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For the NATIONAL GAZETTE.

THOUGHTS on the present Indian War.

By H. H. BRACKENRIDGE, of Pittsburg.

BEING occasionally in this city, I feel myself impelled to give my sentiments on this subject—and I give my name in order to obtain confidence, because it is to be presumed that a man will not lightly avow what he has not weighed, and in which he has not confidence himself.

I am struck, seeing in the Gazette, extracts of letters that were never written, and paragraphs penned from ignorance or mistake of facts. Having resided some years in the western country, and being interested, I have thought much on the subject—and though I may not know more than the most ignorant man there, yet I am persuaded that I know more than the wisest man that has never been there.

The writers of extracts, and the paragraphists, in the first place, endeavor to affect the public mind by holding up the original right of these aborigines to the soil. It is a right of which I have never thought with much respect. It is like the claim of the children; it is mine, for I first saw it—or what that of the Buffalo might be, it is mine for I have first run over it. I consider the earth as given to man in common, and each should use his share, so as not to exclude others and should be restricted to that mode of using it which is most favorable to the support of the greatest numbers, and consequently productive of the greatest sum of happiness, that is, the cultivation of the soil. I pay little regard, therefore, to any right which is not founded in agricultural occupancy.

But supposing these natives to have had an absolute and exclusive right, is it not destroyed by a supervenient right on our part in consequence of our treaty with Great Britain? During the war with that power, were not these natives the subsidiaries of the king of England; were they not, in his hand, as the tomahawk and scalping knife was in theirs? Was not the territory in question ceded by the superior power? Shall we treat with the principal, and make concessions in lieu of this concession—and shall we again treat with the subordinate, and purchase a treaty and concede to them also? *But is this not nothing to be said, for it has been done.* What has appeared in the paper of the other day, from the Secretary at War, has superseded me in stating and illustrating this.

But as to treaties with these Indians, under present circumstances, I can have no confidence in them—Why—Do not savages observe treaties?—No longer than the principle of fear operates; being indolent, and more disposed to acquire by seizing than by earning. But under present circumstances, all treaty with them must be nugatory. While Canada was in possession of the French, were not these Indians hostile to us, and regardless of all treaties, because it was not the interest of that nation that they should be at peace with us, when it was in their power to incite them to a war. Are we not at this time in the same situation with respect to the Indians, and the British in possession of Canada? Hence it is that it was expedient, and has been found practicable to establish treaties with the Creeks, or other nations remote from the British province. But with these Indians, treaties cannot be established, or if established, would not be observed.

Whether the British government has an eye to the territory ceded, I shall not say—I rather think not; but certainly it has an eye to the Indian trade, and on this account supports the savages. I shall not say that this is done directly by the governor of Canada, or the commandant at Detroit, but certainly through the medium of the Indian agents, and with the knowledge and approbation of the ministry at home. Why else are the posts on the lakes not surrendered, when all pretence of the treaty not being fulfilled on our part is taken away? How have the Indians, north of the lakes, been excited, and brought to the Miami village to engage in the war?—certainly, not by the Shawanese or Wabash Indians, but by the voice of the British agents who had stores at Detroit to supply them; two stores called the king's with ammunition, clothing, and provisions.—How have so large a body of Indians as met our army in the late engagement, been supported but by provisions from the king's store? They have been supplied from a king's store at what are called the Rapids, about sixty miles from the Miami towns. Would Canadian volunteers or militia march to aid these Indians, and not the government solicit or enjoin it? That volunteers did turn out, as our phrase is, I know, though not to what amount they may have been in battle.

It is not a war, therefore, with Indians merely; it is a war with the British king, under cover. Have we felt the jaw of the lion, and shall we be still lashed with his tail?

With respect to the mode of war, still to be pursued: what? Precisely that which was adopted and pursued the last campaign, but the means different. More men and higher pay; because

this will procure better men. A greater proportion of light-infantry; or rifle corps would be advisable. But the system already adopted, and in part executed, I approve. The establishment of forts in the country, and planting ourselves in the face of the British province, and convincing those Indians that a greater than the British, whom they venerate, are now there.

It is suggested by paragraphists, that an incursive war of small parties with a premium for scalps, fighting the Indians in their own way, would be best. It might indeed, harass them but from the circumstances stated, could produce no substantial and lasting effect. It is also contended that an incursive war of larger bodies, in the manner of the Kentucky volunteers last year, would avail. I say not. I never considered the Kentucky expedition under Wilkinson or Seon as more than a flourish; honorable to those who went, but little serviceable to those at home. Indians are seldom surprized, or if in part, the whole object is the killing a warrior or two, and the carrying off women and children; an incumbrance more than a spoil.

