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Document relating to blankets for the Indian trade; being questions to, and answers by, Adam D. Steuart, collector of the port of Mackinaw.

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DOCUMENT

RELATING TO

BLANKETS FOR THE INDIAN TRADE;

Being questions to, and answers by, Adam D. Stewart, collector of the port of Mackinaw.

FEBRUARY 3, 1831.

Laid on the table by Mr. BRYTON, and ordered to be printed.

Queries to Adam D. Stewart, Esq. collector of the port of Mackinaw, put by the Senate's Committee on Indian Affairs, January, 1831.

1. How long have you been collector of the port at Mackinaw?

Ans. Thirteen years.

2. Are Indian blankets, strouds, scarlet cloths, swanskins, and moltons, imported into the United States through that port?

Ans. They are not.

3. Are they smuggled in, and, if so, upon what extent of frontier?

Ans. They are not smuggled in, but are introduced by the Indians, who, by the existing laws of the United States, are privileged to import foreign merchandise, for their own use, free of duty.

4. Do the Indians of the United States cross the frontier to get these goods from the British, and, if so, how many miles do these Indians travel, going and returning?

Ans. They do: a large proportion of the Indians east of the Mississippi have, since the peace of 1815, been in the habit, annually, of visiting Amherstburg and Drummond's island, in Upper Canada, for this purpose; and to some of these tribes, the distance in going and returning is twelve hundred miles.

5. Do the white people of the United States use these goods?

Ans. They do, generally, upon the northern frontier, and perhaps elsewhere.

6. Are any of these goods manufactured in the United States?

Ans. I believe not; the coarse wool of which they are made not being produced in the country.

7. At what points are they principally imported by American merchants?

Ans. At the ports of New York and Boston.

8. At what points are they chiefly brought into America by British merchants, and upon what lines do they travel to reach our frontier?

Ans. They are imported by the British chiefly at Montreal, Hudson's bay, and the Columbia river, and are thence forwarded, in boats and canoes, up the Ottawa, Severn, Nelson, and Churchill rivers, to the Hudson's bay trading posts, situated along the northern boundary line of the United States, from lake Huron, westward, to the Columbia river.

9 Is the manufactory of these goods general in England?

Ans. I have no personal knowledge on this point, but have been informed that it is not general, but that they are made to the order of merchants or others requiring them.

ADAM D. STEUART.

January 28, 1831.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the above answers to the queries proposed to me by the Hon. Committee of the Senate on Indian Affairs, and have, for greater convenience, arranged my answers, in immediate connexion with the questions to which they refer.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ADAM D. STEUART.

The Hon. THOMAS H. BENTON,
United States' Senate.