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A FEW WORDS

ON THE

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY;

WITH

A STATEMENT OF THE GRIEVANCES
OF THE

NATIVE AND HALF-CASTE INDIANS,
ADDRESSED TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT
THROUGH THEIR DELEGATES NOW IN LONDON.

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*Communications to be addressed to A. K. ISBISTER,
77, Jubilee Street, Mile End.*

LONDON:

C. GILPIN, 5, BISHOPSGATE STREET, WITHOUT.

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A FEW WORDS ON THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

The Hudson's Bay Company is now the only survivor of the numerous exclusive bodies which at one time depressed almost every branch of British commerce ; and from the very peculiar conditions under which it holds even its present tenure of existence, is well worthy more than passing observation. Occupying a territory comprising a superficial area nearly one-third larger than all Europe, it reigns supreme over 50 native tribes of Indians, who are the slaves of its laws and policy, and scarcely removed but in name from being its actual bondsmen ; it is, however, not upon that point, we purpose to dwell, but rather upon a far more important and hitherto unpublished fact, namely, that although exercising commercial and territorial sovereignty over so wide a range of country, the Charter under which it claims this right of despotic sway is *illegal*.

This Company was incorporated in the year 1670, under a Charter of King Charles II., granting to them and their successors the sole trade and commerce to Hudson's Bay and Streights, with territorial rights and jurisdiction over all the lands and countries on the coasts and confines of the same, which were not actually possessed by the subjects of any other Christian prince or state, to be reckoned and reputed as one of the British plantations or Colonies in America, under the name of Rupert's Land. Of this territory the Company was constituted proprietor for ever, by free and common soccage, as such enjoying over it supreme jurisdiction, civil and criminal, with power to grant lands, pass laws, make war or peace with all nations not being Christians, and, in short, to enjoy, under the Crown of England, all the rights and powers of a commercial sovereignty.

This extensive grant, however, did not receive any parliamentary sanction or confirmation, and was, on that ground, held to be unconstitutional ; or, at all events, failed to secure to the Company the privileges intended. To prevent the intrusion of rival traders, whom the defective Charter could not restrain, the Company in 1790, were under the necessity of petitioning parliament to confirm

it. After considerable opposition a Bill was obtained "For confirming to the Governor and Company of Adventurers trading to Hudson's Bay, their privileges and trade," but for the term of "seven years only, and *no longer*," and subject to certain conditions for the regulation of the sale of furs (for which see p. 21), respecting which it is sufficient to observe that they have not been carried out. But though extending over a very limited period, there is reason to believe it effectually secured the immediate object contemplated, namely, the exclusion of rival traders from the country.

Whether the Company, after the expiration of the Act, were apprehensive that parliament would not renew it, or whether they deemed impolitic to awaken public attention to the subject of their monopoly, the fact is no less certain than extraordinary, that they have never from that time to the present, applied for a second confirmation of their Charter, and to this day hold their monopoly of the trade to Hudson's Bay under the original grant of King Charles II., which, as shown above, was confirmed, with reservation only for seven years, and upon its expiration in 1697, was not renewed. It is important here to insist upon the position of the Hudson's Bay Company, at the period when it obtained its original grant, and when that grant was confirmed by the Act aforesaid; thus it will be seen that in 1690 the Company existed as a perpetual body, under no reservation, whereas under the 2d of William and Mary, it held its rights and privileges under restrictions, and only for a limited period.

Up to the cession of Canada to Great Britain they continued in undisturbed possession of the territories to which they laid claim, but this event throwing the fur trade (which had been carried to a great height by foreigners trading under then existing French charters) into the hands of British subjects the leading fur merchants of Canada formed themselves in the year 1783 into an association under the name of the North West Company of Montreal, who, after rapidly spreading themselves throughout the interior of North America to the Arctic Circle and Pacific Ocean, finally extended their establishments to Hudson's Bay itself. A contest, marked with great bitterness and animosity ensued, which was carried on for many years, and ended in a coalition of the rival companies in 1821.

The influence of the new association was sufficient to procure from the legislature a licence of exclusive trade for the term of 21 years, over such parts of the Indian country as were *not* included in the original Charter. This Licence was renewed in 1842 for a further term of 21 years, but with a reservation on the part of the Crown, namely, to revoke at it any time. We have here to call especial attention to the important character of this Licence, and of the distinction existing between it and the original Charter. In the first place it is not in any way a confirmation or extension of any former

grant, and well aware that no government of the present day would renew such a charter as that of King Charles II., it has always been the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company to affirm that it requires no renewal; accordingly, the Company, in framing this last grant, took extreme care that the chartered territory described by them as the 'proper territory of the Company,' *should be excepted out of it*. Now the grant or Licence of 1821, which was renewed with the reservation before mentioned, is *expressly limited to such "parts of North America as do not form part of the lands and territories theretofore granted [by Charter], to the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, and not being part of the provinces of Canada, or of any lands belonging to the United States of America."* The extent of territory thus granted under the Licence of 1842, is about 2,500,000 square miles, that claimed under the Charter very little less, comprising together the whole of British America, with the exception of the Canadas.

The entire stock in trade of the Company is not more than 400,000*l.* The yearly revenue they derive from all sources averages 200,000*l.* per annum, the profits upon which amount to 110,000*l.* Now from this large amount of income England derives the enormous rental of 5*s.* yearly! whilst the exports consist of articles of trifling importance, the annual sum of which amounts to about 25,000*l.*, employing three ships of about 300 tons burthen, yearly. Hence it is evident that the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly is not productive of the slightest advantage to the Budget of the mother country.

If England derives no benefit from the establishment of the monopoly, still less advantage is it to the natives of Rupert's Land. The avowed object of the exclusive arrangement of 1821, besides preventing competition in trade, and removing all inducements to the supply of spirituous liquors to the Indians as an article of commerce, was to provide facilities and means for instructing the natives, the Company stipulating to make "due provision for their civilisation and moral and religious improvement." The subjoined Memorial and Petition addressed to the British Government by those natives themselves, will show how far the Company have complied with the terms of their agreement. Nevertheless, in the teeth of notorious facts, on the occasion of the Company's applying for a renewal of their Licence in 1842, Sir George Simpson, as local Governor of the country, submitted a report to the Government (which has been printed by order of the House of Commons), detailing the exertions of the "Company's chaplains, missionaries, and schoolmasters," in civilizing and evangelising the Indians, and describing the improved condition of the native population generally throughout the territory, since the passing of the Grant of 1821.

The following is the Memorial :—
 To the Right Honourable the SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
 THE COLONIES,—

The humble Memorial of the undersigned Delegates from the
 Natives of Rupert's Land, in North America,
 Most respectfully sheweth,—

That your Memorialists are natives of Rupert's Land, North America, entrusted with the duty of presenting the accompanying petition from their fellow-countrymen the Indians, and Half-breeds residing in and near the Colony on the Red River, praying for the redress of certain grievances therein set forth.

