsuperscript{45} H.B.C.A., D.4/25, fos.36-37, Simpson to Ogden, June 13, 1839.
\textsuperscript{46} H.B.C.A., D.5/6, fos.43-44, Ogden to Simpson, February 16, 1841.
\textsuperscript{47} Isaac Cowie, editor, The Minutes of the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, 1830 to 1843, Reprinted from the Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Vol. IV, pp.819.
Brigade. Seven men and one Gentleman are the number required to proceed to Dunvegan to procure our supplies of Leather, when no other at your disposal then in that case the Gentleman in charge of McLeods Lake must accompany the leather party three men at the same time with one of the two stationed at McLeods Lake are required to proceed to Finlays Forks to collect the Furs of the Indians in that quarter and settle with them for the winter the Horses after transporting the McLeods Lake Outfit across should be again sent back loaded with Salmon and on their return will transport across the Furs as less transport in winter by far less expense and waste incurred as we have always a supply of Leather on hand for one year in advance the supply for following year is left in depot at McLeods Lake and transported across with Horses in June...  

In these "Notes" Ogden also expressed his opinion on Chilcotin post. He believed that the purpose it served as a buffer between Alexandria and possible competition from the coast was of little importance, and did not merit the expense involved in keeping it open, although he thought it would be viable if moved to Tluz Cuz lake, near the source of the Blackwater River. After some delay, Ogden finally left the district on furlough in the spring of 1844, with Donald Manson replacing him in charge of New Caledonia.

A.C. Anderson, at Alexandria, wrote to Simpson in 1843 concerning declining returns, particularly in beaver furs. He suggested the natives be encouraged to hunt "small furs" as

49. ibid., pp.55-56.
well, as the beaver population in New Caledonia was depleted by more than thirty years of hunting. This demand for beaver had come from both the Hudson’s Bay Company and native traders from the coast.\(^{51}\)

Simpson wrote to Manson in June 1844 concerning the management of the district. He encouraged the development of the post at Tluz Cuz, as a way of fighting the competition of the native traders taking furs to Fort McLoughlin on the coast. However, he thought the suggestion of a post near Tête Jaune Cache was "inexpedient to adopt". He encouraged the idea of getting the natives to hunt small furs, particularly marten, which were plentiful in New Caledonia and commanded a good price in Europe.\(^{52}\)

Manson’s first year in charge was less than successful; Simpson wrote to him in June 1845 expressing his concern that the "business of that district is not in so prosperous a state as could be wished arising from a variety of causes which we trust may not recur, so as to affect the business of the current outfit." Among other problems, the leather party left for Dunvegan too late in the season, again compromising that aspect of the trade. Perhaps because of the poor outfit, Manson was to be sent to the coast to take charge of Fort Simpson or another post, and Chief Factor John Lewes was to be sent in to replace him in New Caledonia.\(^{53}\) Manson overreacted and sent the leather party out much earlier in outfit 1845, when it arrived at Dunvegan in August. By that year, it was uncertain how much longer the leather needs of New Caledonia could be supplied from Peace River, due to the depletion of stocks in that district.\(^{54}\)

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53. H.B.C.A., D.4/33, fos.5-6, Simpson to Manson, June 16,1845.
Although an amicable agreement had been reached between the two European trading companies on the north coast, the tension was escalating in Oregon Territory in the same period. Negotiations began in 1826 to establish jurisdiction in the disputed area. The British authorities, and the H.B.C., wanted the boundary to follow the Columbia River west of the mountains, as a sort of buffer zone for the fur-trading future of New Caledonia. They also wanted free transportation on the Columbia, to ensure a route to the interior. The Americans, on the other hand, although suggesting a border set at 51° North Latitude, did so mainly to produce a compromise at 49°. The negotiations ended in a deadlock in 1827, with an indefinite extension of the convention of 1818. This gave both parties free access to the disputed territory, but was subject to cancellation by either party on a year's notice.\(^5\)

The dispute was reactivated in 1839, with a campaign launched in the U.S. Senate to support American claims in Oregon, to terminate the convention of 1827, and to give the area territorial status under American law. American settlers in the Willamette valley attempted to form a government in 1841. By the following year, Simpson was considering removal of the Company's regional headquarters to Vancouver Island. After a wave of immigration in the early 1840s a provisional government was formed in Oregon in May 1843. The situation was aggravated by the election of the aggressive James K. Polk as president of the United States in 1844, raising the very real possibility of war between the countries over the Oregon question. After some negotiation and consideration, a draft of a treaty was sent from London to Washington in May 1846. The terms of this draft set the boundary west of the mountains at 49°, with the British retaining all of Vancouver Island. As this proposal was in accordance with the ideas of the

\(^{5}\) J.S. Galbraith. *The H.B.C. as an Imperial Factor*, op. cit., pp.178-188.
majority of the American Congress and Senate, it was quickly ratified, and the Treaty of Washington was signed on June 15, 1846.\textsuperscript{56}

From the perspective of New Caledonia, this treaty signalled a change in the transportation route used to supply the district. Article 2 stipulated that navigation on the Columbia south of the 49th parallel was to be free for the Hudson’s Bay Company and those British subjects trading with them, who were to be treated on the same basis as U.S. citizens. However, the management of the H.B.C. foresaw many problems implicit in having their regional headquarters in American territory, and saw little value in the right of transportation on the Columbia.\textsuperscript{57} In 1841, following his trip to the Northwest Coast, George Simpson had realized that there was a possibility that the boundary would be situated north of the Columbia. He wrote to the Governor and Committee on March 1, 1842 suggesting the south end of Vancouver Island as a location for a new depot serving the coast and New Caledonia. He based this suggestion on three factors: the difficulty of navigation through the bars at the mouth of the Columbia; the growing impact of American settlers on the Willamette; and his opinion at that time that the boundary would be set at approximately 48° latitude.\textsuperscript{58}

At their meeting of June 1842, the council of the Northern Department resolved that a site for the Vancouver Island depot be selected, and that “measures be adopted for forming this Establishment with the least possible delay.”\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} ibid., pp.218-250.
\textsuperscript{57} ibid., pp.249,261.
\textsuperscript{58} H.B.C.A., D.4/110, p.50, Simpson to Governor and Committee, March 1,1842.
Construction of Fort Victoria started in March of 1843. By the terms of the Treaty of Washington, this potential depot was left in British territory, but there was still no viable route connecting it to the district of New Caledonia.

At the same time that Fort Victoria was built, there were major changes taking place in the management of the H.B.C. west of the mountains. The relationship between Simpson and McLoughlin had deteriorated, largely over the way the former dealt with the murder of McLoughlin's son at Fort Stikine in 1841. After this incident, McLoughlin's dispatches dealt as much with the murder as with business matters. Additionally, the Governor and Committee were critical of his handling of several issues, including the Puget Sound Agricultural Company and the credit extended to American immigrants. There was also an overall decline in the revenue of the area under McLoughlin's direction. The Governor and Committee wrote McLoughlin that his general superintendency would end on May 31, 1845, and the Columbia Department would be governed by a "board of management" of three members. The department was to be divided eventually into two or more districts. For outfit 1845 the board consisted of Douglas, Ogden, and McLoughlin, but the following year McLoughlin went on furlough, took two more years of leave, and retired from the service on June 1, 1849. In 1845 the Governor and Committee specified the areas of responsibility of the individual members of the Board. Peter Skene Ogden was given:

The management of the trading posts on the Columbia proper and their dependencies; of those in New Caledonia and of any trapping parties that may be in operation...

60. P.A.B.C., Film No. A1361, James Douglas, Diary of a trip to Victoria March 1-21, 1843.
Douglas had been assigned the major posts of Fort Vancouver, Fort Victoria, and Fort Langley, sailing vessels, and dealings with settlers, while John Work, replacing McLoughlin, was assigned the north coast, including the steamer "Beaver". 62

In 1845 Simpson wrote to James Murray Yale, the chief trader at Fort Langley, concerning the need to find an alternate route to transport goods and returns to and from New Caledonia in light of the confusion then surrounding the boundary question. He asked Yale to respond with any information he might have concerning such a route, and to make further inquiries among the natives for information. 63 Yale replied that he had heard of a practicable land route between Fort Langley and Thompson River, from the falls on the south side of the river via a series of valleys, small plains, and lakes, with only one or two mountains to cross. He intended to get more information from a native chief of his acquaintance, who came from the relevant area. 64

Alexander C. Anderson, in charge at Alexandria, was the man assigned by the Council to:

...examine the country &c with the view of establishing a land communication between New Caledonia and Fort Langley near the Gulf of Georgia for carrying on the business of the Interior, in the event of our being deprived of the Columbia, or other circumstances rendering it advisable to remove our principle depot to the straits of de Fuca and Fort Langley becoming the rendezvous of the Interior

63. P.A.B.C., Add Mss. 182, fo.6, Simpson to Yale, June 19,1845.
Brigades, 65

A number of routes were examined in 1846 and 1847, which will be examined below in the section on transportation. Two routes seemed the most desirable, one striking overland from Thompson River to the Fraser at Kequeloose, near the upper end of the Fraser Canyon, and the other taking a more southerly route overland to the Coquihalla River, which entered the Fraser about 69 miles above Fort Langley. In 1848 the New Caledonia brigade travelled out and returned via the Fraser Canyon route. It turned out to be a difficult and costly experience, and Manson, on his arrival back at Thompson River, assigned Henry Peers to re-examine the Coquihalla route. Primarily due to Manson’s reluctance to use the Fraser Canyon route again, Douglas ordered the development of the Coquihalla for use in 1849, including the building of the new post of Fort Hope at the confluence of the rivers. 66 This route from Kamloops to Fort Hope overland, and from there to Fort Langley by bateau, remained the supply route for New Caledonia from 1849 until 1858. In 1849 the headquarters of the region west of the mountains was transferred to Fort Victoria, moving the depot into British territory.

By the end of the 1840s, the profits of New Caledonia were declining. From about £9000 per year in the 1820s, they diminished to £4967/5/10 in outfit 1845, and continued to fall to £1489/10/5 by outfit 1849, by which time district expenses had risen to £5285/19/10. 67 George Simpson attributed the decline to "the rapidly declining state of the trade and to the prodigiously increasing demands of that district." Simpson placed much of the blame on inefficient operation of the transportation network between New Caledonia and the

coast, with 300 horses required to transport servants' families to and from Fort Langley. He also thought the personal animosity between some of the inland gentlemen was creating problems due to their inability to settle on meeting times en route. He also commented on the failing trade at McLeod Lake, and the low price of marten at that post.68

At the same time Manson was getting discouraged with his own prospects. Douglas wrote to Simpson:

Manson feels that he is neglected having been now five years in charge of New Caledonia Distt. without promotion which is contrary to all precedent. I know there is a prejudice against him, and that he has been unjustly and too severely censured. He has, in fact, enemies who have done much to increase the difficulties he has had to contend with in his own District; and to excite a feeling against him abroad. No man can be more zealous and interested than Manson, and I am not clear that many will be found capable of doing more justice to his District than he does.69

Manson applied for and was granted a leave of absence for his health in the same year.70 However, he did return to New Caledonia when this leave ended.

The 1851 brigade arrived back at Fort St. James on September 3:

...we were agreeably surprised by the arrival of Messrs McLean & [Peter] Ogden with two boats and a

68. H.B.C.A., B.226/c/1, Simpson to Board of Management, June 25, 1850.
70. H.B.C.A., D.4/42, fos. 16d-17d, Simpson to Manson, June 24, 1850.
part of the Outfit from Langley, the remainder, from a scarcity of men Mr. McLean had to leave at Alexandria."71

The goods were opened almost immediately, and the servants' orders distributed. The two boats made another round trip to Alexandria, returning at the beginning of October with the rest of the outfit. The party from the east, that year under William Manson, arrived at Fort St. James on November 16, although another trip had been made to McLeod Lake two months earlier to bring back some leather stored there.72 After the district outfit was assembled at Fort St. James, it was divided and distributed to the other posts. On November 15 four servants were dispatched in a boat for Alexandria and Fort George. The boat contained the "Outfits & Salmon for the consumption of the above posts".73

Throughout January and February 1852 parties went out from Fort St. James to collect the returns from the outlying posts. Five men returned from McLeod Lake with dog sledges on February 8, but they were unable to bring all the furs from that post. The next week, 2 sledges loaded with furs arrived from Fraser Lake, and one man reached Fort St. James with a load of furs from Babine. At the same time a servant returned with the "accounts of Alexandria and Fort George".74

The summer arrangements for 1852 were set in April, with William Manson in charge of Fraser Lake, McKenzie at Alexandria, and McLean to "arrange the road between Thompsons & Fort Hope." Preparation for the brigade of 1852 included gumming and preparing boats and pressing bales of furs and of

71. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, p.6d, September 3, 1851.
72. ibid., pp.6d,7d,8d,13, September 4,14, October 1, November 16, 1851.
73. ibid., p.13, November 15,1851.
74. ibid., pp.22-23, January 29-February 14,1852.
salmon, the latter for provisions. On April 23 the boats were loaded and the expedition set out:

Mr. Manson accompanied with Mr. McKenzie took his departure for Fort Langley with the returns of the District with four boats. - loads containing 67 Packs of Furs 5 Kegs Castoreum 43 Bales of Salmon. 28 Bales of these Salmon is for the Consumption of Alex & Fort George for the Summer. 75

Four boats loaded with the outfit from Fort Langley arrived back on Stuart Lake on September 1 and September 5. The bales they carried were opened and sorted almost immediately. 76 The distribution of the outfits to the other posts began within two weeks, with some complications introduced:

Sent Mr Griffin with Outfit of Alexandria & Fort George down in a Boat manned 6 Men & 3 Alex Indian two of the former to remain at Fort George to accompany Mr. Charles to Jaspers House who has instructions to that effect to meet the Tete jaune cache party and inform them that the District was not able to feed the usual number of men from that party as no doubt there would be a famine throughout the District. 77

Shortly after, the other outfits were selected and distributed. That for Bear Lake, or Fort Connolly, was sent out on September 21 with 5 men and 2 Indians; a boat arrived back from that post a month later with a load of furs including more than 500 large and small beaver. Two men were sent to McLeod Lake in October with "5 Horses loaded with

75. ibid., pp.30-31, April 13, 22-23, 1852.
76. ibid., pp.42d-43, September 1, 3, 5, 1852.
77. ibid., pp.44-44d, September 18, 1852.
Salmon 1000.—...". These men would presumably have stayed a
that post to meet and assist with the express and leather
party from the east. McKenzie had been sent with 6 men to
Peace River in early September to get "the Leather Supply of
New Caledonia". The leather party and the express from York
Factory arrived at Fort St. James on November 9, although some
of the leather followed later from McLeod Lake, arriving on
November 14.  

The major change to the operation of the districts to the
west of the mountains in the 1850s was the formal amalgamation
of the Columbia and New Caledonia Districts into the Western
Department, and the new department's separation from the
Northern Department. George Simpson wrote to the Board of
Management at Fort Victoria in June 1853 describing the impact
of the change. He saw an unclear reporting arrangement for
the Board as the main difference. Rather than reporting
directly to the Council of the Northern Department, as they
had until then, they would now be reporting more directly to
the Governor and Committee in London, although there would
still be substantial involvement with the Northern
Department. In November 1853, Douglas wrote to Manson,
informing him of the impact of the change on the business of
New Caledonia:

I beg to state in reply to your letter of the 14th
that the new arrangement of the business in the
Western Department, will not involve any change in
the mode of conducting the business of the Interior,
nor in the time of closing the accounts, which may,
for this year, be brought to a close at the usual
time and sent out by the retiring Servants bound for

78. ibid., pp.44d,47,48, September 21, October 11,27,1852.
79. ibid., pp.43,49d-50, September 8,1852, November 9,14,1852.
80. H.B.C.A., B.226/c/1, fos.340-343, Simpson to Board of Management,
June 18,1853.
York Factory.

The New Caledonia accounts will not as usual be sent to Fort Colvile, as the Books must be duly sent on from Thompson's River to this place under cover to my address.

The retiring servants however will be sent on to Colvile, for the purpose of crossing the mountains.

Manson had left Alexandria with the 4 boats carrying the New Caledonia outfit on August 15, and reported to Douglas that salmon was abundant that fall. 81

The New Caledonia requisition for 1854 had reached Douglas by April of that year. At the same time Douglas chastised Manson for the rate at which horses were used up in the district. The preceding year 63 had been shipped in, and more were requested at that time, which Douglas and the Board of Management both considered unnecessary. In response to Manson's request for more staff, Douglas mentioned 12 recruits from the east, but stated that no servants were available on the coast. 82

The brigade arrived back at Alexandria on August 28, 1854, where it was found that the summer returns had been greater than usual. A plain had been found that year outside Hope, where the horses of the brigade could be kept while the men continued on the trip to Fort Langley by water. 83

83. ibid., pp.158-158d, Douglas to Manson, September 19, 1854; ibid., pp.141d-142, Douglas to Manson, August 1, 1854.
In the late 1850s an attempt was made to address the staffing problems in New Caledonia by bringing in new Norwegian servants from York Factory. However, these men did not arrive with the leather party in the fall of 1857, as intended.  

The following spring, Douglas promised Ogden 10 men from the east side in place of those who were to have come with the leather party. In spite of the problems with labour, and the perennial scarcity of salmon in the district, Douglas stated that the returns for the "past Outfit" (presumably 1856) were up, and hoped the profits would be up as well.

In the spring of 1857 a shipment of leather was sent to New Caledonia from Victoria to replace the Peace River shipment which had never arrived. This replacement shipment contained sealskins, sheepskins, and parchment deerskins for horse appointments.

Manson came out with the brigade in the summer of 1857 and started one year's leave of absence. Douglas then appointed Peter Ogden to the charge of New Caledonia. Some questioned the wisdom of allowing Manson to go rather than granting him his Factorship. Dugald Mactavish wrote to Simpson:

Peter Ogden has gone in this year in charge of New Caledonia but such an appointment you must be aware is a mere farce. he is hardly qualified to take care of himself let alone a district where so much judgement is required as in New Caledonia.

Douglas believed that the district was basically

84. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/16, pp.5-5d, Douglas to Ogden, February 9, 1858.
85. ibid., pp.32d-33d, Douglas to Ogden, March 30,1858.
86. P.A.B.C., A/C/20/Vi4, pp.80-82, Douglas to Manson, April 7, 1857.
well–managed, but he was willing to listen to any suggestions that Ogden might have. Ogden was also told that recruits had been ordered from York Factory, who were to accompany the leather party to New Caledonia that fall. Manson tendered his resignation and retired, still a chief trader, in the spring of 1858.

The Indian Trade

The business life at Fort St. James still focussed on the attempts of the Hudson's Bay Company traders to get the natives around the post to supply large numbers of furs. As has been seen earlier, these attempts were not always successful. An entry in the post journal in the fall of 1826 described the interaction between the two groups, with their radically disparate views of what the trade entailed:

The old chief Qua, and the whole of his adherants made me a visit this morning – but their conduct during the summer, or rather the little success with which their exertions in Hunting were attended – entitling them to no particular attention, they were therefore treated with very little ceremony – and were told that until they evinced a disposition to compensate for the time so unprofitably spent they might spare themselves the trouble of making any requests as the only means of avoiding the mortification of a refusal – They all acknowledged

88. ibid., pp.150-151, Douglas to Manson, July 10,1857, pp.151-152, Douglas to Ogden, July 10,1857.
that they had done but little - which however they do not attribute to the want of good will - I gave them a piece of Tobacco in length proportionate to the value of each individual and dismissed them. To talk to these fellows is of very little use - the only way is to let them feel that they cannot do without us and that by exertion only they will obtain their wants. 90

The natives, by assuring the traders of their good will, were attempting to get more goods on credit, to their advantage, while the H.B.C. men were trying to ensure an advantage to themselves by convincing the natives that they needed the manufactured goods offered. Company men encouraged the natives to hunt for furs in the fall, but the Carrier had their own priorities which often thwarted the traders' intentions. A number of journal entries form October 1826 illustrate the H.B.C. perception of the natives' actions:

A few more of our Indians set out to Hunt - But their Families remaining behind to take care of their Salmon - will induce them to return before they have time to do much - For a rascally Carrier must always have his wife at his tail - ...

All the Indians are occupied Feasting of which they have several yet to celebrate and as their Catch[?] tend to augment the returns a diminution must in consequence be experienced as the best time for Hunting Beaver will be over before they have done their cursed feasts. ...

The Chief Qua & most of the others who know anything of Beaver Hunting were Equipped and are to set out

90. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/8, p.60, September 29, 1826.
tomorrow for their Hunting grounds - If the weather continues favourable - and if they are inclined to exert themselves - they have time yet to make up in some Measure for the spring failures. 91

These entries show that the post was at the mercy of the natives for its fur supply. In spite of the obvious annoyance of the journalist, the native hunters were outfitted on credit to pursue the hunt, if so inclined. Native mores and customs also got in the way of the hunting, with the traditional patterns of the families gathering together and feasting during the salmon run keeping the hunters in the village. The worth of a native in the eyes of the H.B.C. was based on his production of furs. When the favourite wife of "Mal de gorge" died in the fall of 1826, he was described as formerly one of the best Indians, but now one of the most useless, as his grief had interfered with his hunt. 92

As well as trading with "our Indians", the men of the post made some trading excursions to outlying groups. In the same month that the incidents above were taking place, a clerk, James Douglas, Waccan the interpreter, and three men went by canoe to "Tat-lah" to trade with some Sekani, as promised in the summer:

Mr. Douglas is simply instructed to trade with them at the same rates as are observed here - to advance them as few Credits as possible, and none to a Considerable amount. And to treat them with kindness and make a few gratuities of Ammunition - Knives &ct &ct to such as may deserve them either by the influence they possess over their tribe - or their capacity as hunters —— 93

91. ibid., pp.63, 67, 68, October 5, 14, 1826.
92. ibid., p.74, October 24, 1826.
93. ibid., p.66, October 12, 1826.
He was further instructed that if the situation looked promising enough, the Sekani were to be offered a post, in return for hunting and saving skins. Some natives also came into the post from fairly far afield to trade. In October 1826 the "Indians of Simpsons River" were expected soon. If they had not "previously disposed of their Furs to the Indians of the Sea Coast they will add considerably to the little that has hitherto been collected." 94

The 1823 murders at Fort George continued to have an impact in this period. One of the natives responsible was amongst a group of Carriers killed by a party of Cree in November 1826. The natives attributed this event to some H.B.C. intervention. 95 The killing of the second murderer took place in the summer of 1828, in the native village at the mouth of the Stuart River. It was described by Archibald McDonald, who was at Fort St. James with George Simpson in September:

...one of the murderers visited the village of this place, and was destroyed by Mr. Douglas and six men, on the spot.

The event excited great consternation in some, and indignation in others. The Indians to whom he was on a visit thought it incumbent upon them, in self defence, to claim for the relations of the deceased, some property for them in indemnification for their loss, and accordingly they all assembled, and made a clandestine entry into the Fort, and insisted upon

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94. ibid., p.67, October 14, 1826.
getting a blanket.  

Simpson had all the "principal Indians" at Fort St. James assembled to harangue them (through Connolly and Boucher) concerning their misdeeds. Duncan Livingstone, an interpreter, had also been killed, although by Skeena Indians, that spring. The tenor of his lecture was that on the next occasion that merited it, the total force of the Company would be turned against the Carriers, and "that the innocent would go with the guilty, and that their fate would become deplorable indeed." Simpson finished his speech:

The chief that headed the party that entered the fort in the summer was pointed at with marked contempt, and it was only Mr. Douglas's intercession and forgiveness that saved him from further indignities. At the close of the harangue, the chief had a glass of rum, a little tobacco, and a shake of the hand from the Great Chief, after which the piper played them the song of peace. They dispersed, to appearance quite sensible of all that was said to them.

The returns of the post also could be affected by conflicts, real or rumoured, between the various native groups. In the summer of 1831 a rumour reached Stuart Lake that the Beaver Indians were on their way to "war upon the Carriers". The latter group was concerned about this, in spite of the assurances of the H.B.C. that no such attack was imminent. Qua believed that the Sekani "spread these reports

to prevent the Indians of this place from hunting near their lands." 98

The round of feasting continued to affect the relationship between the natives and the Company. As well as the fall feast season, there was apparently one in the early summer, as described in June 1831:

The Indians of this place are anxiously waiting the arrival of those from Sycuz Natleh and Stellah. I wish they would come thus this feasting would be over so they might depart for their homes instead of starving and begging provisions here. So far they behave themselves extremely well they are in much better order than those of Frazers Lake they are far from being troublesome and I hope they will continue so while the crowd is here. 99

The reference to departing for their homes suggests that the "Indians of this place" normally did not live in the immediate precincts of Fort St. James, but were so described because they were tied to the post through a trading relationship. It is also known that their autumn fishing camp locations were centred on the mouth of the Stuart River near Fort St. James, so they were living around the post seasonally. However, their normal residences may have been spread around the region. Later in the summer of 1831 Hoolson, the brother of Qua, whom the H.B.C. considered the chief of the "Indians of this place", returned to "his usual residence down the River." 100

Competition for the furs produced in New Caledonia continued through the 1830s. In the summer of 1831, many of

98. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/16, p.31, June 21, 1831.
99. ibid., pp.31-32, June 22, 1831.
100. ibid., p.36d, August 3, 1831.
the furs from around Fraser Lake were sold to another native group, acting as middlemen:

...the Grand Sauvage of Natley and most of the Chayoo band have sold their Furs to the Nełhâọtine for property the latter have traded from the Indians of the Coast.\footnote{101}

In addition to this competition for the furs sought by the H.B.C. the natives were affected in 1831 by another outbreak of disease, which would have cut back on their production of furs:

...most of the natives are troubled with a breaking out something similar to the chicken pox and is attended with a slight fever on its appearance.\footnote{102}

Yet another threat to the returns of Fort St. James appeared in the fall of 1831. It seemed as though the salmon fishery on Stuart Lake was going to fail, and if such was the case, the natives intended going to Babine to trade for fish:

...if this should take place, the returns will fail, as they will make no fall hunt of consequence. That season is generally the most productive.\footnote{103}

The fall hunt must have taken place, as by November the natives were paying off their existing debts, and receiving high value items such as guns as new debts.\footnote{104} In the post journal of 1831 monthly summaries of furs traded were given; it is illustrative to compare the returns of the months of May and October:\footnote{105}

\begin{itemize}
\item [101] ibid., p.33, July 5,1831.
\item [102] ibid., p.34, July 18,1831.
\item [103] ibid., p.41, September 8,1831.
\item [104] ibid., p.57, November 18,1831.
\item [105] ibid., p.28d,54, May 31, October 31,1831.
\end{itemize}
### May

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Fine Beaver Skins</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small do do do</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Otters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cub Bears</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rats</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Fish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaver Meat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbits</td>
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### October

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sm</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lar Bears</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cub</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskrats</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martins</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minks</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cats</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>352</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The difference in the returns is obvious, with the May returns barely equal to 1 pack of furs, while the October returns made up at least 4 packs. The emphasis on provision items in the spring may also be noted, with exclusively furs traded in the fall.

In outfit 1834 there were abundant supplies of salmon, but the feasts of the natives kept them from hunting. The trade with the coastal Indians also continued, to the
detriment of that of Fort St. James:

...if measures are not adopted to keep the Natives from resorting thither to procure articles at a cheap rate, this District will in my opinion lose a considerable Part of its Trade. 106

Peter Skene Ogden wrote "Notes on Western Caledonia" in 1842, based on his seven years in the district. These notes, intended as orientation for his successor, contain substantial information on the Indian trade in this period:

...I cannot say much in favour of the Carriers a brutish, ignorant, superstitious beggarly sett of beings, lavish of promises and should it so happen have no feast to make for departed relatives take precious good care like all rascals to loose sight off. The debt system was introduced in to this District many years since and it is the opinion of some it would not be good policy to do away with it at present as independent of other considerations the evil has taken too deep root, this could be overcome but again it is said it acts as a hold on them from the great temptations of low prices which the Coast traders who now are annually in the habit of resorting to the frontiers of the District in quest of Furs, it may have this effect on some altho I have my doubts, still with many at this [place] in debt of occasionally clandestinely trading their furs. My predecessor led me to expect that it would be absolutely necessary to lower the tariff on account of the Coast traders and if I did not [I] would find the Indians troublesome, they attacked me as a matter of course on my arrival but on my giving
them free permission to go provided they paid their debts they have been since silent on the subject and should they commence again adopt the same plan as if they are so inclined you can scarcely prevent them. The Fall is the usual season for giving debt but you will find it to your interest to delay doing this as long as you possibly can for no sooner do they secure the goods altho they will promise you to return to their hunting grounds not one in ten will absent himself from his Village and in winter in lieu of employing themselves trapping will lounge and idle their time in gambling feasting and sleeping, their usual season for hunting is in the Fall and Spring and so long as you can keep them hunting in the Fall your returns will encrease and you will also find it to your interest to persuade them to make their feasts in the month of June which does not interfere with their hunts altho in some cases you may succeed still you will find it rather a difficult task, however it is from the object to be gain’d by it worth a trial. When I first assumed charge of this District I found the gratuities given to the Indians very great in the article of Leather particularly so, the latter and nearly all I have abolished and no diminution in our returns has resulted from it and our expenditure decreased, it now remains with you to lessen them and in doing so gradually you will rest assured find no bad effects resulting from it. The lending system I have entirely abolished it was customary formerly to loan Guns, Axes, Tranches, Moose Skins and Traps to the Indians to such an extent that no one on reflection would view it in any other light than an abuse, the Carriers scarcely ever returned an article loan’d them but always have some plausible excuse ready when called on, the Traps alone from the lending
system having so long prevailed as it is only three years since I abolished it, are now most abundantly supplied as regards this place and the same has been adopted all over the District and the returns have not diminished and our Indent on the last article has been decreased one half, they are now sold to the Natives at 4 skins each formerly they were valued at 6 but this was merely nominal as not ten out of 100 were ever sold. Salmon are bartered at the rate of 90 for one Beaver and are paid for in the most valuable goods the Carriers know too well their own interest to take any other, formerly at this place 60 were equal to a skin as an inducement to them to trade more and to save transportation in the winter...

The tariff for salmon had been standardized throughout the district to eliminate discontent. This was made possible by improved transportation using carts on the Babine portage and boats throughout the district, and the H.B.C. providing more of the required fish internally. Ogden also referred his successor to Waccan, whose "long experience in this quarter" rendered him the most useful resource in dealing with the natives.

