

should we be lucky enough to repel them, they will find it a difficult job to get off with their provision, as I candidly think that the greatest coward in the country will be an Alexander or a Caesar to gain a piece of pork, or bottle of whisky.

Mr. Faribault has been up to the river St. Peter's, and stayed fifteen days at Mr. Aird's. There is nothing more interesting from there than anywhere else. The Indians were not come out yet. Mr. Aird was starving according to the custom of that second Nipigon [?] fifty lodges of Sioux went off last Fall with only ten double hands full of powder. They have not been heard of since. The rest of the Sioux think they perished with hunger. Reports of the same nature come daily from every quarter, of Indians dying with hunger for the want of ammunition. Let a person turn his head what way he will, he can find nothing but misery, famine and distress in all their various shapes, staring him in the face. And all this is owing to the shameful neglect on the part of the Government in not supplying the country better with ammunition in proper time. It is easier for you to judge than for me to describe our situation here. We are nearly on the eve of seeing upwards of two thousand Indians, and not a pipe of tobacco, nor a shot of powder to give them. As for eating it is out of question. I wish to ask you as a friend, whether you would wish to be a door-keeper in hell, or be concerned in the Indian Department on such footing? I am sorry to say, that the wretchedness of this place has been augmented, if any addition could be made to its calamity, by the worst of evils—that is to say, party spirit; and that too, at such a critical period when the public safety would require union and good understanding among the whole.

Previous to my departure to go below, notwithstanding every gloomy object that surrounded us, we still lived on terms of amity and friendship; and I was much surprised on my return to find that a coolness, or rather a party disposition had taken place between the gentlemen of the garrison and the [Indian] Department. I do not pretend to say at present who was in the right, or who was in the wrong.