

Resources of British Columbia.

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UTILIZATION OF THE INDIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Some one in America has written a book entitled *The Century of Dishonor*, bearing on the bygone neglect and maltreatment of the aboriginal race, within the far reaching bounds of the United States.

On the contrary, as compared with Western Canada, or the Dominion, west of the Rockies, great and well-judged expenditure with successful issue therefrom has, throughout its possessions on the Pacific slope, for the last twenty years, been the action of the United States government. Farther on this will to some extent, be shown.

Truly does dishonor attach to the successive dominional governments for callous neglect of their Indians in their Pacific province (B. C.), during, to speak within moderate bounds, the last twelve years.

How is this to be remedied?

The Dominion Ministry at Ottawa, as well as our own Ministry at Victoria, are public servants, bound under penalty of dismissal, to conduct all public business "according to the well understood wishes of the people."

If, throughout the Dominion then, a strong desire is manifested to have the poor Indians of this Pacific province variously instructed so as to fit them for useful citizenship, the business of so preparing them will soon be zealously undertaken by those, the Dominion Ministry, on whom that duty so solemnly devolves. It is, by our fellow Canadians, the right-minded of the New Brunswickers, Nova Scotians, Quebecers and Ontarians that this sentiment should be felt, and strongly exhibited in an effectual way. Surely there will be some display of it by British Columbians, whose country the "Indian problem" so immediately concerns.

At a late meeting in Boston, Mass., of friends of the Indian it was remarked by a General Armstrong, himself principal of the important and flourishing Indian school of Hampton, Virginia, that the only

way of handling the Indian question lies in awakening a public sentiment, the influence of which is felt at Washington. Italics mine.

For "Washington," substituting "Ottawa," how perfectly the foregoing applies.

An article in a late *Boston Commonwealth*, headed "The Indian Character," has the following passage.— "The primal cause of the "century of dishonor" in our history was the want of reverential appreciation of the natural Indian character, and the low prevalent idea of their being more savage than the Europeans, whom they always at first welcomed with generous hospitality, and almost worshipful respect, and did not begin to fight, till driven to it, by the encroachments and cruelty of the whites."

The books on the early condition of the Pacific Slope from 1805-6 downwards, present many instances of the exhibition of extreme kindness by Indians to whites in distress. Of their almost worshipful feelings towards whites, one well authenticated case, occurring early in the century, was told me years ago. Two unusually tall and stalwart men, free trappers, coming amongst a western tribe, were treated with great respect, being taken for "children of the sun." This tribe had never previously, in all likelihood seen white men. The men in question were both Canadians, one of them bearing the same historic surname as does the present Premier of the Dominion.

In the southwestern and western countries of the United States, where Indians, used to Buffalo hunting, have yet to be rational; the wholesome spur of necessity is wisely applied. To the native, most laboring for the production of his own food by tillage of the soil, is the most liberal ration given. The slothful and idle are more scantily supplied. The reports prove however that in some quarters such stinting has been too generally applied. As in Europe, so in America, the most fermenting troublesome classes are first attended to. The wild nomad of the North West had regardless of cost, to be conciliated and restrained, by use of every needful appliance, mounted police inclusive, ere white settlement of the great prairie countries of Midland, Canada could be ventured on.

The, as a rule peaceable, well disposed rednecks of Western Canada, our province (B. C.) intermixed with, and helping the whites, have, although long since taught religion by devoted R. C. Missionaries, been for twelve years deprived of their just and most important inheritance, to wit, the vital needed teachings in secular matters, already bestowed on Indians, elsewhere, throughout the Dominion, and so liberally afforded in the United States, comparatively close by. Indians of this province going south to pick hops, comment at home, on the comparative great size of American Indian Reservations, and of the praiseworthy attention to Indian teachings, at