Two post managers were killed by the natives in the early 1840s, William Morwick, the postmaster at Babine in the winter of 1842, and John McIntosh, the clerk at McLeod Lake in July 1844. In both cases the incidents were apparently personal in nature; that at Babine was ended with the revenge killing of the murderer, and at McLeod Lake the goods of the post were untouched. Neither of these events seems to have had a general effect on the relationship between the natives and the

108. ibid., p.50.
H.B.C. in the district. 109

A "Census of the Indian Population of N.C." (New Caledonia) was prepared in February 1845 by Donald Manson. This was based on the number of natives "frequenting" the posts in the district, again rather than stating that they lived in any immediate proximity to the posts. Manson's figures were as follows 110:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
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<tr>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
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<td>258</td>
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<td>160</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frasers Lake</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>77</td>
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</tr>
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<td>72</td>
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<td>Alexandria</td>
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<td>249</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>1013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tluz-cuz</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>1154</td>
<td>1286</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>4138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stuarts Lake 1st Feb 1845

The Fraser River salmon run failed in the fall of 1851, which resulted in the natives around Fort St. James dispersing in late September to attempt to hunt in smaller groups. Throughout the fall and winter other natives arrived at the post in a state of starvation; those from Fort George in November, and those from Fraser Lake in December. 111

111. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.8,13,15d, September 24, November 16, December 4, 1851.
Although the tariffs, or prices in goods paid for furs, were generally set for each outfit, these could be adjusted to some extent by the gentlemen of the post. On some occasions, the natives also attempted to negotiate more favourable prices for their furs or salmon, as shown in the post journal of 1852. On August 15:

Tayah when finding that his summer beaver was taken for each 5 Rats refused giving them up and took them back to his lodge.

Two days later, after reconsidering, Tayah did decide to trade his beaver at this rate. In September, the natives of Babine were refusing to trade salmon to the H.B.C., as they wished the price adjusted from 90 thick salmon equalling 1 Made Beaver to 50 per Made Beaver.

In 1854 correspondence took place between Douglas and Manson, in which Douglas approved of the "employment of Indians, to make up for the deficiency of white servants". Manson was instructed to "provide Goods for the payment of such service." This process of local hiring was to become more and more important as the task of staffing New Caledonia became more difficult.

Douglas wrote to Manson in February 1857, having heard that salmon was plentiful in New Caledonia the previous fall:

I trust the natives may be equally well provided with food and prepared for all the contingencies of

112. ibid., p.40d, August 15,17,1852.
113. ibid., p.44, September 16,1852.
However, this was not the case, as Douglas learned when Manson wrote to him the same month concerning the scarcity of food in the district:

...the sufferings of the Natives must have been intense, and at the date of your letter, they had still two dreary months of almost hopeless suffering before them.  

Besides any humanitarian concerns which Douglas felt for the natives, it was clear that he saw a clear relationship between their physical well-being and their production of furs. When they were starving, and dispersed into smaller units for the purpose of subsistence hunting, there was no way that they could provide furs to the H.B.C.

Through this period, some problems remained between the Hudson’s Bay Company and the Carrier, as exemplified by the two murders of H.B.C. men in the 1840s. These incidents seem to have related more to personal differences or problems than to overall institutional conflicts. However, on each occasion of individual violence, the relationship between the two groups as a whole was shaken. By the end of this period, two generations of Carrier, and in some cases H.B.C. employees, had grown up within the context of the New Caledonia fur trade, and as such the interdependencies were becoming stronger. The hiring of Carrier men in the place of unavailable Euro-American servants in the 1850s was a tacit admission that the Carrier and the Company now made up a symbiotic fur trade community, in many cases with common economic interests.

116. ibid., pp.80-82, Douglas to Manson, April 7, 1857.
Transportation

Although the bulk of the 1826 outfit was received from the Columbia, some articles, as well as new recruits, were still sent from the east. Joseph McGillivray and James McDougall, accompanied by 8 men, arrived at Fort St. James from York Factory on November 3, 1826. They had crossed the prairies with the Saskatchewan and Columbia parties, as far as Edmonton, and then with the latter group continued on to the "Columbia Portage". They parted from the Columbia party on October 3, and proceeded "with Leather and other supplies for this District" to the headwaters of the Fraser, where a canoe from Fort St. James was waiting for them. As this vessel was unable to hold all the goods brought in, two other canoes were constructed with "parchment Skins", and the three canoes proceeded to the "Forks", where the goods were divided and distributed to the district posts. 117

When Simpson visited New Caledonia in 1828 he described the 4 month brigade trip to and from Fort Vancouver:

...the mode of transport being from Fort Vancouver to Okanagan by Boats, from Okanagan to Alexandria by Horses, from Alexandria to Stewarts Lake by North Canoes, and from Stewarts Lake to the outposts by a variety of conveyances, vizt. large and small canoes, Horses, Dog Sleds and Men's backs... 118

Simpson thought that this constant transport required in New Caledonia comprised the most "harassing duties" of any of

the fur trade districts. Simpson's intention had been to have the depot for the interior located near the mouth of the Fraser River. Fort Langley was built there in 1827 to that end, in spite of the observations of Simon Fraser many years earlier. Simpson's trip down the Fraser in 1828 made him realize that until "some other practicable route" was found, the supply route from the Columbia remained the only viable one for supplying New Caledonia.  

In the fall of 1831 men and horses transported the Peace River leather from McLeod Lake to Fort St. James. This party took eight days to reach McLeod Lake, and six days to return to Fort St. James. Three years earlier, the Simpson party had found the road between McLeod Lake and Fort St. James "exceedingly bad". Since the abandonment of the eastern supply route, much less transport was needed on it, and it had been left to deteriorate.

By 1833 Dease proposed the use of a different supply route for New Caledonia, using the Skeena and Babine Rivers:

Were you to remove Nass to Simpson River, and to form a post at the Forks Babine & Simpson River, this district could then receive its supplies from you with ease and facility and if required two voyages to the Sea could be performed in a Summer.

This proposal was based largely on Brown's explorations some years before, which established that the Babine River was navigable. Dease thought that more exploration may have been required in the area. This was carried out by Simon

120. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/16, p.56, November 13, 1831.
McGillivray in 1833. In spite of concluding the Babine River itself was unnavigable, he still thought the Babine route potentially a practical one. 123

Simpson suggested the use of the Babine route to the London management of the H.B.C., who decided against the proposal:

We do not think under present circumstances that any new access from the sea Coast to New Caledonia would be of material advantage to our trade, which is supplied by the present route at a moderate cost;... 124

Peter Skene Ogden described the transportation of the brigades within New Caledonia in his 1842 "Notes on Western Caledonia":

A boat from Frasers Lake instructions being left to that effect in the Spring comes down to meet the Brigade at Alexandria on or about the 15th August in charge of the Gentleman superintending at Frasers Lake, the crew consists of 6 men Canadians & Indians the latter engaged for the trip at the rate of 20 Skins each at Alexandria, then the Outfits for the latter place, Ft. George Frasers Lake are made up and at Chin Lac Forks the Frasers Lake boat separates from the Brigade and proceeds to the latter place with its Outfit, five men and an Indian is the crew of each boat and cargo from 50 to 56 pieces, there are only two places in the river that more than usual precautions are necessary the Grant

& Stony Island Rapids, old Bem acts in capacity of Guide an apology having no authority it is therefore necessary [for] you [to] keep your eyes open on all occasions.125

Ogden went on to recommend that the New Caledonia and Thompson River brigades "come in together", for the security both of the men and the property among the large numbers of Indians gathered at the forks of Thompson River. Ogden normally left Fort St. James on April 22 each year, to join the outgoing Thompson River brigade on May 12. After arriving at Okanagan he would "send the Men to assist in bringing down the Boats from Colville", as stronger crews were less apt to have problems on the upper Columbia.126

A.C. Anderson, stationed at Alexandria in the 1840s, described in some detail the transportation of returns and outfits between New Caldedonia and Fort Vancouver. He stressed the importance of the "boutes" in the navigation of the water sections of the route. He described them as often half breeds or Coughnawaga Iroquois, and something of their roles in steering the boats from front and rear with their larger paddles. As already noted, the shortage of capable boutes was an ongoing problem in the transportation in and out of New Caledonia. After two decades of use the brigade routine was well established:

...during the winter the furs traded at the posts out-side of water communication were brought to Fort St. James the headquarters of the District, with dog sledges. As soon as the navigation was open in the spring, generally about the 20th April, the boats with their cargoes on board started down the Stuart's branch and were met at the junction of the

125. W.N. Sage, "Ogden's Notes on Western Caledonia", op. cit., p.55.
126. ibid.
Fraser's Lake branch, by a boat conveying the furs that had been collected at Fraser's Lake which were then transhipped into the other boats, & the Fraser's Lake boat returned. The boats then ran down to Alexandria having taken the returns of Fort George at the junction of Tete Jaune's branch on the way. The horses several hundred in number were then collected, and by this means the whole returns of the district were conveyed to O'Kinagan, having been preceded, or being sometimes accompanied by the Thompson's river Brigade likewise carrying the furs of that district. A number of the men were then dispatched either with light boats or on horseback to the Kettle Falls below Colvile, where they were joined by the Colvile people with their returns and running down the Columbia the following day reached the general rendezvous at Okinagan. The united brigade under the Senior officer as general leader then ran down the Columbia and generally reached Fort Vancouver about the 15th June. 127

Thomas Lowe, a clerk at Fort Vancouver in the same period, noted the arrival and departure of the brigade in his journal. They had arrived prior to June 10 in 1845, as that day the "Brigade men" were "employed beating the New Caledonia furs". They left that year for the interior on June 29, under the leadership of McDonald from Colvile, and Manson, both of whom also had their families with them. The following year the brigade arrived on June 12, with 54 men in 9 boats under the leadership of Manson and Tod. They had brought the widow and children of John McIntosh, the clerk killed at McLeod Lake, to Fort Vancouver with them. When they left on June 27 they took the priests Fathers Ravale and Acolte as

Andersen described the trip back up to New Caledonia, after the business of the brigade had been completed at Fort Vancouver. Portages were required at the Cascades, the Dalles, and the "Chûtes". At the two latter portages, the numerous Indians were employed to move goods with their horses, and to carry the boats themselves when required. The "Chinook Wind" blowing from the west enabled the fleet to set sails on the upward voyage, and save substantially on labour:

Okanagan was generally reached in about 20 days. Here the brigades of Thompson’s River and New Caledonia resumed the horse transport, reversing the proceedings of the preceding Spring. ...

After reaching Alexandria with the horses, the boats which had brought down the returns in the Spring were put in order and the navigation of the Fraser was resumed. From this point to Stuart’s Lake the navigation occupied 20 days, the steady current of the upper Fraser impeding a severe obstacle to the progress of the boats and demanding the constant use of the pole and tracking line, though unattended with the formidable dangers which characterize the navigation of the Columbia. From Fort St. James generally by open water the supplies were distributed to the various outlying posts beyond that point, and so on year after year. 129

The search for alternate routes of supply to New Caledonia began in earnest in the 1840s, as a result of the pending resolution of the Oregon boundary dispute (figure 12).

The Council assigned A.C. Anderson to the first of these explorations, to find a viable route between Thompson River and Fort Langley, near the mouth of the Fraser River. He began his reconnaissance at Kamloops in May 1846, with the intention of taking one route out to Fort Langley and another on the inward trip. On the outbound trip Anderson and his party headed almost due west to Hat Creek and Pavilion Lake, following an "Indian horse track". They crossed the Fraser, and followed the Seton Lake/Anderson Lake system to Lillooet Lake and Lillooet River, then south into Harrison Lake and River, which took them to the lower Fraser River. The trip occupied ten days, during which they covered 229\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles from the "bank of the Fraser" to Fort Langley.\(^{130}\) This route was considered overly complicated, and also had a dangerous stretch of 50 miles of rapids on the river route going south. The Board of Management was convinced it would "not answer our purpose and ought never to be attempted."\(^{131}\)

On May 28 Anderson set out from Fort Langley on his return voyage, first proceeding about 66 miles up the Fraser, to a point near the present site of Hope. He started overland at the mouth of the "Tlae-Kullum River" (now Silverhope Creek), but turned back when it became apparent that it was not a practical route to the interior. He returned to the main stream, and proceeded 3 miles further up, to the mouth of the "Quequealla" (Coquihalla) River. The party followed an Indian trail through the Coquihalla Valley, which took them to a low ridge. On the other side of the ridge they came on another stream, the Sumallo River, which they descended for about 20 miles. After diverting north along Snass Creek for some 10 miles, they continued over the height of land. Descending on the north side, the party encountered 8 to 10 feet of snow still on the ground, which fortunately was

\(^{130}\) ibid., pp.50-57.
\(^{131}\) H.3.C.A., B.223/b/34, pp.1-13, Ogden, Work, and Douglas to Governor and Committee, November 2, 1846.
compact enough to support them. Carrying on two more days they reached open country, where their horses had been brought to meet them, and two more days ride brought them back to Thompson River. The expedition had covered 237 1/2 miles in 12 days by this route, and Anderson considered it a viable one. The main objection was the depth of snow encountered on the north side of the pass, but the Indians told him it would disappear by the middle of July. The Board of Management sent Anderson's findings to the Governor and Committee in November 1846. The Board recommended use of this route, and the improvement of the first 56 miles from the mouth of the Coquihalla to the height of land, by clearing and grading. Due to the late-melting snow through the mountains, the brigade using this route would reach Thompson River at the end of August, about two weeks later than if it used the Columbia route. This delay was not expected to have any negative impact on the arrangements of the interior districts.

In the winter of 1846 Yale heard of another route along the banks of the Fraser River, potentially providing better access to the interior, and avoiding the problems with snow encountered on the Coquihalla. The Board of Management assigned Anderson to examine this route in May 1847, after which he was to discuss his findings with Yale. If judged suitable by these two men, the Board wanted Yale to begin to develop this route immediately, or if not, to continue with development of the Coquihalla road. On March 19, Anderson set out south from Kamloops to Nicola Lake, and followed the

133. H.B.C.A., B.223/b/34, Ogden, Work and Douglas to Governor and Committee, November 2,1846.
135. P.A.B.C., A/B/20/V20d, Ogden and Douglas to Anderson, January 12,1847; ibid., Ogden and Douglas to Yale, April 28,1847.
Nicola River to its confluence with the Thompson. He then proceeded west and south on a path along the Thompson, Fraser, and Anderson Rivers until reaching Kequeloose, a few miles north of Spuzzum, at the head of the Fraser Canyon. His native guide informed him that near this point pack horses could be ferried across to the west side of the river, where a trail existed to the base of the canyon. Anderson thought this approach impractical, and instead canoed from that point to Fort Langley. Contrary to earlier explorers, he claimed that with a few portages the route was suitable for transporting goods and furs. On June 1 Anderson returned up the Fraser to Kequeloose, and then struck out overland to the north east, towards Kamloops. Anderson wrote the Board of Management recommending the Fraser Canyon route, minimizing the problem of the rapids in his report.

Douglas and Yale examined the Fraser Canyon again in the fall of 1847, and Douglas reached the same conclusion that Simpson had in 1828. The rapids of the Fraser presented a major impediment to moving cargo by this route. However, he proposed that a "horse road" be developed on the "north" side of the canyon to bypass the 13 miles of rapids. From that point river transportation to Fort Langley would be relatively straightforward. On this trip the natives also told Douglas of another trail to the interior, which reached the Fraser about 25 miles above Fort Langley, probably by way of the Chilliwack River. Exploration of this new trail was also planned for that fall, and either it or the Fraser Canyon route developed for use. By this time, the responsibility of exploring and developing the routes to Thompson River had devolved upon the staff of Fort Langley. At the end of

137. ibid., pp.76-80, 81-83, Anderson to Board of Management, June 21, 1847.
October 1847 Yale sent out a party to examine the southern trail. It was already obstructed by snow, but seemed unsuitable in any case, because of a lack of forage for horses. In July, Yale had ordered a reconnaissance of the summit of the Coquihalla route, where little snow was seen, and none that would serve as an impediment to a brigade. However, in accordance with his instructions, Yale was to develop the Fraser Canyon route. He sent his interpreter, Ovid Allard, and 6 men "to build a house & store at the foot of the falls and a store at the crossing place above the falls". The real test was expected the next summer, when the New Caledonia brigade attempted this route. If the Fraser Canyon route proved difficult, Yale's preferred Coquihalla route was expected to get a trial. A fleet of 4 batteaux and two "light boats" was constructed at Fort Langley in anticipation of the transportation requirements of the brigade between the falls and Fort Langley. 139

The final decision to use the Fraser River route rather than that to the Columbia for the 1848 brigade was precipitated by the outbreak of the Cayuse Indian War of 1848 in Oregon territory:

The present distracted state of Indian affairs in the Columbia has, in a manner forced us to undertake this measure sooner than we had intended, and before our preparations are so complete as we could have wished, but we nevertheless do not apprehend that the Brigade will meet with any extraordinary difficulties in its progress. 140

In March the Board of Management wrote to Yale informing

140. H.B.C.A., B.223/b/37, Ogden and Douglas to Simpson, March 16, 1848.
him that the brigades from New Caledonia, Thompson River, and Fort Colvile were expected at Fort Langley in the first week of June. The outfits for these districts, and the private orders of the gentlemen and servants, were to be forwarded immediately to Fort Langley. The staff of Fort Langley, with the new fleet of boats, was assigned the responsibility of bringing the interior returns down from the falls, and taking the outfits back up on the return voyage. The private orders of the men from the interior were to be made up in the "equipment shop" or sale shop at Fort Langley. 141

Although "extraordinary difficulties" were not expected by Douglas and Ogden in March, they were encountered when the brigade attempted the route in June. Fifty men and 400 pack horses set out from Thompson River. Many of the horses were half wild, and the brigade encountered great problems in crossing the mountains to reach the Fraser, and in crossing the river itself. The upward trip with the batteaux, fighting against the current, took longer than expected. Natives gathered in the canyon to fish stole some of the Company's goods on the inward trip. Overall, 70 horses and between 16 and 25 pieces of goods were lost on the trip. The two men in charge of the brigade had different opinions on which was the worst section of the route. A.C. Anderson, in charge of Colvile, considered the Douglas Portage through the canyon unuseable, while Manson, from New Caledonia, thought the trail through the mountains between the plains and the river the worst. 142 Henry Peers kept a journal describing this voyage, which started at Fort Langley on July 17 with the outfit loaded in 5 batteaux and 2 river boats manned by Indians. The party reached Fort Yale on July 24, then split into two groups through the canyon. Eighty Indians carried half the goods in 3 or 4 trips up the "river portage", while 35 horses carried

141. P.A.B.C., A/B/20/V20d, Douglas and Ogden to Yale, March 23, 1848.
142. Mary Cullen, History of Fort Langley, op. cit., pp.43-44.
the rest in 4 trips up "Douglasses portage". Manson and Peers made a final trip from Yale to the head of the rapids on August 2, with 30 horses. They reached Thompson River on August 22, and spent the next three days at Kamloops, when Peers received orders from Manson and Tod to re-examine the Coquihalla route explored by Anderson two years earlier.143

Due to Manson’s reluctance to bring the brigade out via the Fraser Canyon again, Douglas decided to open a new road following Peers’ route.144 Peers, assisted by men from Fort Langley, was assigned to clear and level the new road. They were also to select a spot near the mouth of the Coquihalla and build a palisaded post containing a dwelling house and two storehouses for the accommodation of the brigades.145 This new post, named Fort Hope, was to remain the terminus of the overland portion of the brigade trail for many years.

Douglas still had doubts about the condition of the new road, the depth of snow and the presence of forage for the horses on this route. He decided that the 1849 brigade would come out through the Fraser Canyon.146 The road party worked the Coquihalla route until May, and then proceeded to the Fraser Canyon, to repair the existing portage through the canyon, and then meet the brigade.147 The inward trip followed Peers’ road, which was found preferable to the Fraser Canyon route. The greatest problem encountered was snow in the mountains. Manson and 20 of his men worked for 15 days clearing the rest of the road, which delayed their arrival back at Fort St. James. The two month round trip of the brigade meant a late return to that post, which in turn

144. P.A.B.C., A/B/20/V2DA, Douglas to Tod, October 30, 1848.
145. ibid., Douglas to Yale, October 30, 1848.
146. ibid., Douglas to Yale, November 1, 1848.
complicated the distribution of the New Caledonia outfits.\textsuperscript{148} It later was revealed that some of the delay was due to personal animosity between Manson and Anderson. Their failure to communicate resulted in Manson arriving at Kamloops and then waiting a long time for Anderson and the Colville brigade to arrive.\textsuperscript{149}

Peers' road was put to the full test in 1850, with notable success. The snow in the mountains was compact enough to support the loaded pack horses. Manson thought the passage could be attempted ten days earlier. There had been no problems with the natives, and the road itself was much improved. The New Caledonia and Thompson River brigades reached Fort Langley in ten days travelling from Kamloops, arriving at the depot between July 15 and 17.\textsuperscript{150}

Water transportation was still the preferred mode for local shipping throughout this period within New Caledonia. By the 1850s, much of the salmon used at Fort St. James was traded at Babine, and transported back to the former post in boats. In 1851 the many trips required to transport the salmon in one boat took between 3 and 5 days each, with the boat manned by four servants.\textsuperscript{151}

However, the development of the new brigade route to the interior and Fort Langley's assumption of the role of inland depot were the critical changes in transportation to New Caledonia in this period. A viable route to the interior within British territory was now available, and continued to serve New Caledonia until the early 1860s.

\textsuperscript{149} H.B.C.A., B.226/c/1, p.34, Simpson to Ogden, Douglas and Work, June 25,1850.
\textsuperscript{150} H.B.C.A., A.11/72, pp.290-293, Douglas to Barclay, August 17, 1850.
\textsuperscript{151} H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.9d-12d, October 11-November 12,1851.
Transportation: Methods

Through the 1830s bark canoes were still used and built at Fort St. James. The list of articles in use for outfit 1829 includes 2 large birch bark and 3 small wooden canoes at Fort St. James, as well as 3 "Canoe Sails". The construction and use of the parchment skin canoe as a temporary expedient in 1826 has already been noted. Three of the types of watercraft already mentioned were still built and used through this period. One batteau and two "North Canoes" were charged to the district as a whole in outfit 1829, credited to Fort St. James. This would suggest that boats and canoes were built at the latter post to serve the needs of the whole district.

Eight horses appeared on inventory at Fort St. James in outfit 1829, a relatively small number compared to the 107 kept at Alexandria for use of the brigade. Twelve "Dogs and Pups" were kept at Stuart Lake that year, as were horse and dog appointments, with no quantities given for the latter items.

In the early 1830s there were frequent references in the post journal to canoe materials. In April 1831 Waccan and a number of men "laid a canoe & they began sewing it". Apparently this described the building process for a birch bark canoe. The following month a servant began to "Square Gunwales for our Wooden Canoe", suggesting that dugouts were also used at that time. Four of these wooden canoes carried

152. P.A.B.C., A/B/20/N42.8, New Caledonia Post Accounts, pp.53-55.
153. ibid., pp.35-36.
154. ibid., pp.53-54.
3103 salmon between Babine and Fort St. James that year. At the same time, there was a concerted effort to build boats or bateaux at Fort St. James. A servant at the post, Dompierre, began construction of a bateau in April 1831, and there were references to "bateau timbers" and "boat knees" at different times over the next year. In the fall of 1831 2 men went from Fort St. James to Fraser Lake to saw timbers for a bateau to be built "for that Lake". However, 4 bark canoes still carried the 1831 outfit between Alexandria and Fort St. James.

In June 1836 Simpson commended Ogden for an innovation in transportation in the district:

The substitution of Columbia Boats for Canoes is an admirable improvement on our late mode of transport, and will save much winter travelling which occasioned a vast expenditure of provisions...

The New Caledonia inventory of spring 1844 included a list of livestock, some of which would have related primarily to transportation, specifically 9 oxen, 21 dogs, and 1 "breeding Slut".

The outfit in 1851 went from Alexandria to Fort St. James in boats. Only two were used, due to a shortage of men, and a second trip was necessary to complete the shipment from Alexandria. A.C. Anderson described "boats of about two tons burthen" that were used in the 1840s between Alexandria

156. ibid., pp.22, 33d-34, 41d, 42, 66, April 20, July 13, September 14, 19,1831, February 5,1832.
159. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, p.6d, September 3,1851.
and the posts on Stuart Lake, Fraser Lake, and Tete Jaune Cache.  

A "Salmon Boat" was used to transport dried fish from Babine Portage to Fort St. James in 1851. This boat, manned by 4, carried between 4,000 and 5,000 pieces of dried salmon on each of its trips that fall. The boat used to transport the outfit to Fraser Lake in the same year brought back 50 kegs of potatoes on its return trip. In January 1852 wood was being prepared at Fort St. James for building boats.

At the same time, horses were used for local transportation, particularly on the trip to McLeod Lake and at Babine Portage. The men of the post squared wood for "wooden saddles" in 1851-1852. They worked on the construction of new dog trains in the same period.

Provisions

In the fall of 1826 there was an attempt to control the production of fish by using employees to catch the required salmon. The post fisherman and a helper went in early October to establish "the Fall Fishery" at Rivet’s Point. This enterprise was not attended with success; two weeks later the fisherman was described as "always occupied about the nets altho' he catches nothing in them." At the same time the

161. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.9d-12d, October 11-November 12,1851.
11-November 12,1851.
162. ibid., pp.11,20d-21, October 30,1851, January 19,22,1851.
163. ibid., pp.7d,11,21, September 14, October 24,1851, January 22, 1852.
164. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/8, pp.65, 73, October 11,23,1826.
garden was harvested, and 28 kegs of potatoes were dug, although "more stalks than fruit" had been produced. 165

Simpson described the provisioning at Fort St. James as he found it in 1828:

The Establist. is maintained on Fish, of which there is a variety, say carp at the opening of the Navigation, a small species of Salmon about the size of Herrings in Summer; a larger kind averaging about 5 lbs. Weight (but spent or in a dying state being out of Season) in the Fall, which is their principal "stand by", and a few White Fish in the Winter which with an occasional treat of Berry Cake prepared by the Natives, and a Dog Feast on high Days and holy days constitute the living of nearly all the Posts in New Caledonia... 166

Simpson thought the diet itself was bad enough, but from chronic scarcity of salmon, the men were often on half rations, and agriculture had proven to be a losing proposition due to the summer frosts which would "destroy Vegetation". 167

In outfit 1829 there were fish nets listed among "articles in use". There were 8 "Small 'Sorted" and 2 "Large Sturgeon" nets in use on Stuart Lake, as well as 1 sturgeon spear. The only agricultural implements listed were 6 "Garden Hoes", 3 "Grass Scythes" and 1 sickle. 168 In the same outfit, Fort St. James was debited for 15 kegs of potatoes supplied by Fraser Lake, and 1993 "Seasoned Salmon" from Alexandria. 169

The problems of provisioning continued into the next
decade. In June 1831 3103 salmon were brought from Babine Lake to Fort St. James. The following month the sturgeon net was in use, in competition with Qua, who insisted on placing his sturgeon net in such a way as to prevent the H.B.C. taking any fish. At the end of July it seemed that a sturgeon taken in the H.B.C. net had been stolen by the natives. The salmon run in 1831 was not a good one, and there were concerns about the supply for that winter:

Jose Porteur [a native employee of the H.B.C.] has set his vervaux for Salmon and should he take any is to assist us with a few the natives are not taking more than usual and are now despairing of taking any. They are off down the River a piece to spear and there only remains their families at the Village.

A few days later 3 men were making floats for salmon nets. By having the employees fish, Dease hoped to save the provisions already in store, as he expected few salmon from the natives that year. This concern was confirmed by the end of September, still with no prospect of salmon from the natives. To alleviate the problem, Company servants attempted a whitefish fishery. At that time the total "Provisions in Store" comprised 451 salmon, 8½ kegs of "Small fish Spliced and Dried", and 30 "small trout Spliced". As previously mentioned, ten years earlier the ration was four salmon per man per day, and twenty years earlier 25,000 salmon were in store at the post, so the situation in 1831 was not promising.

In 1831 the garden contained barley, cabbage, turnips, and Swedish turnips. In the summer Jose Porteur and another

172. ibid., p.40d, September 6, 1831.
173. ibid., p.41, September 10, 1831.
174. ibid., p.45, September 30, 1831.
Indian weeded it, but it still produced a poor crop in September:

...got what Barley we have thrashed but scarcely the seed returned & that has been blighted by the frost in the forepart of the Summer, our Potatoes are not much better - the Cabbages are tolerable large but not headed we have however a Crop of very fine turnips one of which without the leaves weighed 8½ lbs.175

By the end of September 15 kegs of turnips were harvested, as well as Swedish turnips and potatoes, of which less than half were "larger than Musket Balls".176 The result of the year's agriculture confirmed what John Stuart had known a decade earlier; that in the uncertain climate of Fort St. James turnips were nearly the only reliable crop.

The district report prepared in 1834 by Dease included the information that the fall 1833 fishery produced abundantly, but that attempts to raise vegetables and grain were unsuccessful.177

John McLean, the clerk in charge of Fort St. James for the summer of 1834, described the food producing activities of the season:

...I was appointed to the charge of Stuart's Lake during the summer, with four men to perform the ordinary duties of the establishment -- making hay, attending to gardens &c. A few cattle were introduced in 1830, and we now began to derive some benefit from the produce of the dairy. Our gardens

175. ibid., pp.30,37,42d, June 12, August 13, September 23,1831.
176. ibid., pp.43-43d, September 24,26, 1831.
177. H.B.C.A., B.188/e/5, Report on District,1834.
(a term applied in this country to any piece of
ground under cultivation) in former times yielded
potatoes; nothing would now grow save turnips. A
few carrots and cabbages were this year raised on a
piece of new ground, which added to the luxuries of
our table. Heaven knows, they were much wanted, for
the other fare was scarcely fit for dogs! In the
early part of the season it consisted entirely of
salmon, which this year was of the worst quality,
having been two years in the store. 178

The Fort St. James accounts for outfit 1836 contain a
table of "Expenditure of Provisions" for the year, describing
the official Company rations and provisions used in the
outfit. Included were:

- 23,455 dried salmon
- 595 "Fish of Sorts"
- 781 sturgeon
- 346 trout
- 21 beaver
- 10 lynxes
- 925 rabbits
- 48 ducks
- 58 geese
- 1 swan

Although large quantities of carrots, turnips, and
potatoes were listed among the provisions consumed at the
other posts in New Caledonia, none appear on the list for Fort
St. James, demonstrating again the uncertainty of agriculture
at that post. 179

Peter Skene Ogden's "Notes on Western Caledonia" outlined the provisioning strategy at Fort St. James in 1842:

...every exertion must be made before the navigation closes to secure a stock of Salmon not less than 30M are required to meet all demands, from the Babine two thirds of this quantity is supplied two men and four Horses with carts transport it across the Portage and from thence three men in the Salmon Boat in two trips land it here, but when Salmon are abundant in this Lake secure them without delay and afterwards send the Boat to the Portage some years the Salmon fail at the Babine not often but in this Lake frequently so whenever you can procure a supply loose not sight off it and Instructions should be forwarded in the Fall to Frasers Lake to trade not less than twenty thousand as a reserve in case of accidents. Salmon with care keep well for two or three years altho not so palatable as those of the present still as last year when a general failure takes place we are glad to have them, when one years staff of life is secured for the year your mind is relieved from a heavy load of anxiety.

