

The Key's Band, above Fort Pelly, have made great improvements on their reserve, and have a large crop planted. I hear, however, that all the potatoes have been destroyed by frost on 1st July, and the extremely dry weather in May retarded the germination of the wheat to such an extent that it is doubtful if it will ripen in season. There are only as yet thirteen families residing on this reserve, the rest being at Shoal River, where they have been persuaded to remain, through the representation of interested parties, that a reserve would be given them at that point. The whole country being either timber or muskeg, it is impossible for them to raise crops, and they subsist almost entirely on fish, and are very poor, the Headman living in a bark tent or wigwam. I hope that many of these people will shortly join their friends at Pelly, where their reserve is a good one. Most of the men are very hardy, and could earn large wages if they could get work. It is to be hoped that better times will cause the development of the lumber interest in their neighborhood, which will afford them congenial and lucrative employment.

Kee-see-konse's Band, also near Pelly, are advancing steadily, and are building good houses and fences, and taking great care of their cattle, which are lent them during good behavior, they having on two separate occasions killed all their treaty cattle while suffering from starvation, caused by total failure of their winter's hunt.

A good school house has been built on this reserve by Indian labor, and is a very creditable building.

This Band would have been self-supporting this year if the frost had not struck their potatoes in July; but I fear great damage has been done, which will occasion a good deal of help being required.

Coté's band are doing fairly well, and are taking great care of their cattle, which are increasing so fast that some arrangement will have to be made shortly to enable each individual Indian to reap some more substantial benefit from raising cattle than the present system allows.

A school is well conducted at this reserve, by Mr. C. McKay, and the few children able to attend, owing to the great distance of the homes of most of them from the school, are making good progress.

A very much larger attendance will be obtained if, as suggested, a few biscuits are served out daily to the children attending, the want of a midday meal being the great cause of the small attendance. Several traders are now competing with the Hudson's Bay Company for the fur trade in this district, and the cost of the necessities of life have now greatly fallen, more particularly flour, a bag of which can now be purchased for five mink skins, when last year it took nine.

Frost has also visited this reserve in July, and some assistance will also be required in consequence. The Assiniboine Bands at Moose Mountains managed to fall-plough all their land, and had their crop in very early indeed, but the great elevation and the exposed situation of their reserve caused the snow to blow off during the winter, and as the first rain fell about the 12th June, but little of their crop came up in time. Most of their potato seed perished of dry rot. These bands have done all it was possible for people to do with the number of cattle, ploughs, &c., they have had, and if the spring had been favorable, would have now been self-supporting. They have just been supplied with more oxen and ploughs, and have broken a great deal of land lately. The liberality of the Department in furnishing extra cattle, ploughs and harrows to my agency will speedily be rewarded by the great increase in acreage under crop next year.

The Assiniboines take great care of their cattle, and get a great deal of work out of their oxen. Assistant Instructor McArthur deserves credit for the amount of work done with such a limited outfit, and with a comparatively small issue of provisions.

The Cree Band, at the east end of the mountains under White Bear, contrary to my expectations, are now working uncommonly well, and are taking great care of their cattle, having broken a lot of new land. They are paying attention to their instructor, and are likely if the seasons will permit to support themselves very shortly.