

Having in the foregoing remarks reviewed the various elements which compose the scanty but widely extended population of the Saskatchewan, outside the circle of the Hudson's Bay Company, I have now to refer to that body, as far as it is connected with the present condition of affairs in the Saskatchewan.

As a governing body the Hudson's Bay Company has ever had to contend against the evils which are inseparable from monopoly of trade combined with monopoly of judicial power, but so long as the aboriginal inhabitants were the only people with whom it came in contact its authority could be preserved; and as it centered within itself whatever knowledge and enlightenment existed in the country its officials were regarded by the aboriginals as persons of a superior nature, nay, even in by gone times it was by no means unusual for the Indians to regard the possession of some of the most ordinary inventions of civilisation on the part of the officials of the Company as clearly demonstrating a close affinity between these gentlemen and the Manitou, nor were these attributes of divinity altogether distasteful to the officers who found them both remunerative as to trade and conducive to the exercise of authority. When, however, the Free Traders and the Missionary reached the Saskatchewan, this primitive state of affairs ceased—with the enlightenment of the savage came the inevitable discontent of the Indian until there arose the condition of things to which I have already alluded. I am aware that there are persons who while admitting the present unsatisfactory state of the Saskatchewan ascribe its evils more to mistakes committed by officers of the Company, in their management of the Indians, than to any material change in the character of the people; but I believe such opinion to be founded in error. It would be impossible to revert to the old management of affairs. The Indians and the half breeds are aware of their strength and openly speak of it, and although I am far from asserting that a more determined policy on the part of the officer in charge of the Saskatchewan District would not be attended by better results, still it is apparent that the great isolation of the posts, as well as the absence of any fighting element in the class of servants belonging to the Company, render the Forts on the Upper Saskatchewan, to a very great degree, helpless, and at the mercy of the people of that country. Nor are the engaged servants of the Company a class of persons with whom it is at all easy to deal. Recruited principally from the French half-breed population, and exposed, as I have already shown, to the wild and lawless life of the prairies, there exists in reality only a very slight distinction between them and their Indian Brethren, hence it is not surprising that acts of insubordination should be of frequent occurrence among these servants, and that personal violence towards superior officers should be by no means an unusual event in the Forts of the Saskatchewan; indeed it has only been by the exercise of manual force on the part of the officials in charge that the semblance of authority has sometimes been preserved. This tendency towards insubordination is still more observable among the casual servants or "Trip men" belonging to the Company. These persons are in the habit of engaging for a trip or journey, and frequently select the most critical moments to demand an increased rate of pay, or to desert *en masse*.

At Edmonton House, the Head Quarters of the Saskatchewan District, and at the Posts of Victoria, and Fort Pitt, this state of lawlessness is more apparent than on the lower portion of the river. Threats are frequently made use of by the Indians and half-breeds, as a means of extorting favorable terms from the officers in charge, the cattle belonging to the Posts, are uselessly killed, and altogether the Hudson's Bay Company may be said to retain their tenure of the Upper Saskatchewan upon a base which appears insecure and unsatisfactory.

In the foregoing remarks I have entered at some length into the question of the materials comprising the population of the Saskatchewan with a view to demonstrate that the condition of affairs in that Territory is the natural result of many causes, which have been gradually developing themselves, and which must, of necessity, undergo still further developments if left in their present state. I have endeavoured to point out how from the growing wants of the aboriginal inhabitants—from the conflicting nature of the interests of the half-breed and Indian population, as well as from the