There are those who advocate what is called a defensive war, by posts on the frontiers, and ranging companies. I say, the best defence is offence. Instead of warding off blows, give one. If you could surround the frontier with a rank and file of men, like the wall of China, and take care that these should never sleep, you might expect something. But, posts and ranging companies are but a help and no effectual defence. It is but watching beasts of prey, who come against our folds, instead of penetrating the forests where they haunt, and exterminating the race.

With respect to the mode of war, I am confident the establishing ourselves in the face of Canada will alone be effectual; but, with respect to the route, would suggest, whether by the way of lake Erie would not have been advisable; that is, by establishing a garrison at Presque and building armed vessels on the lakes, to transport troops and convey provisions; again, a post on the west of the lake, and from thence the progress to the Miami Towns. At least, whether as things now stand that route ought not to be embraced. I have not the smallest doubt, but that unless effective arrangements are made for the winter, and then, in the face of the Six Nations, and so as to speedily to strike them, they will avow themselves; for, I aver that except a few chiefs, they are in disposition hostile, and nothing but the principle of fear restrains them at this moment.

A garrison at Presque would secure their neutrality, or perhaps engage them to act in our favour.—It is thrown out by the paragraphists, few of whom I take to be out of this city, that the possession and security of the western territory ought not to be an object with these states; *we have, it seems, soil enough.*—Be it so—I enquire only what are the best means of protecting the settlements on this side of the rivers?—I say, the only means is by reaching the source of hostility, and taking the commanding ground of posts to the westward.

But is not the government bound to give peaceable possession of the western soil to those to whom they have sold, and to their officers and soldiers to whom they have made grants? Shall every thing be done to support credit in making a liberal provision for the public debt; even though this has brought a great evil, fortunes rising like exhalations from the earth, by other means than common industry; and shall the public disregard their faith pledged in the cases above mentioned?—All who with the preservation of our confederacy ought to feel an alarm at all ideas of dereliction of the claims and rights of any part of the community. The consequences may be fatal to all who have any hopes from government, or any interest in it.

It may be said, that taking the posts on the lakes, building armed vessels, and occupying posts in the neighbourhood of Niagara and Detroit, may involve us in a war with Britain.

Of that there is no danger. If our merchantmen are in the power of the British navy, theirs are in the power of our privateers; and they get more by our imports from them in peace, than by the captures they could make in war; and the province of Canada and the fur-trade of the west, is a stake which they have to lose.

If the world has been astonished at our rising, if they have seen the meridian beams of our splendor in establishing public credit, let them not regret our meanness and want of spirit in suffering the out-guards of our country, the frontier settlements, to be cut to pieces by the axe of the savage, when the probability is, I think, certainly, that it is put into their hands by our late invertebrate, but, discomfited enemy.

I beg the public to excuse these things, written hastily; and let them have their weight with every humane and good man, which the reason of them may support. I say, humane; because I am persuaded humanity is not on the side of the savages, but on our side. They have been the aggressors. They are not to be appeased. They

refuse all treaty, or respect none. They cannot, for it is not the will of those by whom they are expelled.

It is said, the British government cannot possibly countenance these people, for the commandant officers at Detroit are humane to our prisoners, and actually purchase them at a great price from the savages. No doubt—it is but a little matter to redeem a captive, but a great matter to have our armies defeated, and excluded from the country.

In looking over what I have written, there is no sentiment that I would retrench; but add one more, viz. Why dread the expense of an effective and lasting armament for the purposes suggested? The moment we take command of the savages, instead of leaving them to Britain, the fur-trade of the immense world of the west will amply repay us creating a trade to the sea-coast ports of which at present they have no idea.—I say, take command of the Indians; the only way in which, is to place ourselves upon an equal ground with our rivals, and impress the savages with an opinion that we are at least an equal power. All treaty with them until they are humbled and reduced is absurd; and even then to be considered as of duration no longer than while the external pressure of apprehended force, keeps them down.

After some time the interests of trade may conciliate and bind them, and we may have it in our power to make a proper use of these people. Philad. Jan. 31, 1792.

AUTHENTIC.

## SECOND CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

At the first Session, begun and held at the city of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania on Monday the twenty-fourth of October, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one.

An Act making Appropriations for the Support of Government for the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two.

Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,

That for the service of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two, and the support of the civil list of the United States, including the incidental and contingent expenses of the several departments and offices thereof, there shall be appropriated a sum of money not exceeding three hundred and twenty-nine thousand, six hundred and fifty three dollars, and fifty-six cents: that is to say,

For the compensations granted by law to the President of the United States, the Vice-President, Chief Justice, Associate Judges, and Attorney-General, fifty-three thousand dollars.

