

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA,
ST. PETERS AGENCY, LOWER FORT GARRY,
25th September, 1880.

The Honorable
The Superintendent General of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honor to submit the following report, together with tabular statement containing statistics of the Indian Bands in my agency.

Speaking generally of all the bands, I may say there has been very little sickness during the past year, and as a consequence there have been fewer deaths among the children than in any previous year since they have been under my charge.

In the early part of the season the crops were all looking remarkably well, and a greater quantity of seed than usual was sown, but a frost in July did considerable damage to the potatoes, and since the harvest began there has been a great deal of wet weather which has damaged some of the grain. The hay crop has been an exceptionally good one, and more than the usual quantity has been put up and is in excellent condition.

In some of the reserves, more particularly St. Peter's, where there is an unlimited supply of hay and a good market, the Indians might add very materially to their support by the sale of this article alone, but, as they are not pressed by want in the summer, they are not thrifty enough to provide for the hard time sure to come in the winter, and therefore, as a general thing, do not put up much more than they require for their own use.

The privilege of cutting and selling the dry or fallen wood, free of charge, off the reserves, which the Department granted to the Indians last winter, was very much appreciated by them; and as long as there is so much timber in the reserves which has been burned and destroyed, and which, if left alone, will only rot, there seems to be no good reason why the privilege should not be continued.

The payment of annuities this year was made in one instead of five-dollar bills as heretofore. This is decidedly to the advantage of the Indian, and he obtains better value for his money. Formerly when an Indian handed a five-dollar bill to a trader in payment of an article there was always a good excuse for asking him to trade out the balance in the absence of change, and so he frequently had to buy articles he did not wish, and would not otherwise have taken.

In the use of intoxicating liquors by the Indians I cannot report any improvement, and there does not seem to be any difficulty in their obtaining as much as they have money to pay for. The change in the Act relating to the sale of liquors to them, seems to have made no difference either one way or the other. I fully expected it would have resulted in a larger number of convictions, but so far this has not been the case in this district.

ST. PETER'S BAND.

In my last report I stated that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst the members of this band on account of the school and land questions. This feeling had increased to such an extent that Mr. Dewdney, the Commissioner visited the reserve in April last, and gave a careful hearing to all their complaints and grievances; and being convinced that there was good foundation, for some of them, granted certain of their requests, amongst others that a school-house should be built on the reserve, which was to be wholly supported and controlled by the Department, at the same time informing them that only a teacher holding a certificate from the Provincial Board of Education would be employed—this was understood on both sides to be a final settlement of the school question. And now if the land question can be as satisfactorily dealt with, and the trespassers removed from the reserve, the future conduct of affairs here would at least have none of the old standing difficulties to complicate it, or prevent the carrying out of the wishes and regulations of the Department.