

INDIANS ON NORTHWEST FRONTIER.

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TRANSMITTING

*Information of the assemblage of Indians on the northwestern frontier, &c.*

APRIL 10, 1840.

Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

*To the House of Representatives of the United States:*

I transmit, herewith, communications from the Secretary of War and Commissioner of Indian Affairs, giving the information "in possession of the Government respecting the assemblage of Indians on the northwestern frontier, and especially as to the interference of the officers or agents of any foreign power with the Indians of the United States in the vicinity of the great lakes," which I was requested to communicate by the resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 9th ultimo.

M. VAN BUREN.

WASHINGTON, *April, 1840.*

WAR DEPARTMENT, *April 8, 1840.*

SIR: In reply to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 9th ultimo, which was referred by you to this department, I have the honor to transmit, herewith, a report from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, which contains the information "in possession of the Government respecting the assemblage of Indians on the northwestern frontier, and especially as to the interference of the officers or agents of any foreign power with the Indians of the United States in the vicinity of the great lakes."

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,  
J. R. POINSETT.

The PRESIDENT of the United States.

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Office Indian Affairs, April 7, 1840.*

SIR: I have the honor to report on the resolution of the House of Representatives of the United States, of the 9th of March, "That the President of the United States be requested, if, in his opinion, compatible with the public interest, to communicate to this House any information in possession of the Government respecting the assemblage of Indians on the northwestern frontier, and especially as to the interference of the officers or agents of any foreign power with the Indians of the United States in the vicinity of the great lakes," which was referred to this office :

It has long been the practice of the British provincial agents, in Upper Canada, to distribute presents of goods, arms, ammunition, and other supplies, to the Indians resident in the United States, at various points—Drummond's island, Malden, Amherstburg, and the Great Manitoulin island, in Lake Huron. I had reason to think, when I made a report on the 15th of January, 1839, to you, on a similar resolution, that the issues had commenced about the year 1830 to *visiting* Indians on the latter island, and been since confined exclusively to that point; but my previous information on that subject is at variance with a despatch of Sir Francis Bond Head, late lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, in which he speaks of Amherstburg being a place of distribution in 1836, and of the first issue to such Indians at the Manitoulin being made in that year. There can be no doubt that they were long encouraged to make annual visits to the province, with a view to what the successive governors may have thought a fulfilment of the obligations of the British Government, arising out of their alliance with the Indians during our Revolution war, and that of 1812, with England, and probably to conciliation and aid in the event of a future conflict. But it is singular that, while this course was directed by Sir John Colborne and his successor, and the distribution of these presents was actually attended by the latter, the minister at the head of the Colonial Office, in England, appears to have been ignorant of the practice up to the year 1835, so far as official advice of the subject is concerned.

The number of Indians from the United States, who annually attended these distributions, has greatly surpassed what has been generally supposed, and actually amounted to 3,270, as the average for 1836 and a series of years preceding; and I have reason to believe that there has not been a great, if any, diminution of the number since. This practice, however, as we shall presently see, is at an end—it having been officially recommended by the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada to the British minister to publish, at the distribution at the Great Manitoulin, in 1837, that there would be only two more annual distributions to Indians living in the United States, viz, in 1838 and 1839; but that if they removed to Canada, they would be continued. This was done; and the policy is now to colonize the Indians of the United States on the Great Manitoulin, or elsewhere along our northern frontier, to which they have been invited. The Great Manitoulin island (which, with one or two near it, is said to be fertile) is the chosen residence of the Indians, notwithstanding the great body of Upper Canada is yet a wild waste. There are upon it several Government edifices, some Indian settlements of cleared land and log-cabins, and at least three religious establishments under the Catholics and Methodists. The chief island is ninety-three miles long, but quite narrow, while inroads are made upon it by numerous gulfs and bays. Especial pains and anxiety were

manifested in regard of the making of these presents in 1836, and the announcement of their intended discontinuance, in connexion with the invitations to the Indians to place themselves under the British flag, in 1837. The lieutenant-governor attended the distribution in the former year, and intended to communicate, in person, the plan for the future, and the wish that was warmly expressed to continue the donations on the condition of a permanent residence in Canada, but was prevented by intelligence of the demise of William the 4th, which required his presence at Toronto.

The only direct official acts of the British Government, European and provincial, that I am aware of, toward colonizing United States Indians in Canada, do not date farther back than 1836; but there is no doubt that the same efforts had been put forth, in one form or other, for many years before, though, I incline to think, up to that time by the colonial officers, without any direct sanction of their mother-country, and, so far as one may judge from the despatch of the late head of the proper department in England, perhaps, without its knowledge.

In the report of last year, I referred to the despatch from Lord Glenelg to the Earl of Gosford and Sir Francis B. Head, of the 14th of January, 1836, and quoted it; but, as I now can communicate the reply made to it by the latter, as the head of the Upper Canadian Government, it may be proper again, for the sake of the connexion, to place it in this paper. The minister appears to have been prompted to his communication by a resolution of the Committee of the House of Commons on Military Expenditures in the Colonies, and seeks information in regard of Indian affairs, acknowledging, however, that the practice of distributing presents arose out of the military aid which the British Government "anxiously sought" and obtained from the Indians, particularly in 1777 and 1812. He speaks of the number of United States Indians, reported to him to be resident in Canada, as amounting to 4,000; what pledges have been given to them; and whether any bad consequences might be apprehended from a discontinuance of their supplies. The despatch follows:

"The annual expenditure incurred by this country on account of Indians in Upper and Lower Canada has been limited, since the year 1830, to £20,000; of this sum, £15,850 have been considered applicable to the purchase of presents, and £4,150 to the pay and pensions of the Indian Department.

