

INDIAN OFFICE, VICTORIA, B.C., 3rd March, 1885.

SIR.—With reference to your letter of the 2nd August last, requesting me to indicate at what points in this Province I would consider it advisable to establish industrial schools, not to exceed three in number, and also to supply you with a careful estimate of the cost of establishing and maintaining the same, and to my further reply to your favor, No. 16122, of the 29th November, in which I stated that I would furnish a report as soon as I could have an opportunity of conferring with the Bishop of New Westminster, who had made some proposals to me relative to the establishment of an industrial school. I have now the honor to enclose a copy of His Lordship's letter, indicating his own views and the conditions upon which two schools (boys' and girls') might be carried on, with Government assistance.

I also beg to include herein copy of a letter from the Rev. R. J. Roberts, who was formerly connected with the Mohawk Industrial Institution, carried on at Brantford, under the auspices of the New England Society, whose agent in this country Mr. Roberts is. I am unaware of the amount of aid derived from the Government by the last named school, and regret that there are no means here by which I could obtain information as to the requirements and actual cost of a properly organized industrial school, so that I might report more satisfactorily, perhaps, than is possible under existing circumstances.

There can be no doubt, as I have had the honor upon previous occasions of reporting to you, that the Indian desires a minimum of benefit from the day school system, because the influence of camp life is stronger than that of the school.

In fact the whole tribal system, of having their goods and their lands and living in common, is opposed to any system of education which does not begin its reform by separating the child from such a mode of existence, and introducing him to something which is better.

The day school, often presided over by untrained teachers, with its irregular attendance and short hours, is slow to accomplish any tangible or permanent results, which may in no way be compared to the great benefits which are soon felt from a properly organized and well conducted industrial boarding school.

I regard it as a matter of sound policy, if not exalted duty, on the part of the Government having charge of Indians, to place means of education within their reach.

Unfortunately, however, the present annual appropriation for Indian purposes in British Columbia is entirely inadequate to effect more than a very superficial care over such a large population of Indians as there is here, especially while the work and expense of setting aside and surveying lands is borne exclusively by this Department. A considerable addition would therefore have to be made to the usual estimate of Indian expenditure, and the Government would have to be sufficiently high-minded to ignore that portion of the articles of Union by which it was stipulated that the Indians of this country were to be treated with a policy as liberal as that which was pursued prior to Confederation. At that time such a policy meant little, inasmuch as Indians were then left to look out for themselves.

No Government grants whatever were given to any schools, and only a few incomplete reserves were set apart in the settled portions of the Province. Were it not a matter of serious import to the Indians, one might consider such a stipulation as the indulgence of a little grim humor and sarcasm at the Indian's expense. Certainly, nothing less could have been asked by the Province; and, if much more is not to be granted, in view of the large native population—thousands of whom are without any means of education—it would appear idle to suppose that any enlightened or liberal policy, such as is customary among treaty Indians, or those whose aboriginal rights have been acknowledged, could be inaugurated and maintained here.

In the event, however, of a sufficient educational grant being possible, and of the intention of the Department to make a beginning with three schools, I would recommend that one should be established for Vancouver's Island and two for the mainland.

If the New England Company could be induced to undertake the establishment of an institution similar to that conducted by them at Brantford, I think it would be