

Caughnawaga (Kahnawá:ke)



Settler accounts to 1900

Curated by Chris Willmore

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The 18th Century

“To renew their Friendship with us”¹ (December, 1734)

Dec. 30. *On Monday last His Excellency made the following SPEECH to both Houses* [of the Massachusetts Bay Legislature], viz.

Gentlemen of the Council and House of Representatives,

Some little Time after I² dismis'd this Court the last Summer, I embark'd aboard his Majesty's Ship the *Scarborough*, to view such of the Eastern Coasts and Lands of this Province, as I could not see when I met the several Tribes of Indians at *Falmouth* Two Years ago. [...] And as, *Gentlemen*, I have now made myself acquainted with the Eastern Part, it would be pleasing to me to have as good a Knowledge of our Western Frontiers, having lately receiv'd a Message from the *Cagnawaga* Indians, of their Desire to see me that way sometime in the Spring; if you *Gentlemen*, may think it for his Majesty's Service, and to the Advantage of this Province, I shall be ready to make a Journey to our Western Borders, there to meet such Tribes of Indians as may be desirous to renew their Friendship with us; and if this be determin'd on, I shall not doubt your making the proper provision for such an Occasion. [...]

Decemb. 23. 1734.

We hear that the Hon. House of Representatives have voted the Sum of *six Hundred Pounds*, to purchase such Goods as may be suitable to present to the *Cagnawaga* and other Tribes of Indians, at the Interview intended to be had with them next Spring, at the Western Frontiers. And also the sum of *Twelve Hundred Pounds* to defray the necessary Charges and Expences of his Excellency and the Gentlemen that are to attend him at the said Interview.

The conference at Deerfield³ (August, 1735)

AT A CONFERENCE Held at *Deerfield* in the County of *Hampshire*, the Twenty seventh Day of *August*, Anno Regni Regis GEORGII Secundi, Magnæ, Britanniæ, Franciæ et Hiberniæ, &c. Nono, *Annoq; Domini*, 1735.

By & between His Excellency *JONATHAN BELCHER*, Esq; Captain General and Governour in Chief in and over His Majesty's Province of the *Massachusetts Bay* in *New England*, AND

Ountaussoogoe and others, Chiefs of the *Cagnawaga* Tribe of Indians, &c. who were accompanied by a Number of the *St. Francois* Indians, who at their own desire were included in the Treaty with the *Cagnawagas*, the whole being Twenty-seven.

¹ From Dec. 30. (1735, January 23). *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 1.

² Jonathan Belcher (1682 – 1757), governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay from 1730 to 1741.

³ From Belcher, J. (1735). *At a conference held at Deerfield*. [Printer unknown.]

Cuncaupot Captain, with his Lieutenant and several others of the Chiefs of the *Houssatannoc* Indians &c. being upwards of Forty in the whole.

Marlequunt, Naunautooghijau, and Weenpauk, Three Chiefs of the *Seautacook* Tribe and others, including Seventeen of the *Moheegs*, making Eighty in the whole.

His Excellency being seated at a large Table under a spacious Tent for that Purpose prepared, attended by a Quorum of His Majesty's Council, and a Committee of the honourable House of Representatives, thereto appointed by the General Court; with a great Number of Gentlemen and other Spectators.

The Union Flagg flying at the head of the Tent.

His Excellency first received the *Cagnawaga* Tribe of Indians, with the *St. Francois*, who were placed on Seats at a suitable Distance over against His Excellency; they having first made their Compliments to the Governour by shaking Hands &c.

Joseph Kellogg, Esq; being a Sworn Interpreter,

Governour – *to the Interpreter* – Inform the Chiefs I shall speak.

My good Friends and Brethren,

I am glad to see you: I give thanks to the Great GOD who has safely conducted you through a long and tedious Journey; It is a great pleasure to me that we have the Opportunity of refreshing our Faces with the sight of each other. – Holding out one String of *Wampum*, - proceeds, and says, -

My good Friends and Brethren, THIS Is to wipe away all Tears from your Eyes. – Then holding out a second – THIS is to open your Throats that you may speak with all Freedom – Then a third – THIS is to wipe away all Blood, and to comfort you under all your past Difficulties.

And then His Excellency delivered them the three Strings in one.

Aountauresaunkee Indian Speaker.

We that are deputed from our Tribe are come at Your Excellency's Call – at your desire – and are glad we are got safe here, after a long and tedious Travel over Hills and high Mountains, and join with the Governour in our Thanks to GOD that we see the Faces of each other in Health and Peace. As your Excellency has done to Us, we do the same in answer to You – holding a string of *Wampum* – proceeds and says, – Our desire is that all Tears may be wiped from Your Excellency's Eyes. – Then holding out a second String – That your Throat may be open, that all freedom of Speech may be had, we desire the Path may be clear and open, and no difficulty in the way. – Then holding out a third String – We desire the Place where the Governour stands may be clean from all filth of Blood:

And then he delivered the three Strings to the Governour.

The Governour sent for Three of Us, but usually more of us come than are sent for, we are Eight instead of Three. We have brought over our Wives who we always want with us. (Then delivers a Belt of *Wampum*, being in Answer to One the Governour sent them by the Messenger that called them.)

We incline to be short lest we should be troublesome to the Governour. We are here the Representatives of the Three Families of the *Cagnawaga* Tribe, *Ountaussoogoe* and Three others, one of the Families having sent two Delegates.

We desire nothing may be taken amiss by your Excellency; if a wrong Word should happen to fall from us, we desire it may be taken up and rectified; it is what has been usual, and we desire it may be so now.

The Way is now clear, and the Door open for Freedom of Speech; but we have nothing to say at present. We were sent for, and it is not customary for those that are drawn by the Hand to speak first, and therefore wait to hear what Your Excellency has to say, and desire You would please to appoint the time, when we shall be ready to attend.

Governour. It is not at all disagreeable to me that more of you are come than we sent for; You are all doubly welcome, and I am glad to see you all; and if more had come than are here they should have been very welcome too; I am glad to see your Wives and Children also.

Ountaussoogoe. Brother, Governour, and *Broad Way*, we have now shaken hands, finished Salutation, and we take it the Method thereof is now ended according to the Custom of our Forefathers.

Governour. I take it so too. I shall signify to you by Capt. *Kellogg* when I shall be ready to speak further to you on Business, which I intend to Morrow in the forenoon.

His Excellency drank a Health to King GEORGE to them.

They all drink with proper Salutations.

Ountaussoogoe. We are here at Your Excellency's Call, and when You say we are dismiss'd we are ready to go: We return Thanks that we have been well provided for since we have been here; we have wanted nothing, and thank the Governour. When we came from Home we told Our People we purposed to return in forty Days, we have been in this Place near thirty, and now wait Your Excellency's Pleasure for our Return.

Governour. It is in some measure owing to your Selves that so much time is already spent; Your answer to me not coming seasonably, I waited for it a long while, more than Six Months. It is the Great GOD that governs the Winds and Weather, and by his Providence the Vessel sent by the Government from *Boston* with Stores has been delayed.

Ountaussoogoe. When we received Your Excellency's Message Our Young Men were out at War, and we inclined to see the Event; for if great Loss had happened, we should have been obliged to revenge it for Our Selves; and we are now come at Your Excellency's desire. Although I am an Old Man, I am not wanting of Business, sometimes being called to one Place, sometimes to another, on publick Affairs or otherways; and here we are now.

Governour. We can't avoid Disappointments; I will endeavour you shall be early dispatch'd; there are other Tribes here expecting to be treated with as well as you, but I consider your distance, and shall give you the first dispatch.

Ountaussoogoe. We take it all Matters are over as has been customary by Our Fathers at first meeting on such Occasions, and are now ready to take leave.
Then the Indians made their Compliment and withdrew. [...]

Thursday, *August 28*. 1735.

The Conference Continued.

PRESENT.

His Excellency *Jonathan Belcher*, Esq;
Captain General and Governour in Chief, &c.
Ountaussoogoe, and others of the *Cagnawaga* Tribe.

Governour. *My good friends and Brethren*,

There has been a long Friendship between King GEORGE's Subjects, and the *Five Nations* from whence you originally came, and there was a special Covenant made between this Government and You (the *Cagnawaga* Indians) at *Albany*, eleven Years ago, which you on Your part as well as we on Ours, have faithfully observed hitherto; and we now readily acknowledge that you have testified your Faithfulness in divers Instances of your Friendship; and I now come by the desire of the People in this Government to renew that Covenant, and to brighten the Chain, that a good Understanding of Peace and Friendship may be Cultivated and Continued for ever, that so the Children unborn may in times to come rejoice in Our meeting together this day.

His Excellency delivers them a large Belt of *Wampum*.

Aountauresaunkee Indian. It is not to be questioned but when the Governour has done saying, He will inform us He has done.

Governour. There are some of your People who resort to *Fort Dummer*, where Captain *Kellogg* Commands: The Government have placed A FATHER there, who will be ready to learn them and their Children to Read and Write, and to inform them of the Principles of Our Religion; If any of you are willing to be instructed therein, I look upon you to be a free People; You are my Brethren, and you need not be afraid of any body, nor of receiving Knowledge: It will cost you nothing to have your Children instructed by the FATHER that lives at the Fort. It is from the same respect and love that I have for my self, that I would have you and your Children Instructed. And this Matter I leave to your Consideration at your return Home.

Then His Excellency delivered another Belt of *Wampum*.

There is a present from the Government to be given you, which you shall have to Morrow. I have done speaking for the present.

Aountauresaunkee, Indian Speaker – Stands up, – And distinctly repeats every thing His Excellency has said, and he in the Name of the rest, returns their hearty Thanks for the Governour's Care over them and Kindness for them; gratefully acknowledging the Respect shewn them by the Governour, – *and proceeds* – It is

exceedingly kind of the Governour (and we rejoice to see it) that the BROAD WAY is kept Open between Us, that there is safe passing, and no hindrance or stop therein. Matters of such Consequence as these are of great Moment, and deserve the Attention of a better Head than mine (which is weak) to speak to, especially what the Governour mentions as to the Covenant made about eleven Years ago at *Albany*.

Ountaussoogoe, Indian Chief, – Rises up, – And repeats again Article by Article what His Excellency had said: Then he lays down a large Belt of *Wampum* doubled; and in answer to the Governour, (with one End of the Belt) says, – *Brother*, the *Broad Way*. I am poor in the Case: Don't expect a full Answer from us here; but I take up *Your Word* and shall carry it home to them that have sent us here; they are now upon their Knee waiting for Our return, they are the Three Families of the *Cagnawaga* Tribe, and they wish us will take these Affairs, which are of such great Weight under Consideration, in order to give the Governour an Answer. And we give thanks to the Great GOD that has given Your Excellency and Our Brethren of the BROAD WAY, an Heart to continue of the same Mind as when the Covenant was entered into: We also rejoice that GOD has continued Us of the same Mind, and that there is no seeking of any kind, but Good. – With the other hand of the belt, - He returns thanks for the Favours received. And now we have gone through the Work, what have we further to do? We desire to know His Excellency's Pleasure when we may be returning home.

Governour. I have had News from *Boston* to day; there is a Ship lately arrived from *England*, and brings the Account that the Peace is still subsisting between King GEORGE and the *French* King; but if there should happen a War between King GEORGE and the *French* King, yet I shall have a good Opinion of your Fidelity. If it should be War, there is no question but your Justice and Faith, as well as your Interest will hold you to Peace with us; You will be always honestly dealt with by Capt. *Kellogg* at the Truck House, where you may have such things as you need, at a cheaper rate than any others can or will let you have them.

It is with a great deal of Pleasure I have undertaken the fatigue of this Journey to meet you here, and save you the trouble of going to *Boston*. The Way to *Boston* is open and free, and I shall always be glad to see you there, whenever you please to come. On Monday I hope you will be ready to be going home, when you shall have Provision for your Journey: But you must dine with me to Morrow – when you shall have the Present, and take leave after dinner.

The Governour drinks lasting Health and Prosperity to their Tribe.

Ountaussoogoe drinks King GEORGE's Health and the Governour's, &c. [...]

Friday August 28. 1735.

The Conference Continued.

PRESENT

His Excellency *Jonathan Belcher*, Esq;

Captain General and Governour in Chief, &c.

Ountaussoogoe Chief, and others of the *Cagnawagas*.

Governour. I hope you are all well this Morning.

Ountaussoogoe. No Sir, One was taken Sick this Morning, and a Child has been Sick ever since we came.

Governour. I am sorry for it; the Doctor shall tend on them. – I expect none here now, but those of the *Cagnawaga* Tribe. –

[*Some others being under the Tent.*]

The Present of the Government which lays before you, is designed only for your Tribe, and you must take care that it be justly distributed among your Selves: The Government has made other Provision for the others.

Then the Present was delivered.

I hope you will carefully lay up all I have said to you, and though we are at such a distance in Our Persons, yet I hope Our Hearts will be always near one another: And you shall be provided with what may be necessary for your Journey, as well Provisions as Skins for Shoes &c.

To Morrow will be the last day of the Week, and the next Day will be GOD's Day, so you had best tarry till Monday morning; but I don't say this to put you out of your Way. You shall do as you please.

Aountauresaunkee Indian Speaker. We return thanks for the Care Your Excellency has taken of us, and for the Present of the Government.

Your Excellency has minded us of Our Duty, and we shall keep it in mind and observe it.

Governour. I drink King GEORGE's Health, and with you Health and Happiness.

Ountaussoogoe. I Salute the Governour and all the Gentlemen here. I have been so handsomely treated since I have been with you, that I have almost fancied by self to be in Heaven, and I shall not be able to forbear Weeping when I leave the Governour.

The Present was delivered, and the Indians dined with His Excellency &c. under the Tent. [...]

“To treat about some publick Affairs”⁴ (February, 1738)

Pursuant to an Order from His Excellency the Governor to us the Subscribers directed, appointing us to confer with *Ontausoogoe* and Four other Delegates of the *Cagnawaga* Tribe of Indians, we came to Fort *Dummer* aforesaid, where we arrived on the fifth of *October, Anno Domini, 1737.*

⁴ From Province of the Massachussetts-Bay. (1738, February 21). *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 1.

We acquainted the said Delegates, that His Excellency the Governor having been inform'd that they were come to Fort *Dummer*, to treat about some publick Affairs, he had thereupon ordered and appointed us on Behalf of the Government of the said Province, to confer with them of such Matters as were given them in Charge, and that we should be ready to hear what they had to say, when they were prepar'd to speak. The usual Ceremonies being over, they withdrew.

October, 6. Being met in the Morning, *Ountaussoogoe* said to us as follows, *viz.* Brother, the Broad Way, Two Years past I was at *Deerfield*; the Matter than deliver'd to us by you was, that the old Covenant of Peace and Unity between our Brother the Broad Way and us might be continued.

We now return in Answer for our three Tribes, That our Desire is, that it might remain firm and unshaken, and do from our Hearts promise the Covenant shall not be broken on our Part, but if ever there should be any Breach, it shall begin on yours. And the God of Heaven who now sees us, and knows what we are doing, be Witness of our Sincerity. – Then laid down a Belt of *Wampum*.

Ontaussoogoe then said again, We your Brethren of the three Tribes have learn'd by Hear-say, that our Brother the Broad Way has lost his Wife. – Such Losses ought to be made up. We did not know whether the Governor would be capable of a Treaty under his Affliction, but find that he is, and are thankful for it. – Then gave a Belt of *Wampum* to quiet the Governor's Mind, and remove his Grief for the Loss of his Wife; and added, I roll myself in the Dust for the Loss of our great Men.

Ontaussoogoe said again, We do in the Name of our three Tribes salute the Governor, and all the Gentlemen belonging to him, tho' at a great Distance and Strangers, yet something acquainted. This was their Desire and Design when we came from Home, thus to salute you with this Belt, wishing you Happiness and Prosperity; laid it down and said they had done speaking.

We then said to them, we would take what they had delivered into Consideration, and return Answer thereto in the Afternoon. We then drank King *GEORGE's* Health to them, they also drank King *GEORGE's* Health and the Governor's to us.

In the Afternoon being met, we said to them, You have in strong Terms assured us, that the Covenant of Friendship renewed Two Years ago at *Deerfield* between this Government and the *Cagnawaga* Tribe, shall always remain firm and unshaken; and we do in the Name and Behalf of the Government assure you, that they will cultivate the Friendship they have contracted with your Tribes, and that nothing in our Hearts, nor the Instigation of others, shall ever prevail upon us to break our solemn Engagements to you; but we shall always hold our selves under the strongest Obligations to a punctual Observance of what we have promised. We then gave a Belt of *Wampum*.

You have in your Speech made to us this Day, condoled the Death of the Governor's Lady. Her Death was the Cause of much Grief to him. We doubt not but your Sympathizing with him will tend to abate and lighten his Sorrow. We take this Occasion to express our Concern for the Death of your Friends, and to Comfort your Hearts under your Afflictions. We then gave three black Blankets, instead of a Belt.

We kindly accept the Salutation of your People, and esteem it a Token of their Respect and Friendship to us. And we do in the name of the Government, return the like Salutation to your old Men and Young, both to your Councillors and to your Men of War, to all of them we wish Prosperity and Happiness forever. – Then we gave a Belt of *Wampum*.

Ountaussoogoe said, *Gentlemen*, I return your Thanks; you have rehearsed all that has been said this Day. – [We] Are glad your Hearts are disposed as we find they are to Friendship, and desire that they always may, and declare that ours ever will; and thank God for it. – And wishes well to all.

We then drank the Governor's Health.

The Speeches being ended, we then in the Name of the Government, gave a Present to them of the Value of *Seventy Pounds Ten Shillings*.

[(Signed)] *John Stoddard, Eleazer Porter, Thomas Wells, Joseph Kellogg, Israel Williams*, Commissioners.

“The least that ought to be paid for a Prisoner”⁵ (August, 1754)

In *January*, 1753, four of our *Indian* Traders, *viz. Alexander M'Genty, Jabez Evans, David Hendricks* and *William Powell*, were taken trading on *Kantuqui* River, near the *Ohio*, by a Party of *French Indians*, called the *Cagnawagas*, who plundered them of Goods to the Value of several Hundred Pounds, and carried them to *Canada*; where they were made Slaves. But acquainting the Mayor of *Albany* with their miserable Situation, by a Letter which he communicated to this Government, Measures were taken to procure their Release. The *Indians* at first demanded a *Negroe* Boy for each of them, or as much Money as would buy one; but at length were prevailed on by the Commissioners of *Indian* Affairs at *Albany*, to take less; tho' the whole paid them, with the Charges, amounted to *Seventy-two Pounds, Five Shillings* and *Three Half-pence*, for the four Prisoners, which Sum has been repaid by this Province. However, the *Indians* it seems pretend not to be satisfied; and Col. *Myndert Schuyler*,⁶ one of the *Albany* Commissioners for *Indian* Affairs, who transacted this Matter with them, received lately the following Letter from the Chief of that Nation on the Subject, *viz.*

(Copy LITERATIM⁷.)

Au Sault S. Louis, a 14 Juin, 1754.

Je te prie, mon Frere Anangarondon, de faire Attention a tous vos Messieur sur se que je n'est point eté satisfait du Prisonnier que je vous est remy a Aurange Lanné derniere. Mes jeunes Gens me dise tous le Jour qu'il ne sont poin conten de votre Fasson Dagir, et qua lavenir ils namenneron plus les Hommes vivans, puis quon ne leur donne pas Seulement de quoy avoir un petit Escalve Sauvage. Tu cest, mon Frere, que je n'est pas eu que quatrevingt dix Livre de notre Argent. Je charge

⁵ From PHILADELPHIA. (1754, August 15). *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 2.

⁶ Myndert Schuyler (1672 – 1755) was twice mayor of Albany.

⁷ I have refrained from correcting any of the errors in the French text. It is transcribed as it was printed in the newspaper.

Montandre de cette Commission, il texpliquera mes Sentimens en te remettan ma Lettre. Le moins qu'on paye un Prisonnier cest Quatre Cent Livres. Faits faire [illegible] a ceux qui ont [illegible] fortes d'Affaires antre les mains, sans quois je ne repon poin des Evenement qui pourrois arriver a lavenir lorsque mes jeunes Gens feron des Prisonnier.

O'NONRAGUITE.
Chef du Sault St. Louis.

Translated into *ENGLISH*.

Falls of St. Louis, June 14, 1754.

I pray thee, brother *Anagarondon*⁸, to acquaint the Gentlemen, that I have not been satisfied for the Prisoners that were delivered to you at *Albany* last Year. My young Men tell me every Day that they do not like your Management, and that for the future they will bring no living Prisoners, since they do not receive as much for one of them as will buy a little Slave. You know, my Brother, that I had only ninety Livres of our Money. I charge *Montandre* with this Commission, who will explain my Sentiments to you, when he delivers this Letter. The least that ought to be paid for a Prisoner is 400 Livres⁹. Let those that have the Management of these Sort of Affairs, give due Attention to this: Otherwise I will not answer for what may happen hereafter, when my young Men make Prisoners.

ONONRAGUIETE,
Chief of the Falls of St. Louis.

By this insulting Letter from a People with whom this Province has not had the least Difference, to whom we have never given the least Occasion of Offence, we may see the Contempt in which we are held by the Savages; who not content with plundering our People of their Goods with Impunity, propose to make Slaves of all of us they can catch, or to have a Sum for each sufficient to purchase a Slave, otherwise threatening they will not be at the Trouble of saving our Lives. If they are suffered to go on in this Manner, and to make a Trade of catching our People, and selling them to us again for 400 Livres per Head, it may in time cost us more to satisfy the Demands of that Handful of Barbarians, than would serve to defend the Province against all its enemies.

“The strongest assurances of our good will”¹⁰ (September, 1766)

Whilst his Excellency¹¹ and general Carleton¹², were employed in settling the boundaries between the two provinces [of Quebec and New York], the Cachnawagha Indians, residing on the river St. Lawrence, having been informed of their arrival at

⁸ Anagarondon, *is Col. Schuyler's Indian Name*. [Note in the original.]

⁹ *About* Twenty Pounds *Sterling*. [Note in the original.]

¹⁰ From ALBANY, September 29, 1766. (1766, October 9). *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, p. 2.

¹¹ Sir Henry Moore (1713 – 1769), governor of New York from 1765 until his death.

¹² Guy Carleton (1724 – 1808) was twice governor of Quebec.

the upper end of Lake Champlain, sent a deputation to welcome them, which they received in their tents, on the isle de la Motte, with the usual ceremonies; and were addressed by one of the chiefs in the following words.

Brothers, the governors of New-York and Quebec, the seven confederate nations of the province of Quebec having heard of your coming to these parts, thought it their duty to send a deputation to wait upon, and to address you on your arrival. We their deputies, therefore, thank the Being above, for having been pleased to let us meet you in good health, and for having guarded you on your journey from any accident; and likewise for having protected our new Governor on his voyage over the great lake, to arrive safe in his government; and we most heartily bid him welcome, and with him perfect health and happiness to govern the same, recommending the Indian nations in his government to his favour and protection; this we confirm with these *strings of wampum*.

Brothers, having at the same time heard, that you were to ascertain and fix the boundaries between your respective provinces, we saw it a very proper and convenient opportunity, to return the great King of England, our father, our most humble thanks, through you, for having most graciously taken notice of all Indian nations, their lands, and trade in America, in his royal proclamation of October 1763; which our friend and brother Sir William Johnson, had then published to us, by his deputy, Captain Claus: and we most heartily request of you, to support and protect us in the same, as our hunting grounds lay chiefly in your two governments.

A large belt of black wampum.

Brothers, since we lived under the French government, we enjoyed our hunting and fishing about this lake, without interruption or molestation; and we were assured by the French Governor to continue so to do, as long as we lived hereabouts. As to the dominion of the lake, and the lands thereupon, it is true, he reserved that to the French King; but as to the wild beasts in the wood, and the fish in the waters thereof, he said they were for the use of the Indian nations living about it, without exception; and which accordingly we have enjoyed above this eighty years past: But now, *Brothers,* since this lake and country is in your possession, we find there have several settlements been making thereupon, which although it was not the case in the French time, yet we make no objection to it; all that surprises and alarms us is, that some of these new settlers have told to some of our people, that they should not hunt within their right; should this be the case, and they have it in their power so to do, it would at once frustrate our present hopes of his Majesty's good will towards us, and deprive us of our principal subsistence and livelihood. And we beg by this belt of wampum, that you would be pleased to support us in what his Majesty was graciously pleased to reserve to us, and be glad of your opinion and answer upon what we have now laid before you.

A long belt of wampum.

Brothers, what we have been speaking to you, concerning the lake and lands in question, was only since the time the Europeans have come amongst us; as to the original owners thereof, it is well known to have been the undisputed right of the Six Nations, and was chiefly occupied in the hunting seasons by the ancient Mohawks,

whose descendants we are; and our forefathers going to hunt, chiefly in this neighbourhood, was one of the principal reasons for our settling upon the river St. Lawrence, near Montreal; as whenever they killed any game nearest that market, they carried it there, and being well received and flattered by the French; and on the contrary, slighted and neglected by the Dutch, who then possessed the province of New-York; families after families settled and remained in Canada, which occasioned the establishment of what to this day is called the French Mohawks, and where we now live. As to the first building ever made upon Lake Champlain, it is well known to be Crown Point, which our middle-aged men all well remember; and the Six Nations hearing of it, immediately remonstrated against it to the French Governor, who telling them it was to guard against a sudden attack from the English, prevailed upon them with difficulty, to let him finish it; which at last they consented to, with condition, that no other settlement should be made upon the lake hereafter, which be readily engaged in, and promised to observe.

Brothers, the last part of our speech we have only made you by way of information; and therefore give no wampum upon it.

To which their Excellencies returned the following answer.

Brothers, we return you our sincere thanks for your compliments of congratulation on our arrival here; and are extremely happy in having the earliest opportunity of giving you the strongest assurances of our good will towards you.

Brothers, as we are persuaded you will not be wanting on your parts, to merit that protection which has been granted to you by the British Crown, we shall always discourage every attempt made in our respective provinces of New-York and Quebec, to disturb you in those rights and privileges which have ben confirmed to you; and shall endeavour, by every means, to promote a mutual confidence and good understanding with the seven confederate nations; recommending it to you, at the same time, on this, as well as on any future occasion, to make a proper distinction between acts of government, and the proceedings of individuals; nor to suppose, from the rash and unjustifiable actions of particular persons, that any public countenance will be given to violence and oppression.

Several presents were afterwards made to them, of different kinds of provisions; with which, as well as the assurances of protection given to them, they appear highly satisfied, and set out on their return the same day.

After Confederation

“Constant strife about the sale of lands”¹³ (March, 1868)

Hon. Mr. DORION¹⁴ did not wish to dispossess the Indians of their lands, but he certainly was of opinion that some better arrangement with the Indians might be made than at present existed. Near the city of Montreal was an Indian reserve belonging to the Caughnawaga Indians, where there was constant strife about the sale of lands. The Indians were ever fighting among themselves, cutting down the timber and selling it to the white man and quarrelling about it, in spite of every effort that could be made to prevent such a state of things. He thought if the Indians could be induced to commute their lands for a certain sum of money they would be much better off than they now are.

Mr. MACKENZIE¹⁵ said his experience had led him to believe that the Indians would be better off if they were deprived of their lands, &c., being kept at a distance from the large towns scattered among other people. He did not speak against the Indians in a moral sense. They were the best behaved people in his neighborhood, and were guilty of very few crimes indeed.

Hon. Mr. McDOUGALL¹⁶ contended that the Government had no right to dispossess the Indians of their lands. The Indians had as much right to their particular properties as other people had, and the Government could merely advise and direct them in the sale of such lands as they might desire to part with. The Government could not get rid of the management of Indian affairs by transferring such management to the Local Governments. The management of the Indian lands devolved on them by the constitution, and a vote of the House, even, could not disturb or change the liability. [...]

Mr. SNIDER¹⁷ spoke of the evil effect upon actual settlers produced by the competition of speculators. These speculators bought everywhere, and if they bought by accident a bad lot they had influence sufficient to cause the Crown Lands to take them off their hands. He considered one white man worth 100 Indians. The Caughnawaga Indians were the only Indians that would work. The others made a few baskets and nothing else. He recommended that the Indian lands should be all thrown open for settlement.

¹³ From DOMINION PARLIAMENT. (1868, March 27). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Antoine-Aimé Dorion (1818 – 1891), then Member of Parliament for Hochelaga.

¹⁵ Alexander Mackenzie (1822 – 1892) served as prime minister from 1873 to 1878. In 1868 he was a Member of Parliament for Lambton.

¹⁶ William McDougall (1822 – 1905), then Member of Parliament for Lanark North.

¹⁷ George Snider (1813 – 1885) was a Member of Parliament for Grey North.

“Too small for their increased numbers”¹⁸ (December, 1875)

We observe from various telegrams that a deputation of Caughnawaga Indians has been to Washington, and have arranged with the United States Government for a settlement in their Indian territory, and that so soon as the treaty is finally concluded some seven hundred Indians intend emigrating from Canada. This resolve on the part of the Iroquois is caused by the inability of their present number to live together comfortably in their reserve, the size of which is too small for their increased numbers. If this is true, it is a strange and sad commentary on the management of Indian affairs by the Hon. DAVID LAIRD¹⁹. At a time when thousands of dollars are being annually expended in Indian treaties with the view of civilizing the Indians of the North West, when the Sioux Indians, almost red handed from the massacres of Minnesota are petted and reserves of land and provisions given them, nothing can be done to save to the country, the intelligent and patriotic descendants of those who fought so bravely as our allies in all our engagements, surely the Minister of the Interior could have devised some plan by which Caughnawaga Indians could have been removed to a suitable settlement in the North West, where their example and knowledge might have been available for the instruction of the thousands of Indians we are trying to wean from the habits of the chase and make agriculturalists. It surely cannot be that the ultra Protestantism of Mr. LAIRD has prevented him from doing his duty to a class of the Indian community who deserve so much at the hands of any truly patriotic Canadian ministry, and that the dread of sending so large [a] number of Indian Christian Catholics into *his preserve* is at the bottom of this melancholy Indian expatriation.

“We are at present the wards of the nation”²⁰ (January, 1879)

Mr. Joseph Delisle, Jr.²¹, an Indian student at St. Mary’s College, Montreal, arrived in the city yesterday afternoon, having been selected by the Caughnawaga Indians to present an address from them to the Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald. Mr. Delisle, who by the way, is a bright intelligent youth, proceeded to Stadacona Hall last evening and made the presentation, the address being accompanied with an Indian work basket of unique construction for Lady Macdonald. This basket is a companion to that sent by the Caughnawagas to Her Majesty the Queen, recently. It is made of basswood strips, cunningly disposed, and its completion must have cost a large amount of patient labor. The Premier received his young visitor with the utmost cordiality, and expressed his gratification at receiving such a mark of esteem from

¹⁸ From We observe. (1875, December 8). *The Ottawa Daily Citizen*, p. 1.

¹⁹ David Laird (1833 – 1914), then Member of Parliament for Queen’s County.

²⁰ From A PLEASING TRIBUTE. (1879, January 15). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 4.

²¹ Joseph Delisle, Jr. would help found the Brotherhood of Canadian Indians in the 1940s, and would serve as vice-president of the North American Indian Brotherhood and a council member for Caughnawaga.

the Indians. A formal reply will be forwarded to the Grand Chief. The following is a copy of the address:-

Right Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald, K.C.B., Prime Minister of our Dominion Government and Minister of the Interior, Right Honorable Chieftain:-

In the name of Grand Chiefs and people of Caughnawaga, we beg to tender to you, Right Honorable Sir, the congratulations of our people on your accession to power and assumption of the headship of the department that has the supervision of our affairs. Although we are naturally warriors, our instincts leading us into the field of fighting and conflict, it is not for us to mix up with the political controversies and struggles that rage around us. We are at present the wards of the nation, anxious to receive the best possible consideration at the hands of whatever party may chance, by the will of the people, to be called to office. Personally, we esteem you as the tall pine tree that year after year has withstood the blast of the storm, and has only been shaken to take firmer hold of the earth in which it has been planted. We know what you have done for the whites of Canada by the project of union, which you and your colleagues brought to such successful conclusion; and now, that you have taken our case in hand, we confidently expect to see our condition ameliorated, and to be placed in a position more nearly approaching that which we claim for our right, as being the descendants of those who were the Chiefs of the soil, long before the white man ever owned as much as to set foot upon the land. Situated as you are at present, it is to you red men look to for the light of civilization. It is to your great wisdom that the sons and daughters of our Canadian people have to look for the prosperity and happiness of their own fire-sides. God has chosen to entrust to you the great stewardship of our Dominion, in order that you may promote the prosperity of His people. May your Government be a successful one, and may we the children of the forest, be raised to an equal footing with our pale-faced brethren, so that before long we shall have a representative sitting at the Dominion council fire. May our common country in the future be a glorious one, and the Great Spirit prolong your honored life to see the day when the Iroquois of Caughnawaga shall be on a par with the whiteman, and shall occupy the foremost ranks of civilization.

(Signed,)

GRAND CHIEF JOSEPH WILLIAMS,

CHIEF THOMAS JOCKS,

“ LOUIS SATEKANTON,

“ LOUIS TRORAKARON,

“ THOMAS ASSENNASE.

PETER MURRAY,

Interpreter and Secretary.

E. R. A. FLETCHER.

Caughnawaga, Jan. 13th, 1879.

The 1879 harvest at Caughnawaga²² (September, 1879)

Crops in this neighborhood generally good. Hay, over an average, fairly secured. Spring wheat, considerable breadth sown. Yield not up to that of last year. Oats and barley, an abundant crop, the quantity sown is somewhat short of that of other years. Peas, very heavy, but in some places do not seem to ripen equally. Buckwheat, considerably injured by frosts, under an average. Indian corn looks backward, but may give a fair average yield. Potatoes, fine crop; other roots good, and over an average. All fruits, fair average.

“Canadian squatters”²³ (January, 1880)

The Caughnawaga Indians are agitated about encroachments upon their reservation. Of 36,000 acres allotted the Indians, 15,000 are occupied by Canadian squatters, whose expulsion is demanded.

“Vacate immediately”²⁴ (January, 1880)

Few even of those of our business men who reside in Lachine during the winter months, as well as the summer, as they look across the cold St. Lawrence to the dilapidated Indian settlement on the other side, are aware that Caughnawaga is just now agitated to its very centre by a question which is not a new one, but one which has reached a new and most important stage. On this occasion there appears to be a determination on the part of the Indians to vindicate their rights granted by Louis XIV. The question is the encroachment of squatters upon the Caughnawaga reserve, and a meeting of braves has been called for this evening to pass a series of resolutions in reference to this matter, after which the “Canadians,” as they are called by the Indians, will no doubt be asked by the Superintendent to pack up and go, for they appear to have no right to the land they occupy. Of the reserve including about 36,000 acres, these squatters occupy about 15,000.

It should be stated that while the tribe are almost unanimous as to the course that should be adopted there is a want of unanimity among the chiefs, they being equally divided on the question. Chiefs Thomas Anennase, Louis Satekarenton and Louis Tiorakson urge the immediate departure of the intruders, while Chiefs Joseph Williams, Thomas Keratoton and Peter Kairotom favor their remaining.

The resolutions which it is proposed to submit are three in number. The first embodies the wish on the part of the tribe that the squatters vacate immediately. The second is somewhat of a revolutionary character, being nothing more nor less than urging the depositions of the three chiefs who, it is alleged, are too much under outside influences, and are prepared to sacrifice the interests of the tribe. The third

²² From HARVEST OF 1879. (1879, September 11). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 4.

²³ From Dominion Notes. (1880, January 13). *The Minneapolis Tribune*, p. 1.

²⁴ From A MEETING OF THE BRAVES. (1880, January 13). *The Montreal Witness*, p. 8.

provides that a balance of about \$3,030, arising out of the purchase by New York State of a portion of the reserve of the tribe many years ago, and now in the hands of the Fabrique, should be withdrawn and divided among the members of the tribe equally. At the meeting it is proposed to read the original deed, or a copy, which granted in 1714 this reserve to the Indians, the confirmation of this deed in 1762, and the Act of the Dominion Government in 1876, which provided for the removal of intruders by the Superintendent-General, or such officer or person as he may thereunto deputize or authorize.

“The agitation at Caughnawaga”²⁵ (January, 1880)

The little world of Caughnawaga was all agog yesterday afternoon, and as the Indian crier passed through the street announcing the holding of a public meeting of the braves of the tribe at the school-house at 5 o'clock in the evening, his more than wonted pomposity bore evidence that the meeting was to be fraught with unusually important results. The school-house was crowded to overflowing when the hour arrived, and then followed a long pow-wow in the Indian tongue. The deed granting the territory to the Indians by Louis the XIV, was read as well as the Act of the Dominion Government providing for the integrity of their reserve. Then followed the adoption of the resolutions which were indicated yesterday, and which were passed with only one dissentient voice. As each resolution was adopted signs of approval were given, including the clapping of hands. The resolution providing for the resignation of the three chiefs who opposed the demands of the tribe was resolved with unusual enthusiasm. Other matters were touched upon incidentally. An item of \$487 in the blue books put down for law expenses for the tribe, some declared they did not know anything about. Then the petition to the Government was laid upon the table for signatures and about two hundred braves had by 8 45 p.m. signed it or attached their mark.

“There have long been two parties”²⁶ (January, 1880)

SIR, - You may have observed that the *Montreal Witness* has in several of its recent issues published notices of meetings held in this village [Caughnawaga], the object of which was to drive away from the place a certain portion of the inhabitants whom the *Witness* describes as “Canadians,” or “squatters,” or persons entitled to both designations. It is true that there have been a couple of such meetings here, at one of which the resolutions mentioned by your contemporary were passed, with great alacrity, all the men and boys then and there present being of one mind on the subject,

²⁵ From THE AGITATION AT CAUGHNAWAGA. (1880, January 14). *The Montreal Daily Witness*, p. 8.

²⁶ From AN OLD RESIDENT. (1880, January 21). A FRESH INDIAN TROUBLE. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

but at a subsequent meeting these resolutions were repudiated and condemned with about equal unanimity.

I do not know if you are aware that in Caughnawaga there have long been two parties strongly opposed to each other on a question which is undoubtedly of vital importance to all men of Indian race or blood in the old provinces of the Dominion, and perhaps nowhere more so than in the Province of Quebec. Of these parties, that which is largely in the majority may be called the party of inaction or retrogression. It desires to retain old Indian customs and habits, to confine the Indians, as far as possible to the use of their own language and to remain what their ancestors were before they migrated from the West to the banks of the St. Lawrence; and all this when Caughnawaga may almost be said to be, as regards daily intercourse, a suburb of the great city of Montreal, and is surrounded by a population of European extraction imbued with European civilization. The opposite party, or that of the minority, advocates the emancipation of the Indians from their present condition of degrading and mischievous pupilage, by safe and careful steps, and to confer on them the rights and privileges of British subjects in this country. I leave you to judge which of these causes deserves the support of the people of Canada.

As I may, with your permission, address you again on this subject, I shall, in the meantime, content myself with describing in a few words the existing state of the law with regards to these "Canadians" and "squatters" of whom the *Witness* speaks. By law, the term "Indian" means, first, any male person of Indian blood, reputed to belong to a particular band or tribe; secondly, any child of such person; thirdly, any woman who is or was lawfully married to such person.

The Canadians and squatters complained of are the issue of such marriages; and as there are now no persons of pure Indian blood in Caughnawaga, the main difference between them and the rest of the population, and which constitutes their chief crime, is that they generally read, write and speak the English or French language, or both, instead of restricting themselves to Iroquois, like the mass of their people. As for the white inhabitants of this reservation, they consist of a few persons in the employ of the Grand Trunk Railway, a few agriculturalists and domestics in the service of the wealthier families, and who are retained on sufferance, and might be forced to leave the place at any moment.

The "Canadians" and "squatters" are precisely in the same position as any other Indians who own a house on a piece of land in the village or reservation, with respect to title. It is, therefore, difficult to conceive the intentions of those who are evidently encouraging the inauguration of a new Indian trouble, and which, however exciting or useful to the instigators, will probably, as usual, result in injury and disaster to the Indians. Do they suppose that the Government will rob men of property legally held by them in compliance with a demand which is opposed both to law and equity, or do they intend that the majority shall take the law into their own hands by a recourse to brute force? In conclusion, let me observe that the assertion that the "squatters" are owners of thousands of acres of land in this seignory is a pure fiction. It were perhaps as well if they did, but they do not. As I intend to write you

again on the subject, I shall only further say now that I am one of the so-called “squatters,” and

AN OLD RESIDENT

Caughnawaga, January 19, 1880.

“Deadly enemies of Indian emancipation”²⁷ (January, 1880)

SIR, - In my former letter to you, I said that I might address you again on this subject, which the Montreal *Witness* and persons in your city seem desirous to inaugurate in the village of Caughnawaga. But the account of the movement given in the *Witness* is so vague and unintelligible, partly no doubt from ignorance, but partly also, it is evident, with the intention to deceive, that it is impossible to meet the statements of that journal with either facts or arguments. All we know here about the affair is that a meeting took place, as reported in the *Witness*, with just that amount of accuracy which might be expected when the object of the reporter is to tell only half the truth; and that resolutions were passed avowing the desire of the persons assembled to expel from this village and reservation a number of residents whom they were pleased to style Canadians, squatters and strangers, but who these are, or at least the Canadians and squatters, the world is left to guess.

We know, moreover, that the leading managers, actors and orators on the occasion were a couple of emissaries from without, who directed the “pow-wow” of these Caughnawaga “braves,” to borrow the contemptuous and insulting terms in which the *Witness* speaks of its own and its coadjutors’ dupes. One of these emissaries is an Indian from Oka, who has been residing hereabouts for some time, and is said to be a licensed preacher; the other is a trader from Montreal, who made his appearance on the scene, holding in one hand the Deed of Louis the XIV., granting the seignory of Sault St. Louis to the Iroquois Indians, and in the other the last Indian Statute of the Dominion Parliament. These documents he proceeded to explain to his audience, the Oka missionary acting as interpreter and translating the speaker’s English into Iroquois. Considering that several of our ablest Judges have declared that the law and legislation of Canada bearing on Indian affairs are a bewildering puzzle of inconsistencies and contradictions, which often defied all their legal knowledge and acumen, the attempt of the unprofessional jurist from Montreal to enlighten his hearers, and that at second hand, must have been a curiosity in its own way. Probably, however, it answered the intended purpose quite as well as if the orator and his hearers understood what he was talking about, a very improbable contingency in either case.

But enough on that head for the time being. One fact, however, which I formerly stated, and which admits of neither cavil nor doubt, must be kept in mind in connection with this question, namely, that the party here whose cause the *Witness* and its friends have espoused are, and have always been, the deadly enemies of

²⁷ From AN OLD RESIDENT. (1880, January 29). THE NEW INDIAN TROUBLE AT CAUGHNAWAGA. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

Indian emancipation from their existing legal disabilities. The pretension that these people are in favor of any change which would place themselves and their brethren in a position of equality with the rest of their fellow-subjects is wholly and notoriously false and unfounded; and their animosity to the so-styled Canadians and squatters had its source in the desire for enfranchisement which the latter entertain, and which they have long, but vainly, sought to accomplish.

If this senseless movement were not certain to be attended with grave and mischievous consequences, perhaps the most prudent course to pursue in the matter would be to let it die of its own inherent weakness. The demand to chase away the squatters is no more likely to be complied with by the Government than if the petitioners had prayed to be put in possession of all the lands which the Iroquois nation owned when they were first known to white men; and even if the Government were willing to stultify itself, the law is stronger than the Government, and the law, as well as justice, is on the side of the “Canadians” and “squatters.” There need, therefore, be no apprehensions of danger from that quarter.

Yet that there is danger must, I am sorry to say, be admitted, and danger, too, which is the more to be dreaded because of the impossibility of guarding against it. It is well known that there have been nine or ten cases of incendiary fires in the neighbourhood within a comparatively recent period, and it has so happened that the “Canadians” and “squatters” were always the sufferers on these occasions. A large amount of property has thus been destroyed – the loss in one case having been estimated at \$3000, - and in another, the owner of the property was burnt to death²⁸. Indeed arson has become so prevalent among the Indians that a quarrel seldom occurs between them without a chance that one of the disputants finds his house in a blaze some dark night; and it was only some time ago that a person from whom some goods were being stolen, on being asked why he did not take legal steps to punish the delinquents, replied that he feared the incendiary’s torch too much to move in the matter.