"Deferring, for the present, any observation on this latter branch of the expenditure, I feel bound, after much consideration, to express my opinion, that the time is not yet arrived, at which it would be possible, consistently with good faith, altogether to discontinue the annual presents to the Indians. It appears that, although no formal obligations can be cited for such issues, there is yet ample evidence that, on every occasion, when this country has been engaged in war on the North American continent, the cooperation of the Indian tribes has been anxiously sought and has been obtained. This was particularly the case in the years 1777 and 1812; and I am inclined to believe that it is from these periods, respectively, that the present annual supplies date their commencement. But without attempting to pursue that inquiry, it is sufficient to observe that the custom has now existed during a long series of years; that, even in the absence of any original obligation, a prescriptive title thus has been created; that this title has been practically admitted by all who have been officially cognizant of the matter, and that all agree in stating that its sudden abrogation would

lead to great discontent among the Indians, and, perhaps, to consequences of a very serious nature.

“Of the sum expended in presents, there is, however, a portion which would appear to be placed under peculiar circumstances. It has often been represented, and lately on official authority, that, of the Indians who receive presents from the British Government, a considerable number reside within the United States, and only resort to Canada at the periods of issue.

“The number of these Indians in Upper Canada, is said to be 4,000, or about one-fourth of the whole. I have to request that you will direct an immediate inquiry to be made into the truth of the statement, and that you will ascertain and report to me under what arrangements or conditions such persons have hitherto received presents; at what period their change of domicil took place; how far the faith of this country is pledged to them; and whether any bad consequences are to be apprehended from the discontinuance of their supplies.

“While, however, my present information leads me to believe that the immediate or early discontinuance of the annual presents to the Indian tribes residing within the British provinces, without a commutation, would be unjust and impolitic, I am by no means prepared to admit that they should be indefinitely perpetuated; and I have to request that you will direct your early attention to a consideration how far it may be practicable, consistently with good faith and sound policy, gradually to diminish their amount, with a view to the ultimate abrogation of the existing custom.”

To this a full answer was given, dated at Toronto, 20th November, 1836, by Sir Francis Bond Head (which will be found in “Sir F. B. Head’s Narrative,” appendix A, No. 95), in which some philanthropic remarks are indulged, a melancholy picture drawn of the past, and gloomy anticipations made for the future. He asserts that all attempts in Canada at changing the Indians from hunters to farmers have completely failed; that the efforts at civilizing them have made them still more vicious; and that the greatest kindness will consist in shutting them out from all white intercourse. He speaks of various negotiations he has held for the purchase of land from them, and of the valuable acquisitions he has so made for his Government of numerous islands and very rich tracts of land. The number of visiting Indians (that is, from the United States) is stated at 3,270 as the average, being about half as many as reside in Upper Canada, and the average cost of presents issued to both is put at £8,500, which he regards as an expenditure not to be regretted. He recommends that, after three years, the presents should be discontinued except to Indians residing in Canada, and thinks it certain that, although “a few would at first immigrate to Canada, they would not long remain there.” This opinion is founded on the great severity of the northern climate, and is proved to be correct by a fact which came to my knowledge since the resolution was passed, that forty families or about 200 individuals of the Pottawatomie tribe removed to the Manitoulin, or some other Canadian point, in the fall of 1838; they were deterred from remaining there by the depth of the snow in the succeeding winter, returned to the United States, and were found in Wisconsin in the summer of 1839, with a regular establishment of lodges, near Fond du Lac, and about the head waters of the Milwaukee and Rock rivers. Sir Francis recommends that the distribution of presents for the three years, shall be confined to the Great Manitoulin, by which, although the expense of transporting goods is greater than to Amherstburg, or Penetanguishene, he thinks

a saving will be effected, as only those Indians will attend who are really in want. This anticipation was not, I imagine, realized; a small amount in presents will tempt these poor creatures to go a great distance. Although the governor found but about 1,500 Indians at the Great Manitoulin in 1836, there were about 3,700 in 1837; the difference being made up, perhaps, in part, of increased removals from other places in Canada, but chiefly from the discontinuance of distributions elsewhere, which drew those accustomed to receive at Amherstburg to the distant Manitoulin. It is likely, I think, from the whole tenor of Sir Francis's despatch, that the idea suggested in my report of last year, that a discrimination was made between United States and Canadian Indians, was founded in mistake. This state paper is creditable in spirit and manner to its author, and, as it discloses the line of policy on which the British Government is now acting, I give it entire:

*“ Memorandum on the aborigines of North America.*

“ TORONTO, UPPER CANADA, November 20, 1836.

“ MY LORD: As the object of this communication is to endeavor to supply your lordship with the information respecting the Indians and the Indian department, required by your lordship's despatch No. —, I feel it may be satisfactory that I should commence by explaining what opportunities I have had of forming the opinion I am about to offer on the subject.

“ I have, therefore, the honor to state to your lordship that I attended the annual delivery of presents to the visiting Indians at Amherstburg, as also that which took place, for the first time, at the Great Manitoulin island, in Lake Huron.

“ During my inspectional tour of the province, I also visited, with one or two trifling exceptions, the whole of the Indian settlements in Upper Canada, and, in doing so, made it my duty to enter every shanty or cottage, being desirous to judge with my own eyes of the actual situation of that portion of the Indian population which is undergoing the operation of being civilized. I have had a slight opportunity of making myself acquainted with the Indian character in South America, and, from the above data, I have now the honor to transmit to your lordship the following observations on the subject:

“ MEMORANDUM.