Regarding our farming operations I have done all in my power with the slender means at my disposal to encourage them and I would strongly advise you to follow the example, two years following from the scarcity of Salmon that prevailed over the District we had convincing proofs of the benefit arising from farming, at Ft. George ten men were solely supported on grain and at Alexandria even more in proportion, independant of these advantages which are not of minor importance. I have within the last year reduced our demand on Colvile twenty five bags of
flour less in itself again no small object... 180

By the next decade, dependence on game decreased to some extent. The spring 1844 inventory of New Caledonia included a number of domestic meat producers, including 9 bulls, 36 cows, 32 heifers, 13 bull calves, 10 cow calves, 13 hogs, 72 "fowls", 5 pigeons, and 29 turkeys. 181

When Henry Warre and Mervin Vavasour were on their reconnaissance for the British military during the Oregon boundary dispute in 1845, Warre prepared inventories of the H.B.C. posts west of the mountains. He was told that at Fort St. James there were 15 acres of land under cultivation, and that the livestock consisted of 14 pigs, 39 horses and 94 cattle. 182 A.C. Anderson, based in the district in the 1840s, described a little of the agriculture at Fort St. James:

At Fort St. James (Stuarts Lake, Lat. 54°26'43") potatoes, though sometimes raised, are a precarious crop - Turnips and the various hardy vegetables thrive well, notwithstanding the summer frosts that sometimes occur.

This place, as well as Fraser’s Lake and Fort George, is well adapted for the summer pasturage of cattle; there being at all three places plenty of good grass, with abundance of the wild vetch.

In selecting spots in this quarter for sowing wheat, and indeed all the cereals, there is, however, a secret, the ignorance of which too frequently leads

180. W.N. Sage, "Ogden’s Notes on Western Caledonia", op. cit., pp. 52-53.
the cultivator into serious mistakes. Owing to the summer hoar-frosts which are apt to occur in parts, it is necessary to select, for the more tender growths, the slopes of hills, and, if possible, near a large body of water. The low bottoms may appear more tempting vegetation will frequently be blighted there while that on the hill-slope escapes.\footnote{183}

However, into the 1850s salmon remained the staple food on Stuart Lake. In 1851 the salmon run had its cyclical failure before the large run. The natives spent August gathering berries, and the following month started to disperse to hunt game. Qua’s son Tlung was the only native that attempted fishing with his verveau in August.\footnote{184} The H.B.C. sent a boat and 4 men to Babine Portage in the months of October and November, as some 31,000 pieces of salmon had been "delivered at the Portage". By November 12, all 31,307 pieces had been transported back to the stores of Fort St. James.\footnote{185}

In the spring of 1852 barley was planted in a "new Piece of ground" added to the garden at Fort St. James. As well as the barley, some peas and 44 kegs of potatoes were planted, the latter producing 787 kegs that fall.\footnote{186} Although the potatoes had produced well, summer frost and extreme dryness affected many other crops, including the hay raised at the "Monte" for the animals. In spite of a substantial effort that year to develop agriculture, with the new garden area, mud carted to one of the fields for manure, and fencing built and replaced around the new field, the calf yard, and the potato field, the hostile climate again defeated the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[184]{H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.4d-8, August 1-September 24,1851.}
\footnotetext[185]{ibid., pp.9d-12d, October 11-November 12,1851.}
\footnotetext[186]{H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.31-32,46d-47, April 26-May 11, October 11-15,1852.}
\end{footnotes}
The salmon run in 1856 was a large one, but the potato crop was lost that year "from the effects of summer frosts a truly serious loss in your circumstances."

In spite of the many efforts made after 1830 to improve the provision situation at Fort St. James, the local conditions made agriculture uncertain at best. Although some success attended the stock-raising at the post, the "staff of life" at the end of this period, as at the beginning, was salmon, with the cyclical nature of this resource still proving a problem.

Life at Fort St. James

The living conditions in New Caledonia remained marginal in this period. When George McDougall arrived back at Fort St. James in November 1827 he found his brother James in a state of "total Debility in both his Legs Left Hand and Arm", unable to even turn over in bed. Fortunately, George had brought in James' "woman" from the east side of the mountains, so he had someone to nurse him, and began slowly to recover. George also found his fellow clerk James Douglas "bent on leaving the Country", which was regretted:

Independent of his abilities as an Indian Trader he possesses most amiable qualities and an accomplished

187. ibid., pp.32d-33,35,36-37,48, May 11-12,17,20, June 8, June 29-July 8, October 21,1852.
Thomas Dears, a clerk posted to Fraser Lake in 1831, wrote to his friend Edward Ermatinger in Canada, describing the diet in New Caledonia:

...a wholesome meal of food which is not what we enjoy in New Caledonia and if your destination was to have been this way think it one of the most fortunate occurrences of your life you did not return. You know I am generally a slender person what would you say if you saw my emaciated Body now. I am every morning when dressing in danger of slipping through my Breeks and falling into my Boots. Many a night I go to bed hungry and craving for something better than this horrid dried Salmon we are obliged to live upon - it is quite medicinal this very morning one of my men in attending on the call of nature evacuated to the distance of six feet - this is a real fact and is almost incredibale and often we are trouble this way excuse me - these hardships are enough to drive me out of the country. 190

Some juggling of personnel was done in order to maintain peace at the post. In the spring of 1831 a policy was described which prevented Joseph Porteur, a local native employee, and Waccan from being at the post at the same time. They were both considered useful men, but had to be separated "as an old animosity subsists between them." 191

The new year of 1832 was again celebrated late, on

191. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/16, p. 23d, April 26, 1831.
January 14. It was more important in such circumstances to celebrate when the constraints of business and the weather allowed the maximum number of men from around the district to gather at the post:

The men after being collected in the Hall & treated to a couple of Glasses Rum & Cakes got each a Pint to divert themselves & were allowed each 1½ Pints to the respective accounts of those who wished to purchase any with which they passed the day feasting. 192

John McLean, a clerk at Fort St. James in outfit 1833, initially without a specific assignment, described the life of the gentlemen at the post:

...Mr. D, superintendent of the district, played remarkably well on the violin and flute, some of us "wee bodies" could also do something in that way, and our musical soirees, if not in melody, could at least compete in noise, numbers taken into account, with any association of the kind in the British dominions. Chess, backgammon, and whist, completed the variety of our evening pastimes. In the daytime each individual occupied himself as he pleased. When together, smoking, "spinning yarns", about dog racing, canoe sailing, and l'amour; sometimes politics; now and then an animated discussion on theology, but without bitterness; these made our days fly away as agreeably as our nights. 193

Soon afterward, D. McKenzie left the post and McLean took his place, ending his leisure. He now had to make up the

192. ibid., p.63d, January 14, 1832.
accounts for all eight of the posts in the district, superintend the men of the post, accompany them on their winter trips, and manage the Indian trade. 194

McLean described Waccan at this time as married to a daughter of James McDougall, the clerk so intimately involved with the early development of the district. McDougall was said to be retired and living in poverty in 1841. 195

Although life in New Caledonia was difficult, it seems to have held an appeal for some individuals. Peter Skene Ogden had asked Simpson's permission to visit Canada either in 1837 or 1838:

...he has asked that permission with the strange condition attached to it that he may be allowed to return to New Caledonia (the Siberia of the wilderness) in which he has been indulged;... 196

In his 1842 "Notes on Western Caledonia" Ogden left his successor some information on the servants in the district:

The Servants of this District have almost from the first year the Country was established been represented as most worthless dishonest disolute sett of beings having been now some years with them with few exceptions they are by no means so bad as represented and when we seriously take into consideration the hard duty imposed on them food of an indifferent quality and no variety, temptations great it is not surprising that they should occasionally deviate from the right path and under

194. ibid., p.151.
195. ibid., p.163.
all these circumstances some allowance ought to be made for them. ...

The Servants attached to the brigade receive their usual allowance of Flour at Okanagon in the following proportions: married men 100 lbs each, bachelors 50. Servants inland married or single 25 lbs each charged to their accounts. Interpreters 50 lbs each, 25 lb only chargeable the remainder with 15 lb Sugar are given to each of the latter as gratuity. Old Waccan the Interpreter (J. Be. Boucher) is an exception to the last his allowance being ¼ Keg Sugar gratuity and messes at the table. 197

Ogden had also stopped the former practice of allowing each of the servants three moose skins as part of their winter supplies. The men had traded much of this to the natives on private account, hurting the official trade. Ogden allowed each of them one pair of shoes (mocassins) every 15 days instead, thereby saving over 100 of the 160 skins previously consumed this way, and aiding the Indian trade a little.

He also advised that it was best to attempt to re-engage existing employees in New Caledonia, rather than trusting to the "refuse of brothels and Gaols" such as those recently sent from Canada as new recruits. He suggested the use of tobacco as an incentive to re-engage, as liquor was no longer available in the district. 198

Ogden’s forebearance of his staff was reflected in their affection for him. A.C. Anderson, in charge of Alexandria, wrote to George Simpson concerning the pending departure of

197. W.N. Sage, "Ogden’s Notes on Western Caledonia", op. cit., pp.53-54.
198. ibid., p.53.
Ogden:

In a private light, too, his loss will be acutely felt; for his kindness and consideration as our bourgeois we are all more or less indebted. And though Mr. Ogden, on his departure; may not be honoured; like his predecessor, with a testimonial of his worth so sounding as a musical snuffbox, he may, at least boast that he carries off with him, what are even more to be valued, the good wishes and respect of all connected with him...\(^{199}\)

In spite of the views held by the gentlemen within the district, George Simpson wrote to John McLoughlin in 1843, blaming the staffing problems west of the Rockies on the "cruelty & oppression" with which the fur trade was run:

...the service on the West side of the Mountains is become so unpopular with Canadians, Orkneymen & halfbreeds that it is a most difficult matter to get men for that part of the country. This unpopularity appears to arise from loud complaints, industriously circulated, of extreme ill usage, being as they say starved, beaten & maimed by the Co’s officers in the Columbia.\(^{200}\)

These complaints continued into the 1850s, to the displeasure of George Simpson. The conditions in New Caledonia made it difficult enough to engage and keep servants in the district, without any other disincentives. Simpson wrote to Manson in 1853 concerning one servant’s allegations, suggesting that rather than beating the men, other sanctions


could be imposed. They could be taken to the depot, put on short rations, or arrested, but beating was not to occur. These remarks were directed at Peter Ogden and Donald McLean in particular. 201

The spiritual needs of the men in the district were first administered to in 1842, when the priest Modeste Demers accompanied the brigade back to Fort St. James. He arrived at the post on September 16 in company with Ogden, and was met there by three clerks. He held a high mass at the post on September 18, and in the three days spent at Fort St. James, baptised 12 white and 13 native children. The differentiation presumably was made on the basis of the father’s race. Demers returned to Alexandria, to pass the winter ministering to the Canadians and Indians, and where he had the natives build two churches. 202

The Boucher dynasty continued into the 1850s, with several descendents of Waccan in the district. One of these was Jean Marie Boucher, described in 1851 as a young man "exceedingly indolent & careless in his duties, in fact quite unfit for the situation of Interpreter." He was sent that November from Fort George to Stuart Lake, and from there was assigned to Babine. 203

The new year of 1852 was celebrated on time, but otherwise much in the conventional manner:

201. A.G. Morice, The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, Smithers, Interior Stationery Ltd., 1978, pp.281-283, citing Simpson to Manson, June 18, 1853; Morice also cites other documentary and oral evidence for "club law" in the district, suggesting that the "peaceful Canadians" did not appreciate their violent British gentlemen.


203. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.11d-12d, November 5-8, 1851.
...it being new year gave the men of the Establishment an holy day and as customary had meeting with them they were liberally supplied with liquor and bread and also gave them a dance in the evening. 204

In 1853 George Simpson introduced a new policy limiting private orders. Commissioned gentlemen were to be allowed £100 per annum, at 33 1/3 per cent advance, while clerks and servants were not allowed to incur debt of greater than 2/3 their salary, at 50 per cent advance. Simpson stated that items at these costs were supplied at a loss to the Company, so should include only "absolute personal necessaries". This policy was to curtail the practice of employees purchasing large quantities of goods at these favourable prices to pay native labourers on private account. This meant that the Company subsidised this private activity at its own expense, totally contrary to its desires. 205

By this time desertion was becoming a problem in New Caledonia, with very real alternatives opening up for employees in the shape of the California gold fields, and other developments to the south. Three men deserted the brigade at Fort Langley in 1853. When caught they were to be kept at that post until the next year when Manson returned with the next brigade. In a letter discussing the problem, Douglas hinted at execution as punishment for the deserters, presumably to create an example and stem any potential flood of men leaving the service this way. 206 However, this solution was never applied, and the problem continued, with Douglas writing the following summer:

204. ibid., p.19, January 1, 1852.
205. H.B.C.A., B.226/c/1, Simpson to Board of Management, June 18, 1853.
I exceedingly regret the desertion of your men, this is a growing evil and must be checked by severe measures which must receive the support and cooperation of all concerned, otherwise they cannot be properly carried out.207

For the gentlemen and the servants assigned to Fort St. James, the prospects were bleak. By this period, the advancement that had been an inducement for the gentlemen no longer seemed available. It was clear that men such as Manson considered their extended posting to the district as a sort of punishment. In some cases this frustration seems to have been taken out on the servants, resulting in the "club law" disapproved of by Simpson. The reputation of the district became such that only the lowest orders could be recruited to serve in it, aggravating the situation. It became even more essential for the Company to attempt to keep good men in the district. By the 1850s this was extremely difficult, as there were now the inducements of the gold fields of California, and other opportunities in American territory. Solutions like the hiring of Norse servants were unsuccessful, but the hiring of natives to fill vacant positions was a precursor of things to come.

Conclusions

This period saw the strategies decided on in the preceding one institutionalized, with the New Caledonia fur trade carried on in a clear pattern, both in terms of the seasonal round and internal and external business relationships. On the short term this proved profitable, with the relationship between

207. ibid., pp.141d-142, Douglas to Manson, August 1, 1854.
district returns and expenses providing a healthy profit. With the decline in the market for beaver furs in Europe in the 1840s, and increasing expenses in New Caledonia, the profits declined from around £9,000 per year in the late 1820s to not much more than half that by the mid 1840s. By the end of the 1840s the New Caledonia returns were down, and the district expenses had risen from about £3,000 to more than £5,000, leaving the district profit at less than £1,500. The expenses were up because of the development of the new brigade route, as well as various abuses of the system by both officers and servants attempting to make life in New Caledonia more bearable. A minor resurgence took place in the fur trade in the 1850s, with emphasis on furs other than beaver, but expenses continued high. However, the economics of the trade remained viable as long as the Hudson’s Bay Company monopoly on the Indian trade was maintained. The elimination of this special privilege marks the end of this period.
Chapter 5: 1858-1871

The Monopoly Ends

The New Caledonia fur trade continued as it had for years, until 1858 when the rush of men seeking gold on the Fraser River initiated major economic and political changes in the district. Three years before the Fraser gold rush began, gold was discovered on the Flathead River in Oregon, and Douglas recognized that although this had the potential to disrupt the fur trade, it also could open up a new retail market in supplying the miners. As Douglas anticipated, gold was found to the north, particularly in the Thompson River district. Initially these fields were worked primarily by natives, who in August 1857 traded 49 ounces of gold to the H.B.C. at Kamloops. In the same month, miners from Washington and Oregon found their way to the Thompson River gold fields, where they ran into some resistance both from the natives and the H.B.C. Douglas attempted to protect the Company's trade with the natives. He instructed McLean at Kamloops to warn off anyone who attempted to carry on such trade, as the Company had "the exclusive right of trading with Indians on the West side of the mountains". Douglas also issued a proclamation at the beginning of 1858 as governor of Vancouver Island which required gold seekers to get authorization from the colonial government.

2. H.B.C.A., B.113/c/1, p.110, McLean to Yale, August 20, 1857.
In the early spring of 1858 the H.B.C. organized a "transport corps" to move goods inland to sell to the miners at Kamloops. This "corps" travelled from Fort Langley to the forks of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers, by way of Douglas Portage, through the Fraser Canyon. As part of this effort, a new post was built at the forks, initially called Fort Dallas, later known as Lytton. Fort Yale, largely ignored after the abandonment of the Fraser River route for the brigade, was also pressed into service as part of this new transport service. The rush from San Francisco to the Fraser River started in earnest in March, following the shipment of 800 ounces of gold collected by the H.B.C. to the mint in that city. Word leaked out, and by the summer there were over 25,000 men on, or proceeding to, the Fraser River gold fields.

James Douglas, in his dual role as head of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Western Department, and governor of the colony of Vancouver Island, began to issue proclamations, under the authority of his latter position, which were primarily intended to protect the interests of the H.B.C. On May 8 he issued a proclamation asserting the exclusive trading rights of the H.B.C., forbidding all British or foreign trade on the mainland, and requiring all craft proceeding to the Fraser River to purchase a licence from the Company and a sufference from a customs agent in Victoria. By the following month Douglas accepted the fact that the flow of immigrants could not be stopped, and recommended the opening of the country, with some compensation paid to the H.B.C. for

8. ibid., pp.26-27.
relinquishing its licence. Sir E.B. Lytton, the Colonial Secretary, wrote to Douglas in July, with a reminder that the H.B.C. charter only extended to exclusive trade with the Indians, and that attempts to exclude vessels or goods, and persons trading with anyone other than the Indians, was outside Douglas’ jurisdiction. The H.B.C. also exceeded its legal authority by selling licences to miners. Douglas was authorized to take measures consistent with the rights of British subjects. Lytton introduced into the House of Commons a bill to provide for the government of New Caledonia, and proposed that Douglas be appointed governor of the new colony, on the condition that he sever his ties with the Hudson’s Bay Company.

The British Parliament passed the Act creating the colony of British Columbia on August 2, 1858. On September 2 Douglas was appointed governor, and the same day the exclusive trading rights of the H.B.C. ended. As part of the process, a detachment of Royal Engineers and Royal Marines was sent to the new colony, to survey land for public sale, lay out roads and a capital, and generally uphold the peace. To the same end, colonial functionaries were chosen and sent out, including Matthew Baillie Begbie as chief justice, Chartres Brew as police inspector, and Wymond O. Hamley as customs collector.

The Act was proclaimed at Fort Langley on November 19, 1858, formally revoking the exclusive trading privileges of the H.B.C., installing Douglas as governor, and making English

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10. ibid., p.42, Lytton to Douglas, July 16,1858.
11. ibid., p.43, Lytton to Douglas, July 16,1858.
13. ibid., p.53, Lytton to Douglas, September 2,1858.
law the law of the colony.  

The immediate impact of the gold rush on New Caledonia was felt on the 1858 brigade. The arduous conditions both inland and on the brigade, along with low salaries, looked even worse to the Company employees when their route took them by miners making fortunes. To re-engage any of these men took considerable haranguing by Douglas, combined with an increase of £10 per year over their former rates of pay, which had generally ranged from £20 to £25. The returns of outfit 1857 decreased slightly from those of the preceding year, due to a decline in marten, but were still above average, and considered especially good in light of the disturbance attending the gold rush.

The Thompson River and New Caledonia brigades left Fort Langley for the last time on July 18. The introduction of American paddle-wheel steamers on the lower Fraser meant that Fort Hope, the new head of navigation, could now serve as the inland depot. Some thought was given to using the new Lillooet route for the inland brigades. It, along with the Fraser Canyon/Douglas Portage route, was heavily used by the miners. Because of this, regular steamer service was introduced to "Port Douglas" at the head of Harrison Lake, and contract packers began working on the overland sections of the route. However, due to "cost and insufficient means of transport" on this route, it was decided to use the old

15. Victoria Gazette, November 25, 1858.
17. ibid.
Coquihalla route between Thompson River and Fort Hope again.\textsuperscript{19} A.G. Dallas, who initiated these changes, had taken over as the head of the fur trade when Douglas resigned. He was also Douglas' son-in-law. As well as losing the exclusive right of trade, the H.B.C. was now charged 10\% duty on all items shipped into British Columbia, increasing its operational costs overall.\textsuperscript{20}

The situation was aggravated in New Caledonia by another failure of the leather party in the fall of 1858. Although they reached Dunvegan on October 15, and returned to New Caledonia with 6 Norwegian recruits, they left the leather and other supplies behind, due to the lack of a suitable boat. The articles left at Dunvegan were to be forwarded to Fort St. John the following spring, where the New Caledonia men could pick them up.\textsuperscript{21}

Outfit 1858 turned out as badly as expected, with the New Caledonia returns down about 40 packs. The fisheries had failed, necessitating a large cash expenditure for provisions, and some of the district's cattle, horses, and dogs were killed for food. About 70 more horses were lost the previous winter, creating a transportation problem, and because of the resulting hardship in the district, and the alternative work available in the gold fields, staffing the posts became even more difficult.\textsuperscript{22}

On the return of the 1859 brigade 4 of the new Norwegian recruits deserted for the gold fields, proving that staffing experiment a failure. Ogden had already requested ten "English half breeds" from Red River for the district. He

\textsuperscript{19} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/19, fos.7,19-20, Dallas to MacLean, February 16, May 3,1859.
\textsuperscript{20} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/17, pp.143-145, Work to Ogden, April 19,1859.
\textsuperscript{21} H.B.C.A., D.5/47, fos.800-801, Campbell to Governor, Chief Factors and Chief Traders, December 30,1858.
\textsuperscript{22} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/19, pp.31-35, Dallas to Fraser, June 20,1859.
considered them the most reliable servants available. Competition from the Athabasca district was becoming a problem, as New Caledonia natives were taking their furs there to receive the higher tariff prevailing in the east rather than trading them in their own district.\textsuperscript{23}

In 1860 the Thompson River district was absorbed into that of New Caledonia, with the goal of having a reliable supply of food available for the posts further inland.\textsuperscript{24} Meanwhile New Caledonia continued its decline, as described by John Work, who could not:

...entertain much hope that the Fur trade of that hitherto valuable district will ever again be a source of much emolument to the Company for irrespective of the present shortcoming in the returns -- to a considerable extent caused by the scarcity of Salmon among the natives -- the opposition hence forth to be calculated from petty traders in and around the Gold diggings and the facility for obtaining their wants, which the influx of whites will afford to the Indians will to them make the hunting of fur bearing animals a secondary consideration.

Mr. Dallas and the Board are now deliberating as to the immediate measures to be adopted in view of the changed condition of affairs in New Caledonia...\textsuperscript{25}

Regardless of what new measures were anticipated, the basic business of the Company proceeded as usual, as Finlayson's directions to Peter Ogden, leading the 1860

\textsuperscript{25} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/20, pp.131-132, Work to Fraser, April 14,1860.
brigade, illustrate:

You will receive herewith Invoice and Packing Acct. of the Outfits of the posts forming the District of New Caledonia, made up from the Requisitions sent to the Depot last spring, together with List of Servants Orders made up from such of the articles as they indented for considered most useful & necessary for them...26

Ogden brought out extra Indians with the brigade that year, in anticipation of Company servants not renewing their contracts due to the gold excitement.27 Ogden’s assistant at Fort St. James that year was to be James Sabiston, a post master.28 This was in contrast to earlier years, when the district headquarters had two or more clerks assisting the Chief Factor or Chief Trader in charge.

The difficult times continued through 1860, with salmon scarce, and starvation common among the natives in New Caledonia. The 14 new recruits who arrived from the east had to be sent to Alexandria and Thompson River, as they could not be fed in New Caledonia.29

In September of that year Sir George Simpson died, after directing the North American activities of the H.B.C. for almost 40 years and largely defining the district of New Caledonia. The "old guard" of the H.B.C. was now gone, significantly at the same time that major outside forces were beginning to affect the fur trade on the Pacific slope.

27. ibid.
The returns of outfit 1860 were a little better than those of the preceding year in spite of the starvation in the district. "General" Joel Palmer, one of the first free traders on the Fraser mentioned by name, intended to compete with the H.B.C. in New Caledonia, but was not seen as a real threat. Palmer brought wagons overland to the Thompson River via the Okanagan route in 1858. By 1860 he had supplied some of the H.B.C. gentlemen around Alexandria with provisions. The debts incurred to purchase this food were considered to be on private account, and would not be honoured by the Company. It had been decided to run the 1861 brigade to Hope as the previous year. To alleviate the starvation in the district, 70 horse loads of provisions were sent from Victoria in the spring of 1861. These were forwarded by the Port Douglas/Lillooet route, and then by horse to Alexandria.

James Sabiston, the postmaster who had been at Fort St. James with Peter Ogden, had to leave the district due to ill health in 1861, and was replaced by Ogden's son, Peter Skene Ogden, who was engaged as an apprentice clerk. The same summer, the Board of Management instructed the gentlemen in New Caledonia not to get involved with mining "on the Company's account", but to concentrate on the fur trade.

In 1862 Roderick Finlayson reported on conditions in New Caledonia to the Board of Management in Victoria. Finlayson was the member of the Board who had responsibility for the

30. ibid., pp.115-117, Mactavish to Ogden, April 2, 1861.
31. ibid., Mactavish to McKay, April 2, 1861.
32. ibid., pp.181-182, Mactavish to Ogden, July 19, 1861.
33. ibid., p.193, Mactavish to Ogden, August 27, 1861.
34. By 1862 Fort Victoria was almost totally dismantled. The palisades and bastions had no place in the new city that had grown up around the Hudson's Bay Company property.
management of that district. He thought that the failure of the salmon run for the past several years was the greatest problem, and proposed that more emphasis be placed on cultivation of food in the district. To make this possible, he suggested that the traditional New Caledonia brigade be eliminated. Instead, the outfit for the district would be delivered to Alexandria, the first year (1863) by the men of Thompson River, who would also take the New Caledonia returns out to Hope over the Coquihalla:

The New Caledonia party may by this change be kept entirely inland cultivating the land at the proper season ready to watch the opposition when required, and preparing supplies of fish themselves without depending on the Indians for it. By the present system they pass the whole summer out of the district between Alexandria and Fort Hope incurring expenses part of which would be avoided.

In the fall of 1862 Dugald Mactavish expounded on some other aspects of the economic problems confronting the district in the early 1860s:

In New Caledonia District under the charge of Chief Trader Peter Ogden, where the returns amount in value to $26,696 82/100 dollars there is a profit shown of only $4,194 17/100 dollars formerly it would have reached four times that sum but now a days with the mining Country of Cariboo in the centre of the district, the expenses of the trade are much increased, more particularly in the items of Wages & food required to satisfy the laborers employed who

will not winter and work at the different Posts unless their wishes in every respect are complied with. The customs duties paid on the Outfit of Goods at New Westminster are also burdensome. All this combined with more or less opposition make furs costly in this rich & important section of the Department.  

In 1862 George Simpson (the son of Sir George) returned to Victoria from Dunvegan via Fort St. James, and briefly described the latter post as he found it:

Fort St. James is a fine post. It is the Company’s depot, the headquarters for the district. It is a stockade fort, including several houses. Mr. Peter Ogden, chief trader, is in charge, assisted by two clerks, Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Hamilton, and about a dozen men.  

In the same year the Cariboo gold rush began in earnest, centred on the rich claims found on Williams Creek. The success of the miners in this region prompted Governor Douglas to float a loan for the construction of the Cariboo Road. The Royal Engineers constructed the most difficult parts of the road, with the rest contracted out to civilians, who were reimbursed with cash, bonds, or the right to collect tolls. By the spring of 1864 the road was complete between Yale and Soda Creek, from where a steamer ran to Quesnel.  

In 1862 smallpox killed much of the native population of British Columbia, primarily affecting the southern portion of the district of New Caledonia. This plague did not reach as far as

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38. The British Colonist, December 23, 1862, p.3.
In early 1863 Finlayson sent Ogden instructions to upgrade the post at Alexandria, so it could serve as the depot for New Caledonia, as well as a retail shop for the local mining market. That year the leather for New Caledonia again came from Edmonton, by way of Tête Jaune Cache, but in 1864 was supplied from Dunvegan. Cash sales in the fall of 1863 were less than expected, as the new gold rush to the Peace River mines proved unsuccessful. The chronic failure of the salmon run further aggravated the economic situation in New Caledonia. Desertion also remained a problem, in spite of pay raises in 1863. Finlayson advised Ogden to attempt to hire at Alexandria, as men hired in Victoria would probably take the free trip inland and then desert for the mines.

In 1863 the International Financial Society, made up of most of the important banks in London, purchased the Hudson's Bay Company. The negotiations had been carried out without the involvement of the "wintering partners", the chief traders and chief factors who held a substantial portion of the shares, again pointing out the growing centralization of the organization. The immediate impact of this purchase on the operation of the fur trade (and Fort St. James) was minimal, but the strategy of the new ownership included dispensing with land holdings, and the eventual sale of Rupert's Land to

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42. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/27, pp.51-52, Mactavish to Dallas, September 19, 1863; H.B.C.A., B.226/b/26, pp.7d-8, Finlayson to Ogden, September 22, 1864.
43. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/23, pp.5-8, Finlayson to Ogden, October 8, 1863.
In the late summer of 1864, the 1865 New Caledonia outfit was sent from Victoria to Yale, and then on to Alexandria for storage over the winter. Due to the hostility between the Chilcotin Indians and the whites, Finlayson believed it prudent to store the goods on the east side of the river at Alexandria, where a non-Company settlement already had sprung.

In April 1864, a road-building party working on a route from Bute Inlet to the Cariboo was massacred by the Chilcotin Indians. European involvement with native women possibly precipitated the killings. The "Chilcotin War" continued in a desultory fashion until August, when a group of the Chilcotin surrendered themselves. After a trial five of them were executed in Quesnel.

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47. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/27, pp.131-136, Board of Management to Fraser, July 21, 1864.
The Chilcotin War also presented a threat to all the H.B.C. posts in New Caledonia. Because of the presence of ammunition in them, and the scarcity of men, these stations were thought to be potential targets for Indian raids.

