

LIEUT. COL. MCDONALL TO MAJ. GEN. ROBINSON.

(Indiana.)

DRUMMOND ISLAND 23d Sept 1815

Late last evening I had the honor of Your Excellencys dispatch, dated Kingston *8th August*, with its Enclosures. It is much to be regretted that it has been so long reaching me, as it would have been very desirable that such an artful string of unfounded accusations, General charges, and vague insinuations, unsupported by any evidence, should as soon as possible, be refuted & set in their proper light. Your Excellency may rest assured, that from the moment the peace was known at Michilimackinac, every possible exertion was used, every practicable effort made, to disseminate the news among all the Indian Tribes, accompanied by the strongest injunctions to bury the Tomahawk and abstain from all other further hostilities. These messages were re-iterated by every opportunity & in particular by Capt Anderson, as my despatch of the 21st will show. After such unceasing pains having been taken, in the genuine spirit of sincerity and good faith, to make known the Peace amongst the Indians and to cause them to observe the same, accustomed as I have been to American accusations, I did not expect that a regard to truth could have been so totally lost sight of, as to charge British Agents, with having since the conclusion of Peace, stimulated the Indians to hostilities. As far as regards those

who were well under my orders at Michilimackinac, I pronounced the charge to be wholly destitute of foundation, & and a most illiberal & unjustifiable Calumny.

One circumstance must be as candidly admitted, as its consequences must be sincerely deplored. The Letter of Major Foster announcing the Peace and inclosing a Copy of the Treaty, dated the 11th of March, did not reach me at Mackinac till the 11th of May. It is of little use now to advert to the manner in which a dispatch, in which the lives of so many depended, was forwarded, or to recollect that in a matter of infinitely less importance, the journey even to Quebec, has been performed in ten days. THE FIRST intelligence of Peace was received by me on the first of May, in a letter from Lt. Col: Harvey of the 28 March, by a trading vessel from Detroit, and reached Prairie des Cheins on the 22d of May; uncertain rumors of that event were before in circulation, but not credited. I have not the smallest doubt, that to this unfortunate delay may be solely ascribed the whole Catalogue of real and imaginary aggressions, as presented to the British Minister. If Your Excellency will compare the dates, it will be evident that not one of the War parties of Indians alluded to, could possible have received the news of Peace from Michilimackinac in sufficient time, to prevent the meditated hostilities, and owing to this very circumstance they (ignorant of that event) continued to Carry on their operations.

This observation particularly applies also to Lieut. Cadotte, who knew so little of peace being concluded, as to bring in with him Eighty Indians to assist in the defence of Mackinac. I shall carry Your Excellency's orders into immediate effect, as to the investigation of that officers conduct, by a Court of Inquiry, tho' I should have wished another President, having myself ordered him on the service alluded to, I am however strongly inclined to believe that the character of this respectable officer has been unjustly aspersed.

I have &c &c &c
 ROBT. McDONALL
 Lt Col:

His Excellency
 Sir F. P. Robinson K. C. B.
 &c &c &c

LIEUT. COL. McDONALL TO MAJ. GEN. ROBINSON.

(Indians.)

DRUMMONDS ISLAND 24 September 1815

SIR

Since the departure of Major Morgan from Michilimackinac and the arrival of his successor Col. Chambers and also Major Puthoff as their Agent for Indian Affairs the most active exertions have been made and every artifice put in practice to extinguish our influence with the Indians of their neighbourhood and not only to cut off our communication with them but with all the other Indian Nations.

To aid in accomplishing this purpose every inhabitant at Mackinac suspected of the least influence amongst them or attachment to us are treated with the utmost degree of rigor and insult. Dr. Mitchell's Wife in particular has been used with peculiar rancour,—she continued at that place to protect their sole remaining property, Farm Garden &c which have notwithstanding suffered greatly from depredations which appear to be encouraged rather than checked, she was likewise publicly and meanly accused of only remaining there as a spy of the British Government and though related to the Chippewa Nation not allowed to see any of them, they have also taken from her a small Island adjoining never purchased by the Americans, but which was last year (with my concurrence) unanimously presented to her by her relations the Chippewas in return for her Kindness to them.

The most threatening language is constantly made use of to such Indians as are attached to the British Government, whom they use every means to intimidate, they tell them their English Father has been beat, driven from Mackinac and the Mississippi and soon will be from the Canadas which are about to be again occupied by the French, this last Argument is used to weaken their attachment to us; as the Indians inherit from their Fathers the highest opinion of the French, and of their power and courage, and fond as they are of the British, would like well to see their dominion restored.

In this state of things I thought it my duty to make known my sentiments to the Indians previous to their setting out for their wintering grounds, in a speech (copy of which I enclose); in it I allude to a scandalous Traffic Carried on by the Americans at Mackinac who lay wait for the Indians passing with their presents, cheating them of their

guns and clothing for whisky, Even their Indian Agent is mentioned as having been concerned in this most Lucrative but shameful Trade.

I have &c

(Signed) RT. McDONALL

To His Excellency

Lt. Col.

Sir F. P. Robinson K. C. B.

& & &

[C 258, p 354.]