

Report of Supt. Crozier

Fort Walsh, 29th Decmeber, 1879.

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On the 11th July, Lieut. Tillson, of the U.S.A., arrived with a despatch addressed to you, from Gen. Miles. This officer, two days afterwards, left this post for Wood Mountain. The nature of ~~this~~ duty he did not communicate to me, further than that he ~~want~~ he had been instructed to find out if it were possible in any way to hav deserters from the American Army to this country, returned, as his Government was anxious to check dsertion, which was presumed would be frequent, owing to the close o proximity of Fort Assiniboine to the International Boundary Line, and that he was the bearer of the despatch above mentioned, all of which I reported at the time.

I reported to you an intervew I had w th a Cree Indian, brother of Big Skye, an Indian Chief, relative to a supposed council between Big Bear, Canadian Chief, and ~~the whites in this country, the first point of attack being~~ the Sioux, in which Big Bear ~~made overtures~~ to the Sioux to form an alliance against the whites in this country, the first point of attack being this post. As I informed you I questioned the man in the most searching manner when he first brought in the report, and when subsequently he repeated it he certainly seemed to me to be speaking ~~the~~ truthfully; but on having gained information from other reliable sources, I learned there was little or no truth in the ~~matter~~ rumor. I give this as an instance of the many stories one hears, and of the difficulty in believing even those upon whom you might ~~expect~~ imagine reliance could be placed.

During the month of July a large camp of Indians stopped at the post, consisting principally of Bloods, Blackfeet and Crees, to ~~all of whom provisions had be given,~~ as there were few buffalo then in the country; those from the west, north and east, were generally quite destitute of food, the buffalo being in the neighborhood of the Bear Paw Mountains, south of the Boundary Line, where nearly all the Indians that ~~generally inhabit this section of the country were gathered.~~

During last July a large camp of Bloods some 300 lodges, arrived here and held their annual "Sun Dance". They had been hunting before their arrival, I believe, south of this, and had with them a considerable quantity of meat, which they informed me was to have lasted them until after they had received their annual payments; but as they remained here for some time, and as other Indians arrived without provisions they gave a great deal away; from there I understand they went to Fort Macleod.

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On the 30th of September the Right Reverend the Bishop of Dakota arrived on a mission to the Sioux Indians, to induce them to return to their reservation in the United States. The Right Reverend gentleman left for the Sioux camp, in the vicinity of Wood Mt. accompanied by an ~~office~~ escort of officer and 15 non-comms officers and men on the 5th of October. I have already forwarded you a report of the trip by Inspector Cotton, who was the officer in charge of the escort.

In speaking generally, I have the honor to inform you that after the Indian payment in the west large numbers of Blackfeet and Crees, and from the north, Cree Indians, arrived at this post ~~on their~~ their way to Buffalo; nearly all remained here for some time, and a considerable number, say, five hundred souls, are still here, though they have repeatedly been told how necessary it was for them to endeavor to get their own living, but as they are here and the season has advanced, a good many of them will have to be fed by the Government for the winter. There is not a very heavy supply of provisions for Indians here, and if it is only a matter of feeding those here at present, there will be a sufficiency, but the danger to be apprehended is the arrival of large numbers, as this is undoubtedly the first place they would come to in the event of their being unable to procure food for themselves, and this is a contingency that may be brought about in several ways. For instance our Indians are hunting in the United States