

COPIES or EXTRACTS of recent CORRESPONDENCE respecting Alterations in the
Organization of the INDIAN DEPARTMENT in Canada.

Despatches from the Governor-General of Canada.

— No. 1. —

(No. 66.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor-General the Earl of *Elgin* to the
Right honourable Sir *G. Grey*, Bart., M. P.

Government House, Quebec, 18 December 1854.

(Received, 11 January 1855.)

(Answered, No. 11, 24 January 1855, page 39.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to enclose the copy of a report which has been addressed to me by Mr. Oliphant, Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, detailing the proceedings adopted by him to obtain from certain Indian tribes the surrender to the Crown of a large tract of land held by them on the shore of Lake Huron. Mr. Oliphant takes occasion in this report to offer some general remarks on the condition and prospects of the Indians in Canada, which are entitled to consideration, and to which I have called Sir Edmund Head's attention.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Elgin & Kincardine.*

No. 1.
Governor-General
the Earl of *Elgin*
to the Right Hon.
Sir *G. Grey*, Bart.,
18 December 1854.

3 November 1854.

Enclosure in No. 1.

My Lord,

Indian Department, Quebec, 3 November 1854.

I HAVE the honour to report for the information of your Excellency, the proceedings which took place at a council convened by me, in obedience to your Lordship's instructions, at the Indian village of Saugeen, on the 13th of October last, for the purpose of obtaining, if possible, from the tribes resident at Saugeen, Owen's Sound, and Colpoy's Bay, a surrender to the Crown of the greater portion of that tract of land which has hitherto been reserved for their exclusive use and occupation.

The peninsula of Saugeen, which forms this reserve, contains about 450,000 acres. At your Excellency's desire a council was held by Captain Anderson at Owen Sound in July last. I have the honour to annex that officer's report of his proceedings on that occasion, from which your Excellency will perceive, that, owing to the obstacles thrown in his way, both by whites and Indians, the surrender which he ultimately obtained, was of so partial a character, that the Government did not deem it wise to accept it.

On my way to Saugeen, and in passing through the counties of Grey and Bruce, adjoining this reserve, I received numerous evidences testifying to the expediency of the mission upon which your Lordship had been pleased to send me, and leading me to the hope, that the most beneficial results might be anticipated to all classes of the community, by the successful issue of the undertaking. The tide of emigration which has, of late years been flowing into Canada, has driven before it a crowd of those more adventurous spirits, whose office it is to prepare the way for the industrious emigrant. These were the more eager in their search for wild lands, as the prospect of obtaining them became almost confined in this direction to the counties bordering on the Saugeen peninsula, then an Indian reserve, and which must now be the limit of their explorations. These men were to be seen collected at the door of every backwood tavern, or returning in gangs to the more populous parts of the country where they have no settled occupation, disappointed in their search for land, inveighing against the alleged dishonesty of Crown land agents, organising bands for the forcible ejection of more fortunate squatters, a proceeding which generally resulted in bloodshed; and (in one instance which came to my notice) in murder.

They threatened, in my presence, to settle upon the Indian reserve in defiance of the Government. The general principle that Indian concessions are beneficial alike to the Indian and the white, was here merged in a more important consideration. So keen was the struggle for land, that a surrender of the territory for the purpose of sale, appeared the only method by which the property of these tribes could be conserved to them. It therefore became an obligation upon the Indian Department to spare no pains in endeavouring to

Encl. in No. 1.

16 August 1854,
p. 11.