

might be divided into two classes: there are the cabinet and the field investigators. On the other hand, ethnological classifications, especially of the American races, are based on language. Now, of the five different Déné tribes whose habitat lies entirely or partially within the northern part of British Columbia, I understand the dialects of three and speak that of the fourth with more facility than English. Within the last three months, my travels have brought me in contact with all or numerous members of the five tribes; so that should I have the faintest doubt about the ethnic status of any division of the Déné family, established in the extreme northwest of this continent, nothing would be more easy for me than to satisfy my curiosity. This by way of explaining my assurance in dealing with such questions.

Nor is this all. I belong to a religious Order which, for the last forty years or more, has had in hand the evangelization of all the Northern Déné tribes, and, through the numerous letters and essays, contained in the pages of a private review published by said Order, I was enabled to study the various divisions of our aborigines long before I came here to become, as it were, one of them. One of the ablest and most regular contributors to that periodical which, I repeat, does not circulate among outsiders, was at one time the Rev. E. Petitot, who passed well nigh twenty years of his life in studying the Dénés critically. Now, most of what I ever wrote on the Eastern Dénés was based on his investigations, and in every case due credit was given him. It must be admitted that the opinion of such a scholar who personally knows the different tribes, should outweigh that even of travelers like Hearne and MacKenzie, who, for all their information, were entirely at the mercy of their interpreters and who were doomed occasionally to misunderstand and be misunderstood.\* The linguistic data, names of tribes, etc., emanating from such a source are especially subject to caution in connection with languages of so delicate sounds as the Déné. For even such a dull-eared explorer as Sir John Richardson—who seriously derived the word *Esquimaux* from the would-be French "ceux qui *miaux*" (*lege*: "miaulent)—has confessed that "the sounds of the Tinné language can hardly be expressed by the English alphabet, and a great many of them are of a pronunciation *absolutely impossible* to an Englishman."†

Prof. Campbell quotes three different classifications of the Déné tribes, the first of which is Major G. W. Powell's. Of this he merely

\* It is, therefore, a little surprising that, while noting obscure authors in his synonymy of the "Athapaskan" or Déné family, Major Powell should have omitted, in 1866, the name Déné-Dindjé, which had been publicly given to that aboriginal group by Petitot ever since 1873.

† Quoted in French by Petitot in his *Mémoires des Déné-Dindjé*, p. xx.