

*Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honorable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the 24th April, 1882.*

The Committee of Council have had under consideration a despatch dated 31st March, 1882, from Her Majesty's Minister at Washington, Mr. Sackville West, enclosing communications from Mr. Frelinghuysen, the Secretary of State for the United States, together with a memorandum from His Excellency the Governor General upon this despatch, adverting to previous correspondence on the subject of alleged incursions of British Indians into United States Territory.

The Right Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald, the First Minister, to whom the said despatch with enclosures and His Excellency's memorandum were referred, reports that previous to the transfer to Canada of the North-West Territories by the Hudson's Bay Company, the Indians of that country on both sides of the line were allowed to roam at will in pursuit of buffalo, in fact the International Boundary might be considered to be unknown to the Aborigines. Indians of the same tribe, race and lineage, lived on both sides of the line and were as one people.

That since the acquisition of the country by Canada, every exertion has been made by the Canadian Government to induce the British Indians to abandon their nomadic habits and settle down on reservations provided for them.

That considerable success has attended those efforts in the most northerly portion of the Canadian Territories, but it has been impossible to attain any marked progress with the Indians near the International Boundary owing to the presence in Canadian Territory, until recently, of several thousand United States Indians.

That those Indians having now returned to the United States, Your Excellency is aware that the policy of urgently pressing our Indians to leave the frontier and settle on reserves provided for them well in the interior, is being pursued with increased vigor, and with good hopes of success. It cannot, however, be expected that the Indians will be induced by the efforts of one season to abandon altogether what they consider their traditional rights.

That in the case of the Blackfeet and Assiniboine tribes, allied by blood to each other, who are settled by treaty, both by the United States and the Canadian Governments, near to each other, it is not reasonable to demand that these people should not visit each other, but regulations may be introduced to allow this, while any proved depredations committed by individuals may be punished.

That it is believed that no military force, however strong, will prevent occasional raids from either sides as is shown by the repeated horse and cattle-stealing expeditions from the United States to Canadian territory.

That the suggestion made by Your Excellency that individual permits be granted by the authorities of both nations to their respective Indians who may wish to cross the border for the purposes of hunting, and visiting relations, would, if adopted, place in the hands of the officials of the two countries the means of satisfying all reasonable demands of Indians of the various tribes who have intermarried or may desire to hunt together. A short personal description on the permit of the Indian bearing it, would prevent a transfer of it to any Indian having no right to carry the permit.

That, should the United States Government concur in Your Excellency's suggestion, he, Sir John Macdonald, recommends the adoption of a form of permit and instructions as to the issue of the same, which will be applicable to the officials of either country and ensure uniformity of action by them. On this subject a report from the Honorable E. Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor and Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories, is hereto annexed. Neither Government should be held responsible for any wrongful act of an Indian holding a permit, but he should be held personally responsible, be as severely punished as the law will allow, and forfeit forever afterwards all claim to a renewal of his permit.