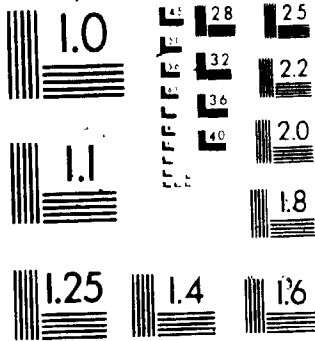


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which he had been ordered to do, Amherst saw Indian affairs as a means to this end. Johnson argued that such a policy would have quite disastrous consequences and urged instead a policy of "steady, uniform and friendly contact toward them." (1) Amherst refused to be moved by Johnson's arguments and remained steadfast in his determination to cut costs particularly as he saw expenditure on the Indians as an extravagant waste. (2) In such circumstances Johnson began lobbying Whitehall, as he was entitled to do, with his own views, outlining the consequences of Amherst's policy and offering instead specific proposals for the future of Indian affairs and a plan for the regulation of the fur trade. (3)

Johnson's relations with Gage on the other hand were far more cordial; Gage respected Johnson's judgement and expertise on Indian matters, and for a time supported Johnson's proposals. The costs of Johnson's operations were however a cause of friction (4) In November 1765 when transmitting Indian Department bills for

(1) J.P., III, 330, Johnson to Amherst, 12 Feb., 1761.

(2) Amherst bombarded Johnson with letters driving home this simplistic argument. All can be found in J.P., X. See, as an example, J.P., X, 284-6, Amherst to Johnson.

(3) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 572-81, Johnson to Lords of Trade, 13 Nov., 1763.

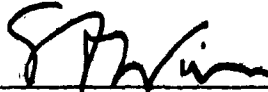
(4) The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage, (hereafter Gage Corr.), ed. Clarence E. Carter, 2 Vols., (New Haven, 1969), Pt. 1, 318-9, Gage to Barrington, 18 Dec., 1765. Where relevant letters are published in this work as well as the Gage Mss. in Michigan, notes will refer to Gage Corr.

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate
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"British Imperial Policy and the Northern
Department Indians, 1774-7"

submitted by John C. Robson, B.A.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts



THESIS SUPERVISOR



CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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15 December, 1983

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to examine the relationship between the British and the Indian peoples of the Northern Indian Department in the early years of the American Revolution, 1774-7. After an examination of the Indian Department and its place within the Imperial edifice in North America at this time, the thesis argues that Indian motives and the British desire to use Indians against colonists in the Revolution resulted in a marriage of convenience. Indian tribes in the Northern Department greatly desired the opportunity to strike back at American settler expansion, which threatened their very existence and willingly provided manpower to the British cause in the belief that the British would act as their guardians. The British on the other hand wished to use the Indians as a tool to wield in a ruthless conflict. However only limited use was made of the Indians in this period owing to a divergence of viewpoint within the Imperial hierarchy. Warriors served a useful purpose as scouts in the period under discussion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like many I was deeply saddened by the untimely death in July of Professor Peter Droune. He had been of great assistance in discussing aspects of late eighteenth century Imperial history with me.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dean S.F. Wise for his help throughout. In particular his critical suggestions and patient and careful editing. A very special debt is owed to Carleton University who provided financial support in the form of an Epstein Foundation Scholarship and by hiring me as a teaching assistant.

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INTRODUCTION.

The British use of Indians in the American Revolution, the topic with which this thesis is concerned, is well known: it engendered great controversy at the time and the literature to be found on the subject echoes this. Yet a primary motive in pursuing this subject is the belief that the interpretations offered by historians in tackling this aspect of the Revolution are not particularly satisfying. The reason for this is undoubtedly the prickly nature of the problem in hand: the use of primitive aborigines in what constituted a civil war and the type of war that these people waged. Broadly speaking, three trends of historiography can be discerned.

Because the idea of using the North American Indian in what was a white man's quarrel, seems to them somewhat immoral, historians of the British Empire and of Canada have taken at best a reticent and at worst a dismissive attitude towards this subject; something best pushed firmly to one side following a sharp rebuke. George Wrong for instance, in his Canada and the American Revolution, deals with the Indian dimension to the British forces in the Revolution by dubbing them "dangerous and useless allies."⁽¹⁾ In 1964, Piers Mackesy in his standard military history of the War, when referring to Burgoyne's inability to raise more Indians, says this "was no great loss, because except as scouts they proved worse than useless, and

(1) George M. Wrong, Canada and the American Revolution, (Toronto, 1935), 324.

their savagery made effective propaganda to raise the enemy's militia."(1) while there is undoubtedly some truth in what Mackesy says, this represents too prompt a dismissal of an important subject, especially given the frequency that the Indian dimension appears in the source material upon which Mackesy's story is based. A further problem, which the above examples demonstrate with the utmost clarity, is to view their subject entirely from a white man's perspective. In Hilda Neatby's *Quebec, the Revolutionary Age, 1760-1791* for example, the standard Canadian history textbook for the period, little mention is made at all about the Indian peoples who happened to live in that province, the Seven Nations of Canada; in fact an Indian dimension only appears when it throws light onto a central character, such as Carleton.(2) It would be wrong to suggest that such attitudes are always apparent, George Stanley, for example, who has admittedly devoted much energy to writing Canadian history from the angle of the Native peoples, treats the Indian dimension to the American Revolution with a degree of fairness and subtlety,(3) but such trends are quite unmistakable. Indeed, as James Walker noted in an essay on the place of the Indian in Canadian history: "the picture of the

(1) Piers Mackesy, *The War for America* (London, 1964), 130.

(2) Hilda Neatby, *Quebec, the Revolutionary Age* (Toronto, 1966).

(3) Of particular relevance are his "The Six Nations and the American Revolution", *Ontario History*, LVI, 1964, and *Canada's Soldiers*, (Toronto, 1974).

Indian as a human being...is confusing, contradictory and incomplete. Clearly, he is not often considered to be deserving of serious attention, or his society of scholarly analysis."⁽¹⁾

The second trend of historiography concerns the response of American historians. And this has been quite different; here opinion abounds on the subject. The British use of Indians in the American Revolution was deemed to be one of twenty seven "injuries and usurpations" inflicted upon the patriots by the British Crown since the accession of George III as expressed in the Declaration of Independence in 1776: "(he).. has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions". Generations of American historians have expounded July the Fourth rhetoric in the most trenchant of terms; they have written with a view to identifying the allegedly guilty who allowed a policy of such wickedness to take place and in chronicling the tales of horror that resulted. Hardly surprising is the fact that much of the writing on the subject has been flawed, and has concentrated on specific controversies: whether or not Hamilton paid for scalps, the policy of Gage in proposing the "unleashing" of the "savages", and the murder by Burgoyne's Indians of Jane McCrae being prominent.

Two examples from well known works written nearly a century

(1) James Walker, "The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing", Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, 1971, 21.

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apart, demonstrate American historiography on the subject. In 1836, W.L. Stone in his Life of Joseph Brant, wrote with reference to Governor Guy Carleton's reluctance to use Indians that:

.....his experience could not have but taught him the capriciousness of their character, their intractableness and inconstancy. He must have known that their ideas of war were totally different from those of civilized nations...and that)...they were utterly regardless of, and looked with contempt on those belligerent usages, which are considered as honourable, generous, and fair in the modern service of civilized man. He could not have been ignorant of the fact that the object and design of most of the wars that Indians participate are not so much to conquer by manly and open battle, as to murder and destroy after their own peculiar fashion...(1)

In 1928 Hoffman Nickerson, in his respected military history of the year 1777, wrote that:

.....the employment of Indians as directed by the unimaginative George III and the always good-natured Lord North remains the dirtiest page of the American Revolution. He..(the Indian)...was used....for paying out the American farmer..and his wife and children with the diabolical outrages and tortures of which the redskin made an art. The Indians were the agents of what the world has recently learned to call the policy of frightfulness.(2)

In an essay published in 1970, S.F. Wise commented on such interpretations and discerned a number of assumptions underlying them: that the Indians constitute but one race, they are wholly

(1) W.L. Stone, The Life of Joseph Brant, Iroquois, (Albany, 1836), I, 190.

(2) Hoffman Nickerson, The Turning Point of the Revolution, (New York, 1928), I, 126-7.

subhuman, mere animals and exceedingly bloodthirsty ones at that, that a craving for blood represents their chief motivation in fighting, and that the Indians are mere pawns of the British. Pointing out the absurdity of such notions, particularly the failure to consider the many Indian tribal groupings and in denying the Indians status of rational human beings, Wise noted how recent revisionist writings on Loyalism in the American Revolution have contributed to a far firmer understanding of Loyalist motives but doubted whether such an approach was likely to be taken towards the Indian dimension to the Revolution.(1)

Such an impression can now be seen to be too pessimistic with the publication of work by Anthony Wallace,(2) James O'Donnell III(3) and, in particular Barbara Graymont,(4) and the fact that in a conference on Loyalism held in London in 1975, three contributions dealt with the question of Indian "Loyalism".(5) The reviewers response to Graymont's work is of interest. C.M.

- (1) S.F. Wise, "The American Revolution and Indian History" in John Moir ed. *Character and Circumstance. Essays in Honour of Donald Grant Creighton*, (Toronto, 1970), 182-3.
- (2) Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Decline and Rebirth of the Seneca*, (New York, 1972).
- (3) James O'Donnell III, *The Southern Indians in the American Revolution*, (Knoxville, 1972).
- (4) Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, (Syracuse, 1972).
- (5) Published in Esmond Wright ed. *Red, White and True Blue*, (London, 1976). The relevant contributions are those by George Rawlyk, Francis Jennings and Peter Marshall.

Johnston wrote : "she spares the reader much of the moralistic present-mindedness that so often distorts studies of this kind"(1) and Reginald Horsman commented that her book "is given more value by the dispassionate nature of her analyses...writing on the American Indian too often produces analyses which fall into pro-white or pro-Indian patterns."(2)

These comments refer to the third trend of historical literature which is the writing of Indian history, in particular the attempt to view Colonial American history, (including the Revolutionary crisis) from an Indian as well as a British or an American point of view.(3) But as Johnson and Horsman have noted many of these works have been seriously flawed. Generally speaking the rise of ethnohistory, as it is usually known, mirrored and was profoundly influenced by the growth of "Indian power" in the 1960s and '70s and symbolized by President J.F. Kennedy's celebrated speech of 1961, when he referred to the Indians as "the least understood" and "most misunderstood" of Americans and talked of the "national disgrace" of American Indian policy since the Revolution.(4) But these works were also

(1) C.M. Johnston in *Canadian Historical Review*, (hereafter *CH.R.*), 59, 1973, 329.

(2) Reginald Horsman in *American Historical Review*, (hereafter *A.H.R.*), 52, 1972-3, 480.

(3) A detailed survey of this trend can be found in James Axtell, "The Ethnohistory of Early America: A Review Essay" *Millian and Marx Quarterly*, 35, 1978.

(4) H.C. Porter, "Reflections of the Ethnohistory of Early Colonial America", *Journal of American Studies*, (hereafter *J.A.S.*), 16, 1982, 244.

fatally affected by the American involvement in Vietnam to the extent whereby it was possible for prominent ethnohistorians to discuss events in Colonial America by explicitly alluding to events in Vietnam.(1)

It was for example in this intellectual atmosphere that the belief became common in the 1970s that scalping was not an Indian custom at all, but rather had been an import of the white man. The only basis for such a view was its origin: a vision by Cornplanter, the Seneca chief, in 1820, in which he saw that the French had furnished the Indians "with sharp knives to take the skins of their (heads)". Although the evidence of numerous travellers' accounts together with published archaeological evidence demonstrated categorically that scalping predated European settlement, this myth was commonplace.(2)

In short, this dimension to colonial American history has been exploited for reasons other than historiographical ones. And evidence has been called upon to bolster positions occupied for political or moral conviction.

Thus a study of this sort of problem is certain to be a controversial one. The main problem is one of dealing with two quite incompatible cultures. And considering the Indian raises one particularly difficult problem. The North American Indian was from a primitive culture. Almost all the Northern groupings

(1) Ibid., 247. Francis Jennings is one such ethnohistorian.

(2) James Axtell and William Sturtevant, "The Unkindest Cut, or Who Invented Scalping", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 37, 1980, 451-472.

practiced, for example, quite excruciating tortures upon their captives and practiced cannibalism on the mutilated corpse. The three modes of historiography, as has already been seen, deal with this problem in totally different ways. Arguably the best means of viewing the problem is to acknowledge the fact that the Indian is indeed from a primitive society and examine his conduct within its own cultural context.(1)

The following thesis seeks to examine the British use of Indians in the early part of the American Revolution 1774-7. It is concerned only with the Indians who lived in area administered by the Governor of Quebec, as defined by the Quebec Act of 1774. The thesis concerns itself essentially with four problems. The first concerning Indian motivation, seeks to analyse the reasons why so many Indians ally themselves with the British in the period under consideration, or put another way an attempt to understand the concept of "Indian Loyalism". The second, concerning British policy, directs attention to the decision to use the Indians in a military capacity and seeks to understand why, when a considerable number of warriors are available for service, very little use is made of them in the period 1775-6. The third, again concerning Imperial decision making, attempts to determine why the British then do make greater use of the Indians in 1777, a reversal of their previous stand. And the fourth seeks

(1) An excellent impression can be gained about the different ways in which the Indian is portrayed in Canadian historical and ethnohistorical works, by comparing the epithets used by the relevant histories to describe Indian culture brought together in the essays by Porter and Walker cited above.

to estimate the significance and the purpose of Indian participation the period 1775-7.

The study breaks off at the end of 1777 before the commencement of the frontier raids of 1778-83, the latter period being a major topic in itself. As a result the subject under discussion becomes somewhat imperfect since the frontier raids are in many ways the logical outcome of the subject matter explained in this thesis.

It is first necessary however to provide some background by examining the British Imperial apparatus for dealing with the Indians as it had developed up to 1774-5.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BRITISH INDIAN DEPARTMENT IN 1774-5

On 24 June 1774, by the Quebec Act, Great Britain extended the existing boundaries of the Province of Quebec to take in all the territory extending south to the Ohio River, west to the Mississippi and north to the southern limits of the area granted to the Hudson's Bay Company. In addition, four new civilian Governments were to be created at Detroit, Michilimackinac, Vincennes and Kaskaskia, each with a Lieutenant Governor. (1) As a result what had in effect been a giant Indian 'reserve' west of the Alleghenies, created by the Proclamation of 1763 and modified by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, was incorporated into Quebec. No mention is made in the Act of the question of Indian territory or of Indians although the Indian problem had been of fundamental importance in the rationale behind the Quebec Act. (2)

As a result of the Act, British Indian affairs were brought under the direct control of the Governor of Quebec, then General Guy Carleton. He inherited the Northern Indian Department, (the Indian reserve was divided into two areas, north and

(1) Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, (hereafter Constitutional Docs.), eds. Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, 2 Vols., (Ottawa, 1918), I, 570-576.

(2) This question will be dealt with in Chap. 2. In fact all questions concerning Indian territory, land cessions will be discussed there.

south, according to Indian tribal groupings), (1) which had been moulded to a great extent in the previous two decades by the lately deceased Sir William Johnson. In 1775 Whitehall sent Carleton a set of instructions concerning "Our Province of Quebec in America and all our territories dependent thereupon" (2) and enclosed in article thirty two of these instructions a "Plan for the future management of Indian Affairs" which had in fact been developed in 1764. (3) It is the working of this Northern Indian Department that this chapter seeks to analyse.

It is impossible however to give a specific picture of the administrative machine because in 1774-5 the Indian Department was in a state of flux; at best it was muddled, at worst chaotic, as a result of the new arrangements resulting from the Quebec Act in 1774 and the untimely death in the same year of the Indian Superintendent, Sir William Johnson. As will be seen when dealing with the Indian Department during the period 1775-7, the whole apparatus was infected by infighting, jealousy, and at times total confusion; in fact satisfactory arrangements never seem to have developed during this period. As a result the following sketch is necessarily vague and aims to explain how the system had developed and how it had worked up to 1774-5.

It is impossible to consider or understand the Northern

(1) Constitutional Docs. II, 594-614.

(2) Ibid., II, 614.

(3) Ibid., II, 614-620.

Indian Department without recourse to the decidedly idiosyncratic figure of Sir William Johnson, who first achieved prominence in Indian Affairs towards the end of "King George's War" against the French (1744-8). An Irish Protestant, Johnson came to North America to manage estates owned by his uncle, Admiral Sir Peter Warren, in either 1737 or 1738. It was the position of Warren's lands, south of the Mohawk River in New York, that brought Johnson into contact with the Mohawk Indians and began his long association with them. (1)

Johnson very quickly established himself in the area by purchasing a huge tract of land north of the Mohawk, the start of a life long interest in real estate, and initiated highly lucrative trading links with the Mohawks. (2) Johnson appears to have gone down well with the Mohawks, who called him, rather aptly, *Warranhiyagey*, "he who does much business." (3) Trade together with his relationships with Mohawk women were the factors responsible for cementing his bonds with the Mohawk tribe. And the latter is of especial importance.

Women in Iroquois society had far greater status and more control over the affairs of their nation than did the women of European countries and their colonies, a situation that resulted

(1) James Thomas Flexner, *Lord of the Mohawks*, (Boston, 1979), 8.

(2) *Ibid.*, Chap. 2.

(3) Robert S. Allen, "The British Indian Department and the Frontier in North America" *Canadian Historic Sites, Occasional Papers in History and Archaeology*, 14, 1975, 13.

from their pre-eminent position in the economic affairs of the tribe. The practice of matrilineal descent, whereby the family name and property passed from one generation to another through the women of the tribe, and when the daughter of a family married, she and her husband lived in the mother's house, gave women a unique position. While each tribe had a number of male chiefs, female clan matrons could appoint and depose these chiefs. The white wampum belts which indicated the hereditary names of the chiefs were kept by the women:(1) And women had significant influence with the warriors and could make or break a war party, by either supporting or disapproving a warrior's enterprise; in effect they had the power to veto a war declaration.(2)

As early as 1739 Johnson fathered a child of mixed blood by an unknown Mohawk girl, the first of many. But it was his relationship with Molly, or Mary, Prant which assumes fundamental importance for political reasons because she was a clan matron who possessed exalted parentage. Her grandfather, Sagayeeanquarashtow, had been one of "the four Indian Kings" who had visited Queen Anne in London. Johnson was probably married to Molly by Indian custom however, he never married otherwise. Their first child was born in September 1759, the

(1) Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, (Syracuse, 1972), 13.

(2) *Ibid.*, 21.

first of eight who survived.(1)

It is important to realise that Johnson's interests lay with the Mohawks; he had few personal dealings with the other five nations of the Iroquois Confederacy and had, for example, no attachment at all to the Senecas, the more numerous tribe. But he was able to influence proceedings through the League of the Six Nations and that Confederacy's practice of requiring the assent of all the members to certain major decisions. The original League was a Confederation of five tribes, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca and Cayuga, and was founded sometime between 1450 and 1660. It was joined by the Tuscarora in the early eighteenth century. Each tribe had equal voice on the Grand Council which usually met at Onondaga because of its central position and involved itself with a variety of concerns: diplomacy, including war and peace, alliances with other tribes and treaties with the Europeans; in short affairs other than domestic ones.(2) Ideally the League was supposed to act with one mind but in practice there was a strong pull of localism; the constituent tribes of the Confederacy would go their own ways, and the principle of unanimity would break down.(3) The traditional problem of autonomy with federalism plagued this Confederation.

It was through the League of the Six Nations that Johnson,

(1) Flexner, *Lord of the Mohawks*, 186-7.

(2) Graymont, *Iroquois*, 14.

(3) *Ibid.*, 16.

through his contacts with the Mohawks, was able to influence other Northern Indian tribal groupings as well, and in particular those who had recognised the headship of the Six Nations especially those tribes to the West of Johnson's domain, such as the Ottawa Confederacy (made up of Ottawa, Ojibway and Potawatomi), and the loose groupings of Indians resident within the boundaries of the Province of Quebec, known as the Seven Nations of Canada. It would be wrong to imagine that Johnson had perfected this process; at the Detroit council of September 1761, Johnson blundered badly. Arriving with an entourage of prominent Mohawks, he greatly angered the Ottawa Confederacy Delegation at an especially sensitive time by telling them that he recognised the Wyandot, a survivor group from the defunct Huron Confederacy, as leaders of the incipient Western Confederacy. In fact this mistake of Johnson's was probably a contributing factor to the Ottawa's hostility that was to vent itself in the frontier violence known as Pontiac's Revolt. (1)

Sir William Johnson was no bleeding heart; nor had he turned native. Certainly he was never taken in by popular eighteenth century "noble savage" theories. He was quite prepared to use the Six Nations Indians as a lever with which to control other tribal groupings, and as a final resort, was prepared to sanction inter-tribal violence if, in his opinion, the ends justified the means. At times in his correspondence with Whitehall, the Indian

(1) *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, (hereafter J.P.) ed. James Sullivan, et al., 15 Vols., (Albany 1924-65), III, 424-501, Johnson to the Indians assembled, Detroit 9-18 Sept., 1761.

is portrayed firmly as a necessary evil.(1)

It is Johnson's links with the Indians that explain his rise to prominence as a British official within the Imperial framework. During "King George's War" against the French, he had managed to maintain Iroquois neutrality and, as a result, was appointed in 1746 "Colonel of the Forces to be raised out of the Six Nations of Indians on His Majesty's service against the French and Indians."(2) During the Seven Years' War against the French, Johnson was handed a commission by Major-General Braddock for "the Six Nations and their allies".(3) Johnson's expertise in preventing the Iroquois from joining the French, unlike the majority of tribal groupings, together with his own military prowess, as demonstrated at the Battle of Lake George in 1756 and during the capture of Fort Niagara in July 1759, won him a baronetcy.

In the following two decades, Johnson was able to mould a highly effective organ with which to deal with the Indians under his direction. In addition to the Superintendent, Johnson of course until his death in 1774, there were four deputy superintendents who administered the whole Northern Department.

(1) Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York (hereafter *N.Y.C.D.*) ed. Edmund B. O'Callaghan, 15 Vols., (Albany 1853-8), III, 474-501, Johnson to the Lords of Trade, Jan. 9, 1764.

(2) *Ibid.*, I, 60-1, Clinton to Johnson, 28 Aug., 1746.

(3) *Ibid.*, I, 466-7, Commission from Edward Braddock.

they were each given areas which corresponded with tribal divisions. George Croghan was appointed Deputy Superintendent by Johnson in 1756 for the tribes in Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley. And when, after 1765, the Illinois country was annexed by the British, Croghan's territory covered this area as well. In 1772 Croghan resigned and was succeeded by Alexander McKee. In 1760 after the expulsion of the French from Canada, Daniel Claus was made a Deputy for the Indians who resided in the Province of Quebec, the Seven Nations of Canada. In 1762 Guy Johnson received the same appointment to deal with the Iroquois in effect as Sir William's assistant. And in 1767 Major Joseph Gorham was appointed to deal with the Micmac and Malecite tribes of Nova Scotia. These officials were assisted by interpreters, smiths, storekeepers and secretaries. (1)

These men and their staffs lived and traded with the Indians and acquainted themselves with the various Indian languages and cultures. In 1774-5 the two most important officers were Guy Johnson and Daniel Claus. Claus was a son-in-law of Sir William, having married a white daughter of Johnson and Catherine Wisenberg, his white mistress. (2) Guy Johnson claimed to be a nephew of Sir William's though their relationship was probably more distant, but in any case Guy was Sir William's son-in-law

(1) S.F. Wise, "Northern Indians in the American Revolution", Unpublished MA thesis, Queen's University, 1952, 19.

(2) Douglas Leighton, "Christian Daniel Claus", Dictionary of Canadian Biography, (hereafter D.C.B.) ed. Frances Halpenny, (Toronto, 1979), IV, 1771-1800, 155.

having married another of his white daughters.(1) Shortly before his death in 1774, Johnson had recommended to Gage that Guy replace him as Superintendent for the Northern Department, a move which Gage approved.(2) Such a move served Sir William Johnson's interests well; the Northern Indian Department had become a kind of Johnson clique, something with which Guy Carleton quickly became aware when responsibility for the Department was handed over to him. Carleton was determined to erode the Johnson flavour to Indian affairs and bring it firmly under his control by staffing it with his men.(3) Carleton's strategy was to lead to great acrimony, something which is of fundamental importance in deciphering Indian affairs in the period 1775-7.

It is important to place the Northern Indian Department within the British Imperial structure in North America. To all intents and purposes British Imperial policy was carried out by the British army at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. There had been plans to incorporate the vast wilderness, invariably referred to as 'Indian Country', within the jurisdiction of the colonies, preferably Quebec, as early as 1763, but that plan

(1) Jonathon G. Rossie, "Guy Johnson", *D.C.B.* IV, 393.

(2) William L. Clements Library, (hereafter W.L.C.), Gage Mss., Gage to Dartmouth, July 18, 1774.

(3) This was a feature of Carleton's administration of Quebec. When he replaced Murray as Governor he set about placing his appointees in the key positions.

never materialized.(1) Instead the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army directed the task of administration from his office in the town of New York.(2) In the Commission to Sir William Johnson in 1756 it was implied that the Superintendent was subordinate to the Commander.(3) While in a second Commission, issued in 1761, the position was clarified: the Superintendent was placed directly under the command of the Commander-in-Chief in America "whose commands and directions you are punctually to observe in all matters relating to the affairs of the...Indians."(4) The Commissions of the Superintendents of both Northern and Southern Departments were renewed by the successive Commanders. The Indian Departments were completely dependent upon the Commander-in-Chief for approval and payment of their expenditures; and this was a crucial factor. Clarence Carter has summarized the relationship aptly: "the Indian question was inextricably interwoven with that of defense and vice-versa."(5)

(1) Constitutional Docs., I, 147, Agreement to the Lords of Trade, July 14, 1763.

(2) This question is fully discussed in John Shy, *Toward Lexington. The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton, 1965). The decision to garrison the Colonies after the Seven Years' War was aimed in part to deter the colonists from provoking the Indians. Ironically the Army was welcomed at first.

(3) See note 3, p. 16.

(4) *N. Y. C. D.*, VII, 459, Commission of Sir William Johnson to be Superintendent of Indian Affairs, March 11, 1761.

