

1867

And better Cultivated, with the prospect of raising grain for surplus. Houses and barns are being built, and other improvements made, corresponding with their gradually advancing condition.

"Considerable attention is now being given to the rearing of Cattle and horses. Indeed I may say, that all domestic animals are better cared for than formerly. The essential attributes of Civilization in all its branches, it may be said in short, are now in actual progress among your red Brethren in Western New York.

"The timely aid of your Society in the prolongation of the day schools of the Cattaraugus and Alleghany Reservations for their full winter terms, during last winter was gratefully received. There is no longer any opposition by any portion of the people to the education of our Children: all are doing what they can to have their Children learn to read and write in the English Language" *

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs in his report to Congress for last year says in relation to the New York Indians: "For the most part these people are industrious and intelligent in the care of their farms and succeed in making a fair living by their labor. Of many of them it may be said they are not surpassed by the Whites, in the care and diligence with which they pursue their business, or the success which crowns their efforts, as may be seen at the Annual Agricultural Fair which have been instituted among them.

"These Indians exhibit a great interest in the education of their Children, and as their location is such as to give them the benefit of the Common School System of the State of New York they are not slow to avail themselves of the privilege, there being 23 Schools among them containing 872 Scholars out of a population of 4,000 - a larger proportion of Scholars to the total population than obtains in most White Communities. The health of the people has generally been good during the past year, and notwithstanding the ravages of the small-pox among the Tonawandas, by which 44 persons died, the aggregate number of births in the agency has exceeded the deaths" † so that the whole population is increasing.

† Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1866, page 60.

* Letter from Nathaniel J. Strong to the Secretary of the Committee on the Indian Concerns of Baltimore N. M. dated 10th Mo. 1st. 1867

1867

The Governor of the State of New York in his last annual Message to the Legislature says "These Indians in the State of New York living upon reservations, have steadily increased in population for the last 25 years, without being indebted to immigration for the result. This growth of the Aboriginal race is opposed to the theory of their final extinction: and their gradual improvement in intelligence and thrift even induces the hope that whenever they shall have conformed to the usages of Civilized people in respect to the Marriage relation, they will be prepared to receive their lands now held in common, as individual property, and the principal of their annuities. The motives which incite men to acquire wealth and inheritance for their families, would then operate in them with appropriate effect, and they might fitly receive and assume all the privileges and duties of the Citizens" †

These facts and conclusions are of great significance and interest in the present condition of the Indian question among some of the tribes West of the Mississippi River, and reference will hereafter be made to them in that connection, in this report.

The attention of the Committee has been vigilantly and feelingly directed to the melancholy condition of Indian Affairs among many of the tribes West of the Mississippi. From every portion of our Western Border, we hear of Indian Wars and massacres. And on the part of the Whites, there is a cry for vengeance and extermination.

"The Indians every where, with the exception of the tribes within the Indian Territory, are rapidly decreasing in numbers from various causes: by disease: by intemperance: by wars among themselves and with the Whites: by the steady and restless emigration of White men into the Territories of the West, which confining the Indians to narrower and narrower limits, destroys that game, which in their normal state constitutes their principal means of subsistence, and by the irrepressible conflict between a superior and inferior race when brought in presence of each other" *

"We have reached a point in our natural history when there appears to be but two alternatives left, as to what shall be the future

* Report of Senator Doolittle, Chairman of the Joint Special Committee of the two houses of Congress, dated Jan 26, 1867, page 3.

† Message of Governor Fenton to the New York Legislature, January 2d. 1867, page 26.