

the Half-breed and Indian, punishing all parties who set fire to our forest or plain. Not many years ago we attributed a prairie fire to the malevolence of an enemy, now every one is reckless in the use of fire, and every year large numbers of valuable animals and birds perish in consequence. We would further ask that our chiefships be established by the Government. Of late years almost every trader sets up his own Chief and the result is we are broken up into little parties, and our best men are no longer respected." I will state in connection with this, some of the false reports I had to combat in passing through this country, all calculated to agitate the native mind. In the neighborhood of Carlton an interested party went to considerable trouble to inform the Willow Indians that I had \$3,000 for each band, as a present from the Government, and nothing in my long journey gave me greater satisfaction than the manner in which these Indians received my explanation of the contents of my letter of instructions. At the Buffalo Lake I found both Indians and Half-breeds greatly agitated. A gentlemen passing through their country had told them that the Mounted Police had received orders to prevent all parties killing buffalo or other animals, except during three months in the year, and these are only samples of the false statements made by parties who would rejoice to witness a conflict of races.

That your Honor's message was most timely, these are ample proofs.

A report will have reached you before this time that parties have been turned back by the Indians, and that a train containing supplies for the telegraph contractors, when west of Fort Pitt, were met by three Indians and ordered to return. Now after carefully investigating the matter and listening to the statements of all parties concerned, my opinion is, that an old traveller amongst Indians would have regarded the whole affair as too trivial to be noticed. I have not met with a Chief who would bear with the responsibility of the act.

Personally I am indebted both to the missionaries, and the Hudson's Bay Company's officials for their assistance at the Indian councils.

Believing it would be satisfactory to your Honor and of service to the Commissioners, I have kept the number of all the tents visited and the names of the places where I met the Indians.\*

By reckoning eight persons to each tent, we will have a very close approximate to the number of Indians to be treated with at Carlton, and Fort Pitt. There may have been a few tents in the forest, and I have heard there are a few Crees at Lesser Slave Lake and Lac la Biche, but the number cannot exceed twenty tents.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

G. McDOUGALL.

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\* The number of Indians, as estimated by Mr. McDougall, as being visited by him, was 3,976.