



THE SCRIP SPECULATOR GLADLY TRAVELS LONG DISTANCES

The Story of Halfbreed Scrip

By Hay Stead

EDITOR'S NOTE—*The writer of this article has studied his subject from all points of view. It came to his notice several years ago when he was with the Hudson's Bay Company and was in close touch with the halfbreeds in the service. At that time it was a regular practice for scrip speculators to search the company's records for particulars regarding halfbreeds in the service. As secretary to the Commissioner, whose duty it was to distribute scrip and receive applications, Mr. Stead has been able to watch the scrip-buying business at close quarters and has had exceptional opportunities for gathering the inside facts—from both buyers and sellers.*

NOW, Sandy, listen to me. You know you promised me that scrip—”

“Promised nothing! You make me tired! You know, Sandy, that that promise isn't worth the paper it's written on. It's money that's talking now.”

“But, Sandy, don't listen to him for a minute. Last spring that scrip was worth two hundred dollars only; you know a lot of them sold at that. But this year they're worth more, and although you promised to let us have it for two hundred, we're not holding you to that—we're giving you four hundred—”

“He's lying, Sandy. The truth isn't in him. You know as well as I do that if I wasn't here bidding against him, you'd have got just two hundred and not a cent more. He came up here last year and made himself out a big man and said he was going to see that

you got your scrip and that his influence would fix it for you and you couldn't get it without him. I tell you he hadn't anything more to do with getting your scrip for you than I had; and if you sell it to him for any less than I'll give you for it, you're a fool and he's a scoundrel. If he wants your scrip, let him bid for it, same as I'm doing; and let the highest bidder take it. Come on now. He says four hundred. I'll give four-fifty to start it. Now, Mister, if you want his scrip, raise me.”

For nearly a couple of hours the altercation went on. One would have thought Sandy had no say in the matter at all, he was so seldom consulted as to his wishes. And yet Sandy had in his own right, and by right of being head of his family, the disposal of three halfbreed scrip certificates,—his own, his wife's, and his sister's. Each certificate entitled the owner to locate and file on