

a body and the prophet sent a friendly message. In the meantime Claus conferred with several chiefs of the Chippewa and Ottawa "nations" who were decidedly reserved and noncommittal in their language. He concluded, on the whole, that they were certainly hostile to the Americans, but that unless they had a prospect of support from the British they would be "very backward." He estimated that the number of fighting men belonging to all the Indian tribes "on the waters of the Miamis, east borders of Lake Michigan, Sagana, and the interior of the country between those waters" did not exceed 1,500.

Elliot, who was better acquainted with the sentiments of these tribes, declared unhesitatingly that one regiment of British infantry would be sufficient to take possession of Detroit and the territory between that town and the Ohio, and in that event the Indians would at once become active allies, an opinion which Mr. Gore promptly discounted as much too sanguine.

The lapse of four years brought about a great change in the situation. The Indians had diminished in numbers and otherwise grown weaker, but more hostile to the American settlers, who had become far more numerous and aggressive. The population of Kentucky and Tennessee had doubled in ten years and then exceeded three-quarters of a million. An eager and adventurous host of 250,000 settlers had poured into Ohio. Fifty thousand more made their way into Illinois and Indiana in open defiance of the protests and threats of the dwindling and dispirited bands that had been pushed back to the banks of the Wabash.

There were unmistakable signs that the visions and the harangues of the Shawanese prophet and others were bearing fruit in the evident unrest and discontent among all the Western Indians. The American settlers declared, and apparently believed, that the spirit of hostility was largely due to British influence. In this they were certainly mistaken, although it would be useless to deny that the officers of the British Indian department sympathized strongly with the Indians and were sometimes indiscreet in expressing their opinions.

As early as 1808 the Seven Nations of Lower Canada were dissuaded by them from sending delegates to a great council near Lake Michigan that had been convoked by the prophet, and up to the last they seem to have spared no effort to avert a collision.