

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES,  
REGINA, 2nd October, 1883.

The Right Honorable  
The Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs,  
Ottawa.

SIR,—My Report on Indian matters in the North-West Territories, forwarded to you at the commencement of the present year, left a large number of Indians still on the Plains, although a slight accession had been made to the different reserves during the previous summer.

The large sum expended last year in assisting Indians to remove to their reserves was, to a great extent, thrown away, the greater number of them having returned to Fort Walsh, where they had been accustomed to be fed without work, and where they had been bribed by the traders to remain and receive their payments.

These Indians until lately made the Cypress Hills their point of rendezvous, and were a source of more or less anxiety, as, owing to their proximity to the International boundary line, they were constantly tempted to make incursions across the border into the camps of the United States Indians on horse-thieving expeditions; these, of course, being followed up by reprisals, which in the end, if not stopped, might have led to more serious complications of an international nature.

I consequently decided to make another effort to disperse these bands and endeavor to get them to move to those sections of the Territories which they had formerly claimed as their own and had ceded under treaty to the Dominion.

On being approached in this direction it was discovered that they were desirous of procuring fixed ammunition, of making one final horse-stealing expedition across the line in all the force at their command, return with as many scalps as possible, then after a certain delay acquiesce with our wishes. Their requests were refused, and on being told that every effort would be made on our behalf, as well as by the United States troops, to frustrate any such attempt, and to catch and punish the offenders, the idea, in the main, was abandoned. Repeated promises were then made on the part of the Indians, and as often broken by them, to leave Cypress Hills, until after two months constant talking and urging, the 2nd of July saw all but some 125 lodges of recalcitrants with their backs towards the hills on the trails leading to their respective reserves.

Some few of the Indians under Lucky Man who went north, returned to Maple Creek, their excuse when leaving the north being that the promises made to them were not carried out; but on being met at Maple Creek by Mr. Reed, my Assistant Commissioner, Lucky Man stated that he had come to fetch some of his Indians left behind. Mr. Reed had instructions from me to compel these Indians to return north and if necessary to call on the police for assistance. This he did, and I feel sure this prompt and determined action will have a good effect on those who, I believe, were only waiting to hear what success their friends had met with in the south to again congregate at Maple Creek, if they saw they would be fed there. In fact, I am aware that runners were sent all over the Territories to try and bring this about. Not only were the last mentioned Indians forced to retrace their steps much more hurriedly than was their wont, but also, I am happy to have to relate, all the Saskatchewan Indians south of the railway track, under Little Pine and other minor chiefs, were compelled to start for the north. These were escorted across the South Saskatchewan by a detachment of North-West Mounted Police, and were, by last reports, wending their way northward.

It is a matter of no wonder that such a strong stand should have been made against our repeated efforts to cause them to leave their old haunts, places associated with thoughts of freedom and plenty, whilst the buffalo roamed the Plains in countless numbers. Leaving these hills behind them dashed to the ground the last hope to which they had so strenuously and fondly clung, of once more being able to live by the chase.