In the fall of 1864 Finlayson sent official word to William Manson, in charge at Alexandria, that provisions could be taken in part payment of accounts against persons at Williams Creek or Quesnel. Items such as flour, bacon, rice, beans, and sugar were for sale at a lower price at those places than the cost to the H.B.C. of shipping their own goods from Victoria. This decision was reinforced by the failure of both the salmon run and the agricultural efforts of the Company that fall. The use of imported provisions in New Caledonia meant that higher charges would be brought against the district, to the amount of about 28 cents for every pound of food sent from Victoria to Alexandria. At the same time, Finlayson encouraged Ogden to crush the opposition in the district, even if it meant taking a loss on tariffs over the short term. This opposition became more direct in competing with the Hudson's Bay Company posts:

We note your observations, respecting people building, for the purpose of trade, about the Company's Establishments in New Caledonia, and trust that you will not permit their doing so on ground actually claimed by the Co.

As we have no exclusive rights of trade in New Caledonia, over others, we must do our best to

52. ibid., pp.35-36, Finlayson to Ogden, November 3, 1864.
secure as large a share of the Fur trade as possible, and with this view we trust to your using all the means at your command to render the ventures of others into the District for Fur trade purposes, profitless...  

The returns of the district for outfit 1864 were down to $27530.66, while the profits were cut almost in half, to $5769.42. This was attributed to the heavy consumption of imported food noted above, which increased operational costs, and to more active opposition from independent traders. The decrease was not as great as anticipated; the competitors had paid high prices for furs based on the previous year's prices in Victoria, and could barely meet their expenses. The policy of active opposition followed by the H.B.C. had probably also had some effect:

To oppose the fur traders outfitted for the last two years by Jews from Quesnellemouth on the Fraser, and proceeding to Mackenzie's River and Athabasca, we had last winter derouine parties watching and counteracting their movements from the different posts in New Caledonia.

The free traders seemed to put most of their effort into the northeast, towards the Athabasca and Mackenzie River districts. Ogden was given explicit instructions to ensure that Company employees did not assist the free traders from Quesnel transport their goods to these districts:

In this way they will find that the prosecution of

53. ibid., pp.62-63, Finlayson to Ogden, January 24, 1865.
54. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/27, pp.297-304, Board of Management to Fraser, October 11, 1865.
56. ibid., pp.252-255, Tolmie to Fraser, June 15, 1865.
the fur trade inland requires more capital than is required to purchase goods and provisions and if we manage affairs properly we can easily frustrate their schemes of opposing us successfully. 57

At the New Caledonia posts themselves, the Company attempted to increase stocks of those goods desired by the natives. Flour and sugar were now in particular demand. 58 Finlayson also directed Ogden to keep more detailed records of the "expenses incurred by the Company in the maintenance of the Officers and Servants at each Post". Initially, this would be a statement for the whole of the preceding outfit, but in future would be a monthly account, to determine the actual requirements of the district. Monthly statements were to be started for furs and gold dust received. 59

By the summer of 1865, the possibility of using contract teamsters to move the outfits and returns between Yale and Soda Creek was investigated, as their rates were cheaper than using H.B.C. labour. 60

In the fall of 1865, 27 pieces of goods were forwarded through New Caledonia to Peace River to assist the Athabasca Department in its fight against the free traders from Quesnel. Plans also existed to establish a temporary New Caledonia post at Rocky Mountain Portage to monitor the activities of the free traders. 61 The competition at this time affected New Caledonia indirectly. The "principal private trader" actually operating within the district was Henry J. Moberly, a former

58. ibid.
59. ibid., pp.72d-73, Finlayson to Ogden, February 7,1865.
60. ibid., Finlayson to McKay, August 11, 1865.
clerk of the H.B.C., who was not viewed as a great threat.  

In the same year, some Company officers in the East expressed doubts about the suitability of Peter Ogden for the charge of the district. James Grahame was suggested as a possible replacement, in the event that these concerns were justified.

In outfit 1865 the prices of beaver, muskrat and mink were rising on the English market, and Ogden was directed to encourage beaver hunting in the district, but not to increase tariffs. Although the marten returns increased for the year, the beaver hunting did not prove so successful.

Other interlopers came to the district in the 1860s besides miners and free traders. W.F. Tolmie wrote to Ogden in May 1865 introducing Major J.L. Pope, the "Chief of the Exploring party of the Russian American Telegraph company this season employed on the line through B.C. and towards the Behring Strait". Ogden was instructed to assist the party, and to give them any goods that could be spared from the stock at Alexandria.

In 1865 Edmund Conway, of the Collins Overland Telegraph expedition, wrote to his superior, Col. Charles Bulkley, including a "few particulars in relation to the Hudson Bay Company". This included a general description of the terms of engagement of the employees, the life of the servants, and the Company's dealings with the natives. Conway recommended that Western Union trade directly with the Indians, bypassing the

63. ibid., fos.92-93, Mactavish to Tolmie, January 2, 1866.
64. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/26, pp.183-184d, Finlayson to Ogden, September 25, 1865; H.B.C.A., B.226/b/29, Finlayson to Ogden, April 20, 1866.
H.B.C., as the telegraph employees knew the territory better than those of the H.B.C. and the exclusive trade charter of the H.B.C. had expired. The telegraph company was clearly after the same limited provisions and manpower that the H.B.C. required in New Caledonia:

They have charged us most exorbitant prices for all that is received, as you will perceive by their vouchers. We can secure a number of their employees who's [sic] time expires early next season.66

A number of administrative changes were introduced to the district in the summer of 1866. The Council of the Northern Department appointed Grahame to the charge New Caledonia.67 Finlayson decided to open an H.B.C. sale shop at the "mouth of Quesnel River", to sell "Goods and Liquors" and to keep an eye on the private traders, so bought a building in Quesnel for this purpose (figure 13). He also believed that this location would prove better than Alexandria for storing the New Caledonia goods for future distribution.68

The colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia amalgamated on November 19, 1866. This had little immediate effect on the H.B.C. or Fort St. James, as the institutions and revenue laws already in existence on the mainland were adopted for the new colony.69

In 1867 Roderick Finlayson summarized the state of the business in the interior of British Columbia for W.G. Smith, the secretary of the H.B.C. in London:

66. P.A.B.C., Film 91A(5), Ed. Conway To Chas Bulkley, December 20, 1865.
Of late years owing to the influx of Miners and Traders into the Interior of British Columbia, the price at which furs were formerly traded has much increased, with the cost of maintaining the stations. The current high price for labor has also tended to diminish the usual Profits. Under those circumstances we have to mention, that the unfavorable result shewn by some of those stations, does not arise from any want of exertion on the part of the several officers, to carry on the usual system of trade, but to causes over which they have no control. A Private Fur trader for instance, having little or no expenses except what he individually incurs can now travel easily through the southern portion of this Department, and has the advantage in this way over an Officer of the Company, who if incumbered with a large family, is at much more expense than his opponent and therefore carries on the same business at a disadvantage. The advantage the Company's officer seems to have over the rival Trader is his influence over the Native hunters, and the reasonable rate at which he is debited with supplies, to retain the native hunters in the interest of the Company, necessitates an advance of goods to them, which gradually accumulates, and those hunters being now bribed by other traders, those advances are seldom paid in full and in the end have to be carried to Profit and Loss as bad debts. Money is now replacing goods as the standard of Value with the Native Hunters for Furs. Our usual system of barter does not therefore answer in places where the hunters come in contact with general traders - a large portion of the Furs obtained in the southern portion of the Country, has now to be purchased for Cash obtained from the sale
of the Goods. Furs obtained in this way at reasonable rates, is considered a better remittance than Cash as it affords a certain margin for profits. The trade of New Caledonia on the Northern portion of the Department, which is not so easy of access, without a proper organization for the purpose, is still under our control, and therefore more profitable than that of the southern portion of the Country.  

As well as reporting on events in the district, Finlayson suggested that Athabasca and Mackenzie River districts be supplied through New Caledonia. He saw this as a way of making full use of the "large capital" invested in coastal steamers by the Company. The plan involved taking steamers up the navigable part of the Stikine River, and then travelling across to the districts under discussion by way of the lakes and rivers on the route.

Finlayson reported to the Board of Management in June 1867 that the New Caledonia returns for outfit 1866 matched those of earlier outfits. Operations were established at Barkerville, and the "Quesnelle Post" had taken over from Alexandria as the depot for the district of New Caledonia. Quesnel, Barkerville, and Alexandria made up the new district of Cariboo, under the direction of John Work, stationed at Barkerville. Although the business transacted in New Caledonia at this time was increasing, the profits were decreasing, because the "expense of the trade has been enormous", a problem which Ogden was asked to explain.

71. ibid.
72. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/33, pp.84-88, Finlayson to Board of Management, June 10, 1867.
73. ibid., pp.76-77, Finlayson to Williams or Ross, June 12, 1869(sic)—should be 1867.
74. ibid., pp.90-91, Finlayson to Ogden, June 27, 1867.
James Grahame arrived in Victoria in November 1867, when he was told that he was to assume charge of both New Caledonia and the new district. The Board of Management ordered him to base himself at Quesnel, rather than Fort St. James, as the former post was more convenient for the management and inspection of the two districts. Grahame made an initial trip to Quesnel, but arrived back in Victoria by the end of January 1868, requesting a posting more to his liking. He was unsuccessful in this effort, and after the Board imposed some sanctions, it sent him back to Quesnel by the end of February, with less authority. John Work was now to report directly to the Board of Management rather than to Grahame.

At the same time, Ogden reported on the affairs of New Caledonia. Lynx and fox furs were more common, but marten returns were down, not because of competition but because of scarcity of the animals. The salmon run had failed again, and a decreased spring trade anticipated as a result. Ogden also commented on competition in the district, much of which came from other H.B.C. posts:

You are aware of the encroachments in this district. Fort George the best half of the natives belonging to that post now trades with Quesnelle some of our Stuarts Lake Indians also found their way to Quesnelle and disposed their furs there. The new post from Fort Simpson at the Roucher de Bouille has carried all the furs away from the Babines post. I am happy to inform you that Connolly's Lake the only post where we have no interlopers has turned out well compared to past years under the management of

75. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/36, p.29, Tolmie to Grahame, November 22, 1867.
In March 1868 Grahame prepared a report which was highly critical of existing operations in his new districts. H.B.C. employees had again replaced private teamsters in the transportation of Company property on the Cariboo wagon road. Grahame thought that Quesnel was on the decline, with half the population Chinese, and that the fur trade between Quesnel and Yale was dead, due to the incursions of independent traders. These traders could pay "fancy prices" for the furs, which they resold in San Francisco for more than current London prices. The trade at Alexandria had potential, but all the trading goods had been removed to Quesnel, and due to interband strife, the Alexandria natives would not go to Quesnel to trade. Grahame leased Alexandria to A. MacKinlay for five years starting May 1 to be operated much as it had been. McKinlay, a former chief trader, would trade furs for the Company in exchange for being allowed to farm the property there. The Western Department Board of Management was less than impressed with the tone of Grahame's report, and a level of antagonism developed between the parties.

By May 1868 50 packs of New Caledonia furs had been shipped to Quesnel from Fort St. James, with the remainder of the returns to be brought out in August. The New Caledonia returns of outfit 1867 were up by $1103 over those of the previous outfit, "valued by the fixed tariff". The "apparent gain" for the district was $9085.07, part of which was attributed to goods received from Quesnel and not charged.

77. H.B.C.A., B.226/c/2, fos.401-403, Ogden to Board of Management, February 25,1868.
78. H.B.C.A., A.11/60, pp.4-13, Grahame to Smith, March 18,1869, enclosing a copy of his report on Cariboo district, March 18, 1868.
to New Caledonia. The returns were up slightly, but this was offset by the rising cost of furs in the district due to competition.\textsuperscript{82}

Grahame, who was not impressed with conditions at Quesnel, located himself at Fort St. James in the summer of 1868. Mrs. Grahame must have shared his feelings, as Robert Williams, the manager at Quesnel was "glad to hear she likes Stuarts Lake".\textsuperscript{83}

In September 1868 the Board instructed Grahame to attempt to head off furs in the interior before they reached the Fraser River. He was authorized to pay up to 25\% over the last tariff for prime furs, as the London fur sale that year had produced prices 10-20\% higher than the previous year. Efforts were made to re-engage servants, who previously had provided manpower for the free traders.\textsuperscript{84}

The Board of Management instructed Grahame to remain inland in the summer of 1869, in order to observe personally the activities of the free traders that were fitting out in Victoria and San Francisco to pursue the trade in New Caledonia, as well as to the northeast.\textsuperscript{85} Grahame wanted to go down to Victoria with his family for the summer, but the only way the Board of Management would allow it was if he took a leave of absence. The Board also reduced the apparent gain for New Caledonia to about $15000; Grahame had valued the returns at Northern Department values, which were higher than in the Western Department, and extra transport costs also had

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{82} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/34, p.344, Tolmie to Smith, August 15,1868. \\
\textsuperscript{83} H.B.C.A., B.171/b/2, pp.8-9, Williams to Grahame, September 1, 1868. \\
\textsuperscript{84} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/44, pp.65-68, Tolmie to Grahame, September 17,1868. \\
\textsuperscript{85} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/44, pp.158-159, Tolmie to Grahame, December 3,1868.}
W.G. Smith wrote to the Board of Management in May 1869, with some instructions and queries, partially based on Grahame's report of the previous year. He was concerned about the apparent shortage of salmon in the district, and wanted to know if it was a trend or simply a regular fluctuation. If the former:

...the establishments of New Caledonia would require to be considerably reduced if, by the failure of the fisheries, the Servants of the Company have to live upon imported provisions such as Bacon and Flour.

The cost of importing and transporting goods was also addressed. Grahame had claimed that there was several years' stock of blankets at Fort St. James, as well as other goods, and that either the Board or Ogden had erred in shipping in an excess. Smith wanted indents and shipments of goods to be closely figured, due to the cost inherent in shipping. A limit on the weight of goods sent in as personal orders of gentlemen and servants was also to be imposed. Grahame's arguments against Finlayson's earlier proposition to supply the outfits for Peace River and Athabasca through New Caledonia had succeeded, and the plan was dropped.

By order of W.G. Smith, Grahame was relieved of the charge of Cariboo and New Caledonia districts on July 1, 1869, and ordered to Victoria. John Work and Peter Ogden respectively re-assumed the charge of the two districts.

87. H.B.C.A., B.226/c/2, fos.455-460, Smith to Tolmie and Board of Management, May 21, 1869.
88. ibid.
The Board of Management responded to some of Smith's queries provoked by the Grahame report, mostly relating to the supply of New Caledonia. What Grahame had perceived as an abuse of the limits on goods sent in as personal property was viewed by the Board as a perquisite designed to retain employees in the district:

...a promise to take up an extra quantity of Flour and Sugar free of charge, is sometimes the considerations which leads an experienced man with a family to renew his engagement. 90

The apparent gain for the district in outfit 1868 finished at $15213.83, a substantial increase on outfit 1867. Part of this was explained by increased values for the fur returns (up $3713.75) and part by the newly included farm produce and provision items not previously inventoried in New Caledonia. 91

In the fall of 1869 stronger opposition to the Company appeared at Fort George. 92 The prices at the Company's August sale in London had dropped, which had discouraged the Victoria-based competition, whom the H.B.C. could now outbid. The Board instructed Ogden to do his best "to effect a reduction" of the tariff paid in New Caledonia, but not to allow prime furs to escape. At Fort St. James substantial sales had been made to miners on Peace River; the gold dust and coin received was to be sent to Quesnel. However, Ogden was to refuse an appointment of the Colonial government to issue licenses and collect money on its account, as contrary to the instructions of the Governor and Committee. 93 This

90. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/40, pp.67-72, Tolmie to Smith, July 12, 1869.
91. ibid., p.81, Tolmie to Smith, July 23, 1869.
"recent discovery of Gold silver and copper on some tributaries of Finlays Branch" was viewed by the Board of Management as an opportunity to "get rid of such unsaleable goods as may be on hand" in the district.  

Salmon was plentiful in the winter of 1869-1870, but one of the major independent traders, Bill Cust, continued to raise the prices paid for furs, particularly marten. Ogden anticipated the need for specialized goods to sell to the miners:

...we shall require a large amount of Flour Bacon Beans Sugar Rice apples and mining implements if the mines will turn out favourable, however time will tell...  

Stock was increased that winter, and Tolmie wrote to Smith that Ogden "had on return of the Peace River Explorers last fall, sold them Goods to upwards of $2000.00 dollars in amount". However, the fur returns by the spring decreased, as Bill Cust had "half of our Indians" trading with him at Fort George. Ogden's hope was that the $5000 of credit (or "debt") which Cust had extended to the natives would never be repaid. The returns must have improved after that, as in August, Ogden brought the district returns, amounting to 152 packs, to Quesnel. This was a 20% increase over the previous year, and cash sales were also up. The Omineca mines proved not to be as rich as expected, but the prospect of miners staying in the region for the winter was thought to present a

95. H.B.C.A., B.171/c/1, Ogden to Williams, November 26, 1869.
97. H.B.C.A., B.171/c/1, pp.312-313, Ogden to Williams, March 6, 1870.
threat to the fur trade.\textsuperscript{98}

The Board of Management of the Department was reorganized the following outfit, with W.F. Tolmie taking a year's furlough prior to retiring, Grahame assuming charge of the depot at Victoria and the coast, and Finlayson retaining responsibility for the interior.\textsuperscript{99} By the latter part of 1870 alternate routes were being examined again for the supply of New Caledonia, particularly the Skeena/Babine route, which some of the miners travelling to the Omineca gold fields on the Peace River had used.\textsuperscript{100}

In the fall of 1870 both Peter Ogden and his son Peter Skene Ogden died, leaving the management of the district and the post of Frser Lake vacant, and dealing a heavy blow to the operation of the district.\textsuperscript{101}

The Indian Trade

In the spring of 1861, the failure of the salmon run the previous fall raised the spectre of starvation among the native population of New Caledonia:

The mortality you report among the New Caledonia Indians is most distressing, and unless some means are taken to provide them with food, the continued scarcity of Salmon & other Country provisions, we fear will soon starve them all out - and they will

\textsuperscript{98} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/43, pp.56-58, Finlayson to Smith, September 2,1870.
\textsuperscript{100} ibid., pp.679-680, Bissett to Grahame, October 12,1870.
\textsuperscript{101} H.B.C.A., B.226/b/45, pp.75-76, Grahame to Smith, October 31, 1870.
become extinct.102

This problem threatened to compromise the returns of that year, and the Board of Management contemplated drastic action:

...it is a question, whether we should not endeavour to take in a supply of flour &c for the trade, with Indians, by this means we may be enabled to keep the Natives at our posts, whereas starvation will compel them all to go down to the Coast, with their furs — for which we shall then have to pay almost their value in the English market, but if we could trade the same skins inland, we might get them at more reasonable rates, this matter we will decide on in course of the summer, and in the meantime we send up in charge of C.T. McKay, for New Caledonia district, 70 horse loads of provisions...103

As mentioned, the smallpox epidemic of 1862 had remarkably little direct impact on the Stuart Lake Carrier. In part, this may have been due to their long contact with Europeans, and consequent development of some immunity to imported diseases.

By 1864 "Flour, Rice, sugar and Tea" were described as "being the Staple articles" for the Indian trade. The Board instructed Ogden to buy such items from any free traders that had a stock of them to "prevent their injuring the Indian trade."104

Flour and sugar were noted again the following year as

102. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/22, pp.76-77, Mactavish to Ogden, February 6, 1861.
items "much in demand among the Indians". In 1865 the post of Fort George was to be "well supplied with such articles as may be wanted by the Indians", in anticipation of competition from free traders that winter. However, in December, Ogden was told that if he was short of trade goods in New Caledonia he should trade furs from the natives on the promise that they would receive goods later.

A.G. Morice, in his book The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia, claimed that the H.B.C. used a more unethical practice for fighting competition. He described Peter Toy and Ezra Evans, retired miners, initially with a third partner, setting up a store at Pinche, near Fort St. James, in 1865. The H.B.C. immediately set up a temporary post on Rey Lake, five miles to the east, designed to intercept the Pinche Indians on their way from their hunting grounds to Stuart Lake. The ultimate solution was to introduce liquor as the main commodity of the trade, which enabled the H.B.C. to trade all the available furs, leaving nothing for the free traders.

Edmund Conway, describing the operations of the H.B.C. at Fort St. James in 1865, commented on the interaction between the Company and the natives:

The great secret of their getting along with the Indians is simply that the Indians cannot get along without them, they can not live without powder and shot, and they would not like to be deprived of their tobacco and other luxuries which they have

107. A.G. Morice, The History of the Northern Interior, op. cit., pp.310-312. Morice cites post journals from October to December 1865 which no longer exist, and an "abundance of eye-witnesses."
become accustomed to. The H.B.Co are very particular and exact in all their dealings with the Indians they thus gain their good will. Should an Indian murder any of their men he is hunted down until captured and then hung in the presence of his tribe; this is done regardless of cost, and is sure to be the result, should it take 50 years to accomplish it the Indians are aware of this fact. A few of the best Indians from each tribe are generally retained around the Fort for hunting getting wood and general work.

The Company purchase large quantities of Salmon which they lay up for winter use, in trading everything is counted by skins, I enclose a list of their prices.

The Company purchased at Babine Fishery last fall (1865) over 20,000 dried salmon, this lot of salmon cost them $1000 in trade. The district of Caledonia purchased 5000 Martin (sic) skins last year - in 1829 this small district of 6 stations made $65,000 clear profit. 108

The trade in marten increased in 1865, with flour one of the principal commodities demanded in exchange for it. The Board sent Ogden a list of fur prices paid in Victoria, which he was to base his tariffs on. 109 A similar list had been sent to the posts the previous year. The short version is reproduced here 110:

108. P.A.B.C., Film 91A(5), Edmund Conway to Col. Chas Bulkley, December 20, 1865.
110. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/26, pp.98d-99, Tolmie to Huggins, April 26, 1865; A longer, more detailed list, but with the same prices was sent to Ogden in August 1865, ibid., pp.160-162d, Finlayson to Ogden, August 4, 1865.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bears, black &amp; brown</td>
<td>No 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5.00 to 7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.00 to 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beavers</td>
<td>lb.</td>
<td></td>
<td>85¢, a 90¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishers</td>
<td>No 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minks</td>
<td>#1 very best</td>
<td></td>
<td>75¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#2</td>
<td></td>
<td>37½¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otters land</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#3</td>
<td></td>
<td>75¢ a 1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Sea, large</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td></td>
<td>$50.00 a 55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raccoons large</td>
<td>small</td>
<td></td>
<td>25¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12¼¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolves best large</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolverines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in this list, furs were now valued in cash, and some of the transactions were carried out this way, primarily in the areas affected directly by free traders. New Caledonia, being more remote, was considered "still under our control", so presumably most transactions were still valued in "Made Beaver" or goods. The changes in the Indian trade noted by Finlayson in early 1867 included the introduction of a cash tariff, and the advancing of credit, or debt, by the competition traders. Finlayson described this practice as bribing the natives, overlooking the fact that the convention had been followed as long as the H.B.C. had traded furs in New Caledonia. He saw the main advantages of the Company traders as their influence with the natives, due to long contact, and the "reasonable rate" paid for supplies within the H.B.C. | 111. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/34, pp.90-92, Finlayson to Smith, March 14, 1867. |
With the advent of competitive traders, the long-standing practice of extending debt to native hunters was proving to be a more risky proposition than it had been when the H.B.C. had exclusive rights. There was now no guarantee that after being equipped on credit, that the furs produced by a native's hunt would be traded in to the H.B.C.

In 1868 the population around Fort St. James succumbed to an outbreak of measles, but apparently only one fatality resulted from it. 112

The trade with the natives at Stuart Lake was affected in many ways in this period. The first change was the impact of disease, which was felt even before large numbers of Europeans reached New Caledonia. Although the major smallpox epidemic of 1862 destroyed much of the population in the southern part of New Caledonia, it did not affect the region around Fort St. James directly. Within a year or two of this, the effect of competition for the natives' furs began to be felt. Although the returns of the H.B.C. posts in New Caledonia remained substantial, the cost of acquiring the furs continued to rise. Bad debts became more common, as natives would get equipment from one source on credit, and then sell their furs to the highest bidder. The major effect of the end of monopoly on the relationship between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Carrier was to lessen the dependence of the latter on the former, as other economic options were opened up.

Transportation

The first substantial change to the transportation system of

112 H.B.C.A., B.171/b/2, pp.30-31, Williams to Board of Management, October 21,1868.
New Caledonia in this period was in 1859, when Fort Hope became the inland depot. This was made possible by the introduction of American paddlewheel steamers, which, unlike the H.B.C. vessels, could navigate the Fraser River above Fort Langley. However, with the exception of the bateaux voyage between Fort Hope and Fort Langley, the rest of the brigade arrangements remained as they had been since 1850.

In 1862 George Simpson (Jr.) returned to Victoria from Dunvegan by way of Fort St. James. At that time the trip from Stuart Lake to Fort George took the party 5 days in a canoe.113

In the early 1860s the problems of provisioning New Caledonia led to the idea that it would be best to keep the New Caledonia men inland for most of the summer. In this way they could farm, and prepare "supplies of fish themselves without depending on the Indians for it", as well as avoiding the expenses incurred on the district by supporting a large party in transit for the whole summer. As a solution, it was proposed that Alexandria become the depot for New Caledonia, to short-circuit the whole supply process. In the fall of 1862 it was decided that the 1863 outfit was to be delivered to Kamloops, from where it would be sent on to Alexandria the following April, to be exchanged there for the New Caledonia returns. These were to be brought out by the Thompson River party with their own returns over the Coquihalla route to Fort Hope.114

Although Alexandria remained as the depot, the supply route to it had changed for shipment of outfit 1864. Finlayson wrote Ogden in April 1864, describing the new route:

113. The British Colonist, December 23, 1862, p. 3.
We shall this season keep our waggons constantly employed between Yale and Alexandria transporting goods for the trade, and you can order from Mr. Manson, there, any articles you may want for the trade.\textsuperscript{115}

The Coquihalla route to Thompson River had been abandoned in favour of the new Cariboo road, which connected the two H.B.C. posts on the Fraser (figures 14 and 15). Company servants were apparently responsible for the transportation on the new road. From Alexandria the rest of the voyage was by water, in the Company’s boats, although in the summer of 1864 Ogden had difficulty recruiting crews for them. Finlayson instructed him to hire men in Alexandria at the "ruling wages", as none were available in Victoria.\textsuperscript{116} In 1864 the cash cost of shipping goods from Victoria to Alexandria amounted to about 28¢ per pound.\textsuperscript{117} Because more provisions were required in New Caledonia that winter than anticipated, William Charles, in charge at Yale, was instructed to accept "Mr. Kirkpatrick’s offer to forward our goods from the Ferry to Alexandria, at 12½ per lb. if yet disposed to do so".\textsuperscript{118} Cook’s Ferry, referred to above, was a short distance up the Thompson River, later replaced by Spence’s Bridge. By the summer of 1865, commercial freight costs from Yale to Soda Creek were less than the expense of the H.B.C. maintaining its own teams. Finlayson directed McKay, in charge at Thompson River, to:

\textldots enquire whether we can get a trustworthy party to contract to forward our goods without delay either from Yale or the Ferry to Alexandria, and if so we

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item H.B.C.A., B.226/b/23, pp.173-174, Finlayson to Ogden, April 2, 1864.
\item H.B.C.A., B.226/b/26, pp.7d-8, Finlayson to Ogden, September 22, 1864.
\item ibid., pp.35-36, Finlayson to Ogden, November 3,1864.
\item ibid., p.36, Finlayson to Charles, November 3,1864.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
can take measures at once to forward all the goods we want for that place. 119

In August 1866 Finlayson decided that the mouth of the Quesnel River would not only be a good location for a shop, and for watching opposition traders, but also for a depot:

I have bought a house and lot at this place ready fitted for business. ... This place will also be more central than Alexandria, for the equipment of our Boatmen from New Caledonia and sending supplies there in winter when required. 120

On the upper portion of this route goods came up either on a new section of the Cariboo road, completed in 1865 between Alexandria and Quesnel, or on the "Enterprise", which ran between Soda Creek and Quesnel. In the latter case, the Company got a preferential rate from G.B. Wright, the owner of the ship. Although the invoices of the ship listed freight rates of $40 per ton, the H.B.C. paid only $20 per ton. 121

In the fall of 1866 Finlayson assigned William Manson to explore possible supply routes to New Caledonia from the coast, repeating the earlier work of Brown and Dease in the 1820s and 1830s. Manson found a usable route by way of the Skeena River to Babine Lake, following paths of the earlier explorers, but still intended to examine the pass from Kitimat Inlet in 1867. The Board of Management would not change the supply route until his final report was in. 122 The Board also had factors to consider other than the cost of supply:

119. ibid., p.166, Finlayson to McKay, August 11, 1865.
121. H.B.C.A., B.188/z/1, pp.11-12, invoices from steamship "Enterprise", June 20, 29, 1867.
122. ibid., pp.86-87, Finlayson to Smith, February 25, 1867.
While it is probable that, by a coast trail to the Interior, goods could be transported to New Caledonia cheaper than by the long overland route now followed, it is very questionable whether it would be, on the Company’s part, sound policy to make access easier to New Caledonia; their most valuable Fur District in the Western Department, and the point from which some of the best Fur Countries in the Northern Department can most readily be reached from the West.\(^{123}\)

In Grahame's 1868 report on the Cariboo he described the transportation system to the district in the winter of 1867. The first leg of his trip, from Victoria to New Westminster was on the H.B.C. ship also called "Enterprise". From there two competing steamship firms, one English and one American, ran to Yale. The Company investigated the use of contract teamsters, but apparently had decided to operate the overland transportation from Yale itself:

Mr. McKay (C.T. at Yale) has the superintendence of the transport service (overland from Yale) comprised of heavy Ox teams and Pack train, which made these trips during the season.\(^{124}\)

From Yale it took Grahame 7 days to reach Quesnel by stage, following the Cariboo road.

Although New Caledonia supplies continued to come through Quesnel, the route from the coast was still under consideration. In 1870 James Bissett presented the argument for its use, based primarily on economics:

\(^{123}\) ibid., p.216, Tolmie to Smith, December 11,1867.
\(^{124}\) H.B.C.A., A.11/60, pp.4-13, Grahame to Smith, March 18,1869, enclosing a copy of his report on Cariboo, April 2,1868.
The Skeena (along with the Nass) river may be regarded as the key to the valuable district of New Caledonia from the coast. ... In this connection I feel constrained to draw attention to this route, as shorter, and apparently much cheaper for forwarding the supplies required for New Caledonia. I am not unacquainted with the views of the Company with reference to opening such routes from the coast as affecting the trade inland but as the figures furnished to me for transporting goods via the Skeena to Babine Lake, appear so favorable as compared with the present route up the Fraser, I am induced to believe a saving would be effected.

