



CHIEF DESKAHEH

TELLS WHY HE IS
OVER HERE AGAIN.

THE PLEDGE OF KING GEORGE III.

L.S. Frederick Haldimand, Captain General and Governor in Chief of Quebec and Territories depending thereon, &c., &c., &c., General and Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in the said Province and the Territories thereof, &c., &c., &c.

Whereas His Majesty having been pleased to direct in consideration of the early attachment to his cause manifested by the Mohawk Indians, and of the loss of their settlement which they thereby sustained, that a convenient tract of land under His protection should be chosen as a safe and comfortable retreat for them and other of the Six Nations who have either lost their settlements within the territory of the American States, or wish to retire from them to the British; I have at the desire of many of these His Majesty's faithful allies, purchased a tract of land from the Indians situated between the lakes Ontario, Huron and Erie, and I do hereby in His Majesty's name, authorise and permit the said Mohawk Nation, and such other of the Six Nation Indians as wish to settle in that quarter to take possession of and settle upon the banks of the river commonly called Ouse or Grand River, running into Lake Erie, allotting them for that purpose six miles deep from each side of the River, beginning at Lake Erie and extending in that proportion to the head of the said River, which them and their posterity are to enjoy for ever.

Given under my hand and seal at arms at the Castle of St. Lewis at Quebec the 25th day of October, 1784, and in the 25th year of His Majestys Reign.

Fred. Haldimand.

By His Excellency's Command,
R. Mathews.

CHIEF DESKAHEH

TELLS WHY HE IS OVER HERE AGAIN.

I am on my way to the League of Nations, and stopped off to tell why, to you who care to know. I go because your Imperial Government refused my plea, for protection of my people as of right against subjugation by Canada. The Canadian "Indian Office" took that refusal to mean that it could do as it wished with us. The officials wished to treat us as children and use the rod. This trouble has been going from bad to worse because we are not children. It became serious three years ago, when the object, to break us up in the end as tribesmen, became too plain for any doubt. Then I came to London to complain under the pledge of the Crown.

These were our grievances. When our men returned home from fighting for you, and three hundred went, leaving forty asleep under the sod, the Indian Office undertook a new scheme to enforce Canadian citizenship upon us, one at a time, but regardless of whether we consented to the conditions. They call it over there "enfranchising" us, although we have our own franchises, men, and women, too, and are quite satisfied on that score. We would not have consented to take Canada's franchises if she had asked us politely to do so. We are Red Indians, but what is more, we are Iroquois: the People of the Six Nations; the Mohawk, the Onondaga, the Oneida, the Cayuga, the Seneca, the Tuscarora. We are very willing to remain allies of the British as against days of danger, as we have been for two hundred and fifty years, and faithful allies, too; but we wish no one-sided alliance, nor will we ever be subjects of another people, even of the British, if we can help it. Any of our people may freely renounce allegiance to the Six Nations, but we object to the Dominion Government rewarding those becoming British subjects

by turning over to them portions of our National Funds happening to be in Dominion hands, and such is the practice of the Indian Office. We are burdened with scores of apostates quitting us for Canadian enfranchisement, who have returned to us as British paupers after squandering their ill-gotten moneys. So the move of the Indian Office, the department of "The Savages," as that office calls itself in Canada, to "enfranchise" more of us and weaken our ranks, did not work. Then the Indian Office undertook to lend our returned soldiers money to buy farms, a generous measure you may think. But all who knew how to farm really had all the land they needed. Those who did not know how would fail. There were a few only who, tempted at the sight of the money, gave mortgages to the Indian Office as security for the loans. That Office took those mortgages readily, for, if not paid, the fact would afford a reason, partially good, for pushing political dominion within our borders by use of the domestic Courts of Canada. Courts are established to deal out justice, but not to seize power. We were not blind. Our Council—the very same in which Captain Joseph Brant used to sit—knew that no domestic Courts have a right to apply the law of one people over another. Our Council knew, too, that if the Indian Office could by hook or by crook buy and sell our lands piece by piece, when our own Government had not consented, the Six Nations would slowly but surely be scattered to the winds and soon gone for ever as a separate people, swallowed up in the alien population surrounding us, not of our blood. So our Council resisted and stood its ground. I then became a marked man and would be in a Canadian prison now on some trumped-up charge if the Mounted Police had caught me—and they tried. They have recently caught and jailed many of my people for being loyal to their own Six Nations, for that is looked on now over our border in the Dominion as a crime or a contempt of court on our part subject to punishment by Canada. Wishing to send me upon this mission, my people insisted that I seek asylum south of the Great Lakes, while they were raising the necessary funds to send me. I went and they worked and saved and raised the money.