For the like compensations to the District Judges, nineteen thousand eight hundred dollars.

For the like compensations to the members of the Senate and House of Representatives, and the officers and attendants of the two Houses, estimated on a session of six months continuance, and including the travelling expenses of the members, one hundred and twenty-nine thousand, seven hundred and thirty dollars.

For the like compensations to the Secretary and officers of the several departments of the Treasury of the United States, including clerks and attendants, and the salaries of the respective loan-officers, sixty thousand three hundred dollars.

For the like compensations to the Secretary and officers of the department of War, six thousand three hundred dollars.

For the like compensations to the Secretary and officers of the department of War, nine thousand six hundred dollars.

For the like compensations to the members of the Board of Commissioners, for the settlement of the accounts between the United States and the individual states, including clerks and attendants, thirteen thousand one hundred dollars.

For the like compensations to the Governors, Judges, and other officers of the Western Territory of the United States, including contingencies, eleven thousand dollars.

For the payment of the annual grant to Baron Steuben, pursuant to an act of Congress, two thousand five hundred dollars.

For the payment of sundry pensions, granted by the late government, two thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven dollars, and seventy three cents.

For defraying all other incidental and contingent expenses of the civil list establishment, including firewood, stationary,

together with the printing work, and all other contingent expenses of the two Houses of Congress, rent and office expenses of the three several departments, namely, Treasury, State, War, and of the general Board of Commissioners, twenty-one thousand five hundred and fifty five dollars, and eighty-three cents.

And be it further enacted, That the compensation to the door-keepers of the two Houses, for services which have been heretofore rendered or may be rendered in the recess of Congress for the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two, and certified by the President of the Senate or Speaker of the House of Representatives, in manner required by law, for like services during sessions, shall be discharged out of the money herein before appropriated for the contingent expenses of the two Houses of Congress.

And be it further enacted, That for discharging certain liquidated claims upon the United States, for making good deficiencies in former appropriations for the support of the civil-list establishment, and for aiding the fund appropriated for the payment of certain officers of the courts, jurors and witnesses, and for the establishment of ten cutters, there shall be appropriated a sum of money not exceeding one hundred and ninety-seven thousand, one hundred and nineteen dollars, and forty-nine cents; that is to say,

For discharging a balance due on a liquidated claim of his most Christian Majesty against the United States, for supplies during the late war, nine thousand and twenty dollars, and sixty-eight cents.

For payment of the principal and interest on a liquidated claim of Oliver Pollock, late commercial agent of the United States, at New-Orleans, for supplies of clothing, arms and military stores, during the late war, one hundred and eight thousand, six hundred and five dollars, and two cents: Provided, That the said monies be not paid to the said Oliver Pollock, without the consent of the agents of the court of Spain.

For making good deficiencies in the last appropriations for the compensations to sundry officers of the civil list establishment, five thousand four hundred and seventy-one dollars.

For defraying sundry authorized expenses to the commissioners of loans in the several states, twenty-one thousand dollars.

For defraying a balance of certain liquidated and contingent expenses in the treasury-department, two thousand eight hundred dollars.

For defraying the additional expense of the enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States, nineteen thousand seven hundred and seventy-two dollars and seventy-nine cents.

For making good a deficiency in former appropriations, to discharge the expenses to clerks, jurors and witnesses in the courts of the United States, five thousand dollars.

For the maintenance and repair of light-houses, beacons, piers, stakes and buoys, sixteen thousand dollars.

For the expense of keeping prisoners committed under the authority of the United States, four thousand dollars.

For the expense of clerks and books in arranging the public securities, two thousand four hundred and fifty dollars.

For the purchase of hydrometers for the use of the officers in the execution of the laws of revenue, one thousand dollars.

For the farther expense of building and equipping ten cutters, two thousand dollars.

And be it further enacted, That for the support of the military establishment of the United States, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two, the payment of the annual allowances to the invalid pensioners of the United States, for defraying all expenses incident to the Indian department, and for defraying the expenses incurred in the defensive protection of the frontiers against the Indians, during the years one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, by virtue of the authority vested in the President of the United States, by the acts relative to the military establishment, passed the twenty-ninth of September, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine, and the thirtieth of April, one thousand seven hundred and ninety, and for which, no appropriations have been made, there shall be appropriated a sum of money, not exceeding five hundred and thirty-two thousand, four hundred and forty-nine dollars, seventy-six cents, and two thirds of a cent; that is to say,