

In regard to concentrating within the Indian Office, and subjecting, as far as may be, to its exclusive jurisdiction, all the affairs connected with the Indians, and the administration of their property, your Committee have carefully examined the reasons for and against the proposition, of transferring to it the sale of Indian Lands from the Office of Commissioner of Crown Lands.

The reasons against this measure, are strongly urged by the Commissioner of Crown Lands himself.

"It appears to me," he says, "that the originals or copies of the documents upon the authority of which the different surrenders have been made by the Indians to the Government, ought properly to be lodged in the Surveyor-General's Department, which is the Office of reference to every transaction connected with land, which affects the interests of the Government therein; and as no Patents, under existing regulations, can issue but through that Office, it ought to have amongst its records the power or authority under which the Crown undertakes to complete a Grant. That the sales being made by the Agents of the Department, and at their respective localities by private contract, is most beneficial to the Indians' interests, and that the concentration of the management of the sales of the different Public Lands in one Department, has a beneficial effect upon the whole, if properly managed. That thereby the expense to each interest is lessened—the facility to the public of obtaining general information upon local affairs increased—the power of adopting the principle upon which sales are conducted, in accordance with the wishes and wants of the purchaser, is facilitated by the general correspondence on land affairs going through one channel; and where, as at present, Agents are appointed in every District for the disposal and management of Public Lands, arrangements can be made by one Head with greater propriety than by more." He is therefore of opinion, that the removal of documents connected with Indian landed property to the Indian Office, would not be practicable nor beneficial to the interests of the Indians.

Notwithstanding the respect due to the opinion above quoted, your Committee are convinced that it would essentially benefit the Indians' interests, without in any way interfering with the principle respecting the Surveyor-General's Department, if the contracting for sales of such portions of the Indians' Reserves as are set apart for that purpose, were left entirely to the Chief Superintendent. His certificate of the sale and payment of the purchase money, would be a warrant to the Surveyor-General to issue the description and Patent, just as a similar certificate from Colonel Talbot, or other person entrusted with the sale and settlement of Crown Lands. While, in respect of facility of search, there is no reason why the public might not have equal opportunity in the Office of the Chief Superintendent, as that of the Surveyor-General or Commissioner of Crown Lands; and, on the other hand, it is to be supposed that the Superintendent, from his constant intercourse with the Indians, will be possessed of more accurate information concerning the value and local peculiarities of each particular lot, than the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and feel greater interest in making advantageous agreement, than can be expected from ordinary Agents for the sale of Wild Lands of the Crown; add to which a portion at least of the heavy charges now attaching upon the purchase money of Indians' Lands would be saved, the business now so costly, forming part of the general services of the Indian Office.

The charges against the proceeds of the sales of Indians' Lands, which are made by the Surveyor-General's Department, are remonstrated against by the Chief Superintendent as onerous and unnecessary. They are explained by the Surveyor-General; and so long as the sales are conducted by the Officer of that Department, and the services of the Clerks devoted to the Indians' affairs, in common with the general business of the Government, it is not unreasonable that they should pay their proportion.

The Surveyor-General states the amount of remuneration to be less than the strict proportion, and your Committee have no doubt that it is so; but they cannot divest themselves of the conviction, that the duties now done by the Clerks in the Surveyor-General's Office, and paid for out of the Indians' Funds, as extra services, might be performed in the Indian Office without any such extra payments, and the Clerks of the Surveyor-General left more uninterruptedly to their other duties.

"The sums," he says, "debited by me for Clerks' salaries to the Indian Accounts, have been charged upon the principle that the Indians were, in justice, liable to a share of the Office expenditure, proportional to the services rendered to them, based upon receipts of their Funds. The business of the Indians, as well as that of all other services in this Depart-