

To the Editor of the *Canadian Chronicle*.

August 15th, 1849.

Sir,—I perceive a great deal of sympathy uselessly expended throughout the various papers of the Province, in the so called eloquent speech of the Sault Indians, which a long acquaintance with them and many others satisfies me they did not make. Take from it a few *Indian* words, and a few *Indian* idioms, and the remainder is all *white*.

It is undoubtedly true, that the Governor had no right to dispose of any portion of these lands, without the form of a trial, British custom having, in all cases, previously sanctioned, if not rendered imperial, such a course of proceeding. This is the amount of the grievance; the remainder is *judge*.

In the first place, Chinguikong is not the chief, and he has no claim to it, from birth or inheritance; he is a half breed from the extremity of Lake Superior, shrewd and intelligent, and who has worked himself up to a prominent place, by means of the traders and Missionaries, and what is vulgarly called the "gift of the gab." *Nay-bay-nay-go-chag*, *Koo-oh-kasse*; and *Nuh-oh-guay-guh-chag*, are the three chiefs who really own from the Sault, down to *Misisaugau*; the father of the first was killed in action during the last war.

The tract of land, with the exception of a few small spots, is utterly and irreclaimably barren, and of no possible use to them. Its mineral riches, if any, could never have been rendered available, either by their own means or industry. And they are acting somewhat the part of the dog in the manger, in wishing still to control or sell at an exorbitant rate, land of no service whatever to them, and rendered valuable merely by the enterprise and outlay of the Whites.

These Indians falsely assert that the labours of the miners destroy their trappings, and drive away the game upon which they subsist. They neither trap nor hunt, depending entirely upon fish for their subsistence. That of course I mean to apply to them as a body; for a few do set marten traps, and occasionally kill a cariboo, but this is many miles in the interior, and far beyond the reach of the few mining operations on the front. In the winter bears abound, and are easily caught, throughout the extent of the coast. I have seen many scores taken within a quarter of a mile of the "*Bruce Mines*," where the blasting was incessant.

The *Abernethys* of the north shore of Lake Huron to *La Cloche* are emphatically no hunters. I mean those inhabiting the immediate coast; and these suffer nothing with regard to furs or provisions from the development of the mineral wealth, which might for them have slumbered there for ages. They may stand upon their dignity and say they ought to have been consulted; I myself think they should, but their loss "hath this extent, no more." They no doubt will receive a fair price, which properly invested will be of far more utility to them, than the empty honor of barren possessions.

On Lake Superior it is the same as applies to the land, and but very few Indians inhabit its shores permanently. The policy of the "*Hudson's Bay Company*" has been to keep them as much as possible in the interior, under their immediate control, and unexposed to the temptation of any passing trader, who, with a few quarts of spirits, could soon deprive them of the means of paying their "winter credits," as these are termed; for this purpose they have been allowed to extend the lands near the Lake, which are carefully preserved farther back, and the consequence is, that few or no fur bearing animals or others are to be found within the limits of the mining patents.

You may rely upon the correctness of this statement, and much though I should hate to see an Indian injured or defrauded, I cannot forbear from pointing out the inaccuracy of their "talk." The advent of the miner is to them a matter of benefit, and ought to be one of gratulation, and if they choose to plant potatoes and corn on a few fertile spots on the islands and flats of the *Thessalin*, they might from their sale and that of their fish, both good and abundant, derive a certain and comfortable subsistence.

J. W. KEATING.

THE PORTLAND RAILWAY.—Our readers are aware that an offer from the contractors to complete this work has been some time on the tapis, and that Messrs. Young & Galt have been employed in making the arrangements in detail. We learn now that this arrangement is completed, and merely awaits the ratification of the directors of which we presume there can be no doubt. We understand that the manner of paying for this work is to be something like this:—The line to *Sherbrooke* will cost in round numbers say £200,000.