

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE
GRADUAL CIVILIZATION OF THE INDIAN
NATIVES: MADE TO THE YEARLY
MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY
OF FRIENDS, HELD IN PHILADELPHIA, IN
THE FOURTH MONTH, 1838**

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Report of the Committee for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Natives: Made to the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Held in Philadelphia, in the Fourth Month, 1838 by Various

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*At a Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia by adjournments
from the 16th of the Fourth Month, to the 20th of the
same, inclusive, 1838.*

The Committee appointed for the gradual Civilization of the Indian Natives, produced a circumstantial and interesting report of their proceedings in the course of the past year. Their care in rendering pecuniary aid to our red brethren, for the relief of their wants produced by the failure or loss of crops, and in other respects—also in assisting them in presenting to Congress and to the President of the United States, their protest and remonstrance against a spurious treaty, by which a small portion of the tribes would sell their lands, and thereby subject the whole to be removed to the western wilds of this country—was satisfactory to the Meeting, and approved. That Committee is authorised to print and publish such parts of the report and documents now read, as may appear to them expedient, for the information of our own members, and Friends in other Yearly Meetings, and to promote feelings of sympathy and interest on behalf of this afflicted and helpless class of our fellow-men.

Extracted from the minutes,

WILLIAM EVANS,

Clerk.

REPORT.

TO THE YEARLY MEETING.

THE committee charged with the gradual civilization and improvement of the Indian Natives

Report,—

That the Friends who went, in the fall of 1836, to reside on the farm at Tunessassah, still continue there, and have received during the past year efficient aid from our friend Robert Scotten, who spent several months at the reservation. Under their superintendence the grist and saw mills have undergone a complete repair. We have also through their means received more frequent information respecting the condition of the Indians residing in the vicinity of that place, than we have been accustomed for some years before to obtain.

In our report last year we informed the Yearly Meeting that, owing to the failure of the crops, six hundred dollars had been expended by direction of the committee, in the purchase of corn and potatoes, for the relief of such of the natives as had not otherwise the means of support. Soon after that meeting, a communication was received from four of the chiefs on the Allegheny reservation, from which the following is an extract, viz.

“ We, the chiefs of the Allegheny reservation, to our brothers the Quakers in Philadelphia.—Robert

Scotten now residing here, has bought and faithfully divided amongst us, provision for us and our children, which has been a great help to us ; for which we are very thankful, believing the Great Spirit has sent our brothers to help us. Now we will speak on the subject of schools. One school has been opened at Cornplanter's settlement, which has been attended by from twenty-five to thirty children. We are very desirous that our children should go to school and get learning ; but the teacher is unsteady. We, the chiefs, are encouraged to have our children schooled, and intend to build a school house next summer, near Cold Spring.

" Brothers, excuse us for getting along so slow ; we have not strength to get along as fast as we ought ; having lost our provision, many of our people have been from home all winter, hunting to get provision. We hope you will not give up your kindness to us."

A letter from the Friends at Tunessassah, dated 8th Mo. 21st, 1837, has the following paragraph.

" The improvement of the natives in agriculture does not bear a very favourable appearance at present, as many of them have been reduced to poverty by the loss of their crops, and have sold their oxen and horses to procure bread, and let their land out to white people to farm. Such Indians as had oxen or horses to work, put in their spring crops tolerably well ; their corn crops are mostly pretty well grown, but the spring being cold and backward, we are fearful that frost will come before it ripens. Their crops of spring wheat, oats, buckwheat and potatoes look well. The natives have not often sat with us in a meeting capacity, but we have had frequent opportunities with them on religious subjects to good satisfaction. They stand open to hear us on those subjects and have feelingly approbated what has been offered."