I am informed likewise that the three chiefs who dissented from the resolutions passed at the late meeting are in constant expectation of seeing their dwellings in a blaze over their heads. You are aware that the destruction of the Roman Catholic church at Oka is now before our courts of justice, and this presents another example of the custom of fire-raising in Indian communities. I do not say that the persons accused burnt the church, but somebody did, and from present indications the guilty parties, whoever they may be, are likely to go unpunished, much to the increase, no

²⁸ “CAUGHNAWAGA, May 12. – On Saturday night one Meloche’s barn, stable and all his stock here were burnt to the ground, and himself burnt to death in the barn. Incendiarism.” FIRES. (1878, May 13). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3. “The inquest on the fatal fire at Caughnawaga reveals a state of hostility between some of the Indians and French Canadian residents. Notices have been placarded in the village threatening vengeance upon the Canadians, to cut the throat of a certain individual not named, and laying the blame on Government agent Cherrier. The fire was incendiary. Meloch was burned while trying to get his horses and cattle out of the stables. Personal threats had previously been made to the effect that his stock would be burned.” MONTREAL. (1878, May 15). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 4.

doubt, of similar practices here and elsewhere. It is deplorable that while other crimes are rare among our Indian population, this dangerous and cowardly one is so common that it is questionable if anything short of special and exceptional legislation can suppress it.

Being unwilling to obtrude too largely at a time on your valuable space, I shall not now fulfil my intentions of offering some remarks on the Indian Act of 1876, passed by the late Government, but if you will permit me, I will do so on the earliest day that my other avocations will permit. I may mention in conclusion that this village of Caughnawaga contains a population of 1,500 souls, constituting, I verily believe, one of the worst governed communities to be found in any Christian country. But there is an evil pending over them which may call public attention to their condition. Hitherto the mass of the male inhabitants were chiefly employed as hands and pilots on rafts coming down the St. Lawrence, but it is certain that this source of industry is about to fail them. The railways have lately made arrangements to carry lumber to market, and rafts descending by the St. Lawrence were, last season, few in number, and are evidently destined to be fewer still in the future. What is to become of the men whose only occupation was this business, I cannot conceive. They appear to have an instinctive repugnance to agricultural labor, and having no other trade or calling, their prospect of gaining a livelihood is something more than doubtful.

AN OLD RESIDENT.

Caughnawaga, 26th January, 1880.

An account of the fatal fire²⁹ (May, 1878)

It will be remembered that several days ago a notice appeared in our columns that one Ozias Meloche had been burned to death at Caughnawaga while endeavoring to save his property from destruction by a fire evidently the work of an incendiary. The jury under Coroner Jones have been since engaged in investigating the case, and we give below their verdict, which tells its own startling story as follows:-

Wherefore, the jurors aforesaid, upon their oaths aforesaid, declare that on the eleventh day of the month of May, 1878, some person or persons to the jurors aforesaid unknown did feloniously, maliciously and unlawfully ignite, set fire to and burn the stables, barns and other outbuildings, the property of one Ozias Meloche, being and situate in the village of Caughnawaga, in the Seigniory of Sault St. Louis, in the county of Laprairie and district of Montreal, and that the said Ozias Meloche, in his endeavors to rescue and save from destruction his horses and cattle contained in the said stables, barns, &c., was in the stables suffocated and burned to death by the said fire, and then and there instantly did die; and the jurors aforesaid, upon their oaths aforesaid, do further say and declare, that there exists a conspiracy in the village of Caughnawaga against the Canadians and the Metis of that village; that notices which were posted on the door of the church in the said village contained

²⁹ From Lecuyer, J. et al. (1878, May 23). THE FIRE AT CAUGHNAWAGA. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2. Written by Joseph L'Ecuyer (1845 – 1926).

serious threats not only against the property of the Metis and Canadians, but also against their lives; that there is no good fundamental cause or reason which could give birth to such a conspiracy, as all the Canadians and Metis are honest, respectable and industrious people; that the fire which destroyed the property of the said Ozias Meloche, and in which he perished, was, without doubt, the work of an incendiary; that the deceased O. Meloche was destined as the first victim against whom these conspirators were to make good their barbarous threat; that the Chiefs of the Iroquois tribe of Caughnawaga are blamable for not having suppressed and publicly disapproved of these threatening notices posted upon the church door, and it is to be regretted that not one chief attended the inquest. We therefore humbly pray that the Government will take the necessary measures for to protect the Metis and Canadians who are threatened and oppressed.

(Signed)

JOSEPH LECUYER, Foreman,
and thirteen jurymen.

“It contains every possible fault”³⁰ (February, 1880)

SIR, - The latest general Act of the Canadian Parliament on Indian affairs is known as “The Indian Act of 1876.” It was introduced into the House of Commons by the Minister of the Interior of that day, and confers on that official, in his capacity of Superintendent-General, the control and management of the persons, lands, reserves and property of Indians throughout the Dominion. I am really doing no injustice to this measure in describing it as probably the worst specimen of legislation to be found upon our statute book. It contains every possible fault from bad grammar to bad sense, and its repeal would not only be a benefit to those interested in its administration, but would, at the same time, free the legislature from the reproach of numbering such an abortion among its bantlings. I cannot, of course, in a communication like the present, go over the whole of this Act, with its one hundred sections and numerous sub-sections to prove the justice of my disapproval of it, and I must, therefore, be content with exhibiting a brick or two to show the character of the entire structure, assuring you, however, that where these samples come from, many such remain behind. But to proceed.

After a definition of the term Indian, in which, by the bye, persons who might be very good Indians are omitted – it is enacted that an Indian who, for five years, shall continuously reside in a foreign country, shall cease to be a member of his tribe or band. The text of the law declares that the delinquent shall cease to be a member of the said foreign country, but this worthy legislator appears to have had as little consideration for the Queen’s English as for the Queen’s subjects and their rights, at all events, when the subjects happened to be Indians. Just examine the nature of the proceeding. What moral authority has the Government or legislature to treat a red

³⁰ From AN OLD RESIDENT. (1880, February 11). THE INDIAN TROUBLE AT CAUGHNAWAGA. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

man after this fashion? Would a white man be treated so? An Indian or one of half-blood, goes to the United States to earn his bread, which he above most men has the least opportunity to earn here; after five years he finds himself deprived of his social *status*, such as it is, of his home, his kindred and his property, if property he possess, which several of them do, either actually or in expectation. A white man removes to the same or some other country, and he may return at any distance of time to the full enjoyment of all his rights and possessions, as if he had never left his fireside. Why should this be?

It is true that the Indian is in a condition of pupillage, the Government or the State being supposed to be his guardian. But are guardians given to minors that they should themselves rob them, or allow others to rob them? One would imagine that the very fact of their pupillage should entitle them to favor from those whose duty it is to protect them, and, as in the case in question, contrive laws to injure and despoil them.

When the Government passed the law of which I speak they must have known that a large number of Indians were owners of houses and other real property, under titles which were always good and valid; they also knew that several of these Indians, or half-breeds, went to the States to gain their living and better their condition; and to confiscate their property in their absence, and, probably, without their knowledge, is an act of oppression for which there can be no shadow of an excuse, when regarded from an equitable point of view. But there is another point from which this phase of the subject may also be regarded. The young Indians who leave home in search of fortune or employment are generally the best educated among them, and on coming back, after a foreign residence, they would confer a vast benefit on their brethren by imparting to them the knowledge and culture which they had acquired, and which would be the most valuable boon they could confer upon them. This, of course, will be answered by an appeal to the false doctrine of isolation, which has long proved so injurious to the Indian and which is sure to end in failure.

Yet probably the scheme of Indian enfranchisement contained in the Statute of 1876 is the most extraordinary among its provisions. The Indian absentee I have above referred to, as has been seen, ceases to belong to his tribe, and, so far, to be an Indian, but there is no provision for his becoming anything else. He is an Ishmaelite driven forth into the wilderness, without the rights enjoyed by other men, whether white, black, or red. As I have said, he forfeits his tribal privileges, he is denied the elective franchise, he cannot enter into trade, for nobody will have dealings with a minor, and the protection which the law gives chiefly enables him to cheat his creditors, should he be so inclined, thus serving to demoralize him. Again, it is provided that any Indian woman shall cease to be an Indian by marrying any other than an Indian, and she is liable to the same forfeiture as the absentee for five years, with respect to property. It is true that she is allowed to share in the distribution of the annuities payable to the band, this favor being granted to her, no doubt, in chivalrous consideration of her fair sex. But to punish her apostasy she is empowered to commute her annuity at ten years' purchase, when all connection with her closes. But this is not all, for more has yet to be told.

Before an Indian can proceed to procure his enfranchisement, he is bound to get permission to that effect from the tribe of which he is a member. Now, the majority of the Indians are bitterly opposed to the emancipation of the race; the performance of this condition is an utter impossibility, and it seems either a mockery or to be imposed as an insurmountable barrier to the attainment of the object which the maker of the law professed to desire. I know that one man in ten here would not give the necessary consent, and those who would, dare not do so, having a wholesome dread of the ordeal by fire to which they would thereby be subjected.

But there is another impediment in the way of the aspirant for freedom; he must not merely secure the assent of his unwilling brethren, but they are asked to reward him for doing that which they do not wish him to do, and which they are determined he shall not do. The Act makes it imperative that as a preliminary to enfranchisement the applicant shall be assigned by the tribe a suitable allotment of land to the satisfaction of the Superintendent-General.

The next stage of the procedure would be laughable if the matter were not too serious for laughter. After directing that the cession shall be announced at headquarters, the Act goes on to say: "Whereupon the said Superintendent-General, if satisfied that the proposed allotment of land is equitable, shall authorize some competent persons to report whether the applicant is an Indian, who, from the degree of civilization to which he has attained and the character for integrity, morality and sobriety which he bears, appears to be qualified to become a proprietor of land in fee simple; and upon the favorable report of such person the Superintendent-General may grant such Indian a location ticket as a probationary Indian for the land allotted to him by the band." The probationary period named is three years, or such longer term as the Superintendent-General may deem fit. And all this tribulation the petitioner has to go through before he can aspire to enfranchisement and to be ranked among the free and enlightened subjects of Her Majesty in Canada.

By what confusion of brain the concoctor of this law came to the conclusion that a man who has attained to a degree of civilization and who has a "character for integrity, morality and sobriety" is unworthy of freedom it is difficult to imagine. Must he be a classical scholar, or what? I fear that a good many among us, white or red, would scarcely come up to the mark if tried by the official test; and in fact there might be danger in trusting so virtuous a man among the wicked pale faces, especially the politicians. But the strangest blunder of all is connected with this allotment of lands, without which there can be no enfranchisement. Yet if there is no land, what then? The Indians of the Lake of Two Mountains, among others, are exactly in that predicament, as every foot of the land they occupy belongs to the Seminary of St. Sulpice; and the Indians of the Maritime Provinces, or most of them, are in the same situation. So, here is one more fatal obstruction to enfranchisement, under the famous Indian Act of 1876. But I find that the subject demands greater space than I had anticipated, and I must defer what further I have to say for another occasion.

In condemning this measure I pass no judgment on the portion of it which deals with the new Provinces of the Northwest, with whose requirement I am but imperfectly acquainted; but I am convinced that it is wholly inapplicable to the old

Provinces on this side of Lake Superior, and ought to be altered or repealed with as little delay as possible.

AN OLD RESIDENT.

Caughnawaga, 3rd February, 1880.

“The intention was to educate and civilize”³¹ (February, 1880)

SIR, - I resume my remarks on “The Indian Act of 1876”; but aware of the demand on your columns at this time, I shall not address you at any length.

The Indian question, in my estimation, is one of no inconsiderable importance, even if confined to the scattered lands spread over the older Provinces of the Dominion, apart from the Northwest and British Columbia, which we are accustomed to regard as the red man’s proper country and home. The latter will always command attention from our rulers, because, if not so dangerous now, they are capable of becoming so, while the former are weak and powerless, and may be neglected with impunity. But we should remember that of the 100,000 Indians within the limits of Canada, nearly 30,000 are to be found in the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and consequently, from their numbers alone, without a view to other considerations, they ought not to be overlooked in our scheme of legislation and government. We have heretofore encumbered them with legal disabilities and safeguards, which may have been useful or necessary for a time, but are no longer so, and are in fact a nuisance to themselves and others.

It was never intended from the beginning that this race should remain in a continued state of debasing inferiority. The intention was to educate and civilize, and then to liberate them. We have not educated and we have not liberated them. When is this process going to begin? The probation through which they were to pass has run over two or three centuries, and the results are what we behold. The tame Indian of Eastern Canada is simply an emasculated wild man, whom in curing of his ferocity we have deprived of his spirit, like a vicious colt in the hands of a careless or incapable trainer. Yet those who have studied the subject declare that the intellect of the North American Indian is naturally of a high order, and that under proper treatment it is eminently capable of expansion and development.

Canadians have been praised, and have praised themselves, for their Indian “policy,” so-called, and have proudly compared it with that of the United States. It is true that we have not massacred nor pillaged them, and the Americans have done both. But while saying so, we ought to admit that, as far as grants of money go, the American Congress has been infinitely more generous to their Indians than we have been to ours, while in reality there was no necessity for our being cruel to them. Our faults have been those of omission rather than commission, except in so far as we have subjected them to the trammels of petty legislation and the pettier sway of

³¹ From AN OLD RESIDENT. (1880, February 16). THE INDIAN TROUBLE AT CAUGHNAWAGA. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

official misrule. So, I doubt, after all, if we have a right to crow so loudly over our neighbors in this respect, the difference being that between two masters, one of whom flogs his apprentices and the other starves them, or leaves them to starve.

We must not forget besides that while the Americans have had to contend with hundreds of thousands of fierce savages along their frontiers, we had only to deal with a small number of Indians, distributed over the Provinces, from Lake Superior to the Atlantic, and hemmed in by a more numerous population who could have exterminated them, had they been dangerous or given offence. I mention these facts because I am of opinion that a belief in their own exceeding justice towards the Indians has had much to do with Canadians' disregard to the true interests of a people intrusted to their charge.

I shall only further say at present that there can be only one method of benefitting the Indians of the old Provinces – enfranchise them. How this ought to be effected, I shall attempt to show on a future occasion.

AN OLD RESIDENT.

Caughnawaga, 12th February, 1880.

“We established odious distinctions”³² (March, 1880)

Hon. Mr. BUREAU – [...] I wish now to call attention to a matter affecting the Caughnawaga Indians who reside near Montreal. They occupy the original grant, of two leagues square, that was made by Louis XIV to the Jesuits, a portion of which has been conceded to the French Canadians who reside in the parishes of Laprairie, St. Isadore and St. Constant. Before the passage of the Act of 1876, there was no trouble in the tribe, but the distinction made between pure-blooded Indians and half-breeds, by that Act, has since created difficulties.

The complaint I have to make is this: Although the Caughnawaga Indians are all Roman Catholics, the Department sent amongst them a minister of a different creed to take charge of their school. Complaints were made, but the Department would not remove him, until he was, at last, obliged to remove himself. There is no complaint against the present teacher, but I think it unwise, and against the Constitution and the rights guaranteed to the Province of Quebec, to impose on a community, Catholic or Protestant, a system of education different from what they themselves desire.

I see that there is a provision in the Bill that, when an Indian woman marries a white man, her children lose their rights in the tribe and are compelled to leave the reserve. Now I wish to call the attention of hon. gentlemen to a provision in the grant of the King of France to the Jesuits, in which Frenchmen who may settle among the Iroquois or other Indian nations are expressly prohibited from keeping cattle or establishing taverns on their lands, from which it is reasonable to infer that intermarriage between the whites and the Indians, and the right of half-breeds,

³² From THE SENATE. (1880, March 20). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 3.

according to natural law, to reside with their parents on the reserve, were not forbidden, but, on the contrary, by inference, recognized.

We do not make sufficient distinction between the different tribes of Indians. Some are nomadic, having no fixed place of residence; others, on the contrary, occupy lands in our midst and should be emancipated and allowed to enjoy their individual possessions separately. The rights of succession for each tribe should be regulated according to the laws of the respective provinces in which these tribes dwell. It is not so now, nor has it been so heretofore.

We established odious distinctions. A woman may marry a free and civilized man, but the children born in this legitimate wedlock are excluded from the inheritance of their mother, from the right of inhabiting the place of their birth, and are less justly treated than negro slaves. In this century of progress in which we live, we should free ourselves from the reproach of making slaves of women. Has not Christianity emancipated them?

Experience has proved the danger of this legislation by the fruitless efforts that have been made to drive from the soil on which they were born those poor children who are known as half-breeds. They cannot enjoy civil rights. You abandon them to themselves after you have driven them from their terrestrial paradise; you do not provide for their future in any way. They are all – men, women and children – slaves without a master.

I desire, then, the emancipation, whether it be immediate or gradual, of those civilized tribes that, in reality, have ceased to be savages, and among whom are many whose knowledge and education have made them distinguished in commerce and agriculture. In 1834 slavery was abolished in all the British Colonies. [...] I hope that the Government will seriously consider this question of half-breed emancipation in a spirit of justice and Christianity.

“Expulsion from the reserve”³³ (March, 1880)

The House resumed, in Committee, consideration of Bill (C) “To amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians.”

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL³⁴ moved the adoption of clause 14.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL³⁵ – I expressed the opinion when this clause was under discussion, yesterday, that it would be perhaps proper to add a clause in amendment to it. I have looked carefully over the Bill, and I do not find in it any provision which regulates the position of some considerable part of the population of Caughnawaga who are engaged in farming. For a long time – for thirty years, I may say – there has been a good deal of trouble in that village, in consequence of the attempts on the part of the Indians to expel half-breeds from the village. Some twenty-five years ago, a Mr. DeLorimier, whose ancestor settled in that village, married an Indian woman, was sued by the Indians, who sought to expel him, and, after a protracted suit, the

³³ From THE SENATE. (1880, March 22). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 3.

³⁴ Sir Alexander Campbell (1822 – 1892) served as Senator for Cataraqui from 1867 to 1887.

³⁵ François-Xavier-Anselme Trudel (1838 – 1890) was Senator for Salaberry from 1873 until his death.

Superior Court of Montreal decided that he could not be removed. He was a half-breed, and there are many other inhabitants of the village in the same position that he is. This question has been repeatedly raised in Caughnawaga, and has always been followed by troubles.

Within a couple of years, a man, who was regarded as the author of those troubles and who, before, lived in another Indian settlement in the Province of Quebec, went there and incited the feelings of Indians against the half-breeds. As a result, efforts have been made to expel them from the village. Different meetings were held and proclamations in the Indian language were posted in various places, threatening the half-breeds that, unless they left the village, they would suffer very seriously. Those threats were followed by brutal assaults, and no less than nine incendiary fires, one of them attended with loss of life, have taken place in the village.

Complaints were made to the Department at Ottawa, and redress was sought without success. The press of our Province, during the last two or three years, has taken great interest in the matter, and I think that some measure should be adopted either to recognize the rights of the half-breeds in Caughnawaga, or what, I think, would meet the views of the people at large, and especially the interested parties in this village: the reserve should be divided, and the Indians enfranchised. [...]

These half-breeds have inhabited the reserve for many years, some of them for half a century, and, though some of them bear the name of civilized families, they have, perhaps, as much Indian blood in their veins as the remainder of the inhabitants on the reserve, for it is a well known fact that there is not a single inhabitant of the reserve now who is of pure Indian blood. Therefore, the half-breeds should have the same rights as the other inhabitants of the reserve, especially when the courts have decided in their favor; yet the struggle goes on, and the question of their expulsion from the reserve continues to be discussed.

What are those people to do? Are they to abandon their property because some feeling has been excited against them? Are they to submit to the dictation of a mob because some interpretation may be given by the Department here contrary to the decisions of the courts of justice? The Canadian Government in the past did not think it proper to expel them.

It is a well known fact that these men are almost the only portion of the inhabitants who cultivate their lands. In fact they are the most important part of the population of the village. There are two parties in Caughnawaga, one consisting of those who have some education and who cultivate their lands and who are in every respect fit for emancipation, and there is the other party, consisting of those who intend to remain in the condition in which their tribe was two centuries ago.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD³⁶ – Is there no way to prevent incendiarism there?

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – Although Caughnawaga is so close to the city of Montreal, the Indians are under different laws, and, under a special system, they are controlled by the Federal Government. I am clearly of opinion that the Police Magistrates of Montreal would have the right to send a force there and arrest the incendiaries, but up to the present time, they have not done so.

³⁶ Sir John A. Macdonald (1815 – 1891), then prime minister.

Hon. Mr. MACDONALD – Have they no organization of their own?

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – So far as I could learn, they have not chosen to arrest the guilty parties because the authors of the trouble seem to meet with the approval of the majority of the Indians. It is a kind of war between these Indians and the half-breeds that they seek to expel from the reserve. [...] The objectionable provision remains in the Bill, and the House will see the difficulty to which the civilized Indians are placed. They are required to get the permission of a majority of their tribe before they can be emancipated, and the majority, whether from prejudice or other feelings, will not grant them that permission, and, under the present system, the half-breeds will be kept in this condition for ever.

I think it is the duty of the Government, therefore, to take immediate steps to emancipate them, and to divide the reserve amongst the present possessors. I have received a number of letters on the subject from gentlemen taking great interest in the matter, and all of them are of the opinion that in the old Province of Canada, at least – Ontario and Quebec – the Indians should no longer be allowed to continue in their tribal condition.

I do not go so far as to say that they should be emancipated at once, but I do say that immediate steps should be taken to bring about their enfranchisement. For instance, it might be decided that at a certain period, which might be defined now, they would be freed. I have already referred to the troubles in Caughnawaga, and I am informed that nothing has been done to prevent a continuance of them.

Hon. Mr. BUREAU – A reward has been offered by the Department for the conviction of the incendiaries.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – The present state of things cannot continue. I do not think it is fair to leave these half-breeds, who are the most intelligent and respectable part of the population on the reserve, in their present condition. I do not offer an amendment, but I think something like the following should be introduced after clause 14:-

“Any half-breeds now settled in the Seigniorship of Caughnawaga, and who have inhabited the said Seigniorship for the last five years, are hereby confirmed in their possession, right of residence, and property.”

And, after the 106th clause, the following:-

“It shall be the duty of the Superintendent-General to inquire into the possibility of enfranchising the said Indians and half-breeds of Caughnawaga, and provide for an equitable way of dividing amongst themselves the said Seigniorship of Caughnawaga, having regard to the equitable right acquired by several of them in building or making improvements on certain parts of said Seigniorship.”

As I have already said, some of these men have been in possession of property for fifty years, and have made extensive improvements, while other members of the tribe, relying upon the favor of the Government, have done nothing towards cultivating their lands. Is it possible that the Government would require these half-breeds to abandon their property, and let the other portion of the population have the benefit of their improvements?

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – The first difficulty is, that this would be establishing a precedent which would affect all tribes over the country where white people or half-breeds have been in possession of part of the reserves, and living in villages with the Indians. If the hon. gentleman restricted his proposed change to the cases of half-breeds who have been living in Caughnawaga upwards of twenty years, which is the term mentioned in the Statue of Limitations, which affects our lands in Ontario, (and I dare say there is the same limitation in Quebec) and whose Indian descent is on the father's side. I have no objection to confirming such people in their possession, but to confirm one who has lived only five or ten years would be an injurious precedent to establish with reference to Indian reserves elsewhere. In all those reserves there are such persons, and to confirm them in their occupations would be to arouse jealousy in the minds of the Indians, and to do injustice.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – But the Indian descent of those parties to whom I have referred is on the mother's side.

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – Then they are not Indians.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – They have been maintained in their possessions by judgments of the courts, and some three or four of them have been considered for, perhaps, twenty-five years as chiefs in the tribe. After having worked for so many years, is it fair to say that the fruit of their labor should be lost to their children?

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – The fruits of their labor will not be lost. If we are required to legislate, we must do so on some principle, and I do not think it would be safe to treat those half-breeds as Indians, if their Indian descent is only on the mother's side. The rule pursued hitherto, and the only sound one, I think, is the occupation for that length of time with that descent, and I hope the hon. gentleman will be satisfied with such an amendment as I have suggested.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – If these men had no rights it would have been better for the Government to have ejected them immediately, 30 years ago, and to have then disposed of the matter finally. If, on the contrary, the Government then found that they had rights, I do not see why they should not be recognized.

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – You cannot legislate for individuals; you must legislate on some principle.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – This is not an individual case. It is a state of things which exists in that part of the country and does not apply to individuals merely, but to a class of the population. Is Parliament prepared to say that a man who has occupied property for fifty years has no right to that property because he happens to be the son of an Indian woman whose husband was a white man?

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – We do not propose to say anything about that. There is no reference to it in the Bill.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – You do not say anything about that, but you leave those people to the alternative of having to abandon their possessions or to risk their lives and properties.

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – I am willing to go as far as I can with what I consider safety. The rule among the Indian tribes has been to recognize descent only on the father's side. It is not necessary, and might exceed decorum, to go into details.

I am unable, however willing I might be, to go the length which the hon. gentleman wishes. This Bill does not dispossess them; it is simply silent upon the subject.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – I would suggest an amendment in the law that would protect that part of the population.

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – I am unable to go as far as that.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – Then the least the hon. gentleman can do is to seriously consider the matter.

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – I will undertake to have the matter considered, not merely by myself, but by the Minister of the Interior, who has charge of that branch of the service. If the hon. gentleman will let the clause pass upon that understanding, I shall bring the matter under the notice of the Head of the Department, and if he thinks that the amendment which the hon. Senator advocates should be adopted, it can be introduced in the Bill in the other House. If it is not, notice will be given, and the amendment can be submitted in the House of Commons.

Hon. Mr. POWER – I cannot agree with the view of the hon. the Minister of Militia in thinking that the Government are perfectly justified in leaving the law as it is. The absence of legislation on this point has led to very serious trouble in the neighborhood of Montreal, and I think it is the duty of the Government, who are charged with the peace and good order of the whole country, to take steps to put an end to that unfortunate state of things.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – Will the hon. Minister of Militia also take into consideration the question of the immediate enfranchisement of the Indian tribes of Ontario and Quebec?

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL – There is a scheme for enfranchising them now.

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – There is a provision which, I suppose, might be applied to the Indians of the North-West, but I do not think it is at all suited to the circumstances of the Indians in the older provinces. At all events, it cannot be applied to the Caughnawaga Indians for the reasons given in the correspondence which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette*. It leaves those who want to be enfranchised at the mercy of the men most interested in preventing their enfranchisement. A feeling prevails in the minds of many members of both branches of Parliament that Indian affairs are not managed in a proper spirit by the Department of the Interior. Of course it is not necessary for me to say that the right hon. Minister at the head of the Department is far above any suspicion of that kind; but it is strange that all the members who have had occasion to come in contact with the officials of the Department have come away with the impression that there is something like religious prejudice which prevents somebody in the Department from seeing clearly in the matter and rendering justice to these parties. [...]

Hon. Sir ALEX. CAMPBELL moved that the following be added to clause 14:-

“Any half-breed who is, by the paternal side, either fully or partly of Indian blood, now settled in the Seigniori of Caughnawaga, and who has inhabited the said seigniori for the last twenty years, is hereby confirmed in his possession and right of residence and property.”

The motion was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

“The habit in Caughnawaga”³⁷ (July, 1880)

We understand that a certain portion of the Indians of the Caughnawaga reserve have been pressing for the expulsion of the white settlers who are cultivating farms among them, that the Indian Department seems disposed to assist them in this work. As we understand the question, it appears that the Indian reservation, although belonging to the band, is in fact divided up and apportioned to individual members of the band. The law makes it illegal for any Indian, not a member of the band, or for any white settler, to settle upon the reservation without the special permission of the band; but it has been the habit in Caughnawaga for certain Indians to lease their reservations to white settlers, just as it has been the habit with some of the more enterprising among them to purchase the allotments of others of the tribe, and thus increase their own properties. These white settlers, of whom there are about twenty on the reservation, have been cultivating farms and paying a small rent to the Indians upon whose allotments they are settled.

This condition of things has been going on for a considerable time, the more intelligent of the Indians regarding it as a decided advantage to them that should not be disturbed. No possible injury is done to the reservation or to the band by the fact that the Indian leases his own allotment to a white man, who cultivates it, subject to the lease; and why the Government should object we cannot very well understand. There may be reasons of which we are ignorant: but on the face of the question, as represented to us, it seems a most extraordinary policy to attempt to drive these people off. We believe they have been summoned to appear before a magistrate on Saturday next. We trust that the acting minister or the superintendent of Indian affairs, will procure a postponement at least of the question, so that the Indians who desire to maintain the present condition of things may have time to make their representations to the department, and that the whole subject may be considered in the interests of the band.

“Intelligent well-to-do people”³⁸ (July, 1880)

We referred last week to the action being taken in Caughnawaga, hostile to certain white settlers or tenants who have been in possession of leases of land for a considerable time. The cases came before Mr. Dawes, the acting magistrate on Saturday, and in accordance with what, undoubtedly, is the law, judgment was given against the parties. Unless something is done to prevent further proceedings, we presume that these unfortunate people are now liable to imprisonment or such other punishment as may be inflicted upon them. We think it is very greatly to be regretted that the Government have not interposed to prevent the proceedings taking place. under the law, as we pointed out in a former article, although the reservation belongs

³⁷ From THE CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS. (1880, July 22). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

³⁸ From THE CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS. (1880, July 27). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

to the band, yet it has been divided up between the individual members of the band, thus constituting a quasi-proprietary interest in special lots. In some cases we understand that these lots have actually been bought and paid for, the proprietors paying as much for them as would have secured from them equally good land outside the reservation. The law, however, prevents white persons, or Indians not belonging to the band, from living within the reservation, unless by the special permission of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, which permit is revokable at will.

We have no doubt that so long as the Indians are left in a condition of tutelage this provision is a wise one; it enables the Indian Department to protect the Indians against the intrusion of unworthy persons. It is equally clear, as it seems to us, that it is one of those powers which ought to be exercised with some discretion, and we are bound to say, from what we have been able to hear of the Caughnawaga case, that that has not been done in relation to the whites who are now being proceeded against.

Some of the Indians of the Caughnawaga reservation, although still nominally wards of the Government, are intelligent well-to-do people, just as capable of exercising the rights of citizenship as are the average of English or French Canadian people, and if, in such cases, the Indian finds it to his advantage to lease his lot to a white settler for cultivation, we cannot possibly understand, provided always that the white settler is an eligible person, why the Superintendent-General should not issue his permission. The great object of the Department should be to instruct the Indians in the rights of citizenship with a view to their early emancipation. In these older districts, as in Caughnawaga, there is really very little reason why that emancipation should not have taken place before now; and certainly every effort on the part of intelligent Indians to utilize to the greatest possible advantage the land which they have, should be encouraged, not thwarted.

One of the chiefs of the Indians, a man engaged in trade, is an intelligent well to do man, but finds it to his advantage to lease the particular lots of land which he has to white settlers. What possible injury can result from granting to these white settlers the necessary permit, thus relieving them from the embarrassment of such prosecutions as those to which they have been subjected?

We sincerely hope that the Acting Minister of the Interior will interpose to prevent the prosecution being proceeded with further. To pursue the policy which appears to have been inaugurated, is certainly not calculated to promote the welfare or advance the character of the better Indians of the settlement.

“That the lands be properly divided”³⁹ (August, 1880)

For some time past an agitation has been carried on in the Indian reserve at Caughnawaga, by a portion of the tribe, to have the white settlers expelled. Their complaints were brought before Mr. Dawes, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, who made an order for the expulsion of four white men who occupied farms. The Indians, Mr. Dawes says, are improving as farmers, and that they desire

³⁹ From THE CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS. (1880, August 2). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 1.

to cultivate more land than heretofore, but are themselves hampered from the fact that there is no proper boundary laid down for the outside of the reserve, while the boundaries between the different farms are not distinct, and give rise to constant disputes, more especially in cases where any Indian begins to break up ground never before tilled.

In consequence of this the Government have decided to have the outside boundary surveyed, but in this Mr. Dawes has recommended that the whole reserve be surveyed, that the lands be properly divided and that the proper boundaries be made so that there can be no dispute to ownership. Many cases of disputed boundaries have come up before him, but when the deeds were submitted no one could tell which of the litigants was the owner.

Mr. Dawes' opinion was very decided as to the inadvisability of permitting whites in the settlement, the result of which would be that in a few years they would control the reserve if they were permitted to land under any tenure. As it is the whites have endeavored to evade the law. Year after year they have been warned off the reserve, but there they stick.

A small section of the Indians, with three out of the seven chiefs, are in favor of the whites remaining and in letting the Indian occupiers sell to any one they please. It is said that the following of Louis Beauvais, one of the chiefs, which is a large majority of the tribe, are possessed of Communistic ideas, and that after the survey of the property they will ask that it be equally divided, so that all might start alike once more. The Government, it is said, will not tolerate any change in existing law, which gives the reserve for the exclusive occupation of the Indians.

“The condition of the Indians”⁴⁰ (September, 1880)

Sir, – I have the honor to transmit [...] the following report upon the condition of the Indians of this reserve, for the year ended the 30th June last.

The harvest last year was good with the exception of the potato crop, but the appearances this year are very encouraging. Since the spring there has been less poverty amongst the Indians than for the same period last year.

The men have been more frequently employed to run the rapids on rafts.

Since the return of prosperity in the United States, bead work sells much better, especially when the Indians go to distant places for this trade. At the present time there are many men and young persons who have been in California for more

⁴⁰ From Cherrier, G. E. (1880, September 21). [Report]. In Dominion of Canada. (1881). *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31st December, 1880*. Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co. Written by Georges E. Cherrier, unknown translator. I have been unable to find a date of death for Georges Cherrier, but am confident he died before 1970, as, if he were 20 at the time of writing this letter, he would have been 110 in 1970. The death of such a long-lived individual would almost certainly have been recorded by a newspaper. Georges may be the same Georges Cherrier who was reported as being 8 years old in the 1871 census – this would have made him an exceptionally young Indian Agent.

than a year. Unfortunately last year two of these young persons, who were peddling bead work, died at Bahama from an epidemic.

Most of the women of this village, gain a scanty livelihood for their families by working by the day, and often a part of the night, to make articles of bead work, for which the merchants more often pay them in provisions than in money. This work is not very remunerative, but it places them beyond absolute want. It is painful to have to say that many of these women support their husbands, who live in idleness; and that it is a recognized principle amongst a great many Indians, that it is the duty of the wife to support her husband.

Money is still scarce in the village, but not so much so as last year; at least this summer no one suffered from hunger, and it is to be hoped that there will be less distress next winter than last. What leads me to suppose this, is, that this year they have sown more Indian corn and potatoes than usual.

The difficulty of procuring the means to sow their lands in the spring, retards the progress of many of them in agriculture. They cannot at all times obtain grain on credit from the farmers of the neighboring parishes, because they have given out publicly that the law exempts the Indians from paying their debts. They even say that one or two of them, on this principle, did not wish to pay a cent to a white who had mowed their hay. This prospect of working without payment is not encouraging. Unfortunately, they have been confirmed in this idea, by a certain individual residing amongst them, who has a certain amount of influence over many of them.

We have not to regret, as last year, any catastrophes due to malice; in the month of May a fire took place – which was probably an accident. But their minds are not yet calmed; the old system of usufruct of the Seigniorie seems to have grown out of date. Many of them wish a change.

The poor and idle, who are many, covet the goods of those who by their labor and industry have risen above the ordinary level. If this question is not settled here for some years one can foresee that disagreement will always go on increasing, and will end in acts to be deplored. It is easy, some of them say, to take possession of a piece of land and fence it in, but it is no more theirs than mine. Those who have laid waste [to] the wood on their land, disposing of it for a little liquor, claim to have the right to take that of those who have taken good care of theirs.

Cases of drunkenness were still to be seen during the summer, but less frequently than formerly; thus morals are fair.

The school is not well attended, notwithstanding the advice given to the parents; with the exception of some children who have gone regularly, and have made fair progress, the others attend irregularly and consequently make little progress. Doubtless the schoolmaster does his best, but in addition to the difficulty he labors under of trying to teach children who speak a different language from his own, he has not perhaps the secret of knowing how to attract them to the school, or of making it interesting.

Many Indians of the tribe who are in easy circumstances, or in a manner fortunate, live in first-class houses, and are an example to the tribe on account of their wise conduct and the advanced ideas they profess. They highly appreciate the

advantages of education and instruction; finding their school inadequate they place their children in the first educational establishments, colleges and elsewhere. Their daughters are sent to the best convents. These children make great progress, and much is to be hoped from the advantage which will result from it for the future emancipation of the Tribe of Sault St. Louis, who from the contact with civilization will advance more than the wandering tribes dwelling far from the civilized centres.

The Indians are all Catholics.

For the last year the number of deaths have exceeded that of the births; but it should be remarked that most of the deaths occurred among young children from fevers, measles and other similar diseases, whilst amongst the adults the number is not greater than formerly.

It is difficult to state precisely the cause of these deaths among the children; one may suppose that the poverty of the parents, the unhealthy conditions of the houses, and the want of care of some of them [are among them].

These are the principal details I can give you, in regard to the state of the village and tribe during the past year.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

GEO. E. CHERRIER,

Indian Agent.

“Joseph Williams has tendered his resignation”⁴¹ (October, 1880)

DEAR SIR, - It is much regretted that Joseph Williams has tendered his resignation as Grand Chief of the Reservation of Caughnawaga. It may not be out of place if the writer should here give a few remarks as to the qualifications of so good a man, in order that those who have the management of such affairs, may be better able to decide as to what best to do. He is a sober, honest, industrious man; he was born in the year 1847, of aboriginal parents; in 1858 his family removed to Boston, where they remained for five years, during which time he acquired a fair beginning in the English language; in 1862, his parents returned to the ancient hunting grounds of their ancestors, where he devoted his time to the manufacture of Indian curiosities.

Being of an ambitious turn of mind, he soon made himself and his business extensively known, so much so, that in order to accommodate his numerous customers he was obliged to extend his establishment. Thus established, he employed many hands in the manufacture of Indian work, while at the same time he supplied Indian peddlers with all sorts of Indian novelties. Moreover, he has intercourse in his line of business with many of the leading establishments of the Dominion, United States and Europe.

On the 25th March, 1878, he was elected Grand Chief of the village and President of the Council. Ever since that date he has taken active part in the interest

⁴¹ From RICHARD. (1880, October 9). TO THE EDITOR OF THE GAZETTE. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 4.

of the reservation, doing all he could to establish peace and happiness among the aborigines. He is charitable to the poor, a good husband and a kind father, not only to his own family, but also to the poor children of the school, in whom he has taken a particular interest in giving them clothing, &c., &c., to protect them from the cold and inclement winter, and at the same time encourages them in the great object which is held out to those who attend regularly.

It is hoped that the Department of the interior will not accept his resignation. However, let that be as it may, the retiring Chief leaves office with the good wishes of every man, woman and child in the village of Sault St. Louis. Should another be elected in his place, it is necessary that he should be of sober habits, free from all nomadic dispositions, and well disposed towards the Government and its offices, and he should be at least, able to read his own name in English when he sees it. If destitute of these qualities, he is not fit for the position of Cazique. For the remainder, I will leave it to those whose duty it is to decide on all such matters.

“White settlers on the Indian reservation”⁴² (October, 1880)

Yesterday we had an opportunity of meeting three of the prominent Indians from Caughnawaga, namely, Chief Jocks and Messrs. De Lorimier⁴³ and François Delisle, from whom we learned something of the difficulties which are prevailing in Caughnawaga, to which frequent reference has been made in the newspapers. The following interview with the Chief will give our readers, perhaps, a better understanding of the whole question than they could get in any other way:-

REP. – I understand that the difficulties in connection with white residents in the reservation of Caughnawaga have not been settled?

CHIEF – They have not.

REP. – What has given rise to these difficulty?

CHIEF – The complaint on the part of some Indians of the residence of white settlers on the Indian reservation, and the apparent disposition on the part of the Government to object to such residence.

REP. – What is the system of tenure in the reservation? Can Indians acquire land by purchase?

CHIEF – Yes, they may acquire land by purchase from other Indians, but the transference must be among the Indians themselves. An Indian cannot sell to a white person.

REP. – Under this system, have any Indians acquired much land?

CHIEF – In some cases, yes, a good deal. I myself own three farms, of 75, 50 and 40 acres, respectively, with a house and outbuildings on each farm, all of which are being worked now in my interest.

REP. – Do you employ white persons to do the work?

CHIEF – Yes, they are being worked by white farmers.

⁴² From THE CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS. (1880, October 28). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁴³ Probably Isaac Alexander de Lorimier (b. 1841).

REP. – What is your arrangement, in general terms, with the white farmers?

CHIEF – I lease them the farms and receive from them a regular rental.

REP. – Has any difficulty occurred between your lessees and the Indians of the reservation?

CHIEF – There has been no personal difficulty whatever.

REP. – Is there any objection on the part of the people to your so leasing to the farmers?

CHIEF – There is objection on the part of some Indians who seem to be jealous of my own progress, but there is not much ground for such objection, seeing that the men do not interfere with them in any way, and they are in no way injured by the fact of my succeeding with the cultivation of my land.

REP. – Who are the people who are making objections?

CHIEF – They are the improvident Indians, who, as a rule, do not cultivate their own reservations, nor employ anybody else to do it for them.

REP. – Is it the usual habit of Indians who have farms to lease them to white farmers?

CHIEF – For the last 25 or 30 years it has been the common practice with the more provident of the Indians, who are anxious to make as much as they can out of their land.

Mr. DE LORIMIER – Formerly I did the same thing, but in consequence of a correspondence with the Department I now employ the whites and pay them a fixed sum.

REP. – Have you got the correspondence which you had with the Government, and is it of a public character?

Mr. DE LORIMIER – I have it, and as it refers to the position of the Indians on the reservation generally, I consider it of a public character and have no objections to your publishing it:-

CAUGHNAWAGA, 25th February, 1880.

To the Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald, &c., &c., &c., Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs.

SIR, - The Indian agent here having received instructions to give notice to owners of the land on the Reservation that after the first day of May next they will not be allowed to retain persons other than Indians in the cultivation of their farms and holdings, I venture to address you on the subject, hoping that you will be pleased to reconsider the matter, in view of its disastrous consequence to several inhabitants of this village and neighborhood who employ white men on their farms, as well as its importance to the people generally.

The persons more directly interested in the prohibition are possessors of land to which, as is the case with my own family, they have come by inheritance, by purchase or otherwise, in accordance with the ancient customary law of the Iroquois tribe, and whose titles have been declared good and valid by judgments of the Courts of Lower Canada.

The number of white men now employed on farms in the Reservation does not, I believe, exceed twelve at the utmost. The result of driving away white

agriculturalists from the Reservation must be that a considerable extent of land will be left wholly barren or insufficiently cultivated, the Indians being unfit or unwilling to do the work, while white men are excluded.

That the presence of these white men on the Reservation has been of much advantage to the Indian population, is admitted by all disinterested persons acquainted with the past and present condition of affairs here. Many Indians have thereby been induced to cultivate their lands, which had formerly been neglected by them and allowed to run to waste; and the quantity of land thus redeemed and utilized is perceptibly, if slowly, increasing. In fact, the white farmers introduced into the Reservation have, by precept and example, acted the part of teachers to the Indians in agricultural knowledge, than which no greater benefit could be conferred on them. They are, in short, doing that for the Indians of Caughnawaga which the trained agriculturalists engaged by the Government are intended to do for the Indians of the Northwest, with this difference, that the teaching in Caughnawaga is without expense to the public.

I may mention in connection with this point, that a crisis in the affairs of the Indians of this place is in progress, which will likely result in making attention to farming a matter of vital importance to them. Hitherto the mass of the people have been almost wholly occupied as pilots or hands on rafts coming down the St. Lawrence; but that occupation is fast failing them for some time past. Last year the rafts descending to Montreal were few in number, and next summer it is certain there will be fewer still. This change has arisen from the fact of the railways having made arrangements for carrying lumber to market, and it is expected that the traffic will almost wholly pass over them. How these Indians who have no other calling are to gain their livelihood in future, it is not easy to conceive; the necessity, therefore, of their turning to agriculture is the more evident.

I again, then, take the liberty of respectfully requesting your further consideration of this affair. I am justified in stating, from my own personal knowledge, that all intelligent men in this vicinity agree in condemning the rejection of white agriculturalists from the Reservation, independently of the circumstance that considerable pecuniary loss will occur by the sacrifice of property and work already done or begun. It is also impossible to doubt that the continuance of their services, under the supervision and control of the Superintendent General, would be attended with highly beneficial results.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

ALEXANDER DE LORIMIER.

OTTAWA, 15th April, 1880.

