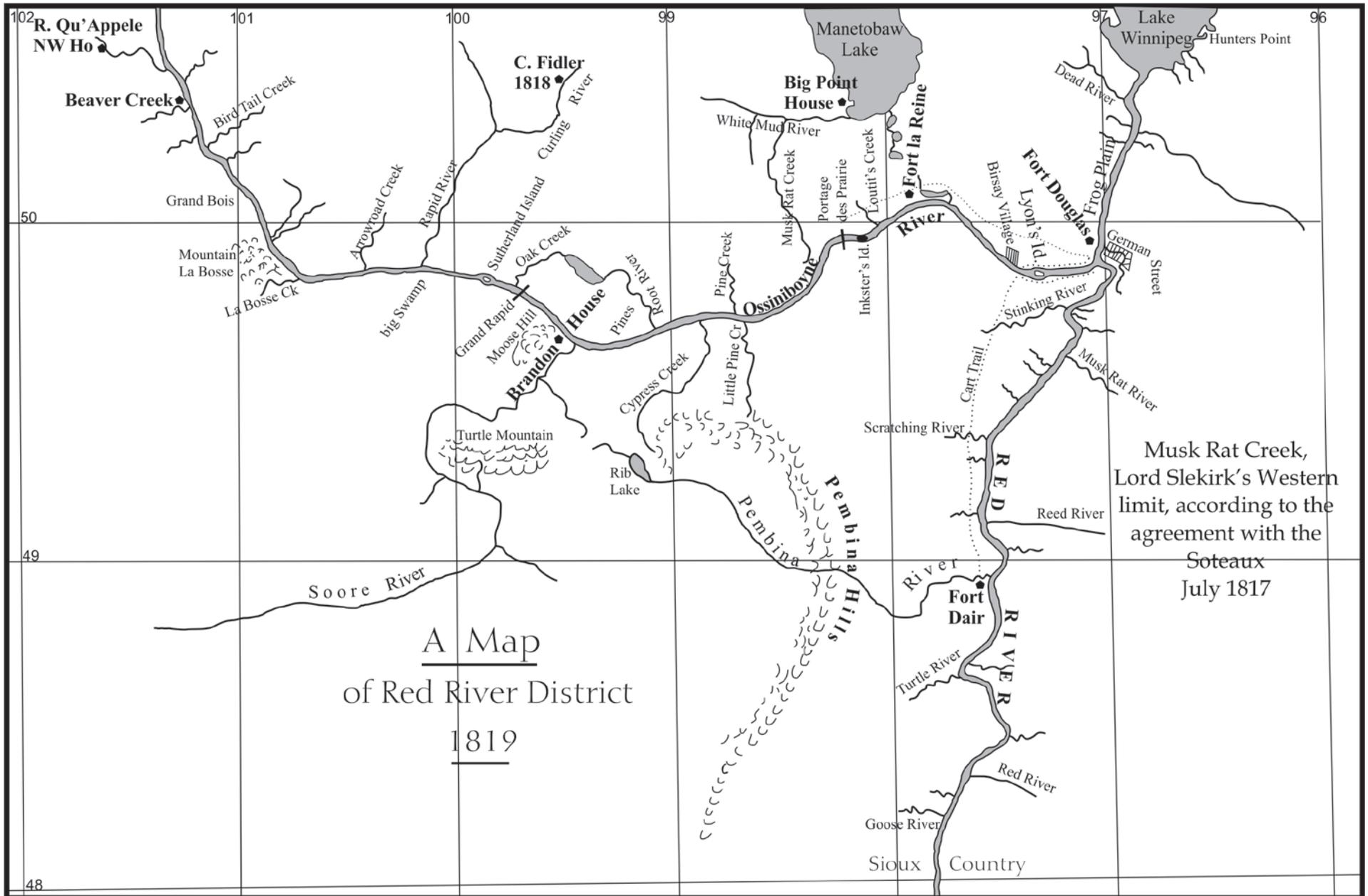


HBCA B.22/e/1 General Report of Red River District, By Peter Fidler , 1819 May



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II Extent of the District &c. &c.

