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Department of Indian Affairs



OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR OF INDIAN
AGENCIES AND RESERVES.

ADDRESS REPLY TO
Inspector of Indian Agencies
OTTAWA

Ottawa, June 3rd, 1901. 139

MEMORANDUM:

For the Honorable the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

Lying to the north and north-east of the country surrendered by the Indians under the Robinson Treaties lies the tract indicated upon the annexed map. In the year 1899 the undersigned together with D. C. Scott, Esquire, Accountant, visited New Brunswick House at the head waters of the Moose River, north of Lake Superior, for the purpose of meeting certain Robinson Treaty Indians, and there met a number of Indians who do not participate in the benefits of that Treaty. These represented many others whose rights of occupancy to the territory north of the tract covered by the Robinson Treaties had not been, and have not since the date mentioned been, extinguished.

These Indians had come from considerable distances and asked what the Government proposed to do about the rights of Indians residing between James Bay and the Great Lakes who had not been treated with by the Honorable Mr. Robinson, ^(in 1850) saying that they heard that railroads were projected through their country, and that already miners, prospectors, and surveyors were beginning to pass through it in such largely increased numbers that the game was disturbed, interference with their means of livelihood had commenced, and their rights were being trespassed.

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being trespassed upon.

The answer given to them was that without doubt the Government would deal with them in the same spirit of justice that it has always manifested towards Indians; that it would be time to expect compensation for their rights when those projects of which they spoke came to be carried out, and disturbance of their means of subsistence became serious; that until such time they should remain content, and believe that when the Government permitted projects to proceed which might affect their interests it would certainly not fail to properly consider their claims. The nicest spirit of confidence was manifested by the inquirers, and from that time until now the undersigned has heard nothing further of the matter.

Recent developments seem to have brought about the time when it becomes proper to inform you of the aforementioned facts. Projects for railroads from Quebec, Mattawa, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and the settlement of New Ontario are much discussed. Advance explorations and surveys have been and are being made, and the Indians, cognizant of all this, are no doubt looking forward to and probably awaiting with some anxiety the action of the Government in respect to their rights.

The Robinson Treaties only extend as far north as the divide between the waters respectively running into James Bay and the Great Lakes, and this divide, as may be seen by reference to the annexed map, extends at some points south of the line of the Canadian Pacific

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Pacific Railway. from this it will be clear to you that, already, country to which the Indians have recognised and unextinguished rights is being settled and used, and the undersigned conceives it to be his duty to inform you that they expect to have their title considered as he thinks the time ^{may} have arrived when they believe that this should be done.

The number of Indians inhabiting the tract referred to is not reliably known nor is their present disposition understood, and it is submitted that it might be wise to collect trust-worthy information in respect to both. This could perhaps be most satisfactorily done by an officer visiting a few easily accessible places in the tract such as Matachawan, Lake Abittibi, River Abittibi Post, Moose Factory, and perhaps Albany. Such an officer without committing the Government to any course might, if any discontent happens to exist amongst these Indians, allay it by letting them know that when the proper time comes their claims would be considered. The undertaking would not lead to any large expense as the posts mentioned could be visited in probably six weeks. The result would be the collection of a mass of information that would in the near future be of value and prevent any possible complications arising between the Indians and any persons who may have business within the territory. It may be remembered that such complications led to the making of the Robinson Treaties.

Most respectfully submitting this memorandum for your information,

J. H. Macdonald

I. I. A. & R.

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