Moreover, the outlet can no longer be considered a sealed Book the route having been selected this year by parties of miners to reach the recently discovered gold diggings at Omineca, on the Peace river. The accompanying statement of the cost by canoe to Ackwalgate [later Hazelton] and thence by pack animals to Babine Lake is prepared by Chief Trader Manson who has explored that portion of the route from Ackwellgate to the lake. The land transport, it will be observed is put down at 45 miles, and the total cost of freighting from the sea coast to Babine Lake at 3½ cents pr. lb. from which latter point it is said the New Caledonia boats could take forward the goods more advantageously than from Quesnel on the Fraser.125

The question of supplying Athabasca from the coast via New Caledonia was reopened in 1870. Grahame again discounted the idea, as transportation to the Omineca mines was not as easy as newspaper articles made it sound, and relays of boats

would be required for the transportation from there. Such an arrangement was impossible due to the shortage of boat men in the district. Grahame also thought that Manson’s estimates of the cost of shipping by the Skeena route were too optimistic. 126

When the New Caledonia returns arrived at Quesnel by batteaux in the summer of 1870, they:

...were transhipped from the Boats into the steamer at this place for conveyance to Soda Creek, where waggons were ready to receive them for transport to Yale and thence by Steamer to Victoria. 127

The argument continued as to whether the Skeena or Fraser route was the best for supplying New Caledonia, but by the spring of 1871 the former route prevailed. The trail required for the Babine route would not be finished that year, so the 1871 outfit was to be sent up the Fraser, and dropped near Fort George, so there was no need to go right into Quesnel. The Company also intended to obtain land at the end of the portage trail on the Babine route, and erect a building there for storage of goods and returns. 128

Transportation: Methods

Although the mechanisms for the supply of goods into New Caledonia changed radically in this period, with oxcarts and steamships on the commercial route to the Cariboo carrying

most of the outfits and returns, within the district little changed. George Simpson’s 1862 trip from Fort St. James to Fort George in a canoe has already been noted, and at the end of the decade canoes were still used for lighter transportation. For instance, in the fall of 1869 the "completion" of the outfit together with the servants’ orders were sent by canoe from Quesnel to Fort St. James via Fort George.129

Boats or batteaux continued to carry most of the goods and returns within the district. Finlayson requested that one or two boats be sent down from Fort St. James to Quesnel in the summer of 1867 to transport the goods required for the winter trade of the district.130 The following year, Ogden expressed a need for "grease to gum our boats with", as well as nails.131 A chronic problem during this period involved finding boatmen, as well as keeping them in the service, with the temptations of the mines at hand. Grahame outlined the problem in 1870:

...over here we have no voyageur community either good or bad, and that the Transport Service of New Caledonia has been a struggle to us only overcome so far through the able management of Chief Trader Ogden. His boatmen consist partly of the failing remnant of our old servants, who are tied to New Caledonia by their Indian connexions, and partly of the best of the Indians around the Forts who are collected at Stuart’s Lake every Spring for the purpose of manning the boats. These crews he cannot easily increase in number even should the District require more supplies. Mr Ogden is yearly applying

130. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/33, p.123, Finlayson to Ogden, August 9, 1867.
131. H.B.C.A., B.171/c/1, p.188, Ogden to Williams, July 6, 1868.
to the Board here for Recruits and cannot get them. None can be engaged here where labour is so high, and the old source of supply from York Factory has for many years dried up. 132

Throughout this period, the local overland transportation continued to be by horse in the summer, and by dog train in the winter (figure 16).

Provisions

The fisheries failed in the fall of 1858, forcing the H.B.C. to spend money on imported provisions, and to slaughter a great number of their cattle, horses, and dogs for food. 133 It appeared that the fishery would be unsuccessful again the following year, and in addition the few crops planted were largely destroyed by summer frosts. 134

In 1861, a large shipment of provisions was sent to New Caledonia because of the failure of the salmon run the previous fall. These 70 horse loads of foodstuffs included 11,000 lbs. of flour, 2,000 lbs. of bacon, and 1,000 lbs. of beans. 135 By the later summer of that year, the situation looked better, as the natives had laid up "considerable stores of dried salmon, and the crops at the Company's posts promised well." 136

133. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/19, pp.31-35, Dallas to Fraser, June 20, 1859.
134. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/20, pp.74-75, Work to Fraser, September 13, 1859.
136. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/20, pp.231-232, Tolmie to Fraser, October 6, 1861.
Finlayson recommended to the Board of Management in 1862 that the supply process to New Caledonia be changed, largely to keep the men inland "cultivating the land at the proper season..." and preparing supplies of fish themselves without depending on the Indians for it. When George Simpson (Jr.) passed through Fort St. James in 1862 on his way to Victoria, he noted the agricultural efforts at the post:

Vegetables of all kinds, with barley, are raised there, and mature well. They have about 30 head of cattle, and a dozen horses.\(^{137}\)

The Stuart Lake salmon run failed again in the fall of 1863, forcing reliance on the Babine run, "until such time as we get our farming operations as far advanced, as to dispense with salmon altogether as a main article of food within the district".\(^{138}\) As part of this process, 30 or 40 cattle were sent into the district that year for distribution to the posts.\(^{139}\)

The attempt to attain self-sufficiency through farming continued into 1865, without notable success. It was essential to produce enough food in this way to enable the Company to feed its men well, and so be able to get them to winter in the district. Ogden was ordered to provide an accounting of the cattle sent into the district in 1863. In 1865 something over 20,000 dried salmon were purchased at the Babine fishery by the men of Fort St. James, at a cost of about $1,000 in goods.\(^{140}\)

\(^{137}\) The British Colonist, December 23, 1862, p.3.
\(^{138}\) H.B.C.A., B.226/b/23, pp.5-8, Finlayson to Ogden, October 8, 1863.
\(^{140}\) P.A.B.C., Film 91A(5), Ed. Conway to Col Chas Bulkley, December 20, 1865.
With the competition for employees brought on by the presence of the telegraph company in the district, "the want of proper food" became the principal argument of servants against re-engaging with the H.B.C.:

Without having our farming operations strictly attended to at Fort George, Frazers Lake and Alexandria and by this means be enabled to maintain our servants with abundance of good provisions we cannot expect to carry on the Fur trade successfully under present circumstances in British Columbia. It is therefore of the utmost importance to have the cattle sent to the different stations well and properly accounted for by the Gentlemen in charge and to have not only horned cattle, but pigs poultry and such other live stock as can be reared at the different places well attended to.

This of course cannot be done in the climate of New Caledonia without providing food for them in summer for winter and before sending up more stock proper preparations should be made for it by raising as much grain and vegetables as possible at such stations.  

At this time Finlayson saw farming as essential for keeping servants, and as a way of gaining an advantage over the trading competition, who needed to import their provisions. Without this added expense, the H.B.C. could use their "capital and means to undersell them".

Thomas Elwyn toured New Caledonia in 1866, in order to report to the Colonial Secretary concerning development in the

142. ibid., pp.120-121, Finlayson to Williams, April 23, 1866.
district. His description of Fort St. James dealt primarily with the agriculture there:

At this post which consists of several large buildings from fifty to sixty acres of land have been fenced in; potatoes and barley are cultivated about twenty head of cattle, fed on hay during the winter, are kept at this place. The ground in the vicinity of the Fort and on the Southern end of the lake is level and accessible but to the north the mountains close in on either side. 143

In spite of the directive to become self sufficient through farming, when the salmon failed on Stuart Lake in the fall of 1867, the solution, as always, was to trade for it at Babine. It was also necessary to send in an extra 10,000 lbs. of flour, and 600 lbs. of bacon "in consequence of the failure of salmon the Staff of life, in your district." 144 The following year the salmon failed both on Stuart and Babine Lakes, and the dependency on imported provisions increased. Fort St. James needed 2000 lbs. of bacon, 1000 lbs. of beans, and 2000 lbs. of flour, along with 25 lbs of dried apples from the shop at Quesnel. 145 The 1869 salmon run was a large one, and a large stock was stored for the winter. 146

Although attempts continued to make the district self-sufficient in terms of food, agriculture was unable to replace salmon as the key element in the diet at Fort St. James. With a more local supply point in Victoria and the other developing towns in British Columbia, the Hudson’s Bay Company could purchase imported provisions to supplement the

143. P.A.B.C., F526/8, Colonial Correspondence, Thomas Elwyn to Colonial Secretary, September 4,1866.
144. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/33, p.131, Tolmie to Ogden, August 27,1867.
145. H.B.C.A., B.171/c/1, pp.219-220, Grahame to Williams, August 24, 1868.
146. ibid., p.310, Ogden to Williams, November 26,1869.
diet in the interior. However, as Simpson had determined 40 years earlier, the cost of feeding employees on imported provisions was prohibitive, increasing operational costs and cutting deeply into the profits of the district.

Life at Fort St. James

The changes brought about beginning with the 1858 gold rush provided alternatives for the employees of the H.B.C. Prior to this, the Company had been the only employer in the region west of the mountains. Although desertion had become a problem after news of the California gold rush reached the area, the logistics of getting to those promised riches were formidable. As has already been described, there was anxiety about desertions from the New Caledonia brigade in 1858, but with arguments and £10 increases in wages, the men were convinced to remain in the service. Much of the Company's effort in the district throughout this period was directed at engaging and maintaining staff in the region.

The district was under the management of Peter Ogden, the country-born son of Peter Skene Ogden, through most of this period. This was the first instance of a district west of the mountains being placed under the charge of a country-born person. Initially, Ogden was assisted at Fort St. James by James Sabiston, a post master, but in 1861 Sabiston was replaced (due to his ill health) by Ogden's son, called after his grandfather, Peter Skene Ogden.147 In 1866, James Grahame was suggested for the charge of the district, as the management of the Northern Department had some doubts about Ogden:

...there is no doubt about the opinion of Officers on this side who generally seem disposed not to place much confidence in Mr. Ogden though I have not heard any of them establish anything like fair grounds for distrust. 148

It remains open to speculation whether Ogden’s mixed-blood status had any part in this opinion held by the management class in the east. After Grahame had visited and then left New Caledonia, he clearly had a high opinion of Ogden’s management of the district.

E. Conway, who accompanied the Collins Overland Telegraph expedition to the area, wrote back to San Francisco in 1865, in part describing the life of the servants of the H.B.C. (figure 17). He commented first in general terms on the terms of engagement of the employees, and the fact that they were generally married to native women. He went on in more detail:

Should employees impose upon the natives or seduce their Women they are fined a certain number of blankets (or other articles) which is charged to the oppressor, and given to the injured. The men around the Fort seldom get anything to eat except salmon and what they can procure with their Guns. A Clerk in charge of a fort is only allowed 100 lbs of flour and a small supply of Tea and Sugar Yearly. 149

Not only servants, but clerks as well were susceptible to the lure of the gold fields. The Board of Management requested five young clerks from the east for outfit 1867, as this had worked out well in the past. "Adult" clerks engaged

in Victoria had sometimes been unreliable, accepting transportation to the interior and then leaving the service to pursue other opportunities. 150

In 1868 when Grahame was assigned to New Caledonia and Cariboo districts, he found the accommodation in Quesnel not to his taste, and so located himself at Fort St. James with Ogden. 151

For those men that chose to remain in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, life continued much on the pattern that was set in the pre-colonial period. The real difference was in the range of options that was now available in the area. If an individual was dissatisfied with his life at Fort St. James or one of the other Company posts, he could seek his fortune in the gold fields, as an independent trader, or in a variety of other pursuits. Along with losing their monopoly on the Indian trade, the H.B.C. had lost their position as the sole employer west of the Rockies.

Conclusions

This period was typified by the efforts of the Hudson's Bay Company to adjust to their loss of the monopoly on Indian trade. The most obvious problem was the opposition traders who were now free to compete for the furs. The cost of operating the district continued to rise. Servants required higher salaries, or otherwise would be tempted to try their hand at mining or working at other jobs; an option that had not existed a few years before. The ongoing problem of

151. H.B.C.A., B.171/b/2, pp.30-31, Williams to Board of Management, October 21, 1868.
feeding the servants became more acute, as the salmon runs and agricultural efforts continued to fail. At the same time, the outside options available to the servants meant they would not accept marginal treatment any longer. Finally, the imposition of government structures meant that taxes, duties, and other such impediments to the formerly unfettered business of the Company had appeared. Although the district of New Caledonia still produced substantial quantities of fur, the cost of production continued to rise, without a corresponding rise in the prices offered for the furs in Europe.
Chapter 6: 1871-1914

The Invasion of the Outside World

This period was defined by major political changes, which for Fort St. James were reflected in economic changes, primarily affecting the patterns of transportation into the district. On July 20, 1871, the Colony of British Columbia joined Canada. For the colony, the incentives to join Confederation included the elimination of its $1,045,000 debt, subsidies and grants to provide some economic stability, and the promise of a rail connection to Canada. An almost immediate effect of the wiping out of the colonial debt was the removal of the toll on the Cariboo road. The survey work on the rail route to the west started almost immediately, but due to difficulties both in finding a suitable route, and political decisions as to where the terminus would be, construction did not start in earnest on the Canadian Pacific Railway until 1880. The last spike was driven on November 7, 1885, and the first passenger train from Montreal arrived at Port Moody on July 4 the following year.1

Operations

A new Deed Poll in 1871 reflected the changes in the ownership and philosophy of the Hudson’s Bay Company over the previous decade. The Committee was to appoint a Chief Commissioner, who would be responsible for all the Company’s activities in North America. Under his direction there would now be five grades of commissioned gentlemen, who would be given 40% of the profit of the fur trade, but were excluded from any other

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profits. This 40% was divided into 100 shares, held as follows: inspecting chief factors, 3 shares; chief factors, 2½ shares; factors, 2 shares; chief traders, 1½ shares; and junior chief traders, 1 share. The result of this structure was to further centralize authority in the Company, and to limit the "partnership" and control of the field officers. The first Chief Commissioner appointed was D.A. Smith.²

In the spring of 1871, Roderick Finlayson's application for a leave of absence was approved. Prior to his departure for England he intended to visit the interior, "to place our affairs on the best footing possible under the circumstances."³ Finlayson's place as the member of the Board of Management responsible for New Caledonia was taken by James Grahame, despite his brief and unsuccessful tenure in charge of the district a few years earlier.

The New Caledonia outfit for 1871 was sent to the district along with goods for Athabasca, which were to be forwarded to Fort St. John with the leather party.⁴ The possibility of full-scale transportation to Athabasca through New Caledonia was still under discussion the following year, but Grahame continued to fight this plan. There was also a shortage of gentlemen in the district in 1872, with the retirement of chief traders William Manson and Thomas Charles, but 3 clerks from the east were promised.⁵ Hamilton Moffatt, the other chief trader already in the district also intended to retire.⁶ Morice reported that these three men all resigned due to the promotion of the clerk Gavin Hamilton (figure 18) to the rank of factor and the charge of the district over

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5. ibid., pp.855-856, Grahame to Hamilton, June 11,1872.
their heads.  

Hamilton requested that 25 horses be sent into the district in order to take the 1872 outfit in through the Skeena route. Grahame would not approve this, allowing only the "Babine general goods" to be shipped that way, "until we see how they get to their destination." The returns of all the district posts were still to be sent to Quesnel by boat.  

A "Dollar system" was apparently used by this time in New Caledonia. Grahame was not sure if new clerks sent from the east, where barter was still general, would understand such a system. The liquor requisition was cut back, as it was now by federal legislation illegal to provide natives with liquor. At the same time, Hamilton's brother, Thomas, wrote to Grahame concerning the opening of a restaurant and bar at Fort St. James.  

Grahame's doubts about the Skeena route proved correct in 1872 when the Indians at the forks of the river obstructed transportation. In the circumstances, his decision to send the "Fur trading portion of your Outfit" by way of Quesnel looked like the right one. The goods shipped to Babine by way of the Skeena, as well as the incoming clerk Mr. R.H. Hall (who was later to have a great impact on the district) were detained until the problem was settled with a cash payment to the Indians.  

Hamilton arrived at Quesnel with the New Caledonia district returns on August 10, 1872. The district produced 116

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8. ibid., pp.865-869, Grahame to Hamilton, June 27, 1872.
9. ibid.
11. ibid., p.931, Grahame to Hamilton, August 20, 1872.
packs of furs in outfit 1871. The apparent gain or profit for the outfit was a low $6327.63, attributed to the "diminished Fur Trade". Although there were substantial sales of goods to miners, the Indians were not hunting, as they could make more money working for the miners. The importation of leather from Peace River continued in this period, with the 1872 party arriving back at Fort St. James before October 23. However, the clerks that Hamilton requested for the operation of the district did not arrive with it as anticipated.

The problems arising from competition for the fur trade and other outside influences were becoming serious by this time. Bill Cust, a former trading rival of the Company, as well as some of his fellow Omineca miners, returned to fur trading in the winter of 1872 to augment their less than spectacular mining income. Grahame wrote that "the influx of strangers &c has disorganized the Indians and raised the price of Furs." In his opinion the situation was now beyond the Company’s control. He recommended that Gavin Hamilton deal with the changing conditions in New Caledonia by attempting to monopolize the trade, paying higher prices if required, and by keeping expenditures to a minimum.

It had been intended to send the 1873 outfit in by the Skeena, but because the "Otter" was out of service, and because of a drop in freight rates from Yale that year, the Cariboo road route was used again. The removal of the toll from the Cariboo road contributed to the low rates. A major problem in the district at this time was the shortage of

13. ibid., pp.318-319, Grahame to Armit, September 9, 1872.
16. ibid.
clerks to man the various posts:

The District is overrun by traders who bid high for all classes of Furs and who are very sharp and active; to contend with such opponents we require Clerks accustomed to deal with Indians and judge skins and such men are not really to be found in this quarter.\textsuperscript{18}

The returns for outfit 1872 exceeded those of the previous year by $7280.42, and the apparent gain for the year was also up substantially, to $16016.64. The main problems identified in the district were the lack of good clerks, the interference of opposition traders and miners with the natives, and an increased trade in "heavy stuffs", such as flour, which did not show the same returns as dry goods. The mines in the Omineca district were "languishing", in spite of the impact they had on the trade.\textsuperscript{19}

The reduction of fur prices in the fall of 1873 was expected to reduce competition in the district. Due to the shortage of clerks in the district, no trade account was kept that year at McLeod Lake. However, in spite of the shortage, no replacement clerks were sent from the east with the leather party from Peace River that year.\textsuperscript{20}

In 1874 the influence of government was felt again, in the form of a "Road Tax" of $2.00 which had to be paid on each man at Fort St. James and the other district posts.\textsuperscript{21} That summer, the H.B.C. purchased the building, wharf, sailboat,
and all stock of J.B. Lovell at Fort St. James and Bulkley House, apparently taking advantage of the problems of one of their competitors. The "Outfit of Dry goods" sent to Fort St. James was doubled, "so that you will have nothing to complain of in the way of supplies." The district returns of outfit 1874 totalled 134 packs, with a value of $47,615.28, up from $42,621.98 the previous year. The apparent gain also rose from $11,852.48 to $13,334.07. At Fort St. James the returns had remained about the same, due to a scarcity of beaver.

Some apprentice clerks finally arrived in the district at this time. The larger returns of outfit 1874 were attributed more to the larger outfit sent in than to the extra manpower. In 1875 the idea of supplying Athabasca from the coast resurfaced, with the goods sent overland across the Giscombe portage to Fort St. James, from there by boat to Fort George, and thence over another portage, where the goods were to be met by a boat from McLeod Lake. The Babine portion of the New Caledonia outfit was to be sent via the Skeena. The main body of the goods were detained at Yale that year, due to the road there being flooded. In the fall, the all too common failure of the leather party was repeated.

The results of outfit 1875 were disappointing, down from the previous year in spite of a generous supply of goods and the absence of opposition except at Babine. The failure was put down to the "outlay of Flour", and "advances of provisions

22. ibid., p.538, Charles to Hamilton, July 2, 1874.
25. ibid., pp.830-831, Charles to Hamilton, May 27,1875.
made to Indians" in the outfit.28

The apparent gain for the district fell to $1,537.26, attributed to a reduced tariff, which dropped the valuation of the returns by $7,194.39, and the $5,000.00 worth of provisions allowed to the natives on credit.29

Both the Babine outfit and the servants' orders for the whole district were to be sent in via the Skeena in 1876. Additionally, some 25,000 to 30,000 pounds of freight were to be shipped through New Caledonia to Athabasca this year. However, this time the plan was to pack the goods directly from Yale to McLeod Lake, where about four boats would be required to take the goods down the Peace River.30

The district continued on its downward trend, with the returns of outfit 1876 declining again. A number of factors contributed, particularly a sharp drop in fur prices in England, which resulted in the tariffs in the district being adjusted accordingly. Some goods had gone missing at Connolly Lake, and the Babine outfit had arrived "late in the season" via the Skeena.31

Hamilton purchased 150 Mile House in 1877, and requested 6 months leave and goods on private order for the spring of 1878. This outside business was contrary to the terms of the Deed Poll, so he was not allowed to purchase the goods. Leave was granted in January 1878, but with the proviso that he must sell 150 Mile House before the end of outfit 1877 or he would be fired.32 Hamilton did not sell his holding by the deadline

30. ibid.; ibid, p.145, Charles to Hamilton, June 15,1876.
31. ibid., p.375, Charles to Hamilton, June 14,1877.
but was left in charge of New Caledonia until the spring of 1879.  

William Charles attributed some of the problems in New Caledonia to Hamilton's management. The latter was thought to be incapable of dealing with anticipated competition at McLeod Lake. Charles described Hamilton as "flighty and excitable", and "a perfect weathercock and unstable as water." Fort St. James, under his direction, was "a ruin, dirty and miserable looking." By 1878 furs were purchased for cash at Babine, and the depression in fur prices in Europe continued. There was an apparent profit for outfit 1877, but it disappeared "when priced by our tariff which is still further reduced." This revised pricing dropped the book value of the returns, while the expenses of the district remained the same. In the spring of 1879 Charles described New Caledonia as being in a "depressed state". Hamilton attempted to sell a sawmill he had built to the north of the Company's claim to the H.B.C. for $1500.00, but the offer was not accepted, as it was viewed as a "speculation altogether foreign to the Company's business". Hamilton's place in charge of Fort St. James and the district was taken by James M.L. Alexander, who had been promoted to chief factor in January 1879. Alexander inherited a meagre district. He requested a clerk at Fort St.  

33. ibid., pp.697-698, Charles to Hamilton, December 31,1878.  
36. ibid., pp.748-749, Charles to Hamilton, April 17,1879.  
37. ibid., p.842, Charles to Alexander, January 5,1979.
James, but was turned down because the cost of a clerk's wages was considered excessive for the post. Charles suggested various austerity measures to him, including the closure of Bear Lake and Bear Lake Outpost (Fort Grahame) if they were "improfitable". It was also recommended that instead of incurring the expense of opening a post on Manson's Creek, the Hudson's Bay Company could simply purchase any furs collected there by opposition traders. Charles intended to send the outfits for Babine and Stuart Lake by way of the Skeena in 1879. 38

By 1881 the value of beaver was on the rise in Europe, and the value of the returns for outfit 1880 was increased accordingly. Most of the 1881 outfit for Fort St. James was sent in by the Skeena route that summer. 39 The following spring the outfits for that post, along with McLeod Lake and Bear Lake Outpost, were all sent in on the Skeena. 40

The district continued its decline through the 1880s. No 1882 outfit was to be sent to Fraser Lake, and Charles suggested that Fort Grahame and McLeod Lake be closed, with Fort St. James assuming a larger role in the trade. The post at the forks of the Skeena was to be kept open, and possibly Bear Lake. Charles hoped that the natives would take their furs to the Skeena or Fort George as an alternative to the posts they had been affiliated with. 41

The apparent loss for the district in outfit 1881 was $9540.72. New accounting procedures by which each district had to bear its own proportion of "charges" rather than covering them in general profit and loss increased this loss by some $2,700 over what it would have been in previous

38. ibid., pp.780-781, Charles to Alexander, May 29, 1879.
40. ibid., p.339, Munro to Alexander, April 27, 1882.
41. ibid., p.342, Charles to Alexander, May 4, 1882.
The apparent loss in outfit 1882 was $7,833.77 on returns of $26,862.78. Charles intended to close one or two of the outposts, and reduce the district and the fur trade to "smaller dimensions", while maintaining those posts needed to keep the communication with the Athabasca district open. The cost of operating the district remained similar to what it had been the decade before, but the value of the returns was not much more than half what it had been, resulting in the loss.

The use of the Skeena route to supply the New Caledonia outfits ended in 1884:

The Outfit for Stuarts Lake McLeod's Lake and Fort George have all been forwarded via Quesnel...

In 1885 fur prices were down overall in Europe, and prospects remained poor in New Caledonia. Although the trade at Fraser Lake was not particularly productive, it was continued as a device to prevent the natives going to Quesnel. The downward trend in fur prices reversed before the end of the outfit. This increased the value of the New Caledonia returns to $42,124.69, for an apparent gain of $3,476.16. The following year, the fur prices rose again, and the New Caledonia outfit for 1886 was to be sent by the Skeena.

42. ibid., pp.433-434, Charles to Alexander, October 5,1882.
44. ibid., p.786, Charles to Alexander, July 16,1884.
45. ibid., pp.908-909, Charles to Alexander, March 19,1885.
By the winter of 1886, Company management had lost faith in Alexander's ability to manage New Caledonia. T.R. Smith, the assistant Commissioner, wrote to Joseph Wrigley, the commissioner:

In view of the competition likely in future to take place in the New Caledonia District, and judging by Mr. Alexander's abilities to meet it by what has been seen of him, I am quite of your opinion that a change in the management of that district is desirable, and should be made with as little delay as possible. 48

At the end of May 1887, Alexander was sent to Quesnel, and Roderick MacFarlane took his place in New Caledonia. 49

MacFarlane analyzed the district in the winter of 1887, finding profits down at Babine and Fort George, but up at McLeod Lake, and Fort St.James/Fraser Lake, which he considered one unit. At Fort St.James, the increase in returns was partly offset by equipment supplied to new gentlemen and servants, and a change in tariffs. MacFarlane thought the indent for outfit 1887 was not adequate to allow the post to compete with a "well equipped opposition," which had appeared at Fort St.James for the first time. The preceding summer, shortages of tea, sugar, and rice forced the post to supply the mess by borrowing from the Catholic mission.

Due to the shortage of goods the natives took their furs to Quesnel, or simply held their furs in anticipation of provisions such as bacon arriving at Fort St. James. MacFarlane wrote that:

49. ibid., p.697-698, Smith to Alexander, May 25,1887.
...except Blankets, Tobacco, Flour, Ammunition and a few General Goods, there was a humiliating display of empty shelves, even at this, the head quarters of the district!

He went on to explain why the district was failing, in his opinion because the H.B.C. abandoned Fraser Lake, Fort Connolly, and Fort Grahame. The natives took their furs to convenient opposition posts, rather than to the remaining Company posts in the district. MacFarlane also cited the lowering of the district fur tariff in 1885, the lack of adequate stocks of "provisions, groceries and staple necessaries," and the late arrival of the outfits from Victoria as factors contributing to the decline.  

He suggested that the problems of the district could be alleviated by encouraging the Indians to hunt, and not go into debt, and to control the goods ordered for the Indian trade more closely. He advised his post managers to note the articles in demand with the natives, and then "indent for whatever they really require and can pay for". The available stock at the posts, therefore, would depend on what the natives were actually purchasing.  

The value of the district returns for outfit 1887 was down about 10%, from $44,286.71 to $40,281.45. At Fort St. James the returns were compromised by failure of the crops and the salmon fishery, a lack of trade goods, and the competition of Frank Guy. In spite of this, the value of the post returns was up by $1,130.36. MacFarlane entertained


51. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/10, pp.79-83, MacFarlane to Sinclair, December 29,1887, and other correspondence to post managers, New Caledonia.
hopes of purchasing Guy's furs, and getting the latter individual to retire from the district. ⁵２

After the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway line some parts of the New Caledonia outfit were supplied directly from Winnipeg. The Canadian Pacific Railway transported these goods to Ashcroft. From there they were shipped by wagon to Quesnel, and then forwarded by boat or canoe to Fort George and Fort St. James. For outfit 1888, the order from Winnipeg comprised 20 dozen axes, 80 hides for moccasins, and 25 dozen lbs. of twine. ⁵³

By far the largest part of the outfit was still assembled in Victoria, and then forwarded by one of the two main routes to New Caledonia. In 1888 most of these supplies were sent via Port Simpson, to be brought across the Skeena Portage by Vieth & Borland, the firm contracted that year to do most of the packing for the H.B.C. ⁵⁴

Throughout 1888, MacFarlane attempted to impress on his post managers the need to economize. He offered typical advice to C.C. McKenzie at Stony Creek:

...you cannot be too careful or economical in your mess, post and other expenditures. We now pay so very high for furs, while the cost laid down of Goods and especially imported Provisions is enormous that the comparatively low prices realized by their sale in England, admit of little or no margin for profit. ⁵⁵

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⁵² H.B.C.A., B.188/b/11, pp. 76-82, MacFarlane to Smith, March 27, 1888.
⁵³ H.B.C.A., B.188/b/10, pp. 43-44, Requisition on Northern Department Depot Winnipeg for...New Caledonia, November 29, 1887.
⁵⁴ H.B.C.A., B.188/b/12, pp. 18-19, MacFarlane to Vieth & Borland, May 7, 1888.
MacFarlane was replaced in charge of the district by William E. Traill, who arrived at Fort St. James on September 19, 1889. He found the post to be "in excellent order," as far as buildings were concerned.\(^56\)

The apparent loss of the district in outfit 1889 was $15,588.95, with every post except Fort Grahame contributing to this loss. Expenses were up by $1,1612.62, which Traill blamed on construction done prior to his arrival. This situation prevailed at Fort St. James, combined with a severe winter, a scarcity of fur bearing animals, and many of the natives going off to work in the mines.\(^57\)

In the summer of 1891, the Commissioner of the H.B.C., C.C. Chipman, sent Inspecting Chief Factor James McDougall to New Caledonia to ascertain how the district could be put on a profitable basis again. From the information produced by this inspection, an austerity programme was developed by R.H. Hall to render New Caledonia economically viable. Hall was the man sent into the district as a clerk in 1872, now in charge at the regional headquarters, in Victoria. His direct intervention in the operations of New Caledonia was to have a profound impact over the next decade.

