

shares of the last year to be paid to the absentees, should they return before the next distribution.

The Indians on the Maintoulin Islands have remonstrated against the license of occupation for a post on the island granted to the Hudson's Bay Company, alleging that encroachments on their lands have been made under cover of it. As the matter is now before your Excellency in Council, I forbear to enter at length into the question here.

In Lower Canada, a vacancy has occurred by the resignation of his office as Visiting Superintendent, by Colonel Napier.

His district comprised the whole of that section of the Province. Some of the bands, however, have local agents attached to them, who are under bonds to the Government, but whose remuneration is wholly derived from a per-centage levied on the rents which they collect.

For many years past, Colonel Napier's infirmities have prevented him from giving that active supervision to the distant tribes which would have been conducive to their progress in civilization. They have been almost entirely dependent on the gratuitous labours of the missionaries who visit them.

Looking to the necessity for the economical administration of the Indian Department, when the Imperial grant is withdrawn, I would submit for your Excellency's consideration, the propriety of not filling up at present the vacancy caused by Colonel Napier's retirement. When your Excellency, after the reception of the Commissioner's report, shall have definitively decided upon the line of policy to be pursued, final arrangements can be made in this respect. As a temporary measure, however, I would propose to appropriate a portion of the salary now attached to the office of superintendent, for the payment of a small stipend to each of the resident agents belonging to the principal bands of Lower Canada, who should henceforward correspond directly with head quarters, and be charged with the conduct of all the business of such tribe.

As it now stands, much is necessarily carried on through persons unpaid by, and virtually irresponsible to the Government. Such an augmentation as I propose to the pittance they now receive from the Indian rents, would render them more zealous in the discharge of their duties.

There is one tribe in particular to which I beg to draw your attention, the Micmacs of the Restigouche. By their geographical position, they are virtually isolated from their brethren in the valley of the St. Lawrence, from whom they are divided by upwards of 100 miles of a perfectly wild country. It is impossible, therefore, that any effectual supervision can be exercised over them directly from head quarters.

Until my visit this summer, they had seen no officer of the department for 15 years; nor in any case could more than an annual visit be paid to them by an officer having under his charge, superintendence of the tribes in the whole of Lower Canada.

It would seem to me, therefore, of importance, that their interest should be protected by an agent residing on the spot. Their reserve is coveted by the neighbouring settlers, and has already been extensively encroached upon.

I was much pleased with their appearance on my visit to them, and their missionary gives the most satisfactory account of their progress in civilization, and their desire for improvement.

They complained much of the destruction of their salmon fishery in the Restigouche, but it would, I fear, be very difficult to remedy this grievance, inasmuch as the laws of Canada for the preservation of the fisheries are different from those in New Brunswick.

They expressed themselves very grateful for the assistance granted by the Provincial Parliament, for the payment of a schoolmaster in their village.

The troubles among the St. Francis Indians relative to the sales and leasing of part of their reserve, and the complaints against their agent, still continue. I have had the honour of submitting to your Excellency a proposal made by part of this tribe, to remove to another location.

Split into two parties as this band is by religious dissension, I should be glad if it be found possible to adopt some such compromise, and I await your Excellency's commands upon the subject.

At Caughnawaga, too, the disturbances consequent upon plunder of timber and the intrusion of the whites are yet unchecked. I have found it impossible as yet to bring the tribe to any satisfactory arrangement for the adjustment of these diffidences, nor do I see much hope of any satisfactory settlement, so long as they remain under the influences which are brought to bear upon them in their present location.

None of the Indians have as yet taken advantage of the Act of last Session, but I am in hopes that this will not long continue. Considerable delay unavoidably took place in the distribution of copies of the Act among the different tribes, but I have lately received several applications from individual Indians for additional copies. This shows that the subject is beginning to excite interest among the more educated, the very class who will be likely to profit by its provisions.

I submit herewith a copy of the account current furnished by the Commissariat to this department. It appears, upon inquiry, that, as is usual with the money voted by Parliament, the large balance standing to the credit of the Indians is only shown upon paper, and is not actually available for any expenditure. As, however, it represents the accumulations resulting from the balance to the credit of the account at the end of each year for some time back, it is clear that it has been actually granted by the Imperial Parliament for the use of the Indians, but not drawn from the public chest. If it were possible to
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