SIR, - I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th February last, relative to an order sent from this office to the Indian agent at Caughnawaga, to warn all unauthorized persons residing on the Reserve to remove therefrom by the 2nd May next.

I am directed by the Right Honorable the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to inform you in reply, that the order referred to applies only to white people in illegal occupation of lands on the Reserve, and has no references to the employees of Indian farmers, with whom the department has never attempted to interfere; on the contrary, the Department had always held that an Indian farmer has as much right as a white farmer to hire farm laborers.

You and others on the reserve have, however, undertaken without the authority of the Superintendent-General, to lease portions of lots to white people. And, as this is contrary to the provisions of the Indian Act, and as the presence of white people on the Reserve has greatly excited the Indians, the Department has instructed its agent at Caughnawaga to inform those who have so leased their lands that they must make arrangements for the working of their farms other than leasing portions of them on shares to white men.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

L. VANKOUGHNET⁴⁴,

Deputy Supt.-General of Indian Affairs.

Mr. Alexander De Lorimier, Caughawaga, P. Q.

REP. – It would seem from this answer that there is really no difficulty in the way, in so far as the employment of labor is concerned?

Mr. DE LORIMIER – So it would appear from the letter, but as I am informed, we are not to be permitted to allow the whites to live in separate houses upon the farms they cultivate. They must be laboring men living with our families, which would be, in many cases, a matter of great inconvenience.

REP. – So that according to this view, you cannot pay a man so much a year or so much a month and a house to live in?

Mr. DE LORIMIER – That is what I understand, and that is one of the things that I think we have good reason to complain of.

REP. – How many Indians are there on the reservations who employ white farmers either as lessees or as servants?

Mr. DE LORIMIER – Probably from ten to twelve, and there are from fifteen to eighteen whites thus employed either as lessees or as hired farmers.

REP. – Are the leases that you have given to these people annual leases?

CHIEF – They are made in such a way as to be revocable at the end of any year.

REP. – What proportion of the Indians are urging the expulsion of these white residents?

CHIEF – They are probably the majority, and, as I have said, they are the poorer classes, and they are induced to take the course they are taking by promises made to them that when the whites are expelled the next agitation will be for a re-distribution of the reserve.

⁴⁴ Lawrence Vankoughnet (b. 1838).

REP. – Then, as I understand it, there is somewhat of a communistic spirit among them?

CHIEF – Yes; it prevails very strongly with the class to which I have referred.

REP. – It is the old story of those who do not possess property in league against those who do?

CHIEF – That is not quite correct. A great many of these people do own small parcels of land, but they do not work it, and as a general thing, it is still uncultivated.

REP. – What proportion of the seignory is cultivated?

CHIEF – Certainly not more than 15 per cent.

REP. – Among the Indians who own that fifteen per cent of cultivated land, what is their view generally as to this question of white farmers?

CHIEF – They may be said to be all in favour of it.

REP. – It has been stated in the papers that a system of incendiarism has prevailed to some extent in the reservation. Is there anything in this?

CHIEF – Unfortunately, yes. Those opposed to the more progressive party in the reservation have resorted to means to prevent any open expression of opinion in favor of the existing system.

REP. – Are not the Indians of Caughnawaga in a position to be enfranchised?

CHIEF – Yes, I think so. They very much desire it.

REP. – Are there any presents given to the Indians of Caughnawaga?

CHIEF – Only in the case of persons over sixty years of age, to whom are given blankets. This year some twenty or so pairs of blankets were given in this way by the Government.

REP. – What is your opinion of this system of presents?

CHIEF – I think the Indians would be better off without them. They are apt to encourage improvident habits, and the one thing which is most to be desired is that the spirit of self-reliance among Indians should be cultivated, with a view to their early enfranchisement.

REP. – Then, as I understand, as a chief among the Indians, you are very strongly in favour of the immediate enfranchisement of the tribe?

CHIEF – I am convinced that it would be greatly to the advantage of the Indians themselves.

REP. – Is this the feeling of your tribe?

CHIEF – It is undoubtedly the feeling of the tribe. I can see no reason why we should be placed in an inferior position to that of our neighbors about us, who, on the whole, are not of a higher standard of intelligence than ourselves.

REP. – There has been some difficulty about the surveys of the seignory. Have you any suggestion to make on that point?

CHIEF – Yes, I think surveys within the seignory are absolutely necessary in order that each individual Indian should hold his property by “metes and bounds” so as to avoid trouble among ourselves in relation to our rights of property.

REP. – Have you made representations to the Government on this point?

CHIEF – Yes, and the Government as we understand, viewed it favorably and sent a recommendation to that effect to the Council of Chiefs, but the same element

to which I have referred as obstructing the progress of the seignory has been opposed to it, and nothing has been done up to this time.

REP. – What is the extent of your seignory altogether?

CHIEF – As I understand it is six miles long by four miles wide.

REP. – What is the Indian population within it?

Mr. DE LORIMIER – Between 1,500 and 1,600 souls.

REP. – Reverting to this question of the white farmers, does not the law declare that white settlers shall not reside within the reservation?

CHIEF – Yes, it does, except by the consent of the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs.

REP. – So that if the government received with favor the policy which you advocate, and which you say is tending to the improvement at least of a portion of the seignory, there is now no difficulty in the law about the necessary authority being given?

CHIEF – I think not, as I understand the law.

REP. – Has any permission been given by the Superintendent-General in any case for a white settler to reside within the seignory?

CHIEF – Yes, in one case where an old Indian of over eighty years of age has been permitted to have a white farmer to work his land.

REP. – As I understand, Mr. Chief, you are in business in the village of Caughnawaga?

CHIEF – I carry on a general store, and it would be impossible, therefore, to attend to my business, and the cultivation of my farms as well.

REP. – Then the carrying out rigidly of the rule to which you referred would be to leave your land uncultivated?

CHIEF – Yes, undoubtedly, because I could better afford to leave it uncultivated than to lose time from my business to cultivate it myself.

REP. – Can you not employ Indian farmers?

CHIEF – No, because those who are suitable for such employment are cultivating their own land.

REP. – It is, therefore, as I understand it, simply a question of allowing your land to remain uncultivated unless you can continue as you have been doing.

CHIEF – Yes; that seems to be the position.

REP. – There is one of your chiefs, as I understand, who is very strongly opposed to you in this matter?

CHIEF – Yes; Chief Louis Beauvais.

REP. – Does he cultivate any land, either by himself or by anybody employed by him?

CHIEF – No; he does not cultivate any land.

REP. – How does he make a living?

CHIEF – He is organist of a church, for which he receives \$50 a year, which is paid out of the Indian fund.

REP. – Has he no other occupation?

CHIEF – None that anyone knows anything about.

REP. – Has he any land himself?

CHIEF – He had land and sold it. To Mr. Delisle he sold four acres, for which he was paid \$150.

REP. – Then, I understand that this chief, who is working so strongly against you, is a fair representative of the class of improvident Indians, of which you spoke a little while ago?

CHIEF – Yes; if all the Indians were like him the reservation would not be cultivated at all.

REP. – What argument do they use to justify their opposition to your employing white labor?

CHIEF – They say that we have made profit enough out of our farms to repay us for what we paid for them, and therefore we ought to get no more.

REP. – Then Chief Beauvais is really the leader of the opposition to you?

CHIEF – Yes; he frequently goes to Ottawa, and the impression among us is that he so misrepresents the case as to get the influence of the Government sometimes on his side.

REP. – Is there any other Chief who agrees with you in your opinion?

CHIEF – Yes; Chiefs Peter Murray and Joe Williams. The latter would have been with us this morning but that he had some business in the city which prevented his coming.

“Without the permission of the Superintendent”⁴⁵ (November, 1880)

Jean Baptiste Viau, living at Caughnawaga, appeared in this Court yesterday on the charge of trespassing on Indian reserves at Caughnawaga. It appears that Vian lived on the reserves in the months of July and August last, without the permission of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. He was notified by Mr. Dawes, magistrate, of Lachine, and Mr. G. A. Cherrier, Caughnawaga Government agent, to leave the place immediately. Not complying with these orders, he was arrested.

Mr. Roy, counsel for Viau, contended that Viau, being a paid laborer, he had a right to remain on the reserves. Viau’s daughter married an Indian, who deserted her, leaving her to take care of three young children in the loneliness of the forest. She observed that she had a right to keep her father with her, to act as protector and do the work which she was physically unable to accomplish.

His Honor stated he was obliged to follow the law, and could not help condemning Viau to an hour’s imprisonment on receiving the promise that he would not return to the reserves again.

⁴⁵ From POLICE MATTERS. (1880, November 12). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

“To dismiss their farmers and servants”⁴⁶ (March, 1881)

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL – I should like to know if it is the intention of the Government to enfranchise the Indians of the Dominion? [...] There are facts mentioned to me which show very clearly that in some parts of the Dominion the Indians should be enfranchised. For instance, there is one case mentioned to me. In Caughnawaga there is a half-breed who keeps a store; he is a man of great ability and energy, and has succeeded in establishing a good business. Of course he cannot find, amongst the Indian women, anybody suitable to keep his house. He engaged a white person last year, but that person was summoned before a magistrate and ordered to leave the village.

Now, there is another instance, of more importance. There is a gentleman in the same village who contracted to furnish stone for the Lachine Canal works and other large public works in that neighborhood. This gentleman has made a contract to deliver a quantity of stone for a cut stone house, and he provided employment for about fifty Indians. It is a great advantage to the Indians, but as there were no stone-cutters amongst them he was obliged to bring them from other places. As soon as these stone-cutters came into the village to work they were ordered to leave the place, so that this man, who is himself a half-breed, is obliged to abandon his contract, and deprive the Indians of the Village of Caughnawaga of very great advantages to themselves.

Orders have also been given to owners of farms to dismiss their farmers and servants employed on the farms, because they are white people. These facts show that the time has come for enfranchising these people, because as soon as some of them exert themselves to improve their condition they are prevented from doing so by the enforcement of the laws.

Of course I understand that the law prohibiting white people from residing in such places ought to be carried into effect, but hon. gentlemen will see at once the disadvantage in such cases as those I have mentioned. I am of [the] opinion that the spirit of the law does not deprive Indians of having white servants, and the enforcement of the law is too severe. [...] I am sure that anything that can be done in the way of enfranchising these people will be received by the most enlightened amongst them with deep gratitude, and will be not only a great advantage to them, but also to the locality from which they come.

Hon. Mr. PENNY – My impression is very strongly in the same direction as that of the hon. gentleman who has addressed the House. I know the gentleman of whom he spoke; he is just as well able to take care of himself as anyone in this House, and perhaps better than most of us. He has a large business and has saved money. He owns several farms, and he finds it very difficult, at times, to get laborers to work on them. When he employs white laborers they are ordered off, and we all know that Indians do not make the best agricultural laborers. The consequence is that the

⁴⁶ From Holland, A. & Holland, G. C. [Eds.]. (1881). INDIAN ACT AMENDMENT BILL [March 14, 1881, pp. 631-635]. In *Debates and Proceedings of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada* [Third Session, Fourth Parliament]. Ottawa: A. S. Woodburn.

industry of the place is brought to a standstill simply because this man is in a state of tutelage; whereas, as I said before, he is quite competent to look after himself.

Hon. Mr. BUREAU – It is quite impossible to apply the laws which are applicable to bands of Indians in the North-West to the tribes in our Province, and I am astonished to learn that the Department at Ottawa is not moving in the direction of enfranchising the Indians. On the contrary, every difficulty is thrown in the way of leading them to rely on their own resources.

A few years ago the Indians in our part of the country were paying their debts and doing very well; but the Department at Ottawa thought fit to say that the Indians should not be obliged, for the future, to discharge their obligations. The consequence is they have become dishonest, and have refused to pay any of the debts they had contracted, and the worst of it is that nobody will trust them now when they are in need.

In the village of Caughnawaga, there are several first class farmers, but the Department at Ottawa has issued an order to expel the white people who are working for these Indians from the reservation, and it will be impossible to obtain labor to cultivate these lands. The Government tells them, “you cannot for the future derive any benefit from your lands;” and under the orders of the Department the farms of Caughnawaga cannot be cultivated next spring. The owners of these farms come here and lay their cases before the Superintendent, - because, I suppose, the Minister at the head of the Department does not care to deal with the question – and the answer is always: “we will not allow white men to be there, or to be your servants.” The Indians say, “if we cannot get these lazy fellows on the reservation to work, what can we do?” How do those people live? Their wives are compelled to earn a living for them. I know some of those Indians at Caughnawaga who are respectable men and well educated, and I have had occasion, in the exercise of my profession, to learn that they lend large sums of money to the farmers in the County of Laprairie and elsewhere.

Those men are treated in the most unjust and barbarous manner by the Department, and the gentleman in the Department from whom this advice comes, is a fanatical man – I think they call him Mr. Vankoughnet. He issues his orders like a despot. More than that, this Department encourages dissensions among the Indians; it encourages them to take possession of lands that do not belong to them, because they can declare that the property in the reservation is held in common. Up to a recent period the Indians were very prosperous, many of them cultivating their own lands, with the assistance of white agricultural laborers, and when they cleared a farm they had the benefit of it. But now we are told that, because the reservation is held in common, the men who have improved these properties will be obliged to share the result of their labors with the lazy Indians who have never attempted to earn their living.

The effect of such a policy is most disastrous and demoralizing. During the present session, one of the chiefs came here and said to me, “I cannot obtain Justice from the Department; they stick to their absurd rules. There is no way of obtaining redress, as they will not allow white men to work for the Indians, and we cannot get the lazy fellows, who are depending upon the rafts coming down in the spring, for

employment, to work for us.” They have no knowledge of agriculture, and the consequence is they are obliged, as the result of the present policy of the Government, to lose all the benefit which they should derive from their land. I am confident of what I have said to-day. I say it in the interests of peace, in the interests of the people who are affected by those regulations, and even in the interest of the Government themselves.

Hon. Mr. DICKEY – I am inclined to think it quite possible that there is such a thing as legislating too much for the benefit of the poor Indian. You have gone to a considerable expense and taken a great deal of pains to teach them to cultivate the soil, and the way in which this legislation will be presented to the mind of the Indian is that, after having encouraged him in habits of industry and thrift, you are to tell him in the same breath that he is not to make use of the products of the soil for barter. To the untutored mind there is an inconsistency in that. Then, with regard to the reserves, by this legislation you prevent the Indians from cutting a certain description of timber. It may be all very well, and for my part I have very great confidence in the ability and discretion of the present Indian Commissioner, but I think the Government will have to exercise great care to avoid, if possible, creating any bad feeling on the part of those people. We have got on so well with them thus far that I think it is not desirable by tightening the lines of legislation to make them feel themselves in a worse position than they are. [...]

Hon. Mr. AIKINS – [...] With reference to the point raised by my hon. friend from De Lorimier about the Caughnawaga Indians, that matter has been before the Government for a long time. It has been going on between the Indians themselves and between the Indians and whites; and it was thought by the Government to put a stop to it as far as possible by having the reserve surveyed. The survey of the reserve was finished last summer, and after determining of what the reserve consists it will be less [difficult] to deal with the troubles which then exist. It is not in the interests of the Government to keep the Indians in a state of tutelage if they can be enfranchised. [...] The object is to try and make the Indians self supporting, and relieve the country of the present burden. That is the object of the Government, and I think it is a very laudable one.

“The tribe is more prosperous”⁴⁷ (October, 1881)

Sir, - I have the honor to submit the following Report on the condition of the Indians of this reserve for the year ended the 30th June last.

The harvest was good and they have reaped a good quantity of peas, oats, &c., and those who had sowed wheat have been able to get bread for their families for many months.

Money has not been scarce this year in the village, even during the winter, on account of a good number of men and boys being employed in the quarries.

⁴⁷ From Cherrier, G. E. (1881, October 1). [Report]. In Dominion of Canada. (1882). *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31st December, 1881*. Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

A greater number of Indians left for the shanties this spring than usual, owing to the higher wages, and many are staying there for the winter.

The trade in bead work⁴⁸ has been brisk on account of the prosperous state of affairs in the United States.

Taking everything together, one can safely say that the tribe is more prosperous. The well conducted people of the place applaud the wise measures taken by the Department to close up the taverns; no doubt drunken men may be seen on the streets yet, because they can get liquor at Lachine or at Montreal, but there is much less disorder in the village and one is not so often disturbed during the night by the shouts of drunkards. The presence of a policeman has contributed much to the suppression of disorders. Many arrests of drunkards and other disorderly persons have been made.

The wood on the reserve is becoming more and more scarce and dear, but I am proud to say that the Indians are much more careful since the Department have taken steps for this purpose; nevertheless, I foresee that this winter and henceforth the poor will have to suffer from cold, and that many will winter in the United States. We have lately had to regret the burning of a barn belonging to the DeLorimier family. Every one agrees in attributing the act to spitefulness. Is it the act of a single individual who wished to avenge himself; or is it the consequence of a plot formed formerly against the half-breeds? The question is difficult to solve.

It is certain that the germs of hatred which have been sown in the village by certain individuals, and which have been stirred up involuntarily by others without leading to harm, indirectly excite the minds of the Indians against the half-breeds, and they do not stop talking of the necessity of the latter being expelled. These are some of the causes which lead to these sad results.

These periodical disasters show the necessity for introducing changes in the tenure of the Seigniory. The system of community which was well enough formerly is out of date. A great number of the Indians being jealous and lazy, always look with an evil eye on those who are prospering, even amongst those of their nation, and will be led to regard the goods and earnings of others as their own.

This winter there were a good many deaths, especially among the children, but for the last three months there have been very few. [...]

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. E. CHERRIER,

Indian Agent.

⁴⁸ "Two Caughnawaga Indians left town yesterday morning for Mexico with a stock of \$1,000 of bead-work." BY THE WAY. (1882, April 13). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

“Demonstrating their civilization”⁴⁹ (July, 1882)

The chiefs of the Caughnawaga Indians are demonstrating their civilization by suing the Montreal seminary to recover \$4000 loaned it from the sale of salt lands 40 years ago.

“There is no use in being troubled”⁵⁰ (August, 1882)

Sir, – The following are the chief matters of interest to be referred to since the date of my last Report concerning the Indians of this tribe.

The harvest was good and many of the Indians saved enough grain to provide for the requirements of their families. This year I have not been obliged to go elsewhere to obtain seed grain because many of the Indians had it to sell in the village.

Some of them have even been able to buy cattle and agricultural implements; but a greater number of them, for lack of these helps, and also for want of the necessary land, have been unable to realize their wish of sustaining themselves by agriculture. Even those who have a small piece of land, or at least many of them, seeing the uncertain position proprietors occupy and foreseeing that a day will come when the antiquated system of possession in community will be done away with and the lands be divided, desire to wait for further developments before devoting themselves to agriculture, therefore the majority of the villagers and of the tribe generally are highly delighted with the good idea of the Department of proceeding with the subdivision of the reserve, in the hope that they will by this means be encouraged to work, each one on his own land, without the fear of being turned off. If any have changed their minds since then it will be those Indians who, knowing themselves to be lazy and idle, fear that they would be unable to keep their lands, or actuated by a mean jealousy against those whom they call rich, a jealousy which makes them think that with money they would be able to obtain possession of lands. But there is no use in being troubled at the remarks of persons who, no matter what measures the Government take, even should it act in accordance with their wishes, are, by force of circumstance, destined to remain poor through their own idleness, intemperance, or want of talent and energy.

The trade in bead-work is progressing favorably and gives large profits to many families. One may see in different parts of the village neat and pretty new houses.

The bead-work and shintying will doubtless for some time remain for those who cannot succeed in agricultural pursuits, and thus one may say that under the new system, as well as under the old one, all those who wish may gain a livelihood.

⁴⁹ From FACT AND FANCY. (1882, July 31). *The St. Albans Messenger*, p. 4.

⁵⁰ From Cherrier, G. E. (1882, August 28). [Report]. In Dominion of Canada. (1883). *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31st December, 1882*. Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

It is an undoubted fact that the zeal and energy with which Constable Lefort performs his duties has greatly contributed to put a stop to disorder in the village. There is now not a single tavern, the stillness of the night is now no longer disturbed as formerly by drunken shouts or broils [sic.]. The girls and women of bad repute are more guarded than formerly.

Education has made but slow progress on account of the slight importance attached to it by parents and the irregular attendance of the children at school. No master could succeed under these conditions.

“The prizes given by the Department had the effect of attracting many children to the school; however, many of them came to receive their books and have not returned since. Perhaps it would be wiser to give books to those only who attend school regularly, and inform them of this decision at the beginning of the school year.”

Some of the well-to-do Indians place their children in colleges and convents, where the progress made by them shows that, as regards talents and ability, they are not inferior to other races.

The moral law of the band is good. [...]

The population has increased this year, as up to the present time the births exceed the number of deaths by twenty-three.

The quarries on the reserve have a wide-spread reputation which promises much for the future, for persons have come from Montreal, St. Anne, Carrillon and Yamaska, to look for stone, which consider it of the finest quality for all kinds of work.

Mr. McLea Walbank, P.L.S., deserves that special mention should be made of the manner in which he performed his duties. He is exceedingly hard-working and intelligent, and his moral example is admired by the men of the tribe, who have great confidence in him.

These are the points to which I wish to draw the attention of the Department.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. E. CHERRIER,

Indian Agent.

“A ploughing match”⁵¹ (April, 1883)

The Indians of Caughnawaga intend holding a ploughing match on Saturday under the auspices of the Caughnawaga Agricultural Association. The following are the officers: Honorary President, W. McLea Walbank, Esq., C.E.; President, Grand Chief Joseph Williams; Vice-President, Thomas Patton; Secretary, Chief Jocks; Treasurer, Chief Williams. The Council is composed of Thomas Akwirotonkwas, Esq., Thomas Talawensere, Esq., and John Tawenrate, Esq. The judges will be Messrs. Sydney Boulter, Rugnel Dupont and John Karonhiaktatie.

The match takes place on the farm of Mr. John Tehonietaronne on the Chateaugay road, in the Indian Reserve. There are to be two competitions, the first-

⁵¹ From PLOUGHING MATCH AT CAUGHNAWAGA. (1883, April 27). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

class open to Indians over eighteen years of age and the second-class to Indians under that age. There are four prizes in each class, \$30 in cash having been subscribed for that purpose. There is also to be a consolation match, for which the first prize will be two bushels of timothy hay seed and the second prize two dozen grape vines.

“To the advantage of the whites”⁵² (June, 1883)

Thomas Gonnais and John Komdo, two of the Caughnawaga chiefs, have just returned from Ottawa, where they were laying their grievances before Mr. Sinclair, Acting Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs. They charged Mr. Cherrier, the Indian Agent, with acting unfairly towards them to the advantage of the whites, whom he allowed to encroach upon the Reservation, and declared that they would never be satisfied until they had an Englishman or a Scotchman as agent. Mr. Sinclair informed them that it was impossible for him to remove the agent until they had passed a formal resolution in council requesting the change. He promised, however, that steps should be taken at once to remove the squatters from the Reserve. They afterwards had an interview at Rideau Hall with His Excellency the Governor-General and Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise, who expressed their fullest sympathy in the welfare of the Indians.

“Eviction at Caughnawaga”⁵³ (July, 1883)

Mr. Cherrier, agent at Caughnawaga, having been instructed by the Indian Department at Ottawa to evict John Deer from the Grand Trunk house which he had been occupying without leave, Constable Lefort left for Caughnawaga last evening armed with a warrant for the arrest of Deer if he still refused to leave the premises.

Sir John A. Macdonald’s report⁵⁴ (1884)

The Iroquois Band, who occupy as a reserve land in the seigniory of Sault St. Louis, in the County of Laprairie, and who, for the most part, reside at the village of Caughnawaga, on the River St. Lawrence, opposite to Lachine, are making fair progress in agricultural and other industries. The second annual exhibition was held last autumn, and was a complete success, both as to the exhibits and the manner in which it was managed. A very commodious building, which cost about \$2,000, for holding these exhibitions, was erected last autumn, mainly at the expense of the band, although many persons interested in their welfare generously contributed towards it, and last autumn’s exhibition was held in this building. The survey of this

⁵² From THE INDIANS AT CAUGHNAWAGA. (1883, June 11). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁵³ From EVICTION AT CAUGHNAWAGA. (1883, July 6). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁵⁴ From Macdonald, J. A. (1884). Report of the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs. In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, for the year ended 31st December, 1884*. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co. Written by Sir John A. Macdonald (1815 – 1891).

reserve into lots, which has been a most intricate and difficult undertaking, is nearly completed, and the Department is adopting measures with a view to locate in as satisfactory a manner as practicable, the various Indian families on the lots. This will be by no means an easy task, but by the exercise of patience and discretion it can, it is believed, be satisfactorily accomplished.

A change in the agency at this point was considered to be advisable, and was effected last summer. Complaints of their agent, in whom they appeared to have lost all confidence, were repeatedly made by the Indians; and, upon investigation, certain charges of a sufficiently serious nature to render a change advisable, were substantiated. The Indians appear to have confidence in the new agent, Mr. Alex Brosseau, and it is hoped that the change will be attended with benefit alike to the Indians and to the Department.

The school in the reserve is not giving as much satisfaction as it is desirable it should give, and many of the Indians have recently expressed their opinion in regard to it in a practical manner, namely, by withdrawing their children and placing them at a private school, which has lately been established on the reserve, although they are obliged to pay for their tuition at the latter institution, whereas at the former, the teachers' salaries being paid by the Department, the children are taught free of all expense to their parents.

As an evidence of the enterprise of some of the members of this band it may be stated that two of them, Chief. Thos. Jocks and Alexander De Lorimier, have undertaken an important contract for the construction of certain works on the Cornwall Canal. The same parties have also had under lease, for several years, a quarry at Caughnawaga, in which they employ a number of men and pay to the credit of the fund of the band dues on all stone excavated. [...] There are some successful farmers among these Indians; others earn a livelihood by working for lumbermen, and piloting rafts of timber and boats down the Lachine Rapids. There is also an extensive business in Indian handicraft carried on in the village, and several of them have become well off through the sale of these wares.

The death of Grand Chief Williams⁵⁵ (May, 1885)

Grand Chief Williams, of the Caughnawaga Indians, died on Wednesday night. He was born there in 1846, and although in his early days he had not the advantage of higher education, by great perseverance he educated himself so that he could read, write and speak three languages fluently. Some fifteen years since he was elected to the position of grand chief by his band, and filled the position ever since with credit. He is spoken of as having been a good adviser, Caughnawaga's progress being apparently his sole aim, taking as he did great interest in agriculture, and being elected president of the local agricultural association. A self-made man, he began business in a very small way, but at the time of his demise he was the leading merchant of the place. The poor of the reserve, it is said, are likely to feel his loss

⁵⁵ From MOURNING AT CAUGHNAWAGA. (1885, May 16). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

severely, for he was ever a true friend to them. The cause of his death is laid principally to grief at the loss of his only daughter about a year since, which had such an effect upon his constitution that it gave way. He was beloved by all on the reserve for his sterling qualities. The band are spoken of as deeply sympathizing with his widow, who has lost during the past year a daughter, mother and husband.

“My first report on the Caughnawaga Indians”⁵⁶ (August, 1885)

Sir, – I have the honor to transmit to you my first report on the Caughnawaga Indians, for the year ended the 30th June last. [...]

There were 90 births and 72 deaths during the year; and since the last report the increase in population is 94 souls.

There were no epidemic diseases on the reserve this year, and the sanitary condition of the tribe has been satisfactory. We have had, however, to deplore the death of two chiefs, that of Chief Louis Morris, and that of Grand Chief Joseph Williams. The demise of Chief Williams was much felt in the village, as he was greatly esteemed.

The crops are very good, and the Indians have in consequence been much encouraged in their agricultural pursuits. There are several good and beautiful farms on the reserve, which are provided with good buildings, and are well cultivated by the Indians themselves. All those who have taken to farming live well; and, I believe, when the division of the reserve shall have been completed, the Indians will seriously take to agriculture.

The work of the sub-division of the reserve by Mr. Dedman, under the supervision of Mr. McLea Walbank, is steadily going on, and I hope that it will soon be completed to the satisfaction of the majority of the band.

An industrial and agricultural exhibition was held at this place during the year, and the committee have decided that there should be one every year, to promote emulation among the Indians in agricultural pursuits.

The agricultural products exhibited have demonstrated to the visitors that there is very little difference between the Indians of this tribe and the civilized people, for all the articles exhibited were arranged with taste and abundance.

The village has been very peaceful, and the presence of Constable Lefort is a guarantee for the maintenance of peace. He is very active, constantly at his post, and always ready to give the Indians good advice.

There has been no progress in the school during the year, and I regret to have to state that the Government school is very little frequented by children, although there are about 200 on the reserve who should attend school.

A change has recently been made by appointing another teacher, which it is hoped will result in a larger attendance and greater progress of the pupils.

⁵⁶ From Brosseau, A. (1885, August 31). [Report] In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, for the year ended 31st December, 1885*. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co. Written by Alexander Brosseau (d. 1925).

The contractors have quarried as much stone as was necessary to satisfy the demands upon them. They gave employment to about 30 or 35 men.

Nearly all the women work in glass beads, and a certain number of men take rafts over the rapids. This occupation prevents these from tilling the land.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. BROSSEAU,

Indian Agent.

“An acceptance of expulsion”⁵⁷ (July, 1886)

It is stated that a number of the settlers on the Indian reserve at Caughnawaga who were requested to file their claims with the Government for compensation for improvements now refused to do so, on the ground that said claims would be an acceptance of expulsion which they are not prepared to accept. They state that in 1870 the Government, by giving them a temporary permit, recognized their rights which they will not now abandon.

“A proper and just division”⁵⁸ (July, 1886)

A meeting of the Caughnawaga Indians was held at Caughnawaga on Monday evening in order to obtain from each Indian farmer his idea of a proper and just division of the allotments. Many of the present occupants have obtained a larger quantity of land than they are entitled to by law, the limit of which is thirty acres, and they are willing to give up the extra portions on being compensated for the improvements they have made, as they are quite aware of the original grant being given in common to the whole tribe. The fact that one holding might consist of three or four acres, while another might run up to 140 acres, seems to have caused the dissatisfaction which resulted in a survey being ordered by the Government. This survey was recently completed, and the Indian department issued a series of questions, which were put to every holder on the reserve, to be signed and sworn by him. They were afterward investigated by the chiefs, and forwarded thereafter to the Indian department at Ottawa. After being investigated by the Minister of Justice, they were returned to the agent with instructions. These instructions are now being carried out, but in no case will any one be ejected without due recompense being given for any improvements made.

⁵⁷ From THE CAUGHNAWAGA RESERVE. (1886, July 1). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁵⁸ From THE CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS. (1886, July 14). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 8.

“Peace and harmony on the reserve”⁵⁹ (August, 1886)

Sir, – I have the honor to transmit to you my report on the affairs of the Iroquois Indians of Caughnawaga, for the year ended 30th June last. [...]

There were ninety-four births and sixty-seven deaths during the year, and the increase in the population since my last report is twenty-two.

Although a portion of the reserve suffered from the effects of variola, which proved fatal in seven cases, the sanitary condition of the tribe has, nonetheless, been satisfactory. The local board of health and the majority of the Indians adopted at once strict measures to prevent the disease from spreading, and not a single case of variola appeared in the village.

The crops this year have a good appearance, but there will be a scarcity of hay. In general, those who are engaged in agricultural pursuits are quite satisfied with their success. The Indians will, on the completion of the sub-division survey of the reserve, be very glad to get their location tickets, and would, no doubt, be encouraged thereby to improve their holdings.

The sub-division of the reserve by Mr. Dedman, under the supervision of Mr. McLea Walbank, is going on, and we have every reason to believe that it will be completed soon.

The industrial and agricultural exhibition held here this year proved to be a great success, the quantity and quality of the exhibits and the manner in which they were arranged gave the greatest satisfaction to the committee of management and the exhibitors; in fact it was the admiration of all the visitors. It is feared, however, on account of the magnitude of the works which are being carried on by the Canada Atlantic Railway on the reserve, that there will be no exhibition this fall.

We are enjoying peace and harmony on the reserve, but particularly in the village, which resembles more a village composed altogether of white people than Indians.

Constable Lefort is very active, and does not spare himself in the discharge of his duties.

There was considerable progress made this year in the education of the children. Mr. O. Roy, the new teacher, succeeded in gaining, by his assiduity and good conduct, the esteem of all the members of the tribe, and the school was well attended.

There were great demands made upon the contractors for stone. There are from forty to fifty men employed daily in quarries, the majority being Indians.

The manufacture of beadwork is being gradually abandoned, and fewer Indians now follow the occupation of taking rafts over the rapids.

I earnestly hope that, as they discontinue those occupations, they will devote their energy to tilling the land.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. BROSSEAU, *Indian Agent.*

⁵⁹ From Brosseau, A. (1886, August 31). [Report] In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, for the year ended 31st December, 1886*. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co.

“Allotment of the new thirty-acre land lots”⁶⁰ (September, 1886)

The allotment of the new thirty-acre land lots have been commenced at Caughnawaga. Each male Indian over 21 years of age in reserve will receive one lot. The chiefs at Caughnawaga having contested the claim to some property on the reserve put forth by the descendants of a Mrs. Giasson, the claim was dismissed by the Indian department. The relatives of Mrs. Giasson have now obtained leave from Ottawa to reopen their case, and are bringing evidence to show that the deceased was a former member of the band.

Toward a New Century

“At whose request?”⁶¹ (June, 1887)

Mr. DOYON⁶² asked, when was Mr. Walbank appointed to survey the Indian Reserve of Caughnawaga, and at whose request? What is the precise nature of the work entrusted to Mr. Walbank? What sums have been already paid to Mr. Walbank, and how much remains to be paid to him? What is the object of Mr. Walbank’s operations, and what action do the Government intend to take in the matter? When will the work be completed?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. In the spring of 1882 Mr. McLea Walbank, P.S.S., was appointed to sub-divide by survey the Indian reserve at Caughnawaga, on his own application for the work. [...] The nature of the work entrusted to Mr. Walbank comprised, in the first place, the preliminary survey of all of the various undefined plots of land claimed, and in part cultivated, by different members of the Iroquois band, which was a work of very great difficulty, and occupied considerable time, and in the second place, a subsequent sub-division by the regular lines of survey of the reserve into lots containing 30 acres each; also, the investigation of the individual claims to the lands. The amount already paid Mr. Walbank, on account of this survey, is \$16,000. It is impossible to say exactly what farther amount will be required to complete the survey, but it is not expected that very much more expenditure will be incurred, as the sub-division of the land will probably be completed this season. The object of Mr. Walbank’s operations is to enable the Department to determine what quantity of land each Indian head of a family on the reserve, and male person 21 years and over, is entitled to, and to distribute the land among them. As soon as the survey has been completed location tickets will be prepared and issued to each locate. As already stated, it is expected that the survey will be completed this season.

⁶⁰ From THE CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS. (1886, September 27). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁶¹ From Wednesday, 15th June, 1887. (1887). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. First Session – Sixth Parliament*. Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

⁶² Cyrille Doyon (1842 – 1918) was a Member of Parliament for Laprairie from 1887 to 1891.

“To the friends of the Government only”⁶³ (June, 1887)

Mr. DOYON. (Translation.) [...] The Government are aware that, in the county of Laprairie, which I have the honor to represent, is to be found a rather numerous tribe, which is composed of rich people only. Some few weeks ago the Government caused to be distributed \$100 or \$150 worth of seed grain in order to aid the poor people of that tribe in sowing their fields, and in order to help them in supplying themselves for next winter. [...] But if my information is correct, it would seem that these grains, potatoes, &c., were distributed to the friends of the Government only, that is to say, to the people who at the last election voted in favor of the ministerial candidate. [...] The list of distribution was not prepared by disinterested parties; it was prepared by one of the chiefs, who was the right hand of the ministerial candidate at the last election, it was prepared by the agent of the Government himself, and, subsequently, it was found impossible to have it approved by other chiefs. They refused to approve this list of distribution because they found it was unjust, because they found it was iniquitous. [...] Grain was given to Mrs. Michel Nolan, whose husband is employed by Mr. Jockes and earns \$2 per day, and they have a son who is sixteen or seventeen years old and who also works every day. I ask whether these people had any need of the help of the Government to procure seed grain? But we have better still. Help was given to the chief's brother, Mr. Jockes; a bag of potatoes was given to him. It appears that he was ashamed to take it.

Several hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. DOYON. (Translation.) I am not making a joke; I am stating a fact. This man has been selling potatoes all winter. Well, I ask the Government whether they distribute seed in the North-West as equitably as they did with regard to the tribe at Caughnawaga, whom I represent and who are perfectly known to me. [...] Mr. Louis Beauvais, who is the present chief of the tribe, was requested to approve the list and he refused. It was not through party spirit that he was unwilling to approve this list, for he refused to vote, either for my opponent or for myself, but he refused to approve it because he found it unjust. I make these remarks to the Government, because I say that when the Government distributes money, or grants offices, to encourage people to support them, people may complain, but others may approve them. But, when it is a question of humanity, there should be but one voice to blame the Government for pursuing such a course.

“A reasonable indemnity”⁶⁴ (June, 1887)

Mr. DOYON asked, Whether it is the intention of the Government to see that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company pay a reasonable indemnity to the parties

⁶³ From Friday, 17th June, 1887. (1887). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. First Session – Sixth Parliament.* Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

⁶⁴ From Wednesday, 22nd June, 1887. (1887). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. First Session – Sixth Parliament.* Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

entitled thereto, for land taken by the company for the construction of the line of railway on the Indian reserve at Caughnawaga?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The Government will take care that the rights of the Indians to their land will be protected, and in case of any land being taken from their reserves for railway purposes, they will see that full compensation is got for it.

“Order and quietness”⁶⁵ (August, 1887)

Sir, – I have the honor to transmit to you my report. [...]

There have been, during the year, eighty-four births and fifty-six deaths, making an increase of twenty-eight.

The sanitary condition of the Indians is very satisfactory; there was no epidemic on the reserve this year, notwithstanding, however, we have lost one chief, Thomas Annassee.

The harvest has been above the average, and the Indians are pleased with the result of their labor.

Order and quietness have existed in the village, notwithstanding that two or three members of the tribe have done all they could to disturb the peace, but the presence of Constable Lefort has had the effect of preventing trouble.

The subdivision of the reserve is actively carried on under Mr. McLea Walbank, C.E., and it is to be hoped that the work will be completed this fall, in order that each person can have a location ticket for his lot.

The school on the reserve has given complete satisfaction during the year; the pupils are well disciplined and have made great progress.

The contractors of the quarries have given work to over thirty men during the year, and the reserve is in a prosperous condition.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. BROSSEAU,

Indian Agent.

“Transported back two hundred years”⁶⁶ (November, 1887)

If you want to be transported back two hundred years, go across the St. Lawrence to Caughnawaga. There you will find yourself among the Mohawks of the Adirondack valley and the Iroquois of the Sault. St. Louis. Passing through the village is not enough. You must enter the houses and speak to the men, women and children. A little girl of six sang to me, the other day, in Indian, English, French and Latin in a hymn. She also preached like the pastor, Father Burtin. Thirty years ago the men still wore blankets; now their rig is mostly modern. But the women hold on to the

⁶⁵ From Brosseau, A. (1887, August 31). [Report] In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, for the year ended 31st December, 1887*. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co.

⁶⁶ From LACLEDE. (1887, November 26. EPHEMERIDES. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 5.

blanket over their plaited hair and the beaded moccasin to their feet, and it is to be hoped that these will never be discarded. No Spanish maid, with her mantilla, nor Ionian beauty, with her jewelled sandal, can show to better advantage.

“Generally very good”⁶⁷ (August, 1888)

Sir, – I have the honor to transmit to you herewith my report for the year ended the 30th of June last. [...]

There were during the past year ninety-eight births and forty-four deaths, resulting in an increase of fifty four.

The sanitary state of the band is very satisfactory, and there was no case of epidemic disease on the reserve.

The harvest in general has been fair; the peas, the potatoes and the buckwheat did not yield so much as usual, but the farmers are satisfied.

The village has been quiet and there were but few cases of liquor on the reserve during the year.

The work of the sub-division of the land on the reserve into lots of thirty acres by Mr. Walbank, civil engineer, has been finished.

The school of the village, under the management of Mr. O. Roy, teacher, has given satisfaction, although the number of pupils attending has decreased; those who attended the school regularly have made much progress.

The quarries on the Reserve have been worked with great success by the contractors.

The condition of the band in general is very good.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. BROSSEAU,

Indian Agent.

“Only completed last season”⁶⁸ (March, 1889)

Mr. DOYON asked, Whether Mr. McLea Walbank has completed the survey of the Indian Reserve of Caughnawaga in the county of Laprairie? Whether he has furnished to the Government a report of his operations? What sums have been paid, up to this date, to Mr. Walbank, or to others, for making the said survey, and how much remains due to him?

Mr. DEWDNEY. The work of the survey of the above reserve commenced in the fall of 1882, and was only completed last season. It proved to be a very complicated matter, owing to the very irregular manner in which the Indians had taken up

⁶⁷ From Brosseau, A. (1888, August 31). [Report] In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, for the year ended 31st December, 1888*. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co.

⁶⁸ From Thursday, 7th March, 1889. (1889). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Third Session – Sixth Parliament*. Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

locations on the reserve – the outlines of which had to be surveyed with a view to ascertain what were the improvements made by each claimant and the value of the same. The reserve contains 12,327½ acres, and the cost of the survey of the same, when completed, will be about [\$22],000 – Mr. Walbank has reported to the department.

“Unbreakable but pleasant bonds”⁶⁹ (November, 1889)

A pleasant ride of some twenty minutes’ duration, from the handsome Windsor depot, along the viaduct and over the great steel bridge across the St. Lawrence, will bring the Montrealer, in search of variety, in sight of the Caughnawaga village. Here now lingers the last of the brave race of Mohawk Indians, who were once, with the various other nations, free and wild and fierce owners of this Dominion. Stepping off the train at this point, one gazes at the collection of poor looking shanties and wonders where all the savage freedom and independence of the old-time Indian are gone. There is not in the locating of these shanties even the regularity so invariably spoken of in the Indian village. Each is apparently erected as occasion calls for its existence. Still, there is left some remnant of the once hardy race; their language still exists; their descendants have the same, or nearly the same, disregard for physical exhaustion, and to some extent the old fiery spirit remains. [...]

Yesterday the village was *en fête* on the occasion of an Indian wedding, when Mr. Joseph Torontentha was rendered happy by being united in the unbreakable but pleasant bonds of matrimony with Miss Marie Tekoionwahritha, a bouncing Indian girl, who has spent the twenty summers of her existence on the banks of grand old Father St. Lawrence. The Indian names and words are invariably expressive and poetic, and those of the newly married pair are no exception. Torontentha is said to mean “He brings over a tree,” and Tekoionwahritha signifies “To break the ice on the river.”

The event took place at the early hour of seven o’clock in the morning, the knot having been secured by the Rev. Mr. Forbes, and the festivities prolonged throughout the day and far into the night. They were of a very simple but hearty character. The dancing was almost incessant, only being relieved by an occasional “long ago” war dance, and the passing round of refreshments in the shape of a pail of water which possessed no trace of “fire.” Very picturesque are those dances, and very intricate too. But they are gone through without a hitch of any kind.

As the dancers perform the many graceful curves, it is impossible not to admire the manly, upright forms of the young “braves.” They seem to be made of the finest steel, so pliable yet enduring are they. There is not in the entire village one of those samples of early, youthful wrecks so frequently noticed among white people in our towns and cities. The dark, clear skin; the sloe-black eyes; the quick, natural action of olden times are all present in the young Indian of today in Caughnawaga. The squaws are, perhaps, the more conservative in their manners and customs. They sat

⁶⁹ From JOINED IN THE HOLY BONDS. (1889, November 5). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

round the dancing room and looked on at the enjoyment; they raised their babies strapped up in those extraordinary arrangements peculiar to their race. They wore the shawl over their head, except when dancing, which they entered into with evident zest.

The bride's mother prepared a very excellent supper, to which "all were cordially invited" and of which all partook heartily. There were, of course, some favored guests. Mr. William F. Egg was there and seemed to enjoy it all. Mr. Lalonde danced himself tired with all the pretty Indian girls (there were a great many of them) and nearly lost his h— —, no, train, through it. And when it was all over Caughnawaga resumed its normal quietude on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

"How much does the Government pay"?⁷⁰ (January, 1890)

Mr. DOYON asked, How much does the Government pay per square yard for measuring of the stone in the quarries of the Caughnawaga Reserve? What is the name of the person employed in measuring the stone? Is this person engaged in any other public employment whatever in the said reserve?

