

with salt pork, though we could get fresh beef at from 8 to 15 cents per lb., and had to pay for the pork, some of which was rusted at that, from 20 to 25 cents per lb. The table I submit, culled from the vouchers in the Indian Department, shows the following rates:—

“At Fort Macleod, in 1882-3, beef was worth per lb. 8½ cents and bacon 20 cents; in 1883-4, beef was worth per lb. 14½ cents and bacon 23½ cents; in 1884-5 beef 15 cents and bacon 18 cent per lb. In the Saskatchewan District, in 1882-3, beef was worth 15 cents and bacon 25 cents; in 1883-4, beef 20 cents, and bacon 22½ cents per lb. At Battleford, in 1882-3, beef was worth 12½ cents per lb., and bacon 23 cents; and 1883-4, beef 17 cents, and bacon 20 cents. In Calgary, in 1882-3, beef was worth 8½, and bacon 21½ cents; and in 1883-4, beef 14½, and bacon 24½ cents per lb.”

And this, although the Department was made aware of the fact, by its agent Mr. Herchmer in his report for 1883. Mr. Herchmer there says :

“A great deal of sickness has visited them lately caused by the want of fresh meat.” The Indians, under treaty 4, received in 1884-5, \$15,290.92 worth of pork, and \$1,288.45 worth of beef, although it is known that beef is life to the Indian, while salt pork is disease and death to him.”

This bountiful, humane and attentive Government, whose duty it was to look after the interest of the Indians, supplied them with twelve pounds of disease and death to one pound of life. And this, although the reports of the Department are literally teeming with warnings to and remonstrances against the Government for the inhuman treatment the Indians received at their hands, by supplying them with pork instead of with fresh meat. Agent Herchmer, in his report dated the 24th July, 1885, speaking of the types of disease among the Indians says :

“To these might be added I think the sudden change from fresh meat on the Prairies to flour and bacon in comparative confinement.”

And again at page 61 he says :

“At Oak River, eleven men have died out of 88 heads of families, and seventeen children under three years old. This is very distressing and is hard to account for—the change of diet, owing to the failure of hunting and scrofula, being probably the cause.”

It is very distressing, the agent pathetically says, while all the time these very agents were doing what they knew they ought not to have done; namely, supplying these men with salt pork at 20 to 25 cents per pound when they could have got fresh beef at from 8½ to 15 cents per pound. Mr. Magnus Begg, Indian agent, in his report dated 28th July, 1885, says :

“During the month of April there was considerable sickness on the Stoney reserve; and it was thought favorable to issue beef, which was done and with satisfactory results.”

In other words, we fed the Indians on salt pork until they became sick unto death, and then we fed them on fresh beef to restore them to health again. Has the Government of this country, has the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the North-West Territory not considered that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, that it would be better to feed the Indian on fresh beef to prevent disease rather than to feed him on fresh beef to effect a cure, especially as fresh beef can be purchased at a much lower figure in the market than salt pork. The reports, with few exceptions, of the agents of the Department for the last four or five years show that there have been constant complaints made to the head of this Department of the inhuman treatment received by the Indians at the hands of the officials of this Government. Those complaints have been renewed from year to year; those complaints have not been investigated. I charge that this Government, although these complaints have been made by their own agents, have not investigated them, and, where the truth of the charges was brought home to the agents of the Department, these agents have not been dismissed as they should have been. Mr. Wadsworth, the Superintendent of Indian affairs, in his report for 1882, speaking of the Rivière qui Barre Indians, says :

“The flour and bacon received as supplies was bad, and the flour received by the Indians at Battleford, had become lumpy.”

Mr. Wadsworth, in his report for 1883, speaking of the Indians in the Sekaskoots reserve, says :

“I could get no account of the supplies sent in by the contractors or the Government.”

He further says :

“The flour received by those Indians only averaged 93 pounds per sack.”

And again, speaking of Poundmaker's band, he says :

“The flour was inferior and of light weight.”

A. McKay, Indian agent, in his report for 1884, says that the Inspector of Indian agencies promised to supply them with all they might require, and that they were urged by that agent to make their demands on the Department for the same; that they did do so, but the supplies were not sent. E. McColl, in his report for 1882, says :

“Waggons were promised these Indians, and that he was apprehensive of serious consequences, unless their claims were recognised.”

Mr. T. P. Wadsworth, in his report for 1883, speaking of Day Star's band says :

“The chief complained that he could not get his treaty pigs, and that he wanted more oxen, a tool chest and milk pans.”

Also that :

“Mistowasis' band and Ah-tah-ka-koop's band did not get their treaty pigs, and he recommends that they get them.”

He further reports that :

“Bobtail's band complained that there was still due them under the treaty a cow and a bull.”

He further reports that :

“Ermine Skin's band complained that there was due them under the treaty a mower and some carts.”

Francis Ogiltree, Indian agent, in his report dated 14th October, 1884, says, in speaking of the Sandy Bay band :

“They are very anxious to get the cattle they are entitled to as well as some of the tools.”

John McIntyre, Indian agent, in his report dated 6th October, 1884, says in reference to the Lac des Mille Lacs band :

“This band is still entitled to three cows.”

And of the Wobegan and Eagle Lake bands :

“I took an inventory of all their tools and implements and find they are short of a good many for which I have made requisition.”

And of the Mattawa and English Rivers band :

“This band asks for one plough and one harrow, twenty grubbers, one morticing pick, one single yoke, and two cows still are due them.”

And of the Fish River reserve :

“They again ask for a steel grist mill. They also request to be supplied with two brush breaking ploughs, two iron harrows, and four sets of strong chain traces as those previously furnished were worthless.”

I have shown not only that we have sent bad agents to administer Indian affairs in the North-West Territories, but that we have broken faith with the Indians in many respects. I now propose to prove that we have by our negligence and misconduct allowed the Indians, in the midst of plenty, to be frozen to death and starved to death. I have shown that we have allowed them to be robbed, swindled and cheated out of what they were entitled to, by the agents and the middlemen, that we gave them little or no clothing, and, to cap the climax of our criminality, we have allowed them to be frozen and starved to death. Let us see how far this is proved by the records submitted to Parliament:—Mr. McDonald, Indian agent, under Treaty No. 4, published a letter from Poundmaker, dated 10th November, 1882, in which the old chief says :

“There is to-day a great distress in my band. Their rations are suspended now for 41 days and, of course, everybody is busy roving about and hunting. It is impossible to work on an empty stomach.”

C. E. Denny, Indian agent, in his report for 1882, says :

“I found the Blackfeet willing to work had they received assistance, but they had been badly neglected and, in consequence, were wild and unsettled.”