

Half-breeds, causing much irritation among the Blackfeet, who have called upon the Police to protect them in maintaining their rights to their territory, saying that if they were not restrained by the presence of the Police, they would make war upon the intruders."

According to the Commissioner's ~~next~~ report, for 1877, the state of affairs existing during the early part of that year in the southwesterly districts of the North-West Territories, was entirely different from any experienced since the arrival of the Force in the country. The weather was extremely mild, week following week with the same genial sunshine, the mild weather being interrupted only by an occasional cold day. There was little or no snow, so that the grass of the prairie from one end to the other being dried up easily, took fire, and only required a spark to set it ablaze for miles in every direction. Unfortunately, nearly all the country out from the mountains, the favorite haunt of the buffalo during the winter season, was burnt over, so that from this cause, and also on account of ^{the} mild weather, the herds did not go into their usual winter feeding ground; but remained out on the plains to the north and south of the Saskatchewan. The Blackfeet Indians had as usual moved up toward the mountains in the fall, and formed their camp along the river bottoms, which had for years back afforded them fuel and shelter, and easy access to a supply of meat, were forced to take long of seventy and one hundred miles, to secure the necessary food supply of food for themselves and families, and eventually moved their camps out to where buffalo were to be got, with the exception of a few small camps, who were in an almost starving condition several times during the winter. ~~the~~

The result of this condition was a large band of Blackfeet were gradually getting closer and closer to the Sioux, who were, by degrees, making their way up from the south-east in pursuit of the buffalo, while other bands of Indians and half-breeds were pressing in from the north and south. the most extravagant rumors were brought in from all directions. A grand confederation was to be formed hostile to the whites, every one of whom was to be massacred as the first act of confederation. "Big Bear," a non-treaty Cree Indian Chief, was said to be fomenting trouble amongst the Indians of the Canadian side. An officer, Inspector Crozier, whom the Commissioner sent to inquire into the matter, was told that he would not get out of Big Bear's camp alive.

The police officers felt quite confident the reported confederation was without foundation. And so far as the Blackfeet were concerned, their loyalty had been made firmer than ever by the treaty which had been very opportunely made the ~~the~~ autumn before. The Commissioner, in fact, had often received assurances of their support in case the Force got into the trouble with the Sioux, and he could never trace the reports of disaffection amongst the Canadian Indians to any reliable source. Even "Big Bear," who had a bad reputation, when visited by Inspector Crozier, repudiated any intention of behaving as had been reported.

On account of the large gathering of Indians of different tribes, the Commissioner deemed it advisable to recommend the concentration of as large a force as possible at Fort Walsh, the post nearest to where the Indians would be congregated. The Canadian ~~in~~ Indians had frequently expressed a desire that some of the police should be near them during the summer when they were out on the plains. The Commissioner thought that the presence of a large force at Fort Walsh might strengthen the ~~the~~ hands of the Canadian Indians, who were very jealous of the intrusion of the Sioux, and might be the means of checking any disturbance which might occur.

Happily the year passed over without any signs of the rumored alliance of the Indians against the whites, and there were no signs of any disaffection on the part of the ~~the~~ Canadian Indians. They had ~~mixed~~ and visited and mixed with the Sioux, and the Sioux with them, and there was no reason to think that those visits had meant anything more than a desire to make peace with one another, as they had been enemies for years before. "Crow Foot," ~~was~~ the leading chief of the Blackfeet, told Commissioner that he had been visited by Sitting Bull who told him he wished for peace. Crowfoot had replied that he wanted peace; that he was glad to meet the Sioux leader on a friendly visit, but that he did not wish to camp near him, or that their people should mix much together in the hunt, and it was better for them to keep apart.