

111,775--5

Ottawa, August 13th, 1896.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of copy of letter from Mr. Agent McKenzie, dated 1st and transmitted by you on the 7th instant ; and in reply to inform you that the Department is unable to discover therein any valid reason for rescinding its decision against allowing the Indians to purchase a self-binder.

The Agent is well aware of the department's policy relative to confining cultivation within such limits as Indians can handle without the use of labour-saving machinery. His statements are of a general character, and there is no attempt to shew by any comparison of area under crop with the number of available workers, and the amount of work which might reasonably be expected from them as compared with white men, that it is unreasonable to require them to cut their grain with cradles, &c.

If, as he says, no boys can be spared from the Industrial School, and there are no Indians in the district who could be hired, there are plenty of Half-breeds or white men, and it would be preferable to get some of them to go in and work with and encourage the Indians, if he himself and his Farmers and the Interpreter are not sufficient for such purpose

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purpose, rather than to give in to the desire to purchase a self-binder. The Department would certainly prefer to pay the labour of 15 or 20 men, if necessary, for a few days, rather than allow further expenditure to be incurred in machinery. The argument of the Indians' ~~preference~~ ^{desire} for the machinery has been too frequently met to require further reference here.

As to what he says about the probability of their purchasing without our consent, it may be remarked that an Agent of his experience should be able to exert sufficient influence to prevent such defiance of the Department's wishes, and if he fail the Department can only attribute it to the half-heartedness indicated by his remark that as he knows what they say about not being strong enough is perfectly true he does not know what to say to them. If, as apparently may be inferred from the whole tone of his letter, he is in sympathy with the desire to purchase, it is very intelligible how he may have expended all his powers of persuasion, as he says, with no effect.

Should the Indians act in the matter in defiance of the department it will then be time to take into very serious consideration the whole subject, and the question of the Agent's influence in relation to the Indians' action.

Your obedient servant,

Hayden

Deputy Superintendent General
of Indian Affairs.

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