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NO. 16.

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

*Office Indian Affairs, Washington, Dec. 1, 1837.*

SIR: In obedience to your direction of the 7th of September, I have the honor to submit the "usual annual report of the operations" of the Indian Department.

The increased extent and diversified character of the operations under the direction of this office will prevent my presenting any thing more than a mere outline. They embrace negotiations with the tribes east of the Mississippi, for the extinguishment of their titles; with those of the western prairie, for the establishment of friendly relations between them and the United States; and with the indigenous and emigrated tribes beyond the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, for the adjustment of difficulties and the preservation of peace. They include the removal of the Indians in New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, in the north, the west, and the northwest; and in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, in the south and southwest, to new homes southwest of the Missouri river. They comprehend the location and sale of reservations, the investment or payment of the proceeds, and of the proceeds of lands ceded, with the collection and disbursement of the interest thereon. They involve a supervision of the execution of treaty stipulations, for the subsistence of emigrants, the examination and payment of debts and claims, the education of the young, the supply of agricultural implements and assistance, the employment of interpreters, farmers, mechanics, and laborers. They demand a constant attention to the conduct of the numerous agents and officers necessarily employed; commissioners to hold treaties, or to investigate claims; superintendents of emigration, and of the four divisions of the department; agents and sub-agents. They call for an exact adherence to the laws, and for the adoption, from time to time, of the regulations requisite to give them full effect. They involve the superintendence of the investment of nearly \$2,000,000, the annual disbursement of appropriations not less, in the last three years, than \$5,000,000, and the disposition of interest to the amount of about \$200,000. And they affect the welfare of a population estimated at 330,000, scattered over an immense extent of country.

The copious extracts, hereto appended, from the complete and accurate reports from the superintendents in Michigan, Wisconsin, and the Western Territory; from almost all the agents in the superintendency of St. Louis, and a valuable communication from Captain Brown, principal military disbursing agent for the western superintendency, exhibit such clear and satisfactory views of the progress, condition, and prospects of a large portion of the tribes, and of the measures that should be pursued for their improvement, as to render more than this passing notice of these subjects unnecessary. Among these papers is one from Mr. Schoolcraft, on the subject of forming a cabinet and library for this office. An extract from the letter to which this is a reply, accompanies it. The considerations in

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quence of the frequent transfer of many of them to other duties. Some alteration is very desirable; in what form and to what extent must be submitted to the wisdom of Congress.

There is an incongruity in the present law providing for the appointment of agents and sub-agents. It prescribes that "no sub-agent shall be appointed, who shall reside within the limits of any agency where there is an agent appointed." The titles imply a distinction in rank and duties, which the clause, just quoted, repudiates; for it makes the sub-agent equally independent, as an officer, with the agent. The distinction, however, exists, in an essential particular, the pay of the former being only one-half of that of the latter. In point of fact, the duties and responsibilities of both are alike, and, with few exceptions, they are equal. Connected with these considerations is another of great moment; the importance of procuring the services of competent and trust-worthy men, and of binding them to a faithful discharge of their duties by liberally compensating them.

The salaries of interpreters, also, are too low. The best qualified persons cannot be obtained for them. They are engaged by traders and companies, at rates of pay four times larger than those fixed by law. Yet the intercourse with the Indians must be maintained through them. The right understanding and successful issue of every negotiation depend upon their fidelity and ability. The fair representation of the wishes of the Indians to the Government, through their agents, is contingent upon their personal interests and biases. True policy demands that the compensation allowed for services of this character should be sufficient to remunerate capable men, and place them beyond the reach of temptation to do wrong.

I have adverted, in another part of this report, to the large amount of interest accruing on the moneys invested for Indians. A considerable sum has already been received, which is deposited in bank, to my credit, *ex officio*. This course was adopted from necessity, as, if the money had been placed in the Treasury, it could not have been used, without an act of appropriation. It is very desirable that a law should be passed to authorize the interest, as it accrues, to be deposited in the Treasury, and to be drawn out upon the requisitions of this department, in the usual form.