“ The fate of the red inhabitants of America, the real proprietors of its soil, is, without any exception, the most sinful story recorded in the history of the human race; and when one reflects upon the anguish they have suffered from our hands, and the cruelties and injustice they have endured, the mind, accustomed to its own vices, is lost in utter astonishment at finding that in the red man's heart there exists no sentiment of animosity against us, no feeling of revenge; on the contrary, that our appearance at the humble portal of his wigwam is, to this hour, a subject of unusual joy. If the white man be lost in the forest, his cry of distress will call the most eager hunter from his game; and among the tribe there is not only pleasure but pride in contending with each other who shall be the first to render him assistance and food.

“So long as we were obtaining possession of their country by open violence, the fatal result of the unequal contest was but too clearly understood; but now, that we have succeeded in exterminating their race from vast regions of land, where nothing in the present day remains of the poor Indian but the unnoticed bones of his ancestors, it seems inexplicable how it should happen that, even where their race barely lingers in existence, it should still continue to wither, droop, and vanish, before us like grass on the progress of the forest in flames. ‘The red men,’ lately exclaimed a celebrated Miami cacique, ‘are melting like snow before the sun.’

“Whenever, and wherever, the two races come into contact with each other, it is sure to prove fatal to the red man.

“However bravely, for a short time, he may resist our bayonets and our fire-arms, sooner or later he is called upon by death to submit to his decree. If we stretch forth the hand of friendship, the liquid fire it offers him to drink proves still more destructive than our wrath. And, lastly, if we attempt to Christianize the Indians, and for that sacred object congregate them in villages of substantial log-houses, lovely and beautiful as such a theory appears, it is an undeniable fact, to which, unhesitatingly, I add my humble testimony, that, as soon as the hunting season commences, the men (from warm clothes and warinhousing, having lost their hardihood) perish, or rather rot, in numbers by consumption; while, as regards their women, it is impossible for any accurate observer to refrain from remarking, that civilization, in spite of the pure, honest, and unremitting zeal of our missionaries, by some accursed process has blanched their babies’ faces. In short, our philanthropy, like our friendship, has failed in its professions; producing deaths by consumption, it has more than decimated its followers; and, under the pretence of eradicating from the female heart the errors of a pagan’s breed, it has implanted in their stead the germs of Christian guilt.

“What is the reason of all this? Why the simple virtues of the red aborigines of America should, under all circumstances, fade before the vices and cruelty of the old world, is a problem which no one among us is competent to solve; the dispensation is as mysterious as its object is inscrutable. I have merely mentioned the facts, because I feel that before the subject of the Indians in Upper Canada can be fairly considered, it is necessary to refute the idea, which so generally exists in England, about the success which has attended the Christianizing and civilizing of the Indians—whereas, I firmly believe every person of sound mind in this country, who is disinterested in their conversion, and who is acquainted with the Indian character, will agree—

“1st. That an attempt to make farmers of the red man has been, generally speaking, a complete failure.

“2d. That congregating them, for the purpose of civilization, has implanted many more vices than it has eradicated; and, consequently,

“3d. That the greatest kindness we can perform toward these intelligent, simple-minded people, is to remove and fortify them as much as possible from all communication with the whites.

“Having concluded the few preparatory observations I was desirous to make, I will now proceed to state what negotiations I have already entered into with the Indians, and what is my humble opinion of the course we should adopt, as regards their presents, and the expenses of the Indian department.

“ At the great Manitoulin island, in Lake Huron; where I found about 1,500 Indians, of various tribes, assembled for their presents, the Chippewas and the Ottawas, at a great council held expressly for the purpose, formally made over to me 23,000 islands. The Saugeen Indians also voluntarily surrendered to me a million and a half acres of the very richest land in Upper Canada. (For the details attending these surrenders, see my despatch to your lordship, No. 70.)

“ On proceeding to Amherstburg, I assembled the Hurons, who occupy in that neighborhood a hunting-ground of rich land of six miles square; two thirds of which they surrendered to me, on condition that one of the said two thirds should be sold, and the proceeds thereof invested for their benefit.

“ The Moravian Indians, with whom I had also an interview, have likewise agreed, for an annuity of £150, to surrender to me about six miles square of black rich land situated on the banks of the Thames river.

“ I need hardly observe, that I have thus obtained for her\* Majesty's Government from the Indians, an immense portion of most valuable land, which will undoubtedly produce, at no remote period, more than sufficient to defray the whole of the expenses of the Indians and Indian department in this province.

“ On the other hand, as regards their interests, my despatch No. 70 will explain the arguments I used in advising them to retire, or fall back upon the Manitoulin and other islands in Lake Huron; the locality being admirably adapted for supporting them, but not for white men. Still it may appear that the arrangement was not advantageous to the Indians, because it was of such benefit to us; but it must always be kept in mind, that however useful rich land may be to us, yet its only value to an Indian consists in the game it contains; he is, in fact, lord of the manor, but it is against his nature to cultivate the soil; he has neither right nor power to sell it. As soon, therefore, as his game is frightened away, or its influx of immigration cut off by the surrounding settlements of the whites, his land, however rich it may be, becomes a *'rudis indigestaque moles,'* of little value or importance; and in this state much of the Indian property in Upper Canada at present exists.

“ For instance: I found sixteen or eighteen families of Moravian Indians living on a vast tract of rich land, yet, from absence of game, almost destitute of every thing; several of the men drunk; nearly all their children half-castes; the high-road through their territory almost impassable; the white population execrating their indolence, and entreating to be relieved from the stagnation of a block of rich land, which separated them from their markets as completely as if it had been a desert.

“ The above picture (which is a very common one) will, I think, sufficiently show, that however desirous one may be to protect the Indians (and I hope no one feels for them more deeply than myself), yet, practically speaking, the greatest kindness we can do them is to induce them, as I have done, to retreat before what they may justly term the accursed progress of civilization; for, as I have stated, the instant they are surrounded by the white population ‘the age of their chivalry has fled.’