(5) Clarence E. Carter, "The Military Office in America", *A. M. B.*, 28, 1922-3, 459.

But the Indian Superintendent, though tied firmly to the Commander-in-Chief, had access to the highest authority, Whitehall - the Board of Trade and the Secretary of State for the American Colonies when the latter was created in 1767 - by means of direct correspondence. In fact Johnson had been ordered in 1763 by the Board of Trade to keep them informed because a "regular and constant correspondence is now become essentially necessary from the great hitherto unknown tribes and nations which are now under His Majesty's immediate protection."⁽¹⁾ But while leading politicians such as Lords Halifax, Egremont, and Hillsborough showed genuine concern for, and engaged in much correspondence about the Indian populations of "the Wilderness", and indeed sought to protect them, they were seldom successful.⁽²⁾

During the two decades before the Quebec Act this triangular relationship between the Superintendent situated at Johnstown, New York, the Commander-in-Chief in North America and Whitehall varied according to whoever held the post of the Commander-in-Chief. At the close of the Seven Years' War the post was held by Sir Jeffrey Amherst. In the same year, 1763, he was succeeded by Major General Thomas Gage, who had considerable experience in the late war, and who was Commander of the forces in Canada at the time of his elevation.

While Amherst held the post the system gave rise to considerable acrimony. Determined to cut Colonial expenditure,

(1) N.Y.C.D., VII, 535, Lords of Trade to Johnson, Aug. 5, 1761.

(2) This argument is forwarded in Chap. 2.

which he had been ordered to do, Amherst saw Indian affairs as a means to this end. Johnson argued that such a policy would have quite disastrous consequences and urged instead a policy of "steady, uniform and friendly contact toward them."⁽¹⁾ Amherst refused to be moved by Johnson's arguments and remained steadfast in his determination to cut costs particularly as he saw expenditure on the Indians as an extravagant waste.⁽²⁾ In such circumstances Johnson began lobbying Whitehall, as he was entitled to do, with his own views, outlining the consequences of Amherst's policy and offering instead specific proposals for the future of Indian affairs and a plan for the regulation of the fur trade.⁽³⁾

Johnson's relations with Gage on the other hand were far more cordial; Gage respected Johnson's judgement and expertise on Indian matters, and for a time supported Johnson's proposals. The costs of Johnson's operations were however a cause of friction⁽⁴⁾ In November 1765 when transmitting Indian Department bills for

(1) J.P., III, 330, Johnson to Amherst, 12 Feb., 1761.

(2) Amherst bombarded Johnson with letters driving home this simplistic argument. All can be found in J.P., X. See, as an example, J.P., X, 284-6, Amherst to Johnson.

(3) N.Y.C.P., VIII, 572-81, Johnson to Lords of Trade, 13 Nov., 1763.

(4) The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage, (hereafter Gage Corr.), ed. Clarence E. Carter, 2 Vols., (New Haven, 1969), I, 518-9, Gage to Barrington, 18 Dec., 1765. Where relevant letters are published in this work as well as the Gage MSS. in Michigan, notes will refer to Gage Corr.

one thousand pounds to the Secretary of the Treasury, Gage showed considerable concern and felt obliged to assure the Treasury of his demands that the Superintendents observe the strictest economy.(1) By the end of the following year Gage was becoming openly hostile to the idea of bearing financial responsibility: "the two Superintendents draw upon me as their occasions require, I can have nothing to say to their vouchers nor very often to the necessity of their expenses, nor am I acquainted with their estimates.....I have no doubt of the necessity and reality of these gentleman's expenditures, but the charge of settling their accounts I could wish to be excluded from."(2) Gage then enclosed a plan in which he suggested that the Board of Trade assume responsibility for the payment of Indian officials and Indian congresses.(3) In July 1767, Gage became so infuriated over the question of costs that he refused to forward some accounts Johnson had given him from Edward Cole, a Commissary at the Illinois. Nothing ever came(4) of Gage's proposals and the system continued until the passing of the Quebec Act whereupon the costs of Indian affairs became the responsibility of the

(1) *Ibid.*, II, 317, Gage to Charles Lowdres, 24 Nov., 1765.

(2) *Ibid.*, II, 393, Gage to Barrington, 10 Dec., 1766. The use of vouchers was the system of keeping account of costs.

(3) *Ibid.*, II, 394-5, Proposals for the more exact and better carrying on and defraying the expenses of His Majesty's service in North America.

(4) *J.P.*, V, 601, Gage to Johnson, 20 July, 1767.

Governor of Quebec.

Sir William Johnson was never happy with the total dependence of his Department on the Commander-in-Chief and himself put forward plans to Whitehall for an Indian Department that would be greatly expanded, independent of the British army and would be directly responsible to Whitehall. Its main role would be the regulation of the fur trade, which he contended, must be confined to the four posts of Oswego, Niagara, Fort Pitt and Detroit.(1) It appeared that Johnson had triumphed when the Boards of Trade made known its proposals on July 10, 1764.(2) In fact, as Peter Marshall has pointed out, this unusually prompt response from Whitehall resulted from the fact that Johnson's reputation was especially high at that particular time because it seemed to the politicians that Amherst's policies had been the cause of the frontier violence of 1763 known as Pontiac's Revolt, and it suited them to rely on Johnson's wisdom in dealing with the various tribes and consider his plan.(3)

The plan accepted Johnson's previous recommendations on the fur trade almost in their entirety. In addition the Indian Superintendent was to become fully independent: "the ... Superintendent shall have the conduct of all public affairs

(1) N.Y.C.D., VII, 572-81, Johnson to Lords of Trade, 13 Nov., 1763.

(2) Constitutional Docs., II, 614-20, Plan for the Management of Indian Affairs.

(3) Peter Marshall, "Sir William Johnson and the Treaty of Fort Stanwix 1768", J.A.S.I., 1967, 150.

relative to the Indians."(1) Moreover the Indian Department would be given considerable freedom of action: "neither the Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's forces in America, nor any of the Governors...of the colonies shall hold any general meetings with the Indians, or send any public talks to them without the concurrence of the ... Superintendent."(2) It was further provided that each Northern Department post be staffed by three department employees, a commissary, interpreter and smith.(3) The commissary was to act as a Justice of the Peace and "no person having military command in the Indian country" could hold the post. In fact such persons had to give "the Commissary ... all assistance in his power."(4) Thus the new Indian Department would possess very real power and would, in effect, become an empire within an empire, something not lost on contemporary critics. Not surprisingly Johnson wrote to the Board of Trade approving the main areas though he questioned a few specific details.(5)

Yet, four years later the whole plan was scrapped: the management of the fur trade was to stay with the colonies and the Indian department was to stay firmly subordinate to the army. Johnson's plans had thus foundered and he and his apparatus were

(1) Constitutional Docs., II, 614, Plan...

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., II, 615.

(4) Ibid.

(5) N.A.C.D., VII, 657-66, Johnson to Lords of Trade, 8 Oct., 1764.

no better off. Johnson's failure illustrates with some clarity the position of Whitehall with regard to Indian affairs; it acted promptly enough when there was a genuine crisis in the form of Pontiac's Revolt, but once the crisis had passed other more pressing issues appeared and this question was dropped.

Undoubtedly a major reason for the plan's rejection was the passing of the Stamp Act on 22 March 1765 and the political turmoil that that Act produced in its wake. Taxing the colonists proved an emotive issue and thereafter policy makers in London were distinctly wary about introducing financial legislation to pay for an Imperial Indian Department. This was of particular importance given that the regulation of the fur trade was directly related to the garrisoning of the western forts and the latter were all in need of costly repairs.⁽¹⁾ As has already been pointed out Gage found even the basic costs of running the Indian Department problematic. And, as a result, Gage felt obliged to abandon as many forts as possible in the Spring of 1766 owing to the financial crisis.⁽²⁾ Johnson clearly knew that the latter prejudiced his plans for trade regulation and a more effective Indian Department.⁽³⁾ Thus the British were being caught in a vicious circle: to implement an effective and much needed Indian policy with trade regulation and the necessary equipment to

(1) Marshall, "Sir William Johnson", 153.

(2) *Ibid.*, XI, 986-7, Gage to Johnson, 25 Dec., 1765.

(3) *Ibid.*, V, 1-5, Johnson to Gage, Jan. 7, 1766.

implement it required taxation, and the latter was a political timebomb.

But, as Peter Marshall has suggested, at least as influential as the question of financing, the operation was the furious response Johnson's ideas provoked in the colonies themselves, particularly in the Province of Quebec. The Board of Trade asked the Governors of the Colonies to comment on the proposals and once the fundamentals of the plan were known Colonial pressure groups made themselves felt. In Quebec the Montreal merchant community, whether French or English, saw the end of the Seven Years' War as an opportunity to renew their old trading rivalries with Albany. And Johnson's proposals were considered in this light. To the Montreal merchants, the plan with all its various restrictions would be of advantage to the less venturesome New Yorkers who preferred to deal with Johnson's Indian Department middlemen, rather than go out into the wilderness by themselves and trade direct. In short the Montreal fur traders and merchants saw Johnson's plans as an inequitable restraint; for them open commerce was essential to their economic survival. Governor Murray took up the Canadian cause with great gusto and rejected the plan's main features when asked to comment. Guy Carleton, who was appointed Lieutenant Governor in April 1766, championed the Canadian cause against Johnson even more vociferously than

Murray.(1) By April 1767, Johnson acknowledged in a letter to Shelbourne that the pressure from the Canadians was too great and that it was impossible to move them.(2)

In 1768 Johnson's proposals were finally rejected having suffered a lingering death; with them went any prospect of an independent and effective Indian Department. The Board of Trade found that the Indian Department should be retained to conduct political negotiations with the Indians, renew treaties, settle inter tribal disputes and land questions and act as a source of information regarding Indian feeling. In the Board of Trade's view these roles "are in our judgement services of great importance, and to which it is certainly necessary for the preservation of the British interest with those Indians, and for preventing all foreign influence and connection."(3)

The centrestone to Indian diplomacy was the system of presents which the British offered for friendship in peacetime and as rewards for services rendered in wartime. The system of giving and receiving presents was a custom deeply rooted in Indian culture and one central to both domestic issues and

(1) Peter Marshall, "Colonial Protest and Imperial Retrenchment: Indian Policy, 1764-68", *I.A.S.*, 5, 1971, 5-7; Governor Murray's position is fully examined in R.A. Humphreys, "Governor Murray's views on the Plan of 1764 for the Management of Indian Affairs", *C.H.R.*, 16, 1935, 167-8.

(2) *N.Y.A.P.*, VII, 915, Johnson to Shelbourne, Apr. 1, 1767.

(3) *Ibid.*, VIII, 28. Representation of the Lords of Trade on the State of Indian Affairs, March 7, 1768. By far the most important element of Indian diplomacy, as will seen from Chapter 2, was the question of tribal territory.

diplomatic relations.(1) From a comparatively early stage after their arrival in North America, both the French and the British discovered that in order to establish effective diplomatic links with the Indian peoples, all conferences had to adhere to the custom of presents. In the period 1748-1754, between the end of King George's War and the start of the Seven Years' War, the competition for native allegiances was particularly fierce. During this period the French, probably because they possessed a centralized government, had a unified system of giving presents. On the other hand the British organisation was hampered by conflicting colonial authority. In effect the struggle over presents mirrored the struggle for empire in America and culminated in French defeat in 1763. The very strength of Britain and her colonies brought the Indians over to the British side.(2)

The presents consisted of a variety of eighteenth century wares: fabrics such as castor hats with lace, extravagantly designed waistcoats as well as such items, as scalping knives, bullet molds and vermilion war paint, wampum, tin pots, needles, thread and scissors; items needed by native women as well as men.(3)

The giving of presents developed into a regular procedure and in 1774-5 was the means by which Indian diplomacy was conducted. There had been one attempt to stop the process by Sir

(1) Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Diplomacy and Indian Gifts*, (Stanford, 1950), 13.

(2) *Ibid.*, 11-12.

(3) *Ibid.*, 5, 11.

Jeffrey Amherst as part of his programme of cutting colonial expenditure already referred to. In 1761 he ordered Sir William Johnson to cease the giving of presents. Johnson, who recognised that such a policy would have dire consequences answered Amherst with a sympathetic appraisal: "it is very necessary and will always be expected by the Indians...to supply them with a little clothing, some arms and ammunition to hunt with; also some provisions on their journey homewards as well as a smith to repair their arms."⁽¹⁾ Johnson's letter touches upon a crucial feature of Indian-White relations in Colonial America and demonstrates his perception with regard to Indian questions.

The arrival of the Europeans in North America resulted in a quite phenomenal change in the lifestyle of the aborigines. A people living in the Stone Age when the first European adventurers met them, the North American Indians gained superior skills from the Europeans, which improved their way of life; of particular use were metal implements; axes, needles, hoes and kettles. By the mid eighteenth century these implements were not only advantageous but absolute necessities. But as a result of these acquisitions the Indians lost their old skills in furnishing stone and bone implements; for example, iron kettles saw an end to the formerly important occupation of pottery making. As a result of this process, the Indian became totally dependent upon the white man.⁽²⁾ Their predicament has been

(1) *J.P.*, III, 330, Johnson to Amherst, 12 Feb. 1761.

(2) Graymont, *Iroquois*, 23-4.

admirably summed up by Barbara Graymont: "the white man had become a necessity to the Indian and the Indian did not wish to do without him....in reaching out for the white man and his civilization, the Indian was in a large measure bringing despair upon himself. This has always been the irony of Indian history."(1)

Amherst ignored Johnson's expertise on the Indian question. He never saw the Indian as anything other than an irritant and his correspondence admirably illustrates his total contempt for the Indian. Indeed Amherst was to put his philosophy into practice when, during Pontiac's Revolt, he ordered that small pox infected blankets be sent to the Indians to facilitate the raising of the siege of Fort Pitt.(2) Amherst dealt with the sensitive question of presents in this light; he wrote to Johnson that he did not believe in "purchasing the good behaviour either of Indians, or of any others..(and)..when men of what race soever, behave ill, they must be punished not bribed."(3) Not only did this policy fail to appreciate the cultural predicament of the Indians but it failed to take into account political realities as well. The

(1) Ibid., 295.

(2) Bernard Knollenberg in his essay "General Amherst and Germ Warfare", Mississippi Valley Historical Review (hereafter M.V.H.R.), 41, 1954, 489-90, argued by assembling a series of documents, that while Amherst would have liked to have carried out such a policy, such measures were never in fact put into practice. Donald H. Kent, in "Communications", Ibid, 162-3, appears to demonstrate conclusively that Amherst's orders were carried out. Knollenberg, in the same "Communications", acknowledged Kent's findings and conclusions.

(3) J.P., III, 345, Amherst to Johnson, Aug. 21, 1761.

western tribes, in particular the Ottawa Confederacy, had been lavishly provided for by the French and behaved violently on hearing the news of the new policy. Having failed to change Amherst's line of thought, Johnson attempted to sway him by suggesting that the system of presents should be slowed down "by imperceptible degrees."⁽¹⁾ But it was impossible to budge Amherst. The abrupt ending of presents, coming as it did at a terribly sensitive time for many tribal groupings, can be considered the most important short term cause for Pontiac's Revolt.⁽²⁾

After the panic caused by Pontiac's Revolt there was never any question of tampering with the system of presents. It is symbolic that for all his financial problems, Thomas Gage never seems to have considered presents as an avenue for cutting expenditure. Until 1774 the costs for this process were channelled through the Commander-in-Chief to the Treasury in London.⁽³⁾ It became the responsibility of the Governor of Quebec.

Thus the British Indian Department cannot be considered a bureaucratic organ in the twentieth century sense. It was an organisation greatly dependent upon the army, which possessed great power in the period following the Seven Years' War. The

(1) *Ibid.*, IV, 276, Johnson to Colden, Dec. 24, 1763.

(2) Jacobs, *Diplomacy*, 5.

(3) The last such account can be found in *J.P.*, VIII, 1170-1. Thereafter all such accounts are to be found in the Colonial Office papers for Quebec.

Department developed, and indeed was moulded, along the lines set by Sir William Johnson; Johnson's personnel gained expertise in Indian diplomacy by being versed in Indian languages and culture. This organisation, which was tied firmly to Johnson by loyalty and marriage, faced a major task in 1774-5 when it was decided to bring the Indians to the British side when relations between the British Crown and the colonists had disintegrated to the point of armed conflict. However it is first necessary to examine the origins for that Indian participation on the side of the British during the American Revolution.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS OF INDIAN PARTICIPATION FOR THE BRITISH IN 1775-7.

By the end of the period under consideration, the fall of 1777, many Indian tribal groupings in the Northern Department had participated in the American Revolution in some role for the British. To the west of the Northern Department many Indians from the Ottawa Confederacy, Ottawa, Potawatomi and Ojibway, contributed manpower as did those from the Wabash Confederacy; (1) the Ohio Indians played a role, particularly the Shawnee and Delaware along with some Sauk and Fox Indians; the Six Nations Confederacy all contributed with the exception of the Oneida and Tuscarora tribes; and the Seven Nations of Canada provided some warriors. From the American angle the Indian dimension was minimal in comparison: a few Stockbridge Indians, (who can not really be considered as warriors like the other groupings owing to their mixed blood and residence among white people), the Oneida and a few Tuscarora among the Iroquois Confederacy, and a small number among the Seven Nations, in particular the Caughnawaga. Thus a clear difference can be detected concerning Indian allegiances in this period: the vast majority of Northern Indians choose to associate themselves with the British cause in the period 1775-7 and moreover contribute to their war effort quite enormous amounts of manpower relatively speaking. And this pattern does not change throughout the

(1) The Wabash Confederacy was also known as the Miami Confederacy. The Wabash and Miami tribes were the most important in this grouping.

remainder of the war, 1778-1783, except for the fact that a number of "Acadian" Indians, the Malecite, supported the Americans. Although no general explanation will stand for all the tribes who took part, the aim of this chapter is to seek an explanation for this phenomenon. In addition it is necessary to determine the nature of the relationship, in short to discover what constituted "Indian loyalism."

At the same time as the momentous chronology of events which led inexorably, if not inevitably, to the American Revolution, and ultimately brought the edifice of the First British Empire tumbling down, (the Stamp Act, the Townsend Duties, the Tea Act, the Intolerable Acts), there occurred quite profound social changes. The period between the Treaty of Paris, which ended the French and Indian War in 1763, and the outbreak of hostilities between the British and the colonists in 1775, witnessed uncontrolled migration towards the interior of the American continent: westward expansion. It was in these years that the Appalachian mountain barrier was crossed by pioneers for the first time. The region that concerns us here has been defined by Frederick Jackson Turner as the Old West, which included the backcountry of New England, the Mohawk Valley, the Shenandoah Valley in Pennsylvania, and the country of the South between the mountains and the sources of the rivers flowing into the ocean.

The coastal region was defined as the East.(1) It is the northern part of this frontier that is under examination.

What concerns us here is the westward expansion of white people into the hinterland in the years following the elimination of the French and in particular the reaction of those Indian tribal groupings who were unfortunate enough to live in the path of this movement; in effect the competition between two races for the same land. Not only was the resultant clash a racial one but one between two quite incompatible cultures. For the hardy pioneer the existence of the Indian was at best an irritant; the Indian after all was a kind of nomad whose unsettled habitation in the "unsettled" regions seemed perverse; he merely hunted and fished. To the settler the Indian had no right to waste the land in this way. The white man on the other hand worked and improved the land. That the Indian had lived in America for centuries carrying out his obnoxious existence was beside the point. From the Indian point of view the white man was a threat to his very existence as he knew it, and in these circumstances the question of white encroachment became a potent one. Some background is helpful to an understanding of this problem.

The oft-quoted dictum that the history of early America is

(1)

Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History, (New York, 1965), Chap. 3, "The Old West". A penetrating critique of some of Turner's findings and others writing on the same subject from the point of view of the aborigine can be found in Wilbur R. Jacobs, "The Indian and the Frontier in North America - Need for Revision" Western Historical Quarterly, 4, 1973, 43-56.

all about the peopling of a new world could not be truer in the period under discussion; a quite astonishing birthrate coupled with massive immigration led inexorably toward the expansion of the frontier. And it was this demographic pressure that the Indian found himself pitted against.

The natural population increase in Colonial America was phenomenal; early marriage was the norm and the birthrate among women of childbearing age was exceptionally high. Indeed in many of the colonies the population doubled every generation. In these circumstances, large scale migration from the areas nearer the coast to new lands offered a means out of the problem.(1)

The conditions on the immigrant ships which took many thousands on the trip from Europe to North America are and were to contemporaries notorious; yet this proved no deterrent whatsoever. Western Europe experienced rapid population growth in the second half of the eighteenth century, while severe socio-economic difficulties such as an increase in the cost of living, increases in land rents, unemployment and enclosures were experienced by many. In Scotland for example, a source of many immigrants, there had been a disruption in the clan system and a shift from feudal to capitalist tenure in agriculture.(2)

But in addition to the more or less destitute immigrants there were also the reasonably well to do, the ambitious and the

(1) Jack M. Sosin, *The Revolutionary frontier 1763-1783*, (New York, 1967), 23.

(2) *Ibid.*, 20-1.

resourceful; middling men, army officers and farmers among other groups. Often agents were sent out to North America to purchase land in the back settlements for conglomerates of these sorts of people. And when they arrived, the land was awaiting them. By far the largest immigrant group in the period with which we are concerned was the Scots-Irish from Ulster. Though the majority settled in the Southern Colonies or Pennsylvania, many became tenants of such magnates as Sir William Johnson in the Mohawk Valley and the area around Lake George in New York State. (1)

The net result of the waves of immigration from Europe was to contribute to the expansion of the frontier; directly when newcomers settled in the backcountry and indirectly when they established themselves in the East because the land available there was as a result reduced.

In fact the westward expansion of white settlers had provoked discontent from the native peoples before the immigration became sustained after the expulsion of the French, particularly in the Ohio region where tribes there were directly affected. And it was to counter Indian resentment that the British first defined something resembling an Indian policy in the 1750s. From the first, the key component was the respect for Indian lands.

Although the Albany Congress of 1754 is probably best known for the Plan of Provincial Union, an apparent precedent for American Federalism, forever associated with Benjamin Franklin,

(1) *Ibid.*, 21-2.

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and which was contemptuously rejected. John Alden has argued persuasively that the real motive behind the congress was an attempt by the British Government to deal with the decentralised system whereby each individual Colony conducted its relations with the Indians. The Imperial Government had come to realise that such a process led to a situation whereby no cohesion was achieved with the other colonies, and that the Indians were being dealt with in a fraudulent manner. As a consequence the Board of Trade decided to bring Indian affairs under the direct supervision of Whitehall: two Superintendents of Indian Affairs were created for the Northern and Southern Divisions. (1)

The Northern Superintendency went to William Johnson because of his influence with the Six Nations and because his adeptness with them had proved so useful in King George's War against the French, and for whom George Clinton, then the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, acted for him as a constant referee in the years following Johnson's first appointment in 1746. (2) As a result it is hardly surprising that by 1751 the Board of Trade noted him as a "very diligent, honest and able officer" (3) or that he

(1) John R. Alden, "The Albany Congress and the Creation of the Indian Superintendents" *M.V.H.R.*, 27, 1940-1, 193-4.

(2) A chronological sample would include: *N.Y.C.D.*, VI, 314, Clinton to Newcastle, Dec 9, 1746; *Ibid.*, VI, 379, Clinton to Board of Trade, Sept. 27, 1747; *Ibid.*, VI, 432, Clinton to Bedford, Aug 16, 1748.

(3) *Ibid.*, VI, 638.

ultimately got the job. (1)

The Congress sat in the atmosphere accompanying the almost inevitable conflict that was brooding with France and the need to secure Indian friendship in that struggle. William Johnson himself spoke about the need to secure Iroquois aid and moreover the price that would have to be paid: a redress of Indian grievances, in particular with respect to Indian territory, but fair trade as well. (2) The desire that Indian lands be respected can be gauged from the following letter to Johnson:

...that memorable and important act by which the Indians put their patrimonial and conquered lands under the protection of the King of Great Britain, their father, against the encroachments or invasions of the French is not understood by them as a cession or surrender they intended to look upon it as reserving the property and possession of the soil to themselves and their heirs. This property the Six Nations are by no means willing to part with... (it is necessary)... that the Indians be remedied and satisfied with regard to their complaints about their lands... that no patents for lands be hereafter granted but for such as shall be bought in the presence of the Superintendent at public meetings and the sale recorded. (3)

Theory was put into practice when, on Johnson's urging, at the Treaty of Easton in 1759, Pennsylvania agreed to surrender

(1) Alden suggests the fact that the Iroquois themselves desired Johnson was influential in him getting the job. Alden, "Albany Congress", 206.
(2) N.Y.C.D., VI, 897-9. Measures necessary to be taken with the Six Nations and other matters requisite to be proffered towards defeating the designs of the French on the British Continent.
(3) N.Y.C.D., VII, 18, Wraxell to Johnson, Jan. 9, 1756.

title to Indian lands west of the Appalachian Mountains in an attempt to pacify the Algonkin tribes west of the Ohio Valley.(1)

The Indian allegiances in the Seven Years' War reveals not only the rationale behind the deliberations of Albany and after but that the measures already taken were both belated and superficial. The majority of Indian tribes in the North sided with the French. The raids carried out by the French and the Abenaki Indians against the New England back country proved especially trying. These Abenaki Indians had been forced to evacuate New England to the white man the previous century. The French encouraged these raids as an instrument of policy to keep the Abenaki hostile to the British at the same time creating a buffer for New France. At the same time the Indians were fighting for their own interests and needed little prompting.(2) In these circumstances Johnson's achievement in getting the Iroquois to side with the British seemed especially noteworthy. But the problems caused by Indian raids on a long indefensible frontier prompted the British to take some measures to rectify the source of the problem.

As a result a Prohibit Manifesto was issued in December 1761 which strictly forbade the Governors of the Colonies from passing any grants on Indian lands. The Governors were directed bluntly

(1) J.A.P., III, 837-851, Johnson to Lords of Trade, Aug 1, 1762.

