

incumbent on them (as soon as the practicability of agricultural improvement was demonstrated) to give a liberal degree of encouragement to an experiment, which independently of other advantages, promises to have most beneficial effects in the civilization of the Indians.

With these views, the company were induced in the year 1811 to dispose of a large tract of their lands to the Earl of Selkirk; in whose hands they trusted that the experiment would be prosecuted with due attention, as the grant was made subject to adequate conditions of settlement.

In entering upon this transaction, the Hudson's Bay company had no reason to suppose that the intended establishment would meet with any peculiar difficulties. The country on Red River where it was to be formed, had been frequented by their servants for a long course of years, and they were in the habits of the most friendly intercourse with the natives. The district had been much exhausted of valuable furs, so that the trading posts in it had proved of late years unprofitable, and doubts had been entertained whether they ought to be continued; and the Indians had on many occasions expressed much anxiety lest the Hudson's Bay company should abandon the posts, from which they had so long been accustomed to receive their supplies of British manufacture. It was not therefore to be supposed that they would object to an establishment calculated to secure them permanently from any such apprehension, and there is no reason to believe that any dissatisfaction would have existed on their part, if they had not been industriously fomented.

—No. 2.—

Dear Sir,

Point Fortuné, 10th October 1814.

Your time of starting being near at hand, I shall trouble you with a line, to acquit myself of my promise. I have this day got in my eleventh bushel of full grain, and still propose continuing to sow more while weather permits. From reports that have reached me, from a source I cannot doubt, since I had the pleasure of seeing you, I have reason to fear that my brother's life, and the safety of the infant colony on Red River, are in a perilous situation; my greatest fear is from treachery, and machinations to prejudice the natives against the colonists. Some of the wintering partners of the North-West company think favourably of the undertaking, and will go all lengths consistent with their duty and interest, as N. W. partners, to prevent its destruction. The strongest argument I have heard used, to raise a jealousy in the natives, is by inculcating on their minds a belief that they are robbed of their lands, without any indemnification. This I have heard a year ago, from the mouth of a principal, and one of the chief instigators of this enmity to the colony; who added, that it was destroying the principle the British government was contending for, in favour of the natives, against the encroachments and seizures of the American government, of their lands against their wills, and allowing them only what remuneration they thought proper to offer. I cannot see upon what ground the colonists claim a right to possess themselves of other people's property, say provisions, traded fairly from the natives with their own merchandize. Self preservation may justify acts that in other situations would be criminal. I sincerely wish more moderation was used by both parties. I dread of hearing something disastrous from that quarter next year.

On the opposite page you will find an account of such things as have occurred to me, to be given up as appendages with this estate. The considerations that may prevent my disposing of it, are the following, of which you will see the propriety. 1st. The death of my wife, or my own health, or hers, being in such a state, that we cannot undertake the voyage to the Red River. 2d. My not being able to dispose of my share in the North-West company, or my inability to go with an amicable accommodation with my partners, for my interest in their hands is about treble of what I should expect as an equivalent for this estate, which I could not, in my sober senses, sacrifice for a wish to go back to the Indian country, to endure hardships and difficulties and privations at my advanced time of life, verging on 45. These difficulties being got over, I shall give you possession of this estate in all May next.

N. B. The rest of the letter relates merely to the transactions of the sale; so far is a correct copy.

(Signed) *Selkirk.*