Mr. DEWDNEY⁷¹. The Government pays 2½ cents per square yard for measuring the stone in the quarries of the Caughnawaga Reserve. The name of the measurer is Moïse Lefort. He is also employed as a constable on the reserve.

Mr. DOYON asked, What is the price per toise charged by the Government during the years 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, and 1889 against those persons who have worked the quarries on the Caughnawaga Reserve, in the County of Laprairie?

Mr. DEWDNEY. The Government charged per toise during the years 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888 and 1889, \$1.50 for stone of large dimensions and \$1 per toise for rubble.

"These parties are not under security"⁷² (February, 1890)

Mr. DOYON asked, 1. What are the names of the parties who worked the quarries on the Caughnawaga Reserve since 1884? 2. Are some of the said persons indebted to the Department in connection therewith, and, if so, to what amount? 3. Did they furnish good and sufficient sureties, and to what amount? 4. Who are the said sureties? 5. When and how do the Government purpose collecting the amounts due?

Mr. DEWDNEY. 1. John D. de Lorimier and Thomas Jocks – both members of the Caughnawaga Band of Indians. 2. The former owes \$2,594.87; the latter, \$1,314.14. 3 and 4. These parties are not under security. 5. The Department is taking

⁷⁰ From Friday, 24th January, 1890. (1890). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Fourth Session – Sixth Parliament.* Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin.

⁷¹ Edgar Dewdney (1835 – 1916) was Member of Parliament for Assiniboia East, Minister of the Interior, and Superintendent of Indian Affairs from 1888 to 1891.

⁷² From Wednesday, 5th February, 1890. (1890). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Fourth Session – Sixth Parliament.* Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin.

steps for the recovery of the amount due, but it would not be prudent to state what these measures are.

“The undertaking would have a beneficial effect”⁷³ (March, 1890)

Mr. Doyon secured the information yesterday that the cost of surveying the Caughnawaga reserve, \$22,250, has been taken out of the funds of the band, but that only \$19,000 has been paid to Mr. Walbank, leaving a balance due of over \$3,000. It seems that while Northwest lands cost only 4 cents per acre for survey, the Caughnawaga lands cost \$1.80 per acre. The trust fund of the tribe, which a few years since amounted to over \$20,000, now only has \$83.95 to its credit, with the \$3,000 claim for surveying. Hon. Mr. Dewdney said the survey was made on a petition of the Indians themselves. The location of every house and fence was surveyed and a map equal to our ordnance map prepared. He had no doubt the undertaking would have a beneficial effect.

“Now reside on their holdings”⁷⁴ (August, 1891)

Sir, – I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended 30th June last. [...] There were seventy-seven births and forty-nine deaths during the year, resulting in an increase of forty-five. This increase, however, includes the return into the tribe of several of its members who had absented themselves.

Both our schools, boys’ and girls’, have given great satisfaction; but the progress achieved by the girls was greater owing to their regularity in attendance at school.

I am very happy to be able to state that the Indians are far more zealous in the tilling of the land than heretofore. Quite a number of them now reside on their holdings, and it is hoped that with the good harvest they expect to realize this fall, they will be able to live comfortably next year.

In general the affairs of the tribe are prosperous and flourishing. The reserve has been free from all kinds of diseases during the year.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. BROSSEAU,

Indian Agent.

⁷³ From PASSED BY A BIG MAJORITY. (1890, March 20). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 5

⁷⁴ From Brosseau, A. (1891, August 31). [Report] In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, for the year ended 31st December, 1891*. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co.

“The terms of their contracts”⁷⁵ (September, 1891)

Mr. RINFRET (for Mr. BEAUSOLEIL) asked, Have Messrs. Thomas Jockes and John B. Delorimier, the Caughnawaga stone contractors, paid the arrears of royalty owing by them to the Government, in 1890, amounting to \$3,909.01? If so, have they paid in full, or only in part? Were they prosecuted? Did the Government accept a sum less than the debt, and if so, what sum? At what date was the settlement made? Through whose intervention was the compromise effected? Are Messrs. Jockes and Delorimier still the Caughnawaga stone contractors? If so, what are the terms of their contract? Are they still indebted to the Government, and if so, to what amount?

Mr. DEWDNEY. The Department of Indian Affairs claimed a balance to be due by Messrs. Jockes and Delorimier of \$3,918.48, exclusive of interest. Upon consideration of all the facts the solicitors of the Government advised that \$3,007 should be accepted in settlement of this claim, and that Messrs. Jockes and Delorimier should pay all costs of prosecution. Part of the above sum has been paid. There is a balance of \$1,225 still outstanding. The date on which the settlement was made on the above basis was May 13, 1891. The solicitors of the Government advised such settlement. Messrs. Jockes and Delorimier are still the Caughnawaga stone contractors. The terms of their contracts are \$1.50 per toise for large stone, and \$1 per toise for rubble. Besides the amount shown above to be still due on their old account, Messrs. Jockes and Delorimier owe \$23.28 for stone quarried in July last.

The death of Big Baptiste⁷⁶ (December, 1891)

“Big” Baptiste Rice, whose Indian name is Taisiake, pilot on the steamers of the Richelieu & Ontario Navigation company running between Toronto and Montreal, and who used to pilot the steamers through the Lachine rapids, is dying at Caughnawaga at the age of 83 years. His photo was on the \$10 bills of one of the Montreal banks. He is a Roman Catholic. His family is large, and his grandchildren are numerous. He was born at Caughnawaga.

“A fine house and an expensive barn”⁷⁷ (August, 1892)

Sir, – I have the honour to submit my report for the year ended the 30th June last. [...] There were eighty-two births and fifty-one deaths during the year on the reserve, giving an increase in the population of thirty-one.

The boys’ school, under the direction of Mr. O. Roy, leaves much to be desired as regards the assiduity of its pupils.

⁷⁵ From Monday, 7th September, 1891. (1891). Official *Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. First Session – Seventh Parliament*. Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin.

⁷⁶ From The Caughnawaga Pilot Dying. (1891, December 1). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁷⁷ From Brosseau, A. (1892, August 30). [Report] In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, for the year ended 31st December, 1892*. Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co.

There was no contagious disease on the reserve this year.

I am happy to be able to say that the Indians of this reserve have cultivated more this year than usual; some of them are now residing on their land. A Mr. Thomas Jocks built, this year, a fine house and an expensive barn on his land and cleared almost forty acres of it he also owns a number of cattle. It is hoped that his example will be followed by others before long.

The affairs of the tribe in general are prosperous and the crops promise a good yield. The Indians of this tribe probably realize enough to purchase the necessaries of life for the current year.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. BROSSEAU,

Indian Agent.

“The National Policy has done wonders”⁷⁸ (January, 1893)

I⁷⁹ think the palm is to be given to the village of Caughnawaga. The village of Caughnawaga, as everybody knows, is inhabited by the remnants of the Five Nations Indians, a once powerful tribe, not particularly distinguished for their manufacturing or trade qualities, but rather for their warlike propensities. According to the census bulletin which I have here, the National Policy has done wonders in the village of Caughnawaga. In the year 1881, there were eight manufactories in that village, and there are now forty-one. The traveller who comes down the St. Lawrence from the great lakes has occasion to see and admire the village of Caughnawaga, but will search in vain for the tall chimneys which were to be the characteristic of the National Policy. [...] I presume, in the innocence of my heart, that the articles manufactured there are fancy baskets, miniature snowshoes, artistic fans and the rest. [...] It may be that the aborigines of Caughnawaga have not been interfered with by the National Policy, as there is no protection granted to them upon their productions, and as they have the whole continent for a market, [it may be this is the reason] that their industries have been developed to this enormous extent.

⁷⁸ From Laurier, W. (1893) Debate in the House of Commons, January 30, 1893. Official Report of the debates House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada, XXXVI, 23.

⁷⁹ Sir Henri Charles Wilfrid Laurier (1841 – 1919), prime minister from 1896 to 1911. In 1893 he was Member of Parliament for Quebec East.

The death of Chief Thomas Jocks⁸⁰ (March, 1893)

Thos. Jocks, honorary chief of the Iroquois tribe at Caughnawaga, is dead⁸¹, aged 51. He was a member of the contracting firm of Jocks, Broder & Delorimer, and was well-known throughout Canada. He leaves \$100,000.

“Please direct this child to New York City”⁸² (April, 1893)

A good-looking Indian girl of fourteen left the steamer New Hampshire at pier 36, North river, New York, Saturday afternoon, and was at once conspicuous by her shyness and embarrassment. A policeman could only induce her to say “Cecilia Patton” and “Brooklyn,” but she seemed to have great trust in an envelope on which was written:

“Caughnawaga, Quebec, March 30, 1893. – Canadian Pacific railway. Conductor please direct this child to New York city. Please see that exchange at Newport and Springfield will be all right. – N. A. Grasson, C. P. agent.”

Cecilia was little less shy with Matron Powers at the Central office, but she was tenderly cared for, and yesterday Gen. Grant’s Indian Aides de Camp Ely S. Parker and Mr. H. M. Converse learned that she was of the Caughnawaga tribe and had come from Canada at the request of her father, Peter Patton, of 934 Third avenue, Brooklyn. He had missed her because he expected her to arrive by rail. He claimed her at police headquarters. The child is to be educated in Brooklyn. She is the great-granddaughter of the famous Indian, “Old Smoke” Johnson.

“The last of the pure blooded Iroquois”⁸³ (April, 1894)

The last of the pure blooded Iroquois has breathed his last at the Indian village of Caughnawaga. The deceased’s name was Teiratasaroiake, which means Broken Knife. All the remaining Indians of the Caughnawaga have either French or Scotch blood in their veins.

“No right whatever”⁸⁴ (February, 1895)

FRANK THOMAS VS. M. LEFORT – The plaintiff claimed \$100 damages resulting from alleged assault committed by the defendant on plaintiff’s wife. It was alleged that the defendant had ejected her from plaintiff’s pew in the Catholic church

⁸⁰ From OUR OWN DOMINION. (1893 March 27). *The Winnipeg Tribune*, p. 4.

⁸¹ “The funeral of the late Chief T. Jocks, of the Iroquois tribe, took place yesterday morning at Caughnawaga. The concourse that escorted him to the grave was a large one and the ceremonies were unique in their way. The mourners carried lighted candles and sang the death chant of the tribe as they walked.” Burial of an Iroquois Chief. (1893, March 28). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁸² From A good-looking Indian girl. (1893, April 7). *The Ottawa Evening Journal*, p. 5.

⁸³ From DOMINION DOINGS. (1894, April 17). *The Vancouver World*, p. 2.

⁸⁴ From LEGAL INTELLIGENCE. (1895, February 18). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

at Caughnawaga, to which pew the plaintiff alleged defendant had no right whatever, the church in question being exclusively set apart for Indians, of whom the plaintiff is one, and no other person having any right therein. The defendant pleaded that he is a member of the Iroquois tribe of Indians of Caughnawaga, and leased the pew in question for one year from the last November, 1893, and paid therefor and obtained possession thereof; that on the 3rd December, 1893, at vespers, the plaintiff's wife, without right, took possession of the pew, and refused to allow defendant or his family to enter it; that he requested her to withdraw, to which she replied that the pastor of the church had given her leave to occupy the pew; that defendant on making enquiry of the pastor, found that this statement was false, and thereupon, the plaintiff's wife still refusing to vacate the pew, the defendant quietly and without violence pushed her out, as he contended he had a right to do, and in a manner not to cause her any injury.

The court, after examination of the evidence, found that the plaintiff had failed to prove the essential allegations of his declaration. The defendant had proved that prior to and at the time of the alleged assault complained of by plaintiff, he, defendant, had been and was in possession of the pew in question as lessee thereof under lease from the cure in charge of the church; that the plaintiff's wife, although aware of defendant's rights therein, and informed by the cure of his rights, persisted in placing herself in the pew and refused to withdraw, and that thereupon defendant put her out of the pew. It was not proved that in doing so defendant had used any violence, or greater force than was necessary to put plaintiff's wife out of the pew, nor was it proved that plaintiff or his wife had suffered any real damage as the consequence of defendant's action.

Even if plaintiff had, as he pretended, any right to the pew which defendant was in possession [of] under the lease above mentioned, he should have enforced the same by due process of law, and neither he nor his wife had any right to oust defendant on their own authority, and the latter was within his rights in preventing plaintiff's wife from interfering with the possession defendant had of the pew under the lease above mentioned. The court, therefore, came to the conclusion that the defendant's plea must be maintained and the action dismissed.

“Repairs were made to roads and bridges”⁸⁵ (August, 1895)

Sir, – I have the honour to submit my annual report on the Indians of Caughnawaga for the year ended 30th June last. [...] The number of births during the year was 81 and the number of deaths 52, making an increase of 29 for the year.

The schools on the reserve have been doing well, and the pupils that have attended regularly have made progress. The improvements made under the direction of the government to the boys' school during the year will add much to the comfort of the pupils and teachers.

⁸⁵ From Brosseau, A. (1895, August 17). [Report] In *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, for the year ended 30th June, 1895*. Ottawa: S.E. Dawson.

There was no contagious disease on the reserve during the year.

Under my direction repairs were made to roads and bridges by the Indians which will be of great benefit, not only to those residing on the reserve, but to persons using the roads passing through the reserve. The cost of the work was borne by the government.

The agitation of a large number of the Indians for a return to the ancient system of electing chiefs has subsided.

The year's harvest is very satisfactory, and I observe with pleasure that the Indians have turned more to agriculture this year than formerly.

The affairs of the tribe generally are satisfactory, and the Indians are well and quiet.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. BROSSEAU,

Indian Agent.

“One of the most impressive ceremonies”⁸⁶ (September, 1895)

Monday in the village of Caughnawaga was the scene of one of the most impressive ceremonies that still cling to the traditions of the aborigines in the way of marriage. The adoption of the Christian ceremony has made no apparent difference in the simpler enjoyments of a people whose first ideas were of the simplest, and those of the marriage tie were of the most sacred.

The ceremony on Monday was strikingly strange to one not acquainted with their customs. At 7 o'clock in the morning the happy couple attend High Mass. Then the bride is driven through the village in order to show the other maidens what a beautiful thing her wedding dress is; and then, what is of more consequence, there is a general feast for everybody in the village. In fact, feasting seems to be the principal enjoyment of life. After this there is another feast provided by the bride's parents, and then little traditional speeches are made, which perhaps are equivalent to our own custom of throwing old slippers and rice.

Such was the case on Monday, only it took on more importance from the quality of the persons wedded. The bridegroom, Sosawetes, was the son of Chief Michel Sakohentinetha, who was the late Chief Jock's closest friend, and the bride was the daughter of Francis Hemlock, whose name is historic in lacrosse circles. Rev. J. G. Forbes, the missionary at Caughnawaga, assisted by his brother, a white father of Cardinal Lavigerie's, performed the ceremony.

A custom that will seem peculiar to Montrealers is that it would be a breach of etiquette to take a wedding trip. This would not be tolerated. Another fact generally unknown is that beforehand all arrangements are made as to where the newly married couple must take up their residence. In the present case the bridegroom will take up his home at his bride's mother's, the young lady being an only daughter.

⁸⁶ From AN IROQUOIS WEDDING. (1895, September 25). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

“Encroachment on his property”⁸⁷ (April, 1896)

There were about fifty Caughnawaga Indians in the Court of Special Sessions yesterday when Judge Desnoyers ascended the Bench. Chief Jocks laid a complaint against four of the Caughnawaga men for an encroachment on his property, and taking therefrom 13 loads of wood.

It transpired to be a case of a title to the land from where the wood was taken, and it was found that the wood was taken from Chief Jock’s property. His Honor thought that the case was one which should be settled, as it was desirable that peace and harmony should prevail on the reserve. The hint of His Honor was taken up, and the interested parties settled the matter by agreeing to pay the costs of the case among them.

“The father of twenty-six children”⁸⁸ (January, 1897)

Caughnawaga, the Indian settlement near here, boasts of a man who is the father of twenty-six children. His name is Marleau, and it was only this week that Father Arbour christened the twenty-sixth child. Even for Quebec, where French-Canadian families in the “teens” are not unusual, Marleau has a long lead in the matter of numerous progeny. Marleau has two wives.

“Left one thousand odd descendants”⁸⁹ (January, 1897)

There may frequently be seen about the streets here a half-breed Indian who comes in from across the Canadian border with snowshoes, moccasins and baskets to sell, says a Saranac Lake correspondent. His name is Macomber. The tribe to which he belongs holds a reservation 12 miles square, and is from the Five Nations. The reservation is known as Caughnawaga. His grandfather has died recently, aged 103, leaving considerable wealth. The old gentleman had been married three times. By his first wife he had six children, by the second 15, and the same number by the third. In reckoning up how many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren this old Indian had it counted up to over 1,000. Of the 36 of his children 36 are still living, as are most of the grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

⁸⁷ From DISPUTE OVER A TITLE. (1896, April 9). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 6.

⁸⁸ From FATHER OF 26 CHILDREN. (1897, January 23). *The Ottawa Evening Journal*, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Left One Thousand Odd Descendants. (1897, January 29). *The Medicine Lodge Cresset*, p. 1.

“Great honors in store”⁹⁰ (April, 1898)

There are great honors in store for Big John Canadien this summer, and profitable honors at that. Dressed in all his warpaint and feathers, like an Indian chief of the first magnitude, and conveyed by a batteau full of other braves, he will set off every afternoon in the year, rain or shine, from his beloved native village, and stop the boats of the New American-St. Lawrence River line, for the purpose of boarding them, and acting as honorary pilot down the rapids. Although the boats will have regular white pilots on board, the passengers will be in blissful ignorance of this and imagine that they are being piloted down by a regular Indian chief. Big John signed his contract yesterday, and is more than delighted with it. He will receive a regular weekly salary, and in addition the right to sell his pictures on all the boats.

Outside of this, his snowshoe business has greatly increased through the Klondike trade. He says that he is continually shipping them by the dozens of pairs, and is getting twice the price for them he used to get.

“Not as jovial”⁹¹ (November, 1898)

Big John, so well known to the Montreal public, is not as jovial nor as gay as is his wont. He seems to have forgotten that he shook hands with Her Majesty, the Queen, and is also not in the humor to shoot Lachine Rapids in his boat. He is sorrowful, and to all questions as to the cause, he mournfully replies: “Big John great man; best man in Caughnawaga once; Big John small man now; rheumatism bigger man than John.”

“Big John’s boat”⁹² (January, 1899)

Big John’s boat, which had grown accustomed to carrying her master through the eddies of the Lachine Rapids on New Year’s Day, grew impatient and this year set out on the perilous journey alone. But the guiding hand of the veteran Indian pilot was not at the helm, and the adventurous craft did not reach her desired haven, and whether she was crushed by the icy water upon some inhospitable shore, is only a matter for conjecture. [...]

The fact remains that Big John, who is never really happy, except when afloat, had no boat today!

Let Big John tell the story of the loss of his boat, as he puffs at his pipe, which is now his only consolation.

“You remember Wednesday night; big wind. Well, I fe^r my boat on hice. He skedaddled an’ run rapids himself, my boat. No pilot though, he won’t get into Montreal, for that’s not easy even with pilot when so much hice. Where is he? That’s

⁹⁰ From BIG JOHN IS IN LUCK. (1898, April 25). *The Windsor Evening Record*, p. 5.

⁹¹ From PRESS OPINIONS. (1898, November 29). *The Windsor Star*, p. 2.

⁹² From BIG JOHN’S BOAT. (1899, January 22). *The Buffalo Sunday Morning News*, p. 10.

what I don't know; maybe under hie. I had dat boat nine-ten years. Good boat; Big John Canadian painted on his side. P'raps I get him in spring."

"Have you made any inquiry for the boat?" asked the writer.

"Oh, yes; on – what you call that day after Wednesday? Oh, yes. Thursday. Well, Thursday morning, I walked all down the river bank, but no boat. He just tink something wrong when I don't run rapids New Year's Day, so start off himself, but I guess he sorry all right now."

And Big John laughed, though there was a suspicious catch in his voice; he was thinking of the many times he had, with that boat, done what others were afraid to do. But he added reverently: "God gave and god take away; He send me anuder boat."

Then he added: "My fortune's gone, but I not discouraged."

The little craft that Big John calls his fortune, was a flat-bottomed boat, 22 feet long and five feet wide. It contained two pairs of oars, and a paddle, and was painted green, with the owner's name on the side. In his home at Caughnawaga, he is anxiously looking for tidings, even if only of the fragments, for Big John Canadien has lost a friend, indeed.

"They are missed"⁹³ (January, 1899)

The squaws at Windsor station – those familiar faces that sit so stoically and offer their little wares of bead work, have been missing for the last three or four days, and it is said they have returned to the wigwam at Caughnawaga to pass the holidays. They are missed, but it is likely in a few days all will be back again.

These squaws live somewhere in town, but they come regularly to the station and occupy the seats provided by the management. They stay ll day and go home about 9 o'clock at night. In some instances they make good sales, especially to foreigners returning home after a sojourn in this country.

"Many are unaware"⁹⁴ (January, 1900)

Many are unaware how some of the Iroquois, of Caughnawaga, came by their English names. The following information contained in Rev. Mr. Forbes' almanac relating to the introduction of white blood in Caughnawaga will be read with interest.

Eunice Williams, 7 years old, daughter of Rev. John Williams, minister of Deerfield, Mass., was taken as a captive to Caughnawaga in February, 1704. She was adopted in the tribe, as it was then customary with the Iroquois, and was called by her captors Kanenstehaw, i.e., "She brings corn," [and] married an Indian chief, Arosen, "The squirrel". Her descendants now living in Caughnawaga are 125, and have adopted her English name. Among the other descendants of Eunice Williams are included a Catholic bishop, nuns and clergymen. Many prominent families in Canada trace their ancestry to this New England captive.

⁹³ From SQUAWS GO HOME. (1899, January 4). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁹⁴ From HOW THEY GOT THEIR NAMES. (1900, January 20). *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 9.

Silas Rice, 9 years old, son of Edmund Rice, of Marlborough, Mass., captured in the summer of 1703, was given the name of Tannahorens, "He splits the door," became a Caughnawaga chief, had six children, and his living posterity reaches the number of 1,350. The late Big Baptiste Rice, who was for many years the Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Co.'s pilot down the Lachine Rapids, was a descendant of this Silas Rice. For many years after his capture, Rice and his children kept up the bond of relationship with his people at Marlborough, Mass., where a hearty welcome was always extended the Indian branch of the Rice family.

Jacob Hill, a twelve-year-old boy, taken near Albany in 1755, known by his captors as Karonhientawl, "Heaven given," married in 1766 a captive girl, [and] had four children. His descendants are 1,100 among the inhabitants of Caughnawaga.

John Stacey, aged 14, Hill's companion of captivity, surnamed Alonwattla, "The maker of rivers," is the ancestor of over 400 members of the Caughnawaga tribe.

Caughnawaga in 1900⁹⁵ (September, 1900)

One of the quaintest historical spots in the vicinity of Montreal is the Indian town of Caughnawaga, which nestles in a valley on the south bank of the St. Lawrence about ten miles up from the heart of Montreal, and opposite the ancient village of Lachine. The Iroquois settled at Caughnawaga in 1674, and its present population is estimated at about 2,000. The tribe which first settled there is said to have come from what are now the United States, and to have first pitched its tents at Laprairie. The colony was founded by the Jesuits, who looked after their temporal as well as religious interests. Part of them after some time migrated to St. Regis. Among the early settlers were some notable characters, one of whom is said to have been a special officer in the service of General Washington.

It can scarcely be said that the town has made the progress that might be expected of a place two and a quarter centuries old, but if the place is "behind the times" in appearance, the people are not. There are today nine general stores, one large stone Roman Catholic church, a boys' school and a girls' school for Catholic children, [and] a Methodist chapel, also used as a school house for Protestant children. The population is almost all Indian, and Catholic.

It must be admitted that there are not many Indians now living at Caughnawaga who claim to be pure-blooded. They have to a considerable extent intermarried with the French, and, while they practically all speak the Indian language, most of them understand French also, and quite a number speak English, too. Owing to a combination of circumstances and the work of time, the old enmity which existed between the aboriginal red man of the district and the unwelcome intruder from European shores has totally disappeared. Not only has the hatchet or tomahawk been buried, but the advantages and blessings of civilization have been seen, appreciated, and accepted by the Indian and today Caughnawaga has reason to be proud of her sons, some of whom are at home as merchants, farmers, traders, etc.,

⁹⁵ From TO TUTOR POOR LO. (1900, September 16). *The Wichita Daily Eagle*, p. 10.

Dr. A. O. Paton included, and others who are scattered in all parts of Canada and the United States.

One of the peculiarities of the town which would strike a visitor, is the total absence of board sidewalks. The streets are narrow and irregular, and the roadbed is similar to some of Montreal's streets. Rough flagstones, often unevenly placed, line some of the thoroughfares, and a poor kind of gravel answers for a walk in other places. Some of the houses are built of wood, some of stone, and many of both materials combined, in antiquated style. Log houses and rough board dwellings, with chimneys and fireplaces of the earliest patterns, are not uncommon. Passing a house on a fine summer day, one sees through the ever-open windows or doors numbers of Indian women making ornaments of beads, bark or buckskin. The manufacture of Indian relics may be said to be one of the leading industries of the town.

Every house seems to have a garden. The rocky nature of the ground may be a fair excuse for the poor crop raised in some spots, but the same excuse cannot be advanced for the rank growth of weeds, which are allowed to flourish in other gardens. Not only may creditable patches of corn, potatoes, and other vegetables be seen here and there, but carefully tended flower beds may also be found in front of the more tidily kept houses. There are a few modern and comfortably furnished houses in the town.

The boys' school and town hall are comprised in the same building, which is of stone, and looks more like a private dwelling than a public institution. The upper story is used as a school room, and in the lower or ground flat is situated the council chamber. The girls' schoolhouse is a frame building. Between the school houses is a small lockup. It has not been used for years, except as a convenient and safe place to store documents. The school attendance is small, and unsatisfactory to many. This is the only Indian school on the reserve. It is said that there are about four hundred children on the reserve of school age, and the daily average attendance at the village school is only about twenty. At the Protestant school, kept in the school chapel, the attendance is about as large as the other, and it is a significant fact that several Catholic children attend there.

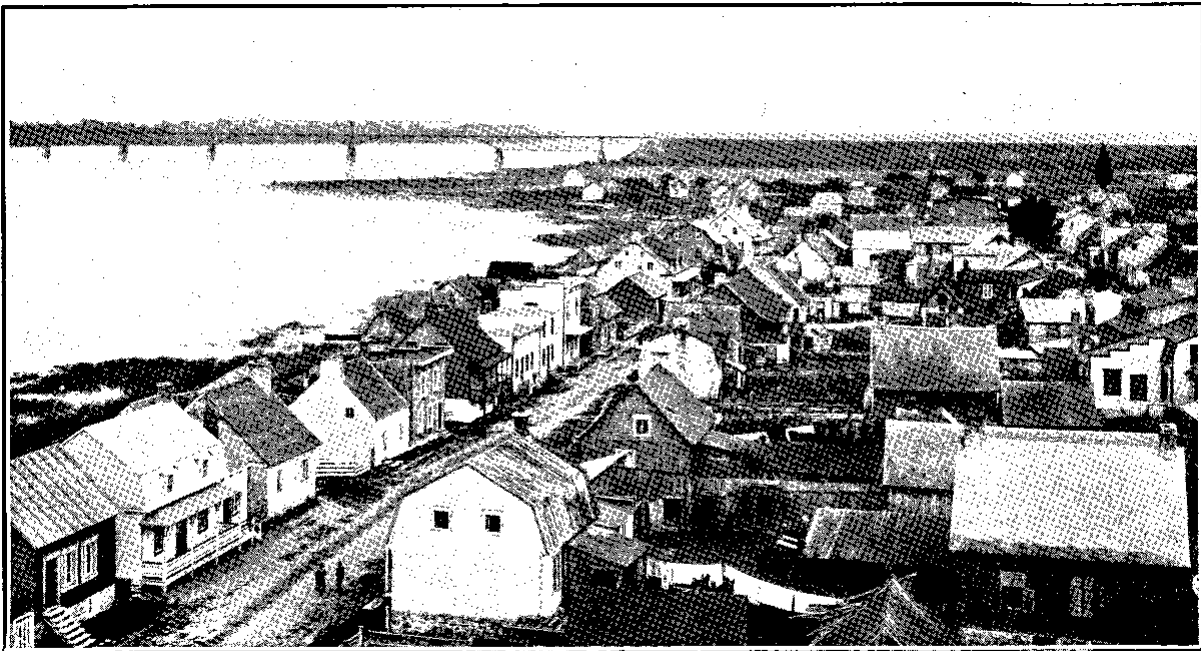
In the western part of the town, a large barn, once the freight shed of the Grand Trunk Railway company, still stands. Caughnawaga was a kind of terminus of the railway in the days before the Victoria tubular bridge was built, and the passengers and freight all had to be ferried across to and from Lachine on the opposite bank. A long stone terrace, sufficient to accommodate about a dozen families, which was then occupied by the railway employees, still stands. Mr. Alex Brosseau, the Indian agent, has his office in one end of the block.

Heavy farm implements are not needed in the town, and rather primitive kinds of implements and tools are seen on adjacent farms. The old fashioned carts of the province are in general use, and it is a common sight to see women or girls driving through the country to work or to town. By authority of an order-in-council, there are sixteen hundred acres of land set aside for the Iroquois of Two Mountains and Caughnawaga, in the township of Duncaster, where, provided they become actual

settlers and improve the lands, each family may be located on a farm of sufficient extent.

The Indians of Caughnawaga elect their council by vote, though some of them would prefer the old system of government by chiefs. As a rule, they strongly object to the interference by police for the preservation of order, preferring to look after unruly characters in an unofficial manner themselves. It is almost unnecessary to state that there are no hotels or saloons in Caughnawaga. Still, with towns and cities so near, where liquor can be got, it is no wonder that a certain number of braves are strongly addicted to the drink habit, and find ways of obtaining liquor.

There are few empty houses in Caughnawaga, and the inhabitants generally are strong, healthy and vigorous.



VIEW OF THE VILLAGE OF CAUGHNAWAGA—*Taken from the church steeple*

Caughnawaga c. 1920. From Devine, E. J. (1921). Historic Caughnawaga. Montreal: Messenger Press.

The Franchise

“The reserve must be surveyed”⁹⁶ (May, 1879)

A number of the Caughnawagas have applied for enfranchisement. This is recommended as a necessary preliminary. The reserve must be surveyed, and a portion of land allotted to each applicant who may be considered by the band worthy of enfranchisement. Instructions have been given to have the cadastre of the Seignory of Sault St. Louis rectified in consequence of changes in the proprietorship of many of the lots therein leased to the whites. An outbreak of small-pox at Caughnawaga and the Lake of Two Mountains was promptly checked by a general vaccination.

“Highly qualified to enjoy the rights and franchise”⁹⁷ (April, 1882)

Hon. Mr. TRUDEL inquired:- Does the Government intend to introduce any measure for the emancipation of the Caughnawaga Indians, and of the other Indian tribes still existing within the limits of the former Province of Canada?

He said: In the course of the last three or four years several documents have been read to this House, and many facts have been stated in the newspapers of Montreal showing that the Indians of Caughnawaga, or at least a part of them, have reached such a degree of civilization, that some of them have succeeded in attaining good positions both in trade and commerce; a proportion of them have also received a liberal education and are in every respect highly qualified to enjoy the rights and franchise of British subjects.

It is admitted by every body that the position in which they are kept prevents them from conducting their business successfully, and in other respects is a serious drawback. The press of the Province, French and English, and especially the newspapers of Montreal, take a deep interest in those Indians and recommend that they be emancipated. It has been shown that some of those Indians have extensive farms which they cannot cultivate, because they cannot depend upon Indian labor and are not allowed to employ white men. It has also been shown that children in several of these families have been educated in the convents and seminaries of the Province, but on their return home, their parents are prevented from putting them under the care of civilized persons to complete their education. This state of things retards the progress of civilization among them. My inquiry embraces other Indians besides those at Caughnawaga, because there may be others whose emancipation should no longer be delayed.

⁹⁶ From DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. (1879, May 6). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

⁹⁷ From Holland, A. & Holland, G. C. [Eds.]. (1882). CAUGHNAWAGA INDIANS [April 3, 1882, pp. 238-239]. In *Debates and Proceedings of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada, 1882*. Ottawa: A. S. Woodburn.

Hon. Sir ALEX CAMPBELL – It is not the intention of the Government to introduce any measure further to provide for the emancipation of the Indians of Caughnawaga or other tribes. My hon. friend knows, I presume, that there does exist now in the Indian Act a provision which he may think, perhaps, insufficient, for the enfranchisement of Indians by which an Indian who desires to be enfranchised, and to whom the Indians of his tribe are willing to assign a piece of land, may be examined by the superintendent of Indian Affairs and, if he is reported fit to be given the rights and privileges of a citizen, he is enfranchised; and there is also a provision that any person admitted to a degree in a university or [who] is an attorney at law, or who has taken holy orders or has been licensed to preach, and perhaps in some other cases, can be enfranchised. I do not know whether further provision is necessary or not: it has not been represented to the Government, so far as I know, that these provisions are insufficient. They certainly meet a good many cases. It is not the intention of the government to amend the Act this Session.

“Public opinion is favorable”⁹⁸ (February, 1882)

The Caughnawaga Indians, occupying a reserve near the city [of Montreal], and who have made great advances in civilization, many of them being well educated and in prosperous circumstances, held a convention and petitioned the Government for all the rights of free citizens. Public opinion is favorable and their demand is likely to be acceded to.

“Only to the Indians of the older provinces”⁹⁹ (May, 1885)

The house resumed in committee on the government franchise bill.

Mr. MILLS¹⁰⁰ opposed the bill because of its intention that all Indians, whether enfranchised or not, should be entitled to vote¹⁰¹.

Mr. DAWSON¹⁰² said that if the proposed amendment to restrict the franchise to independent and self-supporting Indians were adopted, there would be many Indians following occupations outside the reserves and still preserving their tribal relations who would be obliged to go back to the reserves before they could exercise the franchise¹⁰³. It would not be just to withhold the franchise from 130,00 loyal

⁹⁸ From The Noble Red Man. (1882, February 3). *The Reno Gazette*, p. 2.

⁹⁹ From PARLIAMENT OF CANADA. (1885, May 5). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ David Mills (1831 – 1903) was Senator for Bothwell from 1884 to 1896.

¹⁰¹ From the official report of the Debates of the House of Commons for May 4, 1885: “House again resolved itself into committee on Bill (No. 103) respecting the Electoral Franchise. [...] On amendment of Mr. Mills: That the following words be added after the word ‘Indian,’ ‘who has been enfranchised under the Indian Act and has had conferred upon him the same civil capacities as other persons who are qualified to vote under this act.’”

¹⁰² Simon James Dawson (1818 – 1902) was Member of Parliament for Algoma from 1878 to 1891.

¹⁰³ From the official report of the Debates: “The Indian Act says: ‘The term ‘enfranchised Indian’ means any Indian, his wife, or minor, unmarried child, who has received letters patent granting him in fee-simple any portion of the reserve which may have been allotted to him.’” That applies solely to [...]

Indians throughout the Dominion because a few hundred of them were in rebellion. But in any case he did not think the bill would extend the franchise to the extent contended by the opposition.

Sir JOHN MACDONALD, in reply to a question from Mr. Patterson (Brant), said¹⁰⁴ that an Indian, although preserving his tribal relation, would be qualified by this act to vote. He was not prepared to say whether or not a tribal Indian could serve on a jury under the bill, but he did not know that there was any law in the Province of Ontario against it. He thought the government would have power under the act to order Indians to serve under arms.

Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT¹⁰⁵ said that giving the vote to any considerable number of tribal Indians would subject them to temptation¹⁰⁶ at election times that they are least able to resist. He believed it would not tend to their moral advancement while they remain in a state of tutelage.

Sir JOHN MACDONALD said it had been charged that an attempt had been made to smuggle the Indian clause of this bill through the house. If there had been any such attempt contemplated, the word 'Indian' would have been left out and they would have been entitled to vote under the general designation of persons. When he inserted the word 'Indian' in the act, he meant that it should apply only to the Indians of the older provinces, where they were educated and civilized. As large a proportion of Indians in these provinces could read and write as of their white brethren, and they were so far advanced that the member for Brant himself, in a speech delivered in 1880, wanted them enfranchised. Now the hon. gentleman qualified his statement by restricting its application to only those Indians who were free from government influence. It was absurd to suppose that their votes would be controlled by government influence. Many of these Indians were educated, having property of their own, and were engaged in business of various kinds; but they preferred to adhere to the tribal system. These men were just as fit to exercise the franchise as white men.

Indians living on reserves. Now, there is a large class of Indians, of people known as Indians, who live outside the reserves. [...] There are professional men among those Indians who have abandoned their Indian life entirely, and live as white people do. There are among them boat builders, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, carpenters, and Indian farmers – all living among white people, and who now exercise the franchise. Now if this motion before the House were adopted, what would be the effect? [...] [A]ll this class of Indians [...] would be obliged to go upon the reserves, take up a little location and occupy it for three years, and go through a probationary term before they could exercise the franchise. It would disenfranchise them.”

¹⁰⁴ From the official record of the Debates: “Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I would say that an Indian, although preserving his tribal relation, is qualified under this Act to vote.”

¹⁰⁵ Sir Richard John Cartwright (1835 – 1912) was Member of Parliament for Huron South.

¹⁰⁶ From the official record of the Debates: “Sir RICHARD CARTWRIGHT. [...] Does not everyone know that the infirmities of the Indian character are such that it is dangerous to allow white men to mingle with them, that the free mixture of white men with them is to[o] apt to tempt them into intemperance and other vices from which our Government have justly attempted to protect them heretofore? [...] I do not believe it will be for the moral benefit of the Indians, while living in bands on their reserves, to be subject to those solicitations, those temptations and those inducements which have proved [...] so fatal to the virtue of their white brethren.”

Years ago, when the emancipation of the Southern slaves was agitated, large numbers of those fugitives found an asylum in western Canada, where they remained and were given votes. No one objected to these men just emerged from a condition of most abject serfdom becoming voters, and they had ever since exercised a decided influence in the elections in that part of the country. Why should the aboriginal Indians, who were the former owners of the soil, be prevented from either sitting in the house or voting for the men who were to represent their interests in parliament? At present upwards of one hundred thousand people were disenfranchised.

When it came to the proper time in the discussion of the bill he intended to move an amendment by which the Indian provision shall be applied only to the Indians of the older provinces. [...] The Indians living in the older provinces, who had attended school, who were educated, who were acquainted with the principles and practice of civilization, who had accumulated property, who had good and well-furnished houses, who contributed to the public treasury, were certainly entitled to vote. Those in Ontario, and he believed those in Quebec, did not contribute to the general assessment of the country, but they had their own system of taxation on their own reserves. They paid their own taxes, built their own roads and school houses, and carried out their own system in their own way on the reserves. They would be found with good houses, their families well clad, their children receiving education, their morals good and their religious feeling strong.

In the newer provinces, in the Northwest and in British Columbia, the Indians were not yet ready for the franchise. It was his intention when the proper point was reached to introduce a clause to that effect; but as regarded the educated Indians of the older provinces, they were our brethren in that they lived in the same Dominion and under the same laws as ourselves. They were intelligent and by no means immoral men, for in proportion to their numbers they did not fill the prisons as did the whites. A respectable, law-abiding, God-fearing people; he did not see why they should not have a vote. (Applause.)

Mr. DAVIES¹⁰⁷ stated that the hon. gentleman had overdrawn the character of the Indians. These men were uneducated, were sorely lacking in intelligence; they should not therefore be enfranchised.

Mr. MITCHELL¹⁰⁸ said the opposition [...] had been throwing away their powder in drill practice, for instead of hitting at what were real objections to the bill they had been arguing against that which was quite defensible. The clause of the bill under discussion simply defined an Indian as a person. There could be no doubt he was a person, and such being the case, why should the fact not be mentioned in the bill? This clause was, therefore, one which could and should have been passed in five minutes. At the same time he (Mr. Mitchell) disagreed with the views of the Premier with reference to the Indians. In the part of the country he represented Indians were far from being as intelligent as stated by the Premier. (Applause.) In view of their

¹⁰⁷ Louis Henry Davies (1845 – 1924) was Member of Parliament for Queen’s County. He had earlier served as Premier of Prince Edward Island.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Mitchell (1824 – 1899) was a Member of Parliament for Northumberland County, NB.

miserably wretched state, their debased condition, he could not help regretting that any one should propose to enfranchise them.

“As to every one who is a British subject”¹⁰⁹ (May, 1885)

Mr. WHITE¹¹⁰. [...] Chief Jacques, of Caughnawaga, is a tribal Indian and belongs to the tribe to-day; he receives his share of annuities, money which belongs to him just as much as the interest of Dominion bonds belong to the bondholders.

Mr. MILLS. If he is so thoroughly competent to manage his own affairs, why is not his money put under his own control and at his own disposal?

Mr. WHITE. Would the hon. gentleman allow me to finish my argument?

The chief is said to be worth from \$60,000 to \$80,000; he is doing a large business for a place like Caughnawaga. He can transact business just as freely as any hon. member in this House, or outside of it. But because he chooses to retain his tribal relations, to be called one of his own people, because he prefers to remain with those among whom his ancestors lived, and upon whom he may exercise – and in that respect it may be a great advantage to the country – important influence, by his greater intelligence, he is to be treated, forsooth, as if he were a serf, a slave, a person incapable of and not permitted to manage his own affairs. [...]

The only thing an Indian cannot trade with is in relation to the land of the reservation. He cannot dispose of that. If he holds property outside, he can carry on business as much as any one can, and it is only as regards property in the reservation which he cannot deal with, that property being practically held in common. Although it may be sub-divided, still he holds in common, as practically a trust, the property in connection with his tribe, but he carries on his business outside of it, just as much as anyone else. In the older Provinces he can farm and he can sell grain.

I am sure my hon. friend from Brant knows that in his own particular constituency there are well-to-do farmers among the Indians, who raise and sell their own grain, transact business like everybody else, but who, nevertheless, retain their connection with the tribe.

Is it to the advantage of the tribe or of the country that the influence of those more intelligent Indians should be retained in connection with it? Hon. gentlemen opposite say that they would not object to giving votes to the Indians, if they only become enfranchised, in the sense in which they use that word. Well, Sir, nobody thanks them for that, for if the Indians withdraw from their tribe and cease to be Indians under the law, they require no consideration from hon. gentleman to give them franchise. The franchise comes to them as to every one who is a British subject, and when hon. gentlemen say that they are willing that they should have the privilege of voting under those circumstances, they simply say that they would give

¹⁰⁹ From Wednesday, 20th May, 1885. (1885). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Third Session – Fifth Parliament*. Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

¹¹⁰ Thomas White (1830 – 1888) was Member of Parliament for Cardwell from 1878 to 1888.

the Indian that which would belong to him by right, if he has the ordinary qualifications under the law.

“Amendment lost”¹¹¹ (May, 1885)

Mr. Edgar moved that only such Indians should be given votes as are “enfranchised and have had the same civil capacity conferred upon him as other persons who are entitled to vote under this Act.” This brought up the discussion of the whole Indian question. [...] Mr. Dawson moved an amendment to the effect that an Indian, whether enfranchised or not, who follows some calling or occupation common to civilized life, though he participate in the annuities, etc., of a tribe, [should,] subject to the same qualifications as other persons, have a vote. He seemed very mixed as to Indians and half-breeds in Manitoba, as he persisted that Indians had a vote in Manitoba, and had a seat in the Legislature. He asserted that the Premier of Manitoba was an Indian. Mr. Watson pointed out that he was mixed in his ideas as to half-breeds and Indians, but he persisted he was right. Amendment lost.

“Thanking Sir John Macdonald”¹¹² (January, 1887)

The Caughnawaga Indians have passed resolutions thanking Sir John Macdonald for conferring the Franchise upon them.

“Newly enfranchised Caughnawaga Indians”¹¹³ (January, 1887)

At a meeting of the newly enfranchised Caughnawaga Indians, Mr. Angus Patton presiding, it was moved by Messrs. P. Kanenratiron and Thomas Arhakentiake, and seconded by Messrs. Moise Stachy and Akwirotonkwaw: That the Indians of this reservation hail with pleasure the first occasion which is offered them of testifying to the Government of the Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald their gratitude for the interest which that Government has always manifested in them, and particularly for giving them the right of franchise which has been guaranteed to them by act of Parliament¹¹⁴.