In 1891, Hall wrote to Traill listing the allowable "charges of management" in the district, reflecting the elimination of the board allowance for gentlemen. For Fort St. James the total expenses were to be $3000.00, $600.00 as an allowance for the officer in charge in lieu of board, $1000.00 for a clerk, including wages and board allowance, $1000.00 for the wages of 2 labourers, including board, and $400.00 for all other expenses. Fort George had one clerk and

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57. ibid., pp.282-292, Trail to Smith, August 4, 1890.
an allowance for labour, while the other district posts of Babine, Fort Grahame, Stony Creek and McLeod Lake, were each allowed $500.00 for a postmaster's salary and board, and $200.00 for temporary labour. The total expenses for the district were to be kept at $8900.00, including $1100.00 for all other expenses above wages and board. Hall hoped for Traill's cooperation in carrying out these austerity measures, including the elimination of all extra employees and expenses:

I am sure that in carrying out the proposed economy I will have your hearty support. We must all see that in order to compete with our opponents retrenchment must take place. The expenses of management both here and in the Districts have been largely out of proportion to the amount of the transactions...

Traill made counterproposals to those sent him by Hall. Fort George and Babine were to be taken out of the district, so the cuts there were immaterial to him. He considered the budget for Fort St. James adequate, but wanted increased budgets for McLeod Lake, Bear Lake Outpost, and Fraser Lake. In the latter two instances, this was to cover expensive transportation and horse and stock expenses respectively. However, Traill recommended that Fort George be cut back, and proposed that Stony Creek be shut down altogether. Hall was firm on the budget for McLeod Lake, and stated that the cost of transportation for the other posts should be charged to a special account, rather than to the individual post accounts.

Besides proposing that Babine go to Port Simpson

59. P.A.B.C., A/D/20/S2T/K, Hall to Traill, November 19, 1891.  
district, and Fort George become a sub-post of Quesnel, Hall thought that Traill, with his age and narrow background in the trade, was not equal to the task, and suggested to Chipman that a position east of the mountains be found for him.  

One aspect of the reorganization was the almost exclusive use of the Skeena/Babine route to supply Fort St. James. An integral part of this plan involved the construction of two "cutters" to haul freight on Babine Lake and Stuart Lake. The cost of these was intended to be less than $1000 each, but this figure was exceeded; rigging alone was more than $600 for each vessel.

The other element needed for this transportation was a steamer to carry the goods on the Skeena from Port Simpson to Hazelton. This latter settlement had grown up at the forks of the Skeena, as the head of navigation and a logical terminus for river-borne vessels. The Company arranged for the building of the steamer "Caledonia", which was completed in the spring of 1891. The company of Vieth and Borland, of 150 Mile House, were contracted by the H.B.C. in 1889 to pack on the portage between Hazelton and Babine. They also packed for the company on the Cariboo wagon road, from Ashcroft to Quesnel.

The reorganization came too late to help outfit 1891, in which Fort St. James showed a loss of $3,166.71, compared to the previous year's loss of $1,790.19. This loss was due in part to the expenses of transportation, combined with a decline of about 9% in returns, particularly of beaver, bear and fox. On the other hand, post expenses at Fort St. James

62. ibid., Hall to Traill, June 9, 1892.
64. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/15, pp.66-67, MacFarlane to Vieth and Borland, August 29, 1889.
declined by $589.65. The Indian debt at the post was reduced by 3456 skins, with 2728 of them simply written off after remaining on the accounts for years. An attempt was also made to eliminate gratuities throughout the district. All the posts in the district besides Fort St. James also showed a loss in outfit 1891.  

The austerity measures resulted in the district realizing a profit of $6117.07 in outfit 1892. Another $700 was added to this to reimburse New Caledonia for a freight overcharge from Simpson district the previous outfit. Every post in the district showed a gain this year. A new tariff for furs saved Fort St. James and Bear Lake Outpost from what would otherwise have been losses. The total post expenses for Fort St. James in outfit 1892 amounted to $2809.39, including the additional expense of shutting down Connolly Lake post ($150), which devolved on the former post. The district expenses were higher than anticipated by about $400, amounting to $1100. A.C. Murray, now in charge of Fort St. James, believed that New Caledonia would remain a separate district, rather than being joined to Simpson district as had been proposed by the commissioner.

Attempts were made to cut the cost of overland transportation in 1893 by leasing the Company packtrain to the contractors Sanchez and Aguay, in hopes of saving on the shipping cost between Stuart Lake and McLeod Lake.

The returns for the district were up in outfit 1893, and the expenses were down slightly, resulting in an apparent profit of $5,864.95. At Fort St. James the returns rose about 30%, and the apparent profit was $2,808.00. The stock of goods on hand was generous, but Murray thought the next year

65. P.A.B.C., A/D/20/S2T/J/A, Traill to Hall, August 26, 1892.
would be less productive due to food shortages among the natives. 68

Although the H.B.C. surveyed and established its land claims in the 1850s in developed areas, at Fort St. James the issue arose almost 40 years later. Mr. Devereux of the Indian Reserve Survey was to visit the area to survey reserves around Stuart Lake in the summer of 1895. Hall, who thought the claim there was 100 acres, instructed Murray to let Devereux know precisely where the Company's boundaries were located. 69 Murray wrote back, describing what he considered the claim to be:

I believe that it has always been understood that the Company owned 200 or more acres at this place. The distance apart of the two posts, marking the lake frontage of their claim indicates this as they are about 3/4 of a mile apart. If we only owned 100 acres here with this frontage the posts inland would scarcely be far enough back to take in our fields. The most southerly post is just to the south of our barn, known as Tom Hamilton's house, while the one to the North is situated on the edge of the R.C. Mission claim and nearly in front of James Bouché's house. The lines from these posts were supposed to run from West to East, so as to have the building known as Mrs. Ogden's house on the Company's land. 70

Murray wanted assurance that the fields to the east were included in the H.B.C. claim. Ultimately Hall negotiated the purchase of the 112 acres (at $1,000 per acre) between the H.B.C. claim and the Mission. This claim was to be surveyed in the summer of 1896, at the same time as the Indian

The district of New Caledonia, now with four posts, showed a profit of $838.18 in outfit 1895. Fort Grahame and McLeod Lake both had profits of just over $1000, Fraser Lake lost $183, while Fort St. James showed a loss of $1093.04.

In the spring of 1897 Hall assigned Murray to Port Simpson, and W.E. Camsell to replace him at Fort St. James. In outfit 1896 McLeod Lake showed a profit of $800, while all the other district posts showed a loss. Fort St. James lost $2,500, and the district as a whole $3,100.

1897 saw the first direct intrusion of government authority into life at Fort St. James, when Constable Anderson was sent from Quesnel to arrest James Alexander for an assault. At the same time, Camsell was having doubts about his own ability to manage the district of New Caledonia. The district lost over $2,900 in outfit 1897, with McLeod Lake again the only profitable post. Fort St. James lost $1,616.00.

In the fall of 1898 Camsell, who had never liked the Indian trade, was sent to Victoria. A.C. McNab took his place at Fort St. James. Later in 1898 Hall reported to the Canadian headquarters of the H.B.C. in Winnipeg concerning New Caledonia. The Klondike excitement had some effect on the district, particularly the northeast posts. Even at Fort St.

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74. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/17, pp.311-313, Camsell to McNab, September 4, 1897.
75. ibid., pp.360-363, Camsell to Hall, November 30, 1897.
77. ibid., p.725, Camsell to Commissioner, October 15, 1898.
James, miners passing through depleted the stock of goods. Fur returns had fallen off, because of the diversion of some furs out of the district, and a decrease in the population of fur-bearing animals in the area. Camsell had apparently ignored the directive on lowering debt granted to natives, so the Indian debt at Fort St. James had increased. The post expenses of $3,032 were as low as possible. Hall saw the future prospects of the Company in the development of the area for mining, which would create new retail markets:

That we are on the verge of this opening up there is little doubt and the future hope of the Company in this District is that a new and profitable mining trade will spring up to supplant the old and declining trade for which the Posts were originally established. 78

A.C. Murray returned to Fort St. James to take over from McNab in October 1901. Although the district of New Caledonia no longer existed, Murray was assigned the supervision of the former district posts of Fraser Lake, McLeod Lake and Fort Grahame. 79 Fort St. James showed a profit of $2,207.26 in outfit 1901, and the combined profit of the former district posts was over $4,500. 80

Evidence of the intrusion of the outside world continued to appear at Fort St. James. In 1899 a summer post office was in operation at the post, closing again the same winter. By 1904 an official school was established in one of the Company's buildings, with Murray appointed to the board of

78. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/114, New Caledonia District Reports, December 5, 1898.
This new contact with the outside did not eliminate some familiar problems. The results for outfit 1903 showed every post with a loss, including Fort St. James. A large part of this was due to the plight of the natives, who had almost no dried salmon. Because of this, the majority of the furs they did trade were exchanged for provision items, which produced less profit for the H.B.C.82

By 1905 the situation improved in anticipation of the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. James Thomson, who took over Hall's district responsibility for New Caledonia in 1901-1902, wrote the Commissioner in Winnipeg. Thomson thought that when the rich natural resources of the area were opened up, a large trade would result, comparable to that along the Canadian Pacific Railway mainline.83 Large quantities of goods were shipped in by the Company supply route for the G.T.P.R. survey party in the spring of 1906.84

Probably as a result of the impact of the railway, the apparent gain at Fort St. James for outfit 1905 was $7,355.81. Murray stated this to be the best result he remembered for the post since 1876. The former New Caledonia posts showed a combined profit of $14,400 in spite of heavy competition in Quesnel and Hazelton.85 In the summer opposition appeared at Fort St. James, in the persons of Chief Joseph Prince, of the post band, and a Chinese trader from Quesnel, Doug Hoy. They brought in a 9,000 lb. scow of goods as their outfit, and were expected to hurt the Company's business. Louis Grostete, 81. H.B.C.A., B.226/c/1904, Greenfield to Thomson, August 18,1904; ibid., Murray to Thomson, November 12,1904.
82. ibid., Murray to Thomson, August 23,1904.
another local native, was outfitted by the H.B.C. to trade with the natives at the outlying villages to head off some of the trade. 86

In the last years of the century, a concerted effort was made to end Indian debts, and to curtail the practice of "jawbone", where advances and gratuities were given freely (see also the Indian Trade section). Hall wrote to McNab in February 1899 with instructions that he should return to the basic credo of the Company; "Goods in exchange for Furs." 87 I summing up the business of outfit 1898, Hall reflected on the economic ups and downs of New Caledonia. He felt the major problem with the district was a lack of good management, and described his reorganization in 1892:

Prior to that time and for 16 years, covering Outfits 1876 to 1891, the apparent Net Losses had amounted to $73,935.40. 88

The net gains after he introduced his austerity programme were substantial: in outfit 1892 $5494.00; in outfit 1893 $5865.00; in outfit 1894 $8167.00; but in 1895 down to $664.00 due to a drop in fur values. From that point he felt the district had "gone backwards rapidly". There was a net loss of $2908.00 in outfit 1897, and a gain in outfit 1898 of $4068.43. Hall thought that the gain in the latter year should have been much greater, but was compromised by "loose and careless management, losses by bad debts and a decreased collection of furs." Hall believed that new types of stock were required in the district that the post managers were not even aware of. The gain in 1898 was largely due to an increase in fur prices; the returns for the year were down 24% if valued by 1897 prices. Most of the furs available had been

88. ibid., Hall to Commissioner, October 19,1899.
traded, but a lack of food and a bad winter had compromised the hunt. The prospects for the next year were better, as rabbits were more plentiful, and the natives had large quantities of salmon stored. 89

Hall attributed some of the problems to the former post manager, Camsell, whose accounts were not believed, and who had extended credit to dubious risks. His replacement, McNab, seemed more capable. The clerk Ralph Grassham had been fired, so the staff may have contributed substantially to the problems. The 3 men employed at Fort St. James in outfit 1899 were McNab, Mr. Greenwood, apprentice clerk, and Donald Todd, labourer. The post expenses the previous outfit had been $3350.00, the increase attributed to the extra cost of acting as the district depot, and were expected to be down in 1899. In outfit 1898 sales to Europeans had totalled $8,591.38, and the fur returns had totalled $8,827.95 at the higher tariff. Hall's conclusion was that the post would prove profitable under good management. To prevent the natives taking their furs to opposition traders or Quesnel, he recommended that they be payed "good, fair prices" for their furs, and that goods in exchange be sold to them for moderate prices. 90

Hall's suggestions proved successful again, in the short term, with the district showing a net apparent gain of $8,672.83 for outfit 1899. 91 However, the following outfit, the gain for the district was down to $846.08. Fraser Lake showed a gain of $476.19, McLeod Lake a gain of $1,474.92, and Fort Grahame a gain of 367.34, but Fort St. James showed a loss of $1,472.37. Sales of "Dry Goods" were down as the scarcity of salmon and rabbits compelled the natives to spend most of their money on imported provisions. It was suggested that the manager be sent out to select the goods for the post,

89. ibid.
90. ibid.
91. ibid., Hall to MacNab, September 20, 1900.
for both exposure to new goods and to new business methods. The fur returns were off by $868.89 (7.4%) based on the 1899 tariff, with less bear, silver fox and marten traded. Outstanding balances were owed to the post by the Department of Public Works, for assistance with their telegraph line, and the 43rd Mining & Milling Company. Both of these debts were sent to Winnipeg for collection. Some opposition was present in the form of a Mr. Costello, who had initially set up on the reserve, then been thrown off by the Indian Agent, and was now squatting and trading on Company land. Although he was no threat commercially, he had to be driven off the Company holding by legal means.  

The impact of government continued to be felt in the district. In 1906 the North West Mounted Police started building winter quarters near the H.B.C. post at Fort Grahame. There were also rumors of Revillion Brothers setting up a competing post in the same area.  

In 1908 the H.B.C. provided teams and men to haul materials for a new salmon hatchery. Murray thought the $5.00 per day charged for this work was too low.  

The impact of the railway construction continued through 1912. Murray wrote to MacFarlane in December of that year:

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I think I told you before that the Company were doing more business and making better profits now than in the times of Ogden Hamilton, Alexander, or yourself. I thought the summers of 1910 and 1911 were banner seasons for business at Fort St. James but I see now last summer beats them all. There were no end of surveyors, Railroad men, travellers
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looking for farming land others for timber coming and going all summer.  

Although opposition traders were getting most of the skins in the area, the H.B.C. was getting more than half the cash sales. Their major problem was keeping stock on hand. Goods were sent to both Hazelton and Ashcroft, but the cost of freight from those points was prohibitive. The railroad was completed to Hazelton, and Fort St. James was now visited by fortnightly mail service, and a telephone wire had been installed to the telegraph office at Fraser Lake.  

By outfit 1914 the bubble had burst. Business throughout B.C. was down due to the outbreak of war in Europe. The H.B.C. was outbid for furs by the competition in the Fort St. James area. The Company store over extended itself during the 1910-1913 railway boom, and was caught out and overstocked when the 1914 collapse occurred.  

The Indian Trade  

With the introduction into the district of new economic opportunities for the natives, in 1871 the Company considered new strategies for dealing with the native market:  

Mr. Hamilton also alludes to the decline of the fur trade in New Caledonia, owing to the native hunters being now employed so much in the transport of supplies to the mines: in order to make up for this  

96. ibid.  
decline, it would be desirable to send forward a much larger stock of provisions than usual for sale to the natives who are now well supplied with cash...

Along with the cash economy, by 1873 a Catholic mission was established at Fort St. James which also profoundly affected the Carrier people. The missionaries built, using native labour, on land pre-empted to the north of the Hudson’s Bay Company claim. By 1878 it was reported that a number of the Carrier had abandoned their village near the outlet of the lake in favour of a new one of 20 houses developed near the mission, on the pre-empted land.

The Victoria management of the H.B.C. encouraged cooperation with the missionaries (figure 19). Grahame wrote to Hamilton in 1873:

I fully rely on your being able to work together with the Priests. Taking the proper way their influence with the Indians will avail us much, and I have pointed out to the head of the Mission here that they must not have too many Church holidays during hunting times or they will interfere with the Fur Trade and impoverish the Indians.

Grahame also directed Hamilton to regulate the price of imported provisions traded to the natives by varying the prices allowed for furs, "leaving a large margin of Profit in so doing."

101. ibid.
provisions rather than durable goods, the Company would attempt to make a similar profit from the former articles.

By 1875 Quesnel, as the emporium of the district, presented a great temptation to the natives of Fort St. James, to the detriment of the trade at the latter post:

This new idea of the Indians taking their Furs to Quesnel after getting their advances at Stuart’s Lake must be put a stop to, if possible, else you will have to discontinue the practice of giving advances.102

Charles advised Hamilton to get the priests to use their influence to keep the natives at Stuart Lake. In this case the moral damage resulting from free access to liquor and other temptations was as great a threat to the missionaries’ work as the economic damage due to the loss of furs was to the Company’s fur trade.

By the latter part of the 1880s, the trade in New Caledonia was still generally carried on by barter (figure 20), but the Made Beaver (or "skin") standard had been devalued. At McLeod Lake in 1887, the rate paid for a large prime beaver (formerly 1 M.B.) was "7 skins", raised from 6 skins to discourage the post Indians from taking their furs to Fort St. James, where the tariff had been higher.103

The "Indian Debt Book" kept at McLeod Lake the same year illustrates this "skin" system in use. A large beaver would give a native a credit of from 4 to 6 skins, a marten 3 skins, and a large bear 8 to 9 skins. The goods were priced the same

way. Four pounds of flour was 1 skin, a double barrelled gun
50 skins, a shirt 3 skins, and a coat 12 skins. The tally of
debits and credits was kept under individual name headings,
with skin values above each entry of debits (goods) and
credits (furs). 104

A Fort St. James labour book from 1888 also illustrates
the use of a debit/credit system, apparently based on the
M.B., rather than a cash system. By this time natives were
employed for a great deal of the labour around the post,
including construction. They were employed on a daily basis,
and credited at the rate of 1 to 1 1/2 M.B. per day. Their
accounts were again kept under individual names, and debits
(purchases) and credits appear side by side. In the back of
this book are records of the provision trade, kept in the same
fashion. Generally around 30 whitefish or 40 trout equalled a
M.B. Some native labourers were also provided with rations,
as with the "Haymen" employed in the fall of 1888. They were
supplied with flour, bacon, tallow, tea, sugar and salmon. 105

In the same year MacFarlane wrote to McIntosh, his
manager at Babine Lake, encouraging him to fight the natives'
gambling, "which so adversely affects the morals of the
Indians, and the interests of the Company." MacFarlane also
ordered 2 silver watches from Quesnel "for excellent Indian
hunters." 106

In 1668 A.E.B. Davie, the Provincial Attorney General,
attempted to impose trapping seasons on the natives through
the H.B.C. and MacFarlane. The natives were willing to
refrain from trapping for a "closed" season, but wanted
material help for the needy in exchange. MacFarlane estimated

106. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/11, pp.2-5, MacFarlane to McIntosh, February
15, 1888; ibid., pp.31-32, MacFarlane, Memorandum for Quesnelle,
February 22, 1888.
the cost of this help to be $300–$400 in years of plenty, and $1000–$2000 in bad years, like the present one. Due to the bad year, the H.B.C. itself was not in a position to feed needy natives as liberally as the preceding year. MacFarlane attempted to solicit aid from the provincial government.

Some post managers took MacFarlane's pronouncements on cutting debt too literally, and refused to advance the provisions and ammunition the natives required to pursue their hunts. MacFarlane pointed out that only those items which would encourage hunting were to be given out on debt, rather than any luxury goods. The post managers were to make the natives understand that the objective was to pay off their debt:

"Jawbone" is a first class and very useful servant to people—but that if payment be neglected from time to time and debts accumulate, he thus becomes a bad master...

When Traill took over Fort St. James in 1889, he wrote that the Carrier had a "reputation of being very hard to deal with, and I do not think they have been maligned."

By 1891 the government assigned an Indian agent, R.E. Loring, to the region. Based in Hazelton, his impact on, and knowledge of, the Fort St. James groups seemed minimal.

One of the recommendations that came out of McDougall's 1891 inspection of New Caledonia was the abolition of the Made

108. ibid., pp.102-104, MacFarlane to Sinclair, October 23, 1888; H.B.C.A., B.188/b/14, pp.24-25, MacFarlane to Davie, November 12, 1888.
109. ibid., pp.43-46, MacFarlane to McKenzie, November 24, 1888.
111. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/18, p.9, Traill to Lyons, July 16, 1891.
Beaver tariff and implementation of a cash tariff. R.H. Hall, in charge of the district, thought that this move required "very careful consideration", and was unwilling to take immediate action.\(^{112}\)

Traill continued his predecessors' attempts to cut "jawbone" or Indian debt. He wrote to Hall in the summer of 1892:

There is a decrease in the Indian debts at this post of 3456 Skins 2728 having been written off. These debts have been on our book for years and should have been written off before. Evry [sic] effort will be made to collect the same.

There is a slight decrease in gratuities I intend making almost a clean sweep of gratuities [sic] throughout the District Out.1892.\(^{113}\)

Two years later, Murray warned Hall that the Indians were threatening to "make it hot" for Hall the next time he visited the district, as they considered him responsible for stopping debt.\(^{114}\)

Although Hall discouraged cash purchases of furs, Murray was sometimes dealing this way by 1894, and found most of the money came back in the store. Examples of cash prices he paid for furs were $15.00 for a large prime beaver, $4.50 for a large beaver, $1.50 for a marten, $14.00 for a #1 bear, $5.00 for a cross fox, $5.00 for a silver fox, $1.50 for a red fox, $.60 for a mink, and $.08 for a muskrat.\(^{115}\)

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113. P.A.B.C., A/D/20/S2T/J/A, Traill to Hall, August 26, 1892.
Murray claimed to have introduced a system of tokens, based on cash values, at Fort St. James during his tenure:

I introduced a system of tokens here in dealing with the Indians for furs. These were of cardboard, the dollar tokens being red, the five dollar ones blue, and the two-bit ones white. On trading in their furs the Indians were given tokens to the value of the furs and these they exchanged in the store for goods. The whites used these tokens just the same as money, and some of them even got as far as Victoria. They would be taken at any post of the Company and redeemed for goods or cash. In the end, of course, they had to be sent here and redeemed by us. We kept a token account showing how much was outstanding. These tokens were printed at Winnipeg and were signed by the officer in charge. Two or three old fellows among those who traded here would rather have our tokens than actual cash. The young fellows got on to them, too.  

The use of these tokens was confirmed in a 1972 interview of a Carrier informant born in the 1880s:

...no money, used tickets in trade, small hard things, some blue, some red, some white, four bits, one dollar...  

These tokens only became relevant after the natives began to accept cash as payment for their furs. By paying in these tokens rather than legal tender, the Company ensured that the

natives had to come to them to purchase their goods. If Canadian cash paid, the natives could spend it anywhere, but the H.B.C. tokens were only honoured by the Company stores. This mechanism ensured purchaser loyalty in the same way that the debt system had in earlier years.

Due to the depression in 1895, the Dominion Indian Department cut back programmes radically that year, dismissing most of the Indian Reserve Survey Department, and eliminating support to the natives in the form of seeds, medicines and so forth. Hall had taken a copy of the Department's list of seeds, added to it, and sent it to New Caledonia. The natives were to pay for the seeds, but only to cover costs. He ordered a couple of ploughs sent to Fort St. James for the natives on the same basis.\textsuperscript{118}

Murray anticipated some decline in the returns, as the Indians were not trapping that spring. He was also concerned that the natives could lose some of their cattle "for want of fodder." He had fodder available, and would "sell a little to those who can pay me."\textsuperscript{119}

The influence of the mission on the natives continued to grow through this period. In 1895 Murray complained about the meddling of Father Morice:

This fellow though not liked by the Indians, has much influence with all the Indians of this district. If it was not for this I believe I would split with him but on his acc't I must try and keep on the right side of him as long as possible or until he interferes for the worse with the business.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} P.A.B.C., A/D/20/Vi3, Hall to Murray, January 19, 1895.
\textsuperscript{119} P.A.B.C., A/D/20/S2M, Murray to McDonald, February 15, 1895.
\textsuperscript{120} H.B.C.A., B.226/c/16, Murray to Hall, March 14, 1895.
In April 1895 Murray desperately required tea and tobacco, without which he could not secure the natives’ spring hunt. He considered May and June the best months for trade, and did not want to jeopardize this by forcing the Indians to go elsewhere. 121

In the summer, Murray requested 4,000 salmon from Babine, as the Indians at Fort St. James were short of provisions again. Indian debt by this time was down to 497 M.B. 122 The Company now conducted the trade both in skins and cash. The McLeod Lake "Indian Debt Book" of 1895-1897 gave cash and skin values for debited goods, which were applied against credits in skins. The equivalent cash value of 1 skin varied widely, from $.35 to $.70. The skin values of some common furs were; bear, 12-20; beaver, 7; marten, 3; and otter, 5. Some values of goods were; flour, $14.00 per 100 lbs. or 18 skins; shirts, $.56 or 2 skins; 40 bullets, $.42 or 1 skin; 2 lbs. shot, $.42 or 1 skin. 123

Although Murray resented Morice’s impact, the mission served as the centre of large gatherings of natives on the various religious holidays. The Indians also used these occasions to trade with the H.B.C.:

...there has been one of the largest gatherings of Indians here for all Saints Day that I ever saw and we have been kept very busy in the store for the last two weeks. But in return for our busy time we made splendid, or at least I should say a large trade of furs for the month of October-370 beaver, 40 bear and 3 foxes. 124

121. ibid., Murray to Hall, April 16, 1895.
122. ibid., Murray to Hall, April 16, 1895.
Camsell, in his tenure as manager, initially tried to discourage cash payments for furs. He stated the cash value of one skin to have been $.75. However, within a few months he was recommending to Hall that the trade at Fort St. James be conducted on a cash basis "as the Indians handle a lot of cash nowadays and know the prices." Camsell also recommended that an Indian agent or law enforcement officer be stationed at Fort St. James, due to liquor-related incidents among the natives "since the increase of communication between here and outside." By the end of 1898 the Commissioner approved Hall's proposal to end Indian debts, and in early 1899 Hall wrote to McNab that "Jawbone" was to be curtailed. The business was to return to its basics - "Goods in exchange for Furs." The loss on Indian debts in outfit 1900 was $1,093.80, and Hall wanted advances to be limited to traps and ammunition. The natives were "sorely grieved" by this, and debt, institutionalized for almost a hundred years, was proving hard to eliminate. Murray, by now back at the post, wrote to James Thomson, Hall's successor, that some trade might be lost at Fort St. James because of the "stoppage of credit." By 1903 there were "no Bad Debts to provide for" at Fort St. James. However, the natives were short of food, and Thomson relayed to Murray the Federal agreement under which the H.B.C. would be reimbursed by the Indian Department for

125. ibid., pp.305-306, Camsell to Sinclair, August 27, 1897; ibid., pp.327-329, Camsell to Hall, October 15, 1897.
126. ibid., p.343, Camsell to Hall, November 5, 1897.
127. H.B.C.A., B.226/6/53.3/a, Commissioner to Hall, December 8, 1898; ibid., Hall to McNab, February 20, 1899.
128. ibid., Hall to Commissioner, November 21, 1901.
"necessaries" provided in emergencies. This was only to apply to non-treaty natives, or where there was no Agent. Although Loring had responsibility for Stuart Lake, he did not reside there, so the agreement apparently could be implemented. 130

Thomson saw higher fur prices in 1905 as a problem for Fort St. James. They would encourage competition, and expose the natives "sooner or later" to the "values existing on the outside." 131

By 1914 the barter system which had prevailed at Fort St. James since 1806 no longer allowed the H.B.C. to remain competitive with independent traders paying in cash. This contributed to the general collapse of the business in that year. 132

Over this period Fort St. James became less a traditional fur trade post and more a retail outlet. By this time the Company seemed unable to compete with the independent traders in the district, and by the early 20th Century, most of the skins were going to others. However, the H.B.C. was capturing more than half the cash sales in the district, largely as a result of the railway speculation and other outside influences. Although the traditional barter system survived in the Indian trade until this time, it was paralleled by a cash system as well. By the 1914 period, the century-long traditions of the New Caledonia fur trade were largely obsolete.

130. ibid., Thomson to Murray, May 15, 1903.
Transportation

In 1871 the Skeena route was still under consideration for development. At that time goods went to the forks of the Skeena by canoe. From there it was a 40 mile portage to Babine Lake, then 90 miles down the lake, a 9 mile portage to Stuart Lake, and finally 40 miles across the lake to Fort St. James. A 75 mile trail led from that post to the Omineca mines. The cost of shipping goods to the mines was 40¢ per pound via the Fraser route. The proposal, if the mines were to prove successful, was to put two steamboats on the Skeena, one above and one below the "canyon", to replace the canoes on the river. The cost of shipping this way was estimated at 17¢ per pound, based on the 11¢ per pound which had been calculated for the Victoria/Babine route, using canoes. 133 The use of steamers also would eliminate the dependence on the natives in the Kitselas region that was the corollary of hiring them and their canoes for this transportation.

Although it was considered, the Skeena route was not used in the early 1870s, except for the Babine Goods (see above, pp.232-236). By 1876, when the "Babine Outfit and Servants Orders" were still the only goods sent by that route, a small post was proposed at the forks of the Skeena, later known as Hazelton. 134

In 1879, the New Caledonia outfit was sent by way of Yale and Quesnel. However, the next year the outfit went via the Skeena and Hazelton. The primary problem encountered was assembling a pack train for the Babine portage. 135

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arrangements made for a pack train in 1882 fell through, and Indians were engaged to transport the goods overland. In 1884, the outfit was sent in through Quesnel, but by 1886 the Skeena was used again.

In the same year, the Company investigated the feasibility of a steamer on the Skeena, and considered it a practical proposition.

Although at this time the outfit was supplied from Victoria, the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway presented another alternative. Some of the goods for outfit 1888 were ordered directly from Winnipeg, to be sent to Ashcroft by rail and then by pack train to Quesnel.

The 1887 outfit suffered heavy delays and losses between Hazelton and Fort St. James. As a result, MacFarlane was authorized to contract a pack train to work the Skeena Portage at $.02 per lb. Vieth and Borland was the firm mentioned for the job.

At this time an "express" was run between Fort St. James and Quesnel, either by boat or canoe, which was co-ordinated with the schedule of stage coaches on the Cariboo road.

