

**T**HE committee, consisting of Mr. Duane, Mr. Peters, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Lee, to whom were referred a report on Indian affairs, read in Congress on the 21st of April last; a letter from general Schuyler, one of the commissioners of Indian affairs for the northern district, dated the 11th of August last, with messages to and from certain hostile Indians on the subject of peace; a letter dated the same day, from Ebenezer Allen, employed to assist Mr. Bull, a messenger sent by the board of war by order of Congress, to announce the cessation of hostilities to the Indians in the western country; a report from the board of war, dated the 19th of August, accompanying a narrative of Ephraim Douglass, an other messenger to the Indian tribes, with sundry enclosures; a letter from the commander in chief, with instructions accompanying the same; extract of a letter to the commander in chief from general Haldiman, commanding for his Britannic majesty in Canada, dated the 17th of August; a letter from the commander in chief, dated the 26th of August, and its enclosures, and a letter from brigadier general Irwine, dated the 3d of September instant; submit the following detail of facts and resolutions:—

That your committee have attentively considered the several papers referred to them, and have conferred thereon with the commander in chief.

That this report will be confined to Indian affairs in the northern and middle departments as they are defined by the act of Congress of the 12th day of July, 1775, and to the settlement of the western country; these subjects, in the opinion of your committee, being inseparably connected; and your committee not being possessed of materials which enable them to extend their views to the southern district. That it is represented, and your committee believe with truth, that although the hostile tribes of Indian in the northern and western departments are seriously disposed to a pacification; yet they are not in a temper to relinquish their territorial claims without further struggles.

That if an Indian war should be re-kindled, repeated victories might produce the retreat of the Indians, but could not prevent them from regaining possession of some part of the distant and extensive territories which appertain to the United States; that while such temporary expulsions could only be effected at a great charge, they could not be improved to the smallest advantage, but by maintaining numerous garrisons and an expensive peace-establishment. That even if all the northern and western tribes of Indians inhabiting the territories of the United States, could be totally expelled, the policy of reducing them to such an extremity is deemed to be questionable; for in such an event, it is obvious that they would find a welcome reception from the British government in Canada, which by so great an accession of strength would become formidable in case of any future rupture: and in peace, by keeping alive the resentment of the Indians for the loss of their country, would secure to its own subjects the entire benefit of the war-trade.

That although motives of policy, as well as clemency, ought to incline Congress to listen to the prayers of the hostile Indians for peace, yet in the opinion of your committee it is just and necessary that lines of property should be ascertained and established between the United States and them, which will be convenient to the respective tribes, and commensurate to the public wants: because the faith of the United States stands pledged to grant portions of the waste and uncultivated lands as a bounty to their army, and in reward of their courage and fidelity: and the public finances do not admit of any considerable expenditure to extinguish the Indian claims upon such lands: because it is become necessary, by the increase of domestic population, and emigrations from abroad, to make speedy provision for extending the settlement of the territories of the United States; and because the public creditors have been led to believe, and have a right to expect, that those territories will be speedily improved into a fund towards the security and payment of the national debt.

Nor in the opinion of your committee can the Indians themselves have any reasonable objection against the establishment recommended. They were, as some of them acknowledge, aggressors in the war, without even a pretence of provocation, they violated the convention of neutrality made with Congress at Albany, in 1775; and in return for proffered protection and liberal supplies; and to the utter ruin and impoverishment of thousands of families, they wantonly desolated our villages and settlements, and destroyed our citizens.

To stop the progress of their outrages, the war, at a vast expence to the United States, was carried into their own country, which they abandoned in dismay. Waving then the right of conquest, and the various precedents which might be quoted in similar instances, a bare recollection of the facts is sufficient to manifest the obligation they are under to make atonement for the enormities which they have perpetrated, and a reasonable compensation for the expences which the United States have incurred by their wanton barbarity; and they possess no other means to do this act of justice than by a compliance with the proposed boundaries.

Your committee are of opinion, that in the negotiation which they shall recommend, care ought to be taken neither to yield nor require too much, to accommodate the Indians as far as the public good will admit; and if they should appear to be dissatisfied at the lines which it may be found necessary to establish, rather to give them some compensation for their claims, than to hazard a war which will be much more expensive: but it is supposed

that when they shall be informed of the estimates of the damages which our citizens have sustained by their eruptions, and of the expences which the United States have incurred to check their career, it will have a tendency to suppress any extravagant demands.

