

Dickson arrived at Prairie du Chien from Quebec, accompanied by Captain Hamilton, of the Upper Canada Militia, where he was received by the principal inhabitants and a number of Indian chiefs. This gentleman lost no time in carrying out the instructions which he had received from the governor-in-chief in regard to the Indian tribes, and at different councils held with the Indians he exhorted them to take up the hatchet in the cause of England; distributing presents to those in the vicinity of Prairie du Chien, counseling them to be firm and aid the people to defend the place by protecting the rapids at the Rock river, and prevent the Americans — or Big Knives, as they were called by the Indians — from coming up until their Great Father at Quebec could send some of his soldiers to help them. From this point, as well as from Michilimackinac, small parties, consisting of an officer of the Indian Department, with an interpreter, accompanied by a few friendly Indians, were dispatched to the various tribes favourable to the British cause to organize war parties to take part in the coming campaign. Many of these officers commenced their journeys in the depth of winter, traveling hundreds of miles throughout the Indian territory. The privations and hardships which they endured in carrying out the instructions of the government were very trying, and were often attended with loss of life.

Thus it was that the British extended their influence among the Western Indians, until tribe after tribe joined them, each nation sending in a return of the number of warriors they could send when required, until the number reached over ten thousand men. But to return to Prairie du Chien. Shortly after Dickson's arrival he was waited upon by some of the chief men of the settlement, who pointed out to him the defenseless state the old post was in, and requested him to take immediate steps to place it in proper repair, and also demanded that a strong party of Indians be sent down to the rapids at the Rock river to prevent the enemy from ascending. What Dickson's plans were he did not think it necessary to inform them. He had his own opinion on the matter, viz., that the Americans