That from the harsh administration of the Hudson's Bay Company discontent and misery prevail amongst the natives of Rupert's Land to an unparalleled extent; and your Memorialists are most anxious that her Majesty's Government should, as early as possible, inquire into the condition of the unfortunate people who are compelled to appeal to their Sovereign for protection against the ruinous effects and consequences of the monopoly which the Hudson's Bay Company have so long enjoyed under a charter that, according to some of the highest legal authorities, has long since lost its force. Your Memorialists, trusting, that a wise and paternal government, distinguished for its attachment to a liberal policy and the principles of commercial freedom, will not suffer to pass unheeded the prayers of an oppressed and injured race, proceed to lay before your Lordship the grievances which gave rise to the accompanying petition, and humbly solicit your earnest attention to the same.

They complain in the first instance,—

That by the practice of exclusive trading with the natives, which the Hudson's Bay Company assert is secured to them by a royal Charter, that Company has for nearly the last two hundred years, to the utter impoverishment, if not ruin, of the natives, amassed a princely revenue, which, as your Memorialists believe, now amounts to nearly a quarter of a million sterling, per annum. Though one of the leading objects contemplated by the incorporation of the Company was the introduction of Christianity amongst the Indians and the securing a due provision for their moral, religious, and social improvement, little or none of the vast sums the Company has been permitted to accumulate, has been devoted to such purposes.

That on the contrary, with a view of keeping the natives in a state of utter dependence, and of perpetuating the wandering and precarious life of the hunter, on which they erroneously consider the existence of the fur trade to depend, they have permitted generation after generation of the hapless race consigned to their care to pass their lives in the darkest heathenism. There is not at present,

nor as your Memorialists confidently believe, has there ever been a single Indian school, church, or other establishment for religious or general instruction established by the Company throughout the whole of their extensive territories. What little has been done for the religious and moral improvement of the natives is wholly due to the persevering exertions of the Church Missionary Society, and since the year 1839, of the Wesleyan Society of London. The Church Missionary Society receives no assistance whatever from the Company, and owing to the heavy expenses attending the establishment of Indian missions, its operations are necessarily very circumscribed. What assistance the Wesleyan missionaries receive from the Company, if, indeed, they receive any, your Memorialists are not prepared to say. The other objects for which the Charter was granted, namely, for improving the country by opening up its mineral and agricultural resources, and facilitating the means of internal navigation and transport, so as to fit it for a future colony, have been equally overlooked, with the like view of adding to the aggrandizement of the Company.

That the Company, after having entered into a solemn obligation with the British government to discontinue the supply of spirituous liquors to the Indians, and after having actually abolished the trade in ardent spirits in some districts for obvious purposes, for the first few years, before and after the renewal of their last License, have again introduced this deadly and demoralizing poison, thus undoing the slight amount of good which the missionaries were beginning to effect, and interposing the greatest obstacle to their future success.

That owing to the numerous hunting excursions which the demands of the fur trade render necessary, and to the great slaughter of animals consequent thereon, the only present resources of the country have been gradually diminishing to such an extent, that the larger part of the native population can no longer find the means of supporting life from the produce of the chase, or the natural productions of the soil. In the more northern parts of the country from which all missionaries are rigorously excluded, and where the richest furs are obtained, but where the animals which supply the food of man have almost become extinct, the Indians are exposed to the most frightful destitution. Numbers of them die yearly of famine, while others in the extremity of want and despair are tempted to commit the most revolting crimes to preserve a wretched existence. It is impossible for your Lordship's Memorialists adequately to describe the sufferings of the natives who inhabit these portions of the country, arising from the exorbitant prices demanded by the traders for the wretched and almost valueless articles given in a mockery of exchange for the richest and most valuable furs. Without tents of any kind to protect them from the severity of an arctic climate—unable from their migratory pursuits to abide in per-

manent habitations—half naked, owing to the exorbitant prices demanded for the clothes furnished by the Company, whilst they are, at the same time, restricted from exchanging the produce of their toil with any other parties—kept constantly in the Company's debt, which they spend their whole lives in an ineffectual effort to clear off—exposed yearly to all the horrors of famine, and the attendant crimes of murder and cannibalism—the wretchedness of the people's condition can scarcely admit of addition. The scarcity which prevails in the northern districts is gradually but surely extending to the south, and unless government interpose its paternal authority to wean the Indians from their present wandering habits, and endeavour to turn their attention to agricultural pursuits, the whole of the northern tribes must at no distant period, when the resources of the chase shall have failed them, be subjected to all the horrors of a wide-spread famine, from which they never can emerge.

That from the line of conduct pursued by the Company it does not appear probable to your Lordship's Memorialists, that sufficient precaution will be taken by them to avert so overwhelming an evil; their agents in the country are for the most part men of very limited information, and doubtful exemplars to a people arriving so slowly at a social state. Wholly imbued with the mere spirit of trade, few of them are possessed of those generous sympathies and more enlarged views which are necessary for undertaking and carrying out any comprehensive scheme of social amelioration. Their deity is gold, to obtain which they trample down Christianity and benevolence.

That feeling the utter inadequacy of the remuneration for their furs from the Company, many of the more enterprising of the natives have formed a resolution to export their own produce, and import their own supplies independently of the Company. They urge, that even supposing the Charter were still valid, and that it vests in the Company an exclusive right of trade to Hudson's Bay as against all other traders from Britain, none of its provisions are, or can be binding on the natives to trade with the Company exclusively, or can prevent them from carrying their furs or other property out of the country to the best market. Where this course has been adopted, however, the Company's agents have seized the furs of such parties as refused to sell them at the prices fixed by the Company, and in some instances have imprisoned the recusant natives. Against such gross aggressions on the rights and liberties of the natives your Memorialists most vehemently protest. Being unable to obtain redress from the local courts of the country, your Memorialists feel entitled to claim the protection of the British Government, and humbly intreat your Lordship to take the case into your kind consideration.

It is also the painful duty of your Lordship's Memorialists to advert to the precarious state of the public peace throughout the ter-

ritory, particularly in and about the colony on the Red River. The majority of the Indians and Half-breeds in that district depend mainly on the yearly summer buffalo hunts—the colony itself verging on the boundary line of the United States, the whole of the hunting grounds are in the American territories. From these grounds the American government has warned off the hunters of the Red River in favour of the natives of the plains who are under its protection, and for this purpose detachments of American troops are stationed throughout the plains to warn off all persons intruding from the British side, but at the same time proffering them the alternative of becoming American citizens. The Hudson's Bay Company on the other hand claim whatever is hunted on the British side of the line, distraining the goods and imprisoning the persons of those who refuse to accede to their prices. Owing to these conflicting claims the natives, who are the original owners of the soil, have their energies and hopes completely paralysed, and are doomed to starvation in a land which is their own both by birth and by descent.

Deeply convinced that the present appalling condition of the native population, their ignorance, their barbarism, and the sufferings and crimes consequent thereon, are ascribable to the present system of misgovernment, and also being fully satisfied that the existing evils would be remedied, and the still more fearful ones now pending, averted by the adoption of a system founded upon more humane and enlightened views, your Memorialists most earnestly desire to impress upon your Lordship the solemn and sacred duty of inquiring into the condition of this deeply suffering people (the last remnant of a noble race), before inquiry or remedy prove too late. Hitherto no efforts have been made in their behalf by the Government of this country, to which alone they can properly look for protection and justice. The occasional reports which have from time to time been forwarded to the government of this country, at least such as have been made public, are destitute of truth, and were evidently framed with a view to mislead the colonial authorities, and avert further inquiry. To show this we need only request your Lordship's attention to the reports of Sir George Simpson, and beg of you to contrast them with a work published in 1845, entitled, "The Life and Travels of Thomas Simpson," by his brother Alexander. Though both brothers participated in the profits of the monopoly, and must, therefore, be presumed to be less than impartial witnesses, your Lordship will find that the book (published by Bentley, New Burlington-street), strongly sustains and fully corroborates the statements which we have the honour of laying before you.

