

In the hope of being favoured with an intimation of your sentiments upon the observations which that Letter contained, I have hitherto refrained from submitting, for your consideration, any further arrangements, for effecting the improvement of the Indians in Lower Canada, to which, as the Indian department in Upper Canada is now transferred to the direction of Major-General Sir John Colborne, the following propositions for the amelioration of the condition of the Indians, and for their gradual amalgamation with the other inhabitants of the country, are confined.

The first measure to be adopted in the prosecution of these objects is to apprise the different tribes, through the medium of their grand councils, of the conditions on which they may settle, and to ascertain, by those means, the number of Indians who may be disposed to do so.

Those conditions ought to be most distinctly and unreservedly explained to them, to prevent them from hereafter upbraiding the Government with any violation of faith.

It may also be advisable to intimate to them, that on the expiration of a limited period, the encouragement offered to Indian settlers will be withdrawn, and that as the forest no longer affords them the means of existence, self-preservation renders it incumbent upon them to settle, and to undertake the culture of the soil.

The tribes which inhabit Lower Canada are seven in number; namely, Hurons, Algonquins, Nipissingues, Amalacites, Iroquois, Abenakis, and wandering Mic Macs.

They are estimated at 3,437 souls, which, computing each family on an average to consist of five persons, gives a total of 687 families. Many of the Indians speak French; a considerable number also speak English, and it does not appear that they show any preference to the former when uninfluenced by their priests.

The rooted aversion entertained by the Indians to intermix with the white population, and with other Indian tribes, renders it necessary that they should be located in small bodies, comprising about 100 families of the same tribe, in the vicinity of other tribes and of white settlers. By these means they will have examples to guide them in their farming; their antipathy to associate with other people, it is hoped, will be gradually overcome; and the amalgamation with the mass of the population be most efficiently promoted.

With a view to lessen the expenses of opening communications with the Indian settlements, and of conveying to them the assistance which it may be necessary to afford, those settlements should be established as near to each other as circumstances may permit.

One hundred acres of land should be granted to each family; and though you may consider this a large portion to bestow upon such settlers, yet in this cold climate, where the winter prevails for six months in the year, where 50 acres, of lots of this description, are necessarily reserved for fuel, building, fencing, &c., 25 maintained in pasture, and the remaining 25 only allotted for general cultivation, the proportion suggested will be found by no means to exceed the wants of the Indian settler, and to afford the experiment a fair chance of success.

From the best information I have been enabled to procure, I am disposed to believe that the object of attaching the Indians to their farms, and of weaning them from their baneful habits of wandering idleness and dissipation, will be much more efficaciously obtained by locating them upon country lots, than by assembling them in villages.

The general terms upon which I propose that these lots should be granted, are,—

1. That they shall be, in the first instance, granted upon location tickets.
2. That on receiving these tickets, the settlers shall take the oath of allegiance.