By another letter dated 12th Mo. 20th, we are informed, that "the school at Old Town, taught by Peter Crous, (a half-breed Indian) has been in operation about four weeks; it is small, not exceeding ten scholars at any time; probably the number may be considerably increased soon." "The prospect of a school at Cornplanter's settlement is at present no wise flattering, although most of the natives of that place appear to be desirous for it."—"In attending to the subject recommended by our friends Enoch Lewis and Joseph Elkinton, of ascertaining the number of sheep that the natives wish to purchase, most of those who are circumstanced so as to keep them, appeared disposed to get them as soon as they are in circumstances to pay for them. Several declined subscribing for them for want of funds. Eighteen individuals subscribed for ninety-nine sheep, which will be procured as soon as the funds are furnished to pay for them. From what I have been able to discover in going about among the natives, I believe most of them have grain enough to carry them pretty comfortably through the winter. There are a few who are entirely destitute, and some others nearly so; but with reasonable exertion on their part, they may procure a comfortable subsistence for their families."

This anticipation was not fully realized, and it being apprehended that some families would suffer for want of an adequate supply of food, unless some aid was rendered them, the Friend residing on the reservation was authorized to expend three hundred dollars in the purchase of corn, for distribution among such of the natives as were in want. A letter received from him dated 3rd Mo. 28th last says, "I purchased two hundred and ninety-six bushels of corn, and have handed out to the natives about one hundred bushels, and nearly the same

amount of potatoes, which have been thankfully received by them. I think there has not been much more suffering among them during the past winter for want of provisions, than is ordinary. A large number of them have been engaged in cutting and hauling logs to the bank of the river, which furnished them with means to procure a subsistence for themselves; and the few who had plenty of their own raising, assisted those who were unable to provide for themselves. But the present would probably have been a time of suffering with a considerable number, had there not been a supply at hand. Provisions have been unusually scarce and dear since the sleighing failed; corn meal has been sold at Cold Spring at four and a half cents per pound."

"The school at Old Town, will close the present week, having been continued one quarter and a half. The teacher attended strictly to the school. I think fifteen or sixteen was the largest number of scholars that I saw in attendance at any one time. The scholars made considerable progress in learning; two studied arithmetic; four were learning to write, and six read in the testament."

In the 9th Mo. last, the following communication from three of the chiefs on the Allegheny was received, viz.

"Brothers, the Quakers of Philadelphia. We, the chiefs of the Allegheny reservation, believe you to be our best friends, and want you to know how much trouble we have about our land. Schermhorn came to Buffalo not long since, and left money with our agent to hire Indians to sign their names in favour of selling their land. The agent sent out runners to the several reservations in the state for that purpose, and procured sixty signers. Samuel Gordon came to Allegheny and offered Blacksnake one thousand dollars for his name,

which he refused, as he preferred keeping the land for his children. There are but two chiefs and two others, on the Allegheny in favour of selling. Our agent also selected nine chiefs to send as delegates to the west, to see the land where they intend Indians to move to, which made us very uneasy, and we met together in council at Cold Spring, and got a petition drawn and signed by ninety-two Indians in favour of keeping our land, to send to Washington; and the Indians on the other reservations are doing the same. Our agent is holding back our annuity until the chiefs return from the west, which will be nearly three months hence.

“ We are determined not to sell our land, but to stay on it. We have good crops of corn and potatoes growing, and hope we will be strengthened to go forward and improve. We would be glad to have an answer and know your opinion on the subject of selling our land.”

Knowing the anxiety of some of the white people to procure the removal of the Indians from all their lands in New York, and fearing that the efforts so strenuously made to obtain a cession of their present reservations, might result in some procedure seriously injurious to the Indians, we concluded that a visit by a part of our number would be advisable, before we attempted to communicate any particular advice in regard to their present condition, or future decisions. In pursuance of this conclusion, two members of the committee left Philadelphia on the 30th of the 10th, and arrived at Tunessassah on the 8th of the following month.

During the time they remained among the Indians, they took the opportunity of visiting as many of their habitations, and conversing with such of the most intelligent people, as they con-