

NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES,
ASSINIBOINE SIOUX RESERVE,
BIRD'S TAIL CREEK,
September 10th, 1880.

SIR,—I have the honor to enclose tabular statement for the year ending June 30th, 1880. It will be seen that considerable advancement has been made by the Sioux in my agency, particularly in the number of houses built.

At Bird's Tail Creek nearly every family has a house, and resides permanently on the reserve, having raised sufficient wheat, corn, potatoes and vegetables to last until next crop. Unfortunately a very early frost struck all the corn in low places, and has spoilt it for seed; but the Indians farming on high land, and planting early, have secured a large quantity in fine order. The rapid settlement of the adjacent country affords constant work to the Indians requiring it, in cutting house logs and hay, and getting out fencing, at which they are very expert.

Considerable improvement is also shown in the care of their gardens, the weeds having been kept under and the fences made strong and neat. This band, last spring, on hearing of the destitute condition of the Salteaux at Riding Mountain House, subscribed three bushels of seed corn out of their own scanty supply, and sent one of their number with it to distribute among the Salteaux. Taking into consideration that there is only one yoke of oxen for every five families, as much farming has been done as could be expected.

At Oak River Reserve, the Rev. Mr. Perman, a Church of England missionary, has taken up his residence, and many families are preparing to live permanently on the reserve, most of the Indians having hitherto wintered at the Portage. A number of houses and stables are now being built, and enough hay has been cut and stacked to feed all the cattle through a prolonged winter. Mr. Berman, the missionary, informs me that the Sioux are anxious to have their children taught English.

Farming operations at this reserve were greatly retarded by the River Assiniboine overflowing its banks and remaining out nearly a month, it being late in May before the gardens could be cultivated, otherwise a much larger area would have been sown. Their crops look very well however, and unless a very early frost comes their harvest will be abundant. These Indians are very successful potato raisers, and perfectly understand preserving them in pits during the winter. Last spring they supplied Rapid City and neighborhood with seed, and kept sufficient old potatoes to last themselves until July.

Both these reserves are now well supplied with cows, and will soon raise enough steers to enable each family to have an ox; and both bands are quite able to feed and clothe themselves. Scattered along the Assiniboine, between these two reserves, are several small bands farming on a small scale. They are putting up houses and stables, and have stacked sufficient hay for wintering their cattle.

These Indians earn a good deal of money, cutting wood for the steamers. At Oak Lake, south of the river, the Sioux have a reserve, but are only just commencing to farm. They got their first oxen last fall, but unfortunately all the land they ploughed was flooded this spring, the Pipe-Stone Creek being very high. Their plough was stolen during the winter, while the band was away hunting, and it was late in the spring before they were supplied with another. Since they received the new plough, a great deal of land has been broken, and if they can make a living during the coming winter on the reserve, where they are building houses, these Indians will, I am sure, be very comfortable and contented, I may add that this band hired a plough from a half-breed to work their little gardens last spring. They have never as yet wintered on their reserve. Six families still live at Turtle Mountain, and have small gardens, subsisting mainly by hunting, however. Hitherto a great many Sioux have wintered at this point, but game is getting scarce owing to the rapid settlement of the country, and the six families living at the mountain are anxious to farm. But the closeness of the frontier, and the distance from the other reserves, would render