

MCL-59

18.  
Great Britain Notes.  
March 1, 1879. to March 20, 1882.  
Dept. of State/

Canada

Dept. of State  
Wash. May 27, 1879

The R.H. Sir Edward Thornton, K.C.B.

Sir:  
Referring to the correspondence which has been exchanged between us in relation to the lately hostile Indians under the lead of SB., I have now the honor to bring to your attention the substance of recent information received through the responsible agents of the Dept. of the Interior, and to invite earnest consideration of the important points thereby suggested.

This Government has been informed that companies of hostile Indians from S b camp have been and are scattered about, an group of lodges of varying numbers, throughout the entire northern part of the Indians Reservation having Fort Peck, on Poplar River, in Montana Territory, for its headquarters and agency. The peaceable resident Indians of the Reservation have daily come into the Agency, with bitter complaints of the encroachments of SB's men on their special hunting grounds. They say that they find ~~xxxxxxx~~ Uncapapas from S B 's camp everywhere, driving and scattering the buffalo and other game and stealing their horses and running them over the boundary line, thus in every way diminishing the ability and opportunity of the Agency Indians to maintain themselves. There is every reason to believe that SB himself was so late as the 19th ultimo, within the territory of the United States, and had been camped south of the boundary line since Feb. last, and that practically all of his Indians had crossed to the southward of our northern boundary there being, as they claimed, no game for their subsistence on the Canadian side. This state of things naturally gives rise to the disquietude, notwithstanding the late information, communicated to me by you in a recent conference, that SB ~~at last~~ and his chief lodges of warriors were at last advised again on British Territory.

It is ~~xxxxxxx~~ true that these wandering movements of an irreconcilable and declaredly unfriendly Indian force from one side to the other of the frontier do not indicate any determinate purpose or any disposition even, on their part to abandon a residence under British protection, or to renew the state of warfare with the Government of the United States, whose active hostilities were only arrested by the refuge sought and afforded on the soil of a neighboring state. Yet the situation now existing on both sides of the border cannot but be regarded as one requiring the most urgent and careful attention of both governments, lest by uncertainty as to the precise scope and definition of their obligations toward each other, and decision in their treatment of the Indians domiciled within their jurisdiction undue and unnecessary difficulties may grow out of the present attitude of these tribes which have in the most formal manner possible to their savage state renounced their rights in one country and rejected terms of security, subsistence and peace, to seek and receive asylum and residence in the other.

Should these erratic movements continue, this Government may at any time moment be brought face to face with the necessity of suppressing the marauding operations of the hostile Indians under SB's lead, or even of resorting to active ~~xxxxxxx~~ military ~~xxxxxxx~~ operations to repel open attacks on the lives and prosperity of its own people.

OVER