“ The lieutenant-governor of the province may protect them from open violence, but neither he, nor any other authority on earth, can prevent the

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\* Should be his.

combination of petty vices, which, as I have already explained, are as fatal in their operation as the bayonet itself.

"It is impossible to teach the Indian to beware of the white man; for it seems to be the instinct of his untutored nature to look upon him as his friend; in short, his simplicity is his ruin, and though he can entrap and conquer every wild beast in his forest, yet invariably he becomes himself the prey of his white brother!

"For the foregoing reasons, I am decidedly of opinion that her Majesty's Government should continue to advise the few remaining Indians, who are lingering in Upper Canada, to retire upon the Manitoulin and other islands in Lake Huron, or elsewhere toward the northwest.\*

"Your lordship has informed me, that the committee of the House of Commons on military expenditures in the colonies, are of opinion 'that the Indian Department may be greatly reduced, if not altogether abolished; and they therefore call the attention of the House to the same, and also to the expense of articles annually distributed to the Indians, and whether any arrangement may not be made to dispense with such distributions in future, or to commute the presents for money.

"As it is your lordship's desire that I should afford you as much information as possible on the above suggestions, I will now respectfully endeavor to do so.

"The presents which the British Government has been in the habit of granting to the Indians in Upper Canada, have been delivered to two classes, termed the 'resident' and the 'visiting,' whose numbers this year were as follows:

"Number of Indians resident in Upper Canada - - - - - 6,507

"Average number of Indians who, in order to receive presents from the British Government, annually visit Upper Canada from the United States - - - - - 3,270

"Total average annual cost of presents issued as above - - - - - £8,500

"It certainly appears to me very desirable, indeed, that we should, if possible, discontinue the practice of giving presents to that portion of the visiting Indians who reside in the Territory of the neighboring States; but what is desirable is not always just, and it is therefore necessary, before the project be carried into effect, that we should consider what arguments exist for as well as against it.

"In its favor it may be stated—

"1st. That we should save an annual expenditure of, say, £4,000.

"2d. That, according to common laws among nations, there appears to be no reason why, having lost all dominion over and interest in the United States, we should continue to make annual payments to any portion of its inhabitants.

"3d. That it amounts almost to an act of hostility for the British Government to continue to give guns, powder, and ball, to the Indians of the United States, with whom that people are at this moment engaged in civil war.

"4th. That a considerable portion of the presents which we give to the Indians, are shortly after their delivery to be seen displayed by the shopkeepers of the United States, who often obtain them almost for nothing.

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\* This measure was strongly recommended by Sir John Colborne to her Majesty's Government.

“In reply to the first objection, namely, ‘that by withholding the presents we should save an annual expenditure of £4,000,’ it may be stated, that, of all the money which has been ever expended by the British Government, there is, perhaps, no sum which ought to be less regretted than that which we have hitherto bestowed on the aborigines of America. It has purchased for us the blessings of their race; they love us; they have shed their blood for us; they would do so again; they look upon us as the only just and merciful inhabitants of the old world—and, impressed with these feelings, their attachment to our sovereign amounts almost to veneration. ‘When we see the sun rise in the east,’ said a warrior to me at the great council at the Manitoulin island, ‘it is our custom to say to our young men, ‘There is our great father; he warms us; he clothes us; he gives us all we desire.’

“There can be no doubt that, up to the present page in the history of the British empire, we have acted well toward the Indians. What that reflection may intrinsically be worth, it is not so easy to determine, as every man will perhaps estimate it differently; however, its moral value, whatever it may be, should be deducted from the expense of which we complain, for we cannot enjoy both advantages; if we save the latter, we must lose the former.

“In reply to the second objection, namely, ‘that, according to common laws among nations, there appears to be no reason why, having lost all dominion over and interest in the United States, we should continue to make annual payments to any portion of its inhabitants,’ it must be recollected that, in our wars with the Americans, we gladly availed ourselves of the services of the Indians, whom invariably we promised we would never desert. In these promises we made no restriction whatever as to domicile; when the tribes joined us, we never waited to ask whence they came; at the close of the war, when their surviving warriors left us, we never prescribed to them where they should go.

“It will be asked, in what way were these our promises made? It is difficult to reply to this question, as it involves the character of the Indian race.

“An Indian’s word, when it is formally pledged, is one of the strongest moral securities on earth; like the rainbow, it beams unbroken when all beneath is threatened with annihilation.

“The most solemn form in which an Indian pledges his word, is by the delivery of a wampum belt of shells; and when the purport of this symbol is once declared, it is remembered and handed down, from father to son, with an accuracy and retention of meaning which is quite extraordinary.

“Whenever the belt is produced, every minute circumstance which attended its delivery seems instantly to be brought to life; and such is the singular effect produced on the Indian’s mind by this talisman, that it is common for him, whom we term ‘the savage,’ to shed tears at the sight of a wampum which has accompanied a message from his friend.

“I have mentioned these facts, because they will explain the confident reliance the Indians place on the promises which, accompanied by the delivery of wampum, were made to them by our generals, during and at the conclusion of the American wars.

“These rude ceremonies had probably little effect upon our officers, but they sunk deep in the minds of the Indians. The wampums thus given have been preserved, and are now intrusted to the keeping of the great orator Sigonah, who was present at the council I attended on the Manitou-

lin island, in Lake Huron ; and, in every sense, these hieroglyphics are moral affidavits of the bygone transactions to which they relate.