The spirit and tendencies of the Hudson's Bay Company are for reasons that will readily suggest themselves, opposed to the spread of information among the native population, and unfortunately they possess but too many facilities for carrying into effect the short-

sighted and pernicious policy by which they have uniformly been guided in their intercourse with the natives. They are without any direct or positive accountability to the legislature of this country, and as regards their operations in the distant region over which they exercise jurisdiction, are practically beyond the reach of public opinion. Their sole aim is avowedly to draw the greatest possible revenue from the country, to attain which the considerations of humanity and religion are overlooked; while, as your Lordship will perceive by the statements now submitted, the lives of the unoffending native race, who, for no fault of their own, and for no reason that can be given, are deprived of their inheritance and their natural rights, and thus of the power of helping themselves, are being virtually sacrificed year by year to the same selfish and iniquitous object. What must be the ultimate fate of this unhappy people under such a system it is as easy to foresee as it is painful to contemplate.

Your memorialists feel assured that upon a due consideration of the statements now submitted, supported as they can be by a weight of testimony which places their accuracy beyond dispute, your Lordship will extend to them that humane and considerate attention to which their great and urgent importance entitles them. What further corroboration in support of the above allegations may be considered necessary your Memorialists are ready to supply, as well as to suggest such remedies as are calculated to remove the evils complained of—such simple remedies as a people both willing and able to help themselves, but deprived of the power, alone require to restore to them the blessings of peace and prosperity, and render them happy, contented, and grateful subjects.

A. K. ISBISTER.
 THOMAS VINCENT.
 JOHN M'LEOD.
 D. V. STEWART.
 JAMES ISBISTER.

A Sixth Memorialist, Mr. SINCLAIR, has been under the necessity of returning to America.

The following is the Petition which has been entrusted to the Memorialists for presentation to her gracious Majesty:—

Nous soussignés les humbles et loyaux sujets de sa Majesté Victoire Reine des Royaumes Unis d'Angleterre, d'Ecosse et d'Irlande, &c., &c., &c., habitant un coin reculé de ses vastes domaines sur la Rivière Rouge Département de la Baye d'Hudson avons osé avec un confiance entière, nous adresser à votre Seigneurie, pour la supplier de déposer au pied du Trône et d'appuyer de son credit les représentations et les demandes que nous exposons avec un humble respect, dans la présente Requête.

Attirés par de pompeuses promesses sur ce point du vaste ter-

ritoire de la Baye d'Hudson, nos pères avoient espéré que les plans de feu Lord Selkirk seroient ponctuellement effectués ; que suivant les contrats en faveur des Colons leurs deurrées, &c., seroient vendues à un prix suffisant fixé dans ces dits contrats, et que les travaux du laboureur ne seroient pas paralisisés par l'impuissance d'en vendre les produits ; Toutes ces promesses ont été eludees toutes ces espéranes ont été frustrees.

Le monopole qui depuis environ cent soixante et seize ans pèse sur nous, va toujours s'appesantissant, au point qu'il ne nous est plus permis de nous entre échanger des pelleteries de notre pays pour des effets importés, ou vice versâ, *sans peine d'être emprisonnés, ou de voir nos effets saisis sans le seul soupçon même qu'on doive les échanger pour des pelleteries.* Cette sévérité a été poussée jusqu'au point de défendre de recevoir du payement pour des vivres procurés à des Indiens PERISSANT DE FAIM, A DES DISTANCES ELOIGNEES DE TOUT SECOURS vu que ce payement ne pouvoit être que des pelleteries, et nonobstant l'assurance de livrer les dites pelleteries au magasin de la Compagnie même, et au prix qu'elle en voudroit donner. Une sévérité si révoltante, pour ne pas dire inhumaine, à irrité tous les esprits, et quoiqu'on fût en partie disposé à souffrir encore longtems pour prévenir les émeutes et éviter les conséquences funeste d'une irritation à peu près générale, ne pouvant plus adresser nos plaintes au Gouverneur de la Compagnie, pour le quel le peuple n'a plus de confiance, nous prenons le seul moyen qui nous reste d'épargner le carnage, et le sang, en déposant au pied du trône nos humbles et respectueuses supplication.

1st. COMME SUJETS BRITANNIQUES NOUS DESIRONS ARDEMMENT ETRE GOUVERNES D'APRES LES PRINCIPES DE CETTE CONSTITUTION QUI REND HEUREUX TOUS LES NOMBREUX SUJETS DE NOTRE AUGUSTE SOUVERAINE.

La justice s'administrant ici par un juge soldé par la Compagnie ; les conseillers qui font les lois étant, ou creatures de la Compagnie, ou intéressés à ne point lui déplaire ; étant tous d'ailleurs, élus par le gouverneur et le Comité de la dite Compagnie, il s'en suit que le peuple éprouve un manque de confiance, et ne croit nullement à la possibilité d'avoir gain de cause en tout ce qui concerneroit la Compagnie, ou un ami, ou un favori di'celle. Cette disposition des esprits, si dangéreuse à la paix et à la tranquillité publique, n'existeroit pas, si le peuple comme ailleurs dans les possessions Britanniques avoit part aux loix qui se font, et si les jurisconsultes étoient indépendants de la Compagnie.

Nous osons humblement émettre la pensée ou nous sommes qui *des juges de paix* ou *Magistrats* choisis parmi ceux que le peuple respecte et considère comme justes, aidés de Jures, seroit un mode de justice qui pourroit encore suffire longtems, ou dumoins jusqu' à ce que les revenus municipaux pussent permettre les frais qu'exigeroit un cours de justice régulier.

2dly. Comme sujets Britanniques, nous desirons et demandons avec instance, que cette liberté de commerce, si nécessaire à la prospérité des États, et si puissamment maintenue par les loix, dans toutes les autres possessions de notre auguste Souveraine nous soit accordée.

Par le monopole accordé à la Compagnie de la Baye d'Hudson, les habitants indigènes ont la pénible imposition de voir exportées toutes les richesses de leur pays au profit exclusif de commerçants étrangers, et tous les Colons se voyent dans la nécessité d'user d'effets importés sans pouvoir faire exporter en échange, aucun des produits de leur pays. Si quelques fois certains commerçants particuliers ont voulu tenter de transporter quelques effets du pays *la Compagnie leur a suscité tant d'embarras qu'il leur a fallu s'en desister*, et toujours au détriment du pays ; sous un pareil regime le peuple est asseroi à une espèce d'esclavage, les efforts les plus energetiques de personnes industrieuses et donnees de talents commerciaux sont neutralisés, et sous cet état de choses, le mécontentement public ne peut qu'aller toujours croissant, jusqu' à ce qu' une explosion funeste à tous les partis s'en suive. Une parole de clémence de la bouche de notre Souveraine nous sauvera de ces dangers, en établissant la joie, et la paix dans notre pays ; puis en donnant au commerce l'énergie qu' il tire de sa liberté déposera sur notre sol le germ de la prospérité.

