

Document Two

Reply to the Above Memorandum by John A. Macdonald

The Reed memorandum, including the comments by Dewdney, was forwarded to the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Lawrence Vankoughnet. He in turn transmitted the document, along with an edited version of the original, to John A. Macdonald, the Prime Minister and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. Macdonald responded by writing comments on the left hand margin of the edited copy of the memorandum. For the most part, these comments consisted of one-word and sometimes single-phrase endorsements of each of the recommendations. But they also included two substantive references which, like the Reed memorandum itself, very much underscored the extent to which control and manipulation figured into the administration of Indian Affairs:

I agree with Mr. Reed's suggestion that the Tribal system should be broken up as soon as possible--so that each individual Indian may be dealt with instead of through the Chiefs. This must be done carefully--so so that the Chiefs may not be able to rouse a hostile feeling among their Indians ag[ains]t the Dep[artmen]t.

Mr. Dewdney remarks that the pass system could be generally introduced safely. If so it is in the highest degree desirable. As to disloyal Bands this should be carried out as the consequence of their disloyalty. The system should be introduced in the loyal Bands as well & the advantage of the changes pressed upon them. But no punishment for breaking bounds can be inflicted & in case of resistance on the grounds of Treaty rights should not be insisted on.

[Source: PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3710, File 19, 550-3]

