

the force. This is the third year the fever has prevailed since the establishment of the post, and each year it seems to have been of a more dangerous character. The surgeon at one time attributed the epidemic to the impure water, but it would seem to me that the fort, in any case, is in an unhealthy situation, at any rate the extent to which the fever prevailed this year would, I should think, suggest the necessity of removing the post to a more healthy locality, provided the other requirements of the service will permit. I have requested the surgeon at this post to forward his report on the epidemic, and on the situation of the fort in a sanitary point of view.

On the 30th of September the Right Reverend the Bishop of Dakota arrived on a mission to the Sioux Indians, to induce them to return to their reservation in the United States. The Right Reverend gentleman left for the Sioux camp, in the vicinity of Wood Mountain, accompanied by an escort of officer and 15 non-commissioned officers and men on the 5th of October. I have already forwarded you a report of the trip by Inspector Cotton, who was the officer in charge of the escort.

It may not be out of place to mention here that a special agent of the Department of Customs arrived at this post on the 27th October. After making a thorough inspection of the office of that Department, he expressed himself as highly satisfied at the very efficient manner in which everything in connection with that Department has been conducted here.

On the 8th of November, owing to information received that it was probable certain individuals intended bringing into the country a quantity of intoxicating liquor, by way of the Sweet Grass Hills, and that they intended establishing themselves in that vicinity for the purpose of smuggling, and probably horse stealing, I considered it advisable to re-occupy the building on Milk River used last winter as an outpost, I therefore, on the above date, sent a detachment of one non-commissioned officer and six men to that place.

Occurrences during the time you were personally in command here, from the 13th November to the 13th December, it will be unnecessary for me to report upon.

In speaking generally, I have the honor to inform you that after the Indian payment in the west, large numbers of Blackfeet and Circees, and from the north, Cree Indians, arrived at this post on their way to the buffalo; nearly all remained here for some time, and a considerable number, say, five hundred souls, are here still, though they have repeatedly been told how necessary it was for them to endeavor to get their own living, but as they are here and the season has advanced, a good many of them will have to be fed by the Government for the winter. There is not a very heavy supply of provisions for Indians here, and if it is only a matter of feeding those at present here, there will be a sufficiency, but the danger to be apprehended is the arrival of large numbers, as this is undoubtedly the first place they would come to in the event of their being unable to procure food for themselves, and this is a contingency that may be brought about in several ways. For instance our Indians are hunting in United States territory, and on an Indian Reservation, and the authorities may compel them to leave, which, of course, would mean the return to this side; and, again, where there are so many different tribes assembled together it would be only natural if they had trouble among themselves, which would, in all probability, be the means of many of our Indians returning, in fact our Indians are hunting in a foreign country, and many things may occur to make them return to their own, and if they do, having no means of gaining a living themselves, it may be necessary to feed them. I have not had any direct news from the buffalo country for about ten days, or two weeks, but when I last heard the majority of the Indians were near the big bend of the Milk River. I don't anticipate that they will return, at any rate in large numbers, until towards spring, when I certainly think it is quite probable, but as it is a matter of such grave importance, I suggest the desirability of being prepared, even if such an event were only possible. In the meantime the stock of provisions laid in for Indians will be considerably reduced, as it is now certain a considerable number, as I before said, will have to be fed during the entire winter.