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A HISTORY OF SASKATCHEWAN and the OLD NORTH WEST--NORMAN FERGUS BLACK

CHAPTER XIV

UNREST OF CANADIAN INDIANS AND THE INCURSION OF THE SIOUX

DISCONTENT AND SUSPICION OF INDIANS IN LATER YEARS OF HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY REGIME--SIOUX REFUGEES AFTER MINNESOTA MASSACRES--INDIAN RESPECT FOR BRITISH FLAG--EFFECTS OF TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN INDIANS AND HALFBREEDS--ACUTE DANGER OF INDIAN WAR, 1873--SECOND INCURSION OF SIOUX REFUGEES, 1876--FAMOUS GATHERING OF THE TRIBES IN THE CYPRESS HILLS--SERVICES RENDERED BY THE POLICE--CONFERENCES BETWEEN REFUGEE INDIANS AND AMERICAN COMMISSIONERS--DEPLETION OF CANADIAN HUNTING GROUNDS--SURRENDER OF SITTING BULL--UNREWARDED SERVICES OF LOUIS LEGARE'.

Already during the latter part of the Hudson Bay Company's regime the Indians of the British West were developing a spirit of unrest which caused profound anxiety among all thoughtful men familiar with the facts. Even so long ago as 1837, petitions had been presented on behalf of the Indians, complaining of the non-fulfillment of the Selkirk treaty. As the prospect of settlement by the whites increased, and buffalo and other game decreased, the spirit of opposition to any further influx of white men became steadily more and more pronounced.

In 1860, Hind and his company were checked in one of their expeditions by the Indians, and he reports the following speech delivered by a chief:

"The reason why we stop you is because we think you do not tell us why you want to go that way, or what you want to do with these paths. You say that all the white men we have seen belong to one party, and yet they go by different routes; why is that? Do they want to see the Indian's land? You gather corn in our gardens, and put it away. Did you never see corn before? It is hard to deny your request, but we see how the Indians are treated far away. The white man comes; looks at their flowers, their trees and their rivers; others soon follow; the lands of the Indians pass from their hands, and they have nowhere a home."

At the close of the council the chief said to the interpreter:

"Let these men not think bad of us for taking away their guides. Let them send us no presents; we do not want them. We do not want the white men; when the white man comes he brings disease and sickness, and our people perish; we do not wish to die. Many white men would bring death to us, and our people would pass away. We wish to live and to hold the land, our fathers won and which the Great Spirit has given us. Tell these men this, and the talk is finished."

Hind also reported that the plain Crees had in council determined that, in consequence of promise often made and broken by the white men and halfbreeds, and of the rapid destruction by them of the buffalo, they would not permit the white men and halfbreeds to hunt in their country, or travel through it, except for the purpose of trading for their dried meats, pemmican, skins and robes. Hind speaks of war with the northern prairie