

are more than 165,000 at the present time, speaking about 50 different languages. Some people think that if a man knows one Indian language he knows them all. But this is not true. For a Blackfoot to understand an Iroquois would be the same as an Eskimo understanding an Arab. Each of our languages is separate, and their grammars are often more complicated than English.

Besides speaking different languages, my people have different problems. Some signed treaties with the French or English, those on the Prairies signed with the Canadian Government, and some have no treaties at all. In each case they were given different promises or were governed under different rules before the Indian Act came into being.

Now, in this modern world, some live by farming or ranching, some by fishing, logging, trapping or hunting. Some have mixed very well with their white neighbours and work off their reserves; others have never been more than a few miles away from their own homes.

These are the people I must speak for and their problems I must learn. It would be easy if we could find one answer for everyone's problems, but what is good for one tribe might be a hardship on another. Tribal customs, treaties, and local needs all have to be taken into consideration.

On my own reserve we have had many problems over the years in dealing with farming and also in holding onto our reserve, which, by the way, is the largest in Canada. When we were given our reserve, in 1883, our head chief, Red Crow, asked for the land between the Belly and Oldman Rivers on one side and the St. Mary on the other, from their confluence back to the mountains. The Government surveyed the land at five persons to a square mile, but the Indians didn't have any idea of what a square mile was. All they could understand were the natural boundaries like rivers and mountains. Since that time, many of my people have felt that the reserve should have gone right to the mountains, instead of being cut off 15 miles from the United States boundary. It is things like this which have caused suspicion and misunderstanding between the Government and the Indians.

Since they were given the reserve, the Bloods have never surrendered any of it, although we were often under great pressure from the Government and other people to do so. I remember our head chief, when approached some years ago about surrendering his reserve, replied in this way. He bent down and plucked a handful of grass and, handing it over, said, "This you can use". Then, bending down with his right hand, he picked a handful of earth and pressed it to

his heart and said, "This is mine and will always be mine for my children of the future".

These words were always remembered by our tribe, and even though various methods were used to induce the Bloods to surrender, our chiefs pleaded and cautioned the people never to sell. One of the local newspapers published an account of the attempted forced surrender in 1907, which the Bloods turned down. It said that our head chief, Crop Eared Wolf, was "a particularly pig-headed Indian who doesn't know what is good for his people". I mention this incident because I know of the hardship my people went through because they were so stubborn.

I cannot pass by the early period without paying tribute to our first Indian agents. They toiled day in and day out to teach my people how to plow and how to drive the yokes of oxen. The Indians responded very well to their teachings, and it is a matter of record in the Indian Affairs report for 1884 that my reserve raised seven thousand bushels of potatoes and also had other garden stuff, as well as some oats and wheat.

But the Indian Department saw fit to make regulations for the protection of the Indians, and one of these was the permit system, under which no Indian could sell anything without a written permit from the agent. In that year, a minimum price of 25 cents a bushel was set for potatoes, and any Indians who tried to barter their produce for less were punished. As a result, by next spring many of their root houses were still full, so they felt there wasn't any use planting any more until what they had was gone. Now, wouldn't it have been better to let the Indians dispose of their potatoes, even for 5 cents a bushel, so they would keep on producing, instead of discouraging them and causing them to quit farming? But the permit system stayed on and, as years passed, many of the later agents used it as a whip rather than a protection for the Indians. Here, I am supporting the permit system for the purpose that it had in the act, because but for that system a great many of the Indians would have sold everything they had, but what I am objecting to is that many an agent used the system as a whip. Those who would not co-operate with the agent had a hard time getting permits to sell their grain, while those who were the agent's pets didn't have any trouble at all.

A sister reserve of mine, the Blackfeet, were induced to sell part of their land for some \$2 million, and the money was used for the welfare of the tribe. But over the years much of the money proposed for their welfare turned out to be used for the benefit and welfare of the Government and the Indian office. Now this reserve is almost broke and