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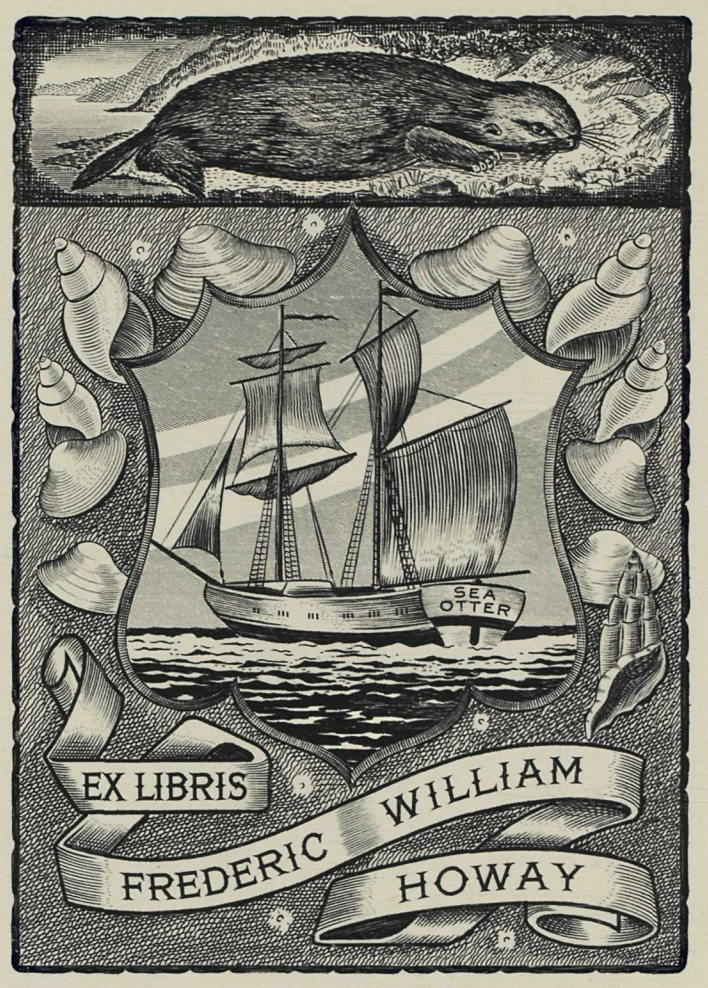

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THE

HUDSON'S BAY QUESTION.

[FROM THE "COLONIAL INTELLIGENCER."]

LONDON:
W. TWEEDIE, 337, STRAND.

1857.

NOTICE.

It is hoped that the following articles, re-published from the current number of "The Colonial Intelligencer," will induce the reader to devote his thoughtful attention to a question which is of vital importance alike to the honour of Great Britain, to the interests of Canada, and to the very existence of the Indian tribes of the Hudson's-Bay territories. Those who desire thoroughly to master the subject, should read Fitzgerald's work on the Hudson's-Bay Company (price One Shilling), some copies of which may still be obtained from Stanford, Charing Cross.

F. W. C.

London, *Nov.* 1857.

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THE HUDSON'S-BAY QUESTION.

We announced in our last Number that the Select Committee on the Hudson's-Bay territories had concluded the examination of witnesses, and that the public inquiry was, in fact, at an end. It now became necessary for the Committee to sit with closed doors, with a view to a full consideration of the evidence, and the preparation of a report founded thereupon. We are unable to enter into detailed particulars of the various discussions and votes which attended the proceedings of the Committee during this stage of the inquiry; but the Special Correspondent of the *Toronto Globe* ("F. W. C.") in a letter dated the 7th of August, gives some account of what transpired. He says—

"Mr. Labouchere's Report, which was eminently favourable to the Company, was prepared by Mr. Merivale, of the Colonial office; while that which contained the views of the opposite party was taken charge of by Mr. Christy. Both Reports were printed for the use of members, and they were discussed, paragraph by paragraph, during three successive meetings. The Committee kept amending and dividing, first taking points from one Report and then from the other, as each party became successful. The result, was the adoption of a third Report, founded on the two draft Reports, which will not be so favourable to the Company as Mr. Labouchere's, and not so hostile as Mr. Christy's. During the first day's discussion, our side was decidedly more successful than the other. Six or seven paragraphs of Mr. Labouchere's Report were voted *out*, two of Mr. Christy's were voted *in*, and the remainder were left over for the next day's discussion. Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Roebuck, Lord Goderich, and Mr. Grogan, having stated that they could not attend the next meeting, it was agreed that the Committee should not meet on the day first intended, and on that distinct understanding these four gentlemen left a little before four o'clock. They had scarcely got into the street, when Sir John Pakington arrived, and he said that the proposed change would be inconvenient to him, and asked to have the day again changed to the day first intended. This monstrous proposition was put to the vote, and carried, the majority alleging that the proposed change would be also inconvenient to them. This shameful manœuvre of course succeeded; and at the next meeting Messrs. Labouchere and Ellice had it all their own way. Mr. Christy, and his supporters who were present, voted and divided upon every point, but, despite their gallant resistance, the rest of Mr. Labouchere's paragraphs were adopted, and the Company was so far successful. I do not believe that, in the whole history of Parliamentary Government, you can fix upon a more dishonourable act than that which I have described."*

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* We regret to state that undue partiality to the Company was manifested by Mr. Labouchere in selecting the members of the House of Commons who should sit upon the Committee. One illustration of what we mean is thus stated by the Correspondent of the *Globe*: "The only two members of the old Committee, who were defeated during the general election, were Mr. Bell and the Hon. Arthur Gordon. These gentlemen evidently regarded the Company's pretensions with an unfriendly eye, and were prepared to consider the question, as between Canada and the Company, on its actual merits. Who were put in their places? Why, Mr. Matheson, a large stockholder in the Company

Comment on this statement is wholly unnecessary.

On the 21st August the passed Report was published in the columns of the *Morning Post*. The following is a copy of this remarkable document, the historical interest and importance of which cannot be exaggerated.

"1. The near approach of the period when the licence of exclusive trade granted, in 1838, for 21 years, to the Hudson's-Bay Company, over that north-western portion of British America which goes by the name of the Indian Territory, must expire, would alone make it necessary that the condition of the whole of the vast regions which are under the administration of the Company should be carefully considered; but there are other circumstances which, in the opinion of your Committee, would have rendered such a course the duty of the Parliament and Government of this country.

"2. Among these, your Committee would especially enumerate the growing desire of our Canadian fellow-subjects that the means of extension and regular settlement should be afforded to them over a portion of this territory; the necessity of providing suitably for the administration of the affairs of Vancouver's Island; and the present condition of the settlement which has been formed on the Red River.

"3. Your Committee have received much valuable evidence on these and other subjects connected with the inquiry which has been entrusted to them, and especially have had the advantage of hearing the statements of Chief Justice Draper, who was commissioned by the Government of Canada to watch this inquiry. In addition to this, your Committee have received the evidence taken before a Committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to investigate this subject, containing much valuable information in reference to the interests and feelings of that important colony, which are entitled to the greatest weight on this occasion.

"4. Your Committee have also had the opinion of the law officers of the Crown communicated to them on various points connected with the charter of the Hudson's-Bay Company.

"5. The territory over which the Company now exercise rights is of three descriptions—

1st. The land held by charter, or Rupert's Land.
2d. The land held by licence, or the Indian Territory.
3d. Vancouver's Island.

"6. For the nature of the tenure by which these countries are severally connected with the Company, your Committee would refer to the evidence they have received and the documents appended to their Report.

"7. Among the various objects of imperial policy which it is important to attain, your Committee consider that it is essential to meet the just and reasonable wishes of Canada to be enabled to annex to her territory such portion of the land in her neighbourhood as may be available to her for the purposes of settlement, with which lands she is willing to open and maintain communications, and for which she will provide the means of local administration. Your Committee apprehend that the districts on the Red River and the Saskatchewan are among those likely to be desired for early occupation. It is of great importance that the peace and good order of those

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and Lord Goderich, whose views were doubtful. The man who, above all others, had a right to sit upon that Committee—I refer to Mr. Christy—was overlooked; and it was only by the chivalrous resignation of Mr. Adderley—himself an opponent of the Company—that Mr. Christy's appointment could be secured."

districts should be effectually secured. Your Committee trust that there will be no difficulty in effecting arrangements as between Her Majesty's Government and the Hudson's-Bay Company, by which these districts may be ceded to Canada on equitable principles, and within the districts thus annexed to her the authority of the Hudson's-Bay Company would of course entirely cease.

