

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1876.

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*To His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir FREDERIC TEMPLE, Earl of Dufferin,  
Governor General of Canada, &c., &c., &c.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

I have the honor to submit the Report of the Department of the Interior for the year ended 30th June, 1876, being the Third Annual Report of the Department.

The Report is accompanied by the usual Special and General Appendix.

The Special Appendix attached to my own Report contains copies of the documents connected with some of the more important transactions of the past year, especially those relating to the Administration of Indian Affairs in the North-West, which not forming part of the ordinary routine business of the office are not specially noticed in the Report of the Deputy Superintendent General, or of the other heads of Branches.

The General Appendix consists of three parts.

*Part First* contains the Report of the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, with a Report of the Indian Superintendents and Agents throughout the Dominion, and the accompanying accounts and vouchers for the expenditure of the past fiscal year.

*Part Second* contains the Report of the Commissioner of Ordnance and Admiralty Lands, with the necessary accounts and vouchers.

*Part Third* contains the Report of the Surveyor General of Dominion Lands, accompanied by the Report of the Assistant Surveyor General, the Agent of Dominion Lands and the Inspector of Surveys, &c., and the necessary accounts and vouchers.

It is satisfactory to be able to report that the Act as passed has met with very general acceptance among the Indians of Ontario. At a general Indian Council, held in Saugeen in the month of July last, an almost unanimous vote was passed approving of its provisions.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN LANDS.

In the annual report for last year the then Superintendent General was enabled to state that, while the report was in the hands of the printer, he received intelligence from the British Columbia Government that they had accepted the basis proposed by the Dominion Government for the settlement of this grave and complicated controversy, which had been the subject of correspondence between the Governments for the two preceding years.

The despatch from the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, announcing the acceptance by his Government of the terms proposed by the Dominion Government, is dated 8th January, 1876, and was received here in the latter part of that month.

It was agreed between the two Governments that the settlement of the Indian Reserve question should be referred to three Commissioners, one to be appointed by the Dominion Government, another by the Government of British Columbia, and the third to be named jointly by the Dominion and Local Governments; that those Commissioners should visit, as soon as practicable, each Indian nation in British Columbia, and, after full enquiry into all matters affecting the question, determine for each nation the number, extent and locality of the Reserves to be allowed to them. In doing so the Commissioners were to be guided generally by the spirit of the terms of union between the Dominion and Local Governments, which contemplated a "liberal policy" being pursued towards the Indians. They were to have special regard to the habits, wants and pursuits of each Indian nation, to the amount of territory available in the country occupied by them, as well as to the claims of the White population.

Early in May, Mr. Alexander C. Anderson, of North Saanich, British Columbia, was appointed by His Excellency in Council as the Indian Commissioner on behalf of the Dominion Government. The British Columbia Government was at once advised of the fact, and requested to name their own Commissioner, and also to submit the name of the gentleman whom they would propose as the third or joint Commissioner for the two Governments.

The Government of British Columbia took no action in the matter until the month of August, when they notified the Department by telegraph that Mr. Archibald McKinley, of Lac la Pêche, British Columbia, had been selected as their Commissioner, and they submitted the name of Mr. Gilbert Malcolm Sproat as the third or joint Commissioner.

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Mr. Spreat was appointed on the 15th August as the Joint Commissioner of the Dominion Government also.

The necessary Commissions, accompanied by full instructions, were sent to the Dominion Commissioner and to the Joint Commissioner on the 23rd August last. The Commissioners were instructed to assure the Indians of the anxious desire of the Government to deal justly and liberally with them in the settlement of their Reserves, as well as in all other matters. They were to inform the Indians that the aim and object of the Government was to assist them in their efforts to raise themselves in the social and moral scale so as ultimately to enjoy all the privileges and advantages which were enjoyed by their white fellow subjects.

As regards the views of the Government on the subject of the land question, the Commissioners were referred to the documents connected with the matter, printed in the Annual Report for last year, in the spirit of which they were requested to act. They were reminded that the Government considered it a matter of paramount importance that in the settlement of the land question, nothing should be done which could militate against the maintenance of friendly relations between the Dominion Government and the Indians of British Columbia, and they were officially enjoined as little as possible to interfere with any existing tribal arrangements; and, particularly, that they were to be careful not to disturb the Indians in the possession of any villages, fishing stations, fur trading posts, settlements or clearings which they might occupy, and to which they might be specially attached.

The Commissioners were, moreover, warned against making any attempt to cause any violent or sudden change in the habits of the Indians, or to divert them from any legitimate pursuits and occupations in which they might be profitably engaged, but rather to encourage them in any branch of industry in which they were so employed.

The Commissioners were instructed to confer in all matters with the two Superintendents in British Columbia, namely, with Dr. Powell, of Victoria, and Mr. Lenihan, of New Westminster, and these gentlemen were directed to co-operate with and assist the Commissioners in the execution of their important labours. Finally, the necessity of bringing their labours to a close as soon as practicable, with a view to the early adjustment of this grave controversy, was strongly impressed on the Commissioners.

It may be here remarked that all the Commissioners appointed have been for many years past resident in British Columbia, and thoroughly identified with that Province. They are, moreover, all men of high standing and character in the Province, and who have taken much interest in public affairs, especially in matters affecting the Indians.

In the month of September, the Department was notified that the Commissioners had organized themselves and entered upon their labours.