I submit copies of the revised regulations that have been prescribed for carrying into effect the laws relating to Indian affairs. A new edition of Indian treaties, including all to 1837, has been printed during the past year, of which twenty-five copies will be placed at the disposal of the Joint Committee on the Library, in conformity with the resolution of Congress of the 19th of June, 1834.

Appended to this report are several tabular statements, exhibiting the population of the several tribes; the lands acquired by treaties since the 4th of March, 1829; the amount of the consideration stipulated to be paid therefor, and the quantity of land assigned to the emigrated tribes; the number of teachers and children in the schools; the application of the annuities for education; and the condition of the civilization fund. A few of these have been printed heretofore; but, as they are of permanent interest, they are again presented.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

C. A. HARRIS,  
*Commissioner.*

Hon. JOEL R. POINSETT,  
*Secretary of War.*

## LIST OF DOCUMENTS

### ACCOMPANYING THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

#### *Condition of the Indian tribes, relations with them, and descriptions of the Indian country.*

1. Report of acting Superintendent of Michigan.
2. Report of Superintendent of Wisconsin Territory.
3. Report of acting Superintendent of the Western Territory.
4. Report of the Principal Military Disbursing Agent for the Western Territory.
5. Report of the Agent at Council Bluffs.
54. Report of the Sub-Agent at Council Bluffs.
6. Report of the Sub-Agent on the Osage river.
7. Report of the Sub-Agent on the Great Nemahaw river.
8. Report of the Agent on the Upper Missouri river.
9. Report of the Sub-Agent on the Upper Missouri river.
10. Instructions to A. P. Chouteau, special agent to Camanches and others.

#### *Education and Schools.*

11. Tabular statement of teachers and pupils.
12. Statement of application of annuities for education.
13. Statement of the condition of the civilization fund.
14. Report of acting Superintendent of the Western Territory.
15. Report of Teacher at Prairie du Chien.
16. Report of Sub-Agent on the Osage river.
17. New system of teaching.
18. Report of Teacher for the Kickapoos.
19. Letter to Superintendents, relative to cabinet and library.
20. Reply of Mr. Schoolcraft to the preceding.

#### *Changes in the laws.*

21. Report of the acting Superintendent of Michigan.
22. Report of the Superintendent of Wisconsin Territory.
23. Report of the Principal Disbursing Agent, Western Territory.

#### *Government for the Western Territory.*

24. Report of Mr. McCoy.
25. Letter of the Agent at Council Bluffs.
26. Petition of the Shawnees.

*Financial and statistical tables.*

27. Of the funds remitted to, and accounted for by disbursing officers.
28. Of the population of the tribes, and the number of warriors.
29. Of the land acquired from Indian tribes, and the amount paid therefor, from March 4, 1829, to May 9, 1836, inclusive.
30. Of the same, from May 9, 1836, to February 11, 1837.
31. Of the same, from February 11, to October 21, 1837, with a recapitulation of this, and the two preceding tables. These treaties not yet ratified.
32. Of lands assigned to emigrated tribes.

*Laws and regulations.*

33. Two acts of June 30, 1834.
34. Revised Regulations, No. 1 to 5.

## REPORT OF THE ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF MICHIGAN.

I proceed, in compliance with instructions, to offer the following observations on the condition and prospects of the Northwestern Indians, and the laws and instructions relative to them, so far as they are comprised within this acting superintendency, premising that the two principal tribes, extending over a wide surface, and being intimately connected by relationship and position, will be classified according to their treaties with the Government.