From the mouth of Red River along its banks to the entrance of Red Lake River; also from Fort Douglas¹ up the North Branch or Assiniboine river to Riviere Qui' appellé where the Red River district joins to the Swan River. Several small rivers or creeks fall into this extent from either side; but none navigable any distance from their mouths, in loaded Canoes excepting the Reed river or River Roseaux² on the Eastern bank 12 miles below Fort Dair³ which communicates with the Woody Lake over a height of land about one mile very swampy. The other most considerable stream is the Saskatchewan or Rapid river⁴ which falls in on the North Side about 30 miles above Brandon House but this is only navigable for Indian Canoes but choaked up by numerous rapids; it comes from the Fort Dauphin Mountain. Several other Rivulets joining it before it empties itself into the Assiniboine river.

Riviere Qui'Appellé⁵ is very circuitous and narrow and only passable just when the Ice breaks up, about the 25th april in Batteaux; from the Trading Houses to its mouth. The Trading Establishment is at present 18 miles by land from its mouth, it has a water communication almost the whole way with the south Branch of the Saskatchewan at the Moose Woods the Height of land is within 20 miles of that place many small lakes & a few of some considerable size intervene.⁶

¹ Fort Douglas was named in honour of Thomas Douglas, the 5th Earl of Selkirk (1771-1820). The first fort was built in the spring of 1813, but was destroyed by the NWC in June 1815. The fort was rebuilt nearby in 1815. That post was taken by the NWC after the battle of Seven Oaks, but was reclaimed by Miles MacDonnell in early 1817.

² The Roseau River, as Fidler says, offered an alternative way to Lake of the Woods. It was suitable for personal travel, but not for canoes loaded with cargo.

³ Fort Daer was named after in honour of Lord Selkirk, the founder of the Red River colony. Selkirk was, Lord Daer and Shortcleuch. Fort Daer was established at the mouth of the Pembina river on the west bank of the Red River during the winter of 1812 by Miles Macdonnell, Governor of Red River and by the Red River colonists. It was captured by the NWC and some of its Native allies on 16 March 1816 (B. 22/a/16) and recaptured by Selkirk in December 1816. Fidler's map correctly places it just south of the 49th parallel. Thus, the HBC was required to abandon that post when it was confirmed to be in the United States.

⁴ The Little Saskatchewan River rises in the Riding Mountains and enters the Assiniboine just upstream from the present-day city of Brandon, Manitoba.

⁵ The Qu'appelle River is a major tributary of the Assiniboine River.

⁶ During the retreat of the last glaciers a large river apparently ran eastwards carving the wide valley that still connects the elbow of the South Saskatchewan River from the headwaters of the Qu'Appelle River. With the retreat of the glaciers, the large river began flowing northward. This left the small Qu'Appelle River with the large valley carved by its predecessor. Since Lake Diefenbaker was formed in 1967 some of the South Saskatchewan River's water once again flows eastward. The Gardiner Dam controls water flowing to the South Saskatchewan River, and the Qu'Appelle Dam controls water flowing into the Qu'Appelle River.

Dead river⁷ 5 miles from the intrance of Lake Winipeç on the west side navigable for Indian canoes only about 14 Miles from its mouth, where it is⁸

[Fo. 2]

These are the only considerable streams within this district excepting the Souris⁹ which falls into the Assiniboyne about six miles below Brandon House. It is not navigable especially the lower part on account of the shoals and rapids. The middle part is deeper and calmner. It extends to within about 18 miles of the head of the south branch River¹⁰ a considerable distance above the Moose Woods and its being between the Indians of this & the Missouri there are manny Beaver in it particularly near the upper parts where the natives are afraid to hunt for fear of being killed by their Enemies¹¹

III Nature of the Country Soil Trees &c..

