
[LORETTE INDIANS.]

YOUR Committee began with causing to be laid before them the evidence produced to a Committee of the Assembly in the year 1819, upon a reference similar to that now made to your Committee.

They next examined the Head Chief in the presence of his Council; his answers, which had the unanimous approbation of his Council, will be found in the Appendix to this Report under the Letter (A.)

Your Committee next proceeded to the examination of the Title Deeds and other Documents laid before your Committee by the Petitioners.

For the right understanding of these papers, it was necessary for your Committee to obtain information upon the History of the Huron Nation, whereof the Petitioners form a Remnant, and of the circumstances which preceded and led to the settlement of their ancestors at the Village of Lorette, where the Petitioners now reside.

(a) In the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, the Hurons occupied the rich and fertile country which is bounded by Lake Erie on the South, by Lake Huron on the West, and by Lake Ontario on the East, between the forty-second and forty-fifth degrees of North Latitude; and although considerably diminished in number by their wars with the Iroquois Indians, are said to have amounted to from Forty to Fifty Thousand Souls; there can be no doubt than they formed one of the most powerful Indian Nations upon this Northern Continent.

Under the Treaty of St. Germain, the possession of Canada was in the year 1632 restored to France, and by one of the Stipulations of that Treaty, all traffic therein with the Indians was interdicted to British subjects.

(b) In 1633, the Company of New France re-entered into possession of all that they had ever held in Canada. Mr. De Champlain, who was in that year sent out as Governor resumed a project which he had long formed to attach to himself the Huron Nation, from which the New Colony had so much to hope and fear, and to begin by converting them to Christianity, convinced that this would form the most indissoluble bond of Union between the New Settlers and this powerful Nation. (c) He thought that their conversion would accredit Christianity with the other tribes, and he wished by means of religious missions to prepare the way for the establishment which he had in view in their country, situated most advantageously for trade, and from whence it would be easy to push discoveries to the very extremity of North America.

Although the number of Proselytes down to this time had been exceedingly few, he had still hopes of ultimate success; hopes which are said to have been founded upon the sober judicious and lofty character of

(a) Charlevoix I vol. 184-5. 4to. Edition of 1744.

(b) Idem I vol. 177-8—181-2.

(c) Idem I vol. 185.