¹¹¹ From CAPITAL NOTES. (1885, May 29). *The Manitoba Daily Free Press*, p. 2.

¹¹² From NEWS IN BRIEF. (1887, January 6). *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 2.

¹¹³ From CAUGHNAWAGA ELECTORS. (1887, January 7). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ The Electoral Franchise Act, 1885, reads in part: “This Franchise Act [...] adopts for Dominion Elections the Provincial franchises of British Columbia and Prince Edward Island, and prescribes for the other Provinces a franchise for eight classes of voters: (1) owners, (2) tenants, and (3) occupants of real property, (4) income voters, (5) real property owners’ sons, (6) farmers’ sons, (7) fishermen, and (8) Indians (except in Manitoba, British Columbia, Keewatin and North-West Territories) in possession of a distinct and improved lot of land on a reserve.” From the Act as transcribed in Hodgins, M.A. (1886). *The Canadian Franchise Act, with notes of decisions on the Imperial acts relating to registration, and on the provincial franchise and election acts*. Toronto: Rowsell & Hutchinson.

It was proposed by Messrs. F. Sohionwase and Saro Kanatase, and seconded by Messrs. Kanentakeron and Sawatis Tehawennake, that the Indians of Caughnawaga appreciate highly the possession of the right of franchise, which is of a nature to promote effectually the progress of the tribe from every point of view in placing them on the same footing as the white population, and that they will never forget the efforts which the Chief of the Cabinet has personally made to obtain for them this measure of justice.

It was proposed by Mr. Thomas Patton and Chief Jocks and seconded by Chief Michael Montour and Mr. Kaneratakeron, that an address on the basis of these resolutions be prepared, signed and forwarded for presentation to the Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald.

It was proposed by Messrs. Joseph Stacy and Joseph Delisle and seconded by Mr. Sewatis Kroniaktatie, "That this meeting approves and ratifies with the greatest satisfaction the choice made by the Conservative convention at St. Isidore of Mr. Joseph Tasse as candidate at the next election for the House of Commons for the county of Laprairie, and they bind themselves to aid in the election of this gentleman by all means in their power."

"Some bottles and a turkey"¹¹⁵ (March, 1887)

The following are the depositions made in the case of the Queen vs. Murray, before Messrs. W. McLena Walbank, J.P., and A. Brosseau, Indian agent, on the 10th inst.:-

Tier Kaheroton, alias Peter Murray, Indian of the village of Caughnawaga, who is charged this day before us for that he, the said Tier Kaheroton, alias Peter Murray, is suspected of having, at the said village of Caughnawaga, on the twenty-first day of February last, past, unlawfully supplied intoxicating liquor, to wit, whiskey, to one Wishe Sakoentineta, alias Chief Michel Montour, Indian, and to one Atonwa Taretame, alias Tom Jacob, Indian, and to one Sawatis Otsitsateklen, alias John Jacob, Indian, all of the village of Caughnawaga, contrary to the form of statute in that case made and provided.

Chief Michel Montour, of the village of Caughnawaga, upon his oath, says: I am one of the chiefs. I know the defendant. On the evening of February last he came to my house at the door, and stated that he was going after liquor, and asked my permission. I told him I did not consent nor object. A short time after that he returned with a little boy carrying some bottles and a turkey. They both entered my house. The boy offered me the bottles. I asked him who they belonged [to]. He said Tier Kaheroton. I said, "Give them to the proprietor."

Tier Kaheroton then asked me to take the bottle and dilute the spirits it contained with water, and rink with him, so as to become one of the Liberal party. I replied I did not want to mix myself up with them, and refused to touch it. The defendant then diluted the spirits himself with water. He then invited myself and my

¹¹⁵ From THE LAPRAIRIE ELECTION. (1887, March 16). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 5.

friends to partake of the liquor on condition that we vote for the Liberal party. My father-in-law, Tom Jacob, and John Jacob took some liquor. I gave the defendant the same reply after the third invitation. The defendant asked me to take some of the liquor to please him, and I took a drink from the cup, which contained white whiskey, supplied to me by the defendant.

The defendant declared that he was working for Mr. Doyon, that Louis Jackson was his first man, and the defendant was his second man in the interest of the election, and that I and my friends must vote for Mr. Doyon, and [to this he added,] "As our liquor cannot convert you to our party, will you sell yourself? I will buy and give you twelve dollars for your vote for Mr. Doyon."

The defendant was about to take the money from his pocket, to all appearances, when I cut him short by saying: "My cousin, I like my honor too much to sell myself."

The defendant said: "You need not fear about the money, we have lots of it; I returned from town to-day with one hundred and fifty dollars, which Mr. Robidoux furnished us." The defendant opened his coat and displayed a diamond pin, which he valued at twenty-five dollars, and said it was a present from the Liberal party at Montreal.

When the defendant saw that I would not accept his money to change my vote, he accused me of being influenced by Thomas Jocks, to which I replied: "I am influenced by nobody, as you know by my actions in the Chief's council. I always act according to my own judgment. In the present election I am not influenced by nobody. I have always been in favor of Mr. Tasse, and I intend to vote for him."

I had to stop the defendant from giving more liquor to my father-in-law to whom he had already given five or six glasses, and I feared trouble. My father-in-law asked me how I was going to stop further drinking. I said by sending my son to defendant's mother, which I did, informing her [that] her son was here and had lots of liquor, and requiring her to come and take him home, as the police might come and there would be lots of trouble.

His mother came and tried to get him, but the defendant told her not to bother him as he was canvassing for Mr. Doyon and to-morrow was election day. On further representations made by myself he put on his coat and left the house with his mother, who took one unopened bottle of whiskey with her and left the unfinished bottle of whiskey on the floor under the table in my house, and I am ready to produce it on demand if required. The defendant's mother said she would destroy the contents of the bottle she took with her.

And further the deponent said not, and this, his deposition having been read to him, he declares it contains the truth and has signed,

(Signed)

WISHE SAKOENTINETA.

“Do not want votes”¹¹⁶ (May, 1897)

The Indians of the famous Caughnawaga reserve near Montreal have followed the example of the Brants and petitioned Hon. Clifford Sifton, superintendent general of Indian affairs, to relieve them of the responsibility of the franchise. While the white man and many of the fair sex consider the ballot one of their greatest privileges, the Indian takes a different view of the matter and wants to return to the old tribal system, which he claims is more conducive to good feeling and less to quarrelsomeness than the use of the franchise. The petition reads:

“The petition of the undersigned councillors of the Caughnawaga band of Iroquois Indians respectfully represents: That the band at Caughnawaga is at present subject to the provisions of the Indian Advancement Act; that your petitioners are informed that application has been made to increase the responsibilities of the band under said act; that your petitioners believe that if any change were made in the status of your petitioners it would be better for the peace and harmony of the band to return to the ancient method of electing chiefs by the various tribes who are members of the band. That under the present system of voting by wards for the election of councillors, constant difficulties arise by reason of the members of various tribes being forced to vote together, and the result is that the band is in a constant state of dissension and division due to the excitement which arises from the elections. That a large majority of the band are in favor of the views expressed by your petitioners. Wherefore your petitioners pray: That there can be no change in the present condition, and that if any change be made that they be allowed to return to the mode of the election of chiefs, and to abandon the present system of electing councillors.”

“You will search in vain for a parallel”¹¹⁷ (April, 1898)

Mr. HEYD¹¹⁸. I must claim the indulgence of the House for a few minutes, while I allude to the effect which this section [of the new Franchise Act] has in the constituency which I have the honour to represent. It says:

The qualifications necessary to entitle any person to vote thereat shall be those established by the laws of that province as necessary to entitle such person to vote in the same part of the province at a provincial election.

Unfortunately for some 647 of my constituents, their names do not appear on the provincial lists. The provincial laws of Ontario do not recognize Indians, in the ordinary sense of the term, to be qualified to exercise the provincial franchise; but some twelve years ago provision was made in the Dominion Franchise Act, for the

¹¹⁶ From DO NOT WANT VOTES. (1897, May 19). *The Victoria Daily Colonist*, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ From Thursday, 21st April 1898. (1898). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Third Session – Eighth Parliament*. Ottawa: S. E. Dawson.

¹¹⁸ Charles Bernhard Heyd (1842 – 1929) was Member of Parliament for Brant South.

first time in the history of this country, to admit Indians of that kind to the exercise of the franchise. [...] The clause of this Bill which I have read has given rise to a good deal of comment in my constituency, as our Indian friends, after having enjoyed the franchise for the last twelve years, and having exercised it on four different occasions, have learned to regard it with considerable affection. I am quite willing to admit that at the time the franchise was conferred upon them, they objected to it. It was a new thing, something that had never been indulged in before. On the reserve in South Brant the affairs of the tribe were conducted on the old tribal system, under which the chiefs were elected by the females of the family; and to have suddenly obtained the right to take part in this Dominion was rather a big undertaking for them. But now, after having exercised that right in four different elections, they appreciate it, or at least a large portion of them do. [...] Those opposed to the franchise are principally the pagan element, which has always objected to it. [...]

Now that they have had the privilege of exercising the franchise, that they did not at first want, these people have learned to appreciate it. Being precluded from exercising their hereditary combative instincts, they find an opportunity of getting rid of their superfluous steam at election time, and have learned to be most inveterate politicians. They take the Conservative or Liberal side in the most ardent manner, and take a most lively interest in politics, and are just as well qualified to exercise the franchise as are the whites. [...]

An hon. MEMBER. What did they cost?

Mr. HEYD. I am proud to say that it does not cost anything to get an Indian to vote. He is sufficiently loyal to our country to come forward and vote as he thinks best in the interest of his country without any money inducement. [...] Under the circumstances, I believe that their right to the franchise should be continued. And I beg to move the following resolution, that after the word "election" in the thirty-third line of the Bill, at the end of subdivision "a," the following words be added:-

Provided that, notwithstanding any provincial enactment, the Six Nation Indians and other Indian tribes that have the right to vote, under the Electoral Franchise Act of 48-49 Victoria, chap. 40, and shall be entitled to vote at any election for the Dominion Parliament. [...]

Mr. LISTER¹¹⁹. [...] There is a principle in this matter. We are not to consider whether the granting of the franchise to the Indians was a wise step or not. We are not now to consider whether the Government of that day, in view of the fact that the Indians were the wards of the Government, should have given the franchise to the Indians. We are face to face with the fact that it has been the law for the past twelve or fourteen years, and that the Indians have exercised the right to vote during all that time, and that it is now proposed by the Bill under consideration to take away from them this privilege. I think I may fairly challenge the Government to produce an instance in which the franchise has been given to a class of the population and then afterwards taken away from them by the law.

¹¹⁹ James Frederick Lister (1843 – 1902) was Member of Parliament for Lambton West .

So far as the right of these people is concerned, it is not of very much consequence in the consideration of the present question, whether they have exercised the right which was given to them wisely or not. They have had the same right as every other voter in the Dominion of Canada. But I may say to the House that my experience is that the Indians upon the reservation in my county have exercised that right as wisely, as prudently and intelligently as any other class of the people in the county of Lambton.

I may say to you, Mr. Chairman, that the tribe in the county of Lambton differs from that in Brant inasmuch as they have, for many years, elected their own chiefs and other officers, and in every contest that has taken place these Indians have taken an active and intelligent part in the election in which they have had a right to vote.

As an instance of their great intelligence, I may say that, notwithstanding the fact of the old Government being in power, I have always received a majority of the votes of the Indians upon that reservation. That proves one thing – it proves that the influence which it was supposed that the Government would have had on the Indians has not in fact existed, but that the Indians, notwithstanding that they were wards of the Government, have been sufficiently independent to vote as they thought proper. [...]

The PRIME MINISTER¹²⁰. [...] There can be no doubt what the policy of the Government is on this subject. We have introduced the principle and have fought for it for many years that the franchise ought to be regulated by the provincial legislatures, that it is for them to decide whether or not the Indians should be admitted to vote or not. If it be the opinion of the legislature of the province of Ontario, for instance, that the Indians there have reached that degree of civilization when they can be entrusted with the franchise, the legislature will so enact.

If the hon. gentleman had been in the House in 1885 when the present Act was introduced he would remember that, as introduced, it gave the right of the franchise to the Indians, not only in the older provinces, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but it gave the right of suffrage also to the Indians in the North-west Territories; and it was pointed out at the time to Sir John Macdonald by Mr. Mills that, according to the Bill, as introduced, Poundmaker, who was at that time engaged in rebellion, and Big Bear, would be invested with the franchise. The Bill was modified subsequently, and the Indians were granted the franchise only in the older provinces and the Indians of the North-west Territories were restrained.

This shows that even according to the Act some discretion is to be exercised in this matter. Who is to exercise it? We think it should be left to the provincial legislatures. Accordingly, after this Bill becomes law, if it should become law, it would be for the legislatures of the different provinces to determine whether or not Indians should be admitted to vote. This is the policy of the Government on this subject. [...]

Sir CHARLES TUPPER¹²¹. [...] The hon. member for Brant (Mr. Heyd) went very fully into the question and made a very powerful argument against the

¹²⁰ Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

¹²¹ Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper (1855 – 1927) was Member of Parliament for Pictou, and leader of the opposition.

disenfranchisement of the Indians who now enjoy the suffrage under existing legislation, and he pointed to the fact that whatever had been the difference of opinion at the outset when any question was first considered, any doubts as to the propriety of the enfranchisement of the Indians in certain cases had been entirely removed by that most potent of all influences, the influence of experience. He showed the impression prevailed at the time that because the Indians were wards of the Government they should not be enfranchised.

The argument was followed up still more fully by the hon. member for Lambton (Mr. Lister), who showed that the great danger felt in respect to the enfranchisement of Indians was that they were wards of the Government, and it was therefore supposed the Government of the day would exercise an overwhelming controlling influence over them and they would not be in a position to give free votes and exercise the franchise freely and intelligently.

Those hon. gentlemen went into the evidence on this point, and they proved to the House conclusively, in my judgment, that all the fears entertained in regard to the enfranchisement of the Indians had proved to be delusive, that they exercised the franchise as intelligently and independently as any other class of the electors, that instead of being entirely swayed by the Government, they had again and again, although somewhat dependent on the Government, shown their independence by dividing their votes, in a great many cases, about equally between the two political parties. [...] Year after year they have proved that they possess all the qualifications necessary to exercise the franchise in a wise, independent and judicious manner in the interests of the country. For the leader of the Government to deprive them of that franchise, without being able to advance a reason for his action, is a thing for which you will search in vain for a parallel all the world over. [...]

The PRIME MINISTER. [...] My hon. friend appealed to me in the name of Liberal principles to retain the franchise to the Indians, and he exclaimed: What, is it to be the case that this so-called Liberal Government is going to disenfranchise a portion of the electorate? Sir, this is not the question before the House. The question is whether this franchise is to be regulated by this Parliament or by the local legislatures, and upon that question we differ. The hon. gentlemen opposite have taken the ground that this Parliament should regulate the franchise, while we have taken the ground that the best method of dealing with it, in view of our complicated government under a federative system, is to have one uniform franchise for each province and for the Dominion, that is to say, that the same authority which regulates the franchise for the local legislature should also regulate it for the Dominion. [...] If we are to deal with the question as an abstract question, if we are to determine whether the Indians should have the right to vote or not, I would not for my part have any objections to giving them that right after the testimony we have heard of the qualifications of the Indians to exercise the franchise. But in any well regulated system of government the proper thing must be done, not alone because it is just per se, but the proper thing must be done by the proper authorities. [...] If the Indians are qualified to vote, [...] the local legislatures will deal with that question and give them the right to vote, and then [the] hon. gentlemen will be satisfied.

“They have no more right to vote”¹²² (May, 1899)

The Prime Minister – [...] The Indian village and reserve of Caughnawaga is transferred from the electoral district of Caughnawaga to the electoral district of Laprairie and Napierville.

Mr. Bergeron – What about Caughnawaga: under the new Franchise Act the Indians have no right to vote?

The Prime Minister – They have no more right to vote, and I do not think it affects the case one way or another. But, to be consistent, we place Caughnawaga where it belongs. At present it is immaterial whether it is Chateaugay or Laprairie, or anywhere else, because the Indians have no right to vote.

¹²² From PRINCIPLES OF THE LIBERALS. (1899, May 20). *The Windsor Evening Record*, p. 1.

Chiefs and Councillors

“Asking for a new election of chiefs”¹²³ (February, 1888)

The Caughnawaga Indians have sent a petition to the Hon. Thomas White, minister of the interior, asking for a new election of chiefs. Three of the seven chiefs, it is stated, have died in office, and one lives in a foreign country, so the council now consists of only three members, and the braves consider this not enough. The petitioners also claim that by the Indian act, section 74, the chiefs should be elected every three years, and that two of the remaining chiefs are far past their term. It is said that the present chiefs are by no means pleased with the action now taken. Mr. White has instructed the local Government agent to report on the matter.

“This is the ground on which they stand”¹²⁴ (April, 1888)

Mr. DOYON (Translation): [...] The Caughnawaga Indians pray [...] that they be allowed an election of chiefs for their tribe. They state that since seven years they have not had such an election; that several chiefs, who managed the affairs of the tribe, are dead or unfit to act as such, and that, therefore, there presently remains to them but two chiefs at Caughnawaga. This is the ground on which they stand to ask from the Government that they be allowed [...] an election of chiefs. I will also quote section 75 of the Indian Act, which reads as follows:

“Whenever the Governor in Council deems it advisable, for the good government of a band, to introduce the system of election of chiefs, he may provide that the chiefs of any band of Indians shall be elected as hereinafter provided, at such time and place as the Superintendent General directs; and they shall, in such case, be elected for a term of three years, but may be deposed by the Governor in Council for dishonesty, intemperance, immorality or incompetence; and they may be in the proportion of one head chief and two second chiefs or councillors for every 200 Indians.”

Particulars are nothing in this case. Therefore in their petition they do not ask for a special law; but they ask that the law which has been passed in 1880, for their benefit, be carried out. In January, 1888, they forwarded another petition bearing 160 signatures. [...] The Caughnawaga Indians were in an anxious mood; and having waited for two weeks and still receiving no answer, they telegraphed to the hon. the Minister of the Interior. The first answer they got from the Government implied that the agent of the Indians at Caughnawaga was to be communicated with. That is to say, they were to come to an understanding with the agent and see what was to be done. And later on, on the 1st of March, after a new exchange of telegrams, comes the definite answer: “Department taking no action.” That is to say, not minding about it.

¹²³ From NEW INDIAN CHIEFS WANTED. (1888, February 21). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

¹²⁴ From Wednesday, 18nd April, 1888. (1888). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Second Session – Sixth Parliament*. Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

[...] Under section 75 of the Indian Act [...] the Indians are not vested with the absolute right of electing their chiefs, they must apply to the Department to be granted that right; but I am surprised to find in the Statute-book an Act passe din 1880, setting forth that whenever the Governor in Council shall deem the Indians sufficiently advanced or enlightened, they shall be allowed electing their chiefs. [...]

Mr. LAURIER. (Translation). Mr. Speaker, if my hon. friend has succeeded in pricking what may be called the sloth of the Government on this topic he will have reached the point that he set out for. It is plain that my hon. friend [...] wanted to know why a petition which appeared so reasonable, whereby the Indians asked the right of choosing their own chiefs and councilors, according to law, had not yet been granted.

There is a strange anomaly in the law with respect to our Indians. They have the right of franchise without being forced to consult the agent, by an Act of Parliament. [...] They have, as a corollary, the right of stating their views on all subjects touching the interests of the country in general, and yet, [...] when there is a question of managing their own kitchen, and of electing their chiefs and councilors, the Government are not prepared to grant them this right of themselves, but must needs consult the agent.

I suspect that there may be a leaven of ill will at the bottom of this matter on the part of the agent, and the trouble possibly comes either from the agent or from the Government. It is well known that if there are Indians who have reached a certain stage of civilization in the land it is surely the Caughnawagas, and I imagine you will not find aborigines further advanced in any respect in either Ontario or Quebec. My hon. friend made this demand because the petitions of the Indians received no answer. They petition and are told that they must apply to the agent; they petition again and are met by the same reply.

“A resolution was adopted”¹²⁵ (January, 1889)

At a meeting held at Caughnawaga on Monday evening, a resolution was adopted asking for the appointment of new chiefs by the Government.

“A recommendation has been made”¹²⁶ (January, 1889)

Mr. DOYON asked, Whether it is the intention of the Government to allow the Indians of Caughnawaga, in the county of Laprairie, to hold an election of councillors, or an election of chiefs, in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Advancement Act; if so, when do they propose to grant them permission to do so?

Mr. DEWDNEY. A recommendation has been made to the Governor General in Council, that the Indian Advancement Act be applied to the above band of Indians,

¹²⁵ From BY THE WAY. (1889, January 16). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

¹²⁶ From Monday, 4th March, 1889. (1889). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Third Session – Sixth Parliament*. Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co.

and that an election of the councillors under the provisions of that Act be held on 26th March next.

“The election of councillors”¹²⁷ (March, 1889)

Owing to the chief system being abolished in Caughnawaga, under the Indian advancement act, the election of councillors will take place at the reserves to-morrow. In the village the two rival candidates are Louis Jocks and Louis Jackson. The three present chiefs, Thomas Jocks, Michel Montour and Louis Beauvais, will become honorary chiefs, as they were elected for life.

“Another person shall be elected in your place”¹²⁸ (March, 1890)

Mr. DOYON asked, Whether the Government in January last, instructed the Indian Agent on the Caughnawaga Reserve to write to certain members of the Council of that Reserve the following letter:- “I have the honor to inform you that there will be a meeting of the Council of the Indian Reserve of Caughnawaga, on Monday, 27th January instant, at 11 a.m., for the general business of the tribe, at which you are requested to attend, and that I am instructed by the Department to notify you that, unless you attend the meetings of the Council of the reserve, so as to conduct the affairs of the tribe, a recommendation will be made advising your removal from your position as a member of the Council, and another person shall be elected in your place. (Signed) A. BROSSEAU, *Indian Agent*.” If so, for what reason, and at whose suggestion or recommendation? Is it the intention of the Government to execute the threat, and what are their reasons for so acting?

Mr. DEWDNEY. The Department of Indian Affairs instructed its agent at Caughnawaga to inform certain members of the council of the band to the effect of the letter addressed to such members by the Indian agent. The suggestion or recommendation was made on the report of the Indian agent, who stated that the members in question would not attend the council meetings, or, if they did, that they left without taking any part in the proceedings, thus rendering the meetings of the council inoperative. A recommendation will be made to the Honorable the Privy Council that the obstructive members of the council be deposed from their position and an election of other parties in their places be held.

¹²⁷ From Elections at Caughnawaga. (1889, March 25). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

¹²⁸ From Wednesday, 12th March, 1890. (1890). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Fourth Session – Sixth Parliament*. Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin.

“To extend the powers of the council”¹²⁹ (March, 1890)

Mr. DOYON (Translation) moved the second reading of Bill (No. 42) to amend chapter 44 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, entitled: “The Indian Advancement Act.” He said: [...] “The Indian Advancement Act,” was applied a year ago to the Caughnawaga Reserve. That Act provides that the Indians to whom it shall apply shall have the right to elect councillors. Section 10 of this Act states the objects as to which the council shall have the right to pass by-laws, but it also provides that these by-laws shall be binding only when sanctioned by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. This is the section I wish to amend.

The object of the amendment I propose is to extend the powers of the council of the Caughnawaga Reserve, by providing that the by-laws of the council shall be valid without requiring the sanction of the Superintendent General. I am seeking to introduce this amendment to the Act in respect to the Caughnawaga Reserve only, because I know the Indians on this reserve more particularly, and I think they are more advanced than a good many other Indians. Indeed, the neighborhood of the towns of Lachine and Montreal with which they have daily intercourse has greatly tended to their rapid advancement; their daily relations with the inhabitants of the Counties of Laprairie and Chateauguy have also greatly tended to their advancement.

There are to be found among the inhabitants of the reserve well-educated people. There are doctors, lawyers, law students, and they generally, a good many of them, speak the French language and the English language as fluently as their own language. There are even some who have taken to farming, and a good many are farming with the implements used by the farmers of the adjacent counties.

The report of the hon. the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs mentions the fact that this Indian tribe is far advanced and supports my statement in reference to their farming with improved implements. I quote from the report for 1889 the following paragraph:-

“The Iroquois of the adjoining County of Laprairie experienced also a year of prosperity, but the crops of 1888 were, with the exception of oats and hay, inferior in their yield to those of the preceding season. The increase in the number of new houses and barns and in their supply of farming implements and cattle indicates healthy progress. They own among them as many as twenty threshing machines.”

This is, among others, one reason that goes to show that these Indians are comparatively more advanced than a good many other tribes. [...] In fact, they were granted by an Act of Parliament, in 1885, the right to vote for a member of the House of Commons, and they were recognized as capable, like any other citizens of this country, to manage the public affairs. [...] I ask whether, after that, it would be fair to maintain the restriction contained in this section 10 of the Indian Advancement Act which reserves to the Superintendent General the right to decide whether the by-

¹²⁹ From Monday, 31st March, 1890. (1890). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Fourth Session – Sixth Parliament*. Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin.

laws passed by the Indians through their council shall become law or not. [...] I think I am warranted in saying that the management of local affairs requires less capacity and knowledge than the management of public affairs. And I take it for granted that it requires less skill for one to manage his own cooking than to manage that of the whole country. [...]

One must remember that the powers granted to this council with respect to the objects as to which they have a right to pass by-laws, are not as extended as those which are granted to our ordinary municipal councils. Under the present system, it is the agent who, so to speak, exclusively manages the affairs of the reserve, for I think the Department interferes only on the advice of the agent, and, if I am not mistaken, I believe the Superintendent General never went there once in order to ascertain for himself how the affairs of the reserve were managed.

I have here the resolutions which were passed a year ago by the council of the Indians, and a whole year's experience must be sufficient to enable use to judge whether these people are fit to properly manage their own affairs. [...] The first thing the council did, as soon as it was properly organized, was to ask for the appointment of a health committee. Here is the resolution:-

“Resolved, no one dissenting, that Dr. Patton, Michel Delisle and Joseph Barnes, be appointed to take charge of the sanitary affairs of the reserve, as sanctioned at the last sitting of the council held on 23rd April last.” [...]

This is a matter the Department never thought of, and yet the Caughnawaga Indians, up to last year, were exposed, like any other citizens, to contagious diseases. The House must remember that in 1885, when an epidemic of smallpox was raging in Montreal, several Caughnawaga Indians died of that disease. There was then no council, and had there been one it would not have prevented them from dying. But, by order of the constable and by order of the Government, children and adults were buried in the fields near the residence of their relatives. I, myself, saw the places where these people were buried, and the corpses are there still, enclosed with fences, in the hearts of the pastures. I think that, had the Caughnawaga council existed at that time, they would not have allowed that members of their tribe should be buried in the fields, for there was there, as everywhere else, a graveyard; and I am not aware that in any other parish in the Province, people who died of this disease or other contagious diseases, were buried in the fields.

I know, as a matter of fact, that their being compelled to come to the Government, for the approval of by-laws passed by the council, is the cause of delays that are detrimental to the good management of the affairs of the reserve. Thus I find that on 3rd May the council passed a resolution asking for the appointment of a turnpike man, his predecessor having gone away. This resolution was passed at the time when the animals are generally sent into pastures. This toll-gate is situated over the common which intervenes between it and the quarries. Well, the answer of the Government did not come but a month later. The council also passed resolutions asking for the erection of fences to enclose the reserve. Answers were very slow in coming. I do not say that that is owing to the bad administration of the Government; it is rather because the agent was compelled to draw up the resolutions, and to

forward them here, in order that the Department might consider them previous to their being carried out. The council passed another resolution, asking for the removal of the organist of the Catholic church, and the Department answered, a month afterwards, that they allowed the removal, and authorized them to deduct a month's salary, because the answer had been delayed a month's time.

They also passed a resolution recommending a man named Murray as the measurer of stones; the Department would not allow the appointment. Mr. Murray was formerly chief of the tribe, and the present measurer of stones on the reserve is also a policeman; and, moreover, he is a mulatto. Were there no other reason than patronizing a member of the tribe, I think the Government ought to have complied with the request of the council, even had that resolution only been passed by way of a petition.

The council also appointed special constables, and the Government sanctioned the resolution passed to that effect. Subsequently, on 27th September the council passed a resolution recommending the removal of Mr. Moïse Lefort, as policeman, and the appointment in his stead, with a reduction of \$200 in salary, of Mr. Louis Beauvais, a former Indian chief, an Indian who had held a chieftainship during thirty-four years, and the same party who had been removed as organist. That is to say, Mr. Lefort received a salary of \$365 a year, and Mr. Beauvais was willing to do the same service for \$165. The Department would not approve of this resolution; not only did they not approve of it, but instead of complying with the wishes of the council, who were unanimous in asking for the removal of Moïse Lefort – for the six councillors were unanimous in requesting he should be replaced; some were recommending Mr. Beauvais and some Mr. Stacey; but the whole six wanted another man at a reduction of about \$200 in the salary – the Government, I say, not only would approve of the resolution, but they also increased the salary of the policeman. By referring to the report of the Indian Department for 1888, I find that the salary of Mr. Moïse Lefort as policeman, at Caughnawaga, last year, was \$233 and that he was allowed an extra sum of \$19 for clothing. And in the report for 1889, I find that his salary has been increased to \$396 and that he has been allowed for clothing a sum of \$54.75. So that it can be seen that the Department not only would not yield to the wishes of the council by approving the appointment of another policeman who would have cost a good deal less, but that they also increased the salary of Mr. Lefort. [...] This same policeman has been in Caughnawaga for more than ten years. Ten years ago, the Indians were not recognized as voters in the country, and I think they must have been less civilized than they are now. Last year, the council appointed two additional policemen to assist in the preservation of order on the reserve. [...]

What reason did the Department allege for not allowing the replacement of Mr. Lefort? I think the answer of the Superintendent General concluded by saying: "So long as Mr. Lefort shall discharge his duties as he now does, the Government shall not deem it expedient to have him replaced." Well, this policeman holds two offices at the same time. He is both a policeman and a measurer of stones; so that he sells his time twice to the tribe, and he receives two salaries, although he cannot possibly be in two places at the same time.

I think this is a serious evil. Moreover, I cannot well see how the hon. the Minister of the Interior can reconcile his answer to the council by which he declines to allow the replacing of Mr. Lefort, by an Indian, with the following statement contained in his report for 1889, pages 13 and 14:

“The presence on an Indian reserve of an officer of the law cannot but have a good moral effect on an Indian band generally, and by one of the members of the band filling that position the detection of crime will, it is considered, be rendered more certain, and proof of guilt will be more easily obtained than it could be were a white man to hold the office; besides, the expense is very much lessened by employing Indians as police.” [...]

Quite the contrary was done. [...] The Department, by refusing to allow the resolution of the council, caused serious dissatisfaction among the tribe. Since the Department would not approve of the last resolution – that is since the 27th September – certain councillors would no more attend the sittings of the council; if they ever went there it was for the sole purpose of enquiring whether the resolution passed at the last sitting had been approved of or not. This has been a source of difficulty, and I might say that the affairs of the reserve have been neglected.

If I am to judge by the report of the hon. the Superintendent General, unfortunate reports were made to the Department. I quote again the following from the report for 1889:-

“The Indian Advancement Act was last year applied by order of Your Excellency to this band, but owing to the obstructive conduct of some of the councillors, notoriously one of them who acts as their ringleader, the beneficial effects of the same upon the community, which were so hopefully looked for, have not been as yet experienced.” [...]

I do not know who can have possibly brought the hon. Minister to such a state of mind. By referring to the report of the very agent of the Indians where the Department take their information, I notice that, on page 32 of the first part, after referring to the births, the sanitary condition of the tribe and the crop, he concludes by saying:- “The Indians of this reserve are prosperous, and I can say that in general they are progressing.” So that the agent says they are progressing, and the hon. the Superintendent General says they are retrograding. I am sometimes led to presume that there might be some secret correspondence between the agent and the Department that does not appear in the report. [...] Allow me to relate a few facts [...] which will enable us to decide as to the manner in which the Government have managed the affairs of the Indians and whether the council themselves could more unwisely manage their affairs.

There is a large quarry at Caughnawaga, and the lease of it is one of the best sources of revenue for the tribe. The quarry was leased to the Indians. [...] It appears [...] that these quarries were leased without any surety being taken, and that the lessees are indebted to the amount of nearly \$4,000. [...] I think the Indians, left to themselves, would not have leased their quarry without taking some additional surety besides the word of the parties who leased it.

Here is another fact. In 1882, the Government had the Caughnawaga reserve surveyed. The survey lasted from 1882 to 1888. The work was given to a man named Walbank. [...] The Department appointed him on his own recommendation. [...] According to his report, the reserve contained 12,327 acres of land, and the Government paid for the survey of that reserve out of the funds of the band, the handsome sum of \$22,250, that is to say, a sum of \$1.80 per acre. Some time ago, the hon. member for Huron enquired from the Government, as to the cost to the Government of surveys in Manitoba and the North-West, and the answer came that they cost a little over four cents per acre, including office expenses. [...] I earnestly feel that the Government was not warranted in taking so large a sum out of the funds of the band to cover the survey of that reserve. I am not an expert in surveys, but all the surveyors to whom I have spoken about that matter agreed it was an enormous sum; and they would not believe it, until I showed them. [...]

All these facts show, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Department do not manage the affairs of the reserves with much care and saving, and that it would not be unwise to grant to the Caughnawaga Council the object of my request.

“Meeting some opposition”¹³⁰ (April, 1890)

The proposition to relieve the municipal council of the Indians at Caughnawaga from the control of the department at Ottawa is meeting some opposition among the tribesmen themselves. At present the Indians of the reserve elect their councillors and mayors and administer their municipal affairs, the only restriction being that to have the effect of law their decisions must be approved by the Department of Indian affairs. Mr. Doyon, M.P., supports the proposition to abolish the restriction. Many of the Indians, however, and especially those who have important property stakes in the reserve, are in favor of a continuance of the present system, and are taking steps to make their opinions known.

“What is the reason for that last provision?”¹³¹ (April, 1890)

Mr. DEWDNEY moved second reading of the Bill (No. 132) to amend the Indian Advancement Act, chapter 44 of the Revised Statutes. He said: There are three amendments proposed in this Bill. The first is to give to the Indian Council power to pass regulations relative to the size and style of the sleighs used during the winter. It has been found that they use sleighs of all sizes and descriptions, which injure the winter roads, and this is to give the council power similar to that vested in the municipalities adjoining the reserves.

The second amendment is to supplement clause 11 of the Act, by adding after the word “kind” the following:— “or who neglects or refuses, without reasonable cause,

¹³⁰ From The Caughnawaga Indians. (1890, April 12). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

¹³¹ From Friday, 18th April, 1890. (1890). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Fourth Session – Sixth Parliament*. Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin.

to attend meetings of the council when notified thereof in the manner required by this Act, or who refrains from taking part in the proceedings by at least voting when present at such a meeting, or who either himself obstructs or induces any other person to obstruct the business of any such meeting, shall, on proof of the fact to the satisfaction of the Superintendent General, be disqualified from acting as a member of the council, and shall, on being notified, cease forthwith so to act; and the vacancy occasioned thereby shall be filled in the manner hereinbefore provided.”

The third amendment is to provide a day of nomination for candidates for election as councillors.

Mr. LAURIER. What is the reason for that last provision?

Mr. DEWDNEY. It has been asked for by the Indians themselves.

Mr. MILLS (Bothwell). Is the election to be by ballot?

Mr. DEWDNEY. No; I think not.

Mr. LISTER. The Indians will hardly be satisfied with the provision giving them a nomination day, unless you go further and give them the vote by ballot. [...]

Mr. LAURIER. The first provision of the Bill seems to me an unobjectionable one. [...] But the second section is altogether objectionable. It is sought by this provision to give the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs the power to remove a councillor for certain offences, among others, for the alleged offence of drunkenness. [...] If the people in any municipality select a man as councillor, it is not fair, that he should be made the subject of removal if he does not come up to the standard of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. [...]

Mr. DOYON. (Translation.) I cannot allow this Bill to pass without a protest. I do not know what motive the hon. Minister of the Interior has for moving this amendment to the Act other than the troubles which have existed, and which still exist, on the Caughnawaga reserve, and which he sought to remedy, but the remedy was worse than the evil. [...] Since the Advancement Act was applied to the council of Caughnawaga, liquor was used as a pretext for many for many endeavors to do away with opponents who barred the way, and I think I am able to substantiate this statement.

After the election of 1887, they began by removing the measurer of stones, who had been appointed by the Government now in power, and he was removed, because, so they said, he had taken a part in the contest, but, they added, that he got drunk. Well, I think, that on the election day, not only in that county, but in many other counties as well, there were people who saw the bottom of the bottle. That man was removed for getting drunk out of duty.

Later on, the council of Caughnawaga wanted to appoint a substitute to the present policeman, and the substitute they proposed was a man named Louis Beauvais, who had been an organist in the Catholic Church. Well, in order to decline his services, they again protested that he was a drunkard. [...]

Why should the Indian Department seek to introduce a new restriction in the Act, when the majority of the Caughnawaga Indians are asking for more extended powers, that is to say, are asking that they might be allowed to manage their own

affairs; or, in other words, that what is done by their council should not require, to be valid, the sanction of the Department? [...]

Mr. DEWDNEY. I was unable to follow the hon. gentleman through his remarks and he will, therefore, have to excuse me for not answering them in detail. As to the changes proposed, there is a difference of opinion among the Indians on the reserve. I hold in my hand a petition signed by a great number of Indians asking that the powers of the Superintendent General be not taken away. [...]

Mr. BLAKE. How many signatures?

Mr. DEWDNEY. Between fifty and sixty. I understand they represent the bulk, if not almost all the property holders on the reserve.

Mr. BLAKE. The hon. member behind me says there are over 300 property holders on the reserve.

Mr. DEWDNEY. These are the principal ones. I dare say the hon. gentleman knows that there [are] a number of Indians on the reserve who have no property and are worth nothing, and at present are really running the business on the reserve. There is a strong feeling on the part of those who have lived there for years and have nice homes, large farms and valuable improvements, against others who are trying to deprive them of their rights. [...]

One of the reasons why this Bill was introduced was because the Government had refused to sanction the appointment of a certain man to a position. [...] On the strength of that action, a portion of the councillors obstructed the business of the council until the end of their term, which has lately lapsed. They have had another election, and all the six old councillors were returned again.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant.) Then the band sustained them?

Mr. DEWDNEY. Yes.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant.) And you want to override that?

Mr. DEWDNEY. No; but we want to prevent the deadlock occurring again. [...]

Mr. LAURIER¹³². [...] The hon. gentleman is exacting from the Indians what no legislature would dare exact from any municipal council of white men. If, for any cause whatever, an Indian chooses to absent himself from the council, I would have no objection that, after a certain time, he should forfeit his office. We have a provision of that kind in the Province of Quebec in regard to municipal matters. If any municipal councillor absents himself without reasonable cause for two months, he *ipso facto* forfeits his seat. But I cannot see why [...] the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs should have the power to hold a sword over the head of such a man and compel him to act according to the will of the Superintendent General.

If we look at the circumstances which caused this section to be drafted, we find that it has a reference to the case of the Indians at Caughnawaga, a certain number of whom chose to absent themselves from the meetings of the council because the by-laws they had passed had not been sanctioned by the Superintendent General. It is known that the Indians passed a by-law to appoint a new constable, thereby making a saving of \$150 a year, and the Superintendent General, because an agent-

¹³² From this point on, I have inserted an extract from the continuation of the debate, which happened on April 28, 1890.

Mr. DEWDNEY. I will agree to the withdrawal of that clause.

“Restrictions which no one would dare apply”¹³³ (April, 1890)

Sir JOHN THOMPSON moved the House into committee on an Act to amend the Interpretation Act. The bill was passed through committee and read a third time.

Mr. BLAKE argued that some of the provisions of the bill set up for the government of the Indians made restrictions which no one would dare apply to members of Parliament. He cited making it compulsory for the Indian to vote. Then there were charges of dishonesty and malfeasance in office, as well as preventing an Indian to be a councillor who was a habitual drunkard. The Minister was aware that such a charge had been already laid against a certain Indian, and when investigated it turned out to be untrue.

Mr. DOYON spoke in French, opposing the bill.

Mr. DEWDNEY admitted that there was a change of opinion among the Indians of Caughnawaga in regard to the bill, but he read a petition signed by from fifty to sixty, including the leading property-holders of Caughnawaga, favourable to the amendments which he proposed making. He expected that he would have secured the support of Mr. Blake to this bill, who evidently favoured some of the amendments which were proposed in 1884, since he (Mr. Blake) asked then why not extend these provisions to the whites.

Mr. PATERSON (Brant) said the Act was retrograde in its action, taking away from the Indians and placing larger powers in the hands of the Superintendent-General. He argued that the operations of the Indian Council should be left in their own hands, the same as other municipal councils.

Mr. MILLS objected to the arbitrary powers put in the hands of the Superintendent-General, and the limitation instead of the extension, as it should be, of the self-governing powers of the Indians as far as municipal affairs were concerned.

“To discuss the desired abolition”¹³⁴ (October, 1890)

The chiefs of the Caughnawaga Indians have decided to participate in the meeting of Indians to be held at St. Regis in the near future to discuss the desired abolition of the councils and a return to the government by chiefs. The tribes to be represented will be the Six Nations, the Oneidas, the Tuscaroras, the Grand Rivers, the Caughnawagas, the Okas and the Metis.

¹³³ From DOMINION PARLIAMENT. (1890, April 19). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 1.

¹³⁴ From BY THE WAY. (1890, October 30). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

“So as to keep him away from the council”¹³⁵ (April, 1891)

The excitement among the Indians of Caughnawaga over the liquor prosecutions has not as yet subsided. One side has been having the members of the other arrested on the charge of selling liquor. Now the other side is about to adopt the same tactics. Yesterday afternoon the GAZETTE reporter met Chief Jocks, the first mayor of Caughnawaga under the present municipal system. He was asked the reason of the trouble among the Indians, when he replied as follows:-

The Liberals at home (Caughnawaga) prosecuted some of the Conservative Indians there for alleged selling of liquor to Indians, and obtained convictions against two a fortnight ago. One of these was against Chief Montour. Since then the Liberals have again had Chief Montour arrested on a similar charge. There is going to be another meeting on May 1 for the election of chief councilor and the Conservative candidate, who is Chief Montour, will in all probability be elected. The Liberals have publicly threatened to have him again arrested on that day so as to keep him away from the council. At the same time the Indian Liberals state that if the Indian agent does not hold the meeting the Liberal councilors will prevent a quorum being at any subsequent meeting during the years. There has been great excitement over the arrests. The second arrest of Chief Montour was made on the deposition of Big John, as the result of something he heard during the first trial. The Indian friends of Chief Montour claim that two can play at the game of arrests. A deposition has been made against Big John. A number of other Liberals are to be arrested shortly. Several of the more respectable among the Liberals are thoroughly disgusted with the persecution of Chief Montour.

“An indecent effigy”¹³⁶ (April, 1892)

A curious case will come before judge Desnoyers to-morrow, in which over forty Indian witnesses have been summoned. During the recent elections at Caughnawaga an indecent effigy of Mr. Michel Montour was exposed, and brought him into derision. Mr. Montour swore out warrants, under the vagrancy act, against Ignace Jacob, Charles Williams, John Martin, Michael Morris and Louis Belleieuille, all residents of the village, as perpetrators of the act, and had them arrested.

“Not very active this year”¹³⁷ (March, 1895)

The politicians at Caughnawaga are not very active this year, as, in five sections of the six into which the Reserve is divided, the councillors were elected by acclamation. The nominations took place on Thursday, in the presence of Mr. Alexander Brosseau, the Indian Agent.

¹³⁵ From Caughnawaga Aroused. (1891, April 29). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

¹³⁶ From Over Forty Witnesses Summoned. (1892, April 5). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

¹³⁷ From Caughnawaga Elections. (1895, March 21). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

The results are as follow:- Section 1, M. Daillebout, re-elected; Section 2, Angus Sam; Section 3, Michel Lacombe; Section 4, Ignace Dionne, re-elected; Section 5, Thomas Deer. For the village proper, Section 6, four candidates were nominated: Big John, Dr. A. O. Patton, Louis A. Jacobs and Louis Beauvais, the last Chief Councillor. The voting, which is by open and public vote, will take place on the 26th inst.

“Seven Chiefs are chosen”¹³⁸ (January, 1898)

An election of chiefs was held in this village on Thursday last. This is the culmination of an agitation which has been in progress for the past three years to do away with the present system of government by councillors and return to the old system of elected chiefs.

