

MESSRS. M'GILL, RICHARDSON, AND M'GILLIVRAY TO SIR GEORGE PREVOST.

*(Indians.)*

MONTREAL 19th Dec. 1812.

May it please Your Excellency.

The conduct of the Government of the United States of America has long evinced, that in drawing the sword they threw away the Scabbard, although they have been since attempting to delude Great Britain into inactivity, by insincere proposals about peace.

The Canadas are peculiarly circumstanced being avowed to be the grand object of American ambition, for the accomplishment of which, they have attempted repeated invasions and are still persisting in using every endeavor to call forth as far as possible, their physical strength to over whelm us. witness the very great numerical force embodied in what they pompously term, their Armies of the North West—Center—and North—

To oppose this gigantic assemblage, when compared with our relative numbers and taking into account the great distance of our Mother Country, it seems an imperious duty, to organize and combine every procurable means of defence, whether arising from internal resources, or from allies resident beyond our limits.

From local situation, the Indians are the only allies who can aught avail in the defence of the Canadas—They have the same interest as us, and alike are objects of American subjugation, if not of extirmination—

The Law of self-preservation that first of Laws, were there none other, is sufficient to authorize the employment of such allies, in the most decided & extended manner, in which they can be brought into operation against our common & rancorous foe—

We therefore most respectfully ask permission to propose for Your Excellency's consideration, that important question which the inveterate hostility of the Enemy forces upon Govt. namely—How to call forth & organize the Indians to the greater practicable extent & how to employ them to the best advantage?

Indians must be led by those in whom they confide—Traders being British Subjects who have resided amongst them for a great number of years & know their customs, feelings & habits are those in whom Govt & the Indians can best place a Joint confidence, & it is to be considered that if the Indians are not employed by us, the enemy will use every endeavor to corrupt & turn them against us. The bearer hereof Mr. Robert Dickson has been long an extensive Trader among the Western Indians adjoining the Mississippi—he knows them perfectly & by them is beloved—He is a native of Great Britian—a man of capacity and most zealous loyalty, indefatigable activity & indeed an enthusiast in the British & Indian Cause.

On this occasion we hesitate not to recommend him to Your Excellency for these reasons as one who is well qualified to give useful information upon the subject & to execute whatsoever Your Excellency may after full consideration of his plans, see fit to employ him in—

To himself we beg leave to refer Your Excellency for particulars.

It will not escape Your Excellency's penetration, that great secrecy on this occasion is requisite, whether his plan be accepted or declined; and

that to render Mr. Dickson extensively useful, if employed; it will be indispensable that he be furnished with a commission, & that the commanders at Detroit Amherstburg & Michilimackinac & the Indian Department there, be instructed to promote the plan Your Excellency may see fit to confide to him; and to furnish in aid therefore such goods & supplies from His Majesty's Indian Stores, as also such provisions as you shall consider needful for stimulating these Indians to embark in the joint cause, & for subsisting them, when engaged in it at a distance from their respective hunting grounds—

His ideas are known to us only, and here mean & remain so—

As individuals interested in establishments which from business & intercourse have for a great period of years been connected with the western Indians; and who have much at stake in the issue of the preservation of the Canadas, we have ventured upon addressing Your Excellency, on this occasion in perfect confidence that our motives will be approved of even if our opinions should not be coincided in to their full extent—

These are times when the great utility & practicability of a plan are the primary considerations & the expence a secondary one—

That something decisive respecting the Indians should be done may be considered indispensable, & how to do it we most respectfully submit to Your Excellency's consideration & wisdom.

The Nations of Indians near the Mississippi have hitherto had little or no communication with Government except through British Traders who have individually contributed very materially to preserve alive their attachment to Great Britain.

Under present circumstances it is needful, that Government should have a more direct & pointed influence upon the Western Nations.

We have the honor to subscribe ourselves with profound respect.

Sir

Your Excellency's  
Most obedient & most  
humble servants

JAMES MCGILL

JOHN RICHARDSON

W. MCGILLIVRAY

His Excellency

Sir George Prevost Bart.

&c. &c. &c.