

Sir J. Richardson,
C. B.

9 March 1857.

Roman-catholics have been abandoned, because they could not get the Indians to settle round them. The reason of the failure probably is that the native tribes in that locality are independent of the Hudson's Bay Company, and therefore not amenable to their advice. They have abundance of sturgeon and great quantities of wild rice, so that they can feed themselves without having recourse to the supplies of ammunition or clothing with which the Hudson's Bay Company supply their Indians.

2971. What ammunition have they which does not come from the Company?—They do not require ammunition.

2972. You used the word ammunition?—I said that that tribe of Chippeways did not require the supplies of ammunition. They feed upon the sturgeon, which is so abundant upon Rainy River and the River Winnipeg, where they live.

2973. Some of the Red River settled Indians still go out to the hunting regularly, you are aware?—I believe that two-thirds of the population go out to the hunting.

2974. And the other third remain at home?—The other third, who are of a different origin, remain at home.

2975. What do they hunt with?—They hunt with the gun; with firearms.

2976. Mr. Bell.] Which are the tribes that you have mentioned which are independent of the Company?—They are Sotoos and other Chippeways.

2977. Where are they located?—Upon the banks of the Rainy River and River Winnipeg.

2978. Are the Chippeways independent also?—Partly.

2979. You say that there is a great difference between the different tribes of Indians, with regard to the civilising of them?—Yes.

2980. What tribes do you consider as most readily adopting the habits of civilised life?—The Swampy and Saskatchewan Crees have adopted them more extensively than any other tribe.

2981. Where are they located?—They are located from Lake Winnipeg to the English river, called also the River Missinippi, or the River of Churchill.

2982. In a north-easterly direction from Lake Winnipeg?—Northerly; and in a direction from east to west from Hudson's to Carlton House.

2983. Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.] Can you give any reason why the Crees more readily adopt civilised life than the other Indians in the country?—Speaking of the Crees, there are a great many families of the Crees, the Sotoos, whom I have mentioned, and the Chippeways, who speak the same language, and are the same people, only using different dialects. The Crees in the lower part of the Saskatchewan, the district which I have just defined, have been long dependent upon the traders for their supplies, and therefore they have the more easily assumed the habits of civilised life. But the Crees upon the upper part of the Saskatchewan, who associate with the Stone Indians, are very turbulent and very difficult to manage.

2984. Are not most of the Red River half-breeds, half-breed Crees?—I suppose they are.

2985. Do you not think that that perhaps is a reason why they more readily adopt the habits and customs of civilised man?—I cannot think that that is a reason.

2986. Mr. Bell.] Have you reason to believe that the Company encourage the settlement of the Indians, wherever it is practicable, and assist the missionaries; or rather, do not discourage the missionaries, in any attempts which they make for settlement?—I believe that they assist the missionaries to a certain extent (I do not know to what extent), in a pecuniary point of view.

2987. But you have no reason to suppose that they throw any obstacles in the way of the missionaries?—On the contrary; I had a good deal of conversation with the Roman-catholic missionaries at Lac La Crosse, and they expressed themselves highly pleased at the attention which was shown to them.

2988. Have you ever had occasion to witness cases of famine among the Indians?—I have seen the Indians come in to the expedition posts suffering from famine, and they were relieved.

2989. Have you seen any cases of starvation, of Indians having absolutely died from want?—No, I have witnessed no instances of that; I have heard of many.