There are in Caughnawaga seven bands of the Iroquois tribe of Indians, and some years ago they were placed under the provisions of the Indian Advancement Act, the reserve was surveyed and laid out into districts and councillors were elected, much in the same way as in other municipalities.

Under the former system, the members of the various bands voted together, each band electing a chief, and under the system of councillors it was found that the members of various bands who happened to be settled together were voting in the same ward for councillor. This led to disagreements and quarrels, and several petitions have been presented to the Government by the dissatisfied members of the band asking to be allowed to return to their old system.

Up to the present time no action has been taken by the Government, and the Indians finally decided to act for themselves. Notices of the meetings were duly given on three successive Sundays at the church door, and on Thursday the election took place.

Seven chiefs were elected and seven deputy chiefs. They now propose to meet and elect a head chief, and it remains to be seen what the results of this action will be. In the meantime four of the six councillors have resigned, and they took part in the election of chiefs. It is understood that the band at St. Regis has also returned to their primitive custom of elected chiefs.

“The department sees no reason”¹³⁹ (January, 1898)

The Department of Indian Affairs was advised by its agent on the 3rd inst., that certain Caughnawaga Indians proposed holding a meeting on the 6th instant for the election of chiefs according to the old custom. The agent was then informed that such proceedings would be irregular, and that any chiefs or councillors elected at the proposed meeting would not be recognized by the department and would have no authority to transact business for the band.

¹³⁸ From SEVEN CHIEFS ARE CHOSEN. (1898, January 10). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

¹³⁹ From NEWS FROM OTTAWA. (1898, January 13). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 1.

Up to 1889 the Indians of Caughnawaga had a council formed in accordance with the ancient custom of the band, but on the 5th of March of that year the Indian Advancement Act was applied. This act contains a system of municipal government for Indian reserves, and is applied to bands who are considered sufficiently advanced for its application.

From time to time certain Iroquois bands have started agitations, not merely against the application to them of an elective system of chiefs, but against the application to them of any law. They contend that they have the right to make laws for themselves, and are not amenable to the jurisdiction of Parliament. In 1895 the agitation at Caughnawaga and St. Regis, resulting then as now in an attempt to form a council in accordance with the old system, reached such a stage that the then Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs considered it advisable to visit Caughnawaga, and meet the members of the band and representatives of the St. Regis band and go fully into the subject matter of the agitation. He did so, and reported to the Governor-General-in-council that it was clear that the progressive members of the band preferred the system of municipal government afforded to them by the Indian Advancement Act to the old form of government, and that to consent to the proposal of the other Indians would be regarded by the more advanced Indians as a sanctioning of a retrograde movement. After carefully considering the question he came to the conclusion that it would not be in the interest of the Caughnawaga band to remove the Indians from the operation of the Advancement Act and allow them to return to the former system. His report was approved by the Governor-General-in-council, and the Indians were so advised.

The department sees no reason for departing from the decision come to in 1895, and will, therefore, refuse to recognize the reported action of the Indians of Caughnawaga in electing a council in accordance with the old system. The present municipal council of Caughnawaga was elected in April, 1897, for one year, so that the term of office will not expire for some months yet.

These Indians have no fund, and receive no annuities, but it has been customary for some years past to make them small grants for repairs to bridges within the reservation.

“Their new chief”¹⁴⁰ (January, 1898)

The Iroquois Indians at Caughnawaga have elected Nowitekuhonwake (Louis Two Canoe) as their new chief. That he knows the responsibility of his title, is demonstrated by the fact that he is working to secure for his tribe a renewal of the American treaty of 1873, by which his people can cross the border without paying duty on their manufactures, which consist of beads, bark, and chamois goods.

Large quantities of the goods have been seized at Malone and Fort Covington, and the owners being too poor to pay the duty the chattels were confiscated.

¹⁴⁰ From MAY VISIT THE QUEEN. (1898, January 13). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

The council of Caughnawaga claims to have corresponded with the authorities at Ottawa and Washington, but without doing anything to better the condition of affairs.

The new chief is 68 years of age, and declares that if his tribe are not treated right he will carry the story of his people's wrongs to the throne of England.

“A renewal of the American treaty of 1873”¹⁴¹ (January, 1898)

Nowitekuhonwake (Louis Two Canoe), who was recently elected chief of the Iroquois Indians at Caughnawaga, is preparing to go to England to make a personal call on Queen Victoria. His object is to secure for his tribe a renewal of the American treaty of 1873, by which his people can cross the border without paying duty on their manufactures.

There are about 2,000 Indians on the Caughnawaga reserve, and they depend entirely upon the sale of their bead, bark and chamois goods for their livelihood. Owing to the great quantity turned out the American market has been relied upon to such an extent that the tribe is now almost in poverty because of the shutting off of this market by a customs duty of no less than 60 per cent. Large quantities of the goods have been seized at Malone and Fort Covington, and the owners being too poor to pay the duty their earnings of many months have been lost to them.

In 1873 the American customs department agreed to allow the goods to be entered free, and this agreement has been in force from then until a few weeks ago, when, without an hour's warning, the customs agents at the points crossed by the salesmen from Caughnawaga seized everything in sight and gloom settled on the reserve. The council of Caughnawaga claims to have corresponded with the authorities at Ottawa and Washington, but without bettering the condition of affairs. The new chief has given his word that he will carry the story of his people's wrongs to the throne of England.

Louis Two Canoe is a remarkable character. He is 68 years old, and was born within a few yards of the spot where he now lives. His grandfather was chief of the tribe. He was the first pilot down the Ottawa river, but his life has been chiefly spent in hunting, fishing and lumbering. He is a brainy old man, and as earnest in his intention to talk to the queen as he would be in steering his craft through the treacherous rapids of a river. He is proud of his Iroquois blood, and declares that her majesty has no more loyal subjects than the members of his tribe.

“All humbug”¹⁴² (January, 1898)

According to Big John Canadien, the reported agitation among the Caughnawaga Indians seems to have been understood with more seriousness by those outside that historic village than by the Indians within it.

¹⁴¹ From TO VISIT QUEEN VICTORIA. (1898, January 19). *The Burlington Daily News*, p. 6.

¹⁴² From SAYS IT IS ALL WIND. (1898, January 14). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

When asked what he thought of the situation yesterday, Big John told the reporter that he could inform the people for him that it was all humbug.

"This is what it is," said John, as he blew energetically into the atmosphere, sending a current of air whistling through the room, to illustrate the particularly insignificant character of the movement set on foot by Mr. Nowitekunhonwake, otherwise Louis Two Canoes.

John said that only a few Indians had joined in the agitation. The meeting, for the purpose of electing a chief, was announced by a crier, who stood at the church door as the Indians were coming out from worship.

The purpose of the gathering was cried out and whoever was in favor of it was invited to attend. This assembly, John said, did not pan out as a collective one.

Meetings were held in seven different places, and as there were only two Indians at some of these meetings, one of them had no difficulty in voting himself chief, or sub-chief, and the other in voting himself into office as his assistant.

John was inclined to be amused at this procedure, and his description of the affair was worth listening to. There was also a touch of sarcasm in his voice as he referred to these elected chieftains, which reached its finest exposition when he blew into the air and said it was all humbug.

"This movement is not represented by the majority of the tribe then, John?"

To this Big John answered that there were about 1,700 Indians in Caughnawaga, and the seven meetings brought together in all about twenty-five of the tribe. Those who were following Mr. Two Canoe were agitators, and John with a probable recollection of the white people's free trade, commercial union, and unrestricted reciprocity orators of only a short time ago, added that there were agitators in all societies, and it was to be inferred from John's manner of putting it that the recalcitrant Indians, like the insouciant orators of the one time free trade, commercial union and unrestricted reciprocity party, were only mad because they were not in it as good citizens, and thought they might become famous by being bad ones.

Some day these wily Indians would seize the opportunity of harmonizing themselves with the policy of the great majority, and as the orators had done, profit by misremembering that they had ever advocated any other thing.

"Do you think Mr. Two Canoe will visit Her Majesty?" the reporter asked.

John gave a decided allegorical negative to this. In his own way, and his own words, he argued that Louis Two Canoe had taken issue with the Government. He could not, therefore, look for their assistance on the road to Queen Victoria's castle and could not get the recommendation or introduction of the big folks of the land to secure him audience; in fact, Louis Two Canoe "could not walk straight."

"How do you think he would have the chance to go straight?" queried John. "Who know him?"

John said it was well with the Indians when they got their municipal council. They wanted the council and they got it. The chiefs were in the minority, therefore they did not govern, concluded Big John Canadien.

“There are apparently some who differ”¹⁴³ (January, 1898)

There are apparently some who differ with Big John Canadienne as to the importance to be attached to the movement of the Caughnawaga Indians to elect chieftains for themselves, and to do business according to the old fashion.

It will be remembered that, according to a Despatch from Ottawa, the Department of Indian Affairs was advised by its Caughnawaga agent on the 3rd inst., that certain Indians there proposed holding a meeting for the election of chiefs according to the old custom.

The agent was then informed that such a proceeding would be irregular, and that any chiefs or councillors so elected would not be recognized by the department, and would have no authority to transact business for the band.

When Big John Canadienne was asked what he thought of the action of the tribe, he expressed the opinion that it was all humbug, and that about twenty-five Indians only, had taken part in the agitation which resulted in the election of Mr. Louis Two Canoe.

According to John, these Indians were to be considered as agitators, and their views were not shared by any appreciable number of the tribe. The emphatic manner in which John contributed this information to the reporter, prepared his mind to accept the matter as settled, and no doubt many people will be surprised to learn that subsequent developments have taken place, which seem to augur that Mr. Nowitekuhonwake, meaning Louis Two Canoe, had gathered around him a considerable number of braves, who, with himself, were willing to think that Big John really should not have said that their agitation was all humbug.

This was made manifest yesterday when a delegation from Mr. Two Canoe's party came in from Caughnawaga to wait upon *The Gazette* in order to file their reply to the statements of Big John Canadienne, and the report of the Indian Department as contained in the Ottawa despatch.

“Louis Two Canoe,” they said “has not been affected, as he does not consider John worthy of second thought. All of his statements are pure fabrications. Two Canoe terms him as shallow, and compares him with the drifting snow bird. His brother (Big John's) at the church door, as the people were coming out of worship, classed him as having no heart and devoid of all sense of manliness, not knowing which way to turn. This in itself would not amount to much only for the fact that it is his own brother, and also being a well respected member of our tribe, belonging to the leading Christian society of our church.

“It would also probably interest some to know that Big John was one of the first to not only sign his own name but also that of his children to the petition to the Government, made by (which he terms) agitators.”

Then turning to the report of the Department of Indian Affairs, the delegation filed the following answer thereto:

¹⁴³ From THEY MAKE A REPLY. (1898, January 20). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 5.

“The Department of Indian affairs has not understood this movement of electing seven chiefs according to the ancient custom. The purpose of this returning to the old custom is for benefiting the Indians of coming generations. We have found that there is no benefit in the councillors, under the Advancement Act. It has deprived us of the many advantages we used to enjoy. We find that the government of Indian affairs does not give us justice, but is influenced more by friends.

“It is true that we have no funds, for what we have is appropriated by the Indian government. The public in general knows the land we owned from the rising to the setting sun; from ocean to ocean, and yet, if we ask for funds for the benefit of our people, it is not granted without the consent of the agent and Government.

“This movement is not a revolt, nor do we wish to make laws for ourselves, as we had laws to govern us under the old system. All we wish is to be placed back in the same council that we have been taken out of, through misrepresentation nine years ago or thereabouts. When the Government proposed the Advancement Act the seven bands called a meeting, and the majority rejected the proposal, and voted for the old system. The Government was informed of the same, but a few days, and we were placed under the Advancement Act, under [the following] condition; that to give a trial of it did not mean that it was to be always.

“It is true that the superintendent general of Indian affairs visited here in 1895. He [has] seen that the majority voted [for] the old system, but one, called the Advanced Indian,, argued the point, and voted the Advancement Act, and strange to say, carried the vote against the whole population.

“The Government have repeatedly caused a general vote, and invariably the majority would vote one way, and oftentimes only two or three to oppose them. Nevertheless, they would carry the vote: Papers please copy.”

The delegation also stated that several members of the municipal council were in sympathy with the movement, headed by Mr. Two Canoe, and had tendered their resignations yesterday to the Indian agent. The names of these councillors were given as Mitchell Dibious (chief); Angus Dibious, Moses Dibious and Angus Sam.

“I would not join them”¹⁴⁴ (January, 1898)

Sir, – You will please allow me to make a few remarks in answer to Louis Two Canoe, and to reiterate what I said in an interview with your reporter, that the present agitation conducted by Two Canoe and a handful of the Caughnawagas is all humbug, pure and unadulterated. The idea of twenty-five Indians talking about repudiating me amuses the people here. The fact of these fellows taking upon themselves the authority to elect chiefs in secret, and without the authority of the Indian Department convinces me that Two Canoe and his friends are bothered with too big ideas.

¹⁴⁴ From BIG JOHN CANADIEN. (1898, January 24). THE CAUGHNAWAGAS. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 5.

I am well aware that I am considered to be no good by the agitators, all because I would not join them in their present movement. Had I joined them I would have been called the wise, great Big John, but as I am not in favor of the so-called chiefs, believe that my name (as a white man would say) is "Denis."

Mr. Editor, I wish also to inform you that I did not sign any paper, or document, in favor of having the old system, and that I was, from the first, in the present instance, against the movement. In 1895, the superintendent of Indian affairs visited the reserve to investigate and enquire into the demands of the Caughnawaga Indians, and of the St. Regis Indians. Then, as now, there was a clamor for chiefs under the old system. The parties who wanted the old system were not able to tell in what consisted the old system of chiefs and what were the laws and customs under that system. There was no election among the people here to choose between the old system of chiefs, and that of councillors under the Indian Advancement Act. But Hon. T. M. Daly, the then superintendent, told the agitators to mind each his personal business and to devote all the energy they deployed in useless agitations to the cultivation of their lands, which would make them (the agitators) rich and happy in a short time.

It is true that four councillors have resigned. Their resignation, written in type, is dated the 1eth December, 1897. Seven days after, on the 20th December, they (the four councillors) sat and met in council as councillors under the Indian Advancement Act. On the 13th instant one of the councillors who have resigned still went to Agent Brosseau at Laprairie in his official capacity of councillor. You and the public can judge for yourselves the value of the sympathy of the four ex-councillors by their conduct.

In the resignation document, the Government is advised that the Caughnawagas are so advanced that they can make their laws without the help of the Indian Agent Brosseau, and that of the Hon. Clifford Sifton, the superintendent-general of Indian affairs; I understood by that, and I am afraid the Government takes the same view, that if the councillors resign because they cannot bear the tutelage of the Government any longer, the only remedy to apply to the present clamor will be to make citizens of the Caughnawagas, to put them on the same footing as the white men in local matters. I know that our people do not want that, but these agitators are working in that direction without knowing it.

As to my brother abusing and insulting me at the church door, I am not surprised; he was too much affected by his tears and the bad advice of some of the agitators. I can only say that I am sorry for my brother being misled by Two Canoe and his clique.

I may state, in concluding that henceforth I will ignore anything that may be published by these embryo chiefs.

BIG JOHN CANADIEN.

Caughnawaga, January 22.

“We shall not relinquish our project”¹⁴⁵ (March, 1898)

At Caughnawaga, this week, there was a mass meeting, Grand Chie Frank Thives presiding. There were also present: Chief Frank Skay and Tribesmen John Standup, So Se Anenavotonkwas and Moses Stacey.

At this meeting there was read for the first time to the present Indians, the grant of gift by King Louis, made May 29, 1680, to the Indians of Caughnawaga of the land on which they now reside.

Several speeches were made, all of which were in behalf of the advantages they enjoyed under the old custom. In referring to the present condition of the Indians under the Advancement Act, one speaker said it was a mystery how a large number of Indians managed to live.

Another speaker said: “There is no doubt but what we have opposition to our desires, but let it be understood that we shall not relinquish our project even to carrying it before the Crown head of England, where the necessity of so much red tape is now in demand.”

At the present time the Indian settlement is being run by seven chiefs and seven sub-chiefs. The whole of the old council including the Mayor, has resigned as will be seen by the following declaration which was signed by Mayor Dibioux and the majority of councillors:

We, the undersigned counsellors [sic.], have concluded to resign our office of councillors of Caughnawaga. We therefore take our former system of electing chiefs (that of seven chiefs) and tender our resignation as councillors under the Indian Advancement Act, having been elected under the direction of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

We have been elected by our tribe for the purpose of advancing our cause and for the benefit of the coming generation of our Indians, and also that we might be heard in the office of the Government when we state what is demanded for our cause.

For the few years that we have been under the Indian Advancement Act we have not been able to accomplish anything; we have no power to do according to the resolution that we pass, unless the Superintendent General or Indian agent consents to the same. The Superintendent General and Indian agent do not know what the real wishes are, and what would benefit the Indians.

We therefore take up our forefathers’ system of electing chiefs according to the seven bands in our tribe. Also it has been proven beyond a doubt that the system of the Indian Advancement Act was made without our consent. It has been ten years or thereabouts since this Indian Advancement Act was first proposed. A meeting of the seven bands of our tribe was held: the majority voted the old system, and rejected the proposed Indian Advancement Act. Nevertheless this new system was forced upon us.

(Signed)

¹⁴⁵ From FOR THEIR OLD CUSTOMS. (1898, March 4). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 8.

MITCHELL DIBIOUX.
Chief Councillor.
ANGUS DIBIOUX,
MOSES DIBIOUX,
ANGUS SAM.
Councillors.

During the present month the Indians intend making an active canvass among the several members of Parliament for the purpose of securing the sympathy and support of the latter. The Caughnawaga Indians will be assisted in their appeals by delegates from the tribes at St. Bridges and at Oka.

“Supported by other tribes”¹⁴⁶ (March, 1898)

The Indians at Caughnawaga are being supported by other tribes throughout the Dominion in their appeal to the Government to allow them to revert to the ancient custom of electing their chiefs, instead of being governed by councillors.

The present chief has received a letter from the Indian tribe at St. Regis, P.Q., to the effect that they intend sending a council of chiefs as a deputation to Ottawa to lay their grievances before the members of the House, and they advise the Indians of the Lake of Two Mountains, Iroquois, and those at Caughnawaga to do the same.

There are, however, several of the tribe at the latter place who believe in being ruled by councillors and for this purpose six councillors will be nominated on the 19th inst., for municipal honors. It is for this reason that the braves who wished to revert to the ancient customs are making such strenuous efforts to obtain Government aid.

“The conference was a lengthy one”¹⁴⁷ (July, 1898)

J. A. J. McKenna, of the Indian Department, is at Caughnawaga, having a conference with the Indians, who have declared almost unanimously for returning to the old tribal custom of electing chiefs. Deputy Inspector Chitty accompanied Mr. McKenna. They represented Mr. Sifton. W. J. White represented the chiefs of the village.

A large tent was erected on the grounds for the purpose of the conference. The conference was a lengthy one. The chiefs fully explained the reasons that actuated them in asking for a change, and Mr. McKenna showed what would be necessary before a return to the old method could be done.

It will be necessary to abrogate the councillor system, which was started by Order in Council in 1885, under the Indian Advancement Act.

A recent poll of the tribe gave 170 for and 20 against the old system.

¹⁴⁶ From HAD AN AXE TO GRIND. (1898, March 10). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ From INDIANS WANT TRIBAL SYSTEM. (1898, July 6). *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 6.

“The government will not accede”¹⁴⁸ (July, 1898)

The Indian department has made known its decision in the question of a return to the old system of chiefs, and the superintendent-general of Indian affairs has advised the Indian agent here [in Caughnawaga], Mr. A. Brosseau, that the government will not accede to the request of those Indians who, instead of trying to progress, want to retrograde, but will maintain the present system under the Indian Advancement Act, as being more in the interest of Indians. The decision is final and irrevocable. The expenses of the Indian delegation to Ottawa will not be paid unless consented to by the superintendent. In the event of Indians not electing councillors, the government empowers the Indian agent to act alone without councillors, until the agitators understand that the government is determined to maintain the present system.

“The old grievance”¹⁴⁹ (September, 1899)

An Indian deputation, consisting of Chief Angus, Joseph Thompson, Lawrence Jocks and Clara Laurin Pike, waited on His Excellency the Governor-General this morning and laid before him the old grievance which the Caughnawaga and St. Regis Indians have been complaining about for years, that is, that they want to return to their old tribal organization and method of electing chiefs instead of being brought under the Indian Government Act.

¹⁴⁸ From WANT BIG CHIEFS. (1898, July 29). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁹ From NEW FROM OTTAWA. (1899, September 29). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.

Exhibitions and Appearances

Two Iroquois in Paris¹⁵⁰ (August, 1867)

It is not every day that one sees Iroquois. I believe that none of those savages have been to Paris since Louis XIV.'s reign, when the governor of New France succeeded, either by trick or treachery, in capturing some of their chiefs, whom he dispatched to the Court of the Grand Monarque.

Be it as it may, Laurent Teokhasion and James Tehatié, the two red-skinned tourists who are now enlivening the capital of France, belong to the Iroquois tribe, established for centuries at Sault St. Louis, near Montreal.

The eldest, Laurent, is a most striking type of the Canadian savage; his complexion is deeply bronzed; his cheek-bones project amazingly; his small eyes, incessantly rolling in their orbits, shine like carbuncles. As to his companion, the more you look at him, the more you feel inclined to question his nationality. However, there is no doubt that he was born in an Iroquois's hut; but in his native land it is not always the husband of his mother that a child should call papa. Albeit, the blue eyes of James belie the matrimonial alliance.

Like almost all the savages of their tribe, Teokhasion and Tehatié are very intelligent; they feel exceedingly pleased in visiting Paris and its marvels, and they speak about them in the highest terms. But methinks it would be a mistake to take them as very artless beings; they are less savage than they look. More experienced than Choctaws, they have seen the great American cities before jumping amidst the splendours of Paris, and it is but natural they should not feel the naïve raptures of Châteaubriand's hero. This pair of Iroquois read and write perfectly well, and speak fluently English and French, though Iroquois is their favourite idiom. Listen! A French lady who followed their footsteps for a good half-hour says that the Iroquois is the tongue they speak the best. [...]

But to our Iroquois. You would be sadly deceived were you to enter into conversation with them, in the hope of finding something approaching the poetical instincts and the sonorous sentences used in time of yore among the countrymen of Atala. Alas! both our Iroquois are utilitarian, as positive, as Manchester people. Their principal – I would say their only – care is to dispose at good terms of their small stock of glass beads and grices.

The jury of the tenth class of the Universal Exhibition have acutely regretted that the Iroquois are no longer in the habit of tattooing themselves, for it would have been a golden opportunity for calling to the remembrance of forgetful Europe that *maquillage*, as well as tobacco and potatoes, came from their native country.

¹⁵⁰ From ECHOES FROM THE CONTINENT. (1867, August 1). *The London Standard*, p. 5.

“Lacrosse at Windsor”¹⁵¹ (July, 1876)

By one of those Royal commands which are interpreted as priceless favours, the Iroquois Indian team of “Lacrosse” players and [a] representative team of Canadian gentlemen selected from the Dominion clubs had the honor of playing the game in which they are, one and all, remarkably skilled before Her Majesty the Queen, yesterday afternoon, on the lawn below the slopes of Windsor Castle. The [...] thirteen Iroquois first had the honour of being presented to the Queen by General Ponsoby and the chief, who is familiarly called Big John, advanced respectfully to the side of the carriage and read from a curiously illuminated scroll of beech bark, mounted on blue silk, with a deep fringe and with rosettes of blue ribbon, a genuine Indian address. [...] Big John did not stint a moment of time in reading this singular address, a translation of which here follows:-

To our great and good mother Queen Victoria across the big water, we the Iroquois Indians of Caughnawaga, near the city of Montreal, at the head of the mighty rapids of Lachine; send you our true love and loyalty. We hope to see you some day in this great land which once belonged only to the Indians, but we hope you will come and look upon us playing our own great game of Lacrosse in England against the pale-faced young men of Canada, who now play our game like us, and sometimes beat us in fair play.

But the English were always brave people, and the Indians love and trust them. When the English soldier dies, he dies firm like an Indian. He makes no cry. Good Queen, our forefathers were once one people, and became the Six Nations. They were first in war, first in eloquence, first in loyal love to the English. Our warriors carried victory in the warpath from Quebec to the Carolinas, and from the prairies of the West to the forests of Maine. They feared no foe – they loved the war-path as a bird loves the air. The war-whoop was a sweet sound. They fought every enemy and exterminated many tribes, and made the foes of their people scatter like leaves in the wood before the wild. At the Council-fire, at the chase, on the war path, in the playing-field, the Iroquois were the first.

Great Queen, our young men used to play La Crosse on the prairies and at the forts before your brave soldiers. When other tribes were against the English the Iroquois were always true. When death with torture came the Iroquois still kept true. When Pontiac, the great head chief, planned to kill your brave soldiers and asked the Iroquois to join, our forefathers kicked the war-belt of wampum and would not go, because they and the English were good friends. On the 4th of June, 1763, the birthday of our great father King George, at Fort Michillimackinac, your brave soldiers of the 55th and 80th Regiments were killed by Indians. A great game of La Crosse was played to put them off their guard, and when the ball was thrown inside the fort the Indians ran in as if for the ball, and killed your soldiers. Our forefathers, the Iroquois, did not join in this.

¹⁵¹ From LACROSSE AT WINDSOR. (1876, July 30). *The Daily British Colonist*, p. 1.

It is the same game which the pale faces of Canada have adopted from us, and which we want your people to see; see it because we played it before the Prince of Wales and Prince Arthur. Will you, great and good Queen, hear the petition of your Indian children? God save the Queen!

The “pale faces,” as they are called in this loyal address of the Iroquois, were next presented, and then the game began. [...] A spirited goal was played and won by the whites. [...] When the goal had been won, just as six o’clock was striking from St. George’s Chapel, the Iroquois chief slowly advanced to the Queen with a beautiful basket of Indian grass, which Her Majesty took very graciously from his hands. Then [...] these Iroquois carried themselves with a forest manliness very pleasing to behold, as each in turn, bowing at the side of the Royal chaise, received from the Queen’s hand a photographic portrait of Her Majesty, in what is generally known as cabinet size. After the red men had passed by, in true Indian file, their white antagonists in the friendly game likewise had the honour each of receiving from Her Majesty’s hands the same gift; and it should be mentioned that the Queen had written her name on each portrait.

“An immense number of spectators”¹⁵² (September, 1883)

The Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition of the Caughnawaga Indians was opened on the reserve to-day, and was attended by an immense number of spectators from this city as well as from rural districts. The exhibits in all departments were very fine, and would do credit to any part of Canada. The Indian curiosities were remarkable for the taste displayed in the work upon them.

“An epoch in the history of the Indians of Canada”¹⁵³ (September, 1883)

An epoch in the history of the Indians of Canada, it is safe to say, is brightly marked in the “Grand Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, open only to Indians throughout the Dominion,” which is being held at the Caughnawaga Reserve. Yesterday the exhibition was opened to the public, but the formal opening takes place at two o’clock this afternoon. That event is to be signalized by a salute from the cannon presented to the Caughnawaga Indians by His Majesty George the Third. Excellent facilities are provided the citizens of Montreal to reach the exhibition, the commodious steamer “Dagmar” connecting with the Grand Trunk trains at Lachine. In getting back, however, when the last boat leaves visitors must be on time, or they may get left, as two pressmen were last evening, one of whom claims to have discounted Hanlan and Courtney’s feats by the energy he put into a pair of oars assisting a stalwart ferryman to propel a canoe across against the stream, to catch the train.

¹⁵² From CANADIAN NEWS. (1883, September 29). *The Ottawa Citizen*, p. 1.

¹⁵³ From THE INDIAN EXHIBITION. (1883, September 29). *The Montreal Daily Witness*, p. 3.

THRUSTING OUT THE SHARPERS

Just outside the entrance to the grounds our reporter met with the first incident worth noting, which was the seizure by the Dominion police of the traps, moneys and persons of a gang of gamblers, who had just entered upon a lucrative business of swindling the people. A detachment of these officers is in attendance to preserve order, and a fine looking squad of men they are. Last night the sharpers were released from custody, and returned to the city rejoicing that their liberty was not forfeited with the implements of their craft.

THE AGRICULTURAL TENT

Upon entering the agricultural tent the first [item] to be noticed as you turn to the right is a display of as fine potatoes, of varied sort, as the best exhibition in the land can boast. In fact, the judges confessed themselves baffled in awarding the premiums, and it will not be surprising if several first prizes were requisite to an equitable decision. While one lot would take the eye for ponderosity of its units, another would claim admiration for rotundity and clearness of texture suggestive of mealiness after emerging from the pot. Beans were shown in every variety and of best quality, and by the number of lots they seem to be a specialty with the Indians. There was a good deal of buckwheat, of well developed grain, also peas, but the few samples of oats shown were very light. Some large pumpkins and beets were laid out, and a few cucumbers of fine growth and appearance. One or two bags of hayseed seemed to be well cleaned and of a good quality. In apples one basket in particular was magnificent, as a sample to be seen at this office can testify, and the woman who owned it said she had thirteen trees bearing that gigantic variety. There were thirteen or fourteen other lots, some of them excellent and others apparently good keepers and first-rate fruit. One or two baskets showed the effects of handling too much for exhibition purposes. Perhaps the finest display was in Indian corn – white, yellow, mottled and variegated, in numerous assortment and better than the average to be found in our market stalls. Sweet corn also was represented by finely developed ears, but in few lots. Preserved fruits, home-made wine and cider, maple syrup and three samples of large and luscious grapes occupied a good share of table. Of bread there was a creditable display in plain loaf, bakers' and home made, including a fine sample raised with salt and water and no yeast, and there were a few lots of fancy cake, one or two decorated tastily in confectionery. A good deal of butter was shown, much of it of excellent color and apparently good body and flavor.

NATIVE HANDICRAFT AND ART

Before leaving this tent a variety of native handiwork demands much of the visitor's attention. Lacrosse and snow shoe men have their enthusiasm fully evoked by a brilliant display of implements for their exercises, substantial and pretty. Lacrosse sticks topped with hand-pieces of velvet and buckskin and bedizened with ribbons seem too aesthetic, particularly for Philistine rough players, but they are none the less strong and durable for their attractiveness to eye and hand, the very best wood and netting being used. Two miniature Indian houses, contributed by "all" as the label tells, at once arrest observation – one a bark and the other a log cabin. The first one has an Indian and his wife in well-executed effigy seated at work by the

door, while a bear is tethered at each corner. It is embellished by a sketch of Zacharie Vincent de Lario Lin, a Huron chief of Lorette, executed by himself, as were also two painted portraits shown on the same stand. A remarkable deal of expression is thrown into the features, which is more strikingly manifest by a rather crude execution of the other parts of the pictures, the background scenery of the principal one being very rough-hewn, so to speak. Having met the artists and subject on the grounds, after seeing the pictures, our reporter at once recognized him by his portraits, although the gorgeous apparel of the latter was substituted by very ordinary raiment of civilization. Baskets, moccasins, Indian cradles, and a carving of an animal's head, which was probably to adorn the prow of a canoe, were also to be seen here. Art of a meritorious and promising order was exhibited in three pictures by Mlle. Mariame Laronde, of Academie N.D. des Anges, St. Laurent: "St. Mary's Church, Waltham, Mass.," "Windermere Lake," and "Clarens," being the subjects. Another artistic production, not showing its author's name, was a souvenir of departed parents, and was well done in free hand color drawing.

A BABY SHOW, POULTRY AND DOMESTIC ART

Outside the next tent there were many well-dressed matrons, with infants in gaudy and often tasteful attire mounted upon the peculiar cradles of the race. A ticket upon the drapery of one cherub marked "first prize" revealed that a baby show formed part of the exhibition. The winner was a burly cherub of two months, which weighed ten pounds at birth and has made excellent progress since.

Before entering the tent, which is devoted to female industry, there are the poultry exhibits, close by, to see – white turkeys, geese, ducks and fowl, excellent all in their kind, so far as size and plumpness are concerned, at all events.

Within the canvas of the department above mentioned the reporter quails at the task involved in anything like an intelligent description, and can only give a general notice, with special mention of a few articles brought particularly to his notice. There are quilts, and dresses, and robes, and petticoats and domestic drapery of many sorts, in wool and silk and other fabric, and a high degree of skill and taste was lavished upon many of the articles. Then there was the beadwork – in cushions and stands, candlesticks and brackets, mirror and mantel mountings, cape and moccasins, wall pockets and toilet cases – in most ornate and dazzling array, and forming a rich source of Indian goods from which to select presents for friends across seas or anywhere, or material to add to treasuries of curios in our own land. Two fine Indian costumes are hung up in one corner. The Princess Louise, in tinted presentiment, looks down amiably upon a display from a beautifully beaded frame, and the women smile pleasantly as they point up to her. A healthy and intelligent looking girl of ten is indicated to our reporter as the maker of a handsome toilet cover in fine needle work. The wife of Sam, brother of the valiant "Big John," shows with delight a silk dress she made from material bought by her husband when on the recent lacrosse tour in England, and it has certainly lost nothing in the making. Celia Flints – at least that is the name phonetically – a sister of "Big John," is a large exhibitor of beautiful bead work. In that line among the nicest pieces are a toy parlor set by Joe Williams' wife, and a treadmill, and the most artistic and best designed is

a cottage, the effect of which is not improved by the disproportionately sized tenants and piano that it contains. A quilt is grotesquely inscribed in an admixture of capitals and small letters that would put a proof reader into a fit – “Kanawake Sex Tenper 28 1883 Nenetonkie Rentwation Thennie.”

A beautiful work of art is shown in this tent, being a picture entitled, “Le Chevalier des Demoiselles,” by Delle Edwidge Plante, of the Pensionnate de Villa Kuna, Lachine. The child’s features and drapery are exquisitely shaded, and the execution bold and free, while the mock-martial expression as she draws her little sabre is well marked. Mary Lucy Maffre has a first-prize ticket attached to a specimen of her penmanship, very fair for a child. Emily S. Martin exhibits a manuscript book of several original poems, revealing rhythm, cadence and devotion that would not violate the proprieties of the average hymnal. Here is the opening verse of the first poem—

The moon that now is shining, in skies so blue and bright,
Shone ages since on shepherds, who watched their flocks by night.
There was no sound upon the earth, the azure air was still,
The sheep in quiet clusters lay upon the grassy hill.

MISCELLANEOUS JOTTINGS

A French window frame and sashes made by an Indian who never served apprenticeship to carpentry is shown in the agricultural tent, and admired by visitors. Specimens of stone cutting are shown on the grounds, and a barrel of potash is one of the exhibits inside.

Horses, cattle, vehicles and implements of husbandry are left for subsequent reports. There are a good many entries in these lines, and the whole number of entries for the exhibition is nearly six hundred.

The faces of men, women and children – who are, as a rule, well dressed – are lit up with joy and enthusiasm over the novel event in their history; and the exhibition promises to have excellent and lasting results upon the future of the Indians in Canada. Mr. W. McLea Walbank, Honorary President and head of the Executive of the Exhibition, cannot be too richly mentioned for the active interest he has taken in the matter from the first. He was untiringly active on the grounds all day yesterday, not even allowing himself time for refreshment from six in the morning till six in the evening. Leading citizens in Montreal are giving practical aid to the enterprise, which is an assured success. Now that the existence of the Exhibition and its attractive features are pretty generally known, as well as its easy access, nothing but fine weather should be required to induce a great throng to the grounds to-day.

AMUSEMENTS

Yesterday’s programme of amusements comprised – log rolling in the water; tug of war, Caughnawaga against all other Indians, won by the former in three straight; war and snake dances, which many could not see for the crowd that filled the tent where they took place; Indian ponies’ races, music and organ recitals, the Onondaga Indian band in showy uniform playing excellently throughout the day. Last night there was a promenade concert, and this afternoon there will be canoe races, egg and sack races, a champion lacrosse match between the Royal

Caughnawagas and the Cornwall Indians, formal opening ceremonies, speeches and other attractions.

“The first of the kind ever held in Canada”¹⁵⁴ (September, 1883)

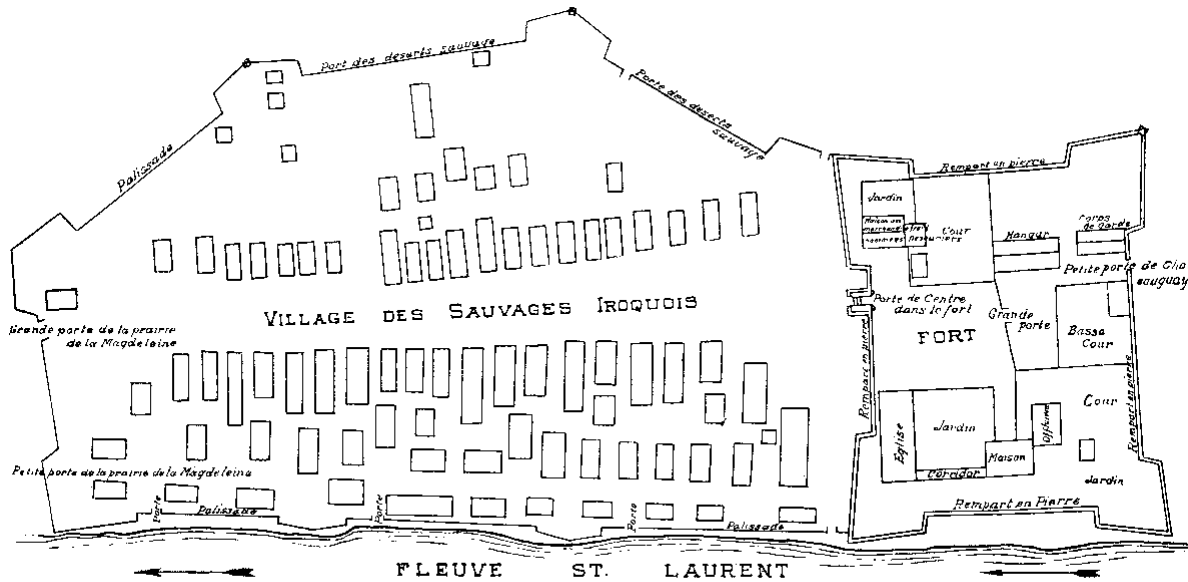
The Indian Exhibition at Caughnawaga, probably the first of the kind ever held in Canada, opened yesterday morning and attracted large crowds of people despite the threatening weather. Since the scheme was taken up, the committee have been working night and day, and when the hour arrived for opening the exhibition, they had the gratification of seeing the exhibits properly classified and ready for inspection. That their position was no sinecure may be judged by the fact that there are over six hundred entries. Nearly the whole of the population of the reservation was present together with representatives of most of the other tribes in Canada. Every convenience had been provided for visitors, the Grand Trunk having issued tickets at single fare and placed the steamer Dagmar at the disposal of the committee as a ferry between Lachine and Caughnawaga, which had the effect of largely increasing the number of visitors.

The exhibition grounds are situated about a mile from the village, on a level piece of ground, surrounded [by] bush, and at the entrance is a beautiful arch composed of evergreens. One tent is set apart for produce, another for bead work and a third for dancing, the band stand being in the centre. A genuine Indian band from the Onondaga Reservation, near Syracuse, N.Y., was engaged, and proved to be quite an acquisition; their playing indeed would do credit to most of our city bands. Probably the best exhibits were those in the produce tent, the potatoes especially being so good that the judges were at a loss to decide between them. There were also some fine specimens of vari-colored corn, which is seldom seen outside the reservation. Most of the visitors appeared to be under the impression that the ears had been painted. The apples, too, were of an enormous size and excellent quality. The butter was put up in all sorts of fantastic shapes, representing almost everything from trees to birds' nests. The bead work in the next tent seemed to interest the fair sex most, and crowds of them were to be seen all day around the tables. A house worked entirely of beads, the British coat of arms worked in the same material, and a lady's dress, made by one of the village beauties, were the most conspicuous objects. Outside this tent, Chief Jocks exhibited a waggon load of chiselled stone from the village quarry, and a barrel of phosphates. Zacharie Vincent, chief of the Huron tribe, exhibited a bark hut and two paintings of himself, all his own work.

A special tent was set apart for Indian relics, which were perhaps the most interesting feature of the show. At the door is a tree, ingeniously worked in locks of hair obtained by the artist from friends, as souvenirs, the names of the latter being indicated by a small card bearing a number attached to each lock and corresponding with the numbers opposite the names in a card at the foot of the tree. Arrowheads of flint, tomahawks, knives, charms, wampum belts, and pipes were arranged on the

¹⁵⁴ From THE INDIAN EXHIBITION. (1883, September 29). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 5.

tables, together with plans of the fort, dated 1754, the various positions occupied by the Indians until they finally settled in Caughnawaga, and the survey of the reservation as far as it is completed. There were also some old swords, a chief's medallion of the time of George III. and two swords supposed to have been owned by the French.



PLAN OF FORT AT CAUGHNAWAGA, 1754

Image: From Devine, E. J. (1921). *Historic Caughnawaga*. Montreal: Messenger Press.

The live stock were placed in pens around the field.

The following are the names of the judges:

Bead work – Messrs. Brazeau, Boyce and Holland.

Live Stock – Messrs. T. A. Dawes, Somerville and Muir.

Fancy work – Mrs. Walbank, Mrs. Bell and Mrs. McDonald.

Agricultural produce and implements – Hon. A. W. Ogilvie, Col. Stevenson and Mr. Robert Ness, of Howick.

The judges occupied all day in inspecting the exhibits, and even yet their labors are far from a close. The committee have adopted the plan of placing numbers instead of names on the exhibits to secure an impartial judgment. [...]

After lunch the log rolling competition took place on the river. Four Indians with spiked boots got on a log about fourteen feet in length, and poled out some distance from the shore, when they commenced rolling the log, each trying to make the other lose his footing. One after another slipped and fell into the water, until in about a quarter of an hour Joe Roach stood alone on the log, and was declared the winner. A number of sharpers with wheels of fortune, prize packets, etc., then appeared on the ground and were driving a thriving business for about half an hour, when they were noticed by Chief Sherwood of the Dominion Police, who was on the ground with five men, and a few minutes later at a given signal each of the sharpers found a police man holding him by the collar with one hand, while with the other he

scooped in the money. They were all placed in a waggon and sent under guard to the lock-up and their implements confiscated. So expeditiously and quietly had the whole thing been done that only one of the fraternity, who had his stand near the gate, had a chance to escape. An adjournment was then made to the dancing tent, where some half a dozen Indians in full war paint and feathers performed the war dance and snake dance, [and] sang some songs in their vernacular. The tug of war between teams representing Caughnawaga and outsiders then took place, and was won by the Indians by three straights. A promenade concert was given in the evening, at which native songs were the order of the day.

The Exhibition will be formally opened to-day, when the following programme will be gone through:- Procession, headed by Indian band; foot race, around track; music by band; lunch; canoe races (paddles), Caughnawaga vs. all other Indian tribes; war dances, snake dances, songs, &c., championship lacrosse match – Royal Caughnawaga vs. Cornwall Indians; egg race, sack race, working beads, &c., closing speeches, music, &c.

The committee have invited the Hon. Mr. Mousseau, Hon. Peter Mitchell, Dr. Higgingston, the Captain and officers of the Canada, and the Mayors of Montreal and St. Gabriel Village, to be present to-day, and it is expected that most of them will attend. A ball will be given in the evening, opening with the war dance. The following is the programme, a unique one, with the translation of the Indian names, those numbers which are left blank being purely Indian dances:-

1.	Wastonneha	————
2.	Iontsinonwateniata	Waltz
3.	Watiakaroniles	Lancers
4.	Wastonneha	————
5.	Spanioineha	Polka
6.	Iontsinonwateniata	Waltz
7.	Teionknwetake	Irish Jig
8.	Tekaneres	Cotillion
9.	Iontsinonwateniata	Waltz
10.	Satekon Nuonkwetake	————
11.	Wastonneha	————
12.	Iontsinonwateniata	Waltz
13.	Takanenres	Cotillion
14.	Kentaherekeha	Sir Roger de Coverley
[15.]	Korakowa Ahorena	God Save the Queen

“The judges worked hard all day”¹⁵⁵ (October, 1883)

Saturday being the closing day of the Indian Exhibition at Caughnawaga, the committee of management exerted themselves to the utmost to get up a good

¹⁵⁵ From THE INDIAN EXHIBITION. (1883, October 1). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 8.

programme of amusements, and the success which attended their efforts was evidenced by the immense crowds of people who could be seen all day thronging the streets of the village, on their way to the grounds. The weather was magnificent, although rather cold, and the quaint old town was looking at its best, and the walk was immensely enjoyed by all. The judges worked hard all day, and the evening was closing in before they had finished their task, which was no easy one in many cases where the different specimens approached so nearly to each other in quality that it was impossible for the average spectator to distinguish between them. Before the show closed¹⁵⁶, however, the following prize list was made up:-

PRIZE LIST.