1. *Chippewas and Ottawas of the Upper lakes.*

First in numerical strength and position, are the united tribes of Chippewas and Ottawas, who are parties to the treaty of the 28th of March, 1836. These tribes speak the same generic language, and still occupy the country ceded to the United States by that treaty, which is situated between Grand river, of Michigan, and Chocolate river, near the foot of Lake Superior. Although much mixed, and living in alternate villages, a distinction is kept up between them, which is, however, not marked by any strong traits in their habits and condition. The Ottawas of Mackinac and its environs have advanced more in agriculture than any of the lake tribes: cultivate corn, beans, pumpkins, to some extent, annually; have fenced fields, and live generally in comfortable log houses. They make a considerable quantity of maple sugar, which, together with a limited crop of corn, is sold in the Mackinac market. This is particularly the case with the several villages on little Traverse bay, usually comprehended under the name of the L'Arbre Croche Bands. In proportion as they have assumed the character of pseudo agriculturists, they have neglected the chase, for which the country, indeed, at this time, affords but little inducement. The bands of this tribe, living on Grand river, &c. south of this location, consist of emigrants or wanderers of the former position, and are now, with few exceptions, much addicted to the use of ardent spirits, and degraded in their condition.

The Chippewas cultivate corn and potatoes to a limited extent, but devote most of their time in quest of food in the chase, or in fishing. They also manufacture sugar from the rock maple, but no part of their subsistence, within the *present* limits of Michigan, is derived from wild rice, a plant common at more northerly and westerly points. This tribe exhibits no general improvement, or advance in civilization. They are warlike, indolent, and impoverished, with few exceptions, living in mat or bark lodges, which are transported in their migrations.

The country which both the tribes occupy embraces large portions of the margins of Lakes Huron and Michigan. It is just opening to settlement; commerce is extending itself into the region, and causes are in active operation, which, in a few years, will render it impossible for those tribes to maintain their position within the limits of the peninsula. The population of both tribes, so far as included under the treaty, as indicated by this year's pay rolls, is four thousand five hundred and sixty-one. The benefits of their annuities are fully appreciated by them at this era of their affairs, when the chase is nearly or quite closed, and will enable them to get through the severe seasons with less suffering than they would otherwise

encounter. Without cultivating to a far greater extent than they do, every year must produce local sufferings. Their reservations will expire in 1841, after which, they will possess no further right to a residence on the lands, but the conditional usufructory right contained in the 13th article. Inebriety prevails among them generally, and is a bar to the right use of their annuities, and to any hope of their permanent advance in civilization. The intercourse act of 1834 does not preclude the introduction of ardent spirits on *ceded* lands; and, consequently, while much of this land is still, in reality, as much an Indian country as ever, no legal penalty can be enforced by the agents against traffickers. I am of opinion that the act should be so amended as to apply, in all cases where the President may direct, to ceded Indian lands not surveyed, and also to lands in the frontier land districts, not actually sold to citizens.

## 2. *Saginaw.*

This tribe numbers at present about one thousand souls, having depopulated within late years. They have suffered much from small pox, and the want of food during the present year. They are much addicted to liquor, cultivate but little, and are in every respect in the hunter state; without some active effort on their part, or by the Government, or individuals, they must very rapidly depopulate and perish. They own one hundred and two thousand four hundred acres of choice lands in the shape of reservation, in Saginaw, Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, Midland and Arenac counties, in Michigan. These reservations were sold to the Government, by a treaty concluded at Detroit on the 14th of January last, but no action has, as yet, been had upon it by the Senate. In the mean time, a delegation of the chiefs have gone to view the country southwest of the Missouri, with a view of migrating thither. It is desirable that final arrangements for their removal should be made as early as possible. I do not think they can subvert themselves the present winter without assistance, and would suggest that, in addition to the aid granted by your instructions of the second instant, five hundred bushels of corn be issued to them, in small quantities, under proper restrictions, during the winter.

## 3. *Stean creek and Black river Chippewas.*

These are fragments of bands still living on ceded reservations of eight thousand three hundred and twenty acres of valuable land, on the borders of Lake St. Clair, and River St. Clair, all within a distance of seventy-five miles from Detroit. These lands were ceded by the treaty of the 9th of May, 1836. By this treaty, the whole avails of the lands, as sold in the land offices, is given to them, after deducting the expenses of survey and sale, and an equal quantity of land is granted to them in the west. A delegation of their chiefs is now absent, for the purpose of choosing a location for their future and permanent residence.

