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CANADIAN TREATY-INDIANS.

BY THE HON. J. A. BOYD, CHANCELLOR OF ONTARIO.

BEFORE Confederation, the Indian Territory outside of the limits of old Canada (now Manitoba and the North-West) was called Rupert's Land. Half the size of Europe, it was held by the Hudson's Bay Company by virtue of a charter granted in 1670 by Charles II. This great monopoly, after an existence of two centuries, was bought out and its proprietary rights were transferred to the Dominion of Canada in 1870.

Prior to this date the Indians inhabiting Rupert's Land had been under the supervision of the Company, on account of trading relations having been established between them. Sir George Simpson, the Company's Governor, in his evidence before the House of Commons in 1857, estimated the number of Indians in the Territory at 60,000. These figures are either an exaggeration (which is probable) or there has been a more rapid reduction of the race than is usually supposed.

In Manitoba and the North-West, according to the Government returns for 1888, the Indians number about 26,000, of whom only one-tenth are

in the original nomadic state—all the rest being in treaty relations with the Government.

The establishment of Confederation involved the acquisition of the territorial rights of the Hudson's Bay Company. None too soon—for about that time there was a combination of circumstances which imperilled the existence of Canadian Indians. A portion of the tribes of the North continued subject to the control of the Company, but those living in the South had been brought into debasing contact with the rapidly-extending white population of the neighbouring republic. Traders, in defiance of law, crossed the 49th parallel, which marked the international boundary, and with firearms and fire-water trafficked with the tribes, to their destruction. Over 50,000 robes every year were carried out of British Territory and the return for this valuable peltry, worth \$250,000, was little else than alcohol. The letter of an observer hints at the devastation which followed a visit of the powder-and-whiskey trader; and one visit is a sample of all. "No language can describe these