

In spite of enquiries and the vigilance of the police, and those interested in the matter, but one case could be found to convict on, and that was a case with the most extenuating circumstances.

A Stoney Indian and his family had been without food for many days, and were in the most deplorable condition. The Indian when in search of game killed a cow, and went to a rancher in the neighborhood, to whom he supposed the animal belonged, and offered his horse in payment. The owner prosecuted, and the Indian ("Little Man,") after laying in jail for a considerable period awaiting trial, was ordered by you to pay twenty dollars, the value of the animal. Several complaints were made to me, during the spring of the year, of houses having been entered and provisions stolen therefrom; also of gardens being robbed, by Indians, as supposed. On these occasions I sent parties to the Indian camps in the vicinity, but could find no trace of the stolen provisions.

Messengers and deputations from Crowfoot were constantly arriving, asking assistance and reporting the dying condition, and even deaths, of many of their number from starvation.

I despatched Inspectors McIlree and Frechette, at different intervals to the camp at the Blackfoot Crossing, with such provisions as I was able to get, to their relief, and to the extent I was able to spare from my limited quantity of stores; at one time I was reduced down to six bags of flour on hand. At this time (June) from 1,200 to 1,500 Indians, Bloods, Peigans and Sarcees, encamped around the Fort, were being fed, and later on as many as 7,000 men, women and children, all in a destitute condition, applied for relief; beef and flour were distributed every other day in small quantities to each family.

I always attended at these distributions, in order that if any Indian complained of not receiving his portion I could settle the difficulty. In this I was assisted by the officers, non-commissioned officers and men.

This continued till after the payments were made, in October, when the majority of the Indians left for the Milk River country, south of the boundary line, in quest of buffalo.

There are at present some ninety or a hundred Indians who are being issued with rations, who were unable from the want of horses, to proceed with their camps to the hunting grounds.

These Indians are employed, as far as possible, drawing water, cutting wood and such work.

Of course, during the year many sensational reports were in circulation of intended risings of the Indians in rebellion, but I am happy to say that not an instance of hostile feeling against us has been evinced or expressed.

The annual payments were made the early part of October; the Indian Commissioner paid the Sarcees, Inspector McIlree the North Peigans and Blackfeet, Inspector Denny the Stoneys and Crees, and I paid the Blood tribe.

An unusual amount of rain fell during the spring and early summer, causing the rivers to become swollen and almost impassable.

The Old Man River changed its course, breaking through a narrow neck that divided the main stream from a slough; thereby the river ran on the south side of the Fort in place of the north, causing, for a time, all communications from that quarter to be cut off, until a ferry could be constructed.

For a period serious apprehensions were felt of the island becoming flooded.

It was with great difficulty that the saw mill was saved from being washed away, by the construction of breakwaters.

A large portion of the garden, about one third, was completely washed away. The farm was flooded, and the oats and potatoes were to a great extent damaged.

The old settlers say, that during their sojourn in the country, they had never known such floods or the river banks to be so full.

As soon as the water fell sufficiently a bridge was constructed across the new bed of the River.