

CASS TO [ARMSTRONG?]

Sir,

Detroit Decr 4, 1813

Indian rumours, I generally despise; nor do I feel any inclination, unnecessarily, to excite any alarm. But, it is, certainly, better, that I should state to you, frankly, the situation of the country, & the reports which are daily reaching me. I do this, in order that proper measures may be taken to guard against probable contingencies; & that, in case of any unforeseen disaster, I may not have failed in my duty.

I have reason to believe, that the professions of many of the Indian tribes are hollow & deceitful. It is a fact, not now to be questioned, that the attachment of most of them to the enemy, is much more sincere, than to us. The cause of this, is to be found, in the relative situa-

tion of the contending parties, & in the art with which the enemy has impressed the Indians, that our success is their destruction. In addition to this, they have reduced the management of their Indian affairs to a system. They have their agents, interpreters, & engagees in every part of the country. The result of all this is, that the Indians are suspicious & jealous, doubtful of our sincerity, & apprehensive for the future. I have ascertained it to be a fact, & it has reached me from various quarters, that the Indians have secretly declared, as soon as the ice is sufficiently strong to bear, they will again take up the tomahawk. I do not believe they will do so. But, I shall continue my preparations, & hold myself in the same situation, as though I knew they were determined to put their threats in execution.

I ask permission to appoint five, or six, interpreters. I am anxious to send them into the Indian country, to watch their movements; to give us notice of their intentions; & to counteract the secret intrigues of the enemy. A small sum, for secret service money, & for the contingent expenses of the Indian department, is necessary. The former, is required, in order to counteract any communication which the enemy yet preserve with the Western District of Upper Canada.

They were in the habit of selecting certain influential chiefs, & granting them pay, of, from ten to twenty dollars per month. By this means, they retained a strong hold upon the Indians, whose effects are yet felt.

I would recommend, that small presents be purchased here for those Indians who deserve them. There are some, who have exhibited traits of fidelity, which, I wish, were more prevalent among some of our own citizens.

In a former letter, I recommended Colo Gabriel Godfroy, of this place, for a sub-agent. I find him the most useful man in Indian affairs in the territory. Zealous & active, faithful & honest, without his assistance, for which he has rec'd nothing, I should have been much embarrassed. I have sent a small party of Canadians & Indians to Lake Michigan & St Josephs, in order to bring in some of our people yet retained as prisoners; & to break up the establishments of some Northwest traders, who are instigating the Indians to mischief. I am in daily expectation of their return.

Among Gen: Procters papers, is a letter from Sir Geo: Prevost, informing him, that, in any event the garrison of Michilimackinae would not be withdrawn. I cannot now lay my hand upon it. I will transmit it to you, when found. We shall, doubtless, be under the necessity of reducing that post, in the spring.

I am, sir,

very respectfully,

Yr ob: Serv:

LEW CASS.