3dly. Nous supplions aussi qu'il soit accordé au conseil municipal de notre pays de vendre des terres à ceux qui voudroient émigrer de pays étranger au nôtre, et nous demandons instamment que pour un tems et a un taux fixé d' apres le bon plaisir de sa Majesté, une somme soit prise sur cette vente pour améliorer les voies de transport.

Placés au centre de l'Amerique du Nord à environ six cent-milles de la Baye d'Hudson, le cours d'eau qui y communique, est obstrué, en divers endroits par des passages impraticables où tous les effets sont transportés à bras, ce qui exige beaucoup d'hommes, beaucoup de tems, beaucoup de frais, et définitivement rend impossible l'export d'une très grande partie de nos produits.

Nos terres sont fertiles, et aisées à cultiver le laboureur n'attend que l'espoir de pouvoir vendre, pour se livrer avec energie à un travail qui pourroit faire de ce pays un grenier à bled.

Nous sommes pres de la ligue territoriale ; nous pourrions nous ranger sur le territoire voisin, nous y sommes invites ; MAIS NOUS ADMIRONS la sagesse de la Constitution Britannique et nous en desirons les priveleges.

Le désir sincère qu' a notre auguste Reine de rendre tous ses sujets heureux est connu jusqu' ici et au de-la ; nous espérons donc tout de sa clémence. En nous exauçant. Elle fera des heureux et nous priérons, &c."

[Here follow about 1000 signatures.]

Nous soussignes certifions sous serment, que les signatures au dessus ont été donnees librement et volontairement consentiés par chacun des signataires reciproques.

Riviere Rouge, Departement de la Baye d'Hudson, ce Premier Juin, Milhuit Cent Quarante Six.

WILLIAM DEASE,

CHARLES MONTIGNY.

J. BAPTISTE PAYETTE,

CUTHBERT M'GILLIS.

J. LOUIS RIELLE,

“ Membres d'un Comité élu par le peuple.”

For the guidance of the Memorialists the following INSTRUCTIONS, relating more specially to the Natives of the Red River District, were addressed to the Delegate in charge of the Petition :—

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE MESSENGER BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

We, the undersigned members of a Committee elected by the people in order to redact a petition to elect a Messenger, and commit to wrighting instructions to the same in conformity with the desires and unanimously known interests of the people have in-scribed the following observations.

It will be a duty to the Commissary to take the oportunity of every favourable circumstance to give a true state of the manner in which this colony and the country in general is governed ; to expose sincerely the desires of its inhabitants, and the possible improvement for their welfare. He shall make use of moderation speaking of those whose interests are opposed to ours with discretion and in honest terms. He shal have a peculiar care in advancing nothing but that could be duely proved.

He must note previously that the Company having bought from the succession of Lord Silkirk his wrights upon this Colony, we do consider the same Company as being obliged to fulfil the contracts of it, and to promote the prosperity of the said Colony.

He shall represent :—

1st. That several individuals are complaining that the Company have obliged them to pay lands without giving them any contract in legal form, and in spite of their will, the officers of the Company retaining upon the wages of their servants the price of the same lands : which price has been placed not in the municipal trunk [bank], but in that of the Company ; is it, then, that the Company might have the property of the lands ? this appears to us inseparably united to the rights of the crown.

2nd. The Company gives in circulation bills, the exchange thereof cannot be received but in London, a thing which is impos- sible to the greatest number of us ; could we not have a right to

require that exchange of them be done in the country, and in the most central part of the Colony.*

3dly. Already the chief Factor, named *Governor of the Assiniboine*, has made us understand that he might suddenly stop the course of the money papers, which would expose us to loses, and occasionate great difficulties in our transactions. In order to avoid a danger of which we have threatened, and that the least pretext in a quick minded man might lead to execution, the Commissary shall invoke the influence of his Lordship in order to obtain that silver money be put in course in this country; the Bank-houses, or Company-house being too far off from us.

4ly. Le portage of certain goods on the Company's ship having been refused under eluding pretexts, and with the visible end of discouraging; could not the Company be obliged to take on their bond everything that would be exported from the Colony at the risk and expences of private traders? Seeing that the Company's exclusive right to the only important branch of commerce until now; take off for another ship a chance of an advantageous load, when it would consist in articles exclusive from furs.

5ly. That if the Company must have for some time again the exclusive right in the trade of this country, would it not be a duty of justice that they would be obliged to purchase at reasonable prices all that the inhabitants have to sell, and does it not look unjust that having kept exclusively for them all the advantages, they could not be obliged to take the changes?

6ly. The same exclusive right would seem to put us in reason to require from the Company to bring to the shop of the Colony the things necessary, and in a sufficient quantity for the want of the inhabitants then it is common to us wanting, things the most important to life in this country, viz., gunpowder, thread for nets, tea, &c., the same articles being sometimes taken off from the Colony shop to be transported to trade-posts, afar, and even on the American territory, and thus to the great discontent of the settlers.

7ly. We think the Company is guilty of an abuse in extending their claims as far as to forbid to the inhabitants of this country to exchange between themselves, furs; and we believe that they have acted unjustly by confining in goal individuals who were not attempting, who had not even the idea to take off from the country the furs that they had, and also in putting under a caution and

* The Company allow no gold or silver money to circulate in their territories; what little finds its way into the country from the United States is carefully drained off every year and shipped to England. The only circulating medium consists in promissory notes, which, by a wretched mockery, are payable in *London only*, to people who can never go there. As a great proportion of the Company's retired servants settle in the Red River Colony their hard earnings are paid off in these notes. By the artifice of making them payable in London only, the Company are enabled to clear off all demands upon them in the shape of servants' wages for the mere cost of the printing of the notes.

seizing the goods imported under that pretext that they were intended to be exchanged for furs. We had believed that in law we could not be punished for the intention, but the infraction of the law only could deserve punishment.

8ly. That the wise laws forbidding to deliver intoxicating liquors to the Indians being in force amongst the settlers, we feel it repugnant to see an exception for the Company in the penalties of that law; that it would be forbidden to the settlers to sell beer to the Indians under penalty of fine, and that the Company be free to sell strong liquors to the same Indians. That partiality excites indignation against the legislators.

9ly. The Commissioner shall beseech his Lordship to supply by his credit to the wants of formalities from the part of a people which lives too far off to be aware of them, and to have the goodness to do so that the attention of our good Queen be rather fixed upon the truth of our observations and the sincere intention that we have to keep the peace, and spare the life of her devoted subjects.

