

of wild animals ; such writers talk at random, they have never counted, nor calculated ; the animals are by no means numerous, and only in sufficient numbers to give a tolerable subsistence to the Natives, who are too often obliged to live on very little food, and sometimes all but perish with hunger. Very few Beaver are to be found, the Bears are not many and all the furr bearing animals an Indian can kill can scarcely furnish himself and family with the bare necessaries of life. A strange Idea prevails among these Natives, and also of all the Indians to the Rocky Mountains, though unknown to each other, that when they were numerous, before they were destroyed by the Small Pox all the animals of every species were also very numerous and more so in comparison of the number of Natives than at present ; and this was confirmed to me by old Scotchmen in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and by the Canadians from Canada ; the knowledge of the latter extended over all the interior countries, yet no disorder was known among the animals ; the fact was certain, and nothing they knew of could account for it ; it might justly be supposed the destruction of Mankind would allow the animals to increase, even to become formidable to the few Natives who survived, but neither the Bison, the Deer, nor the carnivorous animals increased, and as I have already remarked, are no more than sufficient for the subsistence of the Natives and Traders. The trading Houses over the whole country are situated on the banks of lakes, of at least twenty miles in length by two or three miles in width ; and as much larger as may be, as it is only large and deep Lakes that have Fish sufficient to maintain the Trader and his Men, for the Indians at best can only afford a Deer now and then.

Some Lakes give only what is called a Fall Fishery. This the Muskrat country, but the hunter's life is everywhere a precarious one, for the wild animals may move quickly from place to place and the natives, who need to obtain food daily in order to live, may not be able to follow them or to find them quickly enough to avert starvation.