

Copy

N.W.M. Police

Battleford January 11th 1888.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit for your consideration, the following copy of a letter I am in receipt of from the Non Commissioned Officer in charge of our Outpost at Onion Lake;-

Onion Lake

December 30th 1887.

"I have the honour to inform you that on last Tuesday night the Indian Agent informed me that the Saddle Lake Indians had left their Reserve and gone to White Fish Creek to hold a Council of War, and that they also made threats to come and raid this Reserve. In consequence of the report I have put on a double picquet and have had the Reserve constantly watched for strange Indians. However nothing unusual has occurred until now.

"I was last night further informed that although the Indians have gone off their Reserve, it was in consequence of some dispute with the Indian Agent at Saddle Lake, and that they still refuse to return to the Reserve.

I shall wire you at once should anything extraordinary occur.

I have &c,

sgd W.J.Hall, Sergt

in charge.

Since

Since the receipt of Sergt Hall's report I have received no telegraphic communication from that Non Commissioned Officer. This substantiated by enquiries made from other quarters, shows that all is quiet at Onion Lake

Without being able to trace it to any positive source, I am aware that a slight feeling of ~~disquiet~~ disquiet did exist with regard to the influence that the action of Northern Indians might have among those on the Reserves immediately surrounding Battleford. This feeling has died out. In some quarters however, the feeling is entertained that disquiet among the Indians will make itself felt in the Spring. It may be that this is the opinion of alarmists, and my last desire is to unnecessarily disseminate such views. Still, from what I can gather from various sources, I am inclined to the belief that the Northern Indians do not regard the late rebellion as having brought home to them any very severe lesson beyond its having been the means of stopping their annuities. This last fact they regard as a grievance. As bearing indirectly, or perhaps I may even say directly, on this subject, I would inform you that the majority of the Half-breeds at Bresaylor settlement are in very poor circumstances. Some, indeed, almost in want. Then again, many of these Half-breeds have submitted a petition to the Dominion Government asking that their rebellion losses claims may be re-opened with a view to their receiving remuneration. I do not wish to impute unworthy motives to any of the Half-breeds in question. Nevertheless, I
consider

consider it may safely be anticipated that, should the prayer contained in their petition be refused, at least many of the Half-breeds under discussion will become more or less disaffected. And such men are not likely, by either example or precept, to aid in quieting Indians over whom they must have more or less influence owing to blood relationship and language in common.

In the event of trouble arising among the Southern Indians (the Blackfoot nation) disaffection would make itself felt apparent here; though I am most certainly not of opinion that the Indians of this District, even if combined, would represent a formidable enemy. They are very indifferently armed and horsed, though it is not safe to assume that they are entirely without arms and ammunition.

It might be of interest to make a statistical estimation of the Indian population. You may rest assured that the following is approximately correct;-

Eagle Hills Reserves, Assiniboine (Musquito's band)	
14 miles South	
163 souls	35 men
Cree, (Red Pheasant band)	
25 miles South East	
115 souls	23 "
Battle River Reserves	
Cree, (Sweet Grass Band)	
18 miles West	
¹⁷⁰ 165 souls	39 "
	Cree

Cree (Pound Maker's & Little Pine's band)	
35 miles South West	
269 souls	55 men
Saskatchewan River Reserves	
Saulteaux (Moosomin's band)	
14 miles West	
103 souls	21 "
Cree (Thunderchild's band)	
18 miles West	
170 souls	29 "

Thus showing a total of 985 souls of whom 202 are men above the age of 19.

To this may be added the band at Onion Lake Reserve representing 340 odd souls and say about 80 men. Also the Indians comprising the Saddle and Cold Lake bands. The number represented by these last two bands I have been unable to obtain.

Including the BrBresaylor settlement I believe the Half-breeds of this District could muster at least 100 men, many of whom, of course, would be perfectly loyal under any circumstances.

In reviewing the subject under discussion the conclusion I draw is this. The Division stationed in Battleford in the Spring should be at the very ~~lowest~~ lowest possible estimate 150 strong clear of casuals, the men well mounted and thoroughly equipped in serviceable transport, I believe such a number of men could put down promptly and effectually any possible trouble which

might

might arise. In submitting this for your consideration I trust I have done so in a manner which will not occasion alarm, or on the other hand be regarded as merely representing pessimistic views.

I have the honour to be

Sir

Your obedient servant

sgd John Cotton, Supt
Commanding

The Commissioner

N.W.M. Police

Regina

North West Mounted Police

Battleford 29th February '88

Sir,

I have the honour to forward herewith my usual weekly report.

All kinds of stories are in circulation with regard to trouble that may be expected from the Indians. From what I have been able to learn there is, I think no doubt that some little uneasiness does exist among the Farm Instructors, but the result of careful enquiry made by the Indian Agent and myself has not elicited any reliable information which would lead to the conclusion that the Indians contemplated any acts of hostility.

During the absence of the Indian Agent from Battleford, Mr Andrew Sufferin (Farm Instructor at Thunder Child's Reserve) called on me and said that from hints given by friendly Indians to himself and his wife, he was under the impression that an Indian outbreak was contemplated. When pressed for particulars, he still spoke very vaguely and I gathered that his opinions were formed more from the manner of the Indians than from any actual statements made.

In one case an Indian related to him a "dream" from which was foreseen trouble between the Indians and the Police Force.

This morning some thirty half-breed men living
in

in South Battleford came to my office and asked for an interview which I granted. The half-breeds stated that they were all more or less in a semi-starving condition. They maintain that during the present winter there has been an almost total absence of work. That never in the history of the place has there been so little freighting done. Further that there was no sale (owing, as they say, to Indian competition) for firewood.

These half-breeds request me to make their condition known to the Government in order that help may be forthcoming for themselves and their families. They say that some of them could take freight, and others again could cut firewood.

That the majority of these half-breeds are really badly off I do not doubt, and believe that some of the Bresaylor half-breed families are not in much better circumstances.

During the past week I visited Moosomin Reserve. I certainly saw no signs of destitution among the Indians.

I have the honour to be

Sir

Your obedient servant

sgd John Cotton Supt

Commanding

The Commissioner

N.W.M. Police

Regina

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