

treasures, where they could exchange their furs for all that was most desirable, and they soon came to regard the erection of a trading post within convenient distance as a boon conferred upon them by the white man—a boon the white man was only too willing to confer, if business justified it.

Many years elapsed after trade was opened with the natives of British Columbia before the Hudson's Bay Company was able to place its business in this country on a perfect systematic footing. But as its operations extended, and its establishments grew in number, the country was divided into departments, each department possessing its compliments of forts, and each having a chief post to which subordinate forts sent the result of each season's business. These departmental capitals in turn transmitted the furs to headquarters, situated subsequent to 1810 on the Columbia River. From here they were sent overland to Lachine for shipment to London.

The system of government to which the company's servants were subject was a most reasonable and perfect one. All who aspired to command had first to serve, and a long term of apprenticeship was required before every promotion. The highest officers had passed through every grade and knew thoroughly every detail of the business. The entire country was subject to the command of one man, who occupied the position of chief factor, and who was directly amenable to the jurisdiction of the Governor, resident in Canada. Next in dignity to the chief factor was the chief trader, who was usually in charge of some important fort. The chief clerk ranked third, and was either entrusted with the management of a minor fort, or sent on expeditions through the country. Inferior to the chief clerks were the subordinate and apprenticed clerks, who were learning the business, and who were prospective traders and factors. There were also a great many mechanics and laborers in the company's employ, none of whom, however, were eligible to fill the higher offices in the gift of the corporation.

Their fort life and training was largely answerable for the mental and moral character of the early Hudson's Bay traders. The majority of young men who entered the service were possessed of good natural abilities and bodily health and strength, and in the discharge of their duties to the company these gifts were strengthened and developed to the utmost. From the time a youth entered the