In support of the foregoing statements we append the following extracts from the *published works* of Mr. Alexander Simpson and the Rev. Herbert Beaver relating to the condition of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, corroborating in the strongest manner the grievances so simply and temperately complained of by the petitioners. Mr. Simpson was 14 years in the service of the Company, in which he rose to be a Chief Trader, or partner, and is still, it is believed, a shareholder in the concern. The Rev. Mr. Beaver resided for some time on the N.W. coast (the Oregon territory), and is described by Sir George Simpson as "*another* of the Company's Chaplains, under whom missions and schools had been established at *several* of their depots or posts on the Columbia River." It is but fair to hear Mr. Beaver's own account of his interesting labours; and it only remains to add that both these gentlemen left the country *subsequently* to the date of the Reports of Sir George Simpson and Sir J. H. Pelly, with which their statements are here contrasted:—

Extracts from the Reports of Sir J. H. Pelly and Sir G. Simpson, Governors of the H. B. Company, submitted to the British Government on applying for the renewal of the exclusive License of the Company, in 1837.—
Printed by order of the House of Commons, Aug. 8, 1842:—

Extracts from the Life of Thomas Simpson, by his brother Alexander Bentley, New Burlington-street, 1845; and a Letter of the Rev. Herbert Beaver relating to the Indians on the N.W. coast of America, to the Aborigines Protection Society.—
Tracts Relating to the Aborigines. Marsh, 84, Houndsditch, 1842:—

"During the competition in trade previous to the year 1821 (when the exclusive management fell into the hands of the H. B. Company), it was found

"This extensive field for missionary enterprise [the H. B. territories], was *unoccupied* until the year 1839, when the attention of the Wesleyan Conference

impossible to take any effectual measure towards the civilisation or moral and religious improvement of the native population. Since that period the Company have established six Protestant missions under the management of their chaplains, at Red River Settlement, where there are likewise two Catholic missions and 13 schools."—*Report of Sir G. Simpson*, p. 16.

"It is gratifying to be able to say that the zealous endeavours of our missionaries have been most successful."—*Ib.*

"The Hudson's Bay Company have likewise established missions and schools at several of the principal depots or posts on the Columbia River, west side of the Rocky Mountains, under the management of another of their chaplains."—[Mr. Beaver, the *only* clergyman who ever entered that part of the Company's territories. His *own* somewhat different account of his labours will be found in the opposite column.]

"We are using our utmost endeavours in every other part of the country, where the climate and soil admit of it, to collect the Indians into villages, and direct their attention to agriculture, as the first step towards civilization."—*Ib.*

"I have no hesitation in saying that the native population of the countries through which the Hudson's Bay Company's business extends, never derived any real benefit from their intercourse with the whites until the fur trade became exercised under the existing licence. In proof of this the population of some of the tribes previous to that time sensibly diminishing, *is now increasing*."—*Reports of Sir G. S.*, p. 17.

"The employment we afford at those seasons to many of the Indians, whereby they are brought into frequent com-

of Canada was directed towards it."—*A. Simpson*, p. 432.

"From time to time I reported to the Governor and Committee of the Company in England, and to the Governor and Council of the Company abroad, the result of my observations for an immediate attempt at the introduction of civilization and Christianity among one or more of the aboriginal tribes, but my earnest representations were neither attended to nor acted upon.

"Although the Hudson's Bay Company owes its entire prosperity, nay, its very existence, to commerce with the natives of the well nigh unlimited territory over which it exercises a nearly uncontrolled sway, YET LITTLE HAS HITHERTO BEEN DONE BY THE COMPANY ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS, AND NOTHING ON THE WEST SIDE, towards advancing in the scale of creation the innumerable tribes of untold rational and immortal beings, whose most important destinies have for the last 170 years been placed in its hands."—*Beaver*, p. 16.

"With the exception of those placed on the confines of civilization, and the few located at Red River Colony, none have, until a very recent period, heard of Christianity, save, perhaps, accidentally, from traders whose lives but little accorded with its precepts."—*A. Simpson*, p. 431.

"God knows that I speak the conviction of my mind, and may He forgive me if I speak unadvisedly when I state my firm belief that the *life of an Indian was never yet by a trapper put in competition with a beaver skin!*"—*Beaver*, p. 19.

"I cannot close this description of the character and condition of a much injured, much neglected, and therefore, RAPIDLY DECREASING branch of the great family of mankind, without quoting the following remarks on the proper conduct of white men towards savages (of all regions), which were addressed to me by an associated body of French philanthropists (far different, alas! is the general conduct of the French nation).—*A. Simpson* p. 432.

"It is an observation never more truly exemplified than at the Company's settlements, that whenever the Gospel

munication and intercourse with the officers and servants, *tends towards their gradual civilisation and improvement*; and we find our own interests promoted by an equitable and liberal system of trade and management."—*Report of Sir G. Simpson.*

"On the banks of the Columbia we are directing our attention to agriculture on a large scale.

"I have also the satisfaction to say that the native population are beginning to profit by our example, as many formerly dependent on hunting and fishing now maintain themselves by the produce of the soil."—*Report of Sir G. Simpson.*

"The employment we afford at those seasons to many of the Indians, whereby they are brought into frequent communication and intercourse with our officers and servants, tends towards their gradual civilization and

has been carried among modern heathen nations there simultaneously has vice before unknown, been imported. Assuredly the Indians saw no recommendation of religion in the example of the generality of the Company's servants, with whom its precepts seemed to be in total abeyance."—*Beaver*, p. 18.

"An awful fatality seems to overhang the retiring members of the Company, a punishment for the unprincipled and licentious lives they have led."—*A. Simpson*, p. 81.

"I also became acquainted with many acts of cruelty and murder committed upon the natives by persons in the Company's service, some of which I narrated by letter to the Deputy Governor of the Company at home, and to the Governor of the Company's Foreign Possessions, in the hope that a stop might be put to the recurrence of these horrible atrocities; but from both I incurred a rebuke for my undue interference in matters which did not professionally concern me."—*Beaver*, p. 16.

"One great cause of the immorality at the place where I was stationed, and a consequent barrier to the improvement and conversion of the Indians was the holding of some of them in a STATE OF SLAVERY by persons of all classes in the Company's service, and by those who have retired from it, and become settlers on the rivers Willamette and Cowlitz, but over whom the Company retain authority. The women themselves, who were living with the lower class of the Company's servants, were much in the condition of SLAVES, being purchased of their Indian proprietors or relations, and not unfrequently resold amongst each other by their purchasers. But I forbear to add more upon this part of my subject, having communicated full information respecting it to the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Convention by whom my communication has been published.—*Beaver.*

"With respect to the furs of that country, to rob their lawful owner of them by taking possession of them either *with no payment, or with a most inadequate one*, is surely not a legitimate method of teaching him their proper

improvement; and we find our own interests promoted by an equitable and liberal system of trade and management.”
—Report of Sir G. Simpson.

“The principal benefit the Company derive from the exclusive licence of trade is the peaceable occupation of their own proper territory, from which they draw nearly the whole of the profits of their trade, and for the protection of which they have a right to look to government in common with the rest of her Majesty’s subjects, as the trade of the country embraced in the royal Licence is, as yet, of very little benefit to them, and affords greater advantages to the mother country in the employment of shipping, and in the revenue arising from imports and exports, than the Company derive from it.” *—Sir J. H. Pelly’s Report, p. 26.

The following extracts from works of an earlier date, taken in connexion with the foregoing statements of Beaver and Simpson show that the policy of the Hudson’s Bay Company towards the natives, has been throughout such as above described by these authors:—

“The Company find the profits arising from that inconsiderable part of the produce of this country which they have monopolised, so enormous, that, while they are resolved to be undisturbed in the possession, they can have no motive to increase them, but are rather induced to prevent this as an evil that would endanger the loss of the whole. From hence, perhaps, proceeds that vigorous exertion of their art and power to keep all their servants except the chief factors and the captains of their ships, totally ignorant both of the country and trade; hence their treatment of the natives, which so far from aiming at instructing their minds, and reforming their manners, is made up of cruelty to their persons, impositions upon their ignorance or their necessity, and a fomentation of a spirit of discord among them that in time must destroy them all.”—Robson’s Account of a Six Years’ Residence in Hudson’s Bay, 8vo. London, 1752. P. 74.