Vieth and Borland were engaged for the Skeena Portage later in 1888, although MacFarlane thought their rates high. They apparently also were packing on the Ashcroft-Quesnel

139. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/10, pp.43-44, Requisition, November 29,1887.
141. ibid., p.35, MacFarlane to Sinclair, February 23,1888.
route for the H.B.C. It seemed that transportation from Ashcroft to Fort St. James was more expensive (7½ cents per lb.) than on the Skeena route, and a decision had nearly been made to use the latter as the "permanent" choice. 142

By 1889 Vieth and Borland were to start packing both on the Ashcroft to Quesnel to Stuart Lake route, and the Hazelton to Babine portage. By the following year, the proposal for a steamer on the Skeena was accepted, and construction started. 143 The H.B.C. launched the steamer Caledonia in the spring of 1891, and she made her first trip to Hazelton by the end of June. By the fall of 1892 the Caledonia had proven a success on the river, and Vieth and Borland were operating their pack train with native packers. 144

The final part of the transportation network from the Skeena were two new "cutters" or "schooners" built for use on Babine Lake and Stuart Lake. These were due to be completed for the summer of 1892, but had gone over their original cost estimates of $1,000 each by June of that year. However, it was thought they would allow a transport cost of 1½ cents per lb. from Babine to Fort St. James. 145

In 1893 Murray himself operated the schooner on Stuart Lake with a native crew of 3. This vessel, called the Jessie after Traill's daughter, had carried 39,000 pounds of cargo on the last trip he had taken, and probably could take 60,000 pounds. She had not been finished until July 26, 1893, almost a year behind schedule.

145. P.A.B.C., A/D/20/S2/K(A), Hall to Traill, June 9, 1892.
In 1893 the H.B.C. leased its pack train which ran between McLeod Lake and Fort St. James for 3 years, with an option of purchase, to Sanchez and Aguayo, Mexican packers formerly employed by the Company:

They have the promise of the fre't between here and McLeod Lake for that period, which they promise to carry for 2 3/4 cents p. lb.

The cost for 1893 would remain about 1 cent per pound higher, as the rate was set prior to the lease. Sanchez apparently proved more reliable in the lease arrangement than he had as a salaried employee.\footnote{146}

In 1894 the Caledonia was lengthened to carry more cargo in less water. The freight rates on her remained the same, except for flour, for which the rate was raised 1 cent per pound. The Company hoped for a rate from Vieth and Borland on the Skeena Portage of 1\(\frac{1}{4}\) cents per pound for flour, and 2\(\frac{3}{4}\) cents per pound for other goods.\footnote{147}

In 1894 a "track and wharf" was built at Fort St. James to cut the cost of loading and unloading the schooner. In the same year Hall examined the possibility of maintaining a Company pack train to replace Vieth and Borland.\footnote{148}

Using the methods described above, the freight costs to Fort St. James amounted to: \(\frac{1}{4}\) to \(\frac{1}{3}\) cents per pound from Victoria to Port Simpson; 3 cents per pound to Hazelton by the Caledonia; 2\(\frac{1}{4}\) cents per pound to Babine by Vieth and Borland; and 2 3/4 cents per pound from Babine to Fort St. James by

\footnote{146. ibid., Murray to Traill, September 14, 1893.}
\footnote{147. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/91, pp. 281-286, Hall to Murray, January 30, 1894.}
\footnote{148. H.B.C.A., B.188/b/16, pp. 244-246, Murray to Hall, November 15, 1894; ibid., pp. 249-257, Murray to Hall, December 7, 1894.}
schooners and the Babine Lake to Stuart Lake portage. The total cost for each 100 pounds of freight was $9.00 from Victoria by this route, and $12.30 from Winnipeg via Ashcroft.\footnote{ibid., pp.391-394, Murray to Commissioner, August 8, 1895.}

In 1897 Vieth and Borland wished to sell their pack train. Reluctantly, Hall agreed to purchase it for $4,760.00, as it was seen as essential to operate in New Caledonia.\footnote{H.B.C.A., B.226/D/111, pp.111-112, Hall to Commissioner, November 1, 1897; ibid., p.152, Hall to Commissioner, November 13, 1897.} However, the North West Mounted Police bought the pack train instead. Due to the Klondike excitement, the H.B.C. was unable to find any firm willing to undertake their contract, forcing them to establish their own pack train.

It appears that Sanchez and Aguayo managed this Company-owned pack train. Sanchez, who seemed to be the more responsible of the two, died in July 1898, and Aguayo took over the management. Jean Caux, or Cataline, was also to make a trip with his train in 1898.\footnote{H.B.C.A., B.188/b/17, pp.481-482, Camsell to Hall, July 25, 1898; H.B.C.A., B.188/b/18, pp.702-703, Camsell to McNab, September 10, 1898.} Aguayo was incapable of running the train on his own, so the Company took it over themselves.\footnote{ibid., pp.749-753, McNab to Hall, November 4, 1898.}

The total cost of transportation to Fort St. James for outfit 1898 was $4,894.23, a decrease on the same expense in 1892. The rate from Victoria or Vancouver decreased from that of only three years earlier to $7.73 per 100 pounds.\footnote{H.B.C.A., B.226/b/53.3/a, Hall to Commissioner, October 19, 1899.}

By 1902, Jean Caux bought the H.B.C. pack train, removing that responsibility from the Company. The Company intended to build a new boat for Babine Lake. It was to cost about $650
and be written off over 3 years. Another one had already been
built for Stuart Lake. Their respective names were to be
Stuart and Babine. 154

The Stuart was completed at a cost of $360, using the
sails and rigging of the Jessie. The Babine was to be a 46
foot scow, like those on San Francisco Bay, and was designed
by a Japanese carpenter, Paul Kato. 155

Cataline had paid off the pack train, consisting of 46
mules with rigging and 4 horses with saddles, by 1905. The
H.B.C. had sold it for $3,960.00. 156 By 1908 Cataline had
increased the tariff on the Hazelton route from 2½ cents per
pound to 4 cents per pound. 157

However, at the same time, the cost of transport from
Babine to Fort St. James had dropped steadily, from $1.98 per
100 pounds in 1904 to $1.44 per 100 pounds in 1907. By the
latter year, the Grand Trunk Pacific paid $2.50 per 100 pounds
for freight on this route, giving the H.B.C. a good profit.
The two lake boats were written off by 1904. The Stuart
was overhauled in 1907, and replaced with a new Stuart in 1908,
which cost $591.53. It carried the same 25,000 lbs. of cargo
as the older vessel, but was better looking.

The Babine was repaired in 1908. A successful trip to
Fort St. James by the steamer Neechaco in 1909 created the
possibility that the Quesnel route would again become viable.
If this was the case there would be less need for a "barge for
Babine Lake." 158

     B.226/b/53.3/B, Thomson to Murray, January 17,1902.
156. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/1903-6, Thomson to Commissioner, November 1,1905.
158. H.B.C.A., B.226/b/53.3/T, Murray to Thomson, December 12,1904,
     April 13,1907, June 10,1907, September 28,1908, December 5,1908;
     ibid., Thomson to Munro, July 2, 1909.
With the impending arrival of the railway, transportation continued much as it had since 1893, until Fort St. James was opened up by rail and auto road in 1914.

The main theme of transportation to Fort St. James in this period was the use and development of the supply route from the Skeena. Although the Company considered this option as early as the 1820s, it really only became a viable alternative with the construction of the Caledonia and the two lake boats. There were problems, particularly with the overland transportation, but the cost of shipping goods from Victoria to Fort St. James consistently decreased through the use of this route.

Provisions

Through this period the problem of provisioning Fort St. James continued, because of the excessive cost of imported provisions, and the difficulties inherent in food production in New Caledonia.

In 1873 new livestock was needed in the district, as the existing herds had become inbred over the years. In the same year the mess consumption of flour for 3 months at Fort St. James was 425 lbs. at 14 cents per pound. Grahame ordered Hamilton to reduce the expenditure of imported provisions, or the post could not maintain a profit. Three years later, the H.B.C. continued to send huge amounts of flour (19,000 pounds), tallow (600 pounds), and beans (500 pounds) into the

In 1888 MacFarlane exhorted his post managers to keep down mess expenses. The ordinary rations for servants were bacon, salmon, and flour, with a postmaster allowed a "moderate supply of Rice and Raisins" above that.

Hall brought out samples of seed from New Caledonia in 1895, and discovered that they were poor varieties, and the seed was "run out". He intended to send in 5 lbs. each of selected oats and barley, with further seed to follow.

Although a meagre diet prevailed for H.B.C. servants (figure 21), and the natives were chronically on the verge of starvation, by 1913 Murray was able to entertain guests nobly. E.O.S. Scholefield visited the post in the fall of that year:

Typical New Caledonia fare—salmon and potatoes for breakfast; sturgeon for lunch; and bear for dinner. Mr. Murray has an excellent cook who keeps the table well-supplied with appetising food; the coffee is particularly good. Had some fine white currents from the garden last night for dinner with rich thick cream. Whatever may be said about the fare in the old days by the men who resided here at different times (and all complained of the meagre diet), Mr. Murray and his family now live upon the fat of the land.

160. H.B.C.A., B.188/z/2, June 1, 1876.
Life at Fort St. James

H. Bullock Webster, one of the young clerks sent to New Caledonia in the early 1870s, sketched the Christmas ball at Fort St. James (figure 22), and on the back of the sketch described the scene:

Christmas in British Columbia
-A Hudson Bay Ball-

Those who are lucky enough to be able to leave their forts & go to Headquarters for Xmas have lots of fun, amongst other things there is invariably a ball - A very different thing tho' to a civilized "Ball"! All the voyageurs & laborers &c are invited together with their wives and daughters (all halfbreeds as there are no pure white women so far north.) The dancing consists entirely of jigs and reels & the music a violin & a drum. All the women sit on one side of the room & the men on the other. The man chooses his partner dances the jig or reel & then takes the "fair one" back to her side of the room. The women never utter a word & always look as demure & serious as possible. (when alone tho' quite the reverse). The men on the other hand yell all the while they dance. Dresses are most amusing. The women with their beaded leggings & gorgeous silk handkerchiefs on their heads & the men in the flashiest of leggings & beautifully worked deerskin coats. They all wear moccasins.  

Webster was observing some of the last vestiges of the traditional fur trade. At that time New Caledonia was still

164. University of British Columbia Library, Special Collections, H. Bullock Webster, "Sketches of Hudson Bay Life".
removed enough from the mainstream of life in British Columbia that a ball could take place, identical to those described in Oregon and on Vancouver Island 30 years earlier. However, the end was in sight. With the increasing losses after 1876, the district could no longer support a traditional fur trade infrastructure. When posts were managed by one man, with little contact between posts, this society began to crumble. The final blow came with Hall's austerity measures of 1892. From that point on, Fort St. James became more a retail establishment like all others, and less a vestige of a whole commercial empire. The process of merging with the society of northern B.C. as a whole was accelerated by the intrusion of outside institutions, foremost among them the governments of British Columbia and Canada, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

The environment at Fort St. James after the 1892 reorganization has been well-covered by Teresa Homick in A Social History of Fort St. James, 1896, and it is not the intent of this work to repeat her findings.165

Perhaps the strongest indicator of the change in the post society is that A.C. Murray, although a clerk, and nominally of the "gentlemen" class, elected to retire in Fort St. James, rather than out of the district to an old or new "European" home. Ultimately, his ties to the community were stronger than his ties either to his place of origin or the fur-trade society. Unlike earlier gentlemen, he regarded Fort St. James and not the fur trade as his home.

Conclusions

This chapter could be subtitled "The defeat of the Hudson's Bay Company". Throughout these forty years, the various roles of the Company largely were assumed by other agencies. The focus on the fur trade had been replaced by many other commercial opportunities, some of which the H.B.C. was able to utilize. The Carrier at Fort St. James became more dependent on the federal government and the missionaries than on the H.B.C. during this period. In some cases, such as taking advantage of the religious gatherings to pursue the trade, this was not contrary to the interests of the Company. In general, though, the more the outside world intruded, the harder the situation was for the former monopoly.

In observing this period, it is interesting to note the similarity of problems throughout the century that Fort St. James operated as a traditional fur trade post. The managers in the 1890s had the same problems with the Indians starving, outfits not arriving on time, and staffing, that had been chronic from the first establishment of the post. The salient difference, for the Hudson's Bay Company, lay in the basic problem it always had in dealing with any sort of competition. The systems that had proven so successful in the context of a trading monopoly were less useful in the face of other factors. During this period the process that began with the revocation of the exclusive right to trade with the natives ended with the arrival of the railway in the district, making it impossible for the Hudson's Bay Company to maintain its trading enclave.
Conclusion

The most notable aspect of the fur trade based on Stuart Lake in the period covered is the continuity exhibited throughout the better part of a century. Until the reorganization of New Caledonia in 1892, and the corollary change in the route used to supply the district, the basic operation of the trade followed the pattern established under John Stuart of the North West Company in the early years of the 19th Century. The main determinants of the commercial strategy of the fur trade companies were the difficulties implicit in supplying the district, the chronic problem in provisioning, the independence of the natives, and the difficulty in keeping personnel in New Caledonia. The most obvious negative introduction in the century was the H.B.C.'s loss of the exclusive right to the native trade. Although some trade was lost in the earlier period to the natives of the coast, the problem became acute when free traders began to infiltrate what had been the Company's private preserve. The debt system, older than Fort St. James itself, had proved a useful device early in the century, but by the last decade had turned into a major factor in the district's losses. Although introduced to benefit the Europeans, it had turned into a perquisite that the natives were unwilling to abandon.

With the introduction of new factors after mid-century, the conventions and practices of the Hudson’s Bay Company proved to be less useful than under the former monopoly. However, the basic conservatism both of the Company and of the natives it dealt with tended to maintain the continuity with the earlier years of the trade. Eventually, radical methods were adopted to make the business profitable, but with the consequent loss of many of its distinctive elements.

The story of the fur trade at Fort St. James consists of a series of individual or corporate attempts to maintain
commercial viability in the face of all obstacles, economic, environmental, social and political.
Appendix A: The North West Company Post: 1806-1825

Construction of a post on Stuart Lake began almost immediately when the party led by Simon Fraser arrived there on July 26, 1806. Fraser referred to the new North West Company post in his correspondence of the following month in very general terms:

We are here upon the Borders of a spacious large Lake on the Carriers Lands Building [a trading post].

When Daniel Harmon arrived at Stuart’s Lake for the first time on November 7, 1810, he briefly described the setting:

This fort stands in a very pleasant place, on a rise of ground, at the end of Stuart’s Lake, which I am informed, is at least three hundred miles in circumference. At the distance of about two hundred rods from the fort, a considerable river runs out of the lake, where the natives, who call themselves Tâcullies, have a village or rather a few small huts, built of wood.

Harmon’s 200 rods is equivalent to 3,300 feet (1,000 metres), so roughly approximates the distance from the mouth of the Stuart River and the site of the later posts. Assuming that Harmon’s direction of measurement was to the northeast,

1. W. Kaye Lamb, Journals of Simon Fraser, op. cit., p.236.
which seems likely, the N.W.Co. post probably was built in the same general area as the later ones. In his plan of Fort St. James in the 1880s (figure) A.C. Murray represented the site of the 1806 post to the north of the existing buildings. It is possible that the first post was located there, but Murray believed that there had been only two generations of fort, and makes it more likely that the remains he noted were from the 1821-1852 version.

In November 1823, due to the slow progress on the building of the new post, James McDougall decided that the N.W.Co. post would remain in use through the winter. He referred to "all the Buildings in the old Fort", and the needed programme of repairs to the "Old Buildings". The implication is that there were several buildings, and the phrase "in the old Fort" (author's emphasis) further suggests some form of spatial definition, such as a palisade.

Gentlemen's House

Daniel Harmon noted the gentlemen's house in Stuart Lake Post, with its mess hall, for the first time on January 1, 1812:

This being the first day of the year, Mr. McDougall and I dined with all our people, in the hall. After our repast was ended, I invited several of the Sicanny and Carrier chiefs, and most respectable men, to partake of the provisions which we had left;...

In September 1820, a room was partitioned off in one end

of the house, whitewashed, and fitted with a cupboard. Windows were installed in the "Hall" in the same month. In January 1823 furs were inspected in the hall, and after the dry furs were separated from the wet, the former were:

...piled up in Hall against the partition of Mr. Stuart's Room where they remained till late in the evening when Mr. Stuart ordered them into the Store...6

The last reference to the N.W.Co. gentlemen's house was in February 1824 when the men were invited to "come into the Hall" for their belated New Year celebration. They spent the first evening "Dancing & Playing", and the hall was "lighted up" a second night for them to continue partying.7

The descriptions of this building confirm that it contained the mess hall, and at least one residential room, occupied by the man in charge of the post.

Kitchen

In May 1823 the kitchen associated with the gentlemen's house was mentioned, and again in November, in course of its conversion to a storehouse:

This day as there is no likelihood of our meeting here in sufficient numbers or long enough to require the use of a Kitchen much - and having got the

7. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, pp.44, February 7-9,1824.
Chimney pulled down in the Summer & I got it cleared out and converted into a store for the Salmon this winter — ... 8

With McLeod Lake as the depot at this time, and normally only one gentleman assigned to Fort St. James, a kitchen was a lower priority than a salmon store.

Men's Houses

The men's houses in the N.W.Co. post were mentioned in the journal in 1820. In June of that year the two men summering at the post had to "arrange a house to put themselves into". In the fall windows were installed in the "Mens' Houses", and the exteriors of the "Houses" were whitewashed. 9

In November 1823 various tasks were carried out on the men's houses. James McDougall resolved to spend the winter of 1823-1824 in the "old Fort", and set the men to repairing the old buildings, so this work probably applied to the N.W.Co. houses. The men plastered both the interior and exterior of the houses, and built chimneys. The latter reference describes at least two men's houses, each having a minimum of one chimney. 10

Storehouses

8. ibid., pp.3,27, May 8, November 24,1823.
9. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, pp.6,24, June 1, September 25, October 13, 1820.
In 1811 Daniel Harmon described a "store" fitted with a counter and a room in the post on Stuart Lake.\footnote{11} These details, together with the fact that he brought natives into the "store" to give them some cloth, suggests that this storehouse also incorporated an Indian trade shop. This is consistent with the first H.B.C. Fort St. James, where a "Shop & Store" was built in the spring of 1823.\footnote{12} At the same time this new shop was under construction comes the last reference to the N.W.Co. storehouse:

> I have taken such steps in having removed the Store as will render it necessary to remove into the New Fort at once...\footnote{13}

The men prepared bark to repair the roof of the store, and whitewashed the "front of the Store" along with some other buildings in October 1820.\footnote{14} The use of the singular in all of the above examples suggests only one storehouse in the first post on Stuart Lake.

It is likely that the N.W.Co. post had a single storehouse for goods, furs, and provisions, and the Indian trade shop was probably incorporated in the same structure.

Blacksmith Shop

Blacksmithing began in New Caledonia in outfit 1821, when the final N.W.Co. outfit sent from Fort George included:

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{11}{D.W. Harmon, A Journal, op. cit., pp.174-175.}
\item \footnote{12}{ibid., pp.7-8, June 2,7,1823.}
\item \footnote{13}{ibid., p.7, May 31,1823.}
\item \footnote{14}{H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, pp.11,24, July 3, October 13,1820.}
\end{itemize}}
1 small blacksmith’s anvil
1 blacksmith’s bellows mounting
1 pair blacksmith’s pincers
1 blacksmith’s rubber [the term for a file]
1 blacksmith’s vice

These items, which were sent to Stuart Lake Post, comprised the basic fittings of a small, one man shop. The shop was completed and ready for use by December 1821. At the end of that outfit, in April 1822, the "Articles in Use" at the post included:

1 large anvil
1 bellows, complete
1 drill
2 pairs of tongs
1 bench vise

In the fall of 1823 Stuart sent a blacksmith, Martin, to the post "in lieu of Axes" which had been requested. The blacksmith’s immediate task was to put his shop in order. The bellows required immediate work, and at the beginning of December he was "arranging his Forge". He was working at his trade by the second day of the month.

Defences

19. ibid., pp.29-30, November 29-December 2, 1823.
The first definite reference to the defences of the N.W.Co. post comes from May 1820, when "one of the Gates of the Fort" had to be demolished to salvage nails for canoe construction. The way this is phrased makes it clear that there was more than one gate controlling access to a "Fort".\(^{20}\)

In June and July 1820 the men of the post cut a large number of palisade pickets, completing 2,000 long pickets and 760 small pickets by early July. It was thought that "we will not be able to take the Bark off of more Pickets than will serve for the front of the Fort the men will cut no more Pickets".\(^{21}\) At the end of October 1820 the pickets cut during the summer were gathered together, but no further reference was made to their use at that time.\(^{22}\)

It is not clear if the material referred to above was used in the palisade of the N.W.Co. post or kept in storage until the construction of the next fort in 1825. It seems likely that it was used in the earlier post, as new material was prepared and hauled for the later "stockade" between 1822 and 1824.\(^{23}\)

The lack of defences in the new post under construction led to the continued use of the N.W.Co. post through the winter of 1823-24:

...then a Concourse of Indians assembling for Quas feast made me resolve to remain in the Old Fort (as it would be imprudent to remove to the other place where we must remain exposed without a Fort or House to the Indians)...\(^{24}\)

\(^{20}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.4, May 1,1820.
\(^{21}\) ibid., pp.7-11, June 6-July 6,1820.
\(^{22}\) ibid., pp.27-28, October 29-31,1820.
\(^{23}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, pp.7,48-53, May 31,1823, March 17-April 10, 1824, etc.
\(^{24}\) ibid., pp.30-31, December 2,1823.
This reference suggests again that defences were in place around the N.W.Co. post. However, against this is ranged Stuart's directions for Stuart Lake in February 1821, when he wrote that "at this place a Fort & Bastions is much wanted and as far as possible it ought to be attended to".  

In conclusion, it seems that a "fort", or palisade of some description, with at least two gates, was in place by 1820. It is possible that this was partially rebuilt with the material prepared in the summer of 1820; this would logically not have occurred until after Stuart made his recommendations during the winter of 1821. Definitely the defences that were in place by December 1823 were seen as better than the non-existent palisade of the new post then under construction.

Agriculture

Harmon recorded the planting of potatoes, barley, turnips "&c." in the spring of 1811 at Stuart Lake post. He gave no idea of the scope or location of these activities. By 1818 some idea of the size of the barley was suggested, when five quarts sown produced five bushels. Harmon's reference to the equivalent production per acre reveals that the barley field that year was about 50 feet square, or just under 1/16 acre.

Throughout this period the garden was relatively small. In the spring of 1821 McDougall wished to enlarge it "before hoeing time". The use of hoes rather than ploughs implies a

27. ibid., p.228.
smaller area under cultivation.

The only indication of the location of the gardens of the N.W.Co. post comes from the directions for the location of the proposed new fort in the spring of 1821:

It ought to be placed somewhere towards the Little River, about the place where I once had a Garden... 29

This may refer to the stream which entered Stuart Lake to the north of the later H.B.C. posts. However, by 1821 the gardens were enlarged in some other direction, perhaps to the east of the post.

29. ibid., p.49, April 16, 1821.
John Stuart first ordered the construction of a new post on Stuart Lake in the spring of 1821, prior to the amalgamation of the North West Company and Hudson’s Bay Company. Stuart planned a more elaborate establishment, as befitted the administrative headquarters of the district. This role related to the use of the Columbia brigade, with Fort St. James as the terminus of the Fraser River leg of the supply route, and hence distribution point for the district.

As will be discussed further below, in "Defences", Stuart intended this fort to be 120 feet square, and to be located "somewhere towards the Little River". These imprecise directions only hint at a location. Earlier fort remains were shown on A.C. Murray's plan (figure 24), which could well relate to Stuart's post. The stream to the north of the posts, used in the 1870s for Gavin Hamilton's sawmill, and running through the present village of Fort St. James, could equally well have been the "Little River". Based on these assumptions, it may be hypothesized that the 1821 fort was built to the north of the site of the 1806 post, with the latter very close to the location of the remaining buildings of the 1880s post.

Construction began in earnest on this post in the 1823-1824 period, and proceeded in fits and starts until the end of the decade. It is probable that the intensity of work related to the direction the district outfit was shipped from. When the plans were made for the new post, it was to serve as

1. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.49, April 16, 1821.
the district headquarters, but by the time construction started, the eastern route had been adopted, and McLeod Lake became the distribution point for the area. The H.B.C. would have concentrated their efforts on the latter post, until such time as the policy changed again, and Fort St. James again assumed a more important role in New Caledonia.

The most notable change made to the buildings of this post was the general change over from bark to plank coverings on the roofs of the buildings. This modification was made in the 1841-1842 period, at the same time that some new buildings were constructed, such as a boat store, chapel, and kitchen.  

Gentlemen's House

In May 1823 it was intended to relocate the establishment into the partly constructed Fort St. James, which included a new gentlemen's house:

...the entire inside must be plastered within [sic] and divided into apartments abiding by the plan delivered last Summer but the entrance from the Parlour into the Bed Room will be on the right side of the Chimney instead of the left as settled by the plan delivered last Summer but the entrance from the Parlour into the Bed Room will be on the right side of the Chimney instead of the left as settled by the Plan, but no other deviation ought to be made...  

The new house still needed a great deal of work before completion. The roof was blown down the previous winter, and

2. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/19, pp.5-53.  
at least 71 pieces of wood were squared to rebuild it. The roof framing was ready for its bark covering by June 20. The men began a cellar in the house at the same time, and squared 12 foot long beams for its framing. The building was leaning so badly that it required levelling before the construction could proceed.  

By July McDougall knew that the house could not be made "tenantable" by the fall. However, the men began to lay the bark on the roof, a process slowed by the need to make the fastening lathing as the work proceeded. Through the summer work continued on the roof, cellar framing, preparation of wedges and pegs for plastering, and gathering chimney stones for the house. 

The corners of the house were so badly constructed that they were coming apart by the beginning of September. Two men also squared timber for the window frames, as well as squaring up the "very negligently done" openings in the building. "Young lads and women" filled up the "under part" of the house with wood and earth, while the men gathered 41 bundles of hay for the chimney and plastering the exterior of the building. Construction of a "double chimney" started on September 8, and cof a second on September 15. The height of the roof of the house slowed the building of these stone and earth features. The second chimney collapsed while under construction, but was completed on September 22, and a third was finished three days later. However, one of these, "the chimney of the Parlour & Bed Room" was not placed as Stuart had ordered, but could not be taken down immediately because of all the other work required. 

Although the building could not be occupied, work

4. ibid., pp.8-10, June 9-26,1823.
6. ibid., pp.16-20, September 1-27,1823.
continued throughout the winter. James McDougall reported to Stuart on November 17 describing progress on the new fort, and the new house. It was still not habitable, but it was now:

...roofed and covered - the chimneys put up - the cellar made 24 x 14 feet - the lower part filled up to the flooring - the outside plastered and the inside ready to receive the same operation - ...the windows of the house are also all framed"...  

By the end of 1823 the "Hall" was plastered and had a door "arranged" in it. In the fall of 1824 the men of the post plastered the house and constructed panel doors and window sash of "Cypress wood" for it. At the same time, they started a gallery on the "main house". On November 1 word reached Fort St. James that Connolly proposed spending the winter at that post, and required "some kind of dwelling prepared for his reception". On his arrival on November 7, Connolly found the house still uncompleted:

...A house which was commenced two years ago, is so far from being finished that I hardly expect it will be in a state to be inhabited this season. It is on a larger scale & built with more attention to elegance than this country requires. The only houses fit to be inhabited were intended to lodge the men for which purpose they are well adapted. They will not however, answer mine quite so well. I have however, obliged to take up my quarters in one of them...  

The interminable work on the house continued through the winter.

7. ibid., pp.30-31, December 2,1823.
8. ibid., pp.29,33, November 29, December 13,1823; H.B.C.A., B.188/a/4, pp.1-3, September 23-November 1,1824.
fall and winter of that year. Some of the window openings were filled in, as there was a shortage of parchment to glaze them with. One man continued to work on doors, while another "cut Hay for the partitions and brought it to the house". The constant need to repair the house cut into the effort applied to new construction. At the end of November, part of the bark roofing was replaced where it was "bad".

The earth and straw partitions were completed by December 18. At the same time work proceeded on the window sash for the building. Flooring was planed and laid loosely in the house. It would not be "Grooved until the ensuing summer when the wood will be more fully seasoned", when it could be properly fitted and fastened. In January 1825 work continued, with window sash and doors installed, plastering, and flooring installed in the "Parlour".

On February 4, 1825 Connolly noted the men "employed around the new House, which to all appearances will be a useless Job." However, a week later the gentlemen moved out of the servants' houses:

...We entered the new House which is sufficiently finished to make it far preferable to the Hovels we have inhabited so far...

Work on the flooring of the bed rooms continued in February, along with whitewashing. A dance was held in the hall on February 19. The men also worked on wood for the gallery that month; this may have been the one across the front of the house.

11. ibid., p.5, November 27, 1824.
12. ibid., pp.5-11, December 1, 1824-January 31, 1825.
In August 1825 "it rained and blew so hard that part of the covering of the house was thrown off" so the roof needed more repairs. In the same month the grooving and installation of the flooring started, and was completed by the end of October. The rooms referred to included "the Hall", "Small Rooms", a bedroom, a kitchen, a "Shop", and a parlour. In September a poorly constructed partition inside the house was replaced, and the replacement plastered.15

While the floors were being completed, some of the finishing of the interior was under way. The "Hall and back room" was whitewashed, and the "Room & Parlour" washed "with mud". The chimneys in the parlour and bed room were plastered and arranged. Boucher constructed a cupboard and bedstead for McDougall's room in the house, and another servant built steps and a railing for the "Gallery in the front of the house".16

In November 1825 at least two more bedsteads were built, along with a table for the house. The men also continued work on the gallery, which was completed by the end of the month. Doors and the associated hardware were made and installed on the kitchen and the "trading room", both of which were apparently within the house.17

In January 1826 Connolly described further problems with this ill-fated building:

From the immense weight of Snow on the roof of the main House we perceived that the upper parts of three of the Posts were fractured and the building in consequence in great danger of falling. The only remedy at hand was throwing off the snow and fixing Props to support the broken Posts which was

15. ibid., pp.32-38, August 19-October 24,1825.
16. ibid., pp.36-39, October 4-29,1825.
17. ibid., pp.39-44, November 3-December 3,1825.
immediately applied. This building was originally badly constructed and by no means worthy of the labour that has been bestowed upon it.\textsuperscript{18}

This description makes it clear that the building was of post on sill construction, as were the buildings later shown in sketches and photographs of Fort St. James. Over the next few years, work on the house was limited to plastering and whitewashing the interior, repairing chimneys and replacing the bark roof on the "dwelling house and kitchen" in the summer of 1831.\textsuperscript{19}

In October 1841 Peter Skene Ogden commented on the house. He seemed to have no more affection for it than Connolly did:

...the men commenced plastering it is a long job in this Fort and after all the trouble in time the dwelling house is cold as an Ice house and very uncomfortable this Indian Trader must submit to but a house half the size of this would suit my purpose equally as well and not injure the returns.\textsuperscript{20}

In the spring of 1842 five men took down the wainscotting, or wooden plank wall lining in the office and "Mr. Ogden’s bed Room" in order to plaster the walls instead. This reference placed the office function within the gentlemen’s house.\textsuperscript{21} The plastering of interior walls may have been intended to make the rooms of the house more windproof.

