

INDIANS OF DOMINION.

The Indian Act of 1876 has met with very general acceptance among the Indians of Ontario. A steady improvement among the Missisaguas and Six Nations is reported by the agent. More lands are brought into cultivation, the wood law has proved beneficial, more attention is being paid to the schools, and drunkenness has diminished. The population steadily increases year by year, and there is general welfare and prosperity.

A general improvement is noticed among the Indians of the Central Superintendency of Ontario, numbering about 3000. The provisions of the Indian Act have afforded much satisfaction, and the more intelligent of the Indians are quite prepared to assume the responsibility of the franchise. Both of the agents of the Northern Superintendency, at Manitowaning and Parry Sound, speak of the condition of the tribes under their supervision as favorable and gradually improving. More attention is paid to education, more continuous labour done, and farming is slowly superseding hunting, and their honesty and trustworthiness is undoubted. The agent at Sault St. Marie reports a good deal of sickness among the Garden River Indians, and much want during the winter of 1875-76; a greater inclination for agricultural pursuits was growing up among them.

The report from the St. Regis Indians, Quebec, was not so favorable, the schools were not well attended, and there was more trouble from drinking. The Abenakis of St. Francis are very skilful in the manufacture of baskets, hats, &c.; nearly all cultivate small patches of land, but only three or four do much in clearing the land in their reserve, and their children are not very regular at the schools. The Indians at River du Loup possess nothing but their wigwams, and have no school. Of those about Lake St. John a more encouraging account is given,—many comfortable houses have been built, roads, fences, &c., put in repair, land cleared, a considerable number of the children attend the school, and though most of the tribe are poor they are on the way to advance. At Miniwaki a good account is given of the school and of the morality of the people, but they were very poor owing to scarcity of furs and high prices of provisions. No returns were received from a number of agencies in both Ontario and Quebec.

The census return gives the number of Indians in Ontario as 15,549, and in Quebec 10,804.

The reports from the Nova Scotia Indians are not as encouraging as from those of Ontario and Quebec. They are said to be generally unexceptionable in point of morality, and habits of temperance decidedly on the increase; but few of them show an inclination for agricultural pursuits, and they are generally improvident and very poor, and a great part of their reserves is said to be unfit for cultivation.

In New Brunswick the number of the Indians has slightly increased, but there is not much improvement in other respects. At two or three places a little farming has been done, but the ease with

which liquor could be procured has been a bar to advancement.

The few Indians in P. E. Island are said to be improving in their manner of living, but have had a great deal of sickness among them, and are decreasing in number.

The condition of the Indians in Manitoba and the N. W. Territories is steadily improving. Drunkenness is almost unknown, crime very rare, and there is an almost universal feeling of content replacing the irritation and distrust which had existed.

Gov. Morris gives a most encouraging account of the Indians of the Saskatchewan, with whom he negotiated a treaty during the summer of 1876. There was a universal demand for teachers and persons to instruct them how to build houses and cultivate the soil. The Indians in Manitoba have already commenced to build houses and cultivate their land, and there are eight schools in successful operation in the Manitoba superintendency. The great diminution in the herds of buffalo in the last ten years has alarmed the Indians and led them to think seriously of other means of subsistence. During the summer many of the Sioux repaired to the reserve on the Assiniboine, assigned to them and commenced work.

In British Columbia, a commission has been organized by the Dominion and Provincial Governments to determine and settle the land grievances of the Indians in that Province. Among the coast Indians a great deal of vice and degradation is found and the race is fast disappearing, except at the few places where missions have been established. Six schools received Government aid during the year. Garden seeds, &c., were furnished to some of the Vancouver Island tribes with gratifying results. Large quantities of grain and roots were raised, and in the Cowichan Valley the roots were quite equal to those grown by the whites. A good deal of sickness prevailed during 1876 among the Indians both of Vancouver and the coast. There was small-pox among the northern Indians, and 800 were vaccinated. The mortality among the coast Indians is due to the facility for obtaining Indian whiskey from places on Puget Sound.

There were attending the schools in the different Provinces, during 1876:

Ontario.....	1857 pupils.
Quebec	394 "
Nova Scotia	68 "
P. E. Island.....	30 "
Manitoba.....	106 "
B. Columbia	497 "
N. Brunswick	none.

Total 2,952

The census returns give the total number of Indians in the several Provinces as 92,518, viz:

P. E. Island.....	299
Nova Scotia.....	2,091
New Brunswick.....	1,440
Quebec.....	10,804
Ontario	15,549
Manitoba and N. W.....	25,945
Rupert's Land	4,370
B. Columbia	32,020
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	92,518