

supply of fish becomes exhausted, as it certainly will do if the present wholesale slaughter continues, there is then no alternative for the Indians but to roam over a rugged country in search of deer and moose, which will, at best, prove but a precarious means of subsistence, while at the same time this roving mode of life would place them beyond the means of civilization. So far as I have conversed with these Indians on my route, they all seem to look forward with dismay to the approaching ruin of their principal food supply.

I would strongly recommend the Dominion Government to stop the exportation of fish to the United States, and means used to preserve the fish from being wantonly destroyed as seems to be the case at present.

Wild rice is found in many places around Lake Winnipeg, especially around Fort Alexander and Berens River. It is a very hardy plant and will grow in places where there is shallow and still water. I have known several instances of its being sown and always found it to grow in any place adapted for the purpose. There are a considerable number of small rivers and small lakes on the east side of Lake Winnipeg where it could be sown with advantage, and which in a few years would supply the natives with a very good article of food. The average depth of water required for its growth is from three to four feet and the best time to sow it is in the fall season. The first season after being sown, it generally comes up very thin and spare, but in the course of two or three years it comes up abundantly and yields a good crop. I think that an effort should be made to sow this excellent food bearing plant in every place suitable for the purpose, and there are very many such places in the vicinity of Lake Winnipeg, the east side especially. This region on the East side of the Lake is generally rocky and marshy, with innumerable small rivers and small lakes. There is very little of it adapted for agriculture, but the wild rice could be raised almost anywhere throughout this part of the country. By an abundance of this article of food, together with a proper protection of our fish, the Indians would be able to support themselves in comfort, and save the Government a considerable amount which they would otherwise have to expend in feeding them.

From all I can learn I think there must be a considerable amount of intoxicating liquor carried around the shores of Lake Winnipeg. I noticed that at every point we called there was some, more or less, to be had if wanted. Whether there is any supplied to the Indians I am unable to say from personal observations, although I am led to believe that unprincipled persons very often supply the natives with it. I was informed by one of the officers of the steamboat that during the past summer there were complete and general drinking bouts among the Indians at the Little Saskatchewan River. The liquor was brought out there by a man whose name I could not learn, as it appeared he was hiding in the woods on the opposite side of the river, where the Indians were observed to cross and bring over bottle after bottle of the stuff. The consequence was that a complete scene of confusion and noise took place, and the river side was converted into a pandemonium. A considerable quantity of vile stuff is traded among the Indians under the name of "essence," either essence of peppermint, ginger or lemon. These so called essences are put up in small bottles and sold freely among the Indians, and it is no uncommon thing for an Indian to get drunk on a bottle of essence of ginger. This stuff is generally supplied by petty traders in the summer time, who go out in small boats around the various points in the lake where the Indians frequent, and trade off their vile stuff for either furs or dressed moose and deer skins. I do not think that any great quantity is carried out on the steamboats of the North-West Navigation Company, as I think it would be prohibited by them if known. But it is carried out by the small traders who take it out in small boats, and take it into every bay and river where Indians can be found. A little may be taken out in the winter time by sleighs, but the summer time is the principal season that this illicit traffic is carried on.

In my opinion, in order to put a stop to this demoralizing traffic, it would be for the Government to hire or purchase a good fast sailing boat, capable of being worked by two men, one of them at least a good sailor and thoroughly acquainted with Lake Winnipeg, to watch these small craft which swarm around the lake, having power