

erto they have resorted to the Canadian traders for goods, because our own apprehended much danger in attempting to carry on a trade with them, particularly as the Canadians generally prevail on the Indians either to plunder them or to drive them away. Only one trader of our town returned into that quarter during the last year.

Great danger, both to individuals and to the Government, is to be apprehended from the Canadian traders; they endeavor to incite the Indians against us; partly to monopolize their trade and partly to secure friendship in case a war should break out between us and England. They are constantly making large presents to the Indians, which the latter consider as a sign of approaching war, and under this impression frequently apply to me for advice on the subject. Hitherto I have been able to keep them friendly.¹

The United States have it in their power by the adoption of one simple measure to turn the current of Indian trade on the Upper Mississippi, and to put an end to the subsisting intercourse between the Canadian traders and the Indians. Prairie des Chiens from its central position is well calculated for a garrison and factory. It affords health,

and engagés would attract "300 or 400 Indians, when they hold a fair; the one disposes of remnants of goods, and the others reserved peltries."—ED.

¹Oct., 1815, William Clark, Ninian Edwards and Aug. Chouteau, commissioners to treat with the Indians of the Mississippi basin, reported, from St. Louis, to the secretary of war: "The Indians about Prairie du Chien are represented by Mr. Boilvin (the agent at that place) and several other persons who have lately returned from there, as being in a state of the greatest commotion, occasioned by their divisions with regard to peace with the United States; all of which, together with the conduct of the Sacs [the British band], and the failure of the Winnebagoes, Menomonees, and Chippewas to meet us, is thought by the most intelligent white men who have been in that country, as well as by some of the most respectable friendly Indians, to be the result of the immense presents which the British government have lately distributed, and the constant intrigues of British traders, who certainly have a greater quantity of merchandise on the Mississippi at present than they ever had in any former year; indeed, from accounts from various quarters, it appears that they are making the greatest possible efforts to retain their influence over the Indians, and to engross the whole of their trade."—(*Am. State Papers*, vi, p. 10.)—ED.