“ On our part, little or nothing documentary exists ; the promises which were made, whatever they might have been, were almost invariably verbal ; those who expressed them are now mouldering in their graves. However, the regular delivery of the presents proves and corroborates the testimony of the wampums ; and, by whatever sophistry we might deceive ourselves, we could never succeed in explaining to the Indians of the United States that their Great Father was justified in deserting them.

“ To the third and fourth objections, I have nothing to reply ; for I must say I think the Americans have reason for the jealousy they express at the British Government interfering, by positively arming their own Indians, with whom they are at war, with English guns, powder, and ball. I also cannot deny that a great proportion of the presents we give to the American Indians, form a tribute which we annually pay to the shopkeepers of the United States.

“ Having endeavored, as fairly as possible, to explain the arguments on both sides, I now beg leave to state that, after having given the subject considerable reflection, I am of opinion that to the visiting Indians of the United States we cannot, without a breach of faith, directly refuse to continue the presents which, by the word of our generals, we have promised, and which, by long custom, we have sanctioned ; but observing that the minds of these people were wide open to reasonable conviction, it occurred to me that it would not be difficult to explain to them that their Great Father was still willing to continue presents to such of his red children as lived in his own land, but that in justice to the Americans, who are now our allies, he could not arm against them those Indians who could [should] continue to reside in the territory of the United States ; and consequently that, after the expiration of three years, presents would be given only to those of our red children who actually shall inhabit the Canadas. I did not formally make this declaration at the great council at the Manitoulin islands, but it was sufficiently hinted to them to be clearly understood ; and as far as I could learn, and have since learned, it was received without disapprobation.

“ I would, therefore, recommend that this declaration should be formally announced at the next delivery of presents. The Indians in the United States would thus have plenty of time to prepare for the change, which, I feel quite confident, would end by our being released honorably and altogether from an engagement, which I certainly think we have maintained long enough, to reward liberally the United States Indians for the services they rendered us during the war. Indeed, there can be no doubt that we have treated their warriors infinitely better than we have behaved to our own veterans, who, blind, wounded, mutilated, helpless, and miserable, are at this moment wandering in the great bush or wilderness of Canada, regretting the hour that they ever improvidently commuted with the British Government their hard-earned pensions.

“ I do not think the Indians of the United States could or would complain of the above arrangement ; and I feel certain that though a few would at first immigrate to Canada, they would not long remain there.

“ For many reasons, which it would be tedious to your lordship that I should detail, I would recommend that the presents to the visiting Indians should, for the three years, be delivered at the Manitoulin island only.

“The expense of forwarding the presents to that spot, though less than to the old place of delivery (Drummond island), is greater than at Penetanguishene and Amherstburg; but as only those who are really in want of their presents would come to Manitoulin, we should gain, as indeed we did gain this year, by that arrangement infinitely more than the difference of expense of transport.

“In a memorandum I received on the 16th of July last from Mr. Commissary General Routh, many of whose suggestions I have effected, that gentleman, not anticipating the recommendation I have now made for the ultimate discontinuance of presents to the American Indians, proposed to diminish their expense by substituting strouds instead of cloth, and by withholding powder, ball, and shot.

“Every person with whom I have consulted, is of opinion that the latter privation would be most severely felt by the Indian hunter, who lives by his gun; however, I feel confident that Mr. Routh himself will agree with me in opinion, that, if the presents to all Indians residing in the United States, are, as I propose to be, totally discontinued at so early a period as the expiration of three years, it would be unnecessary, unadvisable, and ungenerous, to make any deduction from the pittance or gratuity, which is so shortly to be withheld.

“Your lordship is aware that considerable expenses for building, &c., were incurred at the Manitoulin island this year; but the arrangement was made by Sir John Colborne, before I arrived here, and it was too late for me to alter it; however, as soon as I got there, I put a stop to all that was doing, and discharged every person who had been engaged.

Having disposed of at least one-third part of the Indian presents, and the expense of their delivery, I certainly respectfully recommend that we should continue to deliver them to those few Indians who continue to inhabit Upper Canada. I have already stated that this expense will shortly be defrayed altogether by the sale of the lands they have this year liberally surrendered to me; and even if that were not to be the case, I do think that, enjoying, as we do, possession of this noble province, it is our bounden duty to consider as heir-looms, the wreck of that simple-minded, ill-fated race, which as I have already stated, is daily and yearly fading before the progress of civilization.

“We have only to bear patiently with them for a short time, and with a few exceptions, principally half castes, their unhappy race, beyond our power of redemption, will be extinct.

“I am not prepared to recommend that money should at present be substituted for presents to the resident Indians in this province.

“1st. Because I think, unless good arrangements were previously made, the Indians, from their improvident habits, would in many places be left destitute; and

“2d. Without due precaution, a money delivery to so many men, women, and children, might possibly be attended by very great impositions.

“Another year's experience and reflection will, I make no doubt, enable me to offer to your lordship a decided opinion on this subject, as I am quite alive to the advantage which we should gain by the substitution of money, if it could be properly effected.

“In the expenses of the Indian department, which at present amount to £1,610 17s. 10d. per annum, I am of opinion that a reduction might at once be made to the following extent (subject to moderate pensions, the

greater part of which might be in grants out of land which has lately been ceded to me by the Indians):

“Three superintendents at £206 14s. 4d. - - - - £620 3s.  
 “One interpreter at £62 - - - - 62

“I also think that a considerable reduction might be made in the contingencies which at present amount to £2,000. With respect to the pensions which amount to £462, I conceive that, as they have already been sanctioned, they could not in justice be repealed.

“In conclusion I now beg leave to refer to my despatch No. 31, respecting the age and services of Colonel Givens; I conscientiously concur with Sir John Colborne and Sir P. Maitland, in recommending that, in the evening of his long and well-spent life, this officer may not be neglected by her Majesty’s Government, to whose service he has been more than half a century unremittingly and devotedly attached.