“During the long time in which the Company have been in pos-

* The Company annually fit out one ship, of about 300 tons burthen, to the territories here spoken of, and from it are derived those “great advantages to the mother country, in the employment of shipping,” which Sir John Pelly describes. As there is no duty on furs, and all the exciseable articles sent out to the country are purchased *in bond*, the total revenue Great Britain derives “from exports and imports,” and every other source, amounts to the sum of five shillings, annually paid as “Rent” into her Majesty’s Treasury, every 1st of June.

use and value. Of articles bartered by the Company for peltry and other native produce, one half may be classed as useless, one quarter as pernicious, and the remainder as of doubtful utility.”—Beaver, p. 10.

“The prices paid to the natives for their furs are, in general, exceedingly small. Throughout the whole of the protected territories, the value of goods bartered for furs is certainly under one-twentieth of the value of these furs in England.”—A. Simpson, p. 427.

“The entire value of all the furs and other articles traded by the Company from the Indians in all its territories and possessions, average less than 200,000*l.* per annum. In one year it amounted to 211,000*l.*, and the nett profits for that year were declared at 119,000*l.*!!!”—*ib.* p. 428.

session, they have not once attempted to civilize the manners or inform the understandings of the natives; neither instructed them in the great principles and duties of piety."—*Ib.* p. 82.

"The instances of neglect and abuse of the natives are so gross that they would scarcely gain credit even among uncivilized barbarians who never heard of the mild precepts of Christianity. Besides the facts already mentioned, the following one was well attested by the servants of the Bay, and was also produced in evidence before the Committee [of the House of Commons]:—An Indian boy at Moose Factory, being taught to read and write through the humanity and indulgence of a governor there, wrote over to the Company for leave to come to England, in order that he might be baptized, but upon the receipt of his request, which any man who had the least sense of religion, and the least regard for the spiritual happiness of a fellow creature, would with joy have complied with, an order was sent to the governor to take the boy's books from him, and turn him out of the factory, with an express prohibition against any Indian's being instructed for the future. This was the source of much affliction to the poor boy, who died soon after, with a penitence and devotion that would have done honour to his masters. *But from whence can such preposterous and unnatural behaviour take its rise, unless from the apprehension that if the natives were properly instructed and made converts to Christianity they would all claim the privileges of British subjects, and apply to Britain to be supported in them?* The Company, therefore, to prevent their suffering a remote evil as traders, have violated their indispensable duty as men and Christians."—*Robson*, p. 77.

"When we recollect that this country has been in the hands of an incorporated Company for upwards of 113 years, and compare the few discoveries that have been made during that period with those made in other parts—when we reflect how little we are acquainted with its soil or productions, and how ignorant we are with respect to its capability of improvement—when we further consider that no care has been taken to cultivate a reciprocal friendship with remote nations of Indians; but on the contrary, that those we are already acquainted with have been vitiated by the introduction of spirituous liquors, and disgusted by ill-usage; such reflections naturally excite in the bosom of every one that has the good of their country at heart, a wish that so extensive and improveable a country were in the possession of those who would take more pains to render it more beneficial to the mother country."—*Umfreville's Present State of Hudson's Bay*, p. 102. London, 1790.

The following instance of barbarity, related by Lieutenant Chappell, R.N., of H. M. S. *Rosamond*, in his "*Narrative of a Voyage to Hudson's Bay*," would appear incredible, did it not rest, to use his own expression, on "the most indubitable authority:—"

“When first the Européans [the agents of the Hudson’s Bay Company], went to settle at Richmond [a whaling station on the coast, which was shortly afterwards abandoned], the Esquimaux, who reside about this part, kept them in a continued state of alarm all the winter by lurking about the woods in their sledges drawn by dogs. At length an English boy was missing from the settlement, and after some difficulty, two Esquimaux were seized and confined in separate apartments. In order to recover the absent youth the settlers made use of a stratagem. A musket was discharged in a remote apartment, and the settlers entering the room in which one of the Esquimaux was confined, they informed him by signs that his comrade had been put to death for decoying away the boy; and they gave him to understand at the same time that he must prepare to undergo the same fate, unless he would faithfully pledge himself to restore the absentee. The Esquimaux naturally promised everything, and on being set at liberty he made the best of his way into the woods, and of course was never afterwards heard of. They kept the other native for some time a prisoner: at length he tried to effect his escape by boldly seizing the sentinel’s firelock at night, but the piece accidentally going off he was so terrified at the report that they easily replaced him in confinement; yet either the loss of liberty, a supposition that his countryman had been murdered, or that he was himself reserved for some cruel death, deprived the poor wretch of reason. As he became exceedingly troublesome the settlers held a conference as to the most eligible mode of getting rid of him; and it being deemed good policy to deter the natives from similar offences by making an example, they accordingly shot the poor maniac in cold blood, without having given themselves the trouble to ascertain whether he was really guilty or innocent.”—*Narrative of a Voyage to Hudson’s Bay*, by Lieut. Chappell, R.N., p. 156. London, 1817.

The instances of similar atrocity which may be adduced would fill a volume, but limited space will not admit of more than a concluding extract from the work of Mr. Beaver, already alluded to, with which these appalling details will be closed:—

“About the middle of the summer 1836, and shortly before my arrival at Vancouver, six Indians were wantonly and gratuitously murdered by a party of trappers and sailors, who landed for the purpose, from one of the Company’s vessels, on the coast somewhere between the mouth of the river Columbia and the confines of California. Having on a former occasion read the particulars of this horrid massacre, as I received them from an eye witness, before a meeting of the Aborigines’ Society, I will not now repeat them. To my certain knowledge the circumstance was brought officially before the authorities of Vancouver, by whom no notice was taken of it, and the same party of trappers, with the same leader, one of the most infamous murderers of a murderous fra-

ternity, is annually sent to the same vicinity to perform, if they please, other equally tragic scenes.

"In the former part of the same year I was credibly informed that the same party killed one Indian, wounded another, supposed mortally, and threw a child into a fire, in consequence of a quarrel respecting a knife, which was afterwards found upon one of themselves. And during the year before they put four Indians to death for stealing their horses, which might be pleaded as some excuse for the brutality, but that they afterwards killed ten or twelve more in cold blood, and set fire to their village.

"Since writing the above," he adds at the end of his communication, "I have learned from good authority, that in the month of August, 1840, an Indian was hanged near the mouth of the Columbia River, and several others shot, and their village set on fire by a party in the employment of the Hudson's Bay Company, under the command of chief factor M'Loughlin, who led them from Fort Vancouver, thus indiscriminately to revenge the death of a man who lost his life in an affray while curing salmon."

Do not these things, as Mr. Beaver himself elsewhere asks, imperatively demand inquiry and interference? Is not such treatment as has been narrated of their red brethren, unbecoming to persons who profess the religion of the Prince of Peace, and to persons who, ignorant themselves of the precepts of Christianity, may be in the service of such professors?

