

of my life before. You will be able to form some idea not only of my situation, but also that of the whole party, when I inform you that the morning on which we left the Portage to descend the Wisconsin, at that time full of floating ice, there was not a meal of victuals in any of the Boats. The Indians were unable to give us any assistance, they were themselves in a starving condition owing to the want of ammunition. For near six weeks they had been waiting anxiously along the Banks of the River, for Mr. Dickson, and altho' they hailed him as their preserver from death, reproaches would now and then escape them at his having left them so long to suffer. They appeared to be struck with consternation when they saw the small portion of supplies allotted to them. Many said they feared they would not be able to see the winter out, and that their families would starve. I endeavored thro' Mr. Dickson to encourage them with the hope of better times, telling them to be of good cheer, as this would be the last winter they would experience any misery. We explained to them the causes why a greater supply had not been sent, but they seem'd incredulous and said we had made them the same promises every year and they had never been fulfilled.

In obedience to your instructions I desired Mr. Dickson to communicate to the *Folles-Avoines* & *Winibagoes* at a council which I attended of those nations, the satisfaction which His Excellency derived from their good conduct throughout the last campaign, which appeared to be highly gratifying to them. I also caused it to be imparted to them that their service would again be required at Mackinac in the coming spring, they replied that they would be all ready to act any part their father directed. I think it proper to state to you the sentiments which seem'd universally to prevail amongst them. They expressed great dissatisfaction with their treatment at Mackinac last summer, on my desiring an explanation, they said they had been starved, whilst the stores are full of provisions for they saw them, they said, with their own eyes. I desired