(2) Colin G. Calloway, "An Uncertain Destiny: Indian Captives on the Upper Connecticut River," J.A.S., 17, 1983, 193-4; W.J. Eccles, "The French Forces in the Seven Years' War," D.C.B., III, xviii.

to "publish a proclamation in our name strictly enjoining and requiring all persons whatever who may either willfully or inadvertently have seated themselves on any lands....reserved to or claimed by the Indians without any lawful authority for so doing forthwith to remove there from". And from now on the Governors had to refer all future applications for Indian lands to Whitehall for consideration.(1)

But Indian resentment could not be quelled easily and in May 1763 there occurred a major frontier explosion known as Pontiac's Revolt. The most prominent reason for this was encroachment upon Indian territory though there were other reasons as well. The immediate problem which triggered the Revolt concerned white encroachment in the Wyoming Valley, of Northern Pennsylvania where the Delaware and Shawnee lived, territory referred to by Johnson as "the warpath and hunting ground of the Six Nations." (2) The two tribes in question had been allowed to reside there as tenants of the Iroquois, who claimed vassalage over them. More important was the fact that the threat to these tribes was felt by others, particularly western groupings who had themselves begun to experience white encroachment. In effect this issue mirrored far wider concern. An Onandaga Indian reflected on this problem in 1765: "the chief cause of all the late wars was about

(1) Draft of an Instruction for the Governors of the Colonies forbidding them to grant lands or make settlements which may interfere with the Indians bordering on those colonies. *Native Rights in Canada*, Appendix 1.

(2) *J.P.*, IV, 70-1, Johnson to Amherst, Mar. 20, 1763.

lands. We saw the English coming towards us from all parts, and they have cheated us so often that we could not think well of it. We were afraid that, in a little time, you would be at our very castles."(1)

With regard to those western tribes, the expulsion of the French was another reason for discontent, allied to the policy of General Amherst.(2) The French had supplied these tribes, in particular the Ottawa Confederacy, lavishly; presents, munitions and free services were heaped upon them. Amherst who had been ordered to cut colonial expenditure, decided to halt this with process with quite disastrous consequences. In 1765 George Croghan, whose responsibilities included the tribes in question, commented in his diary: "the French have always adopted the Indians customs and manners, treated them civil and supplied their wants generously, by which means they gained the hearts of the Indians and commanded their services and enjoyed the benefit of a very large fur trade."(3)

Pontiac, or Oowandeyag, in the Ottawa tradition, who was the war chief of the Ottawas at Detroit, first encouraged the various Indian groupings to revolt when, in the summer of 1762 after Amherst's policy was made known to them, a council met at Detroit

(1) N.Y.C.D., VII, 726. An Onondaga speaker, at the Conference of Sir William Johnson.

(2) See Chap. 1.

(3) N.Y.C.D., VII, 787. Journal of George Croghan's Transactions with the Western Indians, August 1765.

made up of the Ottawa Confederacy and Huron tribes.(1)

Pontiac was profoundly influenced at this time by the ideas of Neolin, a Delaware who claimed divine inspiration and argued the need to return once more to the sorts of Indian values recognised before the arrival of the Europeans. From now on, he argued, it was essential to avoid all contacts with the Europeans. Pontiac was profoundly influenced by such a philosophy, as can be seen by a speech made in 1763 at Riviere a l'Ecore, probably realising its value in justifying a war against the British.(2) But, as was suggested in Chapter 1, the plain fact was that the red man was by the mid eighteenth century totally dependent on the white man and his civilization, and such ideas were thoroughly unrealistic, a point demonstrated by the speed at which this "nativist revival" fizzled out. Nevertheless in the short term this philosophy was a latent force.(3)

Pontiac's Revolt lasted over two years. All the Western tribes took part including the Delaware and Shawnee.(4) Of the Iroquois Confederacy, only the Seneca, the most westerly of the Six Nations took part in the hostilities; their conduct is probably best remembered for the massacre of the British garrison

(1) Louis Chevette, "Pontiac", *D.C.B.*, III, 527.

(2) *Ibid.*; Charles E. Hunter has examined this deminsion at length in "The Delaware Nativist Revival of the Mid Eighteenth Century", *Ethnohistory*, XVIII, 1971, 39-49.

(3) Hunter, "Delaware Revival", 39.

(4) *J.P.*, IV, 308-9, Johnson to Gage, Jan. 27, 1764.

at Venango.(1) Francis Jennings has written aptly: "historians have prejudiced what ensued by scornfully naming it 'Pontiac's Conspiracy', but it was in fact a giant system of tribal alliances that laid siege to British forts in the most widespread war for Indian independence that Britain had ever faced."(2)

It would be hard not to overestimate Johnson's efforts to keep the Indians calm at this time, such was the emotive nature of the problem. Throughout the summer and autumn of 1763, Johnson held a number of councils and in September succeeded in persuading the Iroquois to side with the British.(3) In July 1764 Johnson held a council of all the Northern tribes, of which some two thousand representatives attended, in which he promised to redress Indian grievances.(4) Without Johnson's expertise it is hard not to imagine an even more vicious conflict than the one the British had to cope with. The Iroquois in effect put the white man ahead of their Indian dependents and watched idly by, though not without qualms.

Though ultimately a failure, Pontiac's Revolt was of crucial significance in cementing British policy towards the Indians. A Proclamation was issued in October 1763 by the King. Though the Proclamation of 1763 is a key constitutional document

(1) Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Decline and Revival of the Seneca*, (New York, 1972), 114-5.

(2) Francis Jennings, "Tribal Loyalty and Tribal Independence", in Wright ed. *Red White and True Blue*, 25.

(3) *J.P.*, IV, 274-5, Johnson to Colden, 24 Dec., 1763.

(4) *Ibid.*, IV, 415-6, Johnson to Broadstreet, 18 July 1764.

establishing the Government for those territories acquired following the expulsion of the French and the subsequent Treaty of Paris, the main thought in the minds of the framers was to allay Indian fears. Indeed the articles concerned with Indian relations form the core of the document.⁽¹⁾ Though the provisions of the Proclamation are not novel, and can be seen as a mere continuation of policies followed by the British since 1754; the Albany Congress, the Treaty of Easton and the Proclamation of 1761, the proposals are altogether more specific; Pontiac's Revolt had added a far greater sense of urgency.

To understand British motivation behind the Proclamation it is necessary to consider the development of policy at Whitehall as it emerged during a time of great crisis; in May and June 1763 the British forts at Venango, La Boeuf, Presque Isle, Miami, Sandusky, St. Joseph, Outebton and Michilimackinac all fell in the face of the Indian onslaught; only Fort Pitt and Detroit withstood the Indians. Thus British policy developed in the midst of a race war, and a particularly savage one at that, and in which the British, at least initially, fared disastrously.

In a letter to the Board of Trade, Lord Egremont, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, outlined the extent of the British Government's concern:

The second question which relates to the security of North America, seems to include two objects to be provided for; the first is, the security of the whole against any European power; the next is the preservation

(1) Constitutional Docs., I, 163-8. The Proclamation of October 1763.

of the internal peace and tranquility of the country against any Indian disturbances. Of these two objects, the latter appears to call more immediately for such regulations and precautions that your Lordships shall think proper to suggest. Tho' in order to succeed effectually in this point, it may well become necessary to erect some forts in the Indian Country, with their consent, yet His Majesty's justice and moderation inclines him to adopt the more eligible method of conciliating the minds of the Indians by the mildness of his Government, by protecting their persons and property and securing to them all the possessions, rights and privileges they have hitherto enjoyed, and are entitled to, most cautiously guarding against any invasion or occupation of their hunting grounds.(1)

On 8 June the Lords of Trade replied, and dealt at some length with the question of "Indian Country":

...if Your majesty shall be pleased to adopt the general proposition of leaving a large tract of country round the Great Lakes as an Indian Country, open to trade but not to grants and settlements, the limits of such territory will be sufficiently ascertained by the bounds to be given to the Governors of Canada, and Florida to the North and South, and the Mississippi on the west; and by the strict directions to be given to Your Majesty's several Governors of Your ancient Colonies for preventing their making any negrants of lands beyond certain fixed limits to be laid down in the instructions for that purpose.(2)

Egremont then brought up the question of who ruled the "Indian Country" and suggested placing it under Colonial Government preferably the Government of Canada: "that all lands ceded by the late treaty...be assigned to the Government of

(1) Ibid., I, 128, Egremont to Lords of Trade, 5 May, 1763.

(2) Ibid., I, 140, Lords of Trade to Egremont, 8 June, 1763.

Canada unless your Lordships should suggest other distribution." (1) In fact the Lords of Trade rejected this option and placed the Government of the area under the control of the Commander-in-Chief of the army until a better arrangement could be reached. (2) As will be argued later this represented a major misjudgement. Finally Lord Halifax, who had succeeded Lord Egremont, instructed the Lords of Trade draft the Proclamation. (3)

And so a gigantic Indian reserve was created; born in the midst of a crisis which undoubtedly influenced the radical nature of its contents:

...it is just and reasonable, and essential to our interest, and the security of our colonies that the several nations or tribes who live under our protection should not be molested or disturbed in the possession of such parts of Dominions and territories as not having been ceded or purchased by us are reserved to them...as their hunting grounds...we do therefore declare it do be Royal will and pleasure that no Commander-in-Chief or Governor...do presume for the present, and until any further pleasure be known, to grant warrants or survey, or pass patents for any lands beyond the heads or sources of any of the rivers which fall into the Atlantic from the West or North West, whatsoever, which, not having been ceded to or purchased by us aforesaid, are reserved to the said Indians. (4)

The latter designation was considered to be the Alleghany mountains.

(1) *Ibid.*, I, 147, Egremont to Lords of Trade, 14 July, 1763.

(2) *Ibid.*, I, 150-3, Lords of Trade to Egremont, 5 Aug., 1763.

(3) *Ibid.*, I, 153-5, Halifax to Lords of Trade, 19 Sept., 1763.

(4) *Ibid.*, I, 166, The Proclamation of October 1763.

There were other important points in the Proclamation as well. All persons who had settled upon the reserves "either wilfully or inadvertently" were to remove themselves or be removed;(1) all land surrenders to be legal had to be to the crown alone;(2) and "all trade with the said Indians shall be free and open to all our subjects...provided that every person do take out a license for carrying on such a trade from the Governor or Commander-in-Chief of any of our Colonies respectively where such a person shall reside."(3)

The Proclamation of 1763 is of vital importance in British policy, though it is not the watershed that many authors present it as; the problem had been taxing the minds of Imperial decision makers for nearly a decade and had resulted in measures however ineffective. However Pontiac's Revolt had added a far greater sense of urgency; the Proclamation represents the increased seriousness of the Indian problem.(4)

But in taking a stand on the side of the Indian, the British were to pay a fearful political price; by depriving the American

(1) Ibid., I, 168.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid., I, 168.

(4) See, for example George Stanley, "The Indian Background to Canadian History", C.H.A. Report, 1952, 18, who has also written: "the principles constituted a giant step in advancing dealing with the Indians...and it laid the foundation for the treaty system which was to become the cornerstone of British and later Canadian policy."

colonists of the right to seize Indian lands, the British were seen to practice a conspiracy to "reduce free born Americans to a status of slavery."⁽¹⁾ To recover that right the colonists had to destroy the British power to protect the Indians.

Thus British Indian policy was born in the savagery of the French and Indian frontier raids during the Seven Years' War and the racial violence experienced during Pontiac's Revolt; in both the question of land encroachment was the motivating factor. It may seem therefore that the British had discovered the secret of gaining Indian allegiances and that the decade or so between the Proclamation and the outbreak of the American Revolution represents a fairly logical sequence whereby the British act as Indian guardians against white encroachers. But in practice this was not the case: certainly it appears superficially that there was a firm British policy but closer examination reveals rather a set of decisions usually arrived at by Whitehall during moments of great crisis. This latter dimension must now be examined.

Writing to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Gage, in October 1763, when the initial panic caused by Pontiac's Revolt had passed, Lord Halifax spoke of the Proclamation of 1763:

When the Indians shall have been reduced to due submission and the peace of the country restored, the next great object of attention is to secure the duration of it, by preventing all just cause of discontent, and uneasiness among them in future.... and to this important end nothing can be more

(1) Ian R. Christie and B.W. Labaree, *Empire of Independence*, (London, 1976), 279.

effectual, than the measures of equity and moderation, which His Majesty in this Proclamation has thought proper to establish, by restraining all unjust settlement and fraudulent purchase of their lands...(1)

However this failed to take into consideration realities on the frontier and the sheer force of the demographic pressure already referred to. In fact the Proclamation neither reflected the claims of the Indians nor the furthest extent of white settlement in 1763; nor did it allow for future expansion.(2) In effect British policy had become one of attempted insulation of the coastal population and hence the protection of the Indians. The need for a permanent boundary line as opposed to the mere temporary restrictions of the Proclamation became apparent shortly after the Proclamation had been issued. In November 1763, for example, Sir William Johnson wrote to Whitehall of the need for a boundary line "beyond which no settlement should be made...(because)...there will be time enough to advance our settlements, when the large tracts already patented are thoroughly inhabited."(3)

Johnson's ideas were indeed noted and embodied in the 1764 "Plan for the future management of Indian Affairs;" it was necessary "that proper measures be taken, with the consent and concurrence of the Indians to ascertain and define the precise and exact boundaries and limits of the lands, which it may be

(1) Gage, Lois, II, 2, Halifax to Amherst, Oct. 11, 1763.

(2) Sosin, Revolutionary Frontier, 15-16.

(3) N.Y.C.D., VII, 578, Johnson to Lords of Trade, 13 Nov., 1763.

proper to reserve to them, and where no settlement shall be allowed." (1) In the Spring of 1765 Johnson made this position known to the Indians; in return Johnson appears to have been given tacit approval for such a move. (2)

But the need for a firm boundary was becoming more and more urgent by the week, illustrated by the barrage of letters Johnson sent Whitehall from mid 1765 on explaining the deterioration of relations along the frontier. (3) By mid 1766 he warned of the extreme danger of an Indian backlash: "there has lately arisen a fresh discontent among most of the Indian Nations... occasioned by many late acts of oppression, by murders, robberies and encroachments on their native rights and possessions, and as these acts continue or gain ground, the discontent of the Indians is clearly increasing, and will in all probability end in a general war." (4) By December 1766 Johnson complained to Whitehall in even more desperate terms:

the thirst after Indian lands is almost universal, the people who generally want them are either ignorant of, or remote from the consequences of disobliging the Indians, many make a traffic of lands, and few or none will be at any pains or expense to get them settled, consequently they cannot be losers in an Indian war... they have the desire tho' at the expense of the lives of such ignorant

(1) Constitutional Docs., 14, 619, Plan for the Future Management of Indian Affairs.

(2) N. Y. C. D., VII, 726, Conference of Sir William Johnson with the Six Nations and Delawares, Apr. 29-May 22, 1765.

(3) These can be found in Ibid., VII. See, as an example, Johnson to Lords of Trade, Jan. 31, 1766, 808.

(4) Ibid., VII, 835, Johnson to Conway, June 28, 1766.

settlers as may be upon it.(1)

The position and actions of Johnson at this time will be examined forthwith, but there seems little reason to doubt his appraisal of the situation. In particular illegal settlement made by squatters from Virginia and Pennsylvania in mid 1766 at Redstone Creek near the Cheat River led to violence between Indians and settlers after squatters had killed fifteen Indians.(2) And in January 1768 at Shamokin, Pennsylvania, Frederick Stump murdered ten Indians.(3) Led by Thomas and Michael Cressap the obstinate squatters would not budge; Pennsylvania, for example, imposed the death penalty for illegal settlement, but even this draconian measure was worthless because, as Gage frankly admitted, it was unenforceable.(4) Gage then decided to forcibly remove some squatters from the Fort Pitt area but even this move failed because they merely returned in greater numbers. Gage despaired especially when he discovered the wrath of the colonial population.(5)

Indian reaction to these developments was thoroughly predictable as can be gauged from the proceedings of a Congress of the Six Nations held in March 1768 from which the following speech is typical:

(1) *Ibid.*, VIII, 88, Johnson to Shelburne, Dec., 1766.

(2) Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 17.

(3) *N.Y.C.D.*, VII, 837, Johnson to Lords of Trade, June 28, 1766.

(4) *I.P.*, VI, 86, Gage to Johnson, Jan. 31, 1768.

(5) *Gage Corr.*, I, 157.

Your people came from the sunrise up our rivers to the west, and now they become to come upon us from the south, they have got already to Fort Pitt but nothing is done to drive them away...we and our dependents have been for some living like giddy people not knowing what to do.(1)

Once again only when there seemed to be a real crisis at hand was an end put to the drift of British policy. Hillsborough, who had become the first Secretary of State for the American Colonies when that office had been created in 1767, ordered Johnson together with John Stuart, the Superintendent for the Southern District, to work out the necessary arrangements which would satisfy both the colonies and the tribes.(2)

The negotiation of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix of 1768, as it became known, is one of the more controversial aspects of Colonial American history and has stained Sir William Johnson's reputation for posterity. For many authorities Johnson's conduct was nothing short of gangsterism, that deep down he was a confidence trickster whose merciless betrayal of the Indians demonstrated categorically his real feelings towards them. Ray Allen Billington, for example, talks of Johnson "fleecing" the Indians in "one of the worst treaties in the history of Anglo-Indian relationships."(3) The treaty and Johnson's role in

(1) *N.Y.C.*, VIII, 45-8, Proceedings of a General Congress of the Six Nations before Sir William Johnson in March 1768.

(2) *Ibid.*, VIII, 21-2, Representation of the Lords of Trade on the State of Indian Affairs, March 7, 1768.

(3) Ray Allen Billington, "The Fort Stanwix Treaty of 1768", *New York History*, 25, 1944, 182.

it warrant investigation not only because of its very importance but because it illustrates a key problem in British Imperial policy at this time: the inability of Whitehall to maintain adequate supervision of its officials and to prevent them from pursuing other interests which conflicted with their major responsibilities.

Johnson received quite specific instructions for concluding the boundary: in particular he was to exclude Pennsylvania from the Susquehanna lands and terminate the line at the junction of the Ohio and the Kanhawa. The Board of Trade believed that both Pennsylvania and Virginia would gain room for expansion elsewhere. (1) Hillsborough, an entering office, informed Johnson that the Board of Trade's line "shall be ratified and confirmed in every part." (2) It was at this point that Johnson spoke of the need to continue the boundary across New York State and informed Hillsborough of his intention to do so. (3) Johnson however went ahead with his plan before Hillsborough gave him approval to do so. (4) Johnson informed Hillsborough afterwards saying he would secure a cession in order to establish a boundary "according to my best judgement" and as near as possible to "the line descibed on the map provided by your Lordship." (5)

(1) *N.Y.C.D.*, VII, 10004-5, Lords of Trade to Shelbourne, 23 Dec., 1767.

(2) *Ibid.*, VIII, 57, Hillsborough to Johnson, 15 Apr., 1768.

(3) *Ibid.*, VIII, 76, Johnson to Hillsborough, 20 June, 1768.

(4) *Ibid.*, VIII, 101-3, Hillsborough to Johnson, 12 Oct., 1768.

(5) *Ibid.*, VIII, 93-6, Johnson to Hillsborough, 17 Aug., 1768.

It is now necessary to consider yet another dimension to this wily Irishman's career in North America; not only was Johnson a Royal official and ally of the Mohawks and through them the Iroquois, but a very prominent New York landowner and speculator as well. Land speculation was endemic in Colonial America and is beyond the scope of this study; here we are concerned primarily with New York State and Pennsylvania and how speculation impinged upon the negotiation of the treaty, but similar trends were at work throughout the Old West.(1)

The removal of the French from North America and the subsequent return of peace appeared to have removed the key barrier to land settlement. Of the northern Colonies New York was by far the most popular in which to purchase land. By 1763 the Colony had developed a highly organized and thoroughly illegal system of land acquisition and distribution based upon fraudulent application and the use of a tenantry as opposed to a system of freehold rights. Thus land purchases from Indians were restricted to 1000 acres per head, yet such a state of affairs was ignored by the use of "dummies", a technique adopted by all the New York speculators including Johnson; the names of friends and tenants were inserted to make an application appear legal but once the land patent was obtained all rights were transferred to the real purchaser.(2) This procedure was engaged in by a close

(1) A useful summary can be found in Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, Chaps. 2-4.

(2) Peter Marshall, "Sir William Johnson", 158-9.

circle of officials, lawyers, merchants and patrons; not surprisingly outsiders were particularly unwelcome and if persistent made to feel even more so. In this environment it was possible for Lieutenant Governor Colden to assure the Board of Trade in 1765 that there was no land available on the Mohawk River or for many miles between Conajonary and Canada Creeks, yet possible for Johnson to be advertising at the same time for new tenants through a Pennsylvania agent, while also developing Johnstown as a centre for tradesmen and artificers to provide skilled assistance for his farmers.(1)

Johnson's appetite for real estate was by any standards insatiable. But two large Indian grants remained out of his grasp owing to an inability to secure Royal title. In August 1751 he bought for 300 pounds N.Y. a tract on the Charlotte River containing 130,000 acres. Indeed the sheer size of the purchase prevented the Colony from confirming purchase. In December 1760 the Canajoharie Indians ceded a tract of land worth \$1200 which on survey was found to be 80,000 acres and even Colden, himself a veteran of land speculation and a close crony of Johnson's, felt unable to secure its grant. And Johnson had a stake in another lucrative deal as well. In 1766 Sir Henry Moore became Governor of New York. He too was interested in land speculation and quickly joined Johnson's closed circle. Moore joined Johnson in a syndicate in the purchase of an Oneida tract north of the Oneida

(1) *Ibid.*, 159.

River.(1)

And many others were in a similar position; between 1766 and 1768 petitions for the confirmation of Indian grants were presented to the New York Council requiring consent in some cases for purchases of 250,000 acres. But the terms of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 had halted the whole process, or at least "for the present and until further pleasure be known". As can be deduced from Johnson's activities in this period, he had good reason to alter the boundary line. Now, when one adds the activities of George Croghan, Johnson's Deputy, concerning land speculation in Pennsylvania, the picture becomes clearer still. Croghan, who had become seriously indebted as a result of the Seven Years' War, had petitioned for the grant of a 200,000 acre tract which he had purchased from the Ohio Indians in 1749. The close association between Croghan and Johnson ensured that Johnson would be kept fully informed.(2)

Moreover, a syndicate of Pennsylvania merchants and traders, of whom the most prominent were Samuel Wharton and William Trent, exerted great pressure on both Johnson and the London Government for a revision of the line. Their aim was to persuade the Superintendent to obtain for them a massive piece of land, known as Indiana, between the southern boundary of Pennsylvania, the Laurel Hill, the Ohio, and the Kanawha River as compensation for

(1) *Ibid.*, 159-160.

(2) Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat*, (Chapel Hill, 1959), 239-252.

losses allegedly suffered during Pontiac's Revolt. It turned out that Johnson was involved in this enterprise, whose members called themselves the "suffering traders." (1)

Thus it was Johnson's duty to redraw the boundary and, sure enough, the line was tampered with against Whitehall's instructions. A compromise was reached whereby the Indiana Company obtained a grant within the boundaries of Virginia while the Kentucky country was opened up to the Virginians. Attached to the Treaty of Fort Stanwix were sales of land to private persons, two of whom were predictably Johnson and Croghan. The line was moved from its western limits on the Kanawha to the Tennessee River making Kentucky available for settlement. Finally the New Stanwix line commenced at Rollin, New York and cut west across Pennsylvania throwing open the Susquehanna Forks region to settlers. (2)

That Johnson had blatantly disobeyed Whitehall's instructions there can be no doubt, but had he "fleeced" the Indians who trusted him? Peter Marshall has correctly pointed out that such an argument will not stand; the various tribes of the Six Nations knew precisely what they were doing; the negotiations were long, detailed, very specific and the subject of much bargaining; moreover the Iroquois were well paid for

(1) Sosin, Whitehall and the Wilderness, (Lincoln, 1961), Chap. 5.

(2) Marshall, "Sir William Johnson", 159.

their sacrifices to the tune of 10,000 pounds.(1) Of crucial importance was the fact that the Iroquois had knowingly sold out the Shawnee and Delaware tribes, whom they had in the past controlled but who no longer respected that control; in effect the Six Nations sacrificed their former vassals to compromise with white settlement.(2) From the British point of view, Johnson must be blamed for allowing this act to be perpetrated over the heads of the tribes whose lands were being hived off. In fact Johnson had stood by his Iroquois friends once more and they stood by him to the extent that the Mohawks ceded almost all their existing territory to the white man. The cost to the British was soon to appear in the form of another outburst of frontier violence.

It is ironic that while Johnson was busy negotiating with the Indians, or those Indians he cared to consult, other Imperial decision makers were highly optimistic that the measures being undertaken would provide a solution to the perennial frontier problem. In April 1768, Hillsborough wrote to Gage that a fixed boundary would remove from the minds of the Indians "those apprehensions which the unwarrantable attempts to take possession of their lands has created, and which have operated so much to the prejudice of the interests and safety of the colonies" in

(1) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 111-137. Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with the Indians at Fort Stanwix; J.P., XII, 617-29, Congress at Fort Stanwix.

(2) Marshall, "Sir William Johnson", 159.

general."(1) Gage believed that the "money and presents they are to receive...will keep them in temper as long as they last and for a while make them forget all grievances."(2)

Then in November Johnson informed them of what he had done, in effect presenting Whitehall with a "fait accompli" since he "had staked his reputation with the Indians that the several articles they have made be observed" and had noted that "all other endeavours would have been ineffectual."(3) This letter quickly dispelled any illusions. Hillsborough was furious, particularly as Johnson had succeeded in ruining some of John Stuart's negotiations with the Southern Indians.(4) In a long and vigorous critique the Board of Trade indicted Johnson on several counts, in particular the way in which Johnson had allowed the Iroquois to deal with those lands south of the Ohio which were not theirs; the fact that accurate instructions had been disobeyed; and that "the claims and interests of private persons, not stated to or approved by His Majesty, have been allowed to mix themselves in this negotiation". In short Johnson was said to have committed an "indiscretion."(5)

But there was in effect nothing that Whitehall could do. The

(1) Gage Corr., II, 64-5, Hillsborough to Gage, Apr. 15, 1768.

(2) Ibid., I, 171, Gage to Shelburne, Apr. 25, 1768.

(3) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 110-11, Johnson to Hillsborough, 18 Nov., 1768.

(4) Ibid., VIII, 144-5, Hillsborough to Johnson, 4 Jan., 1769.