“His name is so identified with the Indian history of this country, that I earnestly hope he may be allowed to retire on his full pay; he has a large family, and his advanced age must prevent his long receiving the remuneration so strongly recommended by Sir John Colborne, by Sir P. Maitland, and by myself.

“To replace Colonel Givens, who would continue to assist as an interpreter, I have already recommended, in my despatch No. 31, the appointment of Mr. Hepburn, who last year has, without salary, been performing the duties of chief superintendent.”

“I am decidedly of opinion that at the expiration of three years a still further reduction may be made in the Indian department, and that its expenses of every description will ere long be completely defrayed by the lands which I have lately obtained from the Indians.

“I have the honor to be, &c.,

“F. B. HEAD.

“The Lord GLENELG.”

A reply must have proceeded from the British ministry, approving and adopting the views for the future communicated in the foregoing document, for they have been in part carried out, and are still in a course of execution. The subject is so grave, and the responsibility was so great, that, I take it for granted, it would not have been assumed by the colonial officers without ministerial sanction, especially as the matter had been moved in Parliament. But after a very diligent search, I can find no trace of it, except what after acts in Canada enable me with certainty to infer.

At the distribution of 1837, on the Great Manitoulin, the lieutenant-governor (whose absence was made necessary by information of the accession of the present Queen of Great Britain) was represented by ——— Jarvis, Esq., chief superintendent of Indian affairs, and a talk delivered, announcing distinctly that the distribution would cease at the end of three years, inclusive of 1837, except to those Indians of the United States who should, before the expiration of the time mentioned, become residents of Canada. I have no official copy of this address, but am indebted for it to a popular work of the day. There is no doubt, however, of its correctness, as it harmonizes with what preceded it, and was heard by the author of the work referred to, who was on such a footing with the authorities of the province that the publication is, without question, what it purports to be—a literal copy of the official document. The invitation to remove, which was suffi-

ciently pressing, appears to have been well-received by many of the chiefs. The talk was thus :

“ Children ! When your great father, the lieutenant-governor, parted with his red children last year, at this place, he promised again to meet them here at the council-fire, and witness in person the grand delivery of presents now just finished.

“ To fulfil this engagement, your great father left his residence at Toronto, and proceeded on his way to the Great Manitoulin island as far as Lake Simcoe. At this place, a messenger, who had been despatched from Toronto, overtook him, and informed him of the death of our great father on the other side of the great salt lake, and the accession of Queen Victoria. It consequently became necessary for your great father, the lieutenant-governor, to return to the seat of his government and hold a council with his chief men.

“ Children ! Your great father, the lieutenant-governor, has deputed me to express to you his regret and disappointment at being thus unexpectedly deprived of the pleasure which he had promised to himself in again seeing all his red children, and in taking by the hand the chiefs and warriors of the numerous tribes now here assembled.

“ Children ! I am now to communicate to you a matter in which many of you are deeply interested. Listen with attention, and bear well in mind what I say to you.

“ Children ! Your great father, the King, had determined, that presents should be continued to be given to all Indians resident in the Canadas.

“ But presents will be given to Indians residing in the United States only for three years, including the present delivery.

“ Children ! The reasons why presents will not be continued to the Indians residing in the United States I will explain to you.

“ First : All our countrymen who resided in the United States forfeited their claim to protection from the British Government from the moment their great father, the King, lost possession of that country. Consequently, the Indians have no right to expect that their great father will continue to them what he does not continue to his own white children.

“ Secondly : The Indians of the United States, who served in the late war, have already received from the British Government more than has been received by the soldiers of their great father, who have fought for him for twenty years.

“ Thirdly : Among the rules which civilized nations are bound to attend to, there is one which forbids your great father to give arms and ammunition to Indians of the United States, who are fighting against the Government under which they live.

“ Fourthly : The people of England have, through their representatives in the great council of the nation, uttered great complaints at the expense attendant upon a continuation of the expenditure of so large a sum of money upon Indian presents.

“ But, children ! let it be distinctly understood that the British Government has not come to a determination to cease to give presents to the Indians of the United States. On the contrary, the Government of your great father will be most happy to do so, provided they live in the British empire. Therefore, although your great father is willing that his red children should all become permanent settlers in the island, it matters not in what part of the British empire they reside. They may go across the great salt lake to

the country of their great father, the King, and there reside, and there receive their presents ; or, they may remove to any part of the provinces of Upper or Lower Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, or any other British colony, and yet receive them. But they cannot and must not expect to receive them after the end of three years, if they continue to reside within the limits of the United States.

“ Children ! The Long-knives have complained (and with justice, too, that your great father, while he is at peace with them, has supplied his red children residing in their country, with whom the Long-knives are at war, with guns, and powder, and ball.

“ Children ! This, I repeat to you, is against the rules of civilized nations ; and, if continued, will bring on war between your great father and the Long-knives.

“ Children ! You must therefore come and live under the protection of your great father, or lose the advantage which you have so long enjoyed of annually receiving valuable presents from him.

“ Children ! I have one thing more to observe to you. There are many clergymen constantly visiting you for the avowed purpose of instructing you in religious principles. Listen to them with attention when they talk to you on that subject ; but at the same time keep always in view, and bear it well in your minds, that they have nothing whatever to do with your temporal affairs. Your great father, who lives across the great salt lake, is your guardian and protector, and he only. He has relinquished his claim to this large and beautiful island on which we are assembled, in order that you may have a home of your own quite separate from his white children. The soil is good, and the waters which surround the shores of this island are abundantly supplied with the finest fish. If you cultivate the soil with only moderate industry, and exert yourselves to obtain fish, you can never want ; and your great father will continue to bestow, annually, on all those who permanently reside here, or in any part of his dominions, valuable presents, and will, from time to time, visit you at this island, to behold your improvements.

