

should have suggested the desirability of ascertaining, by boring or otherwise, the quality and extent of the beds of lignite in this territory; but under the circumstances, however desirable and important, I have felt that it would be useless to do so.

Even where private enterprise might have been enlisted in the work of developing the mineral resources of the country, nothing can be done owing to the impossibility of obtaining such titles as would justify capitalists in the expenditure that would be necessary.

And for the like reason, anything of the nature of exploration by private individuals in this disputed territory would be a mere waste of time and labour and money, and is therefore utterly discouraged.

INDIANS.

In my last report I stated that the Indians of the Brunswick Lake Band, who now for the most part trade at the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company's post at Missinabie, were exceedingly anxious that a treaty should be made with them. I pointed out that the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway had been located, and runs for a considerable distance through their hunting-grounds; that treaties had been made years ago with every other band of Indians similarly situated, and that it was only right a treaty should be made with them. That the claims of these Indians and those at Flying Post and Mattawagaminque in the Kinogamissee district, had been overlooked, or entirely and unaccountably neglected by the Indian Department at Ottawa, was also represented. Nothing, however, has been done, so far as I am aware, up to the present time.

In view of the recent sad case in which an unfortunate young man was shot near White River Station, of the C. P. R., in an altercation with Indians about furs, I would beg respectfully to offer the following remarks and suggestions which, if adopted and carried out by and with the proper authority, would, I believe, greatly diminish the number, if not altogether prevent such deplorable occurrences in future.

For generations the Hudson's Bay Company's officers have been in the habit of making advances to the Indian hunters and trappers in their territories during the summer and autumn, on the understanding, of course, that the amount thus advanced is to be repaid out of the proceeds of the following winter's hunt. This is called "their outfit," and the value of the articles thus obtained may be, and frequently is, from one hundred to two hundred dollars, if not more, each family. So general has this custom been, and so long has it prevailed, that the Indians rely with full and implicit confidence upon its maintenance. Should the Company be obliged to change their policy, and without intimation or warning put an end to this "old custom," it would be a very serious thing indeed for the Indians of this territory. It would entail not only a great deal of suffering, but in all probability, a great many deaths.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that wherever and whenever the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company may find it necessary to discontinue this practice of making advances (as they must ultimately) that it may be done as gradually as possible.

The construction of railways and progress of settlement is bringing other fur traders into this northern territory, and unless the trade with the Indians be guarded or regulated in some way or other, not only will the Company be obliged to cease making the usual advances, with the results above pointed out, but other evils will undoubtedly follow. The men who are thus brought into the country and tempted to engage in the fur-trade in opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company, are not unfrequently possessed of little means, and less principle. Sometimes they are neither Canadians nor British subjects; they have no fixed abodes nor places of business; in fact, they are too often neither respectable nor responsible, but men of the vilest sort. Such men stick at nothing with their dealings with the Indians. They visit their camps on their hunting grounds by means of snow-shoes in the winter, and way-lay them in canoes when coming to the Company's posts with their furs in the spring. As regards "the goods" which such men take along with them to barter or trade with the Indians for furs, they consist largely of whiskey and trinkets, sometimes whiskey straight, or alone; if other articles of a bulkier or heavier description be employed they are probably adulterated, or of the poorest quality. Men of this stamp should not (if it can be avoided) be allowed to gain foothold in this