

GENERAL REPORT.

Having in the foregoing pages briefly alluded to the time occupied in travel, to the route followed, and to the general circumstances attending my journey, I now propose entering upon the subjects contained in the written instructions under which I acted, and in the first instance to lay before you the views which I have formed upon the important question of the existing state of affairs in the Saskatchewan.

The institutions of Law and Order, as understood in civilized communities, are wholly unknown in the regions of the Saskatchewan, insomuch as the country is without an executive body whatever and destitute of any means to enforce the authority of the Law.

I do not mean to assert that crime and outrage are of habitual occurrence among the people of this Territory, or that a state of anarchy exists in any particular portion of it, but it is an undoubted fact that crimes of the most serious nature have been committed, in various places, by persons of mixed and native blood, without any vindication of the Law being possible, and that the position of affairs rests at the present moment not on the just power of an Executive Authority to enforce obedience, but rather upon the passive acquiescence of the majority of a scant population who hitherto have lived in ignorance of those conflicting interests, which, in more populous and civilized communities, tend to anarchy and disorder,

But the question may be asked if the Hudson's Bay Company represent the centres round which the half-breed settlers have gathered, how then does it occur that that body should be destitute of governing power, and unable to repress crime and outrage? To this question I would reply that the Hudson's Bay Company being a commercial corporation, dependent for its profits on the suffrages of the people, is of necessity cautious in the exercise of repressive powers, that, also, it is exposed in the Saskatchewan to the evil influence which Free Trade has ever developed among the native races, that, furthermore, it is brought in contact with tribes long remarkable for their lawlessness and ferocity, and that, lastly, the elements of disorder in the whole Territory of Saskatchewan are, for many causes, yearly on the increase. But before entering upon the subject into which this last consideration would lead me, it will be advisable to glance at the various elements which comprise the population of this Western region. In point of numbers, and in the power which they possess of committing depredations, the aboriginal races claim the foremost place among the inhabitants of the Saskatchewan. These tribes, like the Indians of other portions of Rupert's Land and the North West, carry on the pursuits of hunting, bringing the produce of their hunts to barter for the goods of the Hudson's Bay Company, but, unlike the Indians of more Northern regions, they subsist almost entirely upon the buffalo, and they carry on among themselves an unceasing warfare which has long become traditional. Accustomed to regard murder as honorable war, robbery and pillage as the traits most ennobling to manhood, free from all restraint, these warring tribes of Crees, Assiniboines, and Blackfeet form some of the most savage among even the wild races of Western America.

Hitherto it may be said that the Crees have looked upon the white man as their friend, but latterly indications have not been wanting to foreshadow a change in this respect—a change which I have found many causes to account for, and which, if the Saskatchewan remains in its present condition,