## 4. *Ottawas of Maumee.*

This band is wholly within the limits of Ohio. The pay rolls of 1836 indicate a population falling below four hundred souls. They ceded all their reservations about seven years ago, and agreed to remove west, and

finding the country proposed for their residence every way favorable, arrangements for their final emigration to it, under Colonel McIlvaine, are now in process of execution. About two hundred souls set out for the proposed territory in August last, taking the route by the way of Cleveland and the Ohio river, after having previously received their annuities for the present year. The remainder of the band are dispersed on public lands in the district of the Maumee valley, where they are destined to destruction; some of them will probably emigrate to Canada, where, however, they have no lands and no funds, and cannot remain. Although exertions have been made to procure a removal of every person, it would be desirable to employ still further means to rescue them from their fate, and induce the scattered families to rejoin their friends in the west.

## 5. *The Ottawas and Potawatamies of Michigan, south of Grand river.*

These bands are parties to the treaty of cession, concluded at Chicago, in 1821, and the subsequent treaty of 1833, by which they relinquish their reservations, and agree to accept a location in the same latitudes, west of the Mississippi. They receive their annuities at, and belong to the Chicago agency, and have only come within my notice from complaints made against them by citizens of Michigan, living on the head waters of the St. Joseph and Kalamazoo, and from parties fleeing north from the emigrating officers. In order to check this course, no provisions have been granted to them, at the agencies; but they have been directed to return within their proper jurisdiction. Care will be required at the subsequent payments within this superintendency, to detect and reject from the rolls individuals who may thus find a reception among the other Indians.

## 6. *Farming and mechanics' establishments on the Indian reservations.*

Reports of the persons in charge of these establishments, herewith transmitted, marked A, B, C, will exhibit the details connected with each reserve. At Saginaw, a new smith's shop has been erected for the Indians, during the year, and an assistant blacksmith employed. These mechanics have prepared their own coal, and executed all the Indian work required. The Indian cornfields have been ploughed, and their working cattle taken care of and subsisted. But little desire has, however, been manifested by any of the bands to engage in agricultural pursuits. I have already advertised to the effects of disease among them, producing distress, added to which, their corn fields on the Cass river, &c., have been covered with water, which totally destroyed the crop. The farmers and mechanics employed at Manistee, reached their station on the 2d of July, and have been assiduously engaged in preparing buildings, &c. An eligible site, on a small lake, has been selected. One building, 25 by 34, and another 16 by 24, are nearly completed. The blacksmith's shop, built on contract, is probably finished by this date, and the mechanics, who have worked out doors during the summer, permanently accommodated. Aid has been given in enclosing a house for the resident chief, and about three weeks' labor of the whole party devoted in cutting hay to winter the cattle. No person has, as yet, been procured to survey the seventy thousand acres allotted to this reserve, Mr. Mullet having declined it, but it is believed that another person may be procured.

Labor on the reserve of Round island was commenced on the 13th of July: two dwellings for Indians have been erected and completed, and the timber, &c., prepared for the farmer's residence; a road cut across the island, six acres of land cleared and brushed, and about three weeks' labor bestowed in cutting wild hay, to keep the cattle.

#### 7. *Schools and school fund.*

The school and mission heretofore kept on this island, under the patronage of the Foreign Board of Missions at Boston, was discontinued last spring, the children dismissed, and the building and other property disposed of. In consequence, there is no report from this station. At Sault St. Marie, the school under the charge of the Reverend A. Bingham, numbers seventeen beneficiaries, and thirty-four day scholars, as per report herewith. The school of the Methodist Society at Little Rapids, on the Ste. Mary's river, has recently been re-organized, but I have no report of its numbers; nor has any report yet reached me from the school of the Ottawas in Barry county. These will be forwarded when received. In the mean time, I forward a consolidated abstract of the last reports.