(5) Ibid., VIII, 158-63, Representation of the Board of Trade, 25 Apr., 1769.

dismissal of Johnson never seems to have been considered; on the contrary Gage quickly spoke of the need for Johnson's assistance to deal with the very troubles Johnson had been personally responsible for causing.(1) Johnson was regarded as irreplaceable. The Fort Stanwix affair merely illustrated with rank clarity a fatal flaw in British policy: the fact that Whitehall was three thousand miles away and was powerless to apply the sort of control over Royal officials necessary to pursue an effective policy. In this instance, albeit an extreme case, personal gain had been placed ahead of duty to the Crown with the result that a fresh outbreak of frontier violence resulted. A benevolent British policy full of good intentions had been seriously compromised; the advantage sought from the creation of the Indian reserve in the first place had thus been lost. The years 1769-74 witness a marked deterioration of frontier relations although ironically British attempts to remedy Indian policy defects were to ultimately benefit them.

Not surprisingly those Ohio Indians who lost out in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix became distinctly disenchanted. In September 1769, Gage perceptively informed Hillsborough that:

the cession made of their lands by the Six Nations at the Treaty of fort Stanwix is generally assigned as the cause of their discontent. I understand the Six Nations took all the purchase money to themselves, that their claim to the lands of the Ohio Indians is derived from an ancient right of conquest, which tho' acknowledged by the other Nations, they could not see their lands disposed of to us, without jealousy and disgust, more

(1) Gage Corr., I, 235, Gage to Hillsborough, Sept. 9, 1769.

particularly as they received little or no share of the money.(1)

Johnson admitted as much himself about this time; he must have known quite clearly the consequences of his actions.(2)

Faced with a deteriorating situation along the frontier, Johnson resorted to the more ruthless side of Indian diplomacy: the need to pit the Six Nations against the Ohio tribes.(3) Johnson passed on this idea to Gage who deemed it necessary to accept this "shocking alternative ...(since)...humanity must make us regret that our affairs are in such a situation."(4) Gage then wrote to Whitehall how "we appear to be thrown into the disagreeable alternative, either to permit the Indians, or perhaps encourage them to go to war with each other, or by uniting them, to endanger our own tranquillity and turn their arms against ourselves."(5) On this point Hillsborough could not disagree:

I am sorry to find you are confirmed in your opinion of the causes of the commotion among the savages, and that there is so much reason

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- (1) *Ibid.*, I, 231, same to same, July 22, 1769. Gage wrote in this letter that "it is apprehended those grants and some others have been obtained by unwarrantable practices and private intrigues with the Indians...by which means it is confidently said that people have acquired large tracts of country so as to have occasioned lately an outcry in this place."
- (2) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, 183-4, Johnson to Hillsborough, Aug. 26, 1769.
- (3) *J.P.*, VII, 294-6, Johnson to Gage, Dec. 8, 1769.
- (4) *Ibid.*, VII, 319, Gage to Johnson, Dec. 25, 1769.
- (5) *Gage Corr.*, I, 245, Gage to Hillsborough, Jan. 6, 1770. Once more Gage bemoaned: "as far as I can understand these affairs the cession...is the cause of all the commotions that have lately happened in this place."

to apprehend that an Indian war may be the consequence. The alternative to which we are reduced is certainly a disagreeable one. The unity of the savages in one common interest is a measure...which appears to be founded in principle of justice and humanity, but if such union is to be accomplished with the hazard of their turning their arms against us, and thereby endangering the tranquility of our frontiers, good policy certainly points out a different system of conduct towards them and self preservation will justify what humanity might otherwise condemn. (1)

Thus Gage received the Home Government's consent for this repugnant formula though in his next letter Hillsborough once more expressed genuine concern about the Indian problem: "I can only lament that a measure of the utility of which such great expectation was held out and which has been adopted at so great an expense, should have so entirely failed in its objects, as to have produced the very evils to which it was proposed as a remedy." (2)

The very thing that the British were conjuring up draconian measures to combat continued unabated: the development of a western tribal alliance around those Indians cheated at Fort Stanwix. In the Spring of 1770 the Shawnee held Indian Congresses at Scioto on the Ohio tributary, and most western tribes sent delegates. Now as it turned out, Johnson never resorted to such an ugly technique as inter tribal violence but looked instead for

(1) *Ibid.*, II, 100, Hillsborough to Gage, 14 Apr., 1770.

(2) *Ibid.*, II, 104, same to same, June 12, 1770.

some kind of diplomatic solution.(1) In July 1770 Johnson attended a joint Congress of the Cherokee and Iroquois and their dependents and suggested they send envoys to the Scioto Congress to reconnoitre proceedings and no doubt intimidate the western Indians.(2)

But the forces of westward expansion seemed uncheckable; it was not long before the lands ceded in 1768 were taken up and the land hungry white people were once again in search for more. The crisis which directly led to the next explosion concerned lands already ceded in 1768 but which had not been taken up. In the Spring of 1773 the British cabinet consented to the purchase of lands to create a new inland colony to be known as Vandalia. Hillsborough, the most vigorous opponent of westward expansion, had attempted to outmanoeuvre the speculators but overreached himself and as a result resigned.(3)

Finally in June 1774 a frontier war broke out. Relations between the Indians and the whites had been especially tense; in the spring of 1774 two surveyors, Thomas Bullitt and William Thompson, led an expedition to examine the Kentucky Basin. The Indians who resided there, the Delaware and Shawnee together with the Mingo, looked on with trepidation. The repercussions of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix were at hand. But this tense situation was

(1) J.P., VII, 656, Johnson to Gage, May 10, 1770.

(2) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 231-40, Proceedings at a Treaty with the Six Nations, the Nations of Canada, the several dependent Tribes and the Deputies from the Cherokee Nation, July, 1770.

(3) Sosin, Whitehall, Ch. 6.

deliberately exploited by Lord Dunmore, the Governor of Virginia, and those who were acting under his instructions, in particular John Connolly of Pennsylvania. In April 1774 a small band of Cherokee attacked a canoe owned by a Pennsylvania trader on the Ohio River. Using this as a pretext, Connolly announced that the Shawnee were on the warpath and that frontiersmen should be on the alert. This in effect amounted to an open invitation to retaliate. Borderers under Michael Cressap, acting under the orders of Connolly, or so they claimed, attacked some Shawnee at Wheeling on the Ohio. And on April 30, in an episode wrongly attributed to Michael Cressap, Michael Greathouse and some colleagues slaughtered an entire band of Mingo with the exception of one child, a measure deliberately engineered to cause a backlash. The Shawnee Chief, Cornstalk, pleaded to Indian Department Deputy Alexander McKee to restrain Connolly and the Virginians from further violence; the Indians were no longer on the warpath. But Connolly pushed for war, and Dunmore backed him on this, with one motive in mind: to terrorise the Indians into ceding more lands. What followed is known as Dunmore's War. (1)

Dunmore's War, which ended in a sharp, ignominious and totally predictable defeat for the Shawnee, once more demonstrated the problem inherent in Imperial policy: how could Whitehall three thousand miles away implement a well intentioned and benevolent policy towards the aborigines when Royal

(1) Sosin, "The British Indian Department and Dunmore's War", *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 74, 1966, 34-50.

officials, such as Dunmore, held such responsibilities? But this episode assumes especially great importance, not so much for its ugliness and violence, but because in dealing with the crisis Sir William Johnson was able to portray the British in a favourable light, at least relative to the alternative. The paradox in this situation is obvious: Johnson was as guilty as anyone for the problem yet managed to appear as a representative of British humanity and justice.

Johnson, who had been told bluntly by some Delaware and Seneca that there would be "evil consequences" if any whites crossed the Ohio, (1) once more gained the neutrality of the Six Nations and through them managed to influence the other tribes. The Seneca Chief, Kayashita, was sent to visit the Wabash Confederacy and persuade them not to support the Shawnee; (2) an Iroquois delegation was sent to the Cherokee to try and keep them out of the conflict; and delegations were even sent to the Shawnee. (3) However the crucial issue was Johnson's attempt to

(1) J.P., VIII, 1086, Haldimand to Johnson, 10 March, 1774. General Frederick Haldimand was acting Commander-in-Chief of the British army in the absence of Gage who was on leave in England.

(2) *Ibid.*, VIII, 1165, Johnson to Haldimand, June 9, 1774. The most likely reason for the cool reaction of the Six Nations at this time was a realistic awareness of the inability of the red man to strike back at his white opponent for any sustained period of time.

(3) *Ibid.*

keep the Six Nations neutral.(1)

In June 1774 Johnson held a congress of the Six Nations. A reading of the proceedings of that conference provides ample evidence of the extent to which Indian tempers had frayed: "your people entirely disregard and dispise the settlement agreed upon...if this is the case we must look upon every engagement you make with us as void and of no effect."(2) Johnson retorted that he had done his best but that this was not enough; it was just impossible to "restrain" the settlers.(3) In fact Johnson died that night but to the very last he had managed to keep the Iroquois tied to the British. Thus, Guy Johnson, who took over Sir William's post immediately, could report to Whitehall that the Six Nations had resisted the Shawnee pleas for help(4) while his efforts were, in Jack Sosin's phrase "indispensible for the very success of the Virginians against the Shawnee."(5)

When Guy Johnson met the Iroquois in December 1774 he was told that "as we take so much pain we expect the English will

(1) Public Archives of Canada (hereafter P.A.C.), Manuscript Group (hereafter M.G.) 21, G2, Haldimand Papers, 835, 104, Haldimand to Dartmouth, Apr. 5, 1774. Dartmouth had succeeded Hillsborough as Secretary of State for the American Colonies after the latter had resigned over the Vandalia Project.

(2) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 475, Proceedings at a Congress with all the Chiefs and warriors of the Six Nations, June-July, 1774.

(3) Ibid., VIII, 478.

(4) Ibid., VIII, 490, G. Johnson to Dartmouth, Sept. 10, 1774.

(5) Sosin, "Bunmore's War", 35.

take some also!"(1) In fact Whitehall finally decided to put into practice Lord Egremont's suggestion of 1763, that the Indian reserve be incorporated into the Province of Quebec.(2) Once again the British offered a guarantee: "no settlement must have the consequence to disgust the savages."(3) The motivation behind the new move was Lord Dartmouth.(4) Yet again it had taken frontier violence and the resultant loss of life to prod Whitehall into coming up with a solution.

However while the Quebec Act may appear superficially as just another milestone along a familiar road, it was far more than this; whereas the Royal Proclamation was subject to administrative change at any time, the Treaty of Fort Stanwix being a case in point, the Quebec Act was an altogether different matter constitutionally; an Act of Parliament could only be altered by another Act of Parliament. As has been seen squatters posed a continual problem to Britain's Indian policy; Gage had found himself powerless to act, while Dunmore actually condoned their actions. But under the Governor of Quebec, General Carleton, this state of affairs would cease; the Governor would enforce his bounds and had adequate forces to do it. And moreover, no patents of land or property could be issued without

(1) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 521, Proceedings of G. Johnson with the Six Nations, Dec. 3, 1774.

(2) Constitutional Docs., I, 570-1, The Quebec Act, 1774.

(3) Ibid., II, 607, Instructions to General Carleton.

(4) Christie and Labaree, Empire or Independence, 195.

the Governor's approval and Carleton was not a Johnson, a Croghan, a Colden or a Sir Henry Moore; he had no dealings with the cancerous influence of the colonial speculators. Francis Jennings has noted correctly: "the Act's passage caused the speculator lobbyists, who had previously been professing loyalty to the crown, to return from London to assume leading roles in the revolutionary movement."⁽¹⁾

In February 1775 General Gage noted to Guy Johnson with reference to the Americans that "the Indians well know that in all their landed disputes the Crown has always been their friend."⁽²⁾ In fact Gage was merely displaying the results of over a decade of watching over Indian policy, experience he attempted to put into effect in dealing with his more telling commitment at this time: the rebelliousness of the colonists. Gage was right; the British Government had attempted to uphold Indian land claims in opposition to the colonists. Dunmore's War for example demonstrated with the utmost clarity the nature of colonial aggrandisement and the British attempts at moderation.

The question of the British guaranteeing Indian lands was the fundamental reason for an Indian dimension to the British side in the American Revolution; it offered a means of getting at the leviathan of the frontier settler. And so the frontier tension along the Old West, with all its racial overtones, merged

(1) Jennings, "Tribal Loyalty", 29. Men in question include George Washington and Benjamin Franklin.

(2) W.L.C., Gage Mss., Gage to G. Johnson, Feb. 5, 1775.

with the political and constitutional quarrel that had been gaining momentum since the mid 1760s into a violent conflict. Thus Indian "Loyalism" was a superficial appearance; Indians fought for the British to preserve their very existence and that meant fighting the Americans.

It is this dimension, it is contended, that offers a satisfactory solution to the problem of Indian allegiances in the Revolution. But a closer examination of British policy reveals that the Indians were in effect the victims of a subtle and treacherous confidence trick which raised its head when the Preliminary Articles of Peace between Great Britain and the United States not only ignored the northern Indian "Loyalists" completely, but transferred all their territory to the ownership of the Americans as far west as the Mississippi. Yet this episode, one of the more terrible though predictably unsung in British Imperial history, was a thoroughly logical outcome from the British point of view. And to understand this disagreeable state of affairs Imperial policy on land ownership must be considered.

The origins of the British position on land ownership are to be found in the activities of those British adventurers who sought new lands for the British Crown in the Sixteenth century. The charter to the Cabots, for example, espoused the principle that lands previously unknown to Christians were open to occupation by the adventurer. The Cabots sailing under the English flag and the lands they discovered were to come under the

sovereignty of the King of England. And the Law of Nations was reinterpreted to accord with Protestant thought and English interests: the sovereignty of the native races was to be ignored and discovery, settlement, occupation or conquest were relied on as a title. There was no real foundation in law for these claims.(1)

In fact a similar position was held by the French in North America. George Stanley has written: "at no time was there any recognition on the part of the French Crown of any aboriginal property rights in the soil". Rather the French settler occupied the lands; there was no compensation, there were no surrenders, negotiations or treaties. The lands set aside for the Indians were granted not of right but of grace, not to the Indians but to those religious orders who were to care for them; as Stanley has written: "whatever rights the Indians acquired flowed not from a theoretical aboriginal title but from the clemency of the crown or the charity of individuals."(2)

When the Ancien Regime collapsed in North America in 1760, the Province of Quebec and the Ohio lands passed to the British with a history of non recognition of Indian title. Since the French did not recognise aboriginal rights, Great Britain, as a successor state, was under no obligation to recognise Indian title. Thus in the celebrated Articles of Capitulation, drawn up

(1) A. Pearce Higgins, "International Law and the Outer World 1450-1648" in John Holland Rose et al, *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, (Cambridge, 1929), I, 192-3.

(2) George F.G. Stanley, "The First Indian 'Reserves' in Canada", *Revue d'Historie de l'Amérique Française*, 4, 1950, 209-210.

in 1760 by Governor Vaudreuil at Montreal, and subsequently acceded to by the British Commander-in-Chief, General Jeffrey Amherst. Article forty reads: "the Savages or Indian allies of his most Christian Majesty shall be maintained in the lands they inhabit; if they choose to remain there they shall not be molested on any pretence whatsoever."⁽¹⁾ Though the French position had in effect been the same as the British, it had never been questioned by the Indians, mainly because Quebec had not experienced sustained immigration with the resultant pressure upon Indian lands. But after 1760 the question did come to the fore concerning the Ohio tribes. The British, unlike the French, who remained quiet or deliberately misled the Indians, revealed their position on land ownership; the lands in question were taken from the French in the name of George III. Understandably this stand proved potentially explosive.

The Indians had a quite different conception of this problem; the lands they felt belonged to them and not the British; rather the French were tenants who were allowed to rent some land to build their forts. They believed further that this status of the French had been transferred in 1760 to the British.⁽²⁾ This line of thought can be discerned from the following speech made by a Wabash warrior in 1765 following

(1) Constitutional Docs., I, 33, Articles of Capitulation (translation).

(2) N. Y. C. D., VII, 958, A Review of the Progressive State of the Trade, Politics and Proceedings of the Indians in the Northern Department by Sir William Johnson, Sept. 22, 1767.

Pontiac's Revolt:

we have agreed to your taking possession of the posts in our country, we have been informed that the English wherever they settle make the country their own, and you tell us that when you conquered the French they gave you this country. That no difference may happen hereafter, we tell you now the French never conquered us, neither did they purchase a foot of our country, nor have they a right to give it to you, we gave them liberty to settle for which they always regarded us. (1)

Imperial officials gave the question of sovereignty not a little thought in the following years and there could be little doubt as to the British position. In August 1765 for example Sir William Johnson had asked John Tabor Kempe, the Attorney General for New York, for clarification on the subject, when the matter arose involving an area known as Kayaderosseras near Albany. Kempe's position is quite clear: "it is the policy of our Constitution that wheresoever the King's Dominions extends he is the fountain of all property in lands and to deny that right in the Crown in any place, is in effect denying his right to rule there." (2) Johnson accepted this judgement but in a private letter, to Kempe pointed out some inconsistencies in this position. (3)

But the British were not foolish; to reveal the true nature of Imperial policy would be self defeating. By the early 1770s

(1) *Ibid.*, VII, 784, Journal of George Croghan's Transactions with the Western Indians, August 1763.

(2) *J.P.*, IV, 817-9, Kempe to Johnson, Aug. 12, 1765.

(3) *Ibid.*, IX, 925, Johnson to Kempe, Oct. 7, 1765.

Imperial officials knew quite well what a potent weapon the land question was in their favour and that one means of gaining Indian "loyalty" was to appear to offer guarantees. And this is what they did; had the British come clean on the subject the Indians certainly would not have been so sympathetic to the British cause and would probably have held feelings for the British not unlike those of the Western Indians during the Seven Years' War and Pontiac's Revolt. The reaction of those Ohio Indians after the expulsion of the French demonstrated clearly that it was far better to keep quiet. In April 1773 Gage wrote to Dartmouth, Hillsborough's successor, that "the latter (Indian title) I can't learn were ever admitted by the French and I apprehend cannot be admitted by us, without establishing a very dangerous precedent." (1)

However when the conflict with the American became a reality and Indian support was deemed necessary, the British spared no effort in their quest to gain Indian support. As will be seen when the diplomacy is examined, the Iroquois were once more central to British efforts. Time and again the Iroquois and through them other northern tribes fought for the Crown against the Americans with the British holding before them the incentive of their tribal lands. Joseph Brant, whose importance in this process cannot be underestimated, told later how in August 1775 Governor Guy Carleton had received them in conference:

Sir Guy Carleton...gave us every encouragement, and requested us to assist in defending their country, and to take an active part in defending His Majesty's possessions;

(1) Gage Corr., I, 348, Gage to Dartmouth, Apr. 7, 1773.

stating that when the happy days of peace should come, and should we not prove successful in the contest that he would put us on the same footing in which we stood previous to our joining him...this flattering promise was pleasing to us and gave us the spirit to embark heartily in His Majesty's cause. We took it for granted that the word of so great a man, or any promises of a public nature would be ever held sacred... we were promised our lands for our services and those lands we were hold on the same footing with those we fled at the commencement of the American war when we joined, fought and bled for your cause...of these lands we have forsaken, we sold, we leased and we gave away, when and as often we saw fit without hindrance on the part of your Government; for your Government well knew we were the sovereigns of the soil and they had no right to interfere with us as independent nations.(1)

According to Brant this pledge was renewed in April 1779 by Carleton's successor, Haldimand.(2)

When peace came in 1783 and the Indians found their lands ceded to the Americans they were understandably furious. General Maclean, then the Commandant at Niagara, was told that "they were faithful allies of the King of England" and that the King "had no right whatever to grant away to the States of America their rights and properties". After all, they contended, they had allowed the French to rent small parts of their lands for forts and posts but no more; after the French had left they had allowed the King of England to retain possession of them and in 1768 they had settled a permanent boundary between Indians and whites. The

(1) Quoted in W.L. Stone, *The Life of Joseph Brant - Ihaxsandsaga*, (Albany, 1836), II, 402.

(2) *Ibid.*, II, 404; See also *Ibid.*, I, 89-90.

Hutchinson, was replaced by General Thomas Gage, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in North America for the past eleven years, with the intention of restoring order in that colony. There appeared to be sound reasoning in placing the man with the full resources of the American military command in charge of the colony where most of the problems seemed to centre. Gage, who was not personally unpopular in Colonial circles and whose wife was an American, is the crucial figure in 1774 and the personality one must turn to for an understanding of the Indian dimension to British thinking at that time. Gage very quickly became aware of the extent of his difficulties.(1)

As Allen French, the American historian who can be considered Gage's most vitriolic critic on the question of Indian usage, has pointed out,(2) Gage made enquiries about the temper of the Indians before the so-called Powder Alarm of August, an event that hurried Gage into making numerous preparations.(3) Gage felt desperately in need of reinforcements in Boston, where

(1) John R. Alden, *General Gage in America*, (Baton Rouge, 1948), Chap. 9; John Shy, "Empire Militant: Thomas Gage and the Coming of War" in *A People Too Numerous and Armed*, (New York, 1976), 73-109.

(2) Allen French, *The First Year of the American Revolution*, (Boston, 1934), 403.

(3) W.L.C., Gage Mss., Gage to Carleton, Aug. 18, 1775. Gage wrote: "I have for more than a year past put the officers at the posts on their guard and have desired them to cultivate the friendship of the Indians as much as possible and I am told in some of my letters that those near Niagara have offered to bring into the field 800 men when the King's service requires it." See also, as an example, W.L.C., Gage Mss., Lernout to Gage, May 14, 1775.

he had moved his head quarters, and in September he requested Governor Guy Carleton of Quebec to send him two regiments. It was

in this correspondence that Gage first raised the question of Indian employment:

as I must look forward to the worst from the apparent disposition of the people here, I am to ask your opinion, whether a body of Canadians and Indians might be collected and confided in for the service in this country should matters come to extremities; and in what plan and in what measures should be most efficacious to raise them, and for them to form a junction with the king's forces in this province.(1)

Governor Carleton replied to this request stating that "the savages of this province, I hear, are in good humour, a Canadian battalion would be a good motive, and go far in influencing them, but you know what sort of people they are."(2) It would seem that on 25 December Gage wrote again to Carleton asking for more specific details(3) to which Carleton provided the following response:

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(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q10, 122, Gage to Carleton, September 4, 1774.

(2) Ibid., Q10, 123, Carleton to Gage, September 20, 1774. Carleton's reply serves to illustrate how completely out of touch with reality he was at this time. Carleton genuinely seems to have believed that the Quebec Act would remedy the grievances of the French Canadians overnight. As is well known he was gravely shocked and upset when he was shown to be wrong and that elements of the French population were not unhostile to the rebel cause. The significance of Carleton's correspondence at this time is that he passed onto Gage, and other authorities hopelessly naive information.

(3) This letter has been lost.

however this rationale was meaningless because they were fighting not for the land itself but for the occupancy of it at the discretion of the British. And as the Indians were to discover in 1783 this meant they were fighting for no cause at all. One must now examine why the British sought to use their primitive allies in the dispute with the Americans which by mid 1774 was approaching crisis point.

CHAPTER 3

THE POLITICS OF INDIAN USAGE, 1774-7.

The title of this chapter is somewhat misleading indeed, contradictory; the political aspects are completely bound up with the military arguments. Nevertheless it is contended here that the question of Indian employment in the period under consideration was above all a political one, although ultimately determined by military requirements. The specific military aspects will be considered separately in chapter four, however it should be remembered that these two elements were taking place at the same time with the result that the presentation offered in this study is somewhat artificial.

This chapter seeks to examine two problems. First, why, when so many officials in the Imperial hierarchy concerned with Indian affairs were prepared to use Indians in the war against the Americans, little use was made of that weapon during the period. Second, why was that state of affairs reversed so that by 1777 much greater use was made of the Indian peoples of the Northern Department as military auxiliaries and the groundwork laid for the frontier raids of 1778-83.

To deal with the first problem it is necessary to return to the political conflict between the colonists and Great Britain in mid 1774. In early 1774, Ministers in Whitehall brought before Parliament a series of proposals which were to become known as the "coercive" or "intolerable" Acts. In one of these, the Massachusetts Charter Act, the Governor of that colony, Governor

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Johnson succeeds, as having their political concerns under his immediate direction with which I never interfered further than their commercial interests, or the private property they possess in this country, required and upon this principle Major Campbell's Commission was granted; however if I am not greatly deceived in my intelligence, not only the Domicilies of the Province, but all the neighbouring Indians are very much at your disposal, wherever you are pleased to call upon them and what you recommend shall be complied with.(1)

Thus months before the outbreak of fighting Gage was making preparations for the possible use of Indians though it should be remembered that few saw war a likely occurrence at this stage; here Gage was alone.(2) As can be seen Gage did not indicate what specific use he saw for the Indians at this point. Nor did Carleton offer opinion; rather he merely outlined the current state of Indian affairs.

What is of significance is the fact that Gage considered the employment of Indians in the coming conflict a matter of course. The reason for such an attitude was that Indians had always been used in North American conflicts. Indeed, as John Shy has pointed out, one facet of the military history of the Anglo-American colonies had been the perennial problem of Indian frontier raids (supplied and managed by either New Spain or New France.(3) In

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q10, 290; Carleton to Gage, Feb. 4, 1775.

(2) Shy, "Empire Militant", 99.

(3) Shy, "Armed Force in Colonial North America: New Spain, New France, and Anglo-America", *Actes du 4e Colloque d'Histoire Militaire*, 1979, 14-5.

the Seven Years' war for example, the majority of northern Indians fought for the French against the British as either raiders or auxiliaries with the main forces, at the same time pursuing their own vendettas.(1) Moreover, in the decade or so that Gage himself had been Commander-in-Chief of the army, he had shown himself quite prepared to use Indians to deal with frontier problems, such as those arising from the Treaty of Fort Stanwix and in dealing with Pontiac's Revolt. Then he had written: "if we can depend on their fidelity a body of Indians might doubtless do us eminent service by preserving our troops from being surprised and conducting them through the wood."(2) The military pros and cons of Indian employment will be considered separately; what is important to understand is that the employment of Indians was seen by Gage as a quite natural phenomenon.

