

be found in all communities, and which may be termed the vagrant class—that do no work beyond what is absolutely necessary in order to live. They hunt and fish a little, but as for steady employment would not accept such were it offered. They live entirely from hand to mouth, making no provision for the future, and when times are hard or game scarce they are unprepared for it, and immediately drop to the verge of starvation. It is this class principally that it was found necessary to feed during the past winter. In all probability, should the coming winter prove to be severe, it will be necessary to repeat the treatment followed last winter; but if so, I would strongly recommend that a full equivalent should be demanded for whatever assistance may be given by the Government.

After spring opened everything remained quiet throughout the district until the 17th August, when I received information that a number of Indian runners from Montana had been seen on Poundmaker's and Little Pine's reserves. It was stated that these men comprised Crow, Gros Ventres, Blackfoot and rebel Cree Indians.

I immediately proceeded to the reserve with a party consisting of Assistant-Surgeon Aylen and twenty-six non-commissioned officers, men and guides, but after three days' search found the runners had gone. The trail of one party, consisting of three men was followed for a considerable distance, but the nature of the country rendered it impossible to pursue them on horseback, and I was compelled to give up the pursuit. Nothing further has since been heard of them.

Since the harvest the Indians in this agency appear more contented and settled than they ever were to my knowledge. The excellent crops gathered on all the reserves seems to have spurred them on to further exertions towards becoming self-supporting. On nearly all the reserves large tracks of ground are already prepared for next spring's seeding. The crops of grain and vegetables on the reserves are more than sufficient to meet the requirements of the Indian Department in this district and leave a surplus.

The settlers through the district have been exceptionally favored with an unprecedented harvest, the return of crops of all kinds being abundant. No frost affected the grain, which is all of the finest quality.

There has been no marked influx of settlers into this district during the year, but the prospects of railway communication will doubtless bring this portion of the Territories into notice, and considerable immigration may be looked for.

This district has never been occupied by any large ranching company, such as forms a peculiar feature of the south-western district; but the number of settlers with bands of cattle, and the condition of their stock, proves that there is a great future before the Saskatchewan District.

I attach herewith a return of all cases tried by me. From the return you will see that crime is a thing almost unknown here. Only two cases throughout the year were sufficiently serious to warrant a committal for trial before the judge of the Supreme Court. One of these was thrown out by the judge and the other resulted in a verdict of "not guilty." There were but two informations laid before me for infractions of the prohibition laws of the Territories, the charges being for supplying beer of local manufacture to Indians. No complaint of illicit importation of liquor was brought to my notice during the year.

I have had the surrounding country carefully and regularly patrolled by small parties. The routes of these patrols are shown on the map already forwarded to you.

There are three outposts furnished from this division—one at Onion Lake, consisting of a non-commissioned officer and seven constables; one at Bresaylor, consisting of three constables, and the other at the Sixty-mile Bush, consisting of two constables. These outposts are permanently kept up and do all the patrol duties in their immediate neighborhoods. Small parties are continually kept patrolling the district within thirty miles of Battleford.

Every possible opportunity of rendering assistance to the Indian Department has been taken advantage of. I furnished an escort under Inspector Chalmers for the purpose of bringing in the money from Swift Current required for the payment