

At the latter place the Indians are doing very well indeed ; their cattle (which they purchased and raised themselves) are very fine looking ; their gardens well attended to, with good root houses or cellars, and a building in which they store their implements in common.

They ask for more hoes, axes, hay forks, two cross ploughs, two harrows, and that permission be granted them to cut and sell cordwood along the banks of the Saskatchewan River.

Having had my doubts aroused at Grand Rapids, I took particular care to question parties presenting orders for absentees. The consequence was, that I soon found out that fraudulent orders were presented for payment, especially in the case of Abraham Bell, of this band. Application being made, I refused to pay it without his written order, regularly signed and witnessed, whereupon the party withdrew, and, in about ten minutes after, appeared again, this time with a written order, regularly signed and witnessed by H. Belanger.

I asked the man where Bell was and who had written the order ? He informed me that Bell was at Cumberland ; that the order was made out and witnessed by Mr. Belanger, without the knowledge of Abraham Bell. As I believed that the order was fraudulent, I refused to pay it.

Orders of the same nature were refused by me as coming from John Bell, sen., Cameron Cook, and others of the band.

Cumberland Band.

The Indians have built thirty-six log dwelling-houses and nine stables ; have nineteen acres under cultivation, and thirteen head of cattle. Their potatoe crops were not up to the average of former years ; they state that August frosts injured them considerably. The reserve for these Indians was surveyed by Mr. Austin, D.L.S., in 1882. It is altogether a poor place for either farming, hunting or fishing.

Many of the Indians requested to be allowed to move up the Saskatchewan River, as far as La Corne or the Forks, but have been refused. Nevertheless, several families moved up there during the last three years.

Quite a number of Indians were absent from the payments, and a number of fraudulent orders for annuity payments were presented by Mr. Belanger, which I refused to recognize, as I was fully convinced, by evidence taken, that they were not genuine.

After completing the annuity payments at Cumberland, I proceeded to visit, by canoe, Shoal Lake and Red Earth Reserves, and by travelling night and day, got back to the Pas on the sixth day. From there I proceeded on to Winnipeg and arrived there on the 27th September. After finishing the business connected with the annuity payments, I returned to the agency at Beren's River, arriving there on the 23rd October.

The winter was very cold, with deep snow throughout the country, but the fisheries having turned out well during last fall, the rabbits being numerous and deer plentiful, the Indians did not suffer from starvation.

During the winter I made a tour of inspection of schools and reserves by dog-train to Poplar River, Norway House, Cross Lake, Jack Head and Fisher River, and found that there was no hardship for want of food or through sickness.

On the 21st June I left Beren's River, in a York boat, for Winnipeg, in order to get the money and make the annuity payments of 1884-85, and arrived there on the 1st July.

By letter of the 5th April last, No. 358, I forwarded to the Department a detailed statement regarding schools and other matters in connection with the bands under my supervision, and therefore refrain from further remarks thereon.

I have the honor to be, Right Honorable Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. MACKAY,
Indian Agent.