

Gazette of the United States.

A NATIONAL PAPER, PUBLISHED WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAYS BY JOHN FENNO, No. 69, HIGH-STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

[No. 80, of Vol. III.]

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1792.

[Whole No. 288.]

STATE PAPER.

UNITED STATES, January the 16th, 1792.

SIR,

AS the circumstances which have engaged the United States in the present Indian War may some of them be out of the public recollection, and others perhaps be unknown, it may appear advisable that you prepare and publish, from authentic documents, a statement of those circumstances, as well as of the measures which have been taken, from time to time, for the re-establishment of peace and friendship.

When the Community are called upon for considerable exertions to relieve a part which is suffering under the hand of an enemy, it is desirable to manifest that due pains have been taken by those entrusted with the administration of their affairs to avoid the evil.

G. WASHINGTON.

The Secretary for the Department of War.

The CAUSES of the existing HOSTILITIES between the UNITED STATES, and certain Tribes of INDIANS North-West of the OHIO, stated and explained from official and authentic Documents, and published in obedience to the orders of the PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES.

RECURRENCE to the Journals of the United States in Congress assembled, of the early stages of the late war, will evince the public solicitude to preserve peace with the Indian tribes, and to prevent their engaging in a contest in which they were no wise interested.

But although partial treaties or conventions were formed with some of the northern and western tribes, in the years 1775 and 1776; yet those treaties were too feeble to resist the powerful impulses of a contrary nature, arising from a combination of circumstances at that time; and accordingly all the various Indian nations (the Oneidas, Tuscaroras, and a few individuals of the Delawares excepted) lying on our frontiers, from Georgia to Canada, armed against us.

It is yet too recent to have been forgotten, that great numbers of inoffensive men, women and children, fell a sacrifice to the barbarous warfare practised by the Indians, and that many others were dragged into a deplorable captivity.

Notwithstanding that these aggressions were entirely unprovoked, yet as soon as the war ceased with Great-Britain, the United States, instead of indulging any resentments against the Indian nations, fought only now to establish a liberal peace with all the tribes throughout their limits.

Early measures were accordingly taken for this purpose. A treaty was held, and a peace concluded, in the year 1784, with the hostile part of the northern Indians, or Six Nations, at Fort Stanwix.

In January 1785, another treaty was formed with part of the western tribes, at Fort M'Intosh, on the Ohio; to wit, with the Wyandots, Delawares, Ottawas, and Chippewas.

During the same year, treaties were formed at Hopewell, on the Keowee, with all the powerful tribes of the south, excepting the Creeks; to wit, the Cherokees, the Choctaws, and Chickasaws.

In January 1786, a treaty was formed with the Shawanese, at the confluence of the Great Miami with the Ohio.

It was not long before certain turbulent and malignant characters, residing among some of the northern and western tribes, which had formed the treaties of Fort Stanwix and Fort M'Intosh, excited uneasiness and complaints against those treaties. In consequence of representations upon this subject, on the 5th of October, 1787, Congress directed, "That a general treaty should be held with the tribes of Indians within the limits of the United States, inhabiting the country north-west of the Ohio and about Lake Erie, as soon after the first of April next as conveniently might be, and at such place and at such particular time as the Governor of the Western Territory should appoint, for the purpose of knowing the causes of uneasiness among the said tribes, and hearing their complaints; of regulating trade, and amicably settling all affairs concerning lands and boundaries between them and the United States."

On the second day of July, 1788, Congress appropriated "the sum of twenty thousand dollars, in addition to fourteen thousand dollars before appropriated, for defraying the expences of the treaties which have been ordered, or which might be ordered to be held in the then present year with the several Indian tribes in the Northern Department, and for extinguishing the Indian claims; the whole of the said twenty thousand dollars, together with six thousand dollars of the said fourteen thousand dollars, to be applied solely to the purpose of extinguishing Indian claims to the lands they have already ceded to the United States, by obtaining regular conveyances for the same, and for extending a purchase beyond the limits heretofore fixed by treaty; but that no part of the said sums should be applied for any other purpose other than those above mentioned."

Accordingly new treaties were held at Fort Harmar the latter part of the year 1788, and concluded on the ninth day of January, 1789, with a representation of all the Six or Northern Nations, the Mohawks excepted—and with a reconfirmation of the following tribes, to wit, the Wyandots, the Delawares, Ottawas, Chippewas, Pottawatamas, and Sacs.—By these treaties, nearly the same boundaries were recognized and established by a principle of purchase, as had been stipulated by the former treaties of Fort Stanwix and Fort M'Intosh.

Thus careful and attentive was the Government of the United States to settle a boundary with the Indians on the basis of fair treaty, to obviate the dissatisfactions which had been excited, and to establish its claims to the lands relinquished on the principle of equitable purchase.

It does not appear that the right of the Northern and Western Indians, who formed the several before mentioned treaties to the lands thereby relinquished to the United States, has been questioned by any other tribes; nor does it appear that the present war has been occasioned by any dispute relatively to the boundaries established by the said treaties.

