

natural constitution of the Hudson's Bay Company, a state of society has arisen in the Saskatchewan which threatens at no distant day to give rise to grave complications; and which now has the effect of rendering life and property insecure, and preventing the settlement of those fertile regions which in other respects are so admirably suited to colonization.

As matters at present rest the region of the Saskatchewan is without law, order, or security, for life or property; robbery and murder for years have gone unpunished; Indian massacres unchecked, even in the close vicinity of Hudson's Bay Company Posts, and all civil and legal institutions are wholly and entirely unknown.

I now enter upon that portion of Your Excellency's Instructions which has reference to the epidemic of Small Pox in the Saskatchewan. It is about fifty years since the first great epidemic of Small Pox swept over the regions of the Missouri and the Saskatchewan, committing great ravages among the tribes of Sioux, Gros-Ventres and Flat Heads upon American Territory; and among the Crees and Assinibouines of the British. The Blackfeet Indians escaped that epidemic, while on the other hand the Assinibouines, or Stonies of the Qu'Appelle Plains were almost altogether destroyed. Since that period the disease appears to have visited some of the Tribes at intervals of greater or less duration, but until this and the previous year its ravages were confined to certain localities, and did not extend universally throughout the country. During the summer and early winter of '69 and '70 reports reached the Saskatchewan of the prevalence of Small Pox, of a very malignant type among the South Peagin Indians, a branch of the great Blackfoot Nation. It was hoped however that the disease would be confined to the Missouri River and the Crees who as usual were at war with their traditional enemies, were warned by Missionaries and others that the prosecutions of their predatory expeditions into the Blackfeet Country would in all probability carry the infection into the North Saskatchewan. From the South Peagin tribes, on the head waters of the Missouri, the disease spread rapidly through the kindred tribes of Blood, Blackfeet and Luree Indians, all which new tribes have their hunting grounds north of the Boundary Line. Unfortunately for the Crees, they failed to listen to the advice of those persons who had recommended a suspension of hostilities. With the opening of spring the war parties commenced their raids, a band of 17 Crees penetrated, in the Month of April, into the Blackfeet country, and coming upon a deserted camp of their enemies in which a tent was still standing they proceeded, to ransack it. This tent contained the dead bodies of some Blackfeet, and although these bodies presented a very revolting spectacle, being in an advanced stage of decomposition, they were nevertheless subjected to the usual process of mutilation, the scalps and clothing being also carried away.

For this Act the Crees paid a terrible penalty—scarcely had they reached their own country before the disease appeared among them in its most virulent, and infectious form. Nor were the consequences of this raid less disastrous to the whole Cree Nation. At the period of the year to which I allude, the early summer, these Indians usually assemble together from different directions, in large numbers, and it was towards one of those numerous assemblies that the returning war party, still carrying the scalps and clothing of the Blackfeet directed their steps. Almost immediately upon their arrival the disease broke out amongst them, in its most malignant form. Out of the 17 men who took part in the raid, it is asserted that not one escaped the infection and only two of the number appear to have survived. The disease once introduced into the camp, spread with the utmost rapidity, numbers of men, women, and children fell victims to it during the month of June—the cures of the medicine men were found utterly unavailing to arrest it and as a last resource the camp broke up into small parties. Some directing their march towards Edmonton and others to Victoria, Saddle Lake, Fort Pitt and along the whole line of the North Saskatchewan. Thus at the same period, the beginning of July, Small Pox of the very worst description was spread throughout some 500 miles of territory, appearing almost simultaneously at the Hudson Bay Company's Posts from the Rocky Mountain House to Carlton.

It is difficult to imagine a state of pestilence more terrible than that