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 REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT L. N. F. CROZIER.
 

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WOOD MOUNTAIN, Dec., 1880.

SIR,—In accordance with instructions, I have the honor to submit the following Report:—

## INDIANS AT FORT WALSH.

At the beginning of the year I was in command at Fort Walsh. There were at that time in the vicinity of the Fort between five and six hundred Indians to whom I was issuing rations. After receiving their annuities, Indians from all parts of the Territory came to the Cypress Hills in pursuit of buffalo, but, finding there were none in that section, a good many at once crossed the international boundary, and continued travelling until they found game. A large proportion, doubtless, thinking they would, in any case, be looked after by the Government, made up their minds to remain within easy reach of Fort Walsh for the winter. Knowing the provisions on hand would not be equal to the heavy drain such a number of people would make upon them, I determined to make every possible effort to induce them to leave for the buffalo country before the season became too far advanced for travelling on the plains. By dint of talking and persuasion, I at last prevailed upon numbers to leave; those remaining, to the number above stated, being in most instances so badly off for horses that they could not move—a regular issue of rations had to be made to them for the winter. I found it necessary, shortly after the winter had set in, to establish a small detachment at the Big Island Lake, about twenty-one miles from the Fort, and where the Indian Department cattle were then herded, in order the more conveniently to feed about two hundred Indians whom I had brought there from different places. Before doing this, provisions had to be taken to the camps by the police, in some instances as far as sixty miles, and, as the season advanced, this service became, not only frequent and difficult, but dangerous. The Indian horses were so wretchedly reduced from cold and scarcity of grass that they were not even able to carry food from the Fort to their camps. I cannot help remarking that it was fortunate, indeed, that the Indians about the Cypress Hills were looked after and able to procure a supply of provisions from the Fort, otherwise hundreds certainly would have starved to death. Feeling the necessity of economizing the supplies on hand in every possible way, I purchased tackle and nets, that by fishing the Indians might, to a certain extent, help to gain their living. The experiment was at first only partially successful, notwithstanding my sending members of the force, experienced fishermen, with the Indians to the different lakes to set their nets and render all possible instruction and assistance. Towards spring, however, a considerable number of fish were caught by the Indians in the lake at the head of the mountain, where the Assiniboine Reservation now is, and after the opening of the season fish in several small creeks became very numerous, so numerous that they were literally “scooped up.” At one time thousands of Indians were receiving food from this source.

I issued, also, from time to time, ammunition, for, although game of all sorts was scarce during the winter, the young men were able to shoot something occasionally, which helped to prevent the expenditure of the supplies so necessary in the event of a large influx of Indians.

## INDIANS COMING IN FROM PLAINS.

About the middle of April the Indians commenced coming in large numbers from Milk River, on the American side, where they had wintered. In every instance they were starving. Many said they had but little to eat during the greater part of the winter, and would have come to the Fort sooner had they been able; men and teams were kept constantly on the road with provisions to meet and feed the starving