Thus Gage does not seem to have differentiated between various forms of conflict as the Whig opposition were to when the question of Indian usage was raised and fully debated in Parliament towards the end of 1777. Then the Earl of Chatham spoke in the House of Lords of the disgrace that "these savage hell hounds" should be used against "our brethren and countrymen in America of the same language, laws, liberties and religion" related by "every eye that should sanctify humanity."(3) For Gage practical considerations came first: Indians were to be used

(1) Eccles, "French Forces", D.C.B., III, xviii.

(2) Gage Corr., II, 10, Gage to Hillsborough, Jan. 7, 1764.

(3) Parl. Hist., 18 Nov., 1777, XIX, 370.

in inter tribal disputes, against colonial rivals or in a civil conflict such as the one now brooding. For Gage the whole concept was quite natural, as old as Colonial America itself.

While the Commander-in-Chief was gaining information about the possible availability of Indians should the crisis boil over into violence, the Indian Department was concerning itself with keeping the Indians neutral. The continuity between the policy adopted during Dunmore's War and the brooding conflict with the colonists is especially noticeable. In July 1774 Sir William Johnson placed all his energies into dissuading the Six Nations from joining the western tribes thus ensuring that that conflict would remain localised.(1) After Sir William's death at that conference, his successor, Colonel Guy Johnson, promised a redress of grievances in return for continued fidelity to the Crown.(2) This message was reiterated at Johnson's next meeting with the Iroquois. Here however Johnson discerned a certain unease among the Indians regarding the rumour that "the king was set against the Americans."(3)

The work of the Indian Department was made particularly difficult at this time by the "dissenting missionary", the Reverend Samuel Kirkland, who was living among the Oneida tribe at this time. In January 1775 Guy Johnson was informed by some

(1) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, 483, Proceedings of a Congress with the Chiefs and Warriors of the Six Nations, July 1774.

(2) *Ibid.*, VIII, 494, G. Johnson to Dartmouth, Oct. 6, 1774.

(3) *Ibid.*, VIII, 516, same to same, Dec. 14, 1774.

chiefs of the extent to which Kirkland was stirring up faction among the Iroquois.(1) Kirkland had been working among the Oneidas since 1768; it was at this time that Sir William Johnson had first noted with alarm the potential consequences of Kirkland's hold upon that tribe.(2) By March 1775 Guy Johnson noted how this 'New England' minister was attempting to gain influence among the Iroquois as a whole by expounding the same message that he had used to win over the Oneida: in effect that it was better for the red man to passively accept the white man's presence and learn to tolerate him.(3) As one Oneida chief, Conoqueisen, put it, Kirkland was "always collecting news and telling us strange matters of the white people."(4)

Throughout the crisis which led to the closure of the Port of Boston, Guy Johnson attempted to keep the minds of the Indians away from the struggle. Johnson explained the Tea Party to the Indians and urged them not to become involved in this problem:

(the Party was)...occasioned by some people...who...would not let some tea land, but destroyed it, on which he (the king) was angry, and sent some troops with the General, whom you have long known, to see the laws executed and bring the people to their senses. This matter, I hope you are all convinced you have nothing to do with any more than you have with those foolish people

(1) *Ibid.*, VIII, 533, same to same, Feb. 13, 1775.

(2) *J.P.*, VI, 513, W. Johnson to Gage, Dec. 5, 1768. It should be remembered that Johnson had good reason to be concerned in the aftermath of the disastrous Treaty of Fort Stanwix.

(3) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, 584, G. Johnson to Dartmouth, March 18, 1775.

(4) *Ibid.*, VIII, 536, Proceedings of a meeting of G. Johnson with the Six Nations, Jan. 20, 1775.

who talk to you about what they don't themselves understand. I charge you therefore to shut your ears against such reports and I trust and expect you will continue to distinguish between those who are your true friends and those who are not, and recommend yourselves to His Majesty's fatherly attention as well as your loyalty as by your pacific conduct.(1)

Thus the policy of the Indian Department was a clear one: the need to keep as many Indians out of the conflict as possible. In this policy there is a clear continuity with Departmental policy in dealing with the sorts of frontier problems it had faced in the past decade or more.

When, however, hostilities commenced, Gage decided to bring the Indians into the conflict. It is for this that Gage has faced the wrath of historians. For Allen French "Gage was the first who planned and definitely tried to let loose the savages against the frontier;"(2) the Canadian historian A.L. Burt has Gage in mind when he writes: "some whose patriotism was of the vengeful type were eager to subdue the rebels with this red nightmare."(3)

Two days after Concord, the initial skirmish between the rebels and the British, Gage wrote to Carleton informing him that hostilities had broken out and that, as a result of the escalation of the conflict, Indians should now be employed. Not only did Gage announce for the first time his firm intention to

(1) *Ibid.*, VIII, 538, Proceedings.

(2) French, *First Year*, 406. French, whose work was published in 1934, speaks of the British using a policy a "frightfulness", a term associated with Germany in World War One.

(3) A.L. Burt, *The Old Province of Quebec*, (Toronto, 1968), I, 193.

use the aborigines but was quite specific in the way they were to be used: "as this is the case a number of Canadians and Indians would be of great use on the frontiers of the Province of Massachusetts under the command of a judicious person." (1) In his next letter to Gage noted how he had seen some Indians among the besieging American camp at Boston and used this as a pretext to justify his own draconian measure: "the rebels about the town have brought some Indians against us and I would repay them in their own way" but, he went on, "they are not distant Indians but what the French would call Domicilies and not of great worth." (2) Gage reiterated these arguments when he reported back to Whitehall:

I hear the rebels after surprising Ticonderoga, made incursions and committed hostilities upon the frontiers of the Province of Quebec which will justify General Carleton to raise both Canadians and Indians to attack them in his turn, and we need not be tender on calling the savages, as the rebels have shown us the example by bringing as many Indians down against us as they could collect. (3)

Gage then mentioned Indians when he began to deal with specifics:

I apprehend my Lord, that it will be necessary in order to carry on a war with effect against this country, that not less than fifteen thousand men should be employed on this side, a large part of which should be good irregulars, such as hunters, Canadians, Indians etc. That another body of ten thousand men should act on the side of New York, and a

W.L.C., Gage Mss., Gage to Carleton, Apr. 21, 1775.

(2) *Ibid.*, same to same, June 3, 1775.

(3) Gage Corr., 11, 403-4, Gage to Dartmouth, June 12, 1775.

third Corps of seven thousand, composed of regular troops with a large corps of Canadians and Indians on the side of Lake Champlain.(1)

Dartmouth replied giving Gage the go ahead to use aborigines in the conflict:

it being His Majesty's intention that we should have if possible in North America early in next spring an army of at least 20,000 men, exclusive of Canadians and Indians...The steps which you say the rebels have taken for calling on the assistance of the Indians leave no room to hesitate upon the propriety of our passing the same measure; for that purpose I enclose to you a letter to Colonel Johnson containing His Majesty's commands for encouraging a body of Indians, and shall by the first ship of war that sails...send you a large assortment of goods for presents, which you will contrive the means of safely conveying to the Colonel...(2)

While there can be little doubt from this correspondence, in the words of Jack Sosin, that "to Gage beongs the major blame for exaggerating the involvement (of Indians) on the patriot side and encouraging the wide-scale employment of the savages", (3) Gage's policy, and the rationale behind it deserve close attention.

Gage was in a quite desperate situation militarily being penned in at Boston. His need for Indians reflected his need for extra forces generally. Indeed so dire was his position that he was forced to consider the use of Negroes and wrote to Lord

(1) Ibid., II, 404.

(2) Ibid., II, 204, Dartmouth to Gage, 2 Aug., 1775.

(3) Sosin, "The Use of Indians in the American Revolution. A Reassessment of Responsibility", C.A.H.B., 1965, 121; c.f. Wise, "Thomas Gage", D.C.A.B., IV.

Dunmore, the Governor of Virginia, asking him to raise a force of Negroes.(1) A private letter Gage wrote to Barrington on June 10 concerning the use of Negroes is instructive: "things have now come to that crisis, that we must avail ourselves of every resource, even to raise the negroes, in our cause."(2) In fact no such use was made but the issue serves to illustrate the desperation of Gage's position and a major reason for his interest in Indians. Moreover once Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point had been seized by the rebels thereby making Quebec vulnerable to attack, it was natural that Gage should look to the Indians for support, particularly as Carleton had already sent Gage two of his regular regiments in September 1774. Thus, as those historians more sympathetic to Gage have pointed out, Gage had a defensive reason for utilizing Indians at this stage: the need to keep open the British lines of communications.(3)

But Gage had another use for the Indians as well; he wanted them to raid the New England backcountry wreaking as great a havoc as was possible, the kind of war utilized by the French during the Seven Years' War. Of course Gage knew that the type of warfare he was suggesting would result in an ugly display of slaughter. When Gage advanced this idea to Carleton, he

(1) W.L.G., Gage Mss., Gage to Dunmore, May 15, 1775.

(2) Gage Coet., II, 684, Gage to Barrington, 10 June, 1775.

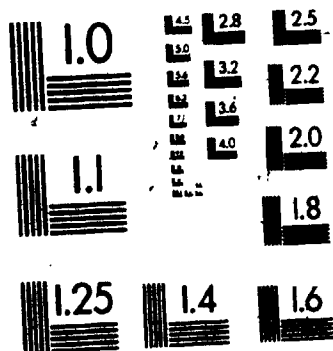
(3) Wise, "The Employment of Indians in the American Revolution: British Military Attitudes", *Actes du 4e Colloque Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, 1979, 2; Sosin, "The Use of Indians", 108.

suggested that suitable officers be employed with the Indians to conduct the raids. But such a request was a mere front? Gage with his vast experience of warfare in North America knew precisely what was at stake: a vicious frontier war in which it was impossible to differentiate between the innocent and the guilty, between ages, sexes, and political persuasions as the frontier war of 1778-1783 was to demonstrate. Arguably Gage had a practical motive in using Indians as raiders; Indian attacks along the frontier would have weakened the American forces besieging him at Boston, men would have felt obliged to return to the backcountry out of fear for their families, while more generally a second front would be created.

But Gage was also bringing his considerable knowledge of the frontier to bear as well. After all he had witnessed at first hand Indian disaffection and its expressions in frontier violence. And in particular he could not fail to be aware of the intense hatred of the Indian for the American settler and the Indian's desire to strike back. Gage knew how the Iroquois in particular had held back from the fight even to the extent that they had seen their former dependents, the Delaware and Shawnee, mercilessly cut down by the Virginians. Throughout his eleven years as Commander-in-Chief of the army Gage had been kept fully informed of frontier developments by Johnson and the members of the Indian Department. Thus Gage was totally aware that the best way to employ his primitive allies was not defensively but as raiders against the New England backcountry. Hence the British

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Johnson had suggested using the Iroquois as a weapon to pacify the Ohio tribes in the wake of the disastrous Fort Stanwix Treaty. Then Gage merely passed on his advice to Hillsborough, Dartmouth's predecessor, who, although perturbed, gave the Commander in Chief a free hand. The initial decision to use Indians therefore was a military one given political approval. It was virtually inconceivable that the politician in Whitehall, three thousand miles away, would override the Commander-in-Chief of the army on a matter of this nature. Dartmouth was carrying out a well tried policy procedure.

It is beyond the compass of this study to consider American policy in recruiting Indians but at least some discussion is warranted to demonstrate that for all their rhetoric in condemning the British for using Indians, the Declaration of Independence being the most obvious example, the rebels would willingly have made greater use of the Indians had they possessed that option. As has already been pointed out the American use of the Stockbridge Indians offered the British a useful pretext to explain away their usage of the aborigines, as exemplified by Lord North's brief statement to the British Parliament. But although Congress on June 30, 1775 asked its officials dealing with Indian affairs to seek neutrality, a point noted with glee by the anti Government critic John Wilkes when the matter was raised in the House of Commons in 1777 and discussed there at

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some length, (1) the actions of the Massachusetts Congress contradicted this line. That body not only enlisted the Stockbridge Indians as early as March 1775 but requested the Reverend Samuel Kirkland to persuade the Iroquois to "whet their hatchet". Missions were sent out at the same time to the Nova Scotia Indians and the Seven Nations of Canada. The following message, written by Ethan Allen to the Seven Nations of Canada, deserves quotation at length; it never reached its destination being intercepted en route:

...as King George's men first killed our men we hope as Indians are good and honest men you will not fight for King George against us as we have done you no wrong and would chuse to live with you as brothers. I always love Indians and have hunted a great deal with them I know how to shute and ambush just like Indians and want your warriors to come and see me and help me fight regulars...my men fight...as Indians do and I want your warriors to join with me...like brothers...if you will I will give you money, blankets, tomehawks, knives and paint and the like. (2)

The importance of this rather pathetic request is to demonstrate that the Americans were by no means loathe to use the very weapon they condemned the British for employing.

Nevertheless such American attitudes on the question of Indian employment cannot be considered a suitable excuse for the

(1) *Ibid.*, 10 Dec., 1777, XIX, 567. Wilkes said: "the Congress, Sir, in the heroic spirit of bravery, which mercy always accompanies, reprobated the idea of torture and cruelty. They determined a fair, honourable war, unstained by murder or massacre."

(2) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q11, 193-4, Ethan Allen to the Councillors at Kokanawaga, May 24, 1775.

policy of Gage and Dartmouth, because in practice there was very little chance for the Americans to use the northern tribes, even if the Indians had wanted to fight on their behalf, which, has been argued earlier, was certainly not the case because in the majority of cases the American was seen as a quite deadly enemy. It is symbolic that when American commissioners held a meeting of the Six Nations at German Flats, no Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga or Seneca turned up at all; the only Iroquois to do so were the Oneida, the faithful supporters of Kirkland.(1)

Once Dartmouth had given Governmental approval for the Indians to be employed in the struggle, the Indian Departmental apparatus went into action. On July 24 Dartmouth wrote to Guy Johnson via General Gage ordering him to bring into the conflict the Six Nations:

the intelligence His Majesty has received of the rebels having excited the Indians to take a part, and of their having actually engaged a body of them in arms to support their rebellion justifies the resolution His Majesty has taken of requiring the assistance of his faithful adherents the Six Nations. It is therefore His Majesty's pleasure that you do lose no time in taking such steps as may induce them to take up the hatchet against His Majesty's rebellious subjects in America and to engage them in His Majesty's service in such a plan as shall be suggested to you by General Gage.(2)

Guy Johnson had been forced to evacuate his home in northern New

(1) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 605-6, Proceedings of the Commissioners of the Twelve United Colonies with the Six Nations, Aug. 15-Sept. 2, 1775.

(2) Ibid., VIII, 596, Dartmouth to Johnson, July 24, 1775.

York after he had discovered his messages were being intercepted. He left for Oswego taking with him John Butler and the Mohawk warrior Joseph Brant.(1) It seems that Gage had already given Johnson some warning that British policy on Indian use was to change from one of neutrality before Dartmouth's instructions.(2) At Oswego Johnson held a conference of 1458 predominantly Iroquois Indians but including representatives of the Delaware and Huron tribes.(3) However the available evidence appears to show that even at this stage Johnson was still thinking in terms of neutrality rather than bringing the Indians into the conflict on the British side. A Mohawk chief, Abraham, said at a conference with the Americans a little while afterwards that Johnson had stated that "the white people were all got drunk" and it was better for them "not to interfere as we were brothers and begged us to sit still and maintain the peace."(4) Johnson however wrote later to Dartmouth that he "assembled 1458 Indians and adjusted matters with them in such a manner that they agreed to defend the communications and assist His Majesty's

(1) Stone, *Brant*, I, 630.

(2) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, 660, Journal of Colonel Guy Johnson from May to November 1775.

(3) Presumably these "Huron Tribes" were survivor Indians from the once powerful Huron Confederacy. The Wyandot, a powerful western tribe, were such a case.

(4) *Ibid.*, VIII, 630, Proceedings of the Commissioners of the Twelve United Colonies with the Six Nations, Aug. 15-Sept. 2, 1775.

troops in their operations."(1) There seems little doubt, however, that Johnson urged the Indians at some length not to assist the rebels.(2) Johnson left Oswego in early July and on July 17 called another conference, this time with the Seven Nations of Canada, at Montreal. Here Johnson persuaded them to assist the British in some operational role.(3) In fact Governor Carleton had already discussed some form of unspecified service with the Mohawks of Caughnawaga and St Regis but had been told that "they did not know or understand the origin and nature of this quarrel between the king and his children."(4) As a result Johnson appears to have strongly outlined the difference of treatment the Indian had received from the British and the Americans, with the British in the more favourable light of course.(5) Daniel Claus, the Deputy Superintendent for the Canadian Indians, played a considerable role in gaining the allegiance of these tribes; before the conference Johnson held with them, Claus met the Caughnawaga and St Regis Indians to explain the conflict to them. As a result these Indians were more favourably inclined than when Carleton had met them earlier.(6)

(1) *Ibid.*, VIII, 636, Johnson to Dartmouth, Oct. 5, 1775.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.19, F1, Claus Papers, IV, I, 23-4.

(3) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q11, 222, Carleton to Dartmouth, Aug. 15, 1775.

(4) P.A.C., M.G.19, F1, 210.

(5) *Ibid.*

(6) *Ibid.*, XIV, Pt.1, 24.

There was also an attempt made by the British to utilize the services of the "Acadian" Indians. On July 7, 1775 Gage sent orders to Governor Legge of Nova Scotia asking him to attach the Indians there to the British side.(1) It took some time before Legge acknowledged Gage's request and sent someone to engage the Malecite tribes of the St John River.(2) However this objective was never realized.(3) These Indians were to be associated with the American side as the conflict developed.

By August 1775 therefore the Indians whom the British wanted to use for a frontier war or as auxiliaries for their regular forces had been approached and had offered to fight. The Iroquois, even if they had not been asked by Johnson, would need little encouragement. And so frontier violence with all its traditional ugliness should have taken place at this time. But it did not; the reason for this was that the British were caught out by their own legislation, the Quebec Act. Had the Quebec Act not been passed Gage could have ordered the commencement of the frontier war he desired, but the matter was out of his hands; the responsibility for the Northern Department Indians was ultimately in the hands of the Governor Of Quebec, Guy Carleton, who refused to allow such a conflict to take place.

The rationale behind Carleton's decision will be discussed

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.217, (Nova Scotia), A94, 133, Gage to Legge, June 7, 1775.

(2) *Ibid.*, A94, 231, Legge to Dartmouth, Nov. 4, 1775.

(3) *Ibid.*, A94, 272-3, Stanton to Legge, Dec. 4, 1775.

later. It is important to note that he made his stand at a time when Canada was in great peril from American invasion. Carleton had believed that the protection of Canada would require 17,000 men with artillery and engineers. However he had under his command only two below strength battalions; in fact a strength return dated June 1775 showed a total of 859 infantry all ranks. Carleton was to be particularly disappointed that the Canadian militia refused to serve.(1)

In such circumstances Carleton's stand has received the praise of historians; Carleton is the hero as Gage is the villain. Thus A.L. Burt, a fierce critic of Carleton, has written that "Carleton...deserves lasting honour for his flat refusal to let Colonel Guy Johnson...loose hordes of savages against the backs of the old colonies when they first rose in revolt"(2)

As has been seen the employment of the Indians in a frontier war seemed to the higher reaches of the Imperial edifice a logical requirement. Of interest at this time was the position of Colonel John Burgoyne, who was serving with Gage at Boston, because later he assumes an important role with regard to the Indian dimension of British forces in the Revolution. In 1775 much of Burgoyne's energies were spent sending letters to Whitehall criticizing the conduct of its Commander-in-Chief, Gage. On the issue of Indian employment however Burgoyne could find no fault with Gage's position. Writing to Lord North,

(1) Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers*, 105.

(2) A.L. Burt, *Guy Carleton, Lord Dorchester*, (Ottawa, 1964), 7.

Burgoyne noted how "one striking circumstance upon first view of it is that the rebels are much alarmed at the report of engaging the Indians than at any other measure... this alone shows the expediency of diligently preparing and employing that engine".(1) For the intensely ambitious Burgoyne, desperately seeking an independent command, Indian employment must have seemed a matter worth exploiting even though it meant agreeing with Gage.

But no one proved more willing to employ the Indians against the frontiers than those who dealt with the Indians directly: the officers of the Indian Department. The Superintendent Guy Johnson informed Carleton after his second conference with the Canadian Indians that these tribes should be employed immediately; Johnson knew it was important to keep these Indians employed or they would merely withdraw from the conflict. But Carleton, according to Johnson, informed him that no Indians would leave the boundary of Quebec, the 45th degree of latitude.(2) Throughout August Johnson attempted to bring the aborigines into the conflict. Early in the month Johnson heard of a raiding party near Point au Fer above St Johns and reported to General Prescott, who was acting as local commander in Carleton's absence, that the Indians were keen to attack the rebels. Prescott merely informed Johnson

(1) E.R. De Fontblanque, *Political and Military Episodes in the Latter Half of the Eighteenth Century Derived from the Life and Correspondence of the Rt. Hon. John Burgoyne*, (London, 1876), 179.

(2) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, 660, Johnson's Journal.

of Carleton's position: the Indians could not leave the boundaries of Quebec. Towards the end of August Johnson again wrote to Carleton urging a change in policy. But it was impossible to budge the Canadian Governor who told him "that no one thing had yet happened to make him alter his opinion in regard to the keeping the savages within the line."⁽¹⁾

Daniel Claus actually requested the Indians under his control to appeal directly to Carleton with a view "to attacking and laying waste the New England frontier."⁽²⁾ The predictable Carleton thanked the Indians for their "good will" but "did not approve at all of the scheme...they were not to go beyond the line of the Province of Quebec." According to Claus "the Indians were something disgusted at their offer being rejected."⁽³⁾ On September 5 Gage once again wrote to Carleton asking that Indians be brought into the conflict but the Governor would not be moved.⁽⁴⁾

Claus and Johnson had good reasons for adopting the position they did on this issue. Like Gage they knew from first hand experience the reasons for Indian motivation.⁽⁵⁾ Moreover they could now experience for themselves the grievances of the Indians

(1) *Ibid.*

(2) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 52, Daniel Claus, Late Agt. for Indian Affairs, Province of Quebec, Memorandum on the Rebel Invasion of Canada, 1775.

(3) *Ibid.*, Q13, 53, Memorandum.

(4) W.L.C., Gage Mss., Gage to Carleton, Sept. 5, 1775. Gage was removed from his post shortly afterwards to be replaced by Sir William Howe.

(5) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 660, Johnson's Journal.

because they too had found themselves minus their land. Both Claus and Johnson were in effect refugees and had ample personal motivation for loosing the Indians against the Americans to reclaim their massive New York land holdings.

In September there occurred a major split between the Indian Department and the Governor of Quebec, something which was in some ways a logical development of the Quebec Act. There seems little doubt that Carleton was disturbed by the Johnson flavour to the Indian Department and was intent on shaping it more to his liking. As a result Carleton replaced Daniel Claus with John Campbell, as the Deputy Superintendent for Quebec.(1) In fact Campbell, an officer of the Twenty Seventh Foot, had been appointed to the same position at the expense of Claus once before, a move Sir William Johnson had managed to block by appealing to Whitehall to overrule Murray, then the Governor of Quebec.(2) Campbell's appointment was made in July 1773 but because he was in Ireland at that time the issue was never raised. However when Campbell arrived in Canada in September 1775 with his commission, the whole Imperial apparatus for conducting relations with the Indians was shaken to its foundations.(3) Campbell can be considered a Carleton man having married the

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q10, 290, Carleton to Gage, Feb. 4, 1775.

(2) Douglas Leighton, "John Campbell", D.F.B., IV, 129.

(3) Ibid., 130.

daughter of La Corne St Luc, the former director of Indian affairs for the French. St Luc, a French Canadian Seigneur, was a loyal supporter of Carleton's.

As a result of this move Daniel Claus and Guy Johnson, together with Joseph Brant, who was very close to the Johnson family, Gilbert Tice, Walter Butler, Peter Johnson and Joseph Chew, left for England to get Carleton's appointment overruled by Whitehall.(1) Thus the ludicrous situation had been achieved whereby the very people skilled to deal with the Indians were absent from their duties at a time when Canada was being invaded by the Americans. Writing about this episode in 1783 Guy Johnson expressed his outrage at Carleton's decision: "I found it inconsistent with my own honour, the good of the service, or my influence and interest with the Indians to remain but chose the necessary authority for commanding the Indians"(2) There is some truth in all three of Johnson's points. Carleton was placing politics above expertise, while Johnson was placing vanity and personal pique above the military problems faced by the British at that time.

Some close analysis of Carleton's position is warranted. As has been shown, the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for the American Colonies, the Commander in Chief of the Army, the Indian Department Superintendent and his deputy were all of one

(1) P.A.C., M.G.19, F1, II, 47-8, Anecdotes about Brant.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.21, G2, B106, 215, G Johnson to Haldimand, Jan. 11, 1783.

mind: Indians should be used to raid the New England backcountry. Why did Carleton stand between them and their objective? Probably the most obvious reason was a deep distaste for frontier violence, a dislike which the others recognised but were not prepared to let stand in the way of practical considerations. At a time when the American struggle for "the Fourteenth Colony" was well under way, when Carleton was desperately short of manpower to defend Canada, he felt able to write: "I would not even suffer a savage to pass the frontier though often urged to let them loose on the rebel provinces lest cruelties might be committed and for fear that the innocent might suffer with the guilty." (1)

But there was also the fact that Carleton lacked the familiarity with the frontier that Gage, Johnson and Claus had experienced. As John Alden argues convincingly Gage was personally a genuinely compassionate and humane man, (2) yet he was quite prepared to put these qualities to one side when faced with the practical realities of warfare in America. He was only following traditional practices; in his own tenure of office he had countenanced Indian usage on three separate occasions. S.F. Wise has drawn a useful comparison between Carleton and Major General Frederick Haldimand, who succeeded Carleton as Governor of Quebec in 1778 and who commanded the frontier war of 1778-83.

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q11, 270-1, Carleton to Dartmouth, Oct. 25, 1775.

(2) Alden, Gage, in passim.

Now Haldimand was not unlike Carleton in outlook(1), yet his experience as Gage's Second-in-Command in North America taught him to place necessity above humanity. A letter from Haldimand to Germain in 1777 is instructive: "the assistance of the Indians is most essential to our success and their attachment to His Majesty at all times to be secured."(2) Carleton drew different conclusions.