The division and allotment of the consolidated school and mission fund of the Chippewas and Ottawas, under the treaty of March 28th, 1836, announced in your letter of the 25th August, meets the approbation of the chiefs, and its faithful application will place these tribes on high grounds as to school privileges.

#### 8. *Cabinet and library in the Indian office at Washington.*

Perhaps no measure could be adopted, so easy and cheap of execution, which would tend more to produce correct information respecting the Indians, their customs, mechanical skill, and the natural productions of the country they occupy, than this plan, proposed in your letter of the 4th instant.

#### 9. *Population and geographical distribution of tribes.*

The accompanying map omits all details not connected with Indian affairs. It exhibits the location of the different tribes, their numbers, and the course and distance of their location from Detroit; together with the sites of the agencies, sub-agencies, schools, farming establishments, and reserves, and the limits and estimated area of the recent purchase from the Ottawas and Chippewas. It also embraces, in a condensed form, a census of the population from the most recent date. More time in its preparation would have enabled me to render it more perfect.

#### 10. *Visits of the lake tribes to the Canadas.*

In closing this report, I take the liberty of calling the attention of the department to this subject. Not only is time and health wasted by numbers of the tribes, in performing these annual visits to the principal summer stations of the Indian Department of a foreign Government, but the visits, and circumstances attending them, are calculated to foster sentiments

of hostility to the United States in the Indian mind. The generation is yet living who opposed our arms as allies of the Canadian forces, during the late war, and the very reason for assembling them and issuing presents as an annual stipend, is based on a remuneration for services and losses incurred by them during the late war. But is such a course compatible with the principles of amity existing between the two Governments? Considered in the fairest light, these journeys are injurious to the Indians, the amount they receive being no compensation for the expense. They suffer much on the way, beg at the agencies, sell their presents for ardent spirits, and finally reach their villages much poorer than they were when they set out.

#### No. 2.

#### REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF WISCONSIN TERRITORY.

First, the condition and resources of the several tribes of Indians residing within the superintendency of the Territory of Wisconsin.

The Sac and Fox Indians occupy a large extent of country on the Des Moines and Iowa rivers and their tributaries, not surpassed as to the fertility of its soil, by any lands in the United States. This country is represented to be well watered, interspersed with prairie and wood land, generally level, and well adapted to agricultural purposes. The Sac and Fox Indians cultivate but a small portion of their soil. They raise small quantities of corn and vegetables, not a sufficient supply for the consumption of their families. The country ceded to the United States last season, by the Sac and Fox Indians, called the Reserve, on the Iowa river, embraced their old villages and fields, where they had resided for many years. The proximity of the white settlements to them made it necessary that they should retire from the settlements of the whites, to establish their villages, and they are now dependent in a great measure on the chase for their support, which is always a very uncertain means of subsistence. The buffalo and other game are becoming very scarce, and receding from the white settlements. These Indians are obliged to travel a considerable distance in pursuit of game, and occasionally come in contact with their enemies, the Sioux, and, from their warlike habits, frequently go in search of them. Although the Sac and Fox Indians claim a large extent of rich and valuable country, and receive from the Government a large annuity, these confederated nations derive but little advantage from the great resources of their country. Their annuities are paid in cash, which goes into the hands of their traders, without being beneficial to them as a people. Could the Government purchase of the Sac and Fox Indians their whole country, and remove them where their intercourse would be entirely cut off from the whites, and they could be reclaimed from their great propensity for war, and from their wandering habits, and could gradually become agriculturists and raise stock, their condition would soon be as much improved as that of the Choctaws and Cherokee Indians on our southwest frontier. The Government, to help the condition of these Indians, will have to remove them from the country they now occupy. Their country is desirable, and the whites will be constantly approaching the boundary line between them and the Indians,