Your committee from these considerations propose that a convention shall be held with the Indians residing in the northern district and the western district who have taken up arms against the United States, for the purposes of receiving them into the favour and protection of the United States, and of establishing boundary lines of property for separating and dividing the settlements of the citizens from the Indian villages and hunting grounds, and thereby extinguishing as far as possible, all occasion for future animosities, disquiet and contentions; and that, all prisoners of whatever age or sex among these Indians shall be delivered up.

*Firstly*, And as a preliminary, it shall be required that the Indians be informed, that after a contest of eight years for the sovereignty of this country, Great Britain has ceded all the lands to the United States within the limits described by the article of the provisional treaty, to wit:

*Thirdly*, That as the Indians, notwithstanding a solemn treaty of neutrality with Congress, at the commencement of the war.—Notwithstanding all the advice and admonition which could be given them during its prosecution, could not be restrained from acts of hostility and wanton devastation, but were determined to join their arms to those of Great Britain and to share their fortunes, so consequently, with a less generous people than Americans, they would be made to share the same fate and be compelled to retire with them beyond the Lakes. But as we prefer clemency to rigor, as we persuade ourselves that their eyes are open to their error, and that they have found by fatal experience, that their true interest and safety must depend upon our friendship, as the country is large enough to contain and support us all, and as we are disposed to be kind to them, to supply their wants, and to partake of their trade; we from these considerations, and from motives of compassion, draw a veil over what is passed; and will establish a boundary line between them and us, beyond which we will endeavour to restrain our citizens from hunting and settling; and within which they shall not come but for the purposes of trading, treating or other business equally unexceptionable.

*Fourthly*, That the following line or lines shall be mutually agreed upon and established between the United States and the several tribes of Indians who shall be affected thereby, or lines as nearly correspondent thereto as the Indians can be prevailed upon to adopt and approve of, that is to say,

*Fifthly*, That the commissioners for the northern and western districts shall be instructed to unite together in holding one convention with the Indians inhabiting the districts aforesaid, and their allies and dependents for the purposes aforesaid; and only to yield to separate conventions in case of inevitable necessity.

*Sixthly*, And whereas the Oneida and Tuscarora tribes have adhered to the cause of America, and joined her arms in the course of the late war; and Congress have frequently assured them of peculiar marks of favour and friendship; the said commissioners are therefore instructed to take particular care to distinguish the lands claimed as the inheritance of those tribes, to have them ascertained, and enter into stipulations, that they shall be reserved for the sole use and benefit of those tribes until they shall think it for their own advantage to dispose of the same: Provided, that if those tribes shall voluntarily agree to exchange their present claims for a district more remote from the settlements of our citizens, and such exchange shall not be deemed disadvantageous by the state claiming the jurisdiction, it shall be lawful for the commissioners to ratify such exchange for the better security of the said Indians.

*Seventhly*, And whereas the legislature of the state of New-York have granted lands at Onondaga and Cayuga to certain officers and privates in the service of the United States, not only as bounties for recruiting and insisting; but to appease the discontent which prevailed for want of their pay, and as a reward for their meritorious services; the said commissioners are therefore further instructed to take care as far as will be consistent with the public peace, that in the establishment of the proposed lines the said military grants be not prejudiced or impeached: but if it shall appear that the persisting in such grants and appropriations may so far irritate the Indians as to expose these United States to the dangers and calamities of an Indian war: that then it will be proper for the commissioners to report the difficulties which shall so occur in their negotiation to the legislature of the state of New-York; and in such case it is earnestly recommended to the legislature of the state of New-York to revise the laws by which such appropriations have been made, so as to prevent the calamities of a new rupture with the Indians.

*Eighthly*, That the superintendent of finance be directed to furnish such quantity of coarse goods, part of those belonging to the United States, as shall be necessary as presents to the Indians at the proposed negotiation: and that the commissioners lay before Congress estimates of the quantities of clothing and other articles which will be requisite for the purposes aforesaid, to the end, that Congress may give the necessary orders for the delivery of such articles as are on hand, and for providing such as may not be in the public magazines.