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INDIANS AS STOCK-RAISERS.

No one who had watched the various phases which the Indian problem has assumed in the North West during the past few years could have been very greatly surprised at the present deplorable outbreak. We do not mean to scold anybody in particular in this connection, and our reason for refraining is, not that there are none who richly merit it, but because if we started we would desire to deal fairly with all concerned, and it would take quite too much time and space to administer one-half the castigations that are deserved. Besides this, THE CANADIAN BREEDER is a live stock and agricultural paper, not a political one.

But without showing the slightest partiality, for either political party, we can safely criticize a blunder in Indian management for which both are equally responsible.

When our Canadian civilization found the Crees, the Assiniboines, the Saulteux, and the Blackfeet on the plains they were all comparatively well off. They had plenty to eat and wear. They had abundance of ponies, and in the winter their buffalo hide lodges were pictures of barbaric splendour and luxury.

Of course they did not live according to our ideas of luxury and refinement, but they had what they wanted. Their lodges were large and roomy, some of them being composed of as many as fifty or sixty buffalo hides. Inside these lodges were great bales of dried buffalo meat, venison of all sorts, bags of pemican, heavy warm buffalo robes, skins of elk, moose, antelope, jumping and blacktail deer, from which clothing was made that was warm and durable, while the fine caribou skin with its soft velvety surface furnished material for the rich robes of which they were so proud with their elaborate embroidery of silk, dyed porcupine quills, brightly-colored beads, and the rich and costly furs of the fisher, beaver, otter, mink, and even the grey and black foxes. These were the days when moccasins and blankets were plenty, and the average red man wanted for little that was within the range of his simple round of desires. His diet consisted largely of animal food, and his occupation was that of the hunter, the trapper, and the fisherman. These were employments that he did not deem beneath him, and though at times he might have been pinched with hunger for a few days there was nothing like permanent poverty among the tribes of the plains. Game was literally swarming all through their country and they had no thought of want.

The white man came among them to stay only a little over ten years ago, and since that time troubles have fallen thick and fast in the path of the Indian. The advance of the mounted police, even when the progress of settlement was hardly noticeable, rapidly drove the buffalo from the country, and with him fled nearly all the smaller game. The case was undoubtedly a hard one. The Indians had let a mere handful of friendly white men, whom they were more inclined to pity than fear, gain a foothold among them, and immediately on their arrival the game, the sole dependence of the Indians began, rapidly to disappear.

The white man was ready with a remedy of his own, and it was not one in whose adoption the Indian had had any voice. Nobody asked him what he would like to do, but it was assumed that he must become a farmer, not a stock-raiser (which would in all probability

have suited him well), but a tiller of the soil. He must be engaged in a pursuit he has been wont to consider beneath him and which he is sure to be slow to learn. He must be cooped up on a reserve in one little corner of what up to but yesterday had been his own country and that of his forefathers as far back as his remotest traditions extended. And why was this change? Because the white man said so. The Indian was talked to till he couldn't rest, and the burden of it all was that the white man had come to do him good. The representatives of the "Great White Mother" had told him so and the missionaries had told him so, and who can blame him for being so simple as to believe them?

Now how has all this turned out? The game is gone for good, and his ponies are fast disappearing. The white man still tells him if he works on his reserve faithfully all will still go well, but in many cases the white farm instructor is not the most intelligent and industrious farmer that could be picked up in Ontario, Quebec, or the Maritime Provinces, and he does not set the Indian the best example that could be put before him as to industry and promptness, and the result is a late seeding and a frost nipped harvest, and the Indian finds himself and family once more depending solely on the rations doled out to them. He loses faith in farming after one or two such disappointments, and growing indifferent about his work becomes poorer and poorer every year. By and by he sees his little ones (whom he loves with all the fondness of a white father) shivering in the bitter wind that sweeps the drifting snow into his wretched hovel or patched teepee. He hears them cry for food when he has none to give them. Sometimes he sees them dying of cold and hunger, and if he asks for help he is denounced as a lying, lazy, improvident scamp and sent away empty handed. His logic is very simple and to the point. He says to himself. "Before the white man came I was rich and had plenty, and the whole country was ours. He came pretending to be our friend and we received him as such. He drove away our game, he took the country from us, buying square miles of us, and paying us back in our own lands with reservations of square feet. He promised to feed us and he lets us starve, and we may as