CLASS I.

Stallions – 1st Mrs. M. Thires, 2nd L. Leborne.
Brood mare and foal – 1st Thos. Patton, 2nd B. Delormiere
Farm team – 1st Isaac Claus, 2nd F. Hemlock.
Filly, two years – 1st E. Parquis, 2nd L. Jacob.
Driving team – 1st Jas. Bruce.
Saddle Horse – 1st Thos. Phillips, 2nd John Diournme.

CLASS II.

Bull – 1st John Diournme, 2nd P. Onakarantethe.
Milch cow – 1st Isaac Claus, 2nd D. Takarihtontie.
Heifer, two years – 1st B. Delormiere.
Heifer, one year – 2nd Isaac Claus.
Special prize twin bull calves – Mrs. John Leclair.

CLASS III.

Sheep – 1st Joss. Kataratiron.

CLASS IV.

Board – 1st Thos. Phillips.
Sow – 1st Thos. Phillips, 2nd Jos. Delisle, ex-chief.
Pig – 1st Thos. Phillips, 2nd B. Delormiere.
Litter of pigs – 1st Jos. Delisle, ex-chief.
Spring pig – 1st Peter Parquis, 2nd S. Thanekirens.

CLASS V.

Fowls, Brahmas – 1st J.. Montour, 2nd M. Montour.
Fowls, Plymouth Rock – 1st M. Deerhouse.
Fowls, Dorkings – 1st J. Montour.
Fowls, Leghorns – 1st M. Deerhouse.
Fowls, bantams – 1st Dr. Jacobs, 2nd Thos. Mitchell.
Turkeys – 1st Dr. Jacobs, 2nd John J. Deire.
Geese – 1st A. Atonion, 2nd Jos. Kataratiron.
Ducks – 1st Chas. Deere, 2nd Thos. Maurice.

CLASS VI.

Wheat, white spring – 1st B. Delormiere, 2nd L. Leborne.

¹⁵⁶ Any 'missing' prizes were presumably determined later, such as all of Classes VIII and XI.

Wheat, red spring – 1st L. Leclair.
Barley – 1st Isaac Claus, 2nd B. Delormiere.
Oats – 1st Thos. Patton, 2nd Isaac Claus.
Pease – 1st F. Bellefeuille, 2nd B. Delormiere.
Indian corn – 1st F. Daillebout.
Beans – 2nd Jos. Tennikatie, 3rd karakeenhaive.
Buckwheat – 1st B. Delormiere, 2nd P. Mitchell.
Potatoes, Early Rose – 1st P. Onakarathethe, 2nd Kanekenawl.
Potatoes, any sort – 1st M. Montour, 2nd W. Serohesi, 3rd Mrs. Parquis.
Turnips – 1st J. Montouor, 2nd P. Mitchell, 3rd P. Onakarakiti.
Carrots – 1st A. Atonion, 2nd P. Onakarakiti.
Pumpkins – 1st Jos. Foster, 2nd E. Tekaneroker, 3rd M. Deerhouse.

CLASS VII.

Butter, rolls – 1st Mrs. T. Maurice.
Butter, prints – 1st Mrs. Isaac Claus, 2nd Mrs. B. Delormiere.

CLASS X.

Moccasins, plain – 1st Mrs. C. Leborne.
Moccasins, fancy – 1st Mrs. Parquis.
Lacrosses – 1st P. Canoe, 1st P. Thoronhioten.
Indian bark house – 1st Mary Ann Saur.
Collection of bark work – 1st Z. Vincent.
Agricultural implements – 1st B. Delormiere, 2nd Isaac Claus.

CLASS XII.

Coarse bead work – 1st Mrs. Jos. Williams, Mrs. Jos. Laronde and Miss L. Jocks, 2nd Mrs. Lefebvre, 3rd Mrs. Jos. Barnes.

Fine bead work – 1st Mrs. Jos. Williams, 1st Mrs. Jos. Laronde, 2nd Mrs. A. Delisle.

Needle work – 1st Mrs. M. Lefebvre, Miss Williams, Miss M. Laronde, Miss L. Jocks, Mrs. D. Jacobs.

Collection of bead work – 1st Mrs. Jos. Williams, 2nd Mrs. Jos. Laronde.

SPECIAL.

Hair work – Mrs. F. Jacobs.
Crochet – Mrs. Kassennanoran.
Patched silk quilt – Mrs. J. Laronde.
Penmanship – 1st Mary L. Maffre.
Free hand drawing, plain – 1st Miss M. Laronde.
Free hand drawing, color – 1st Miss M. Laronde, 2nd Z. Vincent.

At two o'clock the exhibition was formally opened, the fact being announced by the booming of a cannon on the hill and the band playing "Yankee Doodle." Speeches were made by Mr. Walbank, Grand Chief Williams and Mr. S. T. Willett, Mayor of Chambly Canton. The war dance, the snake dance, and a number of others were given by the Indians and excited much amusement. A lacrosse match then took place between the Caughnawaga and St. Regis Indians for the championship pennant,

which was won by the Caughnawagas in three straight games in 3 min., 20 min., and 20 secs. Respectively.

The Indian pony race was won by John Jocks, with T. Phillips a good second. An exhibition of horsemanship was then given by James Bruce on a horse reared and trained by himself. He afterwards rode 1,000 yards against time and came in in 1 min. 40 sec.

A one mile race between representatives of the various Indian tribes was won by John Lefebvre, of Caughnawaga, Louis Solomon, of St. Regis, second, and Magaspe, of Oka, third.

The egg race was won by White Eagle, T. B. Jocks second and Michael Jacobs third.

A half-mile canoe race, with paddles, was the last but by no means the least interesting item on the programme. It had been intended to have a competition between the different tribes, but as no outside entries were made the race took place between two Caughnawaga crews, each of ten men and a steersman, who also acted as captain. Louis Nortin commanded the "Star" and M. Nortin "La Croix." The two boats started off together, and when about three-quarters of the distance had been traversed the "Star" was only a foot ahead. The other crew then spurred and took the lead, and would undoubtedly have won but for a mistake in the steering.

At six o'clock the Exhibition was closed and a vote of thanks, on motion of Mr. J. K. Ward, Mayor of Cote St. Antoine, seconded by Mr. Alex. Gowdey, was passed to Mr. Walbank for the energetic part he had taken in getting up the show.

In the evening a ball was given in the old railway depot, the walls and roof of which were covered with evergreens. The ball room was lighted up with Chinese lanterns suspended from the rafters, and in one corner was placed the headlight of a locomotive. The effect altogether was very pretty. Dancing was kept up till eleven o'clock, when most of the strangers left by special boat for their homes.

The Indians are so gratified at the success of this exhibition that they have determined to hold another next year, and the friendly rivalry engendered thereby among the various tribes cannot fail to be beneficial in the highest degree.

"A concert and character exhibit"¹⁵⁷ (February, 1884)

A concert and character exhibit in public by real Indians, and that for the purpose of erecting permanent agricultural exhibition buildings, is surely a phenomenal event. Shades of the glorious Iroquois chiefs passed to their happy hunting-grounds, can this be true?! Yea, sure enough; for both on Thursday and last night a number of Iroquois from the Caughnawaga reserve gave an entertainment for the purpose mentioned in Nordheimer's Hall.

Very large and manifestly interested audiences witnessed the first appearance of the red man as a concert giver and the novel proceedings which he was able to produce from the traditions and historical characteristics of his ancestors. The idea

¹⁵⁷ From THE INDIAN ENTERTAINMENT. (1884, February 9). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 8.

of giving these entertainments was certainly a happy thought, for besides being an unique attraction during carnival week they enable the beholder to look back to less peaceful times, to scenes and events pregnant with the greatest interest which the master hand of Parkman has so graphically and so faithfully portrayed.

To any one at all conversant with the history of the Iroquois, at once the most heroic, powerful, faithful, fiercest, most warlike, and at the same time, perhaps, the most intelligent of all Indians, the contrast of the present with their ancestor's past, cannot fail to be most striking. From the absolute savagery of a century ago these Iroquois have become highly civilized members of the community, have developed commercial qualifications of no mean order, have betaken themselves with success to agriculture and peaceful industrial occupations, and otherwise fitted themselves by education and example to fulfil all the conditions of the commonwealth. As the chairman, Mr. (Chief) Walbank, said in introducing his subjects, they have shown by their exhibition last year, that not only can the Indian become a farmer, but a good farmer.

Mixture with palefaces has considerably modified the features and expression, but enough remains, as exemplified in the performers, to show that the old Indian blood is paramount still. The voices yet retain that peculiar traditional *timbre* peculiar to the Indian, a trait which, with the unsophisticated manner in which the songs and choruses were rendered, added greatly to the general enjoyment. In more than one of the voices, especially the ladies, this inherent harshness has become considerably softened, leaving a tone of much purity and clearness. Both vocal selections and national ceremonies were given in Iroquois, a language with a decidedly ugly look about it, rivalling Slavonic, Czech or Polish, but in mouths of the performers it was pronounced almost as soft as French. As a curiosity we append the programme.

As to the performances, several of the vocal contributions were heartily applauded, notably "To-sa-His-ta," and of the national ceremonies and incidents were all well done. Everybody knows that the Indian has a dramatic if not very humorous vein in his nature, and therefore it was to be expected that in gesticulations, appropriate forcible expression of thought in speech and action would be witnessed. The audience seemed equally well pleased with the somewhat business-like wedding, the fantastic war dance, the weird snake dance, the exciting scalp scene, and the solemn, though highly symbolic action in the election of a chief. In grouping the various ceremonies were exceedingly effective and the dresses of both braves and ladies were rich and truthful to the traditions of the Iroquois nation.

It is but just to say in conclusion that the accompaniments were played with excellent taste and ability by Miss Mary Ka-rak-wi-io. The most accomplished pale-faced sister could not have done better.

Organist, Miss Mary Karakwiio.
Shensionsenekanteron, Peter Tekahrataneken and chorus.
Indian Snake Dance.
Kanekennekenoronkwa, Alex. Anenaroton and chorus.

Tsiatasekonoronkwakwe, Peter Tekahrataneken and chorus.
Tosa Hista, Louis Hanenarontonko and chorus.
My Dear Konoronkwa, Miss Maggie Kahteraks and chorus.
Indian Wedding Ceremony.
Tekwanonweraton, Alex. Awenaroton and chorus.
War Dance, Snake Dance and Scalp Scene.
Pocahontas and Captain Smith;
Aulg Lang Syne (in Iroquois), Mrs. Kaweniio and chorus.
Kora Kowa (God Save the Queen.)

“The Caughnawaga show”¹⁵⁸ (September, 1884)

The interesting village of Caughnawaga was all agog with excitement yesterday, the opening day of its great annual fair. The braves were in great feather, and the Indian maidens had donned their most picturesque and “killing” Sunday attire, consisting of bright coloured shawl and robe and tiny, daintily worked moccasins – for the Indian women pride themselves on their small and shapely feet – to show the pale-faced visitor how the rich glow of the forest may be made to harmonize with the products of the factory. Caughnawaga has no insignificant place in the early records of Canada, the names of the eminent Jesuit missionaries Breboeuf, Lallemand and Father Jacques, not to speak of LaSalle, Cahmplain and other renowned explorers, being connected with its history; and the influence of these great names may be discerned in the fact that the Caughnawaga Indians were among the first to conform in any degree to the ways of the white man, and so steadily have they followed his ways that to-day they have, in common with him, their annual show. The population of this settlement, all told, is about 1,700, the “reserve” covering six square acres, and containing one church, of which the Rev. Father Bertrand is pastor, and one school under Mr. E. A. R. Fletcher, with an attendance at present of about sixty pupils. Within the last three years, the Indians have taken seriously to cultivating the land, and are becoming first-class farmers, as can be seen by their agricultural exhibit. In fact, several of them have acquired respectable fortunes; in two cases the figure is put at the neat sum of \$40,000 – a very *dot*.

From early morn finishing touches were being given to the preparations, and in many respects these were happily conceived. One feature appreciable in this heated term is the number of little groves in which pleasant shelter can be found from the sun’s burning rays. Flags, of course, were not wanting, nor abundance of gay colours in every direction, which certainly were not without their charm as they harmonized well with their surroundings, and the place reserved for sport was enclosed by a rope fence, wastefully but picturesquely embellished by young pine trees, entrance being had through a grand triumphal arch of fine branches, topped by the British ensign. Refreshment booths to the number of half a dozen, forming a well beflagged terrace, offer solace to the inner man. Chief of these is the fine

¹⁵⁸ From THE CAUGHNAWAGA SHOW. (1884, September 12). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 8.

establishment of Grand Chief Williams, whose dining saloon will compare favourably with more pretentious down town restaurants for cleanliness, and is far cooler and breezier than any of them. Along one side of the ground is a long row of stalls well shaded by a temporary and romantic grove of trees, and well filled by the horses and cattle exhibited by the Indians. Another and similar grove has been erected to shelter the horses of visitors, mangers being also provided.

As to the exhibits themselves, they are in many respects replete with interest apart from their intrinsic merits. Here will not only be seen the orthodox collection of fruit, grain, roots, and all sorts of vegetable produce, but interesting articles of Indian industry such as curiously worked moulds of butter and appetite-producing cakes and bread, beautiful moccasins, soft as kid gloves, Indian warriors' costumes, Indian ladies' silken dresses, besides old Indian relics, peace pipes, wampum, &c. – not to mention the lacrosses, snowshoes and bead work, which everyone expects to find where Indians exist. In one spot is a unique specimen of wax flowers, which is really pleasing in effect, probably because the maker, unlike most workers in wax, has not tried to copy nature, thereby ensuring a miserable failure. The beadwork is most elaborate, and ranges from an immense lion and unicorn trophy to the daintiest and most tasteful adornment on the instep of a moccasin.

It should be stated that all the details of the exhibition sports, games, etc., have been admirably carried out under the supervision of Mr. Walbank, Grand Chief Joseph Williams, Chief Thomas Jocks and others. The patron is Mr. I. Vankoughnet, deputy of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ottawa. The honorary president is Mr. Walbank with an executive committee consisting of the president and Grand Chief Joseph Williams, John Rice, Chief Thomas Jocks, ex-Chief Joseph Delisle, [and] John De Lorimier.

The exhibition will continue to-day and to-morrow. There is a fine programme of sports. In the sports yesterday the girls' race, for which there were six entries, was won, amidst great cheering, by White Eagle's daughter. The "blind race" was won by Strong Arm, with White Eagle second and Tantloerus third, and in the tug-of-war, Indians vs. French, the red men came out triumphant by two straight pulls, the last pull lasting three minutes.

"In New York and Boston"¹⁵⁹ (February, 1900)

A special agent of the Canadian Pacific railway has been in the vicinity of Montreal for some time past selecting representative members of the Iroquois and other tribes of Indians who are to form one of the striking features of the coming sportsmen's shows in New York and Boston. [...] Much time has been required in the selection and the work of costuming and training the braves for the part they are to play in the coming shows. Only the tallest and finest bucks of their respective tribes have been chosen, and all of these have wardrobes which, from the Indian standpoint, are most elaborate. A majority of the redskins selected are expert in the use of the

¹⁵⁹ From INDIANS AT THE SHOW. (1900, February 16). *The Essex County Herald*, p. 1.

rifle and paddle and excel in the games of their tribes. The largest number of the Indians to go will be from the Iroquois reservation at Caughnawaga. [...]

Together with Mr. Armstrong, the Canadian Pacific's representative, the [...] correspondent visited the Iroquois village at Caughnawaga and saw an exhibition of the dances there by the Indians who are to represent the tribe in Boston and New York. Mr. Armstrong was made an honorary member of the tribe with impressive and appropriate ceremonies. He was given an Iroquois name, Sakokweniensta, which in English means "respected."

The Indians, male and female, braves and papooses, were arrayed in picturesque garbs of buckskin, with beaded embroidery and decorations in colors. The males wore the usual headdress of feathers, while each woman had a single feather rising from a coronet. The refinements and comforts of the Indian homes are enough to make Fenimore Cooper turn in his grave. The dancing was done in the capacious drawing room of an Iroquois house, with windows hung with lace curtains and under the bright light of handsome chandeliers. When the measured beat of the odd musical instruments commenced, the Indians moved into line and began marking time and humming a low chant. As the men followed their leader in the serpentine intricacies of the snake dance, their sinewy bodies writhing and turning, they seemed to be transferred from the drawing room to a forest clearing. Wilder grew the music and faster the dance till the performers from sheer exhaustion ended the ceremony. Then once more they were smiling men and women seated in a drawing room and surrounded by the comforts of modern civilization.

The corn dance, a pastoral ceremony of characteristic figures; the snowshoe dance, the moose dance and other forms of festivity will add to the programme with which the Indian contingent will entertain the Canadian section at the sportsmen's shows.

Following is a copy of the contract the Indians have entered into with the Canadian Pacific railway: "We, jointly and severally, agree to go to Boston and New York, leaving Montreal on Feb. 20, and to remain until the end of the exhibition for the wages agreed on. We agree to keep from drink when on the trip. We agree to submit to the loss of our wages if we get under the influence of liquor. We will do whatever Mr. Armstrong or any one whom he may appoint tells us. We will give our time, from 8 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock at night if necessary, spending the whole day in the Indian villages or upon the stages. We agree to keep our suits in perfect condition during the exhibition."

"The wild Indians are all civilized"¹⁶⁰ (February, 1902)

When "the divine Sara [Bernhardt]" reached Montreal, one of the first of those who hastened to pay their respects was Mayor Beaugrand, the proprietor of the daily newspaper *La Patrie*. The Mayor was extremely anxious to know whether he could serve the distinguished visitor in any way.

¹⁶⁰ From LAST SUNDAY'S PRIZE STORIES. (1902, February 4). *The New York Times*, p. 9.

“You can,” replied Mme. Bernhardt. “You shall take me now, at once, to see the dear Indians.”

“Indians?” queried Mr. Beaugrand.

“Mais, oui, the Indians at Caughnawaga.”

“With pleasure,” responded the Mayor, who at once sent a messenger to his friend Louis Frechette, the Canadian poet, asking him to form one of the party which should accompany the actress to the little Indian reservation.

In a few minutes the jovial and very rotund poet arrived. A newspaper reporter who was waiting to interview Mme. Bernhardt was included among the guests. On the way out, the actress was in high spirits, and even appeared to listen to the information which Mr. Beaugrand furnished concerning the financial success of *La Patrie*. But, arrived at Caughnawaga, her spirits fell to zero, for she found her “dear, delightful Indians” to be prosaic in the extreme, dressed like the ordinary “habitant” of the Province of Quebec, and soberly engaged in agriculture.

Utterly disgusted, she promptly ordered a return to the city. The actress remained mute and scornfully angry. Thinking to have some fun at the expense of the reporter, the two discomfited hosts suggested that he use the opportunity to secure an interview.

Eager to do so, the newspaper man opened with the stock question of those days: “Madame, may I ask you what you think of this country?”

“Mon Dieu,” replied Mme. Bernhardt, instantly, “it is the most remarkable country of which I have ever read, not to speak of those I have seen. The wild Indians are all civilized, the newspaper men all become rich, and the poets actually grow fat!”

Old Indian Chief Dead. (1902, February 20). *The New York Times*, p. 9.

Joseph Sky, eighty-three years old, a chief of the Caughnawaga Indians, died last night at his home, in Caughnawaga, leaving a widow, one daughter, and three sons, all of whom live on the reservation. He was elected chief in 1852.

Chief Sky belonged to the Caughnawaga St. Jean Baptist Society and was its president. The deceased was better known as a Lachine Rapids pilot than in any other capacity, having for years taken rafts down the channel of the rough water with great success. He was a most eloquent orator among Indians in their native tongue.

Claims in Vermont and New York

“More than two million acres of land”¹⁶¹ (1798 – 1826)

The claim is for more than two millions of acres of land [in Vermont], the money value of which has been estimated by the claimants at nearly ninety thousand dollars. This claim has been presented on different occasions from 1798 until 1874. It is a large claim, and will probably be urged hereafter. [...]

LEGISLATURE OF VERMONT, Oct. 23, 1798.

His excellency sent the following Message to the Hon. House.

IN COUNCIL, Oct. 23, 1798.

Mr. Speaker, - I do myself the honor to lay before the General Assembly certain papers, together with an application made to me by a deputation of a number of Indian Chiefs of the Seven Nations of Lower Canada, who conceive they have an equitable claim to compensation for the loss of their hunting grounds within this state.

As they are attending in this place (Vergennes,) for the sole purpose of receiving an answer to their application, you will give me leave to suggest the propriety of an early attention to the within communications. ISAAC TICHENOR.

The following Chiefs, being introduced by the High Sheriff of Addison county, took their seats. – *Unowee Goodstream, Afaahnassah, Sonoswoosee, Taahsah, Toosicnowahtassee.*

Unowee Goodstream delivered the following Talk:

Great Friends, - We have had the luck to come so far from the great council fire of our own nation, to tell you of the joy we have to talk with the Honorable Governor, the great Father of Vermont.

Great Friends, - We wish the great Chiefs of the Council happiness.

Great Friend, and Friends, - Since we have come so far to speak to the great council of Vermont, in their big Wigwam in the city of Vergennes, we hope we shall be heard with attention.

Big Fathers, - I who now speak to you am *Chief* of the *Cognahaugah* (or Cognawaga) Indians – I hope you will hear me on behalf of my whole nation. May the great Spirit brighten the chain of friendship between our tribes; may the pathway between us be kept so plain as that a little child may find it when the sun is asleep in his blanket under the western waters. [...]

(Copy of the Credentials of the Chiefs.)

¹⁶¹ From Walton, E. P. (1880). APPENDIX H. – CLAIM OF THE COGNAWAGA INDIANS TO LAND IN VERMONT. In GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL OF THE STATE OF VERMONT, VOLUME VIII. Montpelier: Steam Press of Joseph Poland. Written by Eliakim Persons Walton (1812 – 1890).

“His Excellency Isaac Tichenor, Esq. Governor of the State of Vermont: *Great Brother*, - We the Chiefs and Councillors of the Seven Nations of lower Canada Indians, send our love and respect to you, and your family, by five of our agents, which we the chiefs have sent you to treat about our *hunting lands*, that lie in your state. Beginning on the east side of Ticonderoga, from thence to the great falls on Otter Creek, and continues the same course to the height of land, that divides the streams between Lake Champlain, and the river Connecticut; from thence along the height of lands (to) opposite Missisque and then down to the Bay:- That is the land belonging to the seven nations, which we have sent to settle for with you, as we have settled with York state. So we hope you will be pleased to receive our agents, and that it will be settled, so that both sides will be contented.

“Cognahwagah, the 29th of September, 1798.”

Signed by twenty Chiefs of the different nations. [...]

OCTOBER 18, 1798

The Chiefs addressed the Governor as follows:

Brother, The great spirit has directed this day to be a day of joy, sa we meet the great Governor of Vermont and his whole family; and we sincerely hope this meeting will be happy to us all. Our interpreter, Mr. Fraser, will deliver in writing what we have to say respecting our lands. Upon which Mr. Fraser delivered the paper No. 1, (read it.)

(No. 1.)

To the Hon. ISAAC TICHENOR, Esq. Governor of the State of Vermont,

GREAT BROTHER, You require how the land which we claim became ours, to which we answer that it was given to our forefathers by the supreme spirit for our inheritance, together with the wild beasts for their food, and the skins thereof for their clothing; from our forefathers it descended to their children, and as they have not sold or given it to any one it remains our proper inheritance.

Brother, Our claim is equitable, we hope you will therefore consider it and do us justice. You enquire who were our neighbors, to which we answer, that on the south west were the Stockbridges, and on the north east by the Abenakees of St. Francois, of whom you may enquire as to the justice of our claims, and also of our brothers, the white people of Canada.

Brother, Our desire is to make an amicable settlement, so that if any of your people should come amongst us we may feel toward them as brothers, who have used us well; and if any one of us should happen amongst your people we wish to be considered as brothers in our friendship.

Brother, As our demand is unexpected to you, should you wish to delay, for the purpose of informing yourself, it will be very agreeable to us, for all we want is justice; but at all events we have to request that you will return us an answer in writing to this and the papers we have handed as soon as convenient, for the purpose of showing to the Grand Chiefs of the Seven Nations of Lower Canada, and we wish you to take copies of the papers which we have heretofore handed, and return us the originals. Should you wish for any further information of us, we will endeavor to give it to you.

Mean time I remain, with sincere wishes of welfare to yourself and your family, great brother, Your most obedient humble servant, HONASIO, *Orator for the Seven Nations*. [...]

Memorial of the Cognahwagas in 1812, and action thereon.

At the October session of the Legislature in 1812 the following memorial was communicated by Lieut. Gov. Brigham, in the absence of Gov. Galusha:

Most Honorable Brother. – We, the chiefs of the Iroquois or Cognawaghah nation, in mutual council, agreed to send the following speech to our great brother, the Governor of the State of Vermont.

Most Honorable Brother: We, the Chiefs of the Iroquois nation, do now, in behalf of the whole nation, speak to you and others who are now sitting with you in the Great Council House.

Most Excellent Brother, now attend! – We, the red people, have inhabited and owned this island (America) from the time of immemorial. Our land extended from rising to the setting sun, and from the cold regions of the North to the hot climes of the South. The Great Spirit above made it, and gave it to the Indians for their use. He created various kinds of animals for our food and their skins served us for clothing. He scattered them over this extensive country, and taught us how to kill them. He made the earth to produce Indian corn for bread. He made also the innumerable inhabitants in the great waters to run up and down in our rivers, and taught us how to catch them. The Great Spirit created all these for the use of his red children because he loved them. Great Brother, continue to listen! When your ancestors crossed the great lake (the Atlantic ocean) and landed on this Western island, they were poor and few in number. Our fathers had compassion on them, and protected them. They told our fathers they had fled from their own country for fear of wicked men, and had come here to enjoy their religion. They asked for a small tract of land. We, the red people, gave them a seat, and they sat down among us. We instructed the manner of planting and dressing the Indian corn. We carried them upon our backs through rivers and waters, and when any of them or their children was lost in the woods, and in danger of perishing with hunger or cold, we carried them to our wigwams, fed them, and restored them to their parents and friends. We gave them corn and meat when pinched with famine. We relieved their distresses, and prevented their perishing in a strange land.

Thus you see, Brother, when your ancestors came into our country, you did not find us enemies – but friends. Great Brother, you have now become a great people, but we are decreased and now smaller in comparison to what we once were. Your territory has become to be very large now, and we poor Indians have scarcely a place left to spread our blankets. You have got our country, and now what shall we say? We say, brother, in truth we are distressed on account of it. You have settled where we formerly caught moose, deer and bears – and now we now not hardly where to go to find them.

Most excellent Brother, we would now once more request you to continue to listen. We now would remind you that in the year 1798 we met you at your council fire, and we then requested that you would give us something in compensation annually, for our land, which you have taken possession of. But our Brother, who was then Governor in Vermont, said that in justice and equity the lands we claimed did not belong to us. He required us to exhibit documents as proofs that the land which was then claimed did belong to us – and this he well knew we could not do – as you well know, Brother, we are destitute of writing, records, and history. With us, to preserve the memory of our public affairs and transactions, we depend upon our most aged men to keep them in their heart and mind. He also required us to furnish the necessary documents authorizing the State of Vermont to trade with us. This he also knew, we were totally ignorant where to go to find the necessary documents for the State of Vermont to treat with us.

We would now speak a few words to the honorable Representatives of the people of Vermont.

Brethren and friends: The land we now claim never was purchased of us either by the French or English, and we never sold it nor was it ever conquered by our Indian brethren, but it has always been in our hands, and when you made settlements upon it, we considered then it belonged to us. And now “In justice and equity it does not belong to us!” Yes, brethren, we believe it belongs to use, and we shall claim it as long as the sun rolls from the East to the West. In the year 1683 our ancestors had a considerable dispute as to the boundary line of the land, which we now claim, with the eastern Indians. A French Jesuit, who was well acquainted of our claim, wrote the following paragraph to Governor Dongan, of New York: “The Iroquois, of the Sault St. Louis or Cognawagahah, have always claimed the country lying in the east side of Lac de Champlain.” The boundary is as follows, viz: beginning at the head of Lac de Champlain (Lake George) running thence east up to the heights of the great mountain, thence north to the Fort Chamblee.” Thus you see, brethren, the Jesuit makes it appear that our ancestors have always claimed the land where you now live, and much larger than we do now. We claim as follows: “Beginning on the east side of Ticonderoga, from thence to the great falls on Otter Creek (Sutherland’s Falls,) and continues the same course to the height of land that divides the streams between Lake Champlain and Connecticut river, from thence among the heights of land opposite Missisquoi, and down to the Bay:” that is the land which we claim.

Now, brethren and friends, we do not ask you, that you must give us so much. No, far from that, we know that you and the brethren in Vermont are generous and kind. We also know that you will do justice to a nation who has been, and is now, much abused and despise – a nation, who have been cheated and driven from their ancient settlements. We do hope and pray to the Great Spirit, that the great governor, the honorable representatives and the good people in Vermont will have compassion on their red brethren and give them something annually in compensation for their land.

Most Excellent Governor and respected Gentlemen, Representatives of Vermont: We, the chiefs of Cognawagahah, have now spoken to your ears of our mind –

we hope you will take into consideration what we have said. We wish to live in peace with you, and we hope you will ever consider us your brothers – we hope we shall always live on friendly terms. This is all your red brethren have to say. [...]

Memorial of 1826, and action thereon.

Oct. 21, 1826, Gov. Butler communicated to the General Assembly the following memorial: [...]

To the Honorable, the House of Assembly of Vermont, one of the United States of America:- The humble memorial of the Iroquois tribe, residing in Cognawagah village, commonly called Sault St. Louis, situated in the District of Montreal, in the province of Lower Canada, in the said North America.

The undersigned, and head chiefs of the above tribe, in the collective names of its members, have the honor to represent to you with the most humble submission, that they make a part of the descents of the aborigines, inhabitants of North America. That their ancestors and themselves, as their descents [sic.], have from time immemorial enjoyed and possessed peaceably and without any interruption, until the rupture between the North American colonies and Great Britain, a certain tract of land situate, lying and being on the east side of Lake Champlain consisting in the following extent, viz. Beginning at the line of division between the State of Vermont and the province of Lower Canada, thence running south alongside east shore of said lake, and up to the Otter river inclusively, thence from the mouth of said river, following its course to its sources, thence about a northwest course following the summit of a chain of mountains until it will intersect the line of division between the state of Vermont and the province of Lower Canada.

That under the French and British Governments, and during their respective possessions of the above tract of land, they (your memorialists) never were troubled or molested in any manner whatsoever; on the contrary it was known and acknowledged by those governments to be your memorialists' property. They were protected and supported in the full and peaceable enjoyment and possession of it – where they used to fish and hunt exclusively to any other persons – for the use and maintenance of themselves and families. But now they see with sorrow, that since many years they have been dispossessed of their fathers' inheritance, by force, and deprived of enjoying it as they did from immemorial time – being at present in the possession and occupied by persons, who pretend to be the real proprietors of it in virtue of legal titles from the State of Vermont.

It is notorious that this tribe have never relinquished or given any titles, or ever received any compensation or recompence for their rights to the said land, or for any part thereof: So that your memorialists are dispossessed of their property without their consent, without any indemnification whatsoever, and deprived of the only means they had to support and maintain their families, and find themselves confined to such a narrow state of limits that they are most reduced to want.

Your memorialists beg leave to inform you that seven years ago they did present similar remonstrances to the house of assembly of the State of Vermont, and having not received an answer to it, they take the liberty to renew their reclamations.

Being well convinced by experience of the justice and equity shown by the different branches of the United States' government in their proceedings, your memorialists apply with the most respectful confidence to your honorable body, praying that you would be pleased to take into consideration their claims and unhappy situation, and order that they shall be reinstated into the full and quiet enjoyment of their just rights, as fully and amply as their forefathers and themselves did heretofore enjoy it, or otherwise determined what you, in your wisdom, may judge just and equitable in such case, for the satisfaction and happiness of your petitioners. And they will ever pray as in duty bound. (Signed by fourteen Chiefs of the Iroquois.)

“There can be no doubt”¹⁶² (November, 1853)

It is probably known only to a portion of our readers that the Caughnawaga Indians have from time to time, for the last fifty or sixty years, been memorializing our Legislature to take into consideration their asserted claim to that portion of Vermont drained by Otter Creek and other rivers running into Lake Champlain, which portion they contend was never sold or ceded to the Whites by their ancestors, the Iroquois. They presented their interesting memorial in 1798, 1826, 1851, and now again at the present session. There can be no doubt but that the Iroquois, of whom these Indians are the remnant, were in possession of the tract of country in question on its first discovery by the Whites. Capt. Champlain, who was the first discoverer of Vermont, in his voyage through the lake to which he gave his name, found them, and fought a battle with them, in Addison County, in 1608, and ascertained that their tribe extended over the mountains and valleys to a second great ridge of mountains, which divided the lake waters from those of the Connecticut River; and we are not aware that any of these lands, (except the town of Marshfield, which an old record says was bought of the Indians,) was ever ceded to the Whites by the Iroquois, who were dispersed in the Indian and French wars. We are inclined, therefore, to believe, that while most of the lands of New England were purchased from the native proprietors, in some shape or other, this part of our State can be claimed by us only by the right of conquest. If so, shall we with our professions of justice, and our condemnation of the law or might against right plead this right of conquest in bar to the prayer of the memorialists for compensation? This is a hard question. But one thing the Legislature can do – they can stave the matter off, on pretence of having so much other important business every year on hand that they cannot possibly reach it. [...] Let the Legislature be generous to these descendants of the original proprietors of our soil. No man not a hog would grumble at a pretty smart tax for such an object, and most would pay it with great satisfaction.

¹⁶² From The Caughnawaga Indian Claim. (1853, November 26). *The Bradford Inquirer*, p. 4.

“Remuneration for the loss”¹⁶³ (October, 1874)

A delegation of four Indian chiefs of the Caughnawaga and St. Regis tribes, is here, to present their old claim for remuneration for the loss of their ancient hunting grounds in this State, on the west side of the Green Mountains. They were received by Governor Peck in the executive chamber, this forenoon, and presented their petition, through one of their number, who acts as interpreter. It is a neatly written document, curiously worded in broken English, and recites the presentation of their claim a number of years ago, and its rejection or postponement in view of the expense the State had incurred in rebuilding the State House. They now urge once more their claim, and promise to invest the money they may get, not in any foreign land, but in the United States, and to be content with the interest thereof. Gov. Peck received them courteously, read their petition, and after they had been individually presented and had shaken hands with the Governor, they retired. They were not in their war paint, and the accessories of a council fire and pipe of peace were omitted by some oversight.

“Between the Onion and Otter rivers”¹⁶⁴ (July, 1899)

Caughnawaga Indians of the reservation near this city have reiterated their claim through Chief Jocks to the territory situated in Vermont between the Onion and Otter rivers, down the Lake Champlain district, and including the city of Burlington and other towns in the Green Mountain State. The claim is based on a notarial document, dated and signed in 1802, when the chiefs representing the Abenakis tribe in a council held at Caughnawaga ceded to the last named Indians all their rights in the Vermont possession, which includes all the lands extending to the sources of the two rivers.

“To pay for the lands which they have taken”¹⁶⁵ (August, 1901)

Five Indians from the Caughnawaga and St. Regis tribe called upon [New York] Attorney-General Davies today in the hope of interesting the state in a claim for land which the tribes believe they ought to be paid for.

There were two Caughnawagas and three St. Regis Indians, headed by Grand Chief Frank Theris, of the Caughnawagas. As Indians “know no boundaries,” to quote the chief, it took them some time to make even reasonably clear the object of their visit.

Chief Theris explained that the Caughnawagas, the seven nations, originally comprised all of the Indians in this part of the country, occupying this state, a good portion of the New England states, and a good portion of Canada. All of the land

¹⁶³ From AN INDIAN EMBASSY. (1874, October 14). *The Burlington Free Press*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ From LANDS OF CONQUEST. (1899, July 14). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁵ From INDIANS MAKE A CLAIM. (1901, August 23). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 7.

belonged to them; their hunting grounds were everywhere. Now the Caughnawagas have a reservation in Canada, and the St. Regis a reservation in this state. These two reservations are all that is left of their possessions.

From time to time they have tried to get the usurpers of their territory to pay for the lands which they have taken. Nearly fifty years ago they went to the state of Vermont and endeavored to have that state pay for lands which it had appropriated and which had been part of the hunting grounds of the tribes. In 1853 a bill was introduced in the Vermont Legislature providing for the payment for the land at the rate of two cents an acre. This bill passed the Senate, but failed in the House, and from that time to the present no further attention has been paid to the matter.

During Governor Black's administration the Caughnawagas went to him in an effort to interest New York state in their claim for payment for usurped hunting grounds. After hearing their story, Governor Black told them that he would refer the matter to Vermont for more detailed information. This had not been secured up to the time that he went out of office.

Today the Indians came here to see Governor Odeil, and, in his absence, were referred to the Attorney-General. Their knowledge of their wants is rather hazy and it was impossible for them to state definitely the location of the land. This was all stated, they said, in the papers which they gave to Governor Black. Whether all the land lies within the boundaries of New York, or whether it is in Vermont, Chief Theris could not say; state boundaries are of too recent establishment for the Indians to take cognizance of them. Chief Theris has a remarkable memory and from his statement of the effort to obtain payment from Vermont, it appeared that that state had told them they ought to look to this state for payment.

Until the information asked for from Vermont is obtained, it will not be possible for this state to determine what it will do in the matter.

After the Indians had concluded the business part of their visit, they waited patiently for the Great White Father to take them out and blow them off. Deputy Attorney-General Steele, whose special guests they had been, had provided them with cigars during their pow-wow to facilitate matters during the conference, but was not up on state etiquette with reference to the entertainment of the wards of the state. The matter was explained to him by his visitors, and then it occurred to him that there was a contingency fund of \$500 at the disposal of the comptroller and concluded that this must be available for just such contingencies as the present one; so he directed the delegation to Comptroller Knight, who did the honors in the name of the governor.

The Seigniory of Sault St. Louis

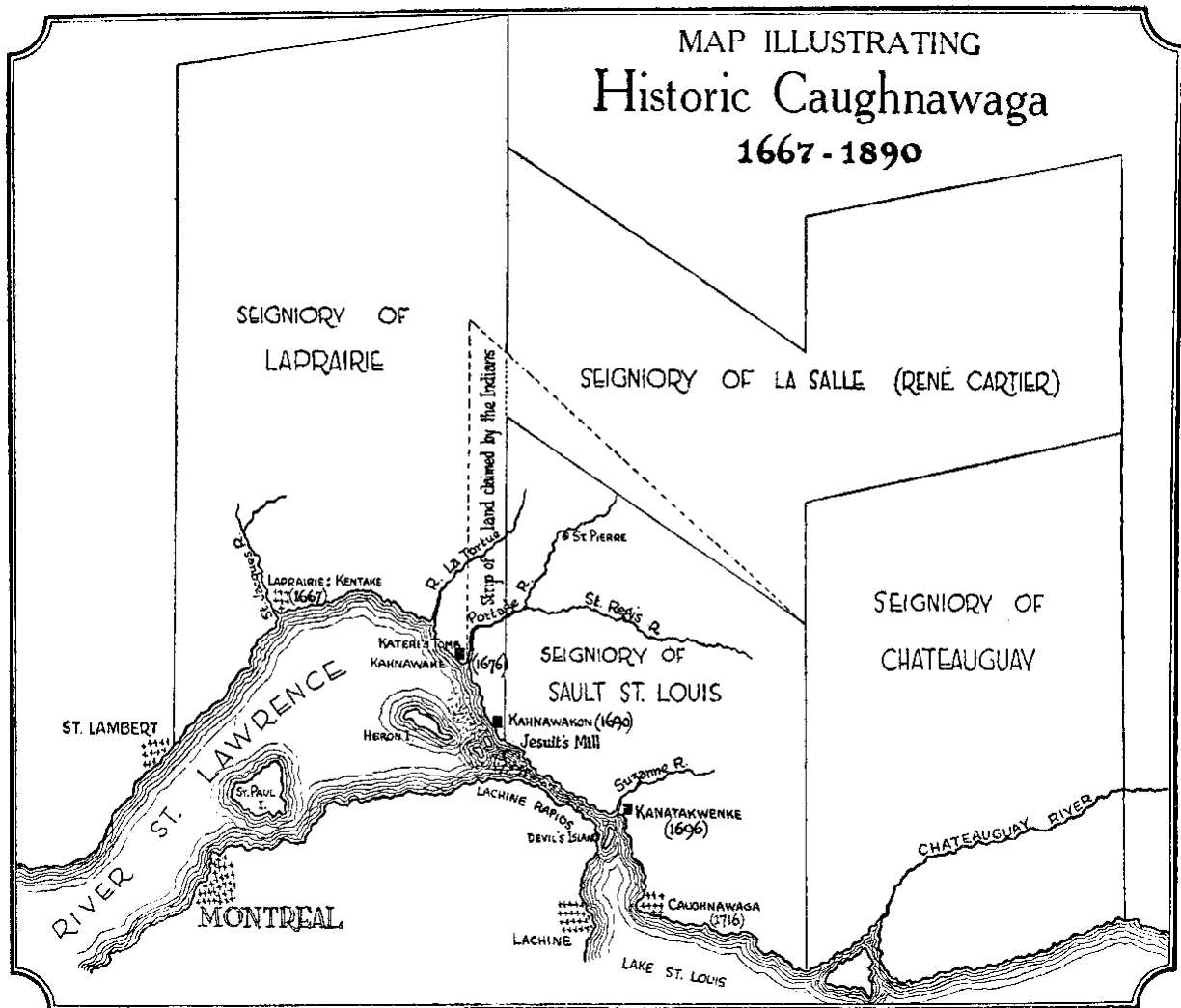


Image: Devine, E. J. (1921). *Historic Caughnawaga*. Montreal: Messenger Press.

“Considerably diminished”¹⁶⁶ (March, 1890)

Mr. DOYON (Translation) [...] said: [...] The reserve of Caughnawaga has been considerably diminished, and I may say by more than half; for I have in my hands the original title deeds of the concessions made by the Kings of France, bearing the respective dates of the 19th May, 1680, of the 31st October, 1680, and of the 15th June, 1717, which give to the reserve of Caughnawaga an extent of two square leagues, besides another concession of two leagues by one league and a half. In order to make the thing better understood, I produce the title deeds and patents of

¹⁶⁶ From Monday, 10th March, 1890. (1890). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Fourth Session – Sixth Parliament*. Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin.

concession I have referred to. I may also add that they even likewise granted two islands and islets, described in these deeds which have also been taken away from them:

29th May, 1680

LOUIS by the Grace of of God King of France and Navarre.
Concession to the Jesuit Fathers of the land called 'Le Sault'.

To all who these present letters shall see: Greeting.

Our very dear and well beloved the members of the Religious Society of Jesus, residing in our country of New France, having most humbly represented to us, that the lands of the Prairie de la Magdeleine, which have been heretofore granted to them, being too wet to be sown and provide for the subsistence of the Iroquois settled there, it might be feared that they would go away, if we were not pleased to grant them the tract of land called 'Le Sault,' containing two leagues in front, to commence at a point of land situate opposite the St. Louis Rapids, and ascending along the lake, by the same depth, with two islands, the islets and shoals opposite and adjoining the lands of the said Prairie de la Magdeleine which would allow them not only to settle the Iroquois, but also to increase their number and to extend by this means the light of the Faith and the Gospel.

Now, therefore, being desirous of contributing to the conversion and instruction of the said Iroquois, and favorably treating the said petitioners, we have made and do make them a gift by these presents, signed with our own hand, of the said tract of land called Le Sault, containing two leagues in front, commencing at a point of land situate opposite the St. Louis Rapids and ascending along the lake by a similar depth, with the two islands, the islets and shoals opposite and adjoining the lands of the said Prairie de la Magdeleine subject to the condition that the said tract of land called Le Sault shall belong to us, all cleared, when the said Iroquois shall abandon it. We do hereby permit all persons desirous of bringing to the said Iroquois, rings, knives and other small wares and things, to do so; most expressly prohibiting and forbidding the Frenchmen who may settle among the said Iroquois, or other Indian nations, who may establish themselves on the said tract of land called Le Sault, to have and keep any cattle, and all persons to establish any tavern in the village of said Iroquois, to be built on the said tract of land. [...]

