

Fort Macleod.

Decr 27th 1875.

Sir

I spoke in one of my former letters about the danger there might possibly be apprehended from the meeting of hostile Indians "War Parties" as they are called - but more properly small bands of horse thieves. I found during my visit to Fort Hamilton that this practice of "going to war" has not entirely ceased in this part of the country, indeed I heard there of a "War party" which had started some days before to steal horses from "their enemies" in the States. I told the people there to let me know when any of these parties return as I have thought it my duty, in case they do come back with stolen horses, to seize them, and if possible to return them to their owners who very often are white settlers on Sun River and the surrounding Country.

In the mean time I thought it advisable to call the Indians together and talk to them about the matter. So I sent Potts round and asked them to come on Christmas Day. A large number of them attended and thinking it was a good opportunity to impress them with our power and to let them see a Cannon fired, I had one of the 9 pounders run out and four shells fired at a range of about a mile. The bursting of the shells made a tremendous impression upon them. They have always shown a great interest in these two Guns and the mortars and appeared to be very much pleased to see the Gun fired. Having fed them well with boiled rice mixed with syrup, Coffee & biscuits, the Chiefs and lay men were taken into another room where I told them the object of calling them together, that war parties were strictly forbidden, and holding the Statute in my hands, which provides for the punishment, I told them the Government had provided in this to punish very severely any one who was guilty of theft. I added that I had been very busy building my houses, but now that I had got that done I had time to look about me to see who was doing wrong for that was what the Government sent me here for. They received what I had to say with evident satisfaction and one Chief "Old Button Chief" speaking for them all reiterated what they have

Lieut-Col. French.

Commissioner N.W.M.P.

Fort Garry.

so often told me before), that our coming here has saved them from destruction, that they all live at peace now with each other, that they are not afraid of their horses being stolen, with a great deal more to the same effect. They all promised to use their influence to prevent their young men from "going to war" and they would tell all the Indians what I had said.

There is another subject upon which I spoke to them and that is the prohibition upon the importation of arms. At first they were greatly alarmed at this as they thought it showed there was going to be trouble amongst the whites, indeed I heard that some of the bands were going to move off from here. But when I told them that the law extended to all of Canada and that the Government only wanted to make proper regulations about the introduction of arms — so that no bad men who were against the Government should get them they were perfectly satisfied. When one knows that the greatest ambition of an Indian is to get the best horse to run Buffalo and the best rifle to kill them he can understand his anxiety at the importation of arms being prohibited.

There is a very noticeable thing about the Camps of Indians thro' this Country. They always camp out in the open prairies, except those immediately in our neighborhood or within a few miles of us. I asked the reason the other day and was told, that they were afraid of being attacked if they camped in the woods but that they have no fear near us, as the Government will protect them, their enemies would be afraid to come near them when the soldiers, as they call us, are so near.

I have &c.

Copy. Letter to Lieut. Col. French.

Feb'y. 2nd 1875.

Sir

I regret extremely that I have not been able for a long time to send you any letters concerning the Force at this Point. We are entirely dependent upon the good offices of private individuals for the carriage of mails. It is almost impossible to hire persons of any character for the service and

no. 37