“ Children ! Your great father, the lieutenant-governor, as a token of the above declaration, transmits to the Indians a silk British flag, which represents the British empire. Within this flag, and immediately under the symbol of the British crown, are delineated a British lion and a beaver ; by which is designated the British people and the Indians, the former being represented by the lion, and the latter by the beaver, are, and will be, alike regarded by their sovereign, so long as their figures are imprinted on the British flag, or, in other words, so long as they continue to inhabit the British empire.

“ Children ! This flag is now yours. But it is necessary that some one tribe should take charge of it, in order that it may be exhibited in this island on all occasions when your Great Father either visits or bestows presents on his red children. Choose, therefore, from among you, the tribe to which you are willing to intrust it for safekeeping ; and remember to have it with you when we next meet again at this place.

“ Children ! I bid you farewell. But before we part, let me express to you the high satisfaction I feel at witnessing the quiet, sober, and orderly conduct which has prevailed in the camp since my arrival. There are assembled here upward of three thousand persons, composed of different tribes. I have not seen or heard of any wrangling or quarrelling among

you. I have not seen even one man, woman, or child, in a state of intoxication.

“Children! Let me entreat you to abstain from indulging in the use of fire-water. Let me entreat you to return immediately to your respective homes, with the presents now in your possession. Let me warn you against attempts that may be made by traders, or other persons, to induce you to part with your presents in exchange for articles of little value. Farewell.”

I am not aware of any further official acts by the British or colonial authorities, though, doubtless, they have been of annual recurrence, but are not within my reach. The preceding references have been to political movements; but it may not be amiss to notice the fact, that good and benevolent men, in communication with the Indians, advise them to a course in accordance with the state views noticed. The letters, from which I shall furnish extracts, breathe a spirit of kindness and good-will, and they were doubtless written from pure motives; but I think it probable that their authors, having learned the views of their Government, have been somewhat biased by them, to which there would naturally be great readiness, from the strong disinclination which such men invariably manifest to the removal of those in whose behalf they have a good feeling, to a greater distance, although at present placed beyond their actual inspection or personal interference. The desire to benefit them is strong; the idea that their own Government is better than ours, probably not weak; and the increased distance has united with those other considerations, to induce Dr. Thomas Hodgkin and Sir Augustus d’Este to think, that a removal from the cold and inhospitable climate of our northern frontier to the still more cheerless one of Upper Canada, was for Indian benefit, and that the exchange of either for the more genial region southwest of Missouri, would be disadvantageous. These philanthropists, for such I take them to be, write, the latter from London, the 17th September, 1838, and the former without date, but the letter bearing the Toronto postmark of 7th November, 1838, to Eshtonaquot, chief of a band of Chippewas, of St. Clair lake, in Michigan. The Doctor says: “We have been much grieved to learn, that badly disposed people have been trying to get your land, and remove you to a distance from your pleasant reservations; and, also, that they have changed the place of your council fire, and made it difficult for you to have your payments or presents. We have formed ourselves into a society to endeavor to help you, and have, again and again, pleaded for you with the Government here; and we hope that Lord Glenelg, who helped thee and thy friends to return to your homes from England, will also be your friend now, and stop the attempt to take your land from you.

“The best advice which we can now give you, is, that you should be all of one mind, and try to remain in your present places of residence, using all the diligence in your power to improve the land and increase your stock of corn, cattle, and other goods.

“I am much interested in learning that you have been visiting the Indians whom the Americans have sent away beyond the Mississippi, and among those who live south of the Missouri. If thou couldst get any body to write for thee, it would be a good thing to keep an account of that journey. Having seen the condition of the Indians in so great a space of country, thou canst tell thy countrymen how much they lose by not becoming quite settled, and how much more they will lose if they do not make haste and till the ground and settle the country themselves.

“When any Indians are obliged to leave their land, they should go to the nearest good place they can find, and lose no time in becoming settled again ; but it will be much better for them not to move if they can possibly help it. They must not be tempted by the promises and pretences of our young men.”

The following is a quotation from the letter of Sir Augustus d'Este : “When you were in London, you marked out, in my map of Upper Canada, two different reserves of lands which were yours, upon the Canada side of the waters of St. Clair. Assemble in council, and *make a petition to Sir George Arthur* (the governor of Upper Canada), praying him to give you **TITLE-DEEDS** for both your reserves ; and if he will do so, that you engage to come over to his side of the water, and to clear them (the reserves) of wood—to cultivate them, and to build comfortable houses upon them, with the money which you shall receive from *the sale* of the lands which you now possess upon the United States side of the waters of St. Clair. As soon as the petition is prepared, and *signed* by yourself, and by the elders of your people, take it over to the Wesleyan missionary, who is stationed at St. Clair—his name is the Reverend John Douse—beg of him to counter-sign it, and to forward it for you to Toronto.

“Before you visit him (Mr. Douse) he will have received instructions from home how to act. My brother, it gives me *great pleasure* to learn that *your brother-in-law*, We-we-naush, and his people, **HAVE BECOME CHRISTIANS** ; it would give me *still more pleasure* to know that **YOU, YOURSELF**, sometimes, *listen to the Wesleyan minister at St. Clair*. **I WAS SORRY** to read in your letter that you have been making so long a journey to the regions beyond the Mississippi. Cannot my brother find *occupation at home* ? Has he no trees to cut down, *so as to make his clearings greater* ? Could not his house, by the work of his hands, be made more comfortable ? Why does my brother lose his time in unprofitable ramblings ? My brother, **YOU CANNOT THINK** of going *far, far away from your reserves in Canada* ; why then, have you made that long journey to countries beyond the Mississippi ?”