The Indian Office is now practising what it calls law enforcement. It is experimenting on our people with the penal laws of Canada in reference to what may be eaten and drunk, and as to what may be done on certain days. We know nothing of those laws, but we learn that certain of them are quite old and some quite new. We had nothing to do with the making of them. Under colour of those laws, nevertheless, the Dominion Government has lately violated the Six Nation domain, and has wrongfully seized many of my people and cast them into Canadian prisons. That is where it has recently put several of our loyal members who, refusing to ask leave of the Indian Office Autocrats under the Indian Act, used fuel from their own woodlands to preserve their own lives in winter season. To keep warm Canadian farmers do not have to ask leave of anyone. This impressment of a domestic judiciary into service for subjugation of tribal Red Men is in imitation of a policy devised by the government of the United States. Not satisfied with those autocratic measures of a civil sort, the Dominion Government has at last committed an act of war upon us, without just cause, by making an hostile invasion of our domain in December last with a Canadian armed force, remaining since in our midst, with the result of serious trouble for our Council in its efforts to carry on our own duly constituted Government.

Along with these aggressions the Indian Office has denied us the use of our own public funds. Those funds arose from cessions of parts of our domain on the Grand River to the British Crown, made mostly over one hundred years ago, with the agreement that the sale moneys should be retained by the British Crown, but in express trust, for the use of the Six Nations and under Royal promise to pay to us the interest moneys annually earned thereon. The Crown, for convenience, turned over to the Dominion Government, soon after the establishment of the Dominion, those funds for administration according to the terms of that trust and promise, and they are now held at Ottawa, except the large sums which have been wasted and misappropriated, and for which no accounting has been rendered, although

the Six Nations have long tried to get one. The principal and the earnings are now being used by the Indian Office for such objects as it sees fit. For many years the earnings of those funds have been depleted by payments made through the Indian Office to men, alien to us, in reward for political services of no concern to the Six Nations. And now that Office is using those funds to incite rebellion among our own people, with the purpose to set up in place of our duly constituted Council a Six Nation Government devised by Canadians, to rest in fact upon Canadian authority supported by mounted police. No revenue from those funds has been available for use by the Six Nation Council or as income for my people for upwards of two years last past, with the result that our officials are for the first time serving without pay. Moneys for meeting the necessary expenses of any peaceful resistance to these aggressions practised upon us we have had to raise through loans and contributions. When we issued our own public bonds to secure our own people and friends who made those advances, the Indian Office undertook to defame our credit and financial honour, using Canadian newspapers for that purpose. But we got the money—good friends over here have helped us.

During the last year we have offered to submit to impartial arbitration the justice of our cause but our offer was rejected by the Dominion Government. We in turn rejected its proposal that our differences be submitted for judgment to a Canadian Government tribunal to be set up for that special purpose. We would accept no tribunal not free to be impartial between us.

The Indian Office decided since that time to conduct an investigation into our morality. No doubt you will soon be hearing that we are a wicked people. That step is intended by the Indian Office to divert attention from its own wrong-doings. We will submit our morality to no other people for judgment, least of all to officials of a Government whose double standard is matter of record in its own so-called laws to which they say we must submit. No one before ever said Must to the Six Nations, or

dictated terms of surrender to them. That law the "Indian Act," so-called, provides that in the case of Red people, a widowed mother or wife may not inherit from her deceased husband except as she established before officials of that Indian Office that she is a woman of good moral character. The Canadians have no such law applying to their own women. You said that the three hundred men we sent over here were good. They were sons and husbands of our women.

I am going to Geneva, and I suppose many stones have been placed in my path. But I must go there because your Imperial Government refused to keep good the British Crown's promise of protection, pledged not only by Royal document delivered to Captain Brant, which we hold, but under the old covenant chain of friendship that Sir William Johnson and Captain Brant kept bright so long. Our document reads that the Six Nations, as the King's faithful allies, may settle upon the Grand River lands as a safe retreat under his protection for them and their posterity for ever. Your Colonial Secretary, who spoke for you, thought that our covenant chain was no longer good. He cast us off two years ago. He held that the British Crown was no longer responsible to us. We deny that such responsibility could be transferred to the Dominion of Canada without our consent, and we never consented. Our memory is not short. It is as true to-day, I am sorry to say, as it was two hundred years ago, that the nearest neighbours of the Six Nations, if they are of European stock, cannot be trusted to be just to us. That was the reason Sir William Johnson received his appointment from London to deal for you with us and not from the local governments of the British colonies which adjoined our domains. We have neighbours now hungry for lands we still own. They long for a very valuable tract of ours adjoining the City of Brantford, which even the Canadian Courts say is ours, yet the Indian Office will not permit us to use that land, to have any income from it, or to make a sale of it for ourselves.

If we have no special claim on British justice on the score of faithful and very useful services of our fathers in British need

of long ago, as we believed we had, we who live to-day have a special right at Geneva. We helped to make possible the League of Nations, and did our full share by your side in the Great War. Now we mean to look to the League of Nations for the protection we so much need, to prevent complete destruction of our Government and the obliteration of the Iroquois race which would soon follow.

London, August, 1923.

