

territory, or under any pretext to engage in trade with the Indians, for trade so conducted can only result in violence, bloodshed, and the general demoralization of the natives.

Even respectable men (comparitively) who have established little stores on the line of the C. P. R. with the view to trading, chiefly with the employees of the Company, cannot resist the temptation to engage in the fur-trade, and in prosecution of it, to exceed that which is lawful and right.

Not contented with simply buying those furs which the Indians bring to them, they must become "peddlers," and on snow-shoes or with dog-trains visit the Indians on their hunting grounds during the winter. The camps of the Indians thus visited may be several days' journey from these men's places of business. After the toil of such a journey they are unwilling, we may be sure, to return empty-handed. They may know that these Indians have received their outfit from the Hudson's Bay Company, and that the Company have, morally speaking, a "lien" on the furs they have caught; but that consideration is as the small dust in balance as against avarice, and if they can persuade them to be so dishonest they will buy every single skin they have got. Or it sometimes happens the trader himself may have made some little advance to the Indian, and demands furs in payment thereof. If content with what the Indian thinks right to give him it is well, but if he insists upon having more, or in taking furs which the family are reserving for the Hudson's Bay Company, there is likely to be trouble in the camp, and somebody hurt, if not killed. It is no uncommon thing for such traders, or their employees and assistants, to bully and intimidate the Indians into parting with their furs, or even take them by force if they are in a position to do so, and that more especially if the Indian is the least in his debt. Blows once struck the Indians are afraid that they are not only going to be robbed, but murdered, and make use of such weapons to defend themselves and their property as may be at hand. It was in a quarrel (thus brought about as I have been told) that the young man alluded to lost his life near White river.

Now, what I would recommend is this: that all parties desiring to trade with the Indians in unorganized territory, should be obliged to procure from the proper authority "a license" permitting him so to do. No license should be issued to men of bad or doubtful character. The license should be subject to certain conditions, a breach of which should entail penalties or a revocation of the license, or both. Those trading with Indians in such unorganized territory as our Northern Territory, should be amenable, on conviction, to forfeiture of furs and other goods found in their possession, or other severe penalties.

Another suggestion I desire to make is in regard to the fur-bearing animals, namely: Until treaties are made with the several bands of Indians under which they surrender wholly or partially their rights, no hunters, whether white men or Indians of other bands, should be permitted to trap or otherwise take the fur-bearing animals on the hunting grounds of these non-treaty Indians, or if convicted of doing so without the consent of the band, should be liable to penalties at least as severe as those imposed upon "poachers" in the Mother Country. Indeed, they should be much more severely dealt with in some cases. Many of the Indians have little lakes or ponds on their hunting grounds, wherein one or more pair of beaver build their lodges and rear their young. Some of these Indians are prudent enough to refrain from killing all these animals during the winter, knowing the vital importance of leaving a sufficient number to breed. Frequently they do not take or kill any of them until the month of March, when the fur is at its best, and the food, which the creature's flesh supplies, is most needed. When white men, trespassing on the hunting grounds of such Indians, find these "beaver preserves" (for they are virtually such) they trap or otherwise catch all they can; they break into the lodges, they tear down the dams, and let off the water, and do not (if they can help it) leave as much as a single beaver, male or female, young or old. In so doing (and I have heard of such cases on good authority) these trappers from the outside commit an offence (morally at least) much more heinous than that of "poaching"; they rob the wretched owner of the furs and the food sometimes indispensably necessary for the support of his family. And in addition to that they ruin his prospects of obtaining any more at that place or spot for years to come, if not for ever. The Indians should be protected as far as possible against such wrongs—wronges which partake more of the nature of sheep-stealing than of poaching.