These efforts of the good men who are named, unite remarkably with the policy of their Government ; and, although they have evidently conferred with the ministers about Indian relations, I, by no means, attribute any other motives than such as might commendably actuate them, which we may see daily at work in all countries.

The Indian emigration to Canada had been encouraged for years before the policy was recommend officially, in 1836, and adopted in action in 1837. It is impossible to speak, with any accuracy, of the number who have passed into the colony from the United States. But it is known that a numerous body of the Pottawatomies and Ottawas of Southern Michigan have become residents of the Manitoulin islands ; and it has been reported to the department that, in the year 1838, one hundred and thirty-seven individuals had so expatriated themselves. I have also learned that about two hundred of the Saganaw tribe of Indians had registered themselves in the summer of 1838, for emigration to Upper Canada. In May last, I was informed, by the acting superintendent of Indian affairs, “that a considerable number of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Lakes Michigan and Huron are about to make their long-contemplated movement to the Manitoulin islands, in Upper Canada. Thirty canoes had passed that place on the 18th instant, and a greater number was daily expected. It is also stated, on verbal authority, that numbers of the Saganaws had crossed

over for the same purpose, near Fort Gratiot." He writes further, from Michilimackinac, under date of 26th June last: "Information and observation, since my arrival here, indicate that a considerable number of the lake Indians have transferred their residence from the United States territories to the Manitoulin islands during the season. They embrace emigrants from the Saganaws, Pottawatomies, Menomonies, Chippewas, and Ottawas. A recent statement from a neighboring chief informs me that the Drummond Island band, with Kokosh, their chief, have gone off *en masse*, together with the chief and leading men of Cheboigan, and of the Rain's bands." He took pains to express to the Indians the disapprobation of the Government of this project, and to inform them that all who permanently and understandingly expatriated themselves, will forfeit their shares of the annuities, together with the benefits of the mechanics' shops, &c.; and he thinks that it is already observable that the effect of this communication has been to produce reflection, and induce numbers to pause and relinquish the idea of a removal. He adds: "Something like a panic was created among the bands along Lakes Huron and Michigan, by a report, which is to be traced across the lines, that the United States intended this season to send steamboats, and take them off by force, to the west of the Mississippi."

In collecting the Swan Creek and Black River Chippewas for emigration during the last summer, every obstacle was thrown in the way of their removal, as the agent employed on the occasion reported, by Canada Indians, "who daily urge their friends to come over and locate among them;" and that these persuasions had been successful with many. In another report he remarks, "an agent of the British Government near us has been inducing the Indians to locate themselves upon lands in Canada, immediately upon the frontier, on the St. Clair river; and I find it impossible to prevent them from going over to hear him, and hear British counsel."

The Honorable James D. Doty, of the House of Representatives, in a communication of 20th February, 1840, to you, says: "It is stated in the papers that several Winnebago and Pottawatomie Indians have removed to the British side of the line, where they are fed and clothed by the British Government; and I am informed, by a letter from chiefs of the Oneidas, at Tolungowon, near Green Bay, dated the 23d January last, that there are several disaffected members of that nation who design to remove to Canada." In this communication was enclosed an extract of a letter to Mr. Doty, dated Detroit, February 3, "from a highly respectable citizen of that town," from which I take so much as concerns the resolution of the House: "At Port Sarnia, opposite Black river, some two thousand American Indians are collected, living in *new* huts, clothed with new blankets, and receiving daily rations from the British Government. In addition to all this, large, very large, contracts for flour and other provisions are being made daily by merchants and army contractors for these articles, to be delivered there forthwith." This place I do not find on the map, but suppose it to be near Point Edward, and the entrance into Lake Huron.

The number of Indians who have been stated in the public prints to have encamped themselves near the St. Clair river, it is believed, have been greatly exaggerated. They have been put at 500; but a letter from General Brady to General Scott, of 10th ultimo, transmitted by the latter to the War Department, furnishes information from the best sources open to the former. They are rated as high as 300 by one account; but another, which is deem-

ed the best, places them as low as 60, and supposes them to be Swan Creek and Black River Chippewas, who declined to emigrate last fall, and who are now at their old residence, where, it is said, they have been joined by a small party of more northern Indians. It is thought probable they will all go to Canada, rather than remove to the southwest. General Brady, notwithstanding frequent inquiries, has learned nothing more positive as to the number or intentions of these Indians; nor have I received further official information.

I have thus detailed (as more convenient in point of form than an appendix) all the information possessed here on the important subject to which it relates.

It is not likely that the inclement and protracted winters of the neighboring province will allow the Indians to continue there permanently. It is true most of them have been accustomed to the rigors of the north; but the increase of cold upon ill-clad and badly-housed human beings, must be very severe. Their known improvidence will multiply their sufferings; and the probability is, that those now in Canada, or who shall go there, will soon return into the United States territories. All the Indians resident in Upper Canada, in 1836, amounted only to 6,507;\* and, I presume, that the smallness of the number can only be accounted for by the facts that, when the whole country was free for them to choose, many must have retired southwardly before the northern blasts, and the increase of those that remained been kept down by the exposures incident to their precarious modes of obtaining a livelihood in wastes of ice and snow.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,  
T. HARTLEY CRAWFORD.

HON. J. R. POINSETT,  
*Secretary of War.*

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\* This number received presents, as stated by Sir F. B. Head; and it is probable that the entire number, or nearly all, would attend at one or other place of distribution.