\textsuperscript{18} H.B.C.A., B.188/a/5, p.81, January 19,1826.
\textsuperscript{19} H.B.C.A., B.188/a/10, p.105, September 25,1827; H.B.C.A., B.188/a/15, pp.42,57, June 1, September 25-26,1829; H.B.C.A., B.188/a/16, pp.7-8, December 29-31,1830; ibid, pp.35-37, July 25-August 8,1831.
\textsuperscript{20} H.B.C.A., B.188/a/19, p.42, October 24,1841.
\textsuperscript{21} ibid., pp. 59-60, April 9-13,1842.
When the roof of the root house fell in in 1845, the potatoes stored there were moved into the "Cellar of the big house the only place we have now to keep them in."\(^{22}\) Two year later the chimneys in the office and bed rooms were arranged, and the rooms were scrubbed.\(^{23}\) After more than 25 years of repairs and complaints, work began on the wood for a new house in the fall of 1848, although it was probably three more years until the house was complete and the move made.

Kitchen

In the spring of 1841 material was prepared for a kitchen. It probably was built during the summer of that year. By February 1842 the men covered the roof of the building with boards.\(^{24}\)

Men's Houses

The men's houses in the new H.B.C. post had not been "put up" by December 1823, but were complete a year later. Connolly wrote when he arrived at Fort St. James on November 7, 1824:

> The only Houses fit to be inhabited were intended to lodge the men for which purpose they are well adapted. They will not however, answer mine quite so well. I have however, obliged to take up my

\(^{22}\) ibid., p.132, November 6, 1845.
\(^{23}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/20, p.29, September 12-14, 1847.
quarters in one of them... 25

On February 12, 1825 the gentlemen moved into their new house, leaving "ample room for all the men" in their houses, which Connolly described as "Hovels" after living in them for three months. 26

Three years later a description of work on the men's houses describes a situation like that in the N.W.Co. for, with two houses, each with one chimney:

...Guilbeau and Grant repaired the two chimneys of the men's houses which were both in a ruinous condition; they also by dint of scraping and scrubbing succeeded in removing from their floor the accumulated impurities of years. 27

In the summer of 1829 various repairs were made, including replacing the bark roofing, rebuilding chimneys, and plastering and whitewashing the houses. A reference was made to "the end house", in which a chimney was repaired and the floor cleaned at this time. 28 A few months later one of the chimneys needed rebuilding again:

The chimney of one of the Men's Houses having fallen down some of them set about erecting another it being a convenience which cannot be dispensed with at this season of the year... 29

The same routine maintenance of the houses continued through the next decade, with mudding, cleaning, and chimney

26. ibid., p.70, February 12, 1825.
28. ibid., pp.47-51, July 7-August 12, 1829.
29. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/14, p.80, January 21, 1830.
repair prominent. A major change took place in 1841 and 1842, when the bark roof coverings were replaced by boards. Roofing boards ranging between 12 and 15 feet in length were sawn throughout February 1841. At least 472 boards were cut in this period, some of which were definitely intended for the men’s houses. However, the actual roofing was postponed for another year. In the winter of 1841-1842 roof boards were sawn and grooved, and by January 11, 1842 there were "350 boards in readiness for covering the mens houses and tomorrow we shall commence..." Assuming two houses and this number of planks, the houses were probably between 40 and 50 feet long and 22 to 25 feet wide. The board roofs were in a gable configuration, as the gable ends were filled in February. In the same month flooring was arranged in these buildings, and the "Ends of the Boards on the Mens Houses" (probably the roof boards) were trimmed. In April, the chimneys were repaired again.

Descriptions of repairs to the men’s houses over the next several years provide a few hints about their arrangement. In early 1843 the chimney of the "middle house" was rebuilt. More than five years later the chimney of "Larance’s house" fell, and the "men who were lodged there have been all employed building a new one". In the fall of 1849 a chimney was built in "the house that was abandoned last winter". The reference to a middle house, with the earlier one to an end house, seems to describe a "rank" or row of men’s houses. It is also clear that a number of servants were living in each one of the houses. The decision to abandon one of the houses may have been made because of the age of the buildings, and probable decrepitude, or due to decreased need for servants’ housing. After another year of repairs to the existing

32. ibid., pp.53-54, 60, February 15-18, April 14, 1842.
33. ibid., p.76, January 4, 1843; H.B.C.A., B.188/a/20, pp.65, 87, November 24, 1848, September 30, 1849.
buildings, work started on material for new men's houses in 1850.

Chapel

In early 1841 the men of the post prepared wood for a chapel at the same time as they worked on the material for the kitchen. These two buildings were probably built during the summer of that year, a period not covered in the post journal.  

Blacksmith Shop

There is no clear reference to a new shop built in the H.B.C. post, or a move into such a shop. On October 12, 1824 two men were "plastering the Forge". This may have been a new forge in the H.B.C. post. By early December blacksmithing started again in a shop at Fort St. James:

The smith commenced working, but his knowledge of the Trade he follows is so very limited, that he generally spoils everything which he takes in hand. With regard to Guns & traps he can repair neither, unless their damages are very slight indeed...

In the spring of 1827 the blacksmith shop was "cleaned &

34. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/19, pp.19-36, January 31-April 18, 1841.
arranged". 36 Four years later the work of the blacksmith was compromised by the bad state of the bellows. In December 1831 work started on repairing them:

...preparing to repair the Bellows in the Smiths Shop that requires it much & for which he must Saw wood for Tables... 37

By January 9, 1832 the forge, including the newly rebuilt bellows, was arranged by Lafleche, the blacksmith:

...the Bellows done & rubbed over with a mixture of Gum & Grease the sides being of Dressed Leather for want of better... 38

Work continued in the shop through the early 1840s in spite of "the apology for a Smith" at the post. 39 In February 1842 the blacksmith shop, with the other buildings in the fort, was covered with boards. The standard length of the planks cut in the preceding month was 14 feet. It is not clear if the shop was totally rebuilt at that time, or if it was simply the roofs of the buildings which were repaired. In March 1842 a chimney was built in the shop. 40

In April 1843, the men of the post "made a house for securing the charcoal". 41 Eight years later the charcoal hauled to the fort from the kiln was stored in a bastion, suggesting that the charcoal store house was no longer in existence. 42

38. ibid., p.63, January 7, 1832.
40. ibid., p.53, February 6-8, 1842; ibid., pp.15-52; ibid., p.57, March 23, 1842.
41. ibid., p.87, April 11, 1843.
42. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, p.16, December 9, 1852.
In December 1851 a new bellows was made for the blacksmith shop, and work carried on as usual in the shop through the early months of 1852.  

Charcoal Kiln

The forge at Fort St. James burnt charcoal as fuel, so a charcoal kiln was an essential part of the blacksmithing process at the post. Most of the references to this function date from the period that the first H.B.C. post was occupied. On November 15, 1823 such a kiln was built across the lake for burning coals for the blacksmith shop. A year later, "two men were sent to chop wood for a Coal Pit", and the same task for "another Coal Pit" shortly thereafter. On November 26 the men "set fire to the Coal Pit", and on December 6 the "coals were taken out of the kiln & laid up."  

In March 1827 the "coal Kiln" was again filled and burnt. By April 7 the burning was finished, with 12 bushels of coals as the final result.  

Four years later, A quantity of birch was cut for a coal pit. The next week, after it was fired, the men were disappointed with the production:

...went to see the coal pit and find that in consequence of the bad quality of the ground with which it was covered, being a mixture of sand and gravel, by far the greatest part of the wood was

43. ibid., p. 18, December 22-24, 1851, p. 21, January 19-22, 1852.  
44. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, p. 26, November 15, 1823.  
consumed to ashes and the quantity of coals it will yield will in consequence be very small...\(^{47}\)

A firing of the charcoal kiln later the same year resulted in underburning rather than overburning of the wood: 

...the Coal furnace was examined & find that not more than half the wood is Charred, said to be on account of the wetness of the wood & Earth when it was put up & the Earth with which it was covered...\(^{48}\)

In the early 1850s the men of Fort St. James still built and attended "coal Kilns", generally at some distance from the fort proper. In December 1851 the charcoal produced at the kiln was carted back to the fort, where it was stored in a bastion.\(^{49}\)

Carpenter Shop

The servants at Fort St. James worked on a new carpenter's shop from December 1840 to February 1841, concurrent with the boat store. They also built a "chimney in the Carpenters shop" in January 1841, which had to be rebuilt in November of the same year.\(^{50}\)

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\(^{47}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/16, p.21d, April 4,11,1831.  
\(^{48}\) ibid., p.61, December 19,1831.  
\(^{49}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/20, pp.118,135, November 18,1850, April 29, 1851; H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.14-16, November 19-December 9, 1851.  
\(^{50}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/19, pp.13-45, December 24,1840- November 12, 1841.
Boat Store

Due to the requirement for boats in New Caledonia, in November 1840 the men of Fort St. James started construction of a boat store in which to build and keep the vessels. This was a post on sill building, with provision made for heating it, in the form of a large chimney. This structure had one "large door", two doors, and ten window shutters fitted. It was completed on January 31, 1841. Just under ten years later, in November 1850, the servants demolished this boat store.

Defences

The first reference to the proposed new fort enclosure was made in February 1821:

...at this place a Fort & Bastions is much wanted and as far as possible it ought to be attended to, ... The Fort ought to be a hundred and twenty feet square and placed where pointed out by Mr. Faries...

George McDougall, left in charge of the post for the summer of 1821, was given instructions of his responsibilities, which first included extension of the post garden, and next:

52. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/20, p.117, November 7, 1850.
53. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/1, p.41, February 25, 1821.
to do what can be done towards erecting a Fort and Bastions - it ought to be placed somewhere towards the Little River, about the place where I once had a Garden and to be one hundred and twenty feet Square. 54

Little took place over the next two years, but by May 1823 Stuart specified how he wanted the defences built:

...for the Fort, nothing but good Strong Pickets, ought to be used, and if like those prepared by Mr. McDonell last fall - they were all sawed, it would embellish the appearance, and I think not much increase the labour. Both Gates ought to be in the centre, and the back one not more than three feet in width, while over the front one there will be a Gueritte as described in conversation with you... 55

Some work started on construction of the defences by the winter of 1823-1824. In December McDougall asked permission to put the blacksmith to work on "Irons for the Gates of the new Fort", and the following month the hinges were made. 56 However, McDougall stated at the same time that the "Pickets of the New Fort have not been erected or touched", but the "Stockades" were to be built in the spring. 57 Through March and April 1824 the men of the post "cut and Squared Timber to be sawed in two for the Stockades", and then hauled the material to the post. 58

A year later the construction of the palisades began,

54. ibid., p.49, April 16,1821.
55. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/2, p.7, May 31,1823. A Gueritte was a sort of watch station, something like the top half of a bastion, supported by the palisade wall, and projecting out from it.
56. ibid., pp.32,38, December 2,1823, January 2,1824.
57. ibid., pp.32,35, December 2,13,1823.
58. ibid., pp.48-54, March 17-April 22,1824.
after the gentlemen had already taken up residence in their new house. This began with the continued hauling of pickets, squaring "Posts for the Fort", and working at the "stockades" and the guerite. On May 17 the guerite was erected, and work continued on the palisades. New pickets had to be cut and barked, as "those formerly cut are too small and crooked". On June 7 the men "took down two Bastions and replaced them as they were not well before".\footnote{59}

By the end of June construction of the palisades had started, with the pickets assembled "on the frame". More pickets were sawn for the front of the palisade. By the middle of July the men started to erect the palisade, with some problems:

\begin{quote}
...in attempting to put the Pickets in a strait\(\text{sic}\) line not having propt the Post the half came down and broke two laths which he must now make to replace them.\footnote{60}
\end{quote}

The palisades were up by July 25, and slightly less than a month later the two gates of the fort were completed and hung.\footnote{61} On November 11,1825 a flagpole which had been cut the previous day was erected at Fort St. James:

\begin{quote}
...the other men having asked me leave to put up a Flag Staff in honour of Mr. Connolly's return to this Quarter I allowed them and they went to cut one of 60 feet Long and rather small.\footnote{62}
\end{quote}

\footnote{59. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/4, pp.20-24, April 28-June 25,1825.}
\footnote{60. ibid., pp.26-28, June 25-July 16,1825.}
\footnote{61. ibid., pp.29-32, July 25-August 17,1825.}
\footnote{62. ibid., p.40, November 10,1825.}
Agriculture

Little specific information is available concerning locations of agricultural activities during this period. However, the overall scope of farming must have increased, as larger quantities of potatoes were planted, and the men were now using ploughs to prepare the land to sow barley. 

Appendix C: Fort St. James II: 1849-1889

By the late 1840s John Stuart's Fort St. James had become decrepit. Donald Manson wrote in the post journal in January 1847:

...with a gale such as we have had to-day it is unsafe to live in such ruins of buildings as we have here and until men are left inland for the express purpose of building it will be impossible to do anything in that way, as throughout the winter the few men who are stationed here, are abundantly occupied in performing the other necessary duties of the Post.¹

The summer of 1848 was spent repairing the palisades of Stuart's post, but by the fall of that year work started on the preparation of material for the buildings of a new fort. A reference from May 1852, when the recently-repaired pickets of the old fort were pulled down and hauled or carted to the new fort, shows that there was a site change at this time.²

From the A.C. Murray plan of Fort St. James in 1885-1886 (figure 24), it is clear that Manson's post was centred on the same site as the buildings which remain today. Murray's plan also shows Fort St. James II was arranged following H.B.C. convention, facing the water, with the manager's house towards the back of the compound, flanked on one side by the servants' quarters, and on the other by the storehouses. Two other plans sketched by Murray or based on his information show the layout of Manson's post prior to the construction of the new

¹. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/20, p.10, January 10, 1847.
buildings in the 1880s (figures 27 and 29). In general terms, the information from all these sources is consistent.

George Simpson (Jr.) briefly described the post after travelling through in 1862:

Fort St. James is a fine post. It is the Company's depot, the headquarters for the district. It is a stockade fort, including several houses. Mr. Peter Ogden, chief trader, is in charge, assisted by two clerks, Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Hamilton, and about a dozen men.\(^3\)

In 1865 George Frost, the artist with the Western Union Telegraph expedition, sketched the interior of Fort St. James II looking east towards the gentlemen's house, with the servants' quarters to the left and a storehouse to the right (figure 17).

Ten years later, the Geological Survey party which passed through Fort St. James took a photograph of the post from the northwest, which showed the same three buildings, by now without a palisade around them, as well as the workshop and agricultural outbuildings to the left of the image (figure 26).

Gentlemen's House

On November 17, 1848 work started on "squaring wood for a new dwelling house 60 by 30 feet". The posts for this house were grooved in May 1849, revealing that it was of post on sill

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3. The *British Colonist*, December 23, 1862, p. 3.
construction. The frame of the building was erected in August, with assistance from the natives.\(^4\) Over the winter, more material was prepared for the house, including window frames, "the wood necessary for the outside work", and about a quarter of the number of planks required to roof the building.\(^5\)

In the summer of 1849 a cellar was dug under the house, the roof was completed, and boards cut for partitions. By September the men started building a chimney, using stones from Long Point and Big Island, and also began the windows, which were glazed with parchment.\(^6\) By the end of that year, doors were made for the building, which had also been mudded.\(^7\)

Work done to the "new dwelling house" throughout 1851 included: caulking its seams with hay; planing and grooving boards (either for flooring or wall boards); arranging chimneys both of the "dwelling House" and "one of the rooms"; building a "platform" in front of the house; and making a "small door for one of the inner chambers".\(^8\)

From 1852 to 1855 various small changes took place in the gentlemen’s house. In 1852 locks were put on some of the "room door" (sic) and a "stair in the Shop" built. Later that year two men started on construction of a porch at the door of the dwelling house. The "Cellar in the Hall" provided storage for potatoes at the same time. "Mudding" took place in November of 1853 and 1855; this may have been necessary every two years. Two men repaired the "two chimneys in the dwelling House" in April 1853. Some of the articles of furniture built

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4. ibid., pp.65,77,84-85, November 17,1848, May 16-17,1849, August 20-30,1849.
5. ibid., pp.92-93,103-104, November 29-December 15,1849, June 7, 1850.
6. ibid., pp.107-117, July 21-December 5,1849.
7. ibid., pp.117,121, November 11, December 23,1849.
in this period for the house included a mess table and various chairs.\footnote{ibid., pp.22-120, January 26,1852-November 17,1855.}

The Frost sketch (figure 17) showed the gentlemen's house in 1865. He drew it as a 1½ storey post on sill building, with a gable roof, probably covered with boards. The six bays in the front of the building correspond well to a 60 foot length, and a sort of porch may be seen at the right hand door. The two doors in the facade suggest two functions for the building, supporting the presence of the trade shop in the gentlemen's house. Only one chimney was shown, of traditional mud and stone construction, within a wooden framework.

The Geological Survey photograph (figure 26) showed only part of the roof of the building, but confirms the information provided by the Frost sketch. The house was taller than the single storey men's house in the foreground, and the roof and chimney details shown were the same as in the earlier sketch. A small sketch plan of Fort St. James done by the same party shows the "Hall" with a porch or landing both front and back, but unfortunately no other details.\footnote{P.A.C., RG 45, Book 1202, Geological Survey Field Note Books.}

H. Bullock Webster sketched "A Hudsons Bay Ball" at Fort St. James in the 1870s (figure 22). It is probable that it was held in the mess hall of the gentlemen's house. The sketch showed this room to have had bare plank floors, vertical planks on the walls, and a vertical plank door with strap hinges and a lock. Light was provided by candles in tin wall sconces, and simple red curtains adorned the windows. The mud fireplace had a tall, narrow opening, set flush with the interior wall. It is possible that Bullock Webster's sketch of "Our Haircutter" was also set in this building (figure 23). The building interior shown was that of a gentlemen's house, and the size would suggest that it was the
example at Fort St. James.

An 1928 plan of Manson's Fort St. James in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives Picture File, probably based on information from Murray, showed the "Indian entrance" to the trade shop at the back of the building (figure 27). On the rear of this plan is a more detailed plan of the gentlemen's house, which showed a central hall with "Double Chimney", separating the manager's quarters from the public areas, which included a mess hall, kitchen, and the Indian trade shop (figure 28).

On August 27, 1883, two of the servants began to demolish the gentlemen's house, a process which continued until November of that year. 11

Clerks' House and Office

The A.C. Murray-derived plans of Fort St. James II included a "Clerks house & Office" located to the southeast of the gentlemen's house (figures 24, 27, 29). Murray believed this to be one of the structures built in the late 1840s or early 1850s. In figure 24 he showed the building as 40 by 20 feet, with a room at each end, separated by a central hall. Presumably one of these rooms was residential, and the other the office. In the same plan, Murray also drew a small "Clerks store house" in close proximity to the residence/office building.

11. H.B.C.A., B.11/a/6, pp. 68, 73, 74, August 27, 29, September 17, November 1, 1883.
Men's House

After some 25 years of maintenance and repairs to the men's houses in the first H.B.C. post, on November 28, 1850, four men:

...commenced squaring wood for a new men's House 100 feet by 20 which length of building will include a work Shop and Interpreter's House.\(^\text{12}\)

Most of the material required for this building was ready by January 17 of the following year. The dimensions of the material suggests a structure 22 by 93 feet, and 11 feet tall from the sill to the plate. The list of material was that required for a post on sill building, consistent with the other known buildings at Fort St. James.\(^\text{13}\) On April 7 the men started work on their new house. Work continued on the house until the fall, with flooring installed in October. By the following month the structure was completed, and the men were working on beds for the house.\(^\text{14}\)

The following August new windows were put in the men's houses, a process repeated in 1855, when parchment was used for the windows.\(^\text{15}\)

The east end of the men's house was shown in the Frost sketch of 1865 (figure 17). It was shown as a long, gable roofed, single storey post on sill building, with one entrance door and a mud and stone chimney located in the east end. Five and one half bays, containing 7 windows were in the

\(^{12}\) ibid., p.119, November 28,1850.
\(^{13}\) ibid., pp.121-124, December 17,1850-January 17,1851.
\(^{14}\) ibid., p.133, April 7,1851; H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, p.10,13, October 13, November 17,1851.
\(^{15}\) ibid., pp.40,119, August 13,1852, November 11,1855.
partially shown south or front wall. The entrance door was embellished with an open porch structure.

The Geological Survey photograph of ten years later shows the back of the men’s house from the northwest (figure 26). Again, this confirms the accuracy of the Frost sketch, with the house shown as a single storey post on sill building, seven bays long by two bays wide. The house had two mud and stone chimneys, located approximately at the second and sixth of the upright posts defining the bays, viewed from the west. The building had three doors in the back wall, in the first, third, and fourth bays from the west, and two windows, in the sixth and seventh bays. The roof of the house was covered with boards, and the gable end was filled with vertical planks.

A.C. Murray’s plan of Fort St. James as it was in 1876 states this long building to have been the "Dwellings for men. Seven in number" (figure 29). The dimensions Murray gave to accompany another plan he drew a year later include the following: "Old Men’s house. 24 x 72." His plan of Fort St. James as it was in 1885 & 1886 (figure 24) describes the same building (his #19) as "Mens Houses", erected in "? 1840" and demolished in 1888. This plan indicates the same three doors shown in the photograph, along with three, and possibly four internal partitions in the building, and small rooms or vestibules around the doors. The Murray-based plan in the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives showed the furthest east room in the men’s house as the interpreter’s quarters, consistent with the instructions in the journal (figure 27). This room was shown with its door opening to the gentlemen’s house, as shown in the Frost sketch. As the interpreter’s duties would largely lie in the Indian trade shop, this layout also seems logical.

J.D. Smedley, in his 1948 article "Early Days at the
Fort" cites Carrier Chief Louis B. Prince, born in 1864:

The Servants lived in long buildings, divided into 6 or 7 rooms. Each had a room to himself and family. There was a chimney built of clay and stones in the dividing walls with an open fireplace for heat and cooking. There were no stoves in those days. The windows were covered with moose skins to let in the light, later on cotton cloth was used.16

Stranger's House

On June 4,1852 two men started squaring timber for the construction of a "Strangers House". As the name implies, this was fitted out as a residential structure, with a chimney, table, and beds. It was post on sill construction, and had a garrett, fitted out with a shelf "for property". A platform was built extending out from the door of the stranger's house.17 It is possible, but by no means certain, that Murray's "Guest House" in figure 24 was the same building as the earlier stranger's house.

House/Kitchen

In the week ending February 8,1851, the servants completed "all the work required for a House 20 x 40 feet". It seems that the next new building started after preparation of this

16. J.D. Smedley, "Early Days at the Fort", Cariboo and Northern B.C. Digest, Spring 1948, p.11.
17. H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.35-44, June 4-September 13,1852.
material was the kitchen, but there is no definite evidence suggesting that it was the 20 by 40 foot building. Work on the new kitchen continued through the summer, with a chimney constructed in it during July and August. The information from A.C. Murray’s plan of the gentlemen’s house in Fort St. James II (figure 28) suggests that the kitchen was incorporated in this building. His plan of the post in 1885-1886 (figure 24) gave dimensions of 40 by 20 feet for the "Clerks house & Office", so possibly this was the "House" referred to in the journal.

Oven

Roi, one of the servants, started construction of an oven on August 26, 1852. By September 21 he had constructed a door for it, probably signalling the completion of the fixture. Two of the servants demolished this oven and built a new one in the summer of 1854. In its turn, this oven was replaced by another new "chimney & Oven" the following summer. In October 1855 the men were:

...employed making an oven as the one made by Mr. Ogden this summer was thrown down by the dogs...

This reference emphasises that the ovens were not built to be long-lasting or permanent structures, and also that they were free-standing, where the dogs had access to them, rather than incorporated into one of the buildings such as the

kitchen.

Storehouses

On December 17, 1849, the men began to prepare wood for a "New Store", the second structure built in the new post after the gentlemen's house. The H.B.C. employed natives in October 1850 to cart "all of our Salmon to the New Store." Early the following month the "old Salmon Store" was demolished. The new store had shutters installed and was plastered with mud at the same time.\(^22\)

A.C. Murray in two plans, showing Fort St. James as it was in 1876 (figure 29) and 1885-1886 (figure 24) respectively, described the "Old Salmon Store" or "Warehouse & Salmon Store" as 50 by 24 feet. On the latter plan, he showed this building separated into three rooms, with entry doors into the two rooms to the west end. In another plan based on information from Murray (figure 27), it was stated that powder was stored in the room to the west, fish in the centre room, and "&c", or miscellaneous items in the room to the east.

In January 1852 the men began to prepare wood for a new fur store. They began to build the frame of the store, which incorporated a fur press, on March 8. As with the other store, the window openings of this building were covered with shutters. The fur store was competed on April 9, 1852.\(^23\)

In both of his plans, A.C. Murray described the fur store as 52 by 27 feet. In the 1885-1886 plan (figure 24) he called

\(^{22}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/20, pp.93,115-117, December 15,1849, October 17-November 7,1850.
\(^{23}\) H.B.C.A., B.188/a/21, pp.22-30, January 30-April 9,1852.
his structure a "Fur Store with Press". In the plan from the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives (figure 27), the first floor was said to serve for fur packing, while the second storey was a warehouse.

The later Grahame warehouse, which survived into the 20th Century, was shown on Murray’s various plans as a building 40 by 24 feet.

Boat Store

In April 1852, the men were employed on a new boat store, to replace that in the old fort torn down in the fall of 1850. As with the earlier building, this one was post on sill construction, and fitted with shutters, so probably closely followed the pattern of the other. 24

In his plan of Fort St. James in 1885-1886 (figure 24), A.C. Murray showed this boat house as the building nearest the lake in the fort, set transversely across the front. He described the "Boat Store & Shed" as both 42 by 31 feet and 40 by 24 feet on the plan, and indicated some sort of internal division in the building.

Blacksmith Shop

The blacksmith shop/workshop was located just to the east of the men’s house. It was shown in the 1875 Geological Survey

photograph (figure 26) as a single-storey post on sill building, four bays long by two bays wide. This configuration suggests a size of roughly 40 by 20 feet, based on the average bay length at Fort St. James. It had a large, central mud and stone chimney, with no window or door openings evident in the north or west walls. The Hudson’s Bay Company Archives plan (figure 27) and Murray’s 1885-1886 plan both show the building divided into two sections, each with a door in the south wall. The H.B.C.A. plan had the shop captioned as having the schoolmaster living in the east part of the building, and the school itself in the "blacksmith shop" or west part. This probably relates to the period when Gavin Hamilton brought in a teacher for his own children, in the 1870s.25

Defences

In January 1851 the men of Fort St. James prepared "Fort Pickets" of 13 and 15 foot lengths. By February 15 more than 1800 such pickets were prepared.26 In May 1852 the men demolished the palisade of the old post, and hauled the pickets to the new fort. There, they dug a "ditch or trench" around the buildings to erect the new palisade.27 The old palisades had only been in place for some four years, so were still fairly sound. Shortly after, two of the men started "picketing the yards about the inside the Fort."28 This referred to the fences which defined various areas within the palisade proper.

The 1865 Frost sketch of Fort St. James shows the

28. ibid., p.35, June 4,1852.
palisade still in place (figure 17). It was represented as something around the height described by Murray (below), with pointed tops on the pickets and at least one horizontal stringer. This sketch also shows the internal divisions defining areas inside the fort. These are shown as palisade style fences to each side of the gentlemen’s house, and to the right of the storehouse. A gate appears in the section of fence to the right of the gentlemen’s house. No palisade is visible in the Geological Survey photograph of Fort St. James taken ten years later (figure 26).

A.C. Murray described the defences of this fort as he found them in 1876:

When I came there were palisades around the fort built by Donald Manson in 1844-45 that was standing, and part of the palisade was standing when I came to the country. Two bastions were standing in the corners. The palisades were built of six-inch or eight-inch poles, which stood fourteen to fifteen feet high. The last of them were taken down when the old buildings came down.29

Agriculture

Various agricultural buildings were built or rebuilt in the construction of Manson’s fort. In November 1850 the servants built a new stable.30 In the spring of 1851 a number of field were enclosed with picket-style fences in preparation for manuring and planting.31 On August 3, 1852, two of the servant

31. ibid., pp.134-136, April 17-May 7, 1851.
started to build a "small dairy".

George Simpson (Jr.) described the agricultural establishment at Fort St. James in 1862:

Vegetables of all kinds, with barley, are raised there, and mature well. They have about 30 head of cattle, and a dozen horses. 32

Thomas Elwyn's description of Fort St. James as he found it four years later emphasised the agricultural component:

At this post which consists of several large buildings from fifty to sixty acres of land have been fenced in; potatoes and barley are cultivated about twenty head of cattle, fed on hay during the winter, are kept at this place. The ground in the vicinity of the Fort and on the Southern end of the lake is level and accessible but to the north the mountains close in on either side. 33

The Hudson's Bay Company Archives plan of Fort St. James II (figure 27) showed a garden inside the palisaded area, between the gentlemen's house and the storehouses. Probably this was the kitchen garden, providing the basic vegetables for the gentlemen's mess.

The 1872 Horetzky photograph (figure 25) suggests the presence of fairly extensive ploughed fields surrounding Fort St. James II. The Geological Survey photograph (figure 26) and the Murray plan of the post in 1885-1886 (figure 24) also show a variety of ancillary agricultural buildings around the fort. Murray attributed most of these to a somewhat later

32. The British Colonist, December 23, 1862, p. 3.
33. P.A.B.C., F526/8, Colonial Correspondence, Thomas Elwyn to Colonial Secretary, September 4, 1866.
period than the buildings of the fort proper.
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RG 45, Book 1202, Geological Survey Field Note Books.

University of British Columbia Library, Special Collections

H. Bullock Webster

"Sketches of Hudson Bay Life"
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