"8. Your Committee think it best to content themselves with indicating the outlines of such a scheme, leaving it to Her Majesty's Government to consider its details more maturely before the Act of Parliament is prepared, which will probably be necessary to carry it into effect.

"9. In case, however, Canada should not be willing, at a very early period, to undertake the government of the Red-River district, it may be proper to consider whether some temporary provision for its administration may not be advisable.

"10. Your Committee are of opinion that it will be proper to terminate the connection of the Hudson's-Bay Company with Vancouver's Island as soon as it can conveniently be done, as the best means of favouring the development of the great natural advantages of that important colony. Means should also be provided for the ultimate extension of the colony over any portion of the adjoining continent, to the west of the Rocky Mountains, on which permanent settlement may be found practicable.

"11. As to those extensive regions, whether in Rupert's Land or in the Indian Territory, in which, for the present at least, there can be no prospect of permanent settlement, to any extent, by the European race, for the purposes of colonization, the opinion at which your Committee have arrived is mainly founded on the following considerations:—1st. The great importance to the more peopled portions of British North America that law and order should, as far as possible, be maintained in these territories. 2dly, The fatal effects which they believe would infallibly result to the Indian population from a system of open competition in the fur trade, and the consequent introduction of spirits in a far greater degree than is the case at present; and 3dly, The probability of the indiscrimate destruction of the more valuable fur-bearing animals in the course of a few years.

"12. For these reasons your Committee are of opinion, that whatever may be the validity or otherwise of the rights claimed by the Hudson's-Bay Company, under the charter, it is desirable that they should continue to enjoy the privileges of exclusive trade which they now possess, except so far as those privileges are limited by the foregoing recommendations.

"13. Your Committee have now specified the principal objects which they think it would be desirable to attain. How far the chartered rights claimed by the Hudson's-Bay Company may prove an obstacle to their attainment, they are not able, with any certainty, to say. If this difficulty is to be solved by amicable adjustment, such a course will be best promoted by the Government, after communication with the Company, as well as with the Government of Canada, rather than by detailed suggestions emanating from this Committee

"14. Your Committee cannot doubt but that, when such grave interests are at stake, all the parties concerned will approach the subject in a spirit of conciliation and justice; and they therefore indulge a confident hope that the Government will be enabled, in the next session of Parliament, to present a Bill which shall lay the foundation of an equitable and satisfactory arrangement, in the event, which we consider probable, of legislation being found necessary for that purpose."

We have no desire to depreciate the value and importance of the concessions contained in this Report. The opening up to civi-

lization and settlement of the magnificent valleys of the Saskatchewan and the Red River; the emancipation of Vancouver's Island from the Company's depressing control; and the gradual extension of that colony over the vast and fertile regions to the west of the Rocky Mountains; these are measures which, if they be honestly carried out, may convert the wilderness into a garden, give to British enterprise and industry such an impetus as it has not yet received on the North-American continent, and rear on those shores another great and prosperous empire, speaking our language, adopting our laws, professing our religion, and, we hope, shunning our evil example. We are quite willing to admit that these may be the results which will ultimately ensue from the policy defined by the Select Committee, and agreed upon by Her Majesty's Government. But, parenthetically, we may remark, that the adoption of that policy, so far as it is unfavourable to the Company, is attributable in a great measure to the able and energetic labours of Mr. Christy, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Roebuck, and a few other members of the Committee, who advocated the settlement of the question upon imperial, and not upon party grounds. To them a great debt of public gratitude is due; while our thanks on behalf of the Aborigines must be especially tendered to Mr. Christy and Mr. Grogan, who elicited much valuable information respecting their character, capabilities, condition, and treatment. There can be no doubt, that had it not been for the existence of this independent element in the Committee, the Company's influence would have carried all before it, and a compromise would have been agreed to, of a character far more injurious to the interests, both of Canada and of the Indians than that which is embodied in the Report.

But still the compromise resolved upon is one which we cannot but deeply deplore. The lamentable manner in which the majority of the Committee allowed themselves to be influenced by the Company's fictitious or exaggerated pretensions may the more readily be seen, if a comparison be instituted between the passed Report and the Draft Report which was introduced by Mr. Christy. In the one the colonizable districts are limited to the Saskatchewan and the Red River; in the other they are made to extend to Mackenzie's River. Again, while, in Mr. Labouchere's Report, no reference is made to the danger which menaces British supremacy from the American occupation of the frontier and the rapid growth of settlement in Minnesota, this consideration is made a prominent feature of Mr. Christy's Report. "The rapid extension of settlement which has been going on in so remarkable a manner to the south of the Amerian boundary line," says Mr. Christy, "renders it a matter of great importance to establish within our territory a counterpoise favourable to British interests, and modelled upon British institutions." The danger to be appre-

hended from this quarter has never been lost sight of by the Aborigines' Protection Society; and the reasonableness of the apprehensions which they, in common with Mr. Christy, have entertained and expressed, is strikingly proved by the following extract from a leading article published in the *Toronto Colonist* of the 19th of August:—

"At the Democratic Convention for Minnesota, recently held at St. Paul, there were delegates from Pembina and from the Red-River Settlement, the latter of whom were elected by British subjects, or, at least, by Hudson's-Bay Company's colonists. A question arose—as well it might—as to their right to participate in the business of an American Democratic Convention. The parties were heard on both sides, and the delegates were likewise requested to give their own opinions, when it was finally decided, "that as the Red-River Settlement and the Saskatchewan Valley would be soon settled by white people, and as the Hudson's-Bay Company would not aid in that settlement, no good reason existed why these pioneers should not have the benefit of American institutions, if they wished them themselves;" and so they were practically, or, rather, conventionally, annexed to Minnesota. The discussion created great fun and amusement in the convention; and it is altogether probable that Mr. Fremont will have a very large majority of British Red-River settlers in his favour at the next Presidential election. Now this circumstance is significant on two grounds. The first is, that the country, if valuable and desirable for settlement, will be taken up as Wisconsin was, as Iowa was, and as the distant Minnesota is now being everywhere penetrated and occupied. The second is, that the people who will possess themselves of this vast territory—providing, of course, that the land and climate are good—must and will have a Government, institutions, in short, the emblems and safeguards of civilization; and if England does not supply these, and Canada is prevented from doing so, the settlers (of necessity) will be driven to those who will; and the recent movement in the Democratic Convention at St. Paul seems but the forerunner of this state of affairs."

It is manifest that the non-adoption of Mr. Christy's references to the American aspects of the question was seriously impolitic and unwise. This shutting of one's eyes to the existence of a palpable source of danger can be no more serviceable to the Hudson's-Bay Company than it is to Canadian interests, or to the rights of the British Crown.

Mr. Labouchere's Report states that "the Committee trust that there will be no difficulty in effecting arrangements as between Her Majesty's Government and the Hudson's-Bay Company, by which these districts may be ceded to Canada on *equitable principles*." There can be no doubt as to what is the meaning in this connection of the phrase "equitable principles:" it simply means "money compensation," a most unjust principle for the Committee to recognise, and one which the Government and people of Canada must promptly refuse to admit. Compensation to the Company forsooth! Rather let us ask compensation for Canada, who has so long been deprived of her legal and historical rights; or for the Red-River settlers, who have been so long subject to unjust and obnoxious imposts, and prevented

from trading in the produce of their own country, and obtaining access to the markets of the world; or for the Indians, who have been compelled for two centuries to buy at the dearest and sell at the cheapest rate, and who, in return for enriching the monopolists of the fur trade, have been allowed to remain in their primitive condition, with scarcely an attempt (and certainly no voluntary attempt on the part of the Company) to reclaim them from barbarism, or to make them acquainted with the arts and habits of civilized life. But the Company—not Canada, or the Red-River settlers, or the Indians—are to be dealt with on "equitable principles!" What this phrase means in the Company's sense, those who are acquainted with the history of the Oregon question well know. Upon the cession of the Oregon territory, they demanded compensation from the American Government to the extent of a million of dollars, although Sir John Pelly, in a letter addressed to the Board of Trade, said that "the outlay and expense attending this competition in trade are so heavy, that the profits are but yet in perspective, none worthy of notice having been realized; the result shewing, some years, a trifling loss, and in others a small gain, fluctuating according to the degree of activity with which the contest is maintained." If a demand for compensation, based upon a similarly fallacious principle, again be made, we hope that Canada will as resolutely refuse compliance with it, as the United States did in the case we have mentioned.

