

R E P O R T .

The Select Committee appointed to inquire into the condition and affairs of the Six Nation Indians in the Counties of Brant and Haldimand, in the Province of Ontario, beg leave to present the following as their

SECOND REPORT:

That from evidence taken before the Committee, and from replies received to a series of questions sent to chiefs, missionaries and others having a knowledge of Indian affairs, they find that there has been a gradual improvement in the moral character and industrial habits of those Indians. That these improvements are due in a great measure to the exertions of the missionaries and teachers of the New England Company, who, at their own expense, maintain five missionaries, nine day schools, and an Industrial Institute. Two other schools are supported by the Wesleyan Mission Society.

The Committee find that while the evidence before them is slightly conflicting on certain points, it nevertheless shows that a considerable amount of dissatisfaction prevails among the Indians, and that this dissatisfaction arises,

1st. From a strong dislike to several clauses in the Act of 1869, intituled: "An Act for the Better Management of Indian Affairs;"

2nd. From the stringent enforcement of the Order in Council, dated February 12th, 1873, relative to the cutting and selling of wood;

3rd. From the lateness of the spring payment of their interest money.

The following objections, among others, are made to the Act referred to:—

1st. That by it an Indian woman is, by her marriage with a white man, cut off from all participation in the annuities and interest money belonging to her tribe;

2nd. That Indians are prevented from leasing their lands to respectable white people of their own motion;

3rd. That by the enfranchisement clauses of that Act, an Indian, however well qualified he may be to control his own affairs, is not, upon his enfranchisement, permitted to hold his own land in fee-simple.

The Order in Council above referred to for regulating the cutting and selling of wood, although evidently framed with the best intentions, has been regarded by the Indians as an arbitrary measure, and has caused a great amount of ill feeling among them, arising out of the idea which they hold that the wood is by right their own individual property.

The objection urged against the lateness of the spring payment is, that they do not receive their money in time to enable them to purchase with it their spring seed.

In view of the evidence before them, your Committee would most respectfully submit to your Honorable House the importance of speedily removing the evils complained of by the enactment of amendments to the existing law that will more effectually remove the obstacles in the way of Indian civilization.

Your Committee also feel themselves constrained, through the representations made to them, to respectfully suggest the desirability of the Government taking into their serious consideration the operation of the Order in Council of February 12th, 1873, with a view of ascertaining whether, in the interest and well-being of the Indian, any modification of such order may be made.

All which is respectfully submitted.

WILLIAM PATTERSON,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ROOM,
Friday, 8th May, 1874.