

The navigation of the river is still unbroken as far as the Okanagan, where a rapid occurs 10 miles long. From the Okanagan to Colville, a distance of over 300 miles, it is said that there is but one rapid to interrupt the navigation of the river, but of this portion of the river we have no personal knowledge.

From the upper part of the Kettle Falls at Colville there are but two portages that would interrupt steam navigation to the mouth of Pendoreilles River in British territory, and from this point I am credibly informed that the river is available for steam navigation as far as and beyond the upper of the two great Columbian lakes, up to a point where a road might be resumed as I have suggested above.

We do not apprehend that the Indians along the North Saskatchewan are likely to cause any serious difficulties to the settlement of the "fertile belt." The Salteans, Crees, and Thickwood Assineboines have been for many years on the best terms not only with the members and servants of the Hudson Bay Company, but with all the free traders, missionaries, visitors, &c., that have visited their country; this may be in some measure accounted for by the justice and good faith which characterize all the dealings of the Hudson Bay Company with them, and also by the number of the company's servants who have adopted their women, and have established with them relationships of which they feel proud.

If white men, or indeed if half-breeds were to settle as agriculturists in the country, I do not say that they would never have serious cause of complaint with the Indians of the North Saskatchewan; quarrels doubtless would arise sometimes out of horse stealing, at other times out of their harmless mischief; but I do not think that any organized system of aggression would be attempted against the settlers, and I even think that many Indians, provided they could obtain farming implements, would follow the examples they saw before them, and begin to till the soil themselves.

No doubt it would often happen that the Indians might carry off horses or oxen, and that the white man in pursuit of them would come into deadly collision with them, the result of which would be a regular system of reprisals. But if examples of practical agriculture, and facilities for obtaining agricultural implements were offered to the Thickwood Crees and Mountain Stoneys, I am certain that they would very rapidly commence planting potatoes, and so save themselves from much of the labour and hunger which they have to endure throughout the winter in providing the flesh of the elk, moose, and deer, as food for their large families. First-rate hunters have frequently told me that such hard and constant labour in pursuing thickwood animals for the support of themselves and their families left them neither courage nor time to devote to their traps, and that consequently they could not get furs wherewith to purchase blankets and other comforts for themselves from the company, adding that if they could be sure of a meal of potatoes sometimes they could follow the traps.*

The settlers, however, would not find all the Indians with whom they came in contact so friendly as the generality of those that occupy the fertile belt. The country to the southward on both sides of the international line is that of the Blackfeet, Piegans, and Blood Indians, and I should apprehend that these Indians would form large war parties (against the Crees ostensibly), and these war parties, although first organized without any hostile intention against their agricultural neighbours, yet infallibly would end in attacks on the property of the settler and in loss of life to both Indians and settlers. When once the party goes forth to war, its individual members are not very nice in their distinctions who may be the owners of the horses they steal. Add to this the fact of the settler being a friend of their enemies, the Crees, will be accused of having furnished them with ammunition, which will render him liable to be ill-treated when he is in the power of these wilder and more uncertain tribes. In the exploring season of 1859 our Expedition traversed the whole of the British portion of the territory of the Blackfoot, Piegan, and Blood Indians, but such was the general terror of the half-breeds whom I had engaged, that it was with the utmost difficulty I could lead them on, and, indeed, if it had not been for the gentlemen and the Americans who had taken service under me, I do not think I could have gone forward at all.

The Hudson Bay Company have long given up the posts they once held in that country as too dangerous to maintain, and since my departure from the country even the Rocky Mountain House, the last of the Blackfoot posts, has been abandoned.

The successful preservation of our friendly relations with the Blackfoot tribes while travelling through their country was not so much owing to the strength of our party, although we were twenty-three in number, as to two other causes. In the first place, I

* Martens, fishers, beaver, &c., are caught by the Indians in traps, larger, but similarly constructed to our vermin traps made in England, supplied to them by the Hudson Bay Company.

Possible
introduction
of agricul-
ture among
the Indians.

Prospects
and dangers
of the
settlers
amongst
them.

Causes of
our success
among the
Blackfoot
tribes.