

THE AGENCY OF MR. MCPHERSON.

An inspection of this agency fully satisfied me that the agent is discharging the duties entrusted to him, honestly and faithfully to the extent of his ability. Accounts of supplies distributed and in storehouse agree with the records kept in the office here. Very little improvement is manifested in the cultivation of the majority of the reserves in this district. The Indians at Rat Portage and Islington are making some progress in enlarging their gardens and in building themselves comfortable dwelling-houses, but the other ten bands, owing to the large quantities of rice and the unlimited supply of fish available, are devoting but little attention to farming. The greater number of the cattle supplied this and Mr. Pither's agency was killed and eaten by the Indians under one pretence or another.

The only school, a mission one, ever established in this agency is at Islington. The Indians there represent that applications were made a number of times to the Government for a teacher, but that their requests were never granted. They ask to be supplied with one without delay, as the other school is now closed. The heathen Indians of Treaty No. 3 are generally opposed to educational institutions of any description being established on the reserves, in consequence of their traditional aversion to religious instruction, invariably associated therewith; hence the deplorable ignorance and gross superstition which for countless ages overshadowed those benighted dusky savages, roaming like the wild animals they hunted, through forests primeval, or sailing in birch canoes, on ancient lakes, over billows untamed.

THE AGENCY OF MR. MCKAY.

There was no office or storehouse at the agency last summer when I visited it, but a building for that purpose was partially enclosed. The supplies on hand were temporarily stored in the Hudson Bay Company's warehouse at Grand Rapids. The payments of annuities were generally satisfactory, but the time occupied was excessive, and I suggested to the Acting Superintendent the advisability of curtailing it in future from seventy-six to fifty-three days. The York boats employed in this and Dr. Young's agency require seven oarsmen each, and, in my opinion, are not suitable for the payments; whereas the yacht used by Mr. Martineau is admirably adapted for light transport, and only requires three men to manage it, except in ascending rapids, where extra help could easily be obtained.

In my inspection of Island and Beren's River Bands, I discovered some half-dozen cases where husbands have deserted their wives, and payments for 1880 have been refused them by the agent, on his own responsibility, although in 1879, while the circumstances in these particular instances were precisely similar, he granted their annuities.

I call attention to this irregularity for two reasons: first, because it involves an apparent contravention of Section 83 of the Indian Act, which refers all such cases to the arbitrament of the Superintendent-General; and second, because in other agencies annuities have not been refused on this ground, whence arises a very undesirable lack of uniformity, in the practice, regarding this important matter. Upon enquiring into the correctness of the Cumberland Band annuities, I became possessed of information evincing the existence of a degree of laxity in adhering to the exact provisions of the Indian Act respecting the various persons to whom payments may be made. Inasmuch as the principle involved is one the misconception of which might, in my judgment, open the door of admittance to individuals not entitled to annuities, and thus perpetuate grave irregularities, I shall briefly state the facts disclosed, and such pertinent considerations as present themselves to my mind. Louis Tourdin, a half-breed, born at Isle à la Cross, and an employee there of the Hudson's Bay Company, was in 1878 married to an Indian woman of the Cumberland Band. His name did not appear on the pay-sheets prior to 1879. In that year he received payment