PRICES PAID TO THE INDIANS FOR THEIR FURS.

Sir J. H. Pelly, in his Report to the Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade, already quoted, states that the "trade of the country embraced in the royal Licence is, as yet, of very little benefit to the Company," and affords greater advantage to the mother country than to them. The annexed Tariff, exhibiting at once the articles supplied, and the prices paid, to the Indians inhabiting that territory, for their furs, will show, that whatever may be the cause of the limited profits derived from this trade it cannot be attributed to any undue liberality in the remuneration afforded to the natives. The Tariff here given is that, with a few trifling local modifications, employed over the whole of the Licensed country east of the Rocky Mountains, embracing a very great extent of territory.

It may be mentioned that 33 1-3d per cent. on the prime cost of the goods is considered by the Company to cover the expenses of freight, &c., to the country. The selling prices of the different skins are extracted from a Table given by Mr. Murray, in his work on British North America, in the series of the *Edinburgh Cabinet Library*, based on a list "obligingly furnished by the Company themselves," as a fair indication of the average prices of furs in the market.

A comparison of this Tariff with the earlier lists of Umfreville and others, shows anything but an improvement in the hard terms which, under the circumstances of the country, may be said to be forced on the Indians.

TARIFF EMPLOYED IN THE TERRITORY EMBRACED WITHIN THE ROYAL LICENCE,
SITUATED EAST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

Prime Cost.	Articles supplied to the Indians.	Beaver Skins.		Martin Skins.		Silver Fox Skins.		Lynx Skins.		Other Skins.	
		No.	£ s. d.	No.	£ s. d.	No.	£ s. d.	No.	£ s. d.	No.	£ s. d.
22 0 0	1 Gum	20	32 10 0	60	46 10 0	5	50 0 0	20	20 0 0	20	23 10 0
12 1 4	1 Gill of Powder.	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	4	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
1 1 1	18 Lenden Butlers	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	0	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
1 1 1	8 Charges of Shot	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	0	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
1 1 1	10 Gun Flints	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	0	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
1 6 0	1 Axe	1	4 17 6	9	6 19 6	3	7 10 0	3	3 0 0	1	3 10 6
1 6 0	1 Copper Kettle (6 gal.)	16	26 0 0	48	37 4 0	0	40 0 0	16	16 0 0	16	18 16 0
2 2 2	1 Fire Steel	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	0	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
4 4 4	1 Scalping Knife	2	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	0	2 10 0	2	2 0 0	2	2 7 0
6 6 6	1 File (8 inch)	2	3 5 0	6	4 13 0	0	5 0 0	2	2 0 0	2	2 7 0
9 9 9	Tobac. box & bunn-glass	2	3 5 0	6	4 13 0	0	5 0 0	2	2 0 0	2	2 7 0
2 2 2	1 Common Horn Comb	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
2 2 2	8 Awtis	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
2 2 2	1 Dozen Brass Buttons	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	2	2 0 0	2	2 7 0
3 3 3	12 Brass Finger Rings	1	3 5 0	6	4 13 0	0	5 0 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
3 3 3	6 Clay Tobacco Pipes	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
1 4 4	1 Paper Mounted Mirror	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
10 10 10	1 lb. Beads	6	9 15 0	18	13 19 0	0	15 0 0	6	6 0 0	6	7 1 3
3 3 3	6 oz. Tobacco	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
5 9 3	1 Blanket (3 point) plain	10	16 5 0	30	23 5 0	0	25 0 0	10	10 0 0	10	11 15 0
7 0 0	ditto striped	12	19 10 0	36	27 18 0	0	30 0 0	12	12 0 0	12	14 2 0
12 5 5	Mart's Slop Coat (large)	12	19 10 0	36	27 18 0	0	30 0 0	12	12 0 0	12	14 2 0
5 3 3	Boy's ditto	5	8 2 6	15	11 12 6	6	12 10 0	5	5 0 0	5	5 17 6
12 5 5	6 Yards Gartering	12	19 10 0	36	27 18 0	0	30 0 0	12	12 0 0	12	14 2 0
6 6 6	1 Pair of Trowsers	1	14 12 6	27	20 18 6	6	22 10 0	1	9 0 0	9	10 11 6
1 9 9	1 Shirt (Cotton)	3	4 17 6	9	6 19 6	6	7 10 0	3	3 0 0	3	3 10 6
4 3 3	1 Handkerchief (Cotton)	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
3 3 3	1 oz. Vermilion	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6
4 4 4	1 Pint of Rum (watered)	1	1 12 6	3	2 6 6	6	2 10 0	1	1 0 0	1	1 3 6

1 Silver Fox Skin is equivalent to 4 Beaver Skins.

The subjoined document has never before appeared in print, its existence having been not even suspected by the British Government. It was passed in the Second Year of the Reign of William and Mary, A. D. 1690, and was intituled,—

“AN ACT FOR CONFIRMING TO THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY TRADING TO HUDSON’S BAY THEIR PRIVILEGES AND TRADE.”

(Copied verbatim from the Rolls of Chancery.)

“Forasmuch as his late Majesty King Charles the Second, by his letters patent or Charter, under the Great Seal of England, bearing date the second day of May, in the two-and-twentieth year of his reign, reciting, or taking notice, that his then Highness Prince Rupert, Christopher Duke of Albemarle, William Earl of Craven, and divers other lords therein particularly named had, at their own great costs and charges, undertaken an expedition to Hudson’s Bay, in the north-west parts of America, for the discovery of a new passage into the South Seas, and for finding some trade for furs, minerals, and other considerable commodities, and that by such their undertaking they had made such discoveries whereby might probably arise much advantage to his said Majesty and this kingdom; for which, and for other reasons and motives in the said Charter mentioned, his said late Majesty was graciously pleased thereby to incorporate, create, and make the said Prince Rupert, Duke of Albemarle, Earl of Craven, and other the lords and persons therein particularly named, and such others as should be admitted into the Society (as therein is mentioned), one body corporate and politic in deed and name, by the name of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson’s Bay, and by that name to have perpetual succession, and to sue and be sued, take, purchase, or grant; and by the said letters patent or Charter of Incorporation provision was made, as well for the appointment and constitution of the first and present as well as for the choosing, appointing, and admitting of all future governors, deputy-governors, committees, members, and officers of the said Company, and for the making of laws, constitutions, and ordinances, and for the government of the said Company and trade, and otherwise, and the sole trade and commerce of all these seas, streights, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks, and sounds, in whatsoever latitude they shall be, that are within the entrance of the streights commonly called Hudson’s Streights, together with all the lands and the territories upon the countries, coasts, and confines of the seas, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks, and sounds aforesaid, which were not then actually possessed by or granted to any of his said late Majesty’s subjects, or possessed by the subjects of any other Christian prince or state, with divers and sundry privileges, liberties, jurisdictions, franchises, powers, and authorities to punish offenders, and to sue for and recover penalties with other powers, and authorities, matters, and

