

important step will be gained towards his well-being, both here and hereafter. But all this forces on another consideration, viz., whether the Indian thus raised should not be permitted, like his fellow-subjects, the right to petition his Excellency in Council, through the chiefs of his nation or tribe, and also the Legislature, if necessary, instead of being compelled as is at present the case, to prefer his petition only through the medium of his own local superintendent. A subject of Her Majesty has the free and untrammelled right to petition, and so should the Indian when he is raised to his new position. The denial of this has, I am aware, given rise to numerous complaints and to more dissatisfaction than almost anything else. I am fully sensible of the objections to such liberty, that it might be attended, and doubtless would be accompanied with some inconvenience, and might induce them to refer every trivial matter to the Government, instead of submitting it in the first instance to their own superintendent, and thus render their applications frequent and troublesome, but not more so, I apprehend, than the constant applications of the whites. Some appeal from the decision of the local superintendent should undoubtedly be permitted; and, in certain cases, a direct application to the Governor in Council, irrespective of the superintendent, should be allowed, which, under proper restrictions, would be a powerful means of removing a great deal of jealousy and heart-burning, which its denial is almost sure to produce.

There is yet another matter connected with their own internal management which I think calls for some attention, and upon which I will offer a few remarks here: I allude to the appointment of their chiefs: this should be held, as it now is, in the hands of the Government; but I think the office might be invested with a little more authority than it possesses at present. To be more explicit: a chief, who had become christianized and civilized, might be appointed to the magistracy and to other offices, not only of trust but also of emolument, and especially the latter, should any such be found necessary amongst them.

But the qualifications for the office of a chief should be raised as the present occupants disappeared. The chief should be required to read and write the English language easily; his moral character should be unexceptionable, and he should be entirely free from that slavish vice, intemperance, which is rapidly obliterating the Indian name. If some such stringent departmental regulation could be framed and rigidly carried out as the following: that intemperance should invariably deprive a chief of his office, upon sufficient evidence being furnished of his guilt, and in fact, that the offence should be total disqualification for the chieftainship. I think it would be a wholesome restraint upon the individual himself, and have also an excellent effect upon the whole community. The nation or tribe would, at all events, have the benefit of a good example from their rulers, and a powerful stimulus would thus be given them to go and do likewise.

Upon the question of intemperance itself, as far as it affects the Indian, I need say nothing here, nor indeed offer any suggestions upon the subject. The whole question is now before the Legislature, and should any good result from its deliberations, the Indian will receive the same benefit as the white man; for the law, should one be carried, will equally affect both.

It is not without much diffidence, my Lord, that I ventured to offer the foregoing crude and imperfect suggestions; but if they can, in ever so small a degree, be made available to his Excellency the Governor-general in his noble efforts to elevate the present deplorable condition of these poor children of the forest, I should be abundantly rewarded, and feel that my time has not been lost, but devoted to the truest interests of this interesting, but too long neglected people.

To Viscount Bury,
Superintendent-general of Indian Affairs,
&c. &c. &c.

I have, &c.
(signed) William M. Murray, D. D.,
Rector of Ancaster and Dundas.

—No. 3.—

No. 3.

Governor-general
Sir E. Head to
Right hon. H. La-
bouchere, M. P.
15 March 1856.

(No. 51.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor-General Sir E. Head to the
Right Hon. H. Labouchere, M. P.

Government House, Toronto, 15 March 1856.

(Received 1 April 1856.)

Sir,

(Answered 4 April 1856, No. 69, p. 42.)

I HAVE had the honour of receiving your despatch of February 21, No. 42, relative to the management of the Indian Department in this Province

As Her Majesty's Government have finally decided upon following the course set forth in that despatch, with a view of making the establishment entrusted with the care of Indian affairs self supporting, it only remains to adopt such measures as may seem best calculated speedily to ensure the object desired.

The returns of the number of persons recommended for the continuance of the yearly blanket, and an estimate of the cost, are in course of being made out, and will be forwarded immediately on their completion, as also lists of the Indians to whom pensions have been granted, with a statement of the respective sums allotted to them.

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