

Deer Park, where forty or fifty of Toosey's Indians had assembled to meet me before going to their camp, twelve or fifteen miles farther on.

In reply to my introductory words to them, Toosey addressed me as follows:—  
“Chief: I know that my people have a bad name, but you are the first Queen's officer who has visited us, except for arresting some of our number.

“We have been afraid of white people because those we have generally met have imposed upon and deceived us. We have heard your words and we are glad that the Queen has sent you to us as our friend.

“You do not come among us to arrest us and punish us, but to counsel and advise us. You must remember that our people are as yet wild. They are like the deer which sleeps and starts suddenly at the first sound of alarm.

“Some of my people are hid in the mountains and have been afraid to come in. They will come in to see you, and when they hear your kind words they will not be afraid, and will do what you say.

“We will all meet you to-morrow.”

Fortunately, I had received at Soda Cree's, from Mr. Moffatt, Capt. Meason's appointment, and having sent a messenger for him, that gentleman accompanied me throughout the remainder of his Agency, a circumstance that greatly facilitated the proper understanding of his instructions, and enabled me to introduce him personally to the various tribes, as their future resident agent.

Captain Meason is a retired army officer, a resident of the country for the last twenty-four years, and therefore well acquainted with native tribes of the interior. He appears to be an active man (riding from fifty to sixty miles a day with me during my visit in his district) and, so far as I was able to judge, was well received by, and possesses the confidence of the Indians.

I had not previously met Capt Meason, but I think his selection was a good one. The Indians, without exception, seemed exceedingly pleased that they could now have his services as their counsellor.

The Chilcotins who have lately given the authorities considerable trouble, felt themselves, from their isolation, almost outside the surveillance of the law.

Separated by the Fraser from the populated parts of the interior, with only four or five settlers among them, and with no officer of the law in their country, they imagined that the power of might was on their side, and hence some of their lawless acts.

The recent hanging of two of their number for murder, and the imprisonment of others for robbery and cattle stealing, succeeded immediately by my visit and the introduction of an agent to them, will, I feel assured, inaugurate a change in the future conduct of these Indians.

With regard to their offences, I might remark that there are only six settlers in the Chilcotin country, distant from each other from seven to twenty miles. These farmers all own cattle which, during the summer are allowed to stray in every direction, and are collected only once or twice in the season for the purpose of branding the increase. They are thus allowed to stray until winter, when they are collected, and, if the winter be severe, looked after during the most inclement months. Besides these there are over 500 head of cattle roaming and not herded in any way, belonging to persons who have no farms in the vicinity. No herders are employed to look after any of the cattle in the summer, and the temptation to kill one, now and then, for food to appease hunger, proves often too much for these wild and untutored savages to resist.

I cannot help concluding that much blame rests upon settlers themselves, for not employing herders to look after their cattle during the whole year, and thus removing any temptation of the kind. It may, I think, be said, not without some truth, that with equal certainty of being undetected, and with equal poverty and hunger, very many white men would commit the same acts.

The chiefs have hitherto had little influence with their people from the want of some recognition by the authorities.