The country near Lake Winipeç to 10 miles at the banks are low and swampy in many places higher up the banks are bolder to the entrance of the Red Lake River & well timbered in many places with Oak, Ash, Elm, White wood,¹² or Liard, & Poplars and also several extensive hummocks of Mapple¹³ of a small kind where a considerable quantity of sugar might be made annually every April 3 Gall^s of the Juice on an average making one pound of sugar. There are a considerable quantity of

⁷ Dead River, or Riviere aux Morts, is today known as Netley Creek. It enters the Red River from the north side some 6 miles from Lake Winnipeg. According to John McDonnell of the North West Company, the river was named Riviere aux Morts because a camp of Assiniboines, Crees and Saulteaux were killed here by the Sioux. It was a favoured camping spot of the natives of the region. John McDonnell, "The Red River," in W. Raymond Wood and Thomas D. Thiessen (eds.), *Early Fur Trade on the Northern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 79.

⁸ This is the bottom right corner of the first page. It seems that a word or two has been rubbed off after frequent page turning.

⁹ This is today's Souris River. "Souris" is French for "mouse," and English speakers did sometimes refer to it as the Mouse River.

¹⁰ The upper Souris River, flowing south east is very near the north west flowing Moose Jaw Creek which flows to the South Saskatchewan River. Fidler is clearly aware of how one might use the Assiniboine and Souris River routes to get from Red River to the South Saskatchewan River.

¹¹ Here and again in Section XIII, Peter Fidler is referring to an intertribal "game sink." The first scholar to discuss this phenomenon was Harold Hickerson. See his "The Virginia Deer and Intertribal Buffer Zones in the Upper Mississippi Valley," in Anthony Leeds and Andrew P. Vayda, ed., *Man, Culture, and Animals: The Role of Animals in Human Ecological Adjustments* (Washington: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1965), 43-65. Also see Charles R. Watrall, "Virginia Deer and the Buffer Zone in the Late Prehistoric-Early Protohistoric Periods in Minnesota," *Plains Anthropologist* 13 (40)(1968): 81-86, and P.S. Martin and C.R. Azuter, "War Zones and Game Sinks in Lewis and Clark's West," *Conservation Biology* 13 (1)(1999): 36-45.

¹² Fidler is probably referring to *Tilia americana* which is known commonly as the American basswood, or Whitewood. The lower Red and Assiniboine valleys represent the northwestern extremity of its natural range.

¹³ *Acer negundo* It is best known in Canada as the Manitoba maple, and in the United States as the box elder, and ashleaf maple. Fidler described the making of maple sugar in more detail in his 1820 annual report of the Manetoba District.

smaller woods which produces Saskuttem berries¹⁴ when dry they much resemble currants in external appearance; Cherries,¹⁵ Plumbs,¹⁶ Hazel nut¹⁷ &c &c besides Strawberries,¹⁸ Cranberries,¹⁹ Hipps, Gooseberries, Currants Red, White & Black²⁰ (the latter of a purgative quality) Haws &c &c. Some oaks and more especially the whitewood attain a very considerable size many of them being 5 feet in diameter. There is a drift stick of this latter class embedded in the muddy parts near the entrance of the Lake that are more than 26 feet diameter in circumference. The woods attain a more considerable size up the South than the N Branch or the assiniboyne the soil being more ~~more~~ moldy and of a better quality.

Almost an entire plain from Dead River to Charlton House on either side & above up the Red River, except near the banks of the rivers and creeks where a belt of woods is generally found extending in depth in some places 2 or 3 miles but commonly not more than from 100 to 300 yards the rest is in general denuded of woods to the very brink of the River.²¹

[Fo. 2d]

A considerable root called by the Crees mes tes coose men²² grows like a small carrot called the wild Turnip from 3 to 5 Inches long and about one Inch in diameter which the natives pound into a coarse meat like substance which they use as substitute to make soup, another smaller (which is entirely confined to wet places, whereas the former is always found in dry ground) it is called by the natives Aotas about the size

¹⁴ The various species of *Amelanchier* are now generally known as Saskatoon berries in Canada and serviceberries in the United States.

¹⁵ The choke cherry (*Prunus virginiana*) was the most common and prolific.