But it can be argued that the issue of Indian employment mirrors Carleton's whole philosophy regarding the conflict with the Americans. This aspect merits discussion because of the way in which, because of its prickly nature, using Indians mirrored men's positions on wider issues.

Carleton seems to have sincerely believed that by treating the Americans well they might become convinced of the benevolence of British rule. Thus by not using the Indians Carleton could help persuade them of this. Carleton released American prisoners during their invasion of Quebec. His explanation to Germain, Dartmouth's successor as American Secretary, is particularly revealing. He emphasised the need to "convince all His Majesty's unhappy subjects that the King's mercy and benevolence were still open to them." Great Britain, he believed, could only turn the scales by "exhibiting valour and good conduct in action with humanity and friendly treatment to those who are subdued and at

(1) Wise, "Employment of Indians", 6.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.21, 62, P42, Haldimand to Germain, Sept. 20, 1777.

our mercy."(1) before the prisoners were released Carleton addressed a Proclamation to his own troops in which he said: "it belongs to the King's troops to save the blood of his deluded subjects whose greatest fault perhaps is having been deceived by their leaders to their own distraction. It belongs to the Crown and it is the duty of all faithful servants of the Crown to rescue from oppression and restore to liberty the once happy, free and loyal people of this continent."(2) Sergeant Roger Lamb of the Royal Welch Fusiliers reports, in typical idiosyncratic style, how Carleton offered gifts and money as bribes to the prisoners:

...Lads, why did you come and disturb an honest man...that never did harm to you in his life? I never invaded your property ...come, my boys, you are in a very distressed situation, and not able to go home in any comfort. I must provide you with shoes, stockings and good warm wastecoats. I must give you some good victuals to carry you home. Take care, my lads, that you do not come here again lest I should not treat you so kindly.(3)

Moreover the question of Carleton's conduct of the 1776 campaign in which the Americans were driven out of Canada deserves some attention in this context. Though superficially successful it was thought by contemporaries and by generations of historians that the American army should have been destroyed,

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q12, 135, Carleton to Germain, Aug. 10, 1776.

(2) Quoted in P. Reynolds, *Sir Guy Carleton, a Biography*, (Toronto, 1977), 114.

(3) Roger Lamb, *An Original and Authentic Journal of Occurrences during the Late American War*, (Dublin, 1813), 89.

historians that the American army should have been destroyed, Fort Ticonderoga taken and the Hudson valley invaded. A.L. Burt has even accused Carleton of treasonable conduct in deliberately allowing the Americans to escape and as a result "Carleton's rejection of what was in his grasp in 1776 led to Saratoga in 1777; that precipitated France into the war in 1778; and French sea power tipped the scales against Britain."(1)

Now it would be impossible not to at least modify such views given the pathbreaking research on the subject of logistics in the Revolution by Arthur Bowler. As he has put it: "logistical problems in Canada...to a very large extent explain the failings of the campaign of that year."(2) Bowler demonstrates how supply problems affected that campaign: the Treasury sent provisions only for the regular army while the Governor's militia, Indian auxiliaries and several thousand cart drivers and boat builders nearly doubled those Carleton had to feed; there was a lack of equipment; and there were problems caused by the wind.(3) Yet posed against all these problems there is the sheer weight of contemporary opinion as well as Carleton's general attitude towards the American controversy. One junior officer who served on the 1776 campaign wrote:

this little army, I say, after having done as much as the situation of the country and the

(1) Burt, *Carleton*, 9.

(2) R. Arthur Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America*, (Princeton, 1975), 214.

(3) Bowler, "Sir Guy Carleton and the Campaign of 1776 in Canada", *C.H.R.*, LV, 1974, 131-140.

climate would admit of by driving the enemy out of Canada, destroying their fleet and then following close to their dens, was obliged to return to Canada to its great regret, which it did...without being molested by the enemy. (1)

Arguably Carleton was once again keen to allow the Americans to get away lightly in the belief that such a policy would stop the rebellion. It is this policy, thoroughly unrealistic like much of Carleton's thinking, that explains why there was not a frontier war of the type that the Colonists were to experience in 1778-83 as early as the summer of 1775.

It is now necessary to deal with the second problem set at the start of this chapter: why the British do make greater use of the Indians, laying the groundwork for their increased use in the 1777 campaigns and ultimately in the frontier war of 1778-83. To answer this one, must examine policy at Whitehall.

By the end of 1775 George III and his Prime Minister Lord North had determined upon a policy of coercion to deal with the American problem. In December 1775 Lord Dartmouth was dismissed from his post and was replaced by Lord George Germain as Secretary of State for the American Colonies. Germain, who was extremely "hawkish" on the American question, is the crucial figure with regard to the Indian problem.

Germain had entered the army in 1737 but in 1759 his career was blighted when, as Commander-in-Chief of the British forces at Minden, he refused to obey the orders of the allied Commander,

(1) For *Wart of a Horse*, ed. George F.G. Stanley, (Sackville, 1961), 90.

Ferdinand of Brunswick and lead a cavalry charge. He was dismissed from the service after being court-martialed.(1) This infamous episode was to follow Germain and impinged on Imperial politics to a considerable extent. Germain entered politics and by the early 1770s, with Lord North in power, he gained a position of some importance as a leading Whig oppositionist in Parliament; in 1774 he changed sides over the American crisis.

Germain had adopted a hard line throughout the American dispute; the reception of the Stamp Act in particular seems to have left him in a very distressed and puzzled condition because it was over this issue that he decided that military force could be the only answer to solve the problem. He opposed the repeal of the Stamp Act, in this way appearing outspoken in his views for coercion.(2) At the time of the Boston Tea Party, for example, he argued that Britain's ills arose from the repeal of the Stamp Act, and that had Britain stood firm, the colonists would have returned to obedience and the issue solved.(3) Germain was chosen to replace Dartmouth because he was seen as holding the correct views on this issue.(4)

Germain's appointment can be seen as something of a watershed; from this stage Whitehall sees the conflict as one of

(1) Alan Valentine, *Lord George Germain*, (Oxford, 1962), Chaps. 5-6; Gerald Saxon Brown, *The American Secretary*, (Ann Arbor, 1963), Chap. 1.

(2) Brown, *American Secretary*, Chap. 2.

(3) *Parli. Hist.*, 16 Dec., 1773, XVII, 16 Dec., 1773, 1162.

(4) Brown, *American Secretary*, 25.

fundamental and sacred principle, and the key to this was not one of allegiance to the Crown but the issue of Parliamentary sovereignty. As early as 1766 George Grenville had argued that if the American rejection of Parliament's authority on matters of taxation was to be admitted, one of two possible consequences appeared to follow, either Britain and America "must be two distinct Kingdoms and that now immediately" or "America must be entirely defended by us". By late 1775 George III could write to Dartmouth that "America must be colony of England or treated as an enemy. Distant possessions standing upon equality with the superior state is more ruinous than being deprived of such connections."⁽¹⁾ In short the question of Parliamentary sovereignty had hardened into an ideological conflict; the situation had been reached whereby it was assumed by Whitehall that one side, the British, was absolutely right, and the other, the American, totally wrong. In such a conflict a fanaticism can be detected; compromise was inconceivable, what was required was a war of righteousness to eliminate those who did not adhere to the correct set of Imperial principles. And it is in this light that Indian employment should be seen. In 1774 Indian usage was an issue raised by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and subsequently given political approval by Dartmouth. Now this position was reversed; Indian employment was brought up by Whitehall as a useful tool to wield in a ruthless conflict. This represents a fundamental difference from the previous line.

(1) See, for example, Ian R. Christie, "The American Revolution", *History Today*, Sept. 1983, 150-1.

In late 1777 the question of Indian employment caught the imagination of the political nation following Burgoyne's catastrophic campaign and his use of Indians in it. The Government made quite clear the rationale behind the decision to use Indians. Lord Suffolk, the Secretary of State for the Northern Department, set the tone when he said it was perfectly justifiable to use all the means "that God and nature put into our hands."⁽¹⁾ When challenged by the understandably surprised opposition, Suffolk merely reaffirmed this position: "I shall ever think it justifiable to exert every means in our power to repel the attempts of our rebellious subjects."⁽²⁾ The Attorney General summarized the Government's position in a nutshell: "as to the use of Indians painful as such a service must be in every mind, necessity loudly demanded it, for in a contest of this sort, such is the nature of man, that every step must be taken to annoy his enemy."⁽³⁾

Nowhere can this attitude be better illustrated than with the appointment of La Corne St Luc as the Commander of the western tribes on Burgoyne's campaign in 1777. St Luc was recommended for the job by the former Governor of New York, General William Tryon, who wrote to Germain that St Luc had told him: "il faut lâcher les sauvages sur les frontières de ces

(1) *Parl. Hist.*, Nov. 18, 1777, XIX, 368.

(2) *Ibid.*, 369.

(3) *Ibid.*, 443.

canaks, pour imposer des terreurs et pour les soumettre au pied de la throne de sa Majeste Britannic."(1) In another letter Tyron alludes to St Luc. in even more trenchant terms: "I am exactly of the opinion with Colonel St Luc who says; il faut lacher les sauvages contre les miserables rebels pour imposer de terreur sur les frontieres; il dit plus...qu'il fait brutalizer les affaires."(2) This man, of whom more will be said in Chapter four, was appointed to a position of great responsibility. Moreover St Luc was a notorious figure. During the Seven Years' War the Indians he was managing massacred some British prisoners the French allowed to go to Fort Lydius. The outrage caused a great stir as the French court was held responsible. St Luc had also acquired a reputation for bounty taking in the Indian manner, the removal of the scalp, something that left many of his contemporaries indignant.(3) The appointment of St Luc is indicative of the British temper.

The question of Indian employment entered high politics in another way: it offered anti Government critics in Parliament a highly effective means to attack the Government. As Vincent Harlow has pointed out, there was something mischievous about the antics of the Parliamentary opposition at this time; there can be

(1) Tyron to Germain, Apr. 9, 1777, quoted in James M. Hadden, *Hadden's Journal and Orderly Books*, ed. H. Rogers, (Albany, 1884), Appendix 17.

(2) N.Y.C.D., VIII, Tyron to Knox, Apr. 21, 1777.

(3) Pierre and Madelaine Tousignant, "Luc de la Corne", *D.C.B.*, IV, 424.

no doubting the desire for conciliation with the Colonies but the Whigs exploited the issue crudely for cheap political gain. Thus it was possible for someone like Chatham who had not the remotest sympathy for "ideas about Colonial supremacy" to speak out wildly against the government.⁽¹⁾ And now the same Whig politicians, Chatham, Burke, Fox and Wilkes, lent their energies to condemning the government for using Indians. None, with the exception of Chatham (whose hypocritical stance shall be considered later), knew anything about the realities of the military situation in North America.

Edmund Burke argued that the use of the Indians as combatants by the British Government was wrong. His objections were not a question of race or colour but rather the way they waged war. This had two objectives: on the one hand "an indulgence of their native cruelty by the destruction and if possible, extermination of their enemies", and the other, which was dependent on the first, was to acquire the greatest number of scalps "which acted as perpetual trophies of victory". Thus unlike civilised nations, whose reward in war was rank and tile, the Indians had no such incentives: rather their reward was a bounty of human scalps and in particular "the gratifications arising from torturing, mangling, roasting alive by slow fires and even devouring their captives". According to Burke, the only result was to tarnish Great Britain's reputation as a civilized

(1) Vincent Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire*, (London, 1952), I, 131.

people and for waging civilized war.(1)

But no opposition politician made more of the issue than John Wilkes:

The conduct of this war goes on a par with its principle. Has the feeble old man, the helpless infant, the defenseless female ever experienced the tender mercies of the Indian savage? He drinks the blood of the enemy, and his favourite repast is human flesh. Is a stretch to be given to thousands of these cannibals?.. I am bold sir, to declare that such orders are unworthy of the general of any Christian King. They are only becoming of a Jewish priest to a Jewish King in the bloodiest and barbarous of all histories, the history of the Jewish nation.(2)

Charles James Fox expressed the greatest horror at using Indians and letting them loose not only against the troops of America but also against women and children "whose bodies even death could not rescue from the insults and barbarity of the savages". He wondered how a prince famed for his humanity, benevolence and sanctity of manner, as the present King was, could allow such "creatures" to remain allied to the Crown.(3)

Undoubtedly there was a degree of genuine concern expressed in these and other speeches in the House of Commons as well as mere sensation. What is of importance is the way in which the issue of Indian employment, because of the very controversial nature of the problems concerned, notably the incompatible codes of warfare practiced by the two peoples, mirrors wider political

(1) Parl. Hist., 6 Feb., 1778, XIX, 694-9.

(2) Ibid., 18 Nov., 1777, XIX, 424.

(3) Ibid., 432.

concerns and can act as a gauge to test the political climate. At a time when the Government saw Indian employment as a means of expressing their distaste at the rebels, the Whig opposition saw it as a means to demonstrate their disgust at the Government.

With Germain in ultimate control of the war effort and bent upon a policy of coercion in which Indian usage played such a part, it was inevitable that some conflict should result between himself and Carleton, who had refused to countenance an offensive usage of the Indians, and indeed much of a defensive use either, as part of his general philosophy of not upsetting the Americans too much in the belief that some sort of a reconciliation was possible. But as Burt has pointed out, there was a deep seated rivalry between the two men, at the heart of which was Germain's conduct at Minden.⁽¹⁾ The two men showered total contempt upon each other even in the official Government correspondence. Germain was determined to remove Carleton from influence, or at least reduce his influence considerably, and succeeded to the extent that Carleton was replaced by Burgoyne, an officer junior to Carleton, as British Commander for the Northern campaigns in 1777. The reasons behind the decision included Carleton's conduct of the previous campaign when, as has already been suggested, he deliberately held back to let the Americans escape. In one letter Germain accused Carleton directly

(1) Burt, "The Quarrel between Carleton and Germain, An Inverted Story", *C.H.B.*, 1930, 202-222. Generally Burt comes down on the side of Germain arguing Carleton exploited a number of issues through especial pettiness.

on this issue.(1) But Germain held Carleton's failure to use the Indians much against him as well. In a long letter to Burgoyne, in which Germain entered upon a long list of Carleton's faults he was quite specific: "the dread the people of New England have for a war with the savages, proves the expediency of our holding that scourge over them...the Indians report that had General Carleton allowed them to act last year Canada would not have been in the hands of the rebels but he (Carleton) kept them so long idle that they resolved to go home."(2) In 1776 when this letter was written there was no longer any room to compromise; opinion in Whitehall had hardened since 1774-5. Carleton's attitude on Indian employment was one reason why he lost his command.

Shortly after his appointment as the American Secretary, Germain took measures to ensure that the Indian weapon would be used against the rebels this time. He was determined to utilize every means to implement the kind of policy he saw as necessary to bring the colonists to heel, and, as has been demonstrated, a vigorous Indian policy served this end. Germain wrote to the Commander-in-Chief of the army, Sir William Howe, on the question of Indians:

As far as I can judge of what is likely to be the general plan of operations in North America, and indeed in all events the securing of the affection and assistance of the Six nations, is a consideration of no small importance, and I hope Colonel Guy

(1) P.A.C., M.G.21, G2, B37, 159, Germain to Carleton, March 26, 1777.

(2) W.L.C., Sackville-Germain Mss., Germain to Burgoyne, Aug. 18, 1776.

Johnson, who is now here, and is preparing to return by the first ship will be found useful.(1)

This represents the crucial departure from the relationship between Gage and Dartmouth, or between Gage and Hillsborough; then Gage came to a military decision and asked Whitehall for political approval, now the position was reversed; Germain reached a political decision and told the Commander-in-Chief to put that decision into effect militarily.

Germain also ensured that the situation whereby Carleton, as Governor of Quebec, could veto Indian usage, was rectified. Guy Johnson, the Indian Department Superintendent, was to be given the same authority as had been given to Sir William Johnson in 1756. Germain informed Howe of this fact:

The King has pleased to give him the same Commission and Appointments as were given to Sir William Johnson in 1756 and he is in all respects made subject to your direction and control. You will therefore employ him in such a manner and give him such instructions, as you shall think reasonable and proper.(2)

Thus Germain had seen to it that the final barrier to Indian employment was removed.

About the same time Germain had written a brief note on using Indians to Burgoyne as well, a point of some importance given that Burgoyne was leaving to join Carleton for the 1776 campaign. Pointing out that Indian "temper" was of vital importance, Germain went on to argue that Indian "good will"

(1) *Ibid.*, Germain to Howe, 28 March, 1776.

(2) *Ibid.*

could be "assured" if they were managed with attention and "proper" persons were employed to negotiate with them.(1) Further evidence of Germain's anxiety to employ Indians can be detected in a letter written to Governor Toyn concerning the Southern Indians. He congratulated Toyn for his handling of a conference with the Creek Indians when those Indians decided to throw in their lot with the British.(2)

It is necessary at this stage to consider the position of Henry Hamilton because of the role he played in influencing Whitehall in its policy. Hamilton held an important post in the Imperial framework in North America as a result of the Quebec Act, when the western territories were brought under the control of the Governor of Quebec and Gouvernement provided for four Lieutenant Governors were appointed to the posts at Detroit, Michilimiackinac, Vincennes and Kaskaskia. Hamilton was the Lieutenant Governor at Detroit and was in charge of Indian politics of the Ohio Mississippi belt. Particularly important was his responsibility for the maintenance of the British hold upon the West and its trade.(3) Hamilton has been judged guilty by American historians, in rather typical fashion, of proposing the unleashing of the savages, while the revisionist historian John D. Barnhard has attempted a rehabilitation: "he has been charged

(1) *Ibid.*, Germain to Burgoyne, 28 March, 1776.

(2) *Ibid.*, Germain to Toyn, 14 June, 1776.

(3) Elizabeth Arthur, "Henry Hamilton", *D.A.C.B.*, IV, 321; Wise, "Northern Indians", 159.

with recommending to the Home Government the employment of Indians even, though his immediate superior, Sir Guy Carleton was opposed... Germain wrote to this effect and Carleton believed him, but no letter of Hamilton's seems to exist which would prove the point." (1)

That Hamilton, like Gage, has been singled out for especially bitter treatment by American historians is symbolic of the fear of Indian raids felt by the American settlers at the time. Hamilton received a notoriety at the time, being dubbed the "Hair Buyer General" by George Rogers Clark. (2) However there is no evidence that Hamilton ever did pay bounty money. On the other hand from the earliest times in Colonial American history the various colonies offered rewards for scalps; bounties were a common feature in colonial life, such was the brutal nature of the frontier. (3) In September 1776, for example, a Committee of the South Carolina Assembly recommended that seventy five pounds be paid for every Indian scalp produced in Charlestown. (4)

By any standards this Irishman seems to have been a restless individual desperate for his share of the action while being exceedingly ambitious at the same time. Hamilton's Indian policy reflects this enthusiasm. In 1775 he was unable to utilize the

(1) John D. Barnhard, "A New Evaluation of Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark", *M.V.H.R.*, 37, 1950-1, 658.

(2) Nelson Vance Russell, "The Indian Policy of Henry Hamilton", *C.H.R.*, 11, 1930, 20.

(3) Turner, *EUROPEAN*, 4.

(4) Russell, "Indian Policy", 27.

Indians at his disposal for two reasons: first the Delaware and Shawnee were neutral as a result of their reversal during Dunmore's war of 1774, and second, the West was subject to Governor Carleton's restrictions on Indian usage.(1) In 1776 however Carleton asked Hamilton to provide some Indians and Hamilton responded by sending some two hundred Ottawa and Ojibway.(2) More generally Carleton informed Hamilton that these Indians should be kept firmly to the Crown and be ready to act upon any occasion.(3)

From this point Hamilton seems to have acted with great vigour. In August he wrote to Dartmouth how he called a council of all the region "receiving Indian deputies from the Ottawas, Chippawas, Wyandotts, Senecas, Delawares, Cherokees, and Pontonattamis."(4) Later in his letter he urged a firm Indian policy:

I have told the savages assembled at this council to content themselves with watchfully observing the enemy's motions, that if the Virginians attacked them, I should give notice to the whole confederacy, and that an attack on one nation should infallibly be followed by the united force of them all to repel or as they term it strike, at the

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q12, 219, Hamilton to Dartmouth, Aug. 29, 1776.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.21, G2, B39, 32, Carleton to De Peyster, June 25, 1776. These Indians were never utilized by Carleton.

(3) *Ibid.*, B39, Carleton to Hamilton, July 19, 1776.

(4) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q12, 219, Hamilton to Dartmouth, Aug 29-Sept. 1, 1776. The "Chippawas" are the Ojibway according to the American spelling.

Virginians."(1)

It is important to note how Hamilton perceived the Western Indians' anxiety to strike back at the Virginians. The frontier war in the West which commenced towards the end of 1777 was largely a case of the western Indians attacking settlers in the Kentucky region, a direct legacy of the frontier relations described in Chapter 2. Later in his letter to Dartmouth, Hamilton speaks of the Indians falling upon the settlements, "a deplorable sort of war", but "one which the arrogance, disloyalty and imprudence of the Virginians has justly brought down upon them."(2) That Hamilton had hit upon this raw nerve can be amply demonstrated from the following Indian message of February 1777 to the Virginians:

You have feloniously taken possession of part of our country on the branches of the Ohio, as well as the Susquehanna, to the latter we have some time since sent you word to quit our lands as we now do to you, as we dont know we ever gave to the liberty, nor can we be easy in our minds while there is an arm'd force at our every door, nor do we think you, or anybody else would. Therefore...with more lenity than you have a right to expect, we know tell you in a peaceful manner to quit our lands wherever you have possessed yourselves of them immediately or blame yourselves for whatever may happen.(3)

(1) *Ibid.*, 219.

(2) *Ibid.*, 221. Presumably because this letter was addressed to Dartmouth, Barnhard thinks this demonstrates that Hamilton did not influence Germain. However the letter was passed on to Germain, Dartmouth having been removed from office. A copy of the letter is to be found in the Sackville-Germain Mss., W.L.C.

(3) Quoted in Wise, "Northern Indians", 160.

In March 1777 Germain removed Carleton's restrictions and ordered Hamilton to go ahead with full scale usage against the frontiers at once:

It is His Majesty's resolution that the most vigorous efforts should be made and every means employed that Providence has put into His Majesty's hands for crushing the rebellion and restoring the Constitution. It is the Kings command that you should direct Lieutenant Governor Hamilton to assemble as many of the Indians as he conveniently can, and placing a proper person at their head...conduct parties...(and)...employ them in making a diversion and exciting an alarm upon the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania .(1)

It can be contended therefore that attempts by revisionist historians to exonerate Hamilton from blame are exaggerated. Hamilton, like other Imperial officials, detected the nature of Indian grievances and then sought to exploit them; he showed great urgency in persuading Whitehall of the benefits to be gained from a frontier war and displayed a distinct eagerness to put such a conflict into operation. However, as has already been argued, Germain required little persuasion; Hamilton was merely preaching to the converted. However Hamilton's influence on Germain can be detected in Germain's public defense of his Indian policy on 6 February replying to Burke's motion:

the matter lay within a very narrow compass; the Indians would not have remained idle spectators; the very arguments used by the hon. mover were so many proofs that they would not; besides the rebels by their emissaries had made frequent applications to the Indians to side with them; the Virginians

(1) P.A.C., M.G.21, 62, B121, 9-10, Germain to Carleton, March 26, 1777.

particularly; and some Indians were employed at Boston in the rebel army.(1)

It is worth emphasising once again, as with Gage and Guy Johnson, that Germain and Hamilton were acting only on practical grounds; moral considerations, such as those Burke talked about in his long speech, did not influence them. The talk about using white officers to control them was useful piece of rhetoric to give the impression that a 'clean' frontier war could be conducted. It has been suggested by Germain's biographer, for example, that Germain was ignorant of the realities of Indian warfare.(2) Such an argument will not stand, as Germain himself wrote: "the dread the people of New England have for a war with the savages proves the expediency of our holding that scourge over them.(3)

As will be seen in Chapter 4, Indians were used in a limited way during the campaign of 1776 when the American invaders were expelled from Canada. What concerns us here however is the preparations made for an altogether more widescale use in 1777. Hamilton's preparations to make use of the western Indians have already been discussed, but once it had been decided to make greater use of Indians it was essential that Great Britain secure an active commitment from the Iroquois once again. And for this purpose the figure of Joseph Brant was crucial. Unfortunately it

(1) Parl. Hist., 6 Feb., 1778, XIX, 700.

(2) Valentine, Germain, 185.

(3) W. I. C., Sackville-Germain Mss., Gage to Burgoyne, 23 Aug., 1776.

is difficult to present an accurate account of his activities in 1776-7 because the main source of information are two biographies of Brant written by Daniel Claus, Brant's colleague, admirer and friend after the events took place. (Claus remained in England until 1777). These sketches, one of which is entitled "Observations of Joseph Brant's Distinguished Genius and Character", are most notable for their tone of complete eulogy, and their prejudice against anyone connected with Carleton or hostile to the Johnson family.

Brant had accompanied Guy Johnson and Claus to England where he met the leading political figures of the day, notably Germain and George III, and acquainted them with Indian grievances. No doubt he made Germain thoroughly aware of the Indian desire to strike back at the Americans. From a personal point of view his voyage was a great success: he was the subject of great attention, being a Mohawk warrior but one who was christianised and literate. The London Universal Magazine published a profile on him.(1) Whether, as was argued in Chapter 2, he fully understood the intricacies of British thinking on the subjects he was discussing is very doubtful.

Brant and Johnson left England on June 3 1776. Claus remained to return in early 1777. En route they were attacked by privateers,(2) and incident which served to highlight the ludicrous situation in which Britain's Indian Department

(1) P.A.C., M.G.19, F1, II, 46-7, Anecdotes about Brant.

(2) Ibid.; N.Y.C.D., VIII, 681, Johnson to Germain, Aug. 8, 1776.

expertise was away from America at the same time. Fortunately, from the British angle, they survived this episode. On arriving in North America Brant participated in the Battle of Long Island, the manoeuvre whereby Howe pushed Washington back from Brooklyn Heights.(1) Brant, desperate to return to Indian country to organise his people, found himself stranded in New York City instead. As a result Brant elected to travel through American lines in disguise a move agreed to by Howe and Clinton. This episode demonstrates British anxiety to utilize the Iroquois, even to the extent of sending their crucial pawn, Brant, on a mortally dangerous mission.(2)

In fact Brant managed this dangerous journey and reached the Iroquois village of Onaquaga. There it seems he acquainted his countrymen of his adventures but more importantly, he rallied the Indians to the British cause because in Claus's words "their country, and liberty were in danger from the rebels."(3)

From Onaquaga Brant, together with Gilbert Tice who had accompanied him on his expedition, journeyed to the western stretches of the Susquehanna River visiting some Delaware Indians before moving to the Seneca village of Chenussio. He then moved to Niagara.(4) The end result of Brant's activities was to tie

(1) P.A.C., M.G.19, F1, II, 208, Observations of Brant; *Ibid.*, II, 48, Anecdotes about Brant.

(2) *Ibid.*, II, 209, Observations; *Ibid.*, II, 48, Anecdotes.

(3) *Ibid.*, II, 48, Anecdotes.

(4) *Ibid.*, II, 209, Observations.

the Six Nations firmly to the British side once again for the 1777 campaigns. Thus the situation differs markedly from the diplomacy of 1775. Then it was primarily the diplomacy of the Indian Department that brought the Indians to the British side; now it was the hasty and dedicated efforts of Brant.

As a result of the hectic diplomacy described, the British were able to utilize a considerable number of Indians for the 1777 campaigns and ultimately to launch the frontier war of 1778-83 in two theatres. The politics of Indian employment can thus be divided into two phases. The first witnesses the desire of the British Commander-in-Chief, General Gage, to use Indians to attack the frontiers, in the traditional manner, as a means of solving his military problems at Boston by means of a diversion. Whitehall allowed Gage to implement such a policy and the Indian Departmental apparatus went into action to bring the Indians over to the British side. The whole process, however, was vetoed by Carleton, because, as a result of the Quebec Act, ultimate responsibility for the Indians of that Province was the Governor's. The second phase witnesses a very different situation. The decision to employ Indians came not from the military in America but from the politicians in Whitehall. The Secretary of State for the American Colonies, Lord George Germain, who was appointed to the post with a mandate to carry out a policy of coercion, employed Indians as a means to this end. 1776-7 sees Indians employed from above. It is now necessary to examine how the Indians were used particularly in the 1777

campaigns, but also their more limited employment under Carleton's restrictions.

CHAPTER 4

THE MILITARY USE OF INDIANS 1775-7.

The argument presented so far has been that many northern Indian tribal groupings desired the opportunity to fight for the British in order to fight back against frontier settlers with whom they were engaged in a life or death struggle. The British perceived this motivation from the outset and attempted to utilize the Indians against the frontiers. That a frontier war did not materialize until late 1777 in the west and 1778 in the eastern theatre resulted from contradictions of viewpoint within the Imperial framework. Little mention has been made in this study about the use of Indians as auxiliaries to the regular forces, which, like the use of Indians as frontier raiders had a long tradition in the military history of Colonial North America. Indians were being used in this capacity at the same time as the debates among Imperial officials were taking place. In the period under consideration Indians were used entirely in this capacity.

But as can be deduced from the main argument, there is a clear paradox inherent in using the Indians as military auxiliaries, when the Indians themselves, not to mention British politicians, wanted to attack the frontiers. This point was made abundantly clear when the Mohawk warrior Joseph Brant addressed the following letter to his "Brothers of the Indians of the Nations of the Lake of Two Mountains":

You may depend on having your own way of making war. I do not think it right to let my brothers go to war under the command of General Carleton as General Carleton expects and trys to have the Indians under the same command as the regular troops, but it will be the best method for us to make war our own way.(1)

This letter is probably the single most instructive document concerning the Indian dimension to the American Revolution, particularly as Brant can be considered the most important figure in this regard. It is also of fundamental importance to understanding the British use of Indians as auxiliaries.

In many ways the Indians made very odd help mates for the regular forces. Their whole philosophy towards conduct in war was totally alien to Europeans. Women had a very great influence on an Iroquois war party and could in effect control it. Of particular importance was the fact that Indian warfare was of an individualistic nature, a complete contrast to the hierarchical obedience practiced by white people. As Graymont has pointed out, the Iroquois war chief ruled by persuasion if at all. That authority should differ so much was probably the result of a greater permissiveness in Iroquois society. As a result the Europeans who fought with the Indians looked on aghast at what seemed incredibly unreliable or fickle conduct on the part of their primitive allies.(2)

It was frequently contended at the time, and has been

(1) P.A.C., M.G.21, G2, B39, 360, Joseph Brant to my Brothers the Indians of the Lake of Two Mountains.

(2) Graymont, Iroquois, 21-2.

pointed out by numerous historians since, that the employment of Indians as auxiliaries to the main forces was an expensive waste. Burke, for example, in a long speech already mentioned, argued that the Indians were hopeless in a military capacity, hence there had to be more sinister motives in using them.

But such an argument assumes the absolute foolishness of those with military experience in North America. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that those with experience of American conditions were prepared to put up with the many faults of the Indians in order to gain the use of what they saw as their advantages. One must also be aware of the element of hypocrisy on the part of some critics of the use of Indians as auxiliaries. The Earl of Chatham could speak in the House of Lords in the most condemnatory of tones; the Indians, he said, "shock every sentiment of honour, they shock me as a lover of honourable war, and a detester of murderous barbarity."⁽¹⁾ Yet the very same Chatham had deemed it necessary to use the Indians in the Seven Years' War in the same capacity as the people he was now criticizing, as Tory critics pointed out. Lord Denbrough called Chatham the "great oracle with the short memory"⁽²⁾ and suggested view the army returns for the last war. The military were perfectly aware, for example, that the Indians in their small numbers, comparatively speaking, could never carry but heavy

(1) *Parl. Hist.*, Nov. 7, 1777, XIX, 369.

(2) *Ibid.*, Dec. 5, 1777, XIX, 511.

fighting; this had to be left to regulars. Nor could they participate in siege operations. But as auxiliaries they served a worthwhile purpose. As scouts they were skilful and adept at moving through difficult terrain. Moreover they were of assistance in ambushing or mopping up operations.

Apart from using the Indians as raiders in the Seven Years' War, the French employed the Indians as scouts and to help in intelligence work; in Eccles' view they proved "particularly useful."⁽¹⁾ Indeed, in August 1757, the French Indian commander, La Corne St Luc, successfully commanded Indians on the left flank of Montcalm's forces against St George. The resultant victory was probably the most striking from the French point of view in the entire conflict and contributed to St Luc being awarded the Knight of St Louis on January 1, 1758.⁽²⁾

But if one is searching for the crucial reason behind the perpetual use of the Indians by European powers in this capacity, the nature of the terrain in America and the problems Europeans had in combatting it is fundamental. General Gage had suggested using Indians during Pontiac's Revolt because he believed "they would doubtless do eminent service by preserving our troops from being surprised, and conducting them through the wood."⁽³⁾ And when the issue was debated in Parliament, those who defended the Government emphasized the problem on numerous occasions.

(1) Eccles, "French Forces", D.C.B., III, xviii.

(2) Tousignant, "La Corne St Luc", D.C.B., IV, 423.

(3) Gage, OPERA, II, 10, Gage to Halifax, Jan. 7, 1764.

Viscount Townsend, for example, said it was impossible to wage war without them "in a country as America covered in woods and intersected by rivers, lakes and morasses". Townsend pointed out that without Indians it might be possible for two armies "though a short space apart from each other, to know no more of each others whereabouts than if they were on opposite sides of the globe."⁽¹⁾ A junior officer, Lieutenant Thomas Amburey, who served in the Burgoyne expedition of 1777, reflected:

it is absolutely necessary to keep with them, for though there is such an amazing tract of country in possession of Europeans it is nothing when put in competition the unknown tract that extends westward...they are absolutely necessary in this woody country.(?)

It is necessary to examine the use made of Indians in each of the following instances: the American invasion of Canada in 1775, the British counterattack and subsequent pursuit of the Americans out of Canada in 1776, the St Leger diversionary campaign of 1777 and finally the invasion of the rebel Colonies by Burgoyne in 1777. As will soon become apparent, far greater weight is placed on the latter campaign partly because it represents the more interesting study, but also because more contemporary accounts were written by those who served with Burgoyne, so it is easier to present a picture of the Indian contribution. In each case an attempt will be made to identify the various Indian tribes who took part and assess the

(1) Parl. Hist., 18 Nov., 1777, XIX, 480.

(2) Thomas Amburey, With Burgoyne from Quebec, ed. Sydney Jackman, (Toronto, 1963), 126.

contribution and effectiveness of those groupings in the role in which they were cast.

The American invasion force left Crown Point on August 31, 1775. Led by General Philip Schuyler and Brigadier General Richard Montgomery, two thousand men pushed to attack the post at St John north of Lake Champlain, while a second force under Benedict Arnold moved up the Kennebec River through Maine to attack Quebec. (1) Carleton, as was shown earlier, had a quite desperate shortage of manpower, together with the additional problems caused by the fact that some elements of the population of Quebec were not hostile to the American cause.

The only Indians used in facing the American invasion belonged to the Seven Nations of Canada. As was noted in Chapter 3, it took much cajoling on the part of Johnson and Claus to bring them over to the British side. Nevertheless Guy Johnson noted in his journal the need to overcome "their apprehensions." (2) In short their response was lukewarm.

The Indians of this loose grouping do not follow the pattern of the western Indians or the Iroquois in reacting violently to white encroachment. These Canadian Indians, often referred to as the Domicilies, occupied, as Stanley has observed, the first Indian "reserves" in Canada. Because of this fact, and because there had never been the population pressure in Quebec that was

(1) Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers*, 106-110.

(2) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, 660, Journal of Col. G. Johnson from May to August 1775.

experienced in the Anglo-American colonies, these Indians lacked a fierce determination to strike out at the Americans. The two most important settlements were Caughnawaga and St Regis. The former were Indians of Iroquois origin who had moved to "the Praying Castle" on the St Lawrence, as that village was known, following persuasion by French Jesuit missionaries.(1) St Regis was settled in 1752 by members of the Caughnawaga.(2) There were other important members of the Seven Nations, but it was these villages which were approached in 1775. Because they lived adjacent to white settlements in Quebec they tended to be more civilized though they adhered to tribal customs such as the Iroquois idea of adopting prisoners. One consequence of this practice was to change their complexion owing to the infusion of New England blood.(3) But these Indians had proved fiercesome enough when used by the French in previous conflicts, and Sir William Johnson wrote of them in October 1773 that they "were allied to and are much regarded by the rest, are good warriors and have behaved well since they entered into alliance with us."(4) These Indians tended to view events from the perspective of a mercenary: they would fight for their presents or for the

(1) Stanley, "First Indian 'Reserves'", 200.

(2) *Ibid.*, 201.

(3) *Ibid.*, 203.

(4) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, W. Johnson to Tyron, Oct. 3, 1773.

winning side. They had been prepared to assist the British army in putting down Pontiac's Revolt in exchange for presents.(1)

On September 7, one thousand Americans landed in a swamp below St John ; the garrison there was in some peril until some Indian scouts attacked the Americans. Carleton estimated that the number of Indians involved was less than one hundred,(2) a number predominantly made up of the Caughnawaga but from Johnson's journal one can detect the presence of some Mohawks.(3) Both Johnson and Claus left accounts of this incident, and both claim the Indians repulsed two American assaults forcing the Americans to retire.(4) What seems undeniable from the available sources is that those Indians who participated felt they had been overburdened and determined to leave.(5) The Caughnawaga Indians then sent a delegation to seek terms from Montgomery; subsequently they promised neutrality in exchange for one thousand dollars.(6) Another result of the skirmish was the thwarting of the American invasion. The Americans were unable to take St John when they would have liked.

(1) J.P., IV, 200, Johnson to Colden, Sept. 20, 1763.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q11, 251, Carleton to Dartmouth, Sept. 21, 1775.

(3) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 661.

(4) Ibid.; P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 52-5, Memorandum by D. Claus on the rebel Invasion of Canada, 1775.

(5) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 661; P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 53-4, Memorandum.

(6) Ibid., Q13, 54.

and by the time it did fall on November 2, they had lost valuable time; the invasion was to flounder in the vicious Canadian climate. Some Indians never specified, but probably from St Regis or from other settlements of the Seven Nations, repulsed an American force under Ethan Allen, their service being acknowledged by Carleton. (1) Indians accompanied a force under Carleton to relieve St John towards the end of October. (2) After the Indians finally captured St John on November 2, all the Indians had departed and played no further role that year. (3)

There is thus little to say about the Indian dimension to British operations in 1775; little is said about the specific ways in which the Indians were used in the official correspondence, other than as auxiliaries. The campaign provided further evidence of the ambivalence of the Domicilies.

With regard to the 1776 campaign to expel the American invaders, it is also difficult to offer an exact picture of proceedings. The highlight concerning Indian usage was the engagement at the Cedars, a fortified point forty miles above Montreal. Here some four hundred Americans surrendered to a combined force of Americans and Indians under the command of a Captain Forster. There were about three hundred Indians and about a hundred whites. On 20th May an American relieving force of 120 men was captured by a force of eighty Indians and eighteen

(1) *Ibid.*, Q11, 267-9, Carleton to Dartmouth, Oct. 25, 1775.

(2) *Ibid.*, Q13, 56, Memorandum.

(3) *Ibid.*, Q11, 274, Carleton to Dartmouth, Oct. 25, 1775.

whites.(1) Forster decided to release the prisoners, numbering several hundred, owing to "the customs and manners of the savages in war."(2)

Throughout the summer Indians were used as auxiliaries, but in small numbers, unlike the affair at the Cedars.(3) And it is quite clear that Carleton preferred to use Indians in this way.(4) One junior officer who participated in that campaign was Lieutenant Digby. He writes how the Indians walked freely about the camp "coming into our tents without the least ceremony wanting brandy or rum, for which they will do anything, as their greatest pleasure is getting greatly intoxicated." They were painted "in a most frightful manner" and "when they give the war hoop and yell...they appear more like infernals than of the human kind."(5)

The scouting value of those Indians who served in 1776 is made clear by the following entry by Digby for October 8:

the wood was so thick round us, that some of our men were near losing themselves on struggling a small distance from camp, against which there were particular orders. It is surprising with what degree of

(1) *Ibid.*, Q12, 49, Carleton to Germain, May, 25, 1776; *Ibid.*, Q12, 51, Cramahé to Germain, May 25, 1776.

(2) *Ibid.*, Q12, 59, Captain Forster's agreement with the prisoners, May 26, 1776.

(3) P.A.C., M.G.21, G2, B39, 139, Carleton to Cramahé, Sept. 9, 1776.

(4) *Ibid.*, B39, 90, Carleton to Burgoyne, Aug. 5, 1776.

(5) William Digby, "The Journal of Lieutenant William Digby" in J.P. Baxter ed., *The British Invasion from the North*, (Albany, 1887), 120.

certainly an Indian will make his way from one country to another through the thickest of woods allowing the sun to be constantly hid from his sight by the clouds, where a person, not used to such a country, would soon be lost, and the more attempts made to extricate himself...would only serve to entangle him deeper.(1)

Earlier Digby had noted with disgust the apparent murder of two American soldiers after they had been captured.(2)

Again it is impossible to reach any worthwhile conclusions about the role of the Indians on this campaign other than note their worthy performance at the Cedars and the fact they did play a small role as auxiliaries to the regulars.

The campaigns of 1777 were the first to employ Indian peoples in an offensive capacity in the American Revolution in any numbers with the exception of the Cedars engagement. British strategy for 1777 contemplated the combined movement of three separate armies, those of Burgoyne up Lake Champlain and Lake George, of Colonel Barry St Leger down the Mohawk, a diversionary expedition, and of Howe up the Hudson. All three were to meet at Albany. The aim of the plan, which was drawn up by Burgoyne, but whose contents were in no way novel, was to split the New England colonies away from New York and the southern colonies.(3)

(1) Ibid., 125.

(2) Ibid., 136.

(3) An excellent recent discussion of the plan can be found in Richard J. Hargrove, General John Burgoyne, (Newark, 1983), Chap. 11. Hargrove rightly holds Germain responsible for the overall failure of this strategy since it was his duty to coordinate the campaigns. As is well known, Howe decided to move to Philadelphia rather than Albany.

On March 26, 1777, Carleton was ordered by the Secretary of State for the American Colonies, Lord George Germain, to recruit Indians for the offensive which, it was thought, was certain to bring a speedy end to the revolt. It was suggested that Burgoyne's force, and St Leger's, be so furnished.(1) Germain decided also remind Carleton that "the manifest utility which large parties of them must be to the army leaves no room to doubt but you will have exerted every means in your power to induce them to a general declaration in our favour.(2) Carleton decided to furnish the St Leger campaign with Indians he had "ordered" the previous year from Niagara and Lake Ontario, while Burgoyne's campaign was to be supported by Indians from the neighbourhood of Michilimackinac as well as the Canadian Domicilies.(3)

In fact the St Leger expedition was to be made up in the main of Indians. According to John Butler, the Indian department official stationed at Niagara, one thousand Iroquois, with the exception of the pro American Oneida and the virtually neutral Tuscarora tribes, contributed manpower.(4) The actual figure of those who took part however was somewhat less. Carleton wrote to Germain that some "western" Indians accompanied this force as

(1) P.A.C., M.G.21, G2, P37, Germain to Carleton, March 26, 1777.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 92, same to same, Aug. 22, 1776. However this letter did not reach Carleton until March 26, 1777.

(3) *Ibid.*, Q17, 112, Carleton to Germain, May 27, 1777.

(4) *Ibid.*, Q14, 145-b, Butler to Carleton, July 18, 1777.

well, but he never specified the tribes.(1)

The main objective for the St Leger expedition was to capture Fort Stanwix, which would then clear the way down the Mohawk and render a junction with Burgoyne's forces possible. But siege operations were something that the Indians were not qualified to carry out, as was suggested earlier, and it is thus not unfair to say that the campaign was fated to an ignominious end before it had started. Why this had never occurred to the planners of the operations is open to surmise.

But the expedition was fated in other ways too. Claus, who had recently returned from England with a commission signed by Germain for the Superintendency of the Indians on the St Leger campaign, ordered a spying mission to check out the fort on July 14. It was found to be strongly garrisoned by about six hundred men. The Americans, it seems, were aware of British intentions but St Leger decided to go ahead anyway underprepared.(2)

At the same time as Claus's efforts, Butler was having great difficulty in persuading a large number of Seneca to join the expedition. The latter felt unhappy at breaking a neutrality agreement signed with the Americans two years before. Butler attempted to bring them over first by argument, but the deciding factor was a huge shipment of presents which arrived during the third week of July.(3) What is of significance is that in

(1) Ibid., Q14, 13, Carleton to Germain, June 26, 1777.

(2) N.Y.C.D., VIII, 718-9, Claus to William Knox, Oct. 16, 1777.

(3) Graymont, *Illinois*, 122-3.

winning over these Seneca, Butler had not made clear the main objective of the campaign, namely to capture Fort Stanwix. According to Claus, whose extraordinary bias against Butler should be remembered at all times, many Indians did not even believe they were going on an expedition at all, but had turned up for a council and "all those that arrived at Oswego brought peltry and deer skins for trade." (1)

Moreover the underlying conflict between the Carleton and Johnson cliques took a final and rather bitter twist. John Butler heard that Claus had gained the Superintendency for the Six Nations on that campaign and wrote bitterly to Carleton how "the pleasure attending my success I have enjoyed by experiencing your excellency's approbation of my humble though unwearied endeavours and when at the last ... (I found) ... the success of my labours conferred on another." (2) Butler's sense of outrage merely reflected the degree to which Carleton had sunk in the Imperial framework owing to the efforts of Germain.

While St Leger laid plans for the siege of the fort, he received news that a force of Americans under Nicholas Herkimer was en route to relieve Fort Stanwix. Sir John Johnson, a son of Sir William, was put in charge of an operation to intercept

(1) P.A.C., M.G.19, F1, XIV, Pt1, 31, General Detail of Col. Claus's services.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q14, 145-6, Butler to Carleton, July 28, 1777.

Herkimer's forces. Four hundred Indians took part.(1)

Herkimer and his militia entered a well organised ambush and were totally decimated. According to St Leger four hundred Americans were killed,(2) while Claus estimated that five hundred had fallen.(3) Herkimer was one of this number. An ecstatic St Leger wrote rather over optimistically to Burgoyne that "the greatest victory was obtained...the militia will never rally."(4) Yet this stunning victory for the British was to result in the withdrawal of Six Nations participation in the campaign. According to St Leger, the Indians lost thirty three killed and twenty nine wounded.(5) Now superficially such a loss was minute in comparison to the carnage suffered by the Americans, but the effect on the Indian mentality was incalculable: by their standards, and owing to their small numbers relatively speaking, the Oriskany engagement represented nothing less than a catastrophe. St Leger wrote how after the Oriskany affair "the Indians grew furious and abandoned, seized upon the officers, liquor and clothes and in spite of the efforts of the servants, and became more formidable than the

(1) *Ibid.*, Q14, 135-6, St Leger to Carleton, Aug. 27, 1777; P.A.C., M.G.19, XIV, Pt.1, 31, General Detail.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q14, 223, St Leger to Burgoyne, Aug. 11, 1777.

(3) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, 721, Claus to Knox, Oct. 26, 1777.

(4) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q14, 223, St Leger to Burgoyne, Aug. 11, 1777.

(5) *Ibid.*, Q14, 237, St Leger to Carleton, Aug. 27, 1777.

enemy we had to expect." (1)

The Indian dimension to the diversionary campaign was thus not a success. Asked to carry out an operation for which they were unqualified, the campaign fizzled out following the Oriskany debacle (from the Indian perspective). Nevertheless John Butler could write following Oriskany:

I should not do justice to the Indians was I not to acquaint you with their behaviour in the action...it...exceeded anything I could have expected from them...the success of this day will plainly show the utility of your Excellency's constant support of my unwearied endeavours to conciliate to His Majesty so serviceable a body of allies. The Indians showed the greatest zeal for His Majesty's cause. (2)

From the Iroquois point of view the campaign was disastrous for reasons other than casualties: Oriskany witnessed the collapse of their Confederacy and the start of civil strife. In their rage, some pro British Iroquois attacked and burnt the Oneida settlement of Oriska in revenge for help rendered by that tribe to the Americans. As Barbara Graymont has observed: "thereafter the lines would become more sharply drawn and the majority of the Confederacy would ally themselves with one or the other warring white nations." (3)

The purpose of the St. Leger expedition was to act as a diversion to Burgoyne's campaign, probably the most crucial of

(1) *Ibid.*, Q14, 142.

(2) *Ibid.*, Q14, 154, Butler to Carleton, Aug. 14, 1777.

(3) Graymont, *Iroquois*, 142.

the war. In his "Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada", Burgoyne wrote that the expedition would require "one thousand or more savages."⁽¹⁾ The plan was then submitted to George III, who personally abbed that. "Indians must be employed and this measure must be avowedly directed."⁽²⁾ The actual figure of those Indians who were employed was somewhat less than Burgoyne's wishes. Carleton reported that "above five hundred warriors" joined Burgoyne's forces at Crown Point, the initial staging post. They were made up of the Indians of St Regis, Sault St Louis, Lake of Two Mountains, and St Francis and the Hurons."⁽³⁾ An anonymous junior officer who accompanied Burgoyne noted in his diary the arrival at their camp of Indians from "Caughnawaga, St Regis and St Francis on the St Lawrence."⁽⁴⁾ Thus the main force was made up of familiar tribes who had

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 28, Thoughts, 28 Feb., 1777.

(2) De Fontblanque, Episodes, 487.

(3) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 188, Carleton to Germain, June 26, 1777. Sault St Louis is the French name for Caughnawaga.

(4) For Want of a Horse, 98. The Indians of St Francis were probably fighting for the first time in the Revolution. Unlike the settlements at Caughnawaga and St Regis these Indians were not Iroquois but Abenaki. They had a formidable history as raiders for the French against the Anglo-American colonies. It was as a result of this potency that the British had led a raid of reprisal against them during the Seven Years' War. Because of this, these Abenaki cannot be considered a major force. They were probably very distrustful of the British as well. The "Hurons" probably refer to those remnants of the former Huron Confederacy who chose to live under French protection.

already displayed quite dismal application for the fight. That the Caughnawaga should see fit to join the British having already left one expedition early and having negotiated a neutrality agreement with the Americans merely demonstrates their attitudes towards this conflict. Though not the number he was seeking, Burgoyne thought this "a good body of Indians."⁽¹⁾

In July Burgoyne's party was joined by some western Indians, those Carleton had collected from Michilimackinac. It is impossible to give a precise tribal breakdown; one junior officer noted the arrival of some "Ottawas",⁽²⁾ therefore they were probably from the Ottawa Confederacy. Certainly they included among their number fifteen Potawatomi;⁽³⁾ presumably there were some Ojibway as well. There were also some Sauk and Fox Indians present.⁽⁴⁾

Before examining the use made of the Indians by Burgoyne it is worth attempting to assess the conduct of the two broad sets of Indians. The Seven Nations seem to have maintained the standards they set on their previous two campaigns. In July Burgoyne was complaining to Germain that these Indians were plundering around Ticonderoga and longed for his western Indian

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 108, Burgoyne to Germain, May 16, 1777.

(2) Eor Want of a Horse, 123.

(3) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 327, De Peyster to Carleton, June 13, 1777.

(4) Ibid., Q13, 327, same to same, June 17, 1777.

allies who had yet to arrive.(1) As will be seen the Indians serving with Burgoyne began to filter away during August. Carleton noted with alarm the return of these Indians to Québec especially when he discovered they were conferring with the rebels.(2) The Governor was determined to ascertain the reason behind their problems and used a Jesuit priest named Pere Huguet as a go-between.(3) A week later Carleton arranged a further distribution of presents and decided to attend an Indian council where the presents were to be given and their services acknowledged. They were to be asked to attend the following year.(4) What seems certain therefore is that the Domicilies were affording yet more evidence of their infidelity and rank indifference to a conflict in which they had little stake.

As for his western Indian allies, Burgoyne had altogether different problems; these Indians represent an altogether different category to the Domicilies. These Indians, who had a reputation for ferocity, also did not stay the course of the campaign, most of them leaving following a disagreement with Burgoyne when the latter attempted to institute greater control over them. Lieutenant Digby looked on with amazement at their arrival:

we were joined by a very numerous nation of
Indians from the Ottawas and who surpassed

(1) *Ibid.*, Q13, 348, Burgoyne to Germain, July 17, 1777.

(2) P.A.C., M.G.21, G2, B39, 680-1, Foy to Maclean, Aug 21, 1777.

(3) *Ibid.*, B39, Foy to Huguet, Aug.21, 1777.

(4) *Ibid.*, B39, Carleton to Maclean, Aug. 28, 1777.

all others I had seen in size and appearance when assembled in Congress, which was well worth seeing, they being painted in their usual style and decked out with feathers of a variety of birds and skins of wild beasts slain by them as trophies of their courage.(1)

As will be seen Burgoyne made great efforts to control his Indians, but such controls proved useless in this instance. These western Indians arrived under the command of Charles Langlade on July 20.(2) A mere three days later, Burgoyne lamented in his Orderly Book how "great enormities (had) been committed at different times upon the people of the country"; as a result he felt it necessary to keep them on transport ships from Skenesbough to Fort Anne.(3) On July 27, Indians from this group wreaked enormous havoc; John Allen and his large family were murdered, an act followed up by the more well known murder of Jane McCrae, a New York Tory engaged to a British Officer.(4) Those serving with Burgoyne were shocked; a junior officer noted in his diary how "one of the Ottawan savages thro' jealousy and spite most inhumanely scalped a young woman about seventeen years

(1) Digby, "Journal", 228-9.

(2) Hargrove, Burgoyne, 151. Charles Langlade possessed enormous experience in Indian affairs. Like his colleague St Luc, he had worked for the French but had offered his services to the British following the French withdrawal. Of mixed blood, Langlade lived and worked among the Ottawa.

(3) John Burgoyne, Orderly Book of John Burgoyne from his Entry into the State of New York until his Capture at Saratoga, ed. Edmund B. O'Callaghan, (Albany, 1869), 47-8.

(4) Don Higginbotham, The War of American Independence, (New York, 1971), 191, 201.

of age upon a dispute about whose property she was.(1) The not inconsiderable repercussions of this affair will be considered later.

The McCrae affair was to end the western Indians' participation in the campaign. Following the incident Burgoyne was determined to prevent further outrages; he insisted that each Indian patrol be accompanied by a white officer. Such a situation proved unsatisfactory to these Indians and on August 4 Burgoyne called a council after St Luc, the officer commanding them, had reported discontents. Burgoyne was told that the Indians had had enough. Indeed they had because the next day saw their departure.(2)

Carleton had also attempted to furnish Burgoyne's expedition with Six Nations Indians as well, once the expedition ran into severe problems in September. Carleton asked John Butler at Niagara to raise as many of these Indians as possible in an attempt to assist Burgoyne's stuttering campaign.(3) But he was too late; Butler replied in December that he would have tried to join Burgoyne himself with some Six Nations Indians "but before I could collect a body necessary for such an attempt, we received the fate of the army."(4) After the St. Leger expedition fizzled out, Joseph Brant, according to Claus, on his own initiative of

(1) For Want of a Horse, 123.

(2) Burgoyne, A State of the Expedition from Canada, (London, 1780), Narrative, 129, and the Evidence of the Earl of Harrington, 65-6.

(3) P.A.C., M.G.21, G2, B18, Carleton to Butler, Sept. 16, 1777.

(4) Ibid., B96-2, Butler to Carleton, Dec. 14, 1777.

course, forced his way through Mohawk country to Burgoyne's camp with some Iroquois warriors, (1) but he returned because in Claus's words "finding he could be of little service finding that army mismanaged." (2) This account receives some confirmation from a junior officer who noted Brant's arrival on August 28: "an Indian chief arrived in camp from Lt Colonel St Ledger's. The Indian chief above mentioned was two or three years in England (and) is a sensible man." (3) Thus an Iroquois demension to Burgoyne's force never materialized. It is difficult to offer an exact figure of all the Indians who served in Burgoyne's campaign but a figure of between six and seven hundred is likely. Carleton himself refused to estimate the number because, as he told Germain, it was difficult to estimate the numbers since "parties being continually leaving and retiring, as their humour leads them." (4)

Thus Burgoyne's Indians did not serve the entire campaign. The least fruitful investment from the British point of view was the role of the western Indians who stayed less than two weeks. The majority of the Indians, the Domicilies, appear to have first asked to leave in early August. Major General Riedesel, the German mercenary hired by the British, records that the

(1) P.A.C., M.G. 19, F1, II, 58.

(2) *Ibid.*, II, 59.

(3) *For Want of a Horse*, 139.

(4) P.A.C., M.G. 11, C.O. 42, QJ3, 188, Carleton to Germain, June 26, 1777.

Indians asked permission to return home in order to gather in their harvest.(1) This preposterous state of affairs was agreed to by Burgoyne. However it seems that the great part of Burgoyne's force left following an engagement at Bennington, an attempt to capture supplies which failed dismally with great loss of life. According to the Earl Of Harrington, when questioned on the Indians by a committee of enquiry investigating the endless catalogue of disaster the following year, the Indians left at various times after Bennington.(2)

But there is evidence that the whole Indian dimension to Burgoyne's campaign was poorly managed. Indian affairs, as was stressed in Chapter 1, was an extremely complex and delicate business. Yet this vital department had been placed in the hands of two British officers, Major John Campbell and Captain Alexander Frazer. The latter was to look after the western Indians and the former the Canadian Indians.(3) Frazer had been

(1) Friedrich Von Riedesel, The Memoirs, Letters and Journals of Major General Von Riedesel during his residence in America, ed. Max Von Eelking, (Albany, 1867), I, 134. Graymont has noted how this demonstrates the extent to which these Indians were semi civilized as a result of living among white people. It was inconceivable for warriors of the Iroquois of the Six Nations to labour in the fields. Iroquois, 152.

(2) Burgoyne, State Evidence of the Earl of Harrington, 75. The foraging expedition to Bennington, which was hopelessly undermanned, resulted from Burgoyne's mistaken decision to advance to Albany through the forests at Skenesborough rather than follow the longer route around Lake George. See Hargrove, BURGOYNE, Chap. 15.

(3) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, 013, Burgoyne to Germain, July 11, 1777.

detached from his regiment to deal with the Indians.(1) What seems certain is that neither possessed the sort of experience in handling Indian affairs that one associates with the Department under Johnson. In fact neither even understood the native languages, a prerequisite for successful dealings with the Indians. Indeed Burgoyne himself admitted this when he came to defend his campaign: "their ignorance of the languages...rendered them of no weight in Indian councils."(2) Why this state of affairs should have come about is unclear, though it is not put of step with much of the management of the campaign generally.(3) Claus and Putler, who did possess the necessary expertise, both assisted the St. Ledger campaign. Nevertheless there were other Indian department officials who were not called upon. The apparent inadequacy of the two British officers is reinforced by an attack on Alexander Frazer by the biased Claus. Writing in November he pointed out that "(he)...as I am told, is one of the gentlemen, who by their harsh treatment of the Indians, were the occasion of the greatest part of them to quit General Burgoyne's army."(4)

This evidence, which clearly would suggest a considerable

(1) Hadden, *Journal*, 78.

(2) Burgoyne, *State*, 130-1.

(3) This aspect comes over well in the memoirs of General Riedesel's wife, who accompanied her husband in America. Friederike Von Riedesel, *Baroness Von Riedesel and the American Revolution: Journal and Correspondence of a Tour of Duty*, ed. M.L. Brown, (Chapel Hill, 1965).

(4) *N.Y.C.D.*, VIII, 726, Claus to W. Knox, Oct. 26, 1777.

degree of mismanagement, is buttressed by an account given by St Luc. Following the Saratoga debacle, Burgoyne, eager to divert criticism and ridicule onto others, criticized St Luc publically in Parliament, accusing him of deserting his force as well as numerous other misdeeds. Now, obviously the circumstances of this attack should be borne in mind; back in July, for example, Burgoyne had called St Luc "a gentleman of honour and parts."⁽¹⁾ In October 1778, St Luc entered the public debate and recriminations that followed Saratoga, by publishing a long letter which was published in the London newspapers in which he defended himself from Burgoyne's attacks. The following section, which refers to the Bennington fiasco, is instructive:

...the Indians, astonished, and unaccustomed to your grand manœuvres, having observed that you detached no corps to collect the remains of the two scattered detachments at Bennington, and to succour those that were wounded, and in part perishing...This indifference towards the Indians also, who had served in the affair at Bennington, who amounted to one hundred and fifty, disgusted them; many of whom with their grand chief were killed.⁽²⁾

Even when one allows for the inherent bias, this description is not too much out of line with the other available evidence for the campaign; in particular it would help explain the Earl of Harrington's contention that the Indians left at different times after Bennington.

More generally Bennington was an engagement in which the

(1) See note 78.

(2) Quoted in Hadden, *Journal*, Appendix 17, 531.

Indians were forced into a stand up fight; it highlighted a mode of warfare which the Indians were ill-equipped to handle, and this determined their attitude which, as has been constantly stressed, was never especially keen anyway. Riedesel remarked in his memoirs that the ultimate reason for the Indian discontent was the conventions of warfare, and that such reasons as returning to collect the harvest were mere pretexts to leave."(1) Lieutenant Amburey, whose diary demonstrates that he thought deeply about the Indians with whom he was serving, elaborated on this theme: "...an Indian's idea of warfare consists of never fighting in an open field...for they consider this method as unworthy for an able warrior."(2) Bennington should be seen in this light.(3)

The problem that now needs to be answered is whether the Indians played any worthwhile role in the weeks before they left the expedition. Certainly, the available diaries and memoirs of those who accompanied them suggests that they did. Amburey throughout his journal constantly remarks about their expertise in combatting the difficult terrain and their scouting functions:

(1) Riedesel, *Memoirs*, I, 135.

(2) Amburey, *With Burgoyne*, 127.

(3) While it is difficult to reach firm conclusions about the Indian participation at Bennington, it seems their performance was not especially noteworthy. Lieutenant Hadden wrote: "...the Indians to a man...ran away at first and got safe in to us...The Canadians were among the first who got in, and scarce making a stop at the army their panic made them proceed to Canada, where they were followed by most of the Indians. (Hadden, *Journal*, 111).

"they are absolutely necessary in this woody country."(1) The following passage deserves quotation at length being suggestive as to the value of the Indians as scouts:

...they are of essential service in either defending or invading a country, being extremely skillful in the art of watching and surprising the enemy...scouts are sent out on every side to reconnoitre the country, and beat up every place that they suspect an enemy can lie concealed. Two of the principal things that enable them to find out their enemies is the smoke of their fires, which they smell at a vast distance, and their tracks in the discovery and distinguishing of which they are possessed of a sagacity equally astonishing, for they will be discerned by the footsteps, that to us would appear extremely confused, nearly the number of men and the length of time they passed; this latter circumstance was confirmed to me by an officer who has been superintending their tribes. Being upon a scout with them, they discerned some footsteps, when the Indians told him that seven or eight people had passed that way and only two or three days since: they had not gone far before they came to a plantation with a house upon it, and as is the custom of the Indians, ran up to it and surprised a scouting party of the Americans, consisting of seven who had come there overnight.(2)

Another junior officer frequently records in his diary how throughout July and early August, Indian advance scouting raids were returning with scalps.(3) Burgoyne used Indians in an attempt to establish contact with the St Leger campaign down the

(1) Ibid., 93.

(2) Ibid., 127.

(3) For Want of a Horse, 127ff.

Mohawk.(1) Thus it can be argued that whatever the failings of the Indians on this campaign, there are grounds for concluding that Indians did in fact provide a worthwhile service.

Moreover once the Indians had departed it seems certain they were missed. General Riedesel explains one way in which their services were missed towards the end of August:

...as the Indians were used as guards at the outposts, the rebels hardly ever dared to come near them, well knowing that the wild men were very cunning and their eyes and ears very acute. This proved by the fact that as soon as they had left, the enemy began to molest the outposts and become very troublesome.(2)

Indeed Riedesel remarks how it was necessary to train a special company to take the place of the Indians after Bennington:

...meanwhile the Americans troubled the outposts more and more. A few men who had strayed beyond them were captured, and, on the first of September, an outpost of twenty Canadians and provincials was taken directly on Frazer's front. To put a stop to these proceedings and replace the Indians in some measure, General Frazer, on September 2, issued an order that one non-commissioned officer and sixteen men should be furnished by each regiment to form a corps...(3)

Thus the Indians were considered by Riedesel at least to serve a useful purpose as marksmen.

Burgoyne however had another motive for using Indians: he believed that the mere threat of Indian usage would terrorize the

(1) See note 3, p. 148.

(2) Riedesel, *Memoirs*, I, 135.

(3) *Ibid.*

New York populace into submission and bring the uncommitted over to the British side. With this in mind on June 30, the day before his expedition was to set off, the idiosyncratic British General issued the following proclamation offering the rebellious colonists one final opportunity to abandon their struggle or face the consequences:

The consciousness of Christianity, my Royal Master's clemency, and the hour of soldiership, I have dwelt upon this invitation and wished for more persuasive terms to give it impression...I have but to give stretch to the Indian forces under my direction (and they amount to thousands) to overtake the hardened enemies of Great Britain and America. I consider them the same wherever they may lurk. If notwithstanding these endeavours, and sincere inclinations to effect them, the phrenzy of hostility should remain, I trust I shall stand acquitted in the eyes of God and men...and executing the vengeance of the state against the wilful outcasts. The messengers of justice and wrath await them in the field: and devastation, famine and every concomitant horror that a reluctant but indispensable prosecution of military duty must occasion, will bar the way to their return.(1)

In fact it is clear that Burgoyne meant this thoroughly absurd manifesto only as propaganda. One can hardly fail to reach negative conclusions about Burgoyne's capabilities given that he should be issuing such nonsense when he had numerous more pressing issues such as logistics to deal with. Later of course Burgoyne had to account for his actions; he told the House of Commons "the design was to execute obedience first by the encouragement and next by the dread not the commission of

(1) Hadden, *Journal*, 59-62.

severity - to speak of daggers not to use them." (1) And Burgoyne did take measures to stop exactly the sort of carnage he was promising. However the effect of the proclamation was to create a great stir both in London and more importantly in the Thirteen Colonies. It was seized upon with a mixture of ridicule, dismay and genuine concern.

In England a particularly venomous line is to be found in the writings of the irreverent Horace Walpole, who took especial pleasure in attacking Burgoyne. (2) Describing the manifesto as "a rhodomontade in which he threatens to cross America with a hop, step and a jump", (3) he suggested, in a more serious vein that "his manifesto to the revolted colonies, penned with such threats of arms that would expose him to derision if he lost and diminish the lustre of his success if he achieved any." (4) The reaction which followed in the Colonies confirmed Walpole's first prognosis.

Writing to Burgoyne in July, Burgoyne said that his

(1) *Parl. Hist.*, May 28, 1778, XIX, 1193.

(2) Walpole, who was incidentally the Godfather of General Gates, Burgoyne's opposite number, held a grudge against Burgoyne, having felt he had been slighted when Burgoyne overlooked a nephew of his, Michael Glover, *General Burgoyne in Canada and America*, (London, 1976), preface.

(3) Horace Walpole, *The Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. Peter Cunningham, (London, 1893), VI, 464.

(4) Walpole, *The Last Diaries of Horace Walpole*, ed. Francis Stuart, (London, 1858), II, 41.

manifesto had had "great effect" in the colonies.(1) Indeed it had but hardly the kind that Burgoyne would have wished. What it did was to directly contribute to the growth of the American forces what were ultimately to strangle Burgoyne at Saratoga. Far from acting as a deterrent, as Burgoyne had naively believed, New England volunteers joined General Gates' forces, determined to enlist under their fellow New Englander. Burgoyne had to be stopped in order to prevent him from carrying out the havoc he was promising them. Now when one adds to this the stories of atrocities committed by Burgoyne's Indians, real in the case of Jane McCrae for example, but greatly exaggerated, this particular aspect of Burgoyne's strategy assumed quite disastrous consequences.

The manifesto also produced considerable counterblast including an amusing parody by Francis Hopkison, of which the following is an excerpt dealing with Burgoyne's Indian menace:

Most high, most mighty, most puissant and sublime general...And we ungratefully refuse the proffer'd blessing? To restore the rights of the constitution you have called together an amiable host of savages and turned them loose to scalp our women and children, and lay our country waste. This they have done with their usual skill and clemency and we yet remain insensitive of the benefit and goodness...forbear to denounce vengeance against us. Forbear to give a stretch to those restorers of constitutional rights, the Indian forces under your direction. Let not the messengers of justice and wrath await us in the field, and devastation, famine and every concomitant horror bar our return to the allegiance of a Prince, who, by his Royal

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13 370, Burgoyne to Germain, July 11, 1777.

will, would deprive us of every blessing of life with all possible clemency.(1)

There was also a parody of a more light hearted nature which was published in the New York Journal; some of its best lines deal with the Indian threat:

If any should be so hardened be
As to expect impunity
Because Procul a fulmine,
I will let loose the dogs of hell
Ten thousand Indians, who shall yell,
And foam and tear, and grin and roar,
And drench their maccssins in gore;
To these I'll give full scope and play
From Ticonderog to Florida,
They'll scalp your heads, and kick your shins,
And rip your guts, and flay your skins,
And of your ears be nimble droppers
And make your thumbs tobacco stoppers.
(2)

In fact Burgoyne's predicament was ironic; he had a terror weapon at his disposal, one capable of wreaking great havoc yet he was determined to ensure that there would not be the kind of outrages he was promising the colonists. For this reason the General issued an even more remarkable manifesto to his Indian allies via an interpreter:

The restraint you have put upon your resentment in waiting for the king your father's call to arms... Go forth in the might of your valour and your cause... Be it the task from your dictates of your religion, the laws of your warfare, and the principles and the interest of our policy to regulate your passions when they overbear; to point out where it is noble to spare than to revenge; to disseminate degrees of guilt, to suspend

(1) Quoted in F.J. Huddleston, Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne, (Indianapolis, 1927), 147-151.

(2) Quoted in Ibid., 151-2.

the uplifted stroke, to chastise and not destroy.(1)

Later in his speech he made a specific set of requirements concerning the conduct of the Indians:

I positively forbid bloodshed when you are not opposed in arms. Aged women, and children and prisoners must be held sacred from the scalping knife or the hatchet, even in the time of actual conflict. You shall receive compensation for the prisoners you take, but shall be called to account for scalps.(2)

Later in this ludicrous speech to his primitive allies Burgoyne allowed the Indians to take the scalps of the dead "in conformity and indulgence of your customs."(3) When news of this speech reached London it was received with a response not dissimilar to that of his other proclamation. Horace Walpole wrote "he was willing to deal with them for the scalps of the dead being a fine and distinguished judge between the scalp taken from a dead person and the head of a person that dies of being scalped."(4)

Apart from his dramatic speeches, the means used by Burgoyne for controlling the Indians was to place them under the command of an officer. But the following dispatch demonstrates that such a situation was far from ideal:

If under the management of their conductors

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, 291-3, Speech of Lt. General John Burgoyne to the Indians in Congress at the Camp upon the River Boquet, June 21, 1777.

(2) Ibid., Q13, 294-5.

(3) Ibid., Q13, 295.

(4) Walpole, Letters, VII, 26.

they are indulged...in all the caprices and humours of spoiled children, like them they grow more unreasonable and importunate upon every new favour. Were they left to themselves, enormities too horrid to think of would ensue, guilty and innocent, women and children, would be a common prey.(1)

But by placing such restrictions on his Indians Burgoyne was getting the worst of all worlds; this was not the type of warfare the Indians wanted to wage, hence their undistinguished behaviour; but, given the record of Indian warfare, it was inevitable that some outrages would occur, a point implicitly recognised by Burgoyne when he came to defend himself before the House of Commons.(2) The McCrae case was the atrocity which had the most dramatic consequences. Much ink has been spilled by American historians on this issue:(3) the significance of the affair, however, lies in its dramatic propaganda potential.

Atrocity stories are all part of psychological warfare, and in this the Americans were far more successful than the completely inept Burgoyne. General Gates, Burgoyne's opposite number who had only assumed command of the American forces in

(1) P.A.C., M.G.11, C.O.42, Q13, Burgoyne to Germain, July 11, 1777.

(2) *Parl. Hist.*, May 26, 1778, XIX, 1199.

(3) There is some evidence to suggest that Miss McCrae was shot by the Americans who were pursuing the Indians who had taken her, and that the Indians scalped her after her death. See W.L. Stone, *The Campaign of Lt. General John Burgoyne and the Expedition of Lt. Colonel Barry St. Leger*, (Albany, 1877), 302-313. The Americans put out the story that McCrae had been killed by the Indians. The American view is to be found in the accounts left by British officers. See Digby, "Journal", 235-7; *For Want of a Horse*, 123.

August, made much of the affair. He wrote a long reproachful letter to Burgoyne about it of which the following is but a sample:

The miserable fate of Miss McCrae was particularly aggravated by her being dressed to receive her promised husband; but met her murderers employed by you. Upward of one hundred men, women and children have perished at the hands of ruffians to whom it is asserted, you have paid the price of blood.(1)

This letter with its exaggerations is symbolic of the affair and its wider implications. In fact Burgoyne answered Gages's accusations: "respecting Miss McCrae her fall wanted not the tragic display you laboured to give it...it is sincerley abhorred and lamented by me, as it can possibly be by the tenderest of her friends."(2) But the damage had been done.

The McCrae episode is so important because it appeared to demonstrate that Burgoyne was indeed carrying out what he had promised in his manifesto with the result that the American determination to stop him at all costs was increased. Sergeant Roger Lamb wrote: "the terror excited by the Indians, instead of disposing the inhabitants to court British protection, had a contrary effect."(3)

But Burgoyne was beaten at his own game; the Americans were astute in using the Indian question for their own propaganda purposes outside the colonies. A letter appeared in the London

(1) Lamb, Journal, 155-7.

(2) Hargrove, Burgoyne, 152.

(3) Lamb, Journal, 145.

Chronicle for October 7-9, 1777, alleged to have been written by an American officer dated July 12, 1777, and said to have been published in the Providence Gazette for July 20 that year. The following is a sample:

The horrid barbarity of our cruel enemies in the pursuit is what you have no idea of. To give you one instance of it will be sufficient to make your humanity shudder...They carried the poor gentleman to their camp, and stripping him naked, tied him to a tree and made a great fire near him; they then took pieces of the pitch pine and making incisions in his flesh with the points of their scalping knives, stuck them in...so that his body looked like a lared fowl, and setting them on fire the boiling rasin ran down as they burned into his wounds. The anguish of the poor man can hardly be described, and to prevent the English soldiers from being shocked by his cries, these children of Satan kept dancing and whooping round him while the pine splinters were burning.(1)

The genuineness of this letter is very questionable; it is not, for example, to be found in the Providence Gazette from where it was supposed to have come. Dr Benjamin Franklin wrote a number of fictitious letters for effect, and plausible enough to deceive; at least initially. This story of torture, which is in fact a reasonable description of the sorts of tortures practiced by northern Indians, was bound to shock enlightened civilized opinion. Franklin was the American minister at the French court at this time, and the Americans were desperately anxious to enlist the aid of the French monarch on behalf of the Colonies. The more likely purpose of this letter therefore, which

(1) Quoted in Hadden, Journal, Appendix 17, note e.

faults that were well known; yet the Indians were employed in the full knowledge of their weaknesses. It would be odd if one did not find such evidence. What is undeniable is that many of the Indians employed were not too keen to participate in this type of warfare; Indians, such as the Ottawas who helped Burgoyne and the Six Nations who made up St Leger's forces, would rather have been employed against the frontiers. But they did not have to wait long for their chance. Guerrilla style raids were to commence in the fall of 1777. Generally however it is hard to accept the verdict of those historians who feel the use of Indians as auxiliaries not to have been worthwhile; were that the case it is hardly likely that such great effort and expense would be taken to employ the Indians in this capacity in the war of 1812.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion it can be contended that the employment of northern Indians by the British, and the Indian appreciation of the Revolution complemented each other well. Many Northern Department Indians greatly desired the opportunity to fight against American frontier communities in a war of revenge and retribution. The Indian dimension to the American Revolution can justifiably be considered a race war which particularly manifested itself in the period 1778-83 in two theatres. Because of the nature of this struggle the Indians were more willing to fight against the frontiers as raiders than serve as auxiliaries to the regular British forces although there was to be a place for both these roles. Clearly however not all northern Indians were fighting for such clear cut motives: Indians, such as the Seven Nations of Canada, fought for presents, and played one side against the other. As a result many of the Indians who served with the British forces demonstrated a distinct antipathy for the fight.

For the British, Indians were employed because they provided a useful service to the regular forces as auxiliaries, a role in which they demonstrated expertise for Burgoyne, but more especially because the Indians could be "unleashed" against the frontiers in a ruthless guerrilla-style war. Those Imperial officials who dealt with Indian affairs, the Commander-in-Chief of the British army, Gage, Lieutenant Governor Hamilton, Indian Superintendent Guy Johnson and his deputy Daniel Claus, were all

fully aware of Indian hatred for the frontier settler and sought to exploit it as effectively as possible. Such attitudes were reported back to Whitehall which sanctioned such a policy. That a frontier race war did not materialize in the period under consideration was because of dissent within the Imperial edifice on the part of the Governor of Quebec, Carleton, who was ultimately responsible for the Indians in the boundaries of Quebec. In 1776, the Secretary of State for the American Colonies, Germain, ensured that a frontier war would take place because raids against the back settlements seemed to him an apt weapon to use against the rebels. It has been argued by Sosin, for example, that "as far as the British Government, and most of the men who executed its policy was concerned, there was to be no terrorism on the frontier." (1) On the contrary, Indians were used precisely to incite terror.

However this marriage of convenience between the British Government and its primitive allies had an air of treachery about it. Although the British were keen to hold before the Indians the incentive that they were indeed fighting for their very existence and that by helping the British they would serve that end, in practice they were fighting for no such thing. The British never recognised Native Sovereignty over land but rather occupancy of the land at their discretion. This position was deliberately held back from the Indians. As the aborigines were to discover when they heard the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, they

(1) Sosin, "Use of Indians", 120.

had been fighting for no cause at all.

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