

One of the greatest deficiencies experienced in the Office of the Indian Department, is attributed to its total want of information upon matters, which ought essentially to be within its knowledge—the state of the Finances which it has to administer. Certainly a fact strongly tending to support the opinion already expressed by your Committee, that with regard to this Department, it was not so much a reforming as an organization of the Office *ab initio* that is wanting.

It is insisted, that much of the present inefficiency of this Department arises from its dependency upon others, which have no necessary connection with it, especially the Commissariat and the Office of the Surveyor-General and Commissioner of Crown Lands.

As to the expediency, and the effect of the intervention of other Departments with the business of the Indians, the strongest opinion was expressed by the Head of the Indian Office against the continuance of the intervention of any other Departments. Your Committee, to a certain extent, concur with the Chief Superintendent; but some part of his theory, they are not disposed to recommend as feasible.

“I am of opinion,” says the Chief Superintendent, “that the duties of the Indian Department may be performed without the aid or intervention of any other Department: *Provided* that obvious and necessary assistance to carry on the details be accorded to it, which is possessed by every other Department in this Province, and that too with advantage not only to the Indians, but to the public, who have become interested or concerned in their affairs. It is needless to attempt to conceal, that the present state of the Department is the very reverse of what it should be; and I doubt the ability of any one now to restore to it the records of transactions and occurrences, whether financial or otherwise, which have passed through it.”

With regard to the objections, founded upon the inconveniences arising out of the dependence of the Indian Department upon that of the Commissariat, your Committee are impressed with the conviction, that much good would be attained by concentrating within the powers of the Indian Office, much of what is now done by the union of the two.

The disposal of lands surrendered by the Indians, to be sold by the Crown for their benefit, is one of the most important services connected with the Indians' interests, and is performed by the Surveyor-General and Commissioner of Crown Lands. This duty the Chief Superintendent is of opinion ought to be transferred to the Indian Office, together with the rest; and zealous, doubtless, for the interests of the Indians, he complains with some warmth of the unnecessary, and, as it certainly appears, expensive interposition of other Departments, and the consequent uneconomical administration of the Indians' affairs. He says:—

“There appears really a desire on the part of other Departments to participate in the onerous duties of the Indian Office. A Clerk in the Receiver-General's Office is made the Accountant of the Six Nations Indians. The Surveyor-General surveys the Blocks of Indians' Lands designed to be sold; the Commissioner of Crown Lands has the selling of them, and is both Auctioneer and Accountant. The Surveyor-General's Office has, I believe, a per centage or charge in some shape or other for surveying—the Commissioner of Crown Lands another for selling—for receiving the instalments—for keeping the Accounts—in fact for doing what should be the most important part of the duty of the Chief Superintendent, and yet hitherto that Officer has not been allowed even a Clerk to assist him in the daily necessary duties of the Department, although sums of money have been taken and expended from the Indian Funds in per centages, and in rewarding the services of other Departments—quite sufficient, and I believe more than sufficient, to have placed and maintained the Indian Office on a most respectable and efficient footing.”

“The most serious consequences to the Indians have resulted from this system, and which is the more to be regretted as they are now irremediable. Vast sums which, from time to time, have been realized from sales of Blocks of their lands, (especially reserved for the use of them and their posterity,) instead of being invested in conformity to the trust, and the interest only paid over to the claimants, have, on the contrary, been from time to time divided and distributed among them, and are consequently lost to those for whose benefit and advantage they should have been safely invested, and inviolably preserved. Had the system of conducting the Indian Department been different from what it has been, and indeed to what it still is—had the Head of it, and he alone, been invested with certain discretionary