

up. The annual presents had then recently been withdrawn, and the Indian department was being gradually left to its own resources. All apprehension of insubordination or warfare was even then so far at an end that the danger to be feared appeared to be lest, on the other hand, the Indians, having been accustomed to look to their superintendents and officers for advice, assistance, and protection in the most trivial matters of ordinary occurrence, should, on the total withdrawal of guardianship, be too much influenced by their natural apathy, or be led to abandon themselves to despair.

The chief point urged by the commissioners was the necessity of measures of concentration for the economical superintendence and gradual civilization of the Indian tribes. In support of this view they urged, among other reasons, that the Indians could only be rescued from a semi-savage and impoverished condition by being settled on their own farms as permanent homes. They regarded the practice of frequent removal as very injurious, because "the Indian, naturally averse to labor, cannot be induced to exert himself, while he feels that he may any day be deprived of the land on which he is located; and while his congenital restlessness is strengthened by the change of domicile, his greediness for the means of gratifying the whim of the moment is fostered by the large sum of ready money promised to him to gain his acquiescence in the move. This cherishes his habit of relying on other sources than his own, and of imprudently contracting debts whereby he becomes the victim of the rapacious trader."

Among their other recommendations was the appointment of local agents, to be chosen from respectable yeomen, who ought to instruct the band to which they would be attached in farming, receive no money, nor dispose of land, but, by adding the force of example to the influence of advice, aid the Indians in their advance towards civilization. The commissioners clearly traced the beneficial effects of a similar system, especially in the prosperity of some of the tribes on the Upper St. Lawrence.

Not only the testimony of the commissioners, but also, as far as I have been able to discover, that of all who are familiar with the history and condition of the Indians in Canada, is adverse to their isolation in small tribes or bands separate and remote from each other. In such a state they are exposed to the evil influences of too frequent contact with the white race, and by no means the most worthy members of it, before they have attained the proportion of civilization and moral stamina necessary to enable them to avoid the evil and adopt the better examples set prematurely before them. Their marvelous and characteristic passion for what is truly to them burning and destroying "fire-water," finds too often an opportunity for gratification. Profligacy of other kinds is encouraged. They are not respected by their white neighbors; and the sense of self-respect essential to their moral and intellectual, and hence to their physical well-being, and kept alive when they associate more generally with their acknowledged equals, is oppressed and worn out by daily intercourse with those whom they perceive to be more perfectly adapted to the circumstances to which all must conform. Various forms of disease, including scrofula, consumption, and other indications of degeneracy, are presented, with a frequency attributable not only to the causes already mentioned, but to the constant intermarriages thus rendered almost inevitable between kindred.

The unauthorized intrusion of white men among the Indian settlements has been found injurious to the progress of civilization. Such stragglers are usually people of dissolute habits, and proselytize the