

477. We will not talk about the servant?—Then this article is sold to the Indian; there is a certain tariff made without any fixed per-centage. The articles that are useful, such as woollens, guns, and absolute necessities, are sold to the Indian at a comparatively cheap rate; there is no fixed percentage upon them. J. Rae, Esq., M. D.
23 February 1857.

478. So that in fact there is no tariff at all to the Indian?—I never made out the tariff, but this is the way in which we did it. Supposing there was a valuable skin, we could not pay the Indian for that in the same proportion as its value.

479. I am not asking that question; I am asking you whether you do not put your own price upon the goods you sell to the Indian, without regard to any tariff whatever?—Exactly so, but there is a fixed price that the Indian perfectly understands; there is no regular percentage put on.

480. You lived some time at York?—At Moose, in James's Bay.

481. Do you know what the tariff was there to the Indian?—Yes; as far as I remember, it was from 2 s. 6 d. to 3 s. for what we called a made beaver.

482. What was the tariff upon goods taken from England and sold to the Indian there?—I do not know that; I did not make out the tariff.

483. Were you there 10 years without ever learning that fact?—Yes; it is difficult to learn.

484. Why difficult to learn?—Because I find that they have no fixed tariff made out upon the plan you have spoken of, wherever it is. There is no fixed per-centage put on the goods anywhere, wherever we have traded with them, or wherever any person else has traded with them.

485. Mr. Lowe.] Do you ask the Indians different prices for goods at different times?—Never; we cannot vary the price.

486. A beaver skin will always command the same amount of European goods?—At the same place.

487. Mr. Roebuck.] Are there not varieties of beaver skins?—Yes; but the beaver skin is the standard; a large beaver making one skin.

488. Do you give the same price for every beaver skin?—Certainly not; two small ones go for a large beaver; two martens go for a large beaver.

489. Who determines whether it is a small or a large beaver?—The Indians themselves determine it; they know it perfectly well, and so does any man who is acquainted with it; any man who looks at it can tell the age of a beaver.

490. Lord Stanley.] When you say that a beaver skin commands a fixed price, you mean, of course, a skin of the average size?—A skin of the average size; a good large skin killed in winter or in spring.

491. Mr. Charles Fitzwilliam.] When you talk of a thing costing so many beavers, you mean that they may give a beaver skin and five or six racoon skins, or marten skins, in the same way that in the buffalo country they talk of a thing being worth so many robes?—Yes.

492. If you bought a horse from an Indian you would give him so many beavers for it?—Yes.

493. If you sold a gun, you would say, "I will take so many beavers for it?"—Yes; it is a thing perfectly understood by the Indian.

494. The beavers being the current coin of the country?—Yes; the same as the current coin of this country. The Indian understands it, and no one will do anything until he gets up to the standard price.

495. Mr. Roebuck.] If a man came with ten beaver skins to the factory at Moose River, you say that he would know what price was to be put upon those beaver skins; but would he know the price to be put upon the European goods?—He does not know anything about the price of the European goods to him. He knows exactly the articles that he wants; he knows how many skins he has got, and he knows what he can get for them.

496. Who determines how much he can get?—It was determined long before I entered the service.

497. It never varies?—It never varies much; it was increased some years ago in favour of the Indian.

498. So that, as goods in England become cheaper, they do not become cheaper in Hudson's Bay?—No; and if the furs sell cheaper we do not give less for them to the Indian.