But on the contrary it appears, that the unprovoked aggressions of the Miami and Wabash Indians upon Kentucky and other parts of the frontiers, together with their associates, a banditti,

formed of Shawanese, and outcast Cherokees, amounting in all to about one thousand two hundred men, are solely the causes of the war. Hence it is proper that their conduct should be more particularly adverted to.

In the year 1784, when messages were sent to the Wyandots and Delawares, inviting them to meet the Commissioners, first at Cayahoga, and afterwards at Fort M'Intosh, their neighbours the Miami Indians were also included in the same invitation; but they did not attend.

In the year 1785 these invitations were repeated; but the messengers upon their arrival at the Miami village, had their horses stolen, were otherwise treated with insolence, and prevented fulfilling their mission.

In the years 1787 and 1788, new endeavours were used to bring those Indians to treat; they were urged to be present at a treaty appointed to be held at Fort Harmar; but these endeavors proved as fruitless as all the former.

At a council of the tribes, convened in 1788, at the Miami river, the MIAMI and WABASH Indians were pressed to repair to the treaty with great earnestness by the chiefs of the Wyandots and Delawares: the Wyandot chiefs in particular presented them with a large belt of wampum, holding one end of it themselves, and offering the other to the hostile Indians, which was refused. The Wyandots then laid it on the shoulders of a principal chief, recommending to him to be at peace with the Americans; but without making any answer, he leaned himself and let it fall to the ground: this so displeased the Wyandots, that they immediately left the council house.

In the mean time the frontier settlements were disquieted by frequent depredations and murders, and the complaints of their inhabitants, (as might be expected) of the pacific forbearance of the government, were loud, repeated, and distressing—their calls for protection incessant—till at length they appeared determined by their own efforts to endeavor to retaliate the injuries they were continually receiving, and which had become intolerable.

In this state of things it was indispensable for the Government to make some decisive exertion for the peace and security of the frontiers.

But notwithstanding the ill success of former experiments, and the invincible spirit of animosity which had appeared in certain tribes, and which was of a nature to justify a persuasion that no impression could be made upon them by pacific expedients, it was still deemed advisable to make one more essay.

Accordingly in April 1790, Anthony Gamelin, an inhabitant of Post Vincennes, and a man of good character, was dispatched to all the tribes and villages of the Wabash river, and to the Indians of the Miami village, with a message purporting, that the United States were desirous of establishing a general peace with all the neighboring tribes of Indians, and of treating them in all respects with perfect humanity and kindness, and at the same time warning them to abstain from further depredations.

The Indians in some of the villages on the lower part of the Wabash, appeared to listen to him, others manifested a different disposition, others confessed their inability to restrain their young warriors, and all referred the messenger to the Indians at the Miami village. At that village some appeared well disposed, but the chiefs of the Shawanese returned the messages and belts, informing the messenger however, that they would, after consultation, within thirty nights, send an answer to Post-Vincennes.—The promised answer was never received. While the messenger was at the Miami village, two negroes were brought in from our settlements, prisoners; and upon his return to L'Angeville, a chief informed him that a party of seventy warriors, from the more distant Indians, had arrived, and were gone against the settlements.

In three days after his departure from the Miami village, a prisoner was there burnt to death. Similar cruelties were exercised at the Outtanon towns, about the same time; and in the course of the three months immediately after the last mentioned invitation, upwards of one hundred persons were killed, wounded, and taken prisoners upon the Ohio, and in the district of Kentucky.

It is to be remarked, that previous to the last invitation, the people of Kentucky who, in consequence of their injuries, were meditating a blow against the hostile Indians (as before intimated) were restrained by the President of the United States, from crossing the Ohio, until the effect of the friendly overture intended to be made should be known.

It is also to be observed, that the Wyandots and Delawares, after having frequently and fruitlessly endeavored to influence the MIAMI and WABASH Indians to peace; upon mature conviction finally declared that force only could effect the object.

As an evidence that the conduct of the hostile Indians has been occasioned by other motives than a claim relatively to boundaries—it is to be observed, that their depredations have been principally upon the district of Kentucky, and the counties of Virginia, lying along the south side of the Ohio, a country to which they have no claim.

It appears by respectable evidence, that from the year 1783, until the month of October, 1790, the time the United States commenced offensive operations against the said Indians, that on the Ohio, and the frontiers on the south side thereof, they killed, wounded and took prisoners, about one thousand five hundred men, women and children; besides carrying off upwards of two thousand horses, and other property to the amount of fifty thousand dollars.

The particulars of the barbarities exercised upon many of their prisoners, of different ages and sexes, although supported by indisputable evidence, are of too shocking a nature to be presented to the public. It is sufficient upon this head to observe, that the tomahawk and scalping-knife have been the mildest instruments of death. That in some cases torture by fire, and other execrable means have been used.