In witness whereof we have caused our seal to be affixed to these presents.

Given at Fontainebleau, the twenty-ninth day of May, in the year of grace one thousand six hundred and eighty, and of our reign the thirty-eighth.

(Signed) LOUIS. [...]

[31st October, 1680]

Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, [...] and Jacques Duchesneau, Chevalier. [...] By reason of what has been represented to us by the Reverend Fathers of the Religious Society of Jesus, that His Majesty by his letters patent of the 29th May,

1680 [...] made them a gift of the tract of land called Le Sault, [...] for the reasons set forth in the said letters and subject to the same conditions therein contained, they ask that it will please us to grant them a remnant of land of one league and a half, or thereabouts, in length, commencing at the said tract of land called Le Sault, ascending along the Lake towards the Seigniorship of Chateau-Gay by two leagues in depth, which would allow them to attract there still more Iroquois and other Indians, and to increase their number and to extend by that means the light of the Faith and the Gospel. We, in virtue of the power given us conjointly by His Majesty, and to facilitate still more to the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus the means of continuing the care they have for so long and with so much zeal taken for the conversion and instruction of the Iroquois, and other Indians, have given, granted and conceded to them, and give by these presents the remnant of land [described above,] to be enjoyed by the said Reverend Fathers subject to the same charges and conditions contained in the aforementioned letters patent of His Majesty, and they shall obtain from His Majesty the confirmation of these presents. In witness whereof we have signed these presents, and caused our seal and arms to be affixed thereto.

Given at Quebec, the thirty-first of October, one thousand six hundred and eighty.

(Signed) FRONTENAC. DUCHESNEAU. [...]

When I assert that these concessions have considerably diminished in extent, I refer, in support of that assertion, to the answer to the enquiry I made last Session, of the hon. Minister of the Interior (Mr. Dewdney), reported at page 481 of the *Hansard*, and to the following words at the end of that answer:- "The reserve contains 12,327½ acres, and the survey of the whole reserve, when all the work is done, will cost \$22,000." I believe that the original reserve must have contained at least 30,000 acres more. My intention [...] is to ascertain by what right the Government or any other person or society, having the administration of this estate, have, at any time since the original concession of these lands, dispossessed the Indians of this part of the reserve. What justifies me in concluding that a portion of the reserve has been conveyed to whites in an illegal manner, is the fact that I have here a deed made before a notary by Ignace Mikanawaha, on 16th April, 1819, to a Canadian, Jacques Patenaude, a farm laborer of the parish of Saint Constant; whereas we know that at no period had an Indian the right to give a valid deed to a white man. The deed in question reads as follows:-

Before the undersigned, notaries public of the Province of Lower Canada, residing at the village of La Prairie de la Madeleine, in the district of Montreal.

Appeared Ignace Mikanawaha, one of the principal chiefs of the Iroquois nation of Sault St. Louis, authorized hereunto, by a resolution of all the chiefs of the said Nation, in Council assembled yesterday, the twenty-sixth April instant.

Who did voluntarily admit and declare by these presents, that he hath given and conceded *à titre de cens et rentes seigneuriales*, unredeemable, henceforth and for ever, and free from all disturbance and impediments whatsoever resulting from

acts and promises of the said chiefs, their successors, or administrators, to Jacques Patenaude, laborer, of the parish of St. Constant, hereunto present and accepting, lessee, for himself, his heirs and assigns forever, a land and concession situated in the Seigniorship of Sault St. Louis, measuring two arpents in front by about seven arpents in depth, bounded in front by the land of the said lessee, in rear by the limits laid down by M. Archambeault; on the one side Alexis Henry to the south, and on the other side Paul Chaperon to the north; without any warranty of precise measurement, but in accordance with return of metes and bounds prepared by M. Archambeault, surveyor, which the said lessee declares he well knows, having seen and examined the same, and is content and satisfied therewith, the said lessee to enjoy, use, work and dispose of the said land, himself, his heirs and assigns, on the charges, clauses and conditions following, that is to say:

The lessee, his heirs and assigns shall pay each year to the seigniors, their successors, administrators and assigns, at their accounting place in the said seigniorship or to their receiver or agent, two *Sols Tournois*, French money, for each arpent in superficies and one bushel and a half of wheat, all good, dry, clean and merchantable, for each twenty arpents in superficies; and three *Sols Tournois* of *cens* for the whole of the said concession; the whole *cens et rentes seigneuriales* payable each year, the first payment shall fall due and be payable on St. Martin's day, 11th Nov. next year; but the lessee binds himself to pay to the seigniors next St. Martin's day for all seigniorial rights, one *écu* or three *livres* for each arpent in the place and stead of the aforesaid *cens et rentes* of the present year only, and shall continue thenceforward, while and so long as the said lessee, his heirs and assigns shall be holders in whole or in part of the said land; with power, nevertheless, to the said chiefs to alter the term of payment; the said *cens et rentes* to carry profit of *lods et ventes* seizure and fines, on occasion, together with all other seigniorial and feudal rights, in accordance with the original titled deed of the said seigniorship; the said concession to be subject to the common mill thereof, under pain of confiscation, arbitrary fine and payment for the grinding of any grain ground elsewhere; lessees to occupy the said land within a year and day from date hereof, give *découvert* to their neighbors as it is required of them, and make party ditches with them (the said seigniors not being in any way bound thereunto as regards their unconceded land) and suffer all roads, bridges, ditches and discharge for watercourses suitable for public convenience, keep the same in good condition, and help with the other tenants to make roads and bridges on the *domaine* of the seigniorship and to maintain the same; work and cultivate the said land, keep it in a good condition, so that the said *cens et rentes* may easily be collected therefrom year by year.

The said seigniors, lessors, reserving to themselves the right of redemption in case of the sale or other equivalent alienation of the whole or part of the said land, on repaying to the purchaser of the principal money of his purchase, costs, and true outlay.

Right of *reconnaissance* and declaration at each change of seignior, by succession or otherwise, at the cost of the holder; nor shall the lessee, his heirs or assigns have the right to give, cede or otherwise alienate the whole or part of the said

land to any holder in mortmain, nor any community impose *cens* on *cens* of the said seigniors the lessors, who shall be entitled to take from the said lands all kinds of timber, stone, lime, sand, and other materials required for building churches, priests' houses, mills and other public works, manors or other houses, or enclosures on the *domaines* of the said lessee, his heirs and assigns, and if the said seigniors wish to build water-mills, windmills, or sawmills, they reserve the right, for the building thereof, to take, occupy, or cut lands for the passage of water in such places as they think proper, on paying for the clearing, as estimated by experts, and reducing the *cens et rentes* in proportion to the land cut or taken, and the lessee shall not nor shall his heirs and assigns have power to build on the said concession any mill whatsoever, under pain, &c. And should the common mill of the seigniorship be burnt, or the dam thereof carried away by flood, in that case only the lessee, his heirs or assigns, shall be bound to give two days labor, in order to assist the other tenants in restoring the said mill or dam.

To all which clauses, conditions, servitudes and reservations, the lessee hath submitted himself, for himself, with his heirs and assigns, hath promised to comply therewith, and the whole thereof will follow out and execute and well and duly pay the said *cens et rentes* to the said seigniors at the time and place aforesaid; with hypothecary lien on his estate, movable or immovable, and specially on the land above conceded, and the one obligation shall not derogate from the other.

And if the lessee, his heirs and assigns, fail to comply with the conditions aforesaid, in such case the said seigniorship may re-enter *de plein droit* the said land, and restore it to the domain of the said seigniorship, and dispose thereof in favor of any person as they think proper, and they shall not be bound to adopt any form of process whatsoever in so doing. The lessee shall be bound to have the said land measured by a sworn surveyor, and before planting bounds shall furnish the surveyor's report thereof to the seigniors at his own cost and expense, together with a copy of these presents within eight days.

And for the execution hereof, the lessee hath elected his domicile on the land herein above conceded, at which place, &c.

Notwithstanding, &c., for, &c., promising, &c., binding, &c., renouncing, &c.

Done and passed at the village of La Prairie, at the office of the undersigned notary, in the year 1819, the 26th April, in the afternoon; and the said Ignace Mkanawaha hath signed with the notaries; the said lessee, on enquiry, having declared his inability to write, hath made his mark, these presents having first been read.

(Signed) IGNACE MIKANAWAHA, JACQUES PATENAUDE, his mark. [...]

This deed is sufficient to create a strong presumption that the reserve has been illegally dispossessed and diminished by similar proceedings. Moreover, the present Government has threatened with legal process some of the *censitaires* who have occupied these lands for many years, and who have not paid any seigniorial rents, for the benefit of the Indians, for over 25 years in many cases. These *censitaires* who have been threatened by the Government are located at La Prairie, St. Constant and

St. Isidore, and are now proprietors of these lands. These threats have not been generally put in execution, but I learn that the Government have prosecuted two of the richest and largest proprietors of St. Constant, in order to make their case a test case.

I know not how the matter stands now; but in any case the fact of the farmers who occupy these lands being compelled to pay certain *rentes*, would not prove that the Indians had a right to sell these lands, whether they were sold by them, or by others who held them for their exclusive benefit; for the deeds of grant from the French kings declare that these lands were given to the Reverend Jesuit Fathers for the benefit and education of the Indians. It is also declared in the said deeds that the said lands shall revert to the Crown only in the event of the Indians abandoning the reserve. It is perfectly clear that the Indians have not abandoned their reserve, for they still occupy it; but they only occupy it in part, having been dispossessed of the rest. [...]

I do not want that the farmers who now hold a part of the Caughnawaga reserve should be dispossessed. In fact, I am not sure the thing could be done, even if it were desirable to do it, but I want that justice should be done to the Indians. If their lands have been unjustly taken from them – and until proof to the contrary, I am inclined to think they have – I think it would be but reasonable that the Government should take steps to indemnify them, or at least to ascertain whether they have not been dispossessed in an illegal manner. [...]

Mr. LAURIER. I would call the attention of the Minister to these facts in connection with the matter. It appears that the Indian reserve, such as it was conceded first by the Government of France, covered an area of over 30,000 acres of land, and it appears the reserve has now been diminished to about 12,000 acres. The white people evidently have crowded out the Indians, and have taken possession of their lands. [...] I understand that the Indian Department has taken proceedings a few months ago to compel some of those who are in possession of those Indian lands, to pay the ground rent. Now, I do not see how the Department could sue anybody in possession of Indian land to pay ground rent, unless those parties derived their title to possession from some concession made by the Government. If the Government are collecting ground rents which are owing to the Indians, these payments naturally go into the funds of the Indians, and would inure to their benefit; but if they are encroachments which have been made without any authority whatever by the whites, the case is different.

We know how it is in the vicinity of reserves; the white settlers are very apt to encroach a little every years, and the process goes on so long that the Indians may be deprived very materially of the reserve they originally possessed. If some of the encroachments have been going on, if to-day the Indians are deprived of a good deal of their lands, certainly the Department must take some measure – not to restore them their land, because I suppose that could not be done without a good deal of disturbance – but certainly in my opinion the Department should take some measure to indemnify them for the encroachments they have suffered. It is not fair to the Indians that they should be deprived of the lands which have been conceded to them

for their benefit, that the white settlers should be allowed to encroach upon them without any compensation being given to the Indians whatever.

“Non-payment of seignorial dues”¹⁶⁷ (April, 1893)

Messrs. J. Waniente Jocks, mayor of Caughnawaga, Lewis Jackson, councillor, and Mr. Broisseau, the Federal Indian agent, left for Ottawa yesterday to interview the Minister of the Interior as to grievances complained of by the Indians of Caughnawaga. The chief of these is the non-payment of seignorial dues by the white settlers, some of whom are thirty years in arrears. The royalty of \$1.50 per yard on the building stone of the Caughnawaga quarries is also objected to.

“The rents have been in arrears”¹⁶⁸ (April, 1894)

Mr. DALY moved for leave to introduce Bill (No. 97) respecting the Seigniority of St. Louis. He said: This Bill provides that the Governor General in Council may, upon such conditions as may be deemed expedient, accept from the censitaires 75 per cent of the arrears of rent due up to the 11th of November, 1892. It appears that the rents have been in arrears for thirty or forty years on this reserve, and efforts have been made to collect them, but owing to the resistance on the part of the censitaires to pay rents owing to the title of the seigniority being in dispute as between the Indians and the Quebec Government, such efforts were not successful, so an arrangement was made to pay 75 per cent. The question was laid before the Caughnawaga band, and they agreed to accept the amount on condition that it was paid in cash. On referring the matter to the Department of Justice, we were advised that it would be necessary to have legislation to confirm any such arrangement.

Action was brought against one Pinsoneault, to recover the amount of rent due, he being one of the censitaires. That suit has been going on for a long time, and is still pending, and we have not been able to get judgment.

The censitaires were induced to appear before a notary, and thus we have the names of all those who are in arrears and the amount owing by each, and also their agreement to pay 75 per cent. The total amount in arrears is about \$7,000, and by the acceptance of the compromise we shall not only receive the 75 per cent of the whole amount outstanding, but, upon our accepting this settlement on behalf of the Indians, the censitaires agree to pay their rents hereafter in full.

¹⁶⁷ From Indian Grievances. (1893, April 11). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ From Monday, 30th April, 1894. (1894). *Official Report of the Debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada. Fourth Session – Seventh Parliament*. Ottawa: S. E. Dawson.

“Reduction of the price”¹⁶⁹ (May, 1895)

Ottawa, May 28. – Sir Mackenzie Bowell in the senate last evening moved the second reading of a bill to amend the Indian act. [...] [An] important change by the proposed bill is a provision for the reduction of the price at which Indian lands have been sold, or the rent at which they have been leased when the same is excessive. It has been the custom of the department to make such reductions as are contemplated by the amendment when the circumstances warranted, but when reductions were made on a large scale, as was the case in the Saugeen peninsula in 1875, the authority of the governor-general-in-council was obtained. When, however, the question came up for wiping out part of the arrears due by the censitaires of Sault St. Louis, the minister of justice expressed the opinion that it would be necessary to have the authority of parliament for foregoing any part of the amount due. This gave rise to a doubt as to the legality of the department’s reducing even upon the authority of the governor-general-in-council arrears of purchase money of Indian lands or the interest thereon, and the minister of justice advised that the authority of parliament was necessary in making all such reductions.

Cases in which the making of such reductions was authorized by order in council in 1875 afford striking examples of purchasers of Indian lands undertaking to pay exorbitant prices. Purchases were made at public auction in 1856 and 1857 when speculation in land was rife, and the purchaser undertook to pay as high as five, six and seven dollars an acre for land which turned out totally unfit for cultivation. [There were] others who bought in the ordinary way on a surveyor’s valuation, which was made when the land was thickly wooded and the real estate market in an inflated condition. It would have been utterly impossible to have collected the amounts due by the purchasers, and to have evicted them would have been a hardship. Individual cases of a similar nature frequently come before the department. Too high a valuation is often made of the land, and even practical farmers are often deceived as to its value, finding after they begin to clear that there is no depth of soil and that the bare rocks will be exposed on a fire going over the land. The opinion of the minister of justice, however, bars the department from giving in this and other cases the relief which it is customary to grant. Hence the authority of parliament is asked for the department making reductions by way of foregoing part of the purchase money due or the interest thereon.

Very few reductions have been made in rents payable under lease. Indian lands are mostly leased for the benefit of the individual owners thereof, and only occasionally for that of the whole band, and when reductions of rent have been made in cases of land leased for the benefit of the Indian owner, the consent of the Indian owner has first been obtained. It is doubtful, however, whether the department has the authority to reduce rent even with the consent of the Indian owners, and as there [are] sometimes good reasons for reducing rent it has been thought well to remove all doubt as to the department’s right to do so.

¹⁶⁹ From THE INDIAN ACT. (1895, May 29). *The Manitoba Morning Free Press*, p. 2.

“The Appeal is by the Minister of Justice”¹⁷⁰ (September, 1896)

The appeal is by the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Canada, from a judgment of the Superior Court rendered on the 30th of June last, which dismissed an action brought on behalf of the Dominion [of] Canada for the recovery of seignioral rents in the seigniori of Sault St. Louis, belonging to the Iroquois Indians, and maintaining the intervention of the Attorney-General of the Province of Quebec, which claimed that the latter was entitled to collect their rents

The declaration set out that certain lots in the seigniori above mentioned, of which one Pinsonneault was in possession, were liable to a yearly rental of \$8 80, payable by privilege, and the plaintiff asked that the defendant be asked to abandon the same unless he preferred to pay an annual rental of \$8 80 for the past thirty years, amounting to \$264, and pass a new title in favor of Her Majesty, binding himself to pay such rental for the future.

It was further alleged that the seigniori and the lands therein were held by the Crown in trust, to be administered for the tribe of Indians known as the Iroquois, and such Indians as may join them upon the Caughnawaga reserve, and that the Government of the Dominion of Canada represents Her Majesty for all matters relating to Indians, and lands reserved for Indians, as proprietor and seigneur of the seigniori of Sault St. Louis.

It was further alleged that although in the titles it was stated that the lands in question formerly formed part of the estates belonging to the religious order of Jesuits, said property never did belong to them, but was originally ceded in favor of, and for the use and benefits of, the Iroquois Indians, and since 1762 has been held and administered by the Crown in trust for said Indians, and defendant Pinsonneault had so admitted, and had, up to thirty years ago, paid to Her Majesty the obligations under the titles and the seignioral rents provided by the Seignioral Act of 1854.

The Attorney-General of Quebec intervening, alleged that it appeared by the deeds produced that the lands, as to which the present demand was made for seignioral rent, are situated in the seigniori of Sault St. Louis, and heretofore formed part of the property of the Jesuit Order; that under the B. N. A. Act the seignioral rents of the seigniori belong to the Province of Quebec, and can only be claimed by the Attorney-General of this Province.

The Minister of Justice contested the intervention, alleging that the lands in question formed no part of any property that ever belonged to the Jesuit Order, and reciting, in support of this assertion, the original deeds of concession of the land in question granted in 1680 by the King of France.

The Court below held that the rents claimed by the action were claimed under deeds executed by the defendants' *auteurs* in favor of Her Majesty in 1828, and that after Confederation these rents continued, and were at the time of Confederation moneys payable to the Government of the former Province of Canada, for lands

¹⁷⁰ From LEGAL INTELLIGENCE. (1896, September 26). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

situate in the now Province of Quebec. Under section 109 of the B. N. A. Act, all sums payable at the time of Confederation to the then Province of Quebec, belong to this Province, subject to any trusts existing in respect thereof and to any interest other than of the Province therein. The intervention was maintained by the judgment appealed from.

On the part of the appellant, it was contended that the territory including the seigniory of Sault St. Louis and the lots in question, were granted by the French King to the Jesuits in trust for the Iroquois Indians. After the Jesuits were compelled to leave the territory it was administered by the Crown for the benefit of the Indians. It therefore became, and was, a seigniory held by the Crown in trust for the Indians. Since Confederation and under the B. N. A. Act, it is the Crown in right of the Dominion who should now hold the seigniory. The Indians and their lands are under the control of the Dominion. What could the Province do with these rents if it collected them? It has no authority over the Indians or their affairs.

Judgment was reserved.

“We, therefore, maintain the appeal”¹⁷¹ (January, 1897)

MOWAT es qual., appellant, and CASGRAIN es qual., respondent.

WURTELE, J. [Justice] – The defendant in this cause, Noel Pinsonneault, is the owner of certain lands situated in the Seigniory of Sault St. Louis, which are subject, under the cadastre made by the Seignioral Commissioner to the payment of constituted rents, representing the cens and rentes with which they were formerly charged. The Seigniory of Sault St. Louis is in possession of the tribe of Iroquois Indians, and their village is built on a part of the unconceded portion.

A suit has been instituted by the Attorney-General of the Dominion against Noel Pinsonneault for 30 years' arrears of the constituted rents with which his lands are charged; he alleges that the Seigniory is held by the Crown in trust for the Iroquois Indians, and that the Government of the Dominion, which has the administration of all matters relating to Indians, and of all lands reserved for them, has the right to sue for and collect the arrears of the rents in question. The Attorney-General for the Province of Quebec has intervened in the cause, and alleges that under the provisions of the Union Act of 1867, the Seigniory of Sault St. Louis is vested in the Crown represented, not by the Government of the Dominion, but by that of the Province of Quebec, and that the latter alone has the right to sue for and recover the arrears of the rents in question, subject, however, to the trust in favor of the Iroquois Indians, and he, therefore, prays that it should be declared that the arrears in question neither belong to nor are under the control of the Federal Government, but that they belong to and are under the control of the Province of Quebec, subject to the trust in favor of the Indians, and that the defendant should be condemned to pay such arrears to the Provincial Government. The defendant thereupon declared

¹⁷¹ From LEGAL INTELLIGENCE. (1897, January 21). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 6. The decision was written by Jonathan Saxton Campbell Würtele (1828 – 1904).

that he was ready to abide by the judgment of the Court and reserved the right to produce a plea of payment and compensation after the decision of the question raised by the intervention.

The Superior Court has maintained the pretensions of the Provincial Government, and the Government of the Dominion now appeals from this decision.

The Iroquois Indians, before 1680, were in the spiritual charge of the Jesuit Father and had been settled on lands situated in the Seigniorship of Laprairie. As these lands were swampy and undesirable, the Indians were dissatisfied with them and threatened to leave the locality. In order to retain them within the sphere of civilization and to keep them under the spiritual charge of the Jesuit Fathers, Louis XIV., by letters patent of the 29th May, 1680, granted to the Jesuit Fathers a tract of land containing two leagues in front on the River St. Lawrence, adjoining the Seigniorship of Laprairie, for the habitation and use of the Iroquois Indians, but with the condition that the land contained in such grant would revert to the Crown if the Indians should ever abandon it. Later on, another tract of land containing one league and a half in front, lying between the first grant and the Seigniorship of Chateauguay, was granted to the Jesuit Fathers by Louis de Buade, then the Governor of Canada, by letters-patent of the 31st October, 1680, for the same purpose and on the same condition as the first grant. The Indians established their village on the land contained in the second grant and afterwards the Jesuit Fathers conceded, under the Seigniorial Tenure, a part of the first grant to persons other than Indians.

The year after the capitulation of Montreal the Iroquois Indians laid a complaint against the Jesuit Fathers before the Governor of Montreal, alleging that the two grants of land had been made for their habitation and use, and complaining that the Jesuit Fathers pretended that they were the owners of the land, and that they were conceding portions of it to their detriment. The case was heard by the Governor, Thomas Gage, assisted by his Military Council, and on the 22nd March, 1762, a decree was rendered depriving the Jesuit Fathers of all right in the land contained in such grants, known as the Seigniorship of Sault St. Louis, and ordering that the Indians should be put and maintained in the same peaceful enjoyment of the same and of all the revenues produced thereby, but confirming, however, "the concessions which have been made by the Jesuit Fathers up to the 8th day of September, 1760, date of the capitulation of Montreal, and requiring the occupants to take new titles." It was further ordered that an agent should be appointed by the Governor for the collection of the rents of the conceded portion, and that he should account for his receipts annually to the Indians. By two ordinances passed, the one on the 20th September, 1764, and the other on the 12th November, 1764, a certain delay was given for the purpose of appealing from decrees or judgments which had been rendered prior to the 10th day of August, 1764, on which day civil Government was established in the Province; but no appeal was ever brought against the decree rendered on the 22nd March, 1762, by the Governor of Montreal and his Council on the complaint made by the Iroquois Indians against the Jesuit Fathers.

Since the date of that decree the Iroquois Indians have always been in possession of the Seigniori and the Seigniorial cadastre, which came into force on the 1st December, 1860, declares that it was possessed by them.

For a considerable time after the cession of Canada to the Crown of England, all Indian matters were managed and all Indian lands were administered by the Imperial Government, through officers appointed by it. During this period, the owners of the lands now in the possession of the defendant, executed renewal deeds, one on the 30th July, 1828, and the other on the 3rd August, 1828, acknowledging that they were charged with Seigniorial rents payable to His Majesty the King of England as Seignior of the Seigniori of Sault St. Louis. The Iroquois Indians only had the use and enjoyment of the Seigniori, and the land and Seigniorial dues were consequently vested in the King subject to such use and enjoyment; and the King as the Guardian of the Indians had the administration of their property. Then the control and administration of these matters were transferred to the Provincial Government, but while the Provincial Government had the management of Indian affairs, the title of lands appropriated for the Indians and of Seigniorial rents accruing therefrom remained vested in the Sovereign. Immediately prior to Confederation, all lands and property in Lower Canada appropriated for the use of any tribe or body of Indians were, under sec. 7 of ch. 14 of the Consolidated Statutes for Lower Canada, being an Act respecting Indians and Indian lands, vested in trust for such tribes and bodies of Indians in a commissioner of Indian lands for Lower Canada, who was appointed from time to time by the Governor; and this commissioner was authorized to recover and receive the rents, issues and profits of all such lands and properties.

By the Union Act, or the British North America Act, 1867, a division is made of the powers and functions of governance between the Government of the Dominion on the one hand, and the Governments of the Provinces on the other hand, and also of the respective legislative powers of the Parliament of the Dominion and of the Legislatures of the provinces. The distribution of legislative powers is made by sections 91 and 92; but the powers of the Provincial Legislatures are restricted to the subjects mentioned in section 92, while in addition to the subjects mentioned in section 91, the Parliament of Canada has the power to legislate on all matters not contained in the classes of subjects attributed to the Provincial Legislatures. Among the matters attributed to the Parliament of the Dominion, paragraph 24 mentions "Indians, and lands reserved for the Indians." [...] The power and right of legislating, respecting Indians and land reserved for the Indians, entrusts the Government of the Dominion with the administration and control of the affairs and of the lands and property of the Indians.

After Confederation, the Parliament of the Dominion repealed ch. 14, of the Consolidated Statutes for Lower Canada, respecting Indians and Indian lands, and enacted that there should be a department of Indian affairs which should have the management, charge and direction of Indian affairs, and that the Minister of the Interior, or the head of any other department appointed to that purpose by the Governor-in-Council, should be the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and should, as

such, have the control and management of the lands and property of the Indians in Canada. These provisions were afterwards consolidated in "The Indian Act," and are contained in sections 4, 5 and 6 of ch. 4 of the Revised Statutes of Canada. As a matter of fact, I may say that from the formation of the Union on the 1st of July, 1867, the control, direction and management of all matters relating to Indians and of their lands and property were assumed and have ever since been exercised by the Government of the Dominion.

But it is contended that, inasmuch as at the time of Confederation, all lands or property appropriated for the use of Indians in Canada were vested in the Crown although in trust for their benefit and use, they fell and belonged under the provisions of section 109 of the Union Act, to the Province in which they were situated, subject, however, to the trust or interest of the Indians existing in respect of the same. The Attorney-General for the Province of Quebec maintains, therefore, that the constituted rents of which the arrears are claimed by the suit in this cause, and which represent the lands upon which they are charged, belong to the Province of Quebec, subject, however, to any trust or interest existing in respect thereof, and that it is the Crown represented by the Government of the Province of Quebec, and not the Crown represented by the Government of the Dominion, which has the right to sue for an recover the arrears claimed in this cause.

The special condition contained in the grants from the Crown of France and the two tracts of land forming the Seigniorship of Sault St. Louis, which provides that such land should revert to the Crown should the Iroquois Indians ever abandon their settlement, does not affect the present use and enjoyment of the seigniorship by them, and it must be borne in mind that we are now dealing with such use and enjoyment, and not with the ownership of the Seigniorship.

While section 109 assigns all lands to the Government of the several provinces in which they are situated, it, however, does so "subject to any trust existing in respect thereof, and to any interest other than that of the province in the same." [...] On the one hand, the Province of Quebec holds the naked ownership of the constituted rents, and on the other hand, the Indians have a right to the enjoyment and use thereof so long as they remain in their settlement on the Seigniorship of Sault St. Louis.

The question to be decided does not relate to the ownership of these constituted seigniorial rents, but is as to whom it appertains to sue for, recover and collect the arrears. By the Union Act the Government of the Dominion is entrusted with the administration of the affairs and properties of the Indians in Canada, and, under the Indian Act, the control and management of their lands and property is confided to the Department of Indian Affairs, under the charge and direction of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, who was authorized, as was the Commissioner of Indian Lands before Confederation, to collect and receive the rents, issue and profits of the lands and property appropriated for Indians, and to apply the same to their use. The Government to which such control and management is entrusted must necessarily have as a corollary the right to sue wherever the affairs of the trust require such action. [...] We are of opinion, therefore, that the suit for the recovery of the arrears was properly brought by the Attorney-General of the Dominion; that the intervention

of the Attorney General of the Province of Quebec is unfounded, and that there is error in the judgment appealed from which maintains the intervention.

We, therefore, maintain the appeal with costs; we set aside and annul the judgment appealed from and rendered by the Superior Court on the 30th of June, 1896, and proceeding to pronounce the judgment which should have been rendered, we dismiss the intervention with costs.

Schools

“In a rather precarious condition”¹⁷² (May, 1879)

Sir, – It is rumored that the spirit has moved the heart strings of the Indian Chiefs at Sault St. Louis to repair the school-house, which is at present in a rather precarious condition from old age, and also the frequent councils which are held in it during the winter season, as the warriors are more at liberty at that time than any other part of the year. It is about time that the Chiefs took this in hand, as the present occupier is well worthy of a better mansion than the one in which Providence has been pleased to place him and his family. It must be borne in mind that the inhabitants of Sault St. Louis have to thank the pen of their present schoolmaster for all the good which the civilized world knows of them.

It is to be hoped that the rumor is true, and that the chiefs will use their endeavors not only in making the school-house commodious for their good master, but also for the benefit of their children, so that in after time the descendants of the present generation will look back with profound respect upon the memory of their ancestors, when they look upon the old school-house wherein they learned the first ideas which lead them into the ways and habits of Christians and civilized citizens.

The Chiefs well deserve the congratulations of the public, for a better move could not have been made than to repair the school-house for their present master and make it a credit to themselves and an honor to the Indian Reservation of Sault St. Louis.

PROGRESS.

“It is a pleasant surprise”¹⁷³ (July, 1880)

The annual examination of the pupils of the Indian school at Sault St. Louis took place on Thursday, the 8th of July, under the direction of the resident schoolmaster who, in consequence of the unsatisfactory state of the aborigines in 1869, was appointed by the Dominion Government to take charge of the Indian proportion of that reservation. It is a well known fact that the aborigines were in a

¹⁷² From PROGRESS. (1879, May 22). TO THE EDITOR OF THE GAZETTE. *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 2.

¹⁷³ From SAULT ST. LOUIS INDIAN SCHOOL. (1880, July 12). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 4.

pitiable condition as far as education goes, and that, as a rule, the majority of them did not seem to appreciate the importance of cleanliness, and to-day it is a pleasant surprise to see the pupils so remarkably clean and well dressed. The progress made by the pupils is most satisfactory, and the greatest praise is due to the pioneers of Indian education in this district, for the pains-taking manner in which they have carried on their labours. Mr. Fletcher, the school-master, has a large number of certificates on the school register as to his abilities and the success that has attended his cohorts.

“The examination was most satisfactory”¹⁷⁴ (July, 1882)

The annual examination of the Indian school at Caughnawagaa took place in the school-house on Saturday morning. The event created quite a stir in the village, the whole population, except the men who were working as pilots, were in attendance, and filled the lower part of the room, those who could not find room inside crowding round the windows. The school children were seated in rows in front, and looked remarkably picturesque with their bright-colored dresses, intelligent, animated faces and large dark brown eyes. The Rev. Fathers Burtin Guillette, Messrs. Grondin, School Inspector, Cherrier, Indian Agent, and Williams, Grand Chief, were present. Among the visitors from Montreal were Mrs. Dr. Hingston, Miss Pope, Mr. McDonald of the Inland Revenue and his wife.

The greatest difficulty was found in deciding the winners of the prizes for catechism and geography. In each case two candidates held out, answering every question correctly, and [a] decision was only arrived at in the first case by drawing lots, and in the other by giving the prize to the one who had attended most regularly. The prizes were judiciously selected, the poor children receiving articles of clothing and those of the more prosperous parents, books, pictures and toys. The principal prizes were a handsome prayer-book presented by Mrs. Hingston and a silver cup by the schoolmaster, Mr. Fletcher.

Short addresses were made by Father Burtin, Messrs. McDonald, Gryndin and Cherrier and Grand Chief Williams, complimenting Mr. Fletcher on the progress the children had made and advising the latter to attend regularly, after which a handsome pincushion was presented to Mrs. Hingston by the pupils as a mark of their appreciation of her kindness.

The examination was most satisfactory. The children showed wonderful aptitude, and were by no means behind their white *confreres*, in fact it seemed as if their intellect were in proportion to the darkness of their skin. Mr. Fletcher deserves great credit for the state of proficiency to which he has brought his pupils despite the disadvantages with which he has had to contend.

¹⁷⁴ From CAUGHNAWAGA INDIAN SCHOOL. (1882, July 10). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

“The whole population were in attendance”¹⁷⁵ (July, 1883)

The annual examination of the pupils of Mr. Fletcher’s School at Caughnawaga took place on Saturday morning, and the event created quite an excitement in the village. The whole population were in attendance, and filled the room to such an extent that it was suffocating, those who could not find room inside crowding around the window. The pupils were seated in rows in front, and looked remarkably picturesque, with their dark brown skins, intelligent and animated faces and large black eyes. The Rev. Father Burtin, Messrs. Grondin, School Inspector, Cherrier, Indian Agent, and Chief Montour, were present. Among the visitors from Montreal and other places were Mr. Macdonald, of the Inland Revenue, and his wife, Miss Marry Ann Andrews, of Fournierville and T. D. Hare, of Maynooth College, Ireland, and Messrs. Bruce and Napoleon Giassion, of Caughnawaga.

The program consisted of history, geography, spelling, translating history into Indian, English grammar, catechism, dictation, composition and map tracing. The greatest interest was manifested in deciding the winners of the prizes for arithmetic, catechism and geography. The prizes were judiciously selected, and all who had put a certain number of days in attendance at the school received suits of clothes and other articles of apparel; pupils, for proficiency, &c., received books and other appropriate articles suitable for the occasion. The principal prizes were two suits of boy’s clothes, presented by Mr. I. A. Beeuvais, merchant tailor, for the best attendance and for the promotion of education among the Iroquois. Chiefs Williams and Jocks, James Bruce, Joseph Barns, Chas. Giassion, Sr., Francis Delisle, Edward De Blois and G. C. Giassion, of Caughnawaga, also Messrs. Ligget & Hamilton, of Montreal, largely contributed towards the prize list; the village constable sent a box of candies, which was highly appreciated by the pupils of the school.

Short addresses were made by Father Burtin, Messrs. Macdonald, Cherrier and Grondin, complimenting the schoolmaster on the progress the children had made and advising the latter to attend regularly, after which a handsome holy water font was presented to Mrs. Macdonald by the pupils as a mark of appreciation of her kindness in attending their examinations.

The exercise was most satisfactory. The pupils showed wonderful aptitude, being by no means behind their white *confreres*, and it spoke well for the persistence of the teacher in battling against Indianism, in order to ingraft education on the nomadic intellectual faculties of his pupils.

Our readers know that we are not indulging in unmerited praise, and we consider it an act of simple justice here to remark that the progress made by the Indians in general is owing to the assiduity of the present master in pushing education to such a state of perfection that the whole of the Iroquois now send their children to the school. The schoolmaster is deservedly popular with all who are acquainted with him. To chiefs and warriors he is equally well known and beloved,

¹⁷⁵ From CHILDREN OF THE FOREST. (1883, July 12). *The Montreal Gazette*, p. 3.

and has the art of winning the confidence of all, making himself equally at home with all, and the amount of good work he does is incalculable.

“Round like an orange and slightly flattened”¹⁷⁶ (1883)

Those of our readers who have travelled from Toronto to Montreal by water will remember that, before attempting the perilous descent of the Sault St. Louis rapids, the boat stops at the Iroquois village of Caughnawaga to take on board an Indian pilot. This veteran, by name Jean Baptiste, is a well-known figure to Canadian eyes. His stately form has been handed down to posterity on the four-dollar notes of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, and one of Notman’s best photographs shows him guiding the *Corinthian* through the seething waters of the fall, with the dangers of which he is so familiar. It is chiefly owing to his name and fame that the travelling public know anything of Caughnawaga, and yet it has a past, a present, and a future of its own, far removed from the commonplace history of river-side hamlets. The village gives its name to the whole Indian reserve, which lies in the county of La Prairie, on the southern side of the St. Lawrence, opposite to Lachine on the island of Montreal. It is chiefly farmed by Iroquois, though there is a sprinkling of other nations, and even among the Iroquois there is a pretty general admixture of French and Scotch blood.

As viewed from the Lachine pier, Caughnawaga has the appearance of a large and flourishing village; but in this, as in many other cases, “distance lends enchantment to the view.” If you happen to take an interest in Indian education it would be well to visit the place on the day of the annual examination of the government school. There is a ponderous ferry-boat plying between Lachine and Caughnawaga, that at stated hours will convey you from that railway wharf at Lachine to a rather rickety pier on the Caughnawaga side; but by far the pleasantest mode of crossing is in a canoe paddled by two brawny red men, who smile loftily at your fears and guarantee safety. The current here is fearfully swift, and, let the braves pull never so strongly, you are pretty sure to be carried quite a distance down the river, to be paddled up again at the opposite bank until a convenient spot is seen for hauling up the canoe and helping you over the stones to dry land.

Once landed you look about for the imposing little town you saw from Lachine. Can this collection of straggling gray houses be Caughnawaga? – warm-looking (indeed, far too warm on this sultry summer day), but for the most part uncleanly and most irregular in situation and in architectural design. The soil is dry, white, and sandy, the atmosphere close and none of the pleasantest. One is stuck by the absence of whitewash, paint, flowers, and the small prettinesses that give such charm to French villages. The houses are open to the public gaze, and within can be seen bead-work and bark-work, and other evidences of the chief trade of the place – work laid down for the time, for the workers have betaken themselves to the schoolhouse to see, or perchance to receive, the reward of merit.

¹⁷⁶ From At Caughnawaga, P. Q. (1883). *The Catholic World*, XXXVII(221), 607-623

The building now used as a school-house is about two hundred years old. It was originally the residence of the military commander; for the place was once well fortified, and troops stationed here to guard the early converts. Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, known to the Indians as the great *Onontio*, or governor, has rested within its precincts; Mantet, Courtemanche, and La Noue probably sojourned here while collecting their Indian army to subdue the Mohawk foes; and the old walls doubtless have seen many a doughty deed and sheltered many a gallant soldier of France. Now they echo the sound of the pedagogue's voice as he leads his flock through the mysteries of Lindley Murray, soars with them to the planetary system, conducts them along the green pastures of history and geography, and aids them over the stumbling-blocks of arithmetic. There are one hundred and nine children on the roll of this school, but the average attendance is only forty-five. Indian boys can earn two dollars and a half by piloting a raft down the rapids, and the money as well as the excitement is naturally a great inducement to them to play truant. The girls are enticed away by large payments for bead-work, so that it seems almost impossible to secure a regular attendance at school. On the occasion of an examination there is, however, a goodly number present.

The lady patroness of the school, the parish priest, the grand chief of the tribe, and some other invited guests are provided with books and enter heartily into the questioning of the pupils and the awarding of prizes to the most deserving. Class after class of sturdy Iroquois children come forward to answer the questions put to them in English and Iroquois, while the standing-room is filled to overflowing with interested spectators. Some women wear the "tête couverte" – that is, a black shawl wrapped over the head, and the hair hanging in glossy braids; others are more modernly attired, some few even fashionably. The feminine nature betrays its curiosity by an expression of lively interest in the proceedings; the men, on the contrary, appear haughtily indifferent. Not so the small boys, who literally swarm, perched on the window-ledges, on the tops of posts, on the backs of benches – anywhere to get a peep. The room is gaily decorated with spruce and bead-work, and the pupils all have an air of neatness and cleanliness that reflects great credit on the training of their teacher. Their answers show a great amount of painstaking and perseverance on the part of the instructor and instructed, and prove that the Indian mind can be led in the paths of knowledge and rectitude. Now and then there is a slight hitch, owing, perhaps, to the confusion of tongues, or perhaps to the minds of the pupils having wandered to the tempting pile of prizes. For instance, to the question, "What was Christopher Columbus?" the answer, "Round like an orange and slightly flattened at both ends," was rather disconcerting. [...] At Caughnawaga catechism is a strong point, so much so that three boys are ties for the prize – a handsome prayer-book bound in velvet and silver and given by the lady patroness. It takes nearly a quarter of an hour's dodging among the most lengthy and difficult answers before the winner can be determined upon. At the close of the examination speeches are made in English and French by most of the visitors, and in Iroquois by the curé and by the grand chief, Mr. Joseph Williams, called in his native tongue *Skatsentie*. Then the well-pleased children troop out into the village street, and the

guests from Montreal, the parish priest, his assistant, the grand chief and his daughter, adjourn to another part of the time-honored mansion, where a most tempting dinner has been provided.

The burning sun, so unpleasant in Caughnawaga streets, has a most beneficial effect on Caughnawaga gardens. The beans and peas trained under the shelter of the massive walls of the old régime cannot be surpassed; the cucumbers and tomatoes spreading over the ruins of Count Frontenac's masonry are unrivalled; fruit, too, and flowers, plump birds, lordly beef, the very nuttiest of cream and butter; and, though it is early in the season, there is a watermelon, the gift of Chief Williams, who has just returned from visiting his branch business in the United States and brought with him some of the delicacies of New York markets. [...]

The population of Caughnawaga numbers seventeen thousand; of these there are very few pure Indians, and descent from European races is plainly discernible in feature and complexion. There is one man, bearing the Scottish name of McCumber, who rejoices in a family of thirty-six children. The French who marry Indian women and get possession of a portion of the Indian reserve clearly usurp the birthright of those for whom the land was set apart. The toleration of this by the government agent, as well as his offensively reminding the chiefs of their being as minors and unable to vote, etc., caused a commotion at Caughnawaga not long ago, but the new arrangement suggested by Sir John A. MacDonald, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, has given intense satisfaction. It was announced to the council of chiefs that the Department of Indian affairs proposed at an early date to have the reserve subdivided into lots and to issue titles to each location, and that the department hoped soon that the whole band, or such members of it as may be deemed fit for the change, would be enfranchised. This promise has been in part fulfilled, and the grand chief is very sanguine as to its working well and benefiting his "braves."

Once a month the grand chief summons the minor chiefs to meet in the council-house. The position of grand chief is not hereditary, but is accorded by the votes of the tribe; the chiefship of the subdivisions, however, descends from father to son.

When a marriage is arranged it is etiquette for the respective chiefs of the tribes to which the contracting parties belong to inform the council of the arrangement; word is then given to the priest, and the banns called on Sunday. On Monday the marriage ceremonies begin.

The altar-rails are decorated, usually by being covered with carpet. Wedding presents are tied or hung on a long pole, which is carried in front of the bridegroom and bride, who are escorted to the house of the bride's father, with whom it is customary for the young people to live two years. The festivities are kept up for three days. In some cases everything is decided by the parent, and the bride and groom know nothing about it until they hear their names called in church! When a widower marries a widow he leaves his own children in his own house and goes to live in hers. [...]

In the old histories of Canada there is usually reference made to Caughnawaga, or Sault St. Louis. Lambert, in his *North America, 1806 to 1808*, says:

“Here I observed one of their little girls, about seven years old, with something in her arms which she seemed to be nursing, and was going to look at it when she ran away and hid it under her blanket, as if ashamed; upon which I ran after her, and found it was a doll placed upon a little cradle-board and bandaged up with little pieces of colored cotton in exact imitation of the manner in which the Indian women nurse their children. I call it the cradle-board because it serves the purpose when the child is restless far better than the English cradle, it being the practice to suspend it by a string from the branch of a tree or the top of their wigwam, and swing it backwards and forwards till the child falls asleep.” [...]

Here and there a cradle of the old back-board pattern shows a lingering fondness for the old custom. On the wharf a bevy of Indian women sit motionless, waiting the arrival of the ferry-boat that is to convey them and their beaded wares to market. On the water – or, more truly, in it – some small boys are constructing a miniature raft. Up and down the platform pace two Oblate novices telling their beads. All is picturesque, even the stoical disregard of time.