

the persons who are present at it, that is, French or Spaniards, so that it may be a lasting record.

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[Report of Pedro Piernas. Source, same as preceding document.]

As this [Fort San Carlos el Principe] has been, and is, the place of residence for the commandant, the near and distant Indian tribes, both those of the Misisipi River, and those of the Missouri and its branches, whose names are contained in the enclosed report, gather there. The season for their greatest gathering is during the months of May and June. At that time they descend the rivers in numerous parties with their traders to declare their furs. That is their first object, although it is accomplished with the condition of the pretext of visiting the chief and ratifying the friendship that has been established. All the time of their stay provisions are furnished them at the expense of the king, those provisions being reduced to bread and corn, for they provide themselves with meat; and when they depart one has to make them, as it is the established custom, a present, which is proportional to the number of each tribe. Most of the tribes, with the exception of some remote and distant tribes of the Missouri are accustomed to the use of brandy, and prefer a small portion of it to any other present of merchandise even of four times its value. If the savages are treated with kindness, reasonably, and with consideration, they are reasonable when in their right mind. But when drunk they are importunate, beggars, insatiable and tiresome. Yet the commandant must always be attentive to them, listen to them with patience, compose the differences and discords among the various tribes; sometimes make rulings and mediate in their peaces, with persuasions, sometimes with firmness, and most always with presents. Consequently, they are generally costly. But they cannot be so, if the presents are distributed little by little and with equity. That depends in part on a disinterested and vigilant commandant, a loyal interpreter, and a righteous