But the outrages which were committed upon the frontier inhabitants were not the only injuries that were sustained: repeated attacks upon detachments of the troops of the United States were, at different times, made. The following from its peculiar enormity deserves recital.—In April, 1790, Major Doughty was ordered to the friendly Chickasaws on public business. He performed this duty in a boat, having with him Ensign Sedam, and a party of fifteen men. While ascending the Tennessee river, he was met by a party of forty Indians in four canoes, consisting principally of the aforesaid banditti of Shawanese, and outcast Cherokees. They approached under a white flag, the well known emblem of peace. They came on board the Major's boat, received his presents, continued with him nearly one hour, and then departed in the most friendly manner. But, they had scarcely cleared his oars, before they poured in a fire upon his crew, which was returned as soon as circumstances would permit, and

a most unequal combat was sustained for several hours, when they abandoned their design, but not until they had killed and wounded eleven out of fifteen of the boat's crew. This perfidious conduct, in any age, would have demanded exemplary punishment.

All overtures of peace failing, and the depredations still continuing, an attempt at coercion became indispensable. Accordingly the expedition under Brigadier General Harmar, in the month of October, 1790, was directed. The event is known.

After this expedition the Governor of the Western Territory, in order that nothing might be omitted, to effect a peace without further conflict, did, on his arrival at Fort Harmar, in December, 1790, send through the Wyandots and Delawares conciliatory messages to the Miami's, but still without effect.

The Cornplanter, a war chief of the Senecas and other Indians of the same tribe, being in Philadelphia in the month of February, 1791, were engaged to undertake to impress the hostile Indians with the consequences of their persisting in hostilities, and also of the justice and moderation of the United States.

In pursuance of this design Col. Procter, on the fourteenth of March, was sent to the Cornplanter to hasten his departure, and to accompany him to the Miami village—and messages were sent to the Indians declaratory of the pacific sentiments of the United States towards them. But both Col. Procter and the Cornplanter, although zealously desirous of executing their mission, encountered difficulties of a particular nature, which were insurmountable, and prevented the execution of their orders.

Major General St. Clair, in the month of April, sent messages from Fort Harmar to the Delawares, expressive of the pacific designs of the United States, to all the Indian tribes.

A treaty was held at the Painted-Post by Col. Pickering, in June, 1791, with a part of the Six Nations, at which the humane intentions of the General Government towards them particularly, and the Indian tribes generally, were fully explained.

Captain Hendricks, a respectable Indian residing with the Oneidas, appearing zealously disposed to attempt convincing the hostile Indians of their mistaken conduct, was accordingly sent for that purpose, but was frustrated by unforeseen obstacles, in his laudable attempts.

The different measures which have been recited must evince, that notwithstanding the highly culpable conduct of the Indians in question, the government of the United States, uninfluenced by resentment, or any false principles which might arise from a consciousness of superiority, adopted every proper expedient to terminate the Indian hostilities, without having recourse to the last extremity; and, after being compelled to resort to it, has still kept steadily in view the re-establishment of peace as its primary and sole object.

Were it necessary to add proofs of the pacific and humane dispositions of the General Government towards the Indian tribes, the treaties with the Creeks, and with the Cherokees, might be cited as demonstrative of its moderation and liberality.

The present partial Indian war is a remnant of the late general war, continued by a number of separate banditti, who, by the incessant practice of fifteen years, seem to have formed inveterate and incurable habits of enmity against the frontier inhabitants of the United States.

To obtain protection against lawless violence, was a main object for which the present government was instituted. It is, indeed, a main object of all governments. A frontier citizen possesses as strong claims to protection as any other citizen. The frontiers are the vulnerable parts of every country; and the obligation of the government of the United States, to afford the requisite protection, cannot be less sacred in reference to the inhabitants of their Western, than to those of their Atlantic Frontier.

It will appear from a candid review of this subject, that the General Government could no longer abstain from attempting to punish the hostile Indians.

The ill success of the attempts for this purpose, is entirely unconnected with the justice or policy of the measure. A perseverance in exertions to make the refractory Indians at last sensible, that they cannot continue their enormous outrages with impunity, appears to be as indispensable, in the existing posture of things, as it will be advisable, whenever they shall manifest symptoms of a more amicable disposition, to convince them, by decisive proofs, that nothing is so much desired by the United States as to be at liberty to treat them with kindness and beneficence.

H. KNOX, Secretary of War.

War Department, Jan. 26, 1792.

FROM THE QUEBEC HERALD.

QUEBEC, November 23.

Extract from the Chief Justice's charge to the Grand Jury, 25th Nov. 1791. Sessions of Oyer and Terminer at Quebec.

I REMARK it with pleasure, that for two years past, there has been a great reduction of the list of criminal prosecutions in all parts of the province. If Grand Juries have not been in fault, we may presume that the virtue of our fellow citizens is on the increase. It adds to the consolation, that it does not seem to be imputable merely to terror, the government of the country for the last five years, having mingled mercy and judgment very frequently; but with so sagacious a discernment, that the great clemency dispensed, may perhaps be reckoned among the causes of these restraints upon vice.

Happier still, if the reformation of our country, shall keep pace with the blessings recently poured out upon it, by the benignity of our Sovereign, and the liberality of his Parliament.

What their number and extent, the most fertile and best informed mind, can neither enumerate nor ascertain, suffice it to remark, that the political frame erected for your prosperity, being on the model, as nearly as our condition will permit, of that constitution which has made England the admiration of the world, it must be