things, in the said letters patent or Charter of Incorporation mentioned and expressed, were thereby granted to and vested in the same said Company and their successors for ever in such sort, manner, and form as in and by the said Charter or letters patent, and enrolment thereof, is mentioned and expressed, and as thereby more fully appears. AND FORASMUCH as the said Governor and Company at their great charges and with much difficulty and hazard have settled and made great improvements of the trade to the said seas, streights, and places aforesaid, which as now and for several years past hath been found to be useful and profitable to this kingdom and the navigation thereof for furs, minerals, and other considerable commodities; and it appearing that the said trade cannot be carried on or managed so advantageously either to the honour or interest of this realm as in a company and with a joint stock, and IT BEING NECESSARY THAT SUCH A COMPANY SHOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT AND UNDOUBTED POWERS, and authorities, privileges, and liberties, to manage, order, and carry on the said trade, and to make bye-laws, orders, rules, and constitutions for the due management and regulation as well of the said Company as trade, and for the punishment of offenders, and recovering of forfeitures and penalties, which cannot be so effectually done as by authority of parliament: BE IT THEREFORE ENACTED by the King and Queen's most excellent Majesties, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the present Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, and their successors shall at all times from henceforth stand, continue, and be a body politic and corporate in deed and name, by the name aforesaid, and according to the purport and effect of the said letters patent or Charter herein before mentioned; and that the said letters patent or Charter hereinbefore mentioned, bearing date the said second day of May, in the two-and-twentieth year of the reign of his said late Majesty King Charles the Second, and all things therein contained, be, and by virtue of this present Act shall be from henceforth ratified, established, and confirmed unto the present Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, and to their successors for ever, and also that the said Governor and Company and their successors shall and may have, do, use, exercise and enjoy all and singular, the liberties, privileges, powers, authorities, matters and things in the said letters patent or Charter mentioned to be granted to them, and also that the said letters patent or Charter, and all and every the liberties, franchises, immunities, privileges, jurisdictions, powers, authorities, royalties, hereditaments, matters and things whatsoever, and of what nature or kind soever thereby given, granted, or demitted, or mentioned to be given, granted or demitted to the said Prince Rupert, Duke of Albemarle, Earl of Craven and other the lords and persons therein particularly named,

and thereby incorporated, and to the Governor and Company thereby created, made or erected, and to their successors, and to all governors, deputy governors, committees, and other members, officers and servants, of or upon the said governor and company for the time being, and their successors, or otherwise. **HOWSOEVER,** with and under such restraints and prohibitions, and subject and liable to such forfeitures and remedies for RECOVERING thereof, as in the said Charter are contained, shall from henceforth be good and effectual, and available in the law, and to all intents, constructions, and purposes to the aforesaid **NEW GOVERNOR AND COMPANY** and their successors for evermore, and shall and may be by the **NEW GOVERNOR AND COMPANY** and their successors from time to time for ever hereafter holden and enjoyed, and put in execution after and according to the form, words, sentences, purport, effect and true meaning of the said letters patent or Charter, and that as amply, fully, and largely, to all intents, constructions, and purposes, as if the same letters patent or Charter, and the general matters and things therein mentioned, and thereby granted or mentioned to be granted, were word for word recited and set down at large in this present Act of Parliament, any law, statute, usage, custom, or other matter or thing to the contrary notwithstanding. **PROVIDED ALWAYS,** and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said Governor and Company shall make at least two public sales of Coat Beaver in every year, and not exceeding four, and that they shall proportion the same into lots each of about 100*l.* sterling, but not exceeding 200*l.* value; and that in the intervals of public sales the said Company may not sell Coat Beaver by private contract, and at any lower price than it was set up at the last public sale, and that the Coat Beaver now in the Company's hands shall be liable to the same rules. **PROVIDED ALWAYS THAT THIS ACT SHALL CONTINUE AND BE IN FORCE FOR THE TIME OF SEVEN YEARS, AND FROM THENCE TO THE END OF THE NEXT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT AND NO LONGER."**

Mr. Robson gives the following account of the passing of the Act, which will be found to perfectly explain away any contradictions apparent in it:—

"It being alleged in the Committee [of the House of Commons], that the Company's Charter was confirmed by Act of Parliament, the Lords' and Commons' Journals were inspected, from which it appeared, that in 1690, the Company, sensible that they had no legal title to their monopoly, petitioned the Commons for a bill to confirm their Charter, upon account of the great losses they had sustained from the French, and their having no right to restrain English interlopers.

"Accordingly, a bill for a perpetual confirmation was brought into the House, but upon a petition against the bill from the furriers, and afterwards from the northern Colonies of America, some of which came too late to be heard, at the third reading a rider was

proposed to make it temporary, and upon a division whether for seven or ten years, it was carried for the latter; but the Lords returning it amended, by inserting seven years instead of ten, the Commons agreed to the amendment, and passed the bill. The Commons, however, to prevent their being surprised into such an act for the future, came to a resolution, which was made a standing Order of the House, that no petition should be received for confirming the Charter unless the Charter itself was annexed to the petition.

“The Act for confirming the Company’s Charter,” he continues, “expired above 50 years ago. *They have not had the assurance to apply for a renewal, and yet have been mean enough to keep the absolute possession of what they knew was become the property of the nation.*”

The foregoing statements are sufficiently indicative of the lamentable results of the monopoly established by the Hudson’s Bay Company, both with reference to the natives of Rupert’s Land, and the interests of the mother country; and it is sincerely to be desired that the legislature should open its eyes to the policy of introducing a healthier system, namely, by throwing open trade to those territories over which the Company exercise their illegal jurisdiction. The advantages of such a course are manifest; first, in the facilities which the occupancy of settlements on the sea-coast would afford to our rapidly declining whale fisheries; secondly, in the opening of a new channel for British enterprise and employment of capital, by working the valuable mines of silver, lead, and copper, especially the two latter, in which the country is known to abound; thirdly, by the establishing of salmon, porpoise, and seal fisheries along the coast; fourthly, by leasing, or letting as pasture lands, until the country could be brought into more general cultivation, the extensive plains which now support thousands of droves of wild buffaloes and horses; 5thly, the establishing of a good export trade in wood, tallow, hides, wool, corn, and other natural productions of the country—sources of revenue which the Company wholly neglect, modestly contenting themselves with the enormous profits accruing to them from their exclusive trade in furs. But apart from the political and commercial importance of the subject to the British government, the condition of the natives is even more deserving of its attention. When we assert that they are steeped in ignorance, debased in mind, and crushed in spirit, that by the exercise of an illegal claim over the country of their forefathers, they are deprived of the natural rights and privileges of free born men, that they are virtually slaves, as absolutely as the unredeemed negro population of the slave states of America—that by a barbarous and selfish policy, founded on a love of lucre, their affections are alienated from the British name and government, and they themselves shut out from civilisation, and debarred from every incentive threto—that the same heinous system is gradually effacing whole tribes from the soil on which they were born and nurtured, so that a few years hence not one man from among them will be left to point out where the bones of his ancestors repose—when we assert all this in honest, simple truth, does it not behove every Christian man to demand that the British legislature should not continue to incur the fearful responsibility of permitting the extinction of these helpless, forlorn thousands of their fellow creatures, by lending its countenance to a monopoly engendering so huge a mountain of human misery. For the honour of our nature we trust it may not be—for the honour of this great country, we pray it will not be; and, sincerely trust we, some few voices will respond earnestly, Amen.