

*Supply Farm No. 24.*

I remained for some time here, where a large crop of grain was sown. This was put in the ground in good shape and promised a good yield before I left the district. The necessity for this farm as a part of our Indian farming policy will soon cease to exist by the country becoming settled. Should we any year require more seed grain or potatoes for the Indians than their own crops can supply, we can easily purchase them from the settlers. Should this farm be disposed of, it will give us an opportunity of concentrating our efforts upon the reservations.

I next visited the Blood Reservation. Mr. W. C. McCord is the Instructor. These Indians had worked well; they had planted a great many potatoes and sown some barley. Although rails are not plentiful, their land was well fenced. However, as soon as wire fencing can be taken in by the railway, it will pay the Department to furnish the Indians with a supply. There is a large staff of men here, but when it is considered that there are 3,615 Indians, about 700 or 800 of whom are able bodied and anxious to farm, the number of men should be increased rather than diminished. At first it was with difficulty the Indians could be induced to scatter over the reservation; they adhered to the custom of their life on the plains, and remained in large encampments. However, they are overcoming this habit, and, as they spread themselves, they will require more men to overlook and direct their work. At present we have to adhere to the system of issuing meat and flour regularly. It will be some time before this can be dispensed with. As barley is the cereal upon which the greater dependence can be placed for a crop, it has been given to them for seed, but they sow it rather reluctantly. I was told they are afraid if they grow it, they will have to eat it, which I think is very likely to be the case. They are all very anxious to have a large crop of potatoes. Should the supply farm at Pincher Creek be closed, the plant as well as the men can be used here to very great advantage. The present buildings used as storehouses, men's quarters and so forth, are very unsuitable; they were hastily constructed of logs, with mud roofs, a couple of years ago, when the Indians first settled, it may be well to consider if it would not be to the advantage of the Department to put up permanent ones, which will greatly add to the safety of our stores and to the comfort of our employés. During the time I was here I gave great attention to the system of issuing food to the Indians. This was done every alternate day. I think the contractors should be called upon to construct shambles, that the cattle may be killed in a civilized manner. They are at present shot down in a corral, when commences a perfect orgie. Men, squaws, children and dogs become indiscriminately mixed up. The two former engage in the business of skinning and cutting up; they become covered with blood, and look like demons, eating some portions raw. These remarks with regard to the killing and the cattle will also hold good at the Blackfoot, Piegan and Sarcee Reservations. Mr. Molson, the issuer of rations, was taking great care in doing so, and was making the best of a very disagreeable business. His books and accounts were well and neatly kept.

From the Bloods I went to the Piegans. These Indians are much further advanced in farming, having been two years longer settled. They had a large crop of potatoes planted and some grain. Most of them have good comfortable houses. Their land is rather light, and would possibly, in a dry season, be better with irrigation. They number about 900 souls. These Indians have a herd of stock cattle that were given them by the Department under treaty two years ago, which are doing very well. In another year the increased produce of their farms should make it admissible for the Department to withdraw the flour issue entirely.

I next inspected the Indian Office at Fort MacLeod. Having so recently reported at great length upon this, it will hardly be necessary for me to go into the subject deeply so soon again. I will merely reiterate my recommendation then made, that the office should be established at the headquarters of the Blood Reserve. In this there will be economy of officials and buildings, and the Agent will be able to be two-thirds of his time at the most important post in the district, it will tend to keep