¹⁶ May be a reference to *Prunus Americana*, the American plum. Fidler hints at the northern limit of its distribution in his 1820 annual report.

¹⁷ The beaked hazelnut is common in Manitoba (*Corylus cornuta*).

¹⁸ *Fragaria virginiana*, or wild strawberry. These berries are neither prolific nor amenable to drying, but the tiny berries are sweet.

¹⁹ Fidler may be referring to the low-bush (*Vaccinium pallidum*) or the unrelated high-bush cranberry (*Viburnum americanum*).

²⁰ Gooseberries and currants (*Ribes spp.*) were not prolific but tasty and nutritious.

²¹ Thus, by "entire plain," Fidler means "entirely treeless."

²² Fidler is referring to *Psoralea esculenta* which is known by various names including wild turnip, Indian turnip, prairie turnip, scurf pea, and Indian breadroot. This was among the most palatable and nutritious wild plants of the region. For literature see D.W. Moodie and Barry Kaye, "The Psoralea Food Resource of the Northern Plains," *Plains Anthropologist* 23(82 pt. 1)(1978): 329-336; Kenneth C. Reid, "Getting to the Root of the Problem: A Rejoinder to Kay and Moodie," *Plains Anthropologist* 24(86)(1979): 339-340; Barry Kaye and D. W. Moodie, "Rooting for the Truth: A Reply to Reid on the Importance and Distribution of Psorelea Esculenta," *Plains Anthropologist* 26(91)(1981): 81-83; and M. S. Kaldy, A. Johnston and D.B. Wilson, "Nutritive Value of Indian Bread-root, Squaw-root, and Jerusalem Artichoke," *Economic Botany*, 34(4) (1980): 352-357. Its widespread use by Natives is well documented. The Cree name has been recorded as "mistaskucomina," (grass berry), and the Blackfoot name as "sowkaas".

of a goose quill great numbers of roots of this kind grow to a single stalk. It is called also the wild parsnip and is both nourishing and palatable.²³

The country is level on the north side to 14 miles above Portage De Prairie²⁴ from Lake Winipeg where a constant succession of small sandy hills slightly covered with herbage and shrubs and some stunted oaks and intersected with numerous valleys or rather hollows all the way to Brandon House below which some stunted Pines are found which ledge of woods Crosses the Assiniboyne about 30 miles below Brandon House at which it verges from the river 10 miles on the North side & extends a considerable distance to the N,Westard. The Southern end extends only about 6 miles on the south side the assiniboyne where they terminate in dry sandy ridges.²⁵ About 30 miles from Brandon House in the direct route to Fort Dair a chain of hills commence their N. Eastern side is pretty steep & in some places more than 360 feet above the level of the adjacent plains but intersected with many vallies where flow some small Rivulets of pure water Several small lakes are also found among these hills but few if any fish in them except where a stream of any magnitude issues from them. No large timber growing among these hills only some small oaks but in general small ash.

There are several salt springs above Fort Dair where a great quantity of salt is made by concentrating it of a very good quality. A salt spring has lately been discovered $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way from the Forks to Pambina. One also was discovered near Brandon House a few years back by a Canadian freeman but he refused to discover the spot unless

[Fo. 3]

he got the reward of an 100 skins Value in goods which he found none offered him. And the place is still unknown by any other. But near Swan river the best & most copious springs are found which yield the greatest proportion of salt. The soil above Portage De Prairie is in general too porous and Sandy, but will yield good crops of all the kinds tryed but it requires a rainy or very frequent showery summer. Hops

²³ This probably not *Pastinaca sativa*, commonly known as the "wild parsnip" because that plant is an introduced species.

²⁴ Portage la Prairie took its name from the portage route that connected the Assiniboine River and Lake Manitoba. The first post in that vicinity was Fort la Reine, established by La Verendrye in 1738. The HBC had a post there since at least 1815, HBCA B.51/c./1, p. 29.

