

most salutary influence upon all classes of the community, and from the day the red coat first appeared upon the plains, it may be asserted that life and property became practically secure. The great secret of their success with the Indians has been that the latter quickly learned that, while prompt and firm in bringing offenders to justice, the well-behaved could always rely upon their friendship and active sympathy in case of need.

Another secret of success in dealing with our Indians has been the respect paid to one of their most marked peculiarities in their dealings with white men, viz., their unrelenting and literal exaction of the fulfilment of any promise made.

Indians have a most peculiar code of morals. Their honesty, in some respects, excites admiration and surprise. The absence of doors and locks in their natural surroundings created a sacred regard for each other's property, necessarily left unprotected; and one is often astonished to find how scrupulous they are in respecting property even under circumstances which would seem almost to justify a different course. On the other hand, in order to gain an advantage over a white man, they would not, as a rule, hesitate to make the falsest statements; and yet, as already said, they expect a white man to fulfil to the letter any promise made to them.

An Indian does not understand a conditional promise, nor will he make allowances for unforeseen difficulties which may have prevented or delayed fulfilment. There is, moreover, a great danger of his regarding as a promise something which may have never been intended by the speaker to bear such construction. A large proportion of grievances can be traced to this source, and so much importance has been attached to the exact fulfilment of anything regarded as a promise, that, with a view to avoid trouble, subordinate officers visiting reserves are not allowed to hold meetings and listen to complaints and bring on discussions which might lead to misconception on the part of the Indians as to what had been promised them.

Before passing away from the general features of the policy which has turned out so well, it would be unfair to leave unacknowledged the extent to which, in dealing with the Indians now under review, the road had been cleared by the Hudson's Bay Company, which, by an uninterrupted course of fair dealing, had prepared the Indians to put confidence in the justice and friendly intentions of the white man.

The half-breed population, too, served as a go-between, and although their influence may not have invariably been for good, on the whole it has been very beneficially exerted between the Indians and the Government.