The phrase "equitable principles" would not have occurred in the Report, at least, in its present sense, if the Committee had been prepared to do justice to the question of the Charter. In suggesting compensation, they *assume* the legality of the Company's claims; which they are not justified in doing. It is important to mark the difference between the two Reports in regard to this matter. Mr. Christy states that—

"Numerous allegations and much controversy on these questions have created a serious evil, arising from the impression, both in Canada and in the countries subject to the jurisdiction of the charter itself, that many of its provisions, if not altogether contrary to the laws of England, are of doubtful authority. The prevalence of such impressions, whether well founded or otherwise, cannot but be prejudicial, not only to the authority of the Company, but to the peaceable and orderly government of those living under them; and it appears to your Committee necessary for the satisfaction and benefit of those concerned, that the question of the validity of powers so anomalous and extensive should be set at rest by the instrumentality of a competent legal tribunal. It has, however, been strongly urged upon your Committee, in the course of their inquiry, that the question of the boundaries between Canada and the Hudson's-Bay Territories is of the most pressing importance at this moment, and one that should be determined as speedily as possible; but it is obvious, that in bringing this to a practical decision, the question of the validity of the charter presents itself the first to be ascertained. The definition of the limits of Canada must necessarily follow on the determination of what is, or is not, the jurisdiction of the Hudson's-Bay Company."

Mr. Christy's views are expressed with so much logical force, that we do not need to support them by any additional arguments. The Committee, however, by the narrow majority of one, came to an opposite conclusion. They say—

"As to those extensive regions, whether in Rupert's Land or in the Indian Territory, in which, for the present at least, there can be no prospect of permanent settlement, to any extent, by the European race, for the purposes of colonization, the opinion at which your Committee have arrived is mainly founded on the following considerations:—1st, The great importance to the now peopled portions of British North America that law and order should, as far as possible, be maintained in these territories. 2dly, The fatal effects which they believe would infallibly result to the Indian population from a system of open competition in the fur trade, and the consequent introduction of spirits in a far greater degree than is the case at present; and 3dly, The probability of the indiscriminate destruction of the more valuable fur-bearing animals in the course of a few years. For these reasons your Committee are of opinion that whatever may be the validity or otherwise of the rights claimed by the Hudson's-Bay Company, under the charter, it is desirable that they should continue to enjoy the privileges of exclusive trade which they now possess, except so far as those privileges are limited by the foregoing recommendations."

Our readers will participate in our surprise at this extraordinary judgment, and at the still more extraordinary reasons upon which it is based. The Hudson-Bay monopoly is, forsooth, to be maintained for the benefit of the Indians! That monopoly which gives to a body of traders, and their agents, irresponsible and absolute power throughout the vast regions of Rupert's Land and the adjacent territories, is, after all, a blessing, and not the curse we have so often represented it to be! The people of England, however, know better. They know that despotic power in the hands of any body of men, however just and generous their intentions may be, cannot fail to be most mischievous. They know, too, that the effect of such a monopoly as that which exists in the Hudson's-Bay territories must be to deprive the Indians of the fair value of their furs, and to keep them in a state of slavish dependence upon their masters. On this point it is well that we should avail ourselves of the testimony of a journal whose sympathies and predilections are frequently of an anti-aboriginal character. The *Daily News* of the 12th September, after controverting the Company's argument that the maintenance of their monopoly is essential to the preservation of the Indians, makes the following pertinent remarks upon the trading relations subsisting between the two parties :—

"The relations of the Hudson's-Bay Company to the Red-Indian population have some points of resemblance to the relations which the Jesuit Missions bore to the Guarani Indians in Spanish and Portuguese America, at least in their trading operations. The interest of the Company, as it was of the Jesuit Fathers, is to keep the Indians dependent on it: all supplies reach them through the Company's agents; and supplies so furnished are never cheaply

sold: all their hunting operations are directed by the Company's interests; all the furs obtained are sold to the Company according to a tariff of prices fixed by itself; and it is especially the policy of the Company to deprive the Indians of all intercourse with Europeans not in its service. To invite Englishmen to settle in a country where they cannot participate in the only valuable trade which it possesses is of course a mockery; and to assert that the Indians are benefited by a system under which the Company can sell to them as dearly and purchase as cheaply as it pleases, involves such a departure from, and disregard of, ordinary economical principles, as to make the most superficial reader doubt the assertion. Such a system, we know from experience, did not ultimately improve the Indians of the Missiones and Paraguay; and reasoning on analogy, we are well entitled to doubt whether, in the long-run, it can really benefit the Red Men of the Hudson's-Bay territory. Such a system of dependency and isolation may materially assist in enabling the Company to divide ten per cent., with occasional bonuses of five per cent.; but if the furs, out of which those dividends are paid, be procured from the Indians on terms so low as to keep them in a state of misery, and to prevent all accumulation (the first germ of social development); and if the Indians be compelled to accept the Hudson's-Bay tariff because of the absence of all other demand; then it is obvious that the interests of the Company and the welfare of the Indians are not identical; and, that fact established, the case of the Company falls to the ground. The Company claims great credit for the care it takes not to allow spirits to reach the Indians; and to the extent to which its exertions in this behalf are successful too much praise cannot be given to the Corporation. Nevertheless, it is plain that, in one way or another, the Indians do obtain spirits; and a great trading monopoly cannot of course be justified and upheld merely because it diminishes the quantity of alcohol which reaches the Indian population. There is free trade in fur on the other side of the British frontier; and the mode adopted in the United-States' territory to prevent the destruction of the Indians by spirits is, at all events, more in accordance with sound principles than a commercial monopoly. There, each American trader has a licence; the licence is revocable on its holder introducing spirits into the Indian country; and the jealousy and competition of trade make each trader desirous of convicting his neighbour of an offence which diminishes the area of competition. In this expedient and desire there is something reasonable. But to confine the fur trade of 3,000,000 of acres (square miles?) to a single Company, for fear the rest of the world will introduce larger quantities of spirits than are imported under the Company's rule, is one of the most preposterous examples it is possible to conceive of an absolute disproportion between the object and the means."

We may repeat here what we have often stated before, that the Company's tariff bears no just proportion to the market value of the furs. The following extract from Dr. Rae's evidence will illustrate what we mean:—

Sir J. Pakington—"If I understand your use of the word 'tariff,' it is a written scale of prices according to which the goods which the Indians require are supplied by them, estimated in beavers?"

Dr. Rae—"Exactly."

"What is the money result as regards the payment made by the Indians for those goods so supplied to them, of course taking the average value of the skins. You have said that the servants pay fifty per cent. on the London prices; What do you suppose the Indians pay?"

"Much higher."

"How much higher?"

"I cannot say: it varies."

"Do you think they pay 200 per cent. on the London prices?"

"I should think they do."

"Do you think they pay 500 per cent.?"

"I cannot say."

"Do you think they pay very much more than 200 per cent?"

"I should think they pay more than that, but it is a calculation that I never entered into, it varies so much with the prices of the furs and the quantities of skins obtained.

"You say you have never entered into the calculation; at the same time you seem to have an accurate idea to this extent, that they pay more than 200 per cent. upon the cost price in London?"

"Yes."

"Do you think they pay 300 per cent?"

"They may: I never made a computation."

"Do you think, that if anybody said that they paid 500 per cent. it would be at all an extreme statement?"

"I cannot tell you: I never made the calculation. Besides which, I have been for the last eight or ten years employed in quite a different service, and have had little to do with the Company's service."

Our primary objections against the Report are, therefore, two-fold. The one is, that it avoids the question of the legality of the Company's charter, and thereby refuses to settle a question which ought to have been decided on the very threshold of the inquiry. The other objection is, that the gross fallacy, that the maintenance of the Company's monopoly is essential to the preservation and well-being of the Indians is made the pretext for allowing things to remain in their present state in the whole of those districts which are alleged to be uncolonizable.

The condition and treatment of the Indians formed an important part of the inquiry. A very large number of the 6098 questions which were put to the various witnesses, had a direct reference to the Indians. And yet, except in connection with the fallacy above mentioned, the Report ignores the existence of that unfortunate people. It maintains the Company's exclusive privileges; it proposes that they shall continue to prosecute their lucrative trade to keep what tariff they please in force, and to realize the same enormous profits that they have heretofore obtained; but the Report does not require them to make any provision for the education or civilization of the Indians, and does not exact from them any security that their rule shall, for the future, be adapted more to the reign of Queen Victoria than to that of Charles II. We hope, however, that when this question shall come before Parliament, there will not be wanting within the walls of that assembly some earnest advocate of the Indians who will so effectually raise his voice, and influence his colleagues, that, in the final settlement of the question the interests of the Red Man shall be no more overlooked than those of Canada or of the Hudson's-Bay Company.

The unsatisfactory manner in which the Select Committee have proposed to settle the question is doubtless, in a great measure, attributable to the singular course pursued by Mr. Chief Justice Draper, the Agent of the Canadian Government. This gentleman was examined at great length before the Committee, but it is with some difficulty that a just and intelligible idea of his evidence can be obtained, even from the official Report. This much is certain, however, that he refrained from committing himself to any measures which would have the effect of bringing the question of the validity of the Company's charter before the Judicial Committee of Privy Council; and that the only question which he appeared to be really anxious to have decided was the minor, and comparatively unimportant one of boundaries. On this latter point he distinctly expressed the opinion that Canada could not claim to go farther westward than the Mississippi river, unless by a gift of the Crown. He did this, although Canadian rights, founded upon the French claims, unquestionably extend, not only to the Red River, but to the banks of the Saskatchewan, and eastward to the shores of Hudson's Bay.

Discarding the boundary proposed under the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, which was in 53° of latitude, Mr. Draper suggested that which was proposed under the treaty of Utrecht in 1713. This he rightly described as a line running from the latitude of 59½, on the Labrador coast, in a south-west direction, till it intersected the 49th parallel, which it would do near Lake Abbitchy. This extension of boundary would of course give to Canada a small slice of territory beyond her present limits; but if this had been her only object in taking part in the Hudson's-Bay Question, there is no doubt that the matter might have been satisfactorily arranged, without trouble or expense. The Company would have been only too glad to get rid of a formidable opponent by making so trivial a concession.

But, in reality, it would appear that Mr. Draper never intended to jeopardize the existence of the Company's monopoly; and that, like the Committee's Report, his reasons for non-interference with it were professedly based upon a desire to benefit the Indians! It is but right to add, that in all other respects he manifested no anxiety whatever on their account. In answer to Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Draper said that—

"His own opinion was, that, for the purpose of preserving peace among the Indians, and preventing difficulties arising, it is of great importance, for some time at all events (I should say a limited time), that the Hudson's-Bay Company should maintain those stations and that trade which they have hitherto carried on, and which have kept the Indians at peace. That is my own individual opinion, founded upon this consideration, that wherever I have seen an instance, as far as I have been able to read or ascertain about it, in which there have been rival traders, it has had two effects: first of all, the indiscriminate and unlimited use of spirituous liquors to draw this trade, which is

of itself a most prejudicial thing to the Indians; and, secondly, that it has prompted and promoted those quarrels between rival traders which have had one of two effects, either to produce sometimes bloodshed, or at least to produce, as has been the case between the Hudson's-Bay Company and the North-West Company, a combination of interests, where the parties can only repay themselves by carrying on their trade with the Indians upon those terms which are any thing but advantageous to the Indians who have to purchase them."

We have so often controverted the fallacies contained in the above quotation, that it can scarcely be necessary for us to do so upon the present occasion. But we may remark, that Mr. Draper never appears to have contemplated the possibility of excluding spirits altogether from the Company's territories, a measure which we believe to be practicable, even if the trade be thrown open. Mr. Isbister, in his very valuable evidence, pointed out the geographical fact, that access can be had into the northern districts by one inlet only, *i.e.* at the point where the Saskatchewan River enters into Lake Winnipeg; and accordingly, as he remarked, "a custom-house, or a little garrison, established there, would exercise an effectual control and supervision over every thing which entered the country." By this agency the introduction of spirits into the interior might be effectually prevented. In addition, the use of spirituous liquors should be made an illegal offence, and be punished by the revocation of the fur trader's licence, or by fine and imprisonment.

As Mr. Draper's evidence was, in many respects, so unsatisfactory, and fell so far short of the just expectations and wishes of the great bulk of the Canadian people, we cannot feel surprised at the public censures which have been cast upon him by his fellow-citizens of Canada West, both before and since his return. Great meetings have been held at Toronto, London, Hamilton, and other places, at which his conduct was emphatically condemned, and resolutions of a most satisfactory character were enthusiastically adopted. At all these meetings the treatment and condition of the Indians formed a prominent topic of discussion, and views were expressed which augur well for the future aboriginal policy of Canada.

When the reports of Sir George Simpson's and Dr. Rae's evidence, furnished by the special correspondent of the *Toronto Globe*, reached Red River, there was considerable excitement among the settlers. A meeting was held on the 25th May, and the following among other resolutions were adopted:—

"RESOLVED—That a portion of the evidence, as given in the Toronto *Globe*, purporting to be that given by Sir George Simpson and Dr. Rae before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, being read to this meeting, and found to be not only utterly at variance with truth, but also calculated to act

prejudicially to our interests, and give a most untrue and unfavourable opinion of this country, this meeting feels itself called upon to express its astonishment and indignation at the prolonged persistence in a course of false representations on the part of Sir George Simpson and his colleagues, in order to perpetuate a fur monopoly, that has been fruitful only of poverty and degradation.

"That, respecting the free trade of this country, this meeting feels bound to say, that should the fur trade be longer retained in the exclusive hands of monopolists, the disorder predicted by Sir G. Simpson and his colleagues as likely to spring up from opening the trade, will inevitably follow, unless, indeed, the Government can have troops in the country to support a monopoly. It is the feeling and opinion of this meeting that there is nothing to prevent the fur-trade from being carried on in the same way that trade is pursued in all civilized communities; and that one way by which to prevent the disorders apprehended would be, rigorously to exclude such as threaten disorders because they cannot have the exclusive possession of it.

"That Dr. Rae certainly 'went the whole figure' when he took upon himself to say that the Hudson's-Bay Company had hospitals in the country, at which infirm Indians were nursed, clothed, and fed. There are those of us at this meeting who have been in every part of the so-called Hudson's-Bay Company's territory, but we have yet to learn where these receptacles are at which there is the exhibition of the benevolence of which he speaks. In giving the evidence, that this country was unfit for colonization, he did not speak from a personal knowledge of at least the more favoured portions of this country, his residence having in general been about the shores of Hudson's Bay, and still more northern regions.

"That it is a duty on our part to contradict, in most unqualified terms, the statements respecting the use of spirituous liquors in this country. So far from its even being withheld as an article of trade, not only have many of us, when in the service of the Company, obtained furs in barter for it, but even a settler among us has had his stock of this article taken from him, and the same was afterwards used by the Hudson's-Bay Company as an article of trade. The entire valley of the Saskatchewan is so flooded with this fruitful source of mischief to the Red Man, that it is almost the exclusive commodity with which the Hudson's-Bay Company procures the large stock of provisions obtained from the Saskatchewan.

"That nothing can be farther from the truth than the statement that the Hudson's-Bay Company have been in the habit of taking our surplus produce; for, for thirty-five out of over forty years that this colony have been farming, they have not taken even a tenth of what we could have supplied them. It is equally untrue, that for the last seven years they have been obliged to import grain from the United States in order to supply their own wants. As to our wheat crops being uncertain, we can state that, during the last ten years, we have not known a total failure of crops from any cause whatever, and *never* known them to fail from the causes given by some of the witnesses before the Select Committee.

"That it being necessary to have a voice at the scenes of the present controversy respecting this country, Captain William Kennedy and A. K. Isbister, Esq., be delegated to act as our representatives before either the Imperial or Canadian Governments, and be and are hereby empowered to make known our wants, views, feelings, and circumstances, as well as the resources and capabilities of this country for colonization. They are hereby authorized to correct the misrepresentations of the Company, whose aim in doing so is to keep out the blessings of Christianity and civilization from among us."

In January last Captain Kennedy proceeded to the Red River on behalf of an association of merchants and others, which had been formed at Toronto. On his return to that city, after an absence of several months, he published a report containing the results of his mission, from which we make the following interesting extracts :—

"Trade, in so far as it is pursued by the settlers themselves, as might well be supposed, I found in an extreme state of depression. Agricultural pursuits were carried on only to the extent of supplying their own wants; and the only other mode of procuring such other necessaries as their soil did not produce, was to engage in the fur trade; in which, however, they invariably found themselves at a disadvantage, from having such powerful and unscrupulous opponents as the Hudson's-Bay Company to compete with, who, having the power alone of forming the laws of the country, have ever taken good care that they shall be the best for protecting their own interests; and, being irresponsible to any party, may break through any of them with impunity, whilst unprotected settlers can be, and have often been, for doing the same, dealt with *à la code* Hudson's-Bay Company. Here is an instance. A law in the colony prohibits the sale or brewing of strong drink. The law is, in general, respected by the colonists, but, in the eyes of the Hudson's-Bay Company, is as so much waste paper; and the result is, a never-failing supply either of spirits or beer. They have in this a means of procuring what gold and silver cannot buy. This was exactly my case when endeavouring to procure a supply of pemmican for my voyage out. Though there was every abundance of this just brought in from the plains about the time of my leaving Red River, I could not procure a morsel for money, and could only get it at last, indirectly, through the Company. Many of the settlers were engaged to a small extent in the fur trade, of course, in all cases, hotly pursued by the superior numbers of the Hudson's-Bay men. These procure their supplies from St. Paul, to which they repair with ox-carts in caravans, sometimes numbering as high as 300. Some half-dozen of the settlers are more extensively engaged in trade, and obtain their goods, through the Company, from England, by way of York Factory, conveying them to Red River in their own boats. The most extensive traders of this class may import goods to the amount of 1200*l.* sterling, whilst the smaller may import to the amount of 600*l.* They take comparatively little from the United States, though it is supposed that they contemplate drawing more largely from the American market in future.

"The Hudson's-Bay Company are said to introduce annually into Red River goods to the amount of 12,000*l.* sterling. This they dispose of at an advance of from 100 to 400 per cent. Each spring they invariably run out of goods, and, before doing so, advance their prices very materially. Whether they restrict their supplies from supposing that their gains will be greater by confining themselves to a small supply, in order that they can better advance prices at a season of the year when there is no remedy, or that they find it more convenient to restrict a supply on the ground that it is not politic for monopolists to give a full supply of requisites to a people struggling so stoutly for commercial freedom, there is no means of ascertaining. This, however, is quite certain, that, with an unrestricted supply of their wants, the settlers could very much increase the trade and importance of their colony, especially in the fur-trade, which, from association in their earliest days, they are most thoroughly acquainted with. Whilst this trade could be made sufficiently remunerative, simply in the exchange of British manufactures, there could, at the

same time, be opened out an unequalled market for their agricultural produce, as well by the consumption that would be created by an augmentation of the means of transport, as by making it an article of trade with the Indians, who everywhere cry for it, and especially in the Licensed Territories, from which it is rigorously excluded.

"To what has been said so frequently about the fertility of soil both on the Red River and Saskatchewan, I believe I need add little beyond using the words of the settlers themselves, in one of their resolutions, namely, that they are ready to challenge the world both for fertility of soil and the ease with which it is cultivated. Forty, fifty, and even sixty returns of wheat have been obtained with only a little extra cultivation, and even more of barley, oats, and potatoes. There has been such a thing obtained in Red River as three crops of barley in one season. It was sown on the 1st of May, reaped 27th July; a second crop sprung up from self-sown seed; and grain good enough for seed was reaped in September. A third growth might have made fodder, but was let out to pasture. With such tangible, unquestioned facts as these, surely we cannot have any more croaking on the subject of the frozen, barren regions of the west. Mr. Thom, the first Recorder of Red River, though no friend to progress, once told a jury there that six miles square of such a soil as Red River, and yielding as it does, would create a greater revenue than all the fur trade put together, supposing each bushel of wheat to be sold at 3*s.* 6*d.* sterling per bushel. The climate of Red River will, I believe, compare most favourably with Canada, with, perhaps, this difference, that its summers may be warmer and its winters colder. Farming operations begin and end about the same time as in Canada"

In the month of May last it became known that a body of Canadian riflemen had been ordered by the War Minister to proceed to the Red-River Settlement. We were alarmed at this proceeding, because of its obvious connection with the position of hostility which the settlers have assumed towards the Hudson's-Bay Company. What were these troops despatched for, if not for purposes of coercion and violence, if coercion and violence, in the Company's opinion, appeared to be necessary? That this was the view taken by thoughtful people in Canada is apparent from articles which have appeared in various Canadian journals. The following is an extract from an article which was published in the Toronto *Globe* on the 2d July, the day after the troops destined for the Red River left Montreal:—

"The troops will be made to pass through a vast region of country, with the hope of impressing upon the inhabitants, the Indians and traders, the wholesome apprehension of suffering and death should any of them disregard the behests of the Company. It will be proclaimed to all that England is determined to sustain the Hudson's-Bay Company in the exercise of their tyrannical rule. Had the troops passed through Canada, the prestige of the Company's power would have passed away: they would not then have been regarded at the Red River as the Hudson's-Bay Company's troops. We have serious apprehensions that they will now be regarded, not as the bulwarks of liberty, but as an instrument in the hands of the Company to subvert it."

In the justice of these views we cordially concur. It is our earnest hope that the unfortunate policy of our Government in

sending out troops to the Red River at a period of great public excitement, and under circumstances which were calculated to provoke acollision between the soldiers and the settlers, may not result in the disasters which it was calculated to bring about. The ground of our hope is the peaceful disposition and religious training of the settlers themselves, combined with the knowledge they must possess of what their friends in England and in Canada are endeavouring to accomplish on their behalf. We believe that they will prove themselves to be worthy of the high character which has been bestowed upon them by their excellent Bishop.

We were glad to perceive, that, on the 3d of July, Mr. Wyld called the attention of the House of Commons to the extraordinary circumstance, that the troops intended for the Red River settlement, instead of being despatched by the regular overland route, a distance of about 1500 miles from Montreal, were to be sent down the river St. Lawrence, round the coast of Labrador, and landed at York factory on the western shores of Hudson's Bay, making altogether a distance of more than 2000 miles. On disembarking they would then have to be paddled in canoes a distance of about 800 miles before they reached their destination; so that the entire journey would amount to at least 3000 miles, or twice as far as the common-sense route. Sir John Ramsden's excuse was, that the route from the western end of Lake Superior to Red River was "impracticable;" a statement which is sufficiently refuted by the fact, that it was constantly pursued by the North-west Company's traders, and by the French and other adventurers who preceded them in this great field of American enterprise. But the dangers which, according to Sir John Ramsden, soldiers cannot face, the less hardy sex are in the constant habit of successfully encountering. "Will it be believed," says the *Globe*, "that this dangerous route is constantly traversed by the wives and daughters of officers of the Company; that parties of Missionaries and their families have frequently passed over it, among them the aged Rev. W. Ryerson, accompanied by two of his brethren, with their wives? Will it be believed that Lady Simpson herself has been conveyed by it, brought from the Red River to Fort William without wetting her feet?" But while the Company and their friends have had so much to say about the difficulties of the route *viâ* Lake Superior, they have been silent as to the dangers of Hudson's Bay, which is only navigable for six weeks or two months during the year, and the navigation of which is always attended with considerable risk. The fact simply is, that the Company wish to perpetuate the absurd idea that nature has raised an insuperable barrier between Canada and the territories lying beyond. That idea, together with many others equally unfounded, will, we hope, be exploded during the next session of Parliament.

MEMORIAL TO MR. LABOUCHERE.

THE following Memorial, regarding the Indians of the Hudson's-Bay Territories has been addressed

To the Right Honourable HENRY LABOUCHERE, M.P., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Hudson's-Bay Company—

SIR,

THE condition and circumstances of the Indian tribes, inhabiting the vast territory under the administration of the Hudson's-Bay Company have for many years engaged the attention of the Aborigines' Protection Society, who have witnessed with deep interest the movement which has resulted in the inquiry now pending before the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

Impressed with the importance of this movement, as affecting the future destiny, not only of the wide region conceded by Charter to the power of the Hudson's-Bay Company, but that of the adjoining province of Canada, with which its interests are so intimately interwoven, the Society took early steps to procure such facts and information relating to the territory and its inhabitants as were accessible to them, and have, on various occasions, brought the subject under the notice of Her Majesty's Government. Apart from all considerations of humanity, they could not be unmindful of the circumstance, that while, in too many instances, in other portions of our Colonial Dominions, the aboriginal proprietors of the soil have been viewed as an obstruction to the advancing interests and exigencies of the white settlers who have displaced them, both policy and humanity must concur in the preservation and just treatment of the native races of Hudson's Bay, who are the support of an important and lucrative commerce, and the real producers of the vast wealth, amounting, on competent authority, to more than Twenty Millions sterling, with which the fur trade has already enriched England.

The Society trust that they are not too far presuming, if they desire to avail themselves of the present opportunity to submit their views on the important subject at present under the consideration of the Committee of the House of Commons. They beg to assure the Committee that in so doing they have been most anxious not unreasonably to intrude on their attention by raising merely theoretical discussions. They have watched the progress of the evidence with great interest, and they have collected with much care, both from public sources and from private and personal communications with individuals, such facts and information bearing on the condition and prospects of the aboriginal race, as appeared to them calculated to aid the investigation now in progress by throwing additional light upon points where the evidence has been defective, or by suggesting considerations which

may lead to further inquiry, and to such an enlarged view of our connexion with the Indian tribes as may tend to the adoption of proper measures for their future inprovement and preservation.

The subjects which appear to the Society to be deserving of special attention in connection with the present inquiry, and on which they would respectfully offer a few observations, embodying the information they have been able to procure, are the following:—

1. The general character, geographical distribution, and estimated numbers of the tribes of Hudson's Bay.

2. Their rapid decrease and theatened extinction.

3. The character and operation of the system of trade and administration of the Hudson's-Bay Company, as connected with this decrease.

4. The prevalence of famines, and their effects.

5. The result of Missionary operations in reference to the capacity of the Indian for the habits of civilized life.

6. The prospects of the Indian race, under the contemplated annexation of the Hudson's-Bay territories to Canada.

Notwithstanding the diversity of petty independent tribes, of whom between fifty and sixty names are found scattered over the surface of this wide region, there does not appear at the present day to be more than six languages of a radically distinct character in the whole area of British North America.

1. Beginning from the north, the Esquimaux, an exclusively maritime family, occupy the entire circumference of the arctic coast of the American continent from Russian America on the west to Labrador on the east.

2. The Kolooch, comprising a great variety of tribes, many of whom are also maritime in their habits, occupy a large portion of British Oregon and of Russian America, and extend eastward to Mackenzie's River.

3. The Athabascan, or Chepewyan, a wide-spread family conterminous on the north with the previously-mentioned divisions, extend from Fort Churchill on Hudson's Bay across the entire continent through New Caledonia and the adjacent parts of British Oregon to the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

4. The great Algonquin division, the largest of all the North-American groups, subtend the Athabascans on the north, and extend in a southerly direction far into the territory of the United States. They include the well-known tribes, the Delawares, Crees, Chepewas, &c., besides many now extinct races.

5. The Iroquois, completely surrounded by and inclosed in the vast area of the Algonquins, formed the famous confederacy of the five nations, whose original area comprised the greater portion of the present limits of Canada, and extended southwards as far as the states of Pennsylvania and New York.

6. Disregarding minor subdivisions, the remaining portion of

the country included between the limits of the Algonquins and the Rocky Mountains may be considered as in the occupancy of the Sioux, at the present day by far the most numerous and warlike native confederacy of North America. The Sioux are dominant over the vast prairie region watered by the Missouri and the upper waters of the Saskatchewan. To quote the language of a recent writer, "The Iroquois and Algonquins exhibit in the most typical form, the characteristics of the North-American Indians, as found in the earliest descriptions; and they are the two families upon which the current notions respecting the physiognomy, habits, and moral and intellectual powers of the so-called Red Race are chiefly founded. As a general rule, though not without important exceptions, the Algonquins and Iroquois classes lie to the east of the Mississippi, and their original area was the region of the forest, rather than the prairie;"—a remark which applies also to the Kolooch and Athabascans who are usually classed by the Hudson's-Bay traders under the general designation of "Thickwood Indians." In the accompanying map, coloured ethnologically, the limits of the great divisions just mentioned, together with the localities of the most important tribes of which they consist, are indicated with as much precision as the nature of the subject will allow. For the convenience of comparison, a statement of the numbers and distribution of the Indian tribes, as far south as the Gulf of Mexico, based on the reports of the United-States Commissioners on Indian Affairs, has been added; and the whole, it is believed, exhibits a summary of information, from the most recent and reliable sources, in regard to the Indian tribes of North America, as complete as the present state of our knowledge admits. Although the data for estimating the past and present population of the Hudson's-Bay territories are by no means satisfactory, the census given in evidence before the present Committee by Sir George Simpson, of 55,570 for the entire territory east of the Rocky Mountains, would seem to indicate, from the vast disproportion between the population and the extent of the territory they occupy, that here, as in other parts of the North-American continent, the aboriginal race is rapidly wasting away. The testimony of travellers to this painful fact is uniform and emphatic. "Since 1829," says Mr. Parker, an American writer, speaking of the tribes west of the Rocky Mountains, "probably seven-eights, if not, as Dr. M'Laughlin, (the Superintendant of the Hudson's-Bay Company's affairs in that quarer) believes, nine-tenths of the entire population, have been swept away by disease, principally fever and ague. The malignancy of these diseases may have been increased by predisposing causes, such as intemperance, and the general spread of venereal since their intercourse with Europeans; but a more direct cause of the great mortality was their mode of treatment."

Among other causes of this lamentable waste of Indian life, the de-

crease of the game upon which the natives subsist has been much dwelt upon. The subject is one of great importance in reference to the future disposition of these territories; and as it is also intimately connected with the system of trade carried on by the Hudson's Bay Company, it appears to the Society to call for most serious attention.

The destructive influences operating on the Indians, from the prevalence of epidemic diseases and the habits of intemperance, may perhaps be considered as rather of a temporary than a permanent character. How far the Hudson's-Bay Company have employed their full influence in preventing the introduction of spirituous liquors, and arresting the spread of European diseases, are questions which will doubtless receive the careful attention of the Committee. The daily operation and tendency of the Company's system in the destruction of the game which necessarily forms the sole support of a hunting population, is of greater importance as respects the future prospects of the country, and the fate of its aboriginal inhabitants. The furs of wild animals forming the sole articles of export from the country, the business of hunting and trapping falls exclusively on the Indians, and to satisfy the demands of the traders, whose profits, depend upon the amount of the returns, it is pursued by them very far beyond what would be required to supply the personal wants of a simple people subsisting by the chase. Differing wholly in its nature from a trade in manufactured articles, demand does not, in this case, increase supply, but the ratio is necessarily reversed. It is asserted, indeed, that the Company's regulations prevent, as far as possible, the wanton destruction of the animals producing the finer furs, by discouraging the trade in the skins of the young, and those killed at improper seasons: such regulations do not extend, however, to the larger animals—the buffalo, the moose, and the deer—whose flesh is adapted for the food of man, immense herds of which are wantonly destroyed for the sake of their tongues alone, to supply a delicacy for the table.

It must be obvious, that as the demands of such a system increase, the difficulty of meeting them becomes proportionately great. The more the furs are required, the greater must be the difficulty in finding and killing the animals: more fatiguing and longer-continued hunting expeditions are required: and as the population itself decreases, and the hunters become fewer, the labour of procuring the furs becomes more onerous on the survivors. The result is inevitable. The children and old persons perish or suffer, and settlement and progressive improvement become impossible. Even those arts which exercised native ingenuity and skill, and sufficed originally for a subsistence suited to their primitive condition and simple wants, are abandoned or forgotten, as the manufactured articles sold by the Company are often more effectual as well as more easily obtained. To complete their entire

dependence upon the Company, they are, by the custom of giving all the articles supplied to them on credit, invariably kept in debt; another powerful means of repressing the energies and advancement of any people, whether barbarous or civilized.

The practical operation of such a system cannot perhaps be better described than in the words of Mr. M'Lean, himself a partner of the Hudson's-Bay Company, who, in his recently-published work, "Notes of a Twenty-five Years' Residence in Hudson's-Bay," has the following remarks on the subject:—

"That the Indians wantonly destroy the game in years of deep snow is true enough; but the snow fell to as great depth before the advent of the whites as after, and the Indians were as prone to slaughter the animals then as now, yet game of every description abounded, and want was unknown. To what causes, then, are we to attribute the present scarcity? There can be but one answer—to the destruction of the animals which the prosecution of the fur trade involves. As the country becomes impoverished the Company reduce their outfits so as to ensure the same amount of profits, an object utterly beyond their reach, although economy is pushed to the extreme of parsimony; and thus, while the game becomes scarcer, and the poor natives require more ammunition to procure their living, their means of obtaining it, instead of being increased, are lessened. . . . The general outfits for the whole northern department amounted, in 1835, to 31,000*l.*; now (1845) it is reduced to 15,000*l.*, of which one-third at least is absorbed by the stores at Red-River settlement, and a considerable portion of the remainder by the officers and servants of the Company throughout the country. I do not believe that more than one-half of the outfit goes to the Indians. While the resources of the country are becoming yearly more and more exhausted, the question naturally suggests itself, What is to become of the natives when their lands can no longer furnish the means of subsistence? This is indeed a serious question, and well worthy of the earnest attention of the philanthropist. While Britain makes such strenuous exertions in favour of the sable bondsmen of Africa, and lavishes her millions to free them from the yoke, can nothing be done for the once noble but now degraded Aborigines of America? Are they to be left to the tender mercies of the trader until famine and disease sweep them from the earth?"—M'Lean. Vol. ii. pp. 266—269.

A former correspondent of the Society, Mr. Alexander Simpson, also a partner of the Company, and at present in this country, gives evidence of a similar character.

"There are some extensive tracts of country in which the means of subsistence (he says) "are scanty in the extreme. In the region lying between Lake Superior and Winnipeg the natives during the winter can with difficulty collect enough of food to support life. In the country lying immediately north of the Canadas, though fur-bearing animals are still comparatively

numerous, and the trade consequently valuable, the poor Indians have at all times a hard fight against famine. In this tract of country fish is at all seasons scarce, and in winter the sole dependence of the natives for subsistence is placed upon rabbits (the most wretched food upon which to exist for any time that can possibly be conceived); and when these fail, the most frightful tragedies at times take place. Parents have been known to lengthen out a miserable existence by killing and devouring their own offspring."

The prevalence of famines such as are here described, and which, there is but too much reason to fear, are gradually extending over every part of the country, with the exception of the prairie districts and the deplorable consequences they entail upon the suffering, and helpless natives, are events which must perhaps cause regret rather than censure. To prevent altogether the occurrence of such calamities may indeed be beyond the power of the Company, and it may be admitted that their treatment of the Indians is as considerate and humane as is consistent with the interests of a body having the primary question of a profitable trade as the object of their association. But the fact is no less certain and deplorable, that while, under the system now in force, we have given unlimited scope to the cupidity of a Company of traders, placing no stint on their profits or limits to their power, the unhappy race we have consigned to their keeping, and from whose toil their profits are wrung, are perishing miserably by famine; while not a vestige of an attempt has been made on the part of their rulers to imbue them with the commonest arts of civilized life, or to induce them to change the precarious livelihood obtained by the chase for a certain subsistence derived from the cultivation of the soil. While we are hesitating to introduce the changes which these and similar considerations seem imperatively to call for, from a fear that, under a free Government, the fur trade will suffer from the apprehended extermination of the fur-bearing animals, the question is irresistibly forced upon us—Are we not already effecting the same object far more speedily and certainly by the extermination of the Indian?

The capacity of the Red Man for the habits of civilized life is abundantly demonstrated in the success which has attended the efforts of the Missionary Societies at the Red River Settlement, and other parts of the territory. We find there a considerable community, of pure Indian blood, subsisting by agriculture, and, in point of intelligence, not inferior to the whites of the same rank of life by whom they are surrounded. Famine, with its attendant horrors, is there unknown; population is on the increase; intemperance, and the vices usually incident to a savage state, are declining, if they have not wholly disappeared; and the inference from the whole is irresistible, that the extension of settlement and a free Government in these territories is far more favourable

to the moral and intellectual advancement of the aboriginal race, than the irresponsible and destructive *régime* of the fur trade.

It may be said, indeed, that although the Company have no Missions or Schools of their own in any portion of their territories, they have offered no obstacle to their establishment by Benevolent Societies, from England and Canada: but it is submitted that this can scarcely be considered an adequate fulfilment of the duties and responsibilities imposed by their position. The monopoly of the fur trade, if not a compact for the benefit of the Indian, is an injustice, as it deprives him of the fair value of his toil, debars him from intercourse with civilized man, and the ameliorating influences without which he can never rise in the scale of humanity. For the last two centuries the right of exclusion has been rigidly enforced from the shores of Hudson's Bay, and never, perhaps, in the whole world, and in all time, has a fairer opportunity been offered for the regeneration of the Indian race. No surrounding communities have acted upon them with evil and pernicious influences; no opposing interests have interfered with the most comprehensive and benevolent plans for their amelioration: they have been cut off from the intercourse, the contentions, and the contagion of the world. And yet what has been the result? The system which has made the Company prosperous and powerful, has made the Indian a slave, and his country a desert. He is at this day wandering about his native land, without home or covering, as much a stranger to the blessings of civilization as when the white man first landed on his shores. It is far from the intention of the Society to cast indiscriminate censure upon the servants of the Hudson's-Bay Company, many of whom are, without doubt, benevolent and humane, as well as enterprising and intelligent. But it must be obvious that their character and habits, as well as the policy of the Company's rulers, are alike unfavourable to that progressive settlement and civilization of the country which has been going on in so remarkable a manner to the south of the British and American boundary. And the question really comes to be, whether these territories are to remain a wilderness till the tide of population bursts in upon them, over a conventional line from a country where the possessory rights either of Indians or civilized states are little regarded; or be opened up under the auspices of the Canadian Government, whose interest in the welfare and improvement of the native race living under its jurisdiction the Society is thankful to acknowledge. The recent enactment of the Provincial Legislature conferring on them the right of suffrage is one of the most hopeful character, as it admits them to full participation in the privileges and duties of British subjects. In pleading for the extension of the Government of Canada over the Indian tribes of Hudson's Bay, the Society indulge the hope that similar rights will be accorded to them, and that the necessary measures will be taken for promoting their

moral and religious improvement, by settling them on lands of their own, instructing them in the arts of civilized life, and, by the establishment of Missions and Schools, bringing within the reach of every member of the community the means of Christian training and instruction.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

R. N. FOWLER, *Chairman.*

F. W. CHESSON, *Secretary.*

May, 1857.

This Memorial appears in the Appendix to the recently published Blue Book.

"THE MONTREAL GAZETTE" AND THE ABORIGINES' PROTECTION SOCIETY.

THE following is an extract from an article which appears in the *Montreal Gazette* (a Government organ) of the 16th of Sept. :—

"Having taken a leading part in agitating the question of the opening up of portions of the North-West Territory to Canadian enterprise and settlement, and having opened our columns to its discussion when the agitation on this side of the Atlantic, at least, slumbered, we have yet, in so far as our own share of the controversy went, endeavoured to take a moderate, middle ground. While admitting all comers to have their say in our columns, we have yet kept aloof ourselves from the extremes which would, on the one hand, leave the Company as it is, to breed ill-will against British rule, and disorder at the Red River, and shut us out from the cultivable portions of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan countries; or, on the other, with a blind fanaticism, would break down and destroy the Company at all risks, before we were prepared to furnish any substitute for its organization for the supply of the Aborigines. The policy we have urged has been simply to call in question the Company's Charter, and demand the extension of our boundaries, with a view to the transference to Canada of the Imperial authority over the Company's Charter—a recognition of Canadian sovereignty over all unorganized portions of British North America—and a decision upon the claims which we derive from the French founders of the colony, by virtue of prior discovery and occupation, to the immediate possession and dominion of all those cultivable districts above referred to. Mr. Draper, it seems, did not deem it advisable or necessary to go so far. He never seems to have deemed it necessary or fitting to ask for so great an extension of Canadian sovereignty; though, in speaking of the organization of the new colonies, he pointed directly to their ultimate union with this province, and the adoption of our institutions there as soon as practicable, with that object in view. Throughout, he seems to have approached the subject rather in a judicial spirit, as if he had been a member of the committee, than as the advocate of a particular interest or partisan views. Believing that all Canada needed could be obtained by a demand for the settlement of the boundaries upon the basis of the priority of French or the Company's discoveries and occupation, he confined himself to that point. He knew the Company would make large concessions ere they would take their charter into court. He did not for one moment forget that he had been sent there—not as an enemy to the Hudson's-Bay Company, to breath fire, fury, and hatred against them, and by

their destruction to avenge the wrongs of sundry individuals who owed them grudges—not as the champion of the Red Man, and the agent of the Aborigines' Protection Society, but as the representative of this province, to look after its interests and secure its rights. He did not bluster, rave, fret, or call hard names; he did not bully or threaten—and therefore it is that he failed to satisfy Mr. Chesson, and the hot-headed, warm-hearted enthusiasts who think with him. On going to England, he found Mr. Labouchere, the head of the Committee, with its majority, and the Cabinet at his back, disposed to act in the interest of Mr. Ellice and the Company. He found Mr. Ellice, with his Grey and other Whig connections, most powerful, not only with the Government, but in the House of Commons. He found also, we fancy, the proverbial conservative spirit of British legislators, their profound respect for vested and long-possessed immunities, already cunningly aroused against him, and any possible accidental vote obtainable in the House of Commons likely to be reversed by the hereditary branch of the Imperial Parliament. Here were the odds which the provincial delegate found himself called upon to contend against. In such circumstances, what was a wise man to do? To bluster and talk big, to throw down the gage of battle, and fight *a l'outrance*? To commence a lawsuit likely to last for twenty years, the Company meantime remaining in possession of the whole territory, and suppressing revolt at Red River by means of British bayonets? Was he to run his head against the stone wall, built up of prejudice, party ties, family influence, and almost unlimited patronage across his path? Or was not diplomacy and compromise advisable, if by that means nearly all that it was desirable we should have could be obtained? if the Red River and Saskatchewan could be immediately rescued from the Company and prepared for union with Canada, and the danger of disaffection and separation from British rule or Canadian alliance averted? Certainly the latter course was best for Canada, however much it may have robbed the delegate of the *éclat* obtainable by pursuing the opposite course. He might have covered himself with glory in the eyes of zealots; he might have spoken great speeches and written great pamphlets; he might have aroused a great deal of ill blood, and come back with a flea in his ear, having gained nothing for Canada but the opportunity of carrying on a long and expensive law-suit, and a grudge against the British Government and Parliament likely to come to no good. He chose a less conspicuous, noisy course, productive, perchance, of more practical good. There is every prospect that what is ours will speedily be handed over to us, and when by its occupation we shall learn its value, we shall be the better able to judge of the advisableness of undertaking the cost and trouble of the management of the rest of the continent. *Festina lente* is an excellent maxim with respect to the annexation or absorption of territory as in other affairs of life. For ourselves, we admit that we are not altogether satisfied with the result of Chief Justice Draper's mission, but we are still willing to believe that he has acted according to his best judgment for Canadian interests, as we know he must have been in a much better position to know how they could be best promoted, than we have been, or Mr. Chesson, or, we fancy, even Mr. Roebuck or Mr. Gladstone, who were so much disgusted, we are told, with Mr. Draper's conduct."

We think that there is abundant evidence to prove that the *Montreal Gazette* did not adopt twelve months ago, "the middle course," which it now takes credit for having pursued. Then our contemporary published leading articles condemning the Company's monopoly, advocating a legal examination of their claims, and animadverting upon their treatment of the Indians. At that

time, also, the *Gazette,* instead of censuring the Aborigines' Protection Society, encouraged us to proceed in the work which we had undertaken, and gave a practical proof of its sympathy with our labours, by publishing the whole of our memorial to Mr. Labouchere, together with the voluminous appendix added thereto. The change of opinion has been on its part, and not on our's.

The *Gazette* endeavours to create the impression that we are endeavouring "to break down and destroy the Company at all risks," without being prepared "to furnish any substitute for the supply of the Aborigines." We have never sought "to destroy and break down the Company:" so long as they confine themselves to the proper business of fur-traders, we have neither the wish nor the right to interfere with them. We are not endeavouring to break down their trade, or to put an end to their existence, but rather to place them in the position of private traders. As friends of the Indians, we advocate the abolition of the Hudson's-Bay monopoly, because it excludes them from the enjoyment of those advantages of competitive trade which, upon every principle of natural justice, ought to be granted to them. If this be "blind fanaticism," where shall we look for reason or common sense?

The *Gazette* states that the policy it has urged "has been simply to call in question the Company's charter, and to demand the extension of our boundaries, with a view to the transference to Canada of the Imperial authority over the Company's charter; a recognition of Canadian sovereignty over all unorganized portions of British North America," &c. Here both the *Gazette* and ourselves meet on common ground; we have not asked for more than our contemporary; but the difference between us is, that while we continue to make these just and reasonable demands, the *Gazette* surrenders them for the sake of a compromise, which is based upon no real regard for the rights either of Canada, or of the inhabitants of the Hudson's-Bay territories.

Mr. Draper, instead of approaching the subject in that judicial spirit for which our contemporary gives him credit, rather exhibited the character of a partisan of the Company. He certainly did not give that prominence to the French claims which the *Gazette* gives him credit for; and, as his published evidence shews, it was not he who claimed for Canada either the Saskatchewan or the Red River. As a matter of right he asked for Canada no portion of the territory lying to the west of the Mississippi. In reality, therefore, his supposed opposition to the Company was of a most harmless character, and did not, in any important degree, affect the vital questions at issue.

It is true that we had no right to expect that Mr. Draper would act as "the champion of the Red Man or the agent of the Aborigines' Protection Society;" but we had a right to expect that he would not altogether leave out of consideration the rights and interests of the

Red-River settlers and of the Indian population. He had an opportunity of making representations of the treatment which they received from the Company. All the facts were within his reach, and if he required further information it would not have derogated from his dignity had he consulted Mr. Isbister, the accredited representative of the Red-River colonists, who was eminently qualified to speak on their behalf. And so with regard to the Indians, we do not complain that he did not constitute himself their "champion;" but the complaint we make is, that he absolutely placed himself in the position of their enemy. He recommended the maintenance of the Company's monopoly, which keeps the Indians in a position but little removed from that of slaves. He proposed to draw the new boundary-line so as to include as large a proportion of the Indian population as possible under the Company's control; and when he was asked by Mr. Christy whether the effect of his suggestions, in reference to the natives, would not be to prevent them from crossing the boundary-line to sell their furs, he replied in the affirmative. If we had no just ground for anticipating that Mr. Draper would have made himself the advocate of "the red man," we had, at least, reason to expect that he would have exhibited a higher sense of justice, and more generosity of feeling towards that unfortunate race.

We believe that the *Gazette* greatly exaggerates the difficulties which Mr. Draper would have had to contend against had he taken the course which we advocate. No doubt the Company would have exhibited a strong disinclination to confront Canada before the Judicial Committee of Privy Council, but we believe that neither Mr. Labouchere nor the Select Committee would have offered any serious opposition to a step of this kind. Mr. Labouchere would doubtless have looked upon it with an unfriendly eye, but there is not the slightest reason for supposing that it would have led to any breach of friendly relations either between Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Draper, or between the former gentleman and Canada. Instead of resulting in a law-suit, which would last for twenty years, we believe it would have settled the question in six months, and have effectually prevented many troubles and difficulties which are now almost certain to take place. At all events, the course we have pointed out was the only straightforward and satisfactory one to pursue; but it was one which, according to the *Gazette's* own shewing, Mr. Draper had not the moral courage to take.

POSTED IN STANDARD BOX (DETAINED)