²⁵ Fidler is describing the Manitoba Escarpment. The escarpment marks the western edge of the Manitoba plain, a very flat plain that stretches east to the Canadian Shield and is occupied by the Red River, the lower Assiniboine River, and Lakes Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Winnipegosis. The escarpment runs in a roughly southeast-northwest direction. From southeast to northwest it forms the eastern edge of the Pembina Hills (see Fidler's map), Riding Mountain, Duck Mountain, Porcupine Hills, and Pasqua Hills. In the Assiniboine Valley it is far lower, forming a series of sandy hills, as described by Fidler. The escarpment represents the western shores of the ancient Lake Agassiz. To the west of the escarpment, lies the second prairie level, where the land is more undulating and the soil sandier than on the Manitoba plain.

grow ~~along all~~ in considerable quantities all along the banks of the Rivers & Creeks & are to be found as well as the Oak as far north as Swan River House.²⁶ Some wild flax grows near Fort Douglass. And the black root about Brandon House about the size of a man's finger which runs straight down into the ground like a rope no person has ever it is said dug so low down as come to the extremity of it it is of hot pungent aromatic & rather astringent taste promoting an effusion of saliva it is also applied as a cataplasm in bruises Burns scalds or other inflammatory eruptions & generally proves of great efficacy it is much valued by the Indians. Very little of it is to be found but near Brandon House it flowers early the stem forms nearly similar to part of a bullrush full of black triangular seeds about 14 Inches above the ground.²⁷

There are also a great variety of medicinal roots whose specific qualities are well known to a select few of those natives & especially to a few old men who value themselves upon their Botanical medical knowledge.

III Productions Provisions Animals & Trade

The Buffalo are generally abundant above Brandon House (Tho' in some seasons as 1814-15 there were none particularly Cows within 40 miles of that House) and will afford excellent subsistence for a great number of people. Few are seldom ~~howe~~ found below Portage De Prairie half way between Brandon House & the Forks of the Red & Assiniboine rivers There are many of these

[Fo. 3d]

animals along the banks of the river above Pambina all the way to the Missouri & beyond few are seldom lower than Pambina, The cows generally take the bull from the middle of Aug^t to the middle of September at which time the bulls are very vicious

²⁶ Fidler also mentions wild hops (*Humulus lupulus*) in his annual report for 1820.

²⁷ Because Fidler failed to describe the habitat in which this plant grew, his description does not permit a definitive identification of the plant. It is probably sweet flag (*Acorus calamus* and/or *A. americanus*), although it does not fit Fidler's description perfectly. Sweet flag, a relatively uncommon plant of the wetlands, is similar to a bulrush. Its roots are dark, although not black, and it has triangular, although not black seeds. Fidler's description of the taste fits sweet flag perfectly, and the plant was clearly esteemed by aboriginal people for many purposes (see Robin J. Marles, *Aboriginal Plant Use in Canada's Northwest Boreal Forest* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 269-71. It is also possible that Fidler was referring to the more common perennial western variety of the Seneca snakeroot (*Polygala senega*). The western snakeroot has a long root which is very difficult to extract whole, although it is usually light to dark brown, not black. The plant does flower earlier than most plants. The white flower spikes of the Seneca snakeroot appear in May or early June, and mature to produce black, tear-drop shaped seeds. It is very common in well-drained sites in southern Manitoba, although less so than formerly in the Brandon area, thanks to cultivation. It rarely grows as tall as 14 inches. Fidler's description does match the medicinal qualities of the snakeroot well. It was and continues to be valued as medicinal plant. (Marles, *Aboriginal Plant Use*, 216-17.) Manitoba has emerged as a major supplier of powdered snakeroot which is still valued as an expectorant. I wish to thank Norman Kenkel, biologist at the University of Manitoba, for helping me with my attempts to identify this plant.

especially when wounded and several fatal accidents have then occurred. The Cows go nine months with young as in Europe and have in general only one at a time In April & May the under hair or rather a very fine soft fur or wool for it seems to partake of all these qualities has been frequently made into good warm stockings & mittens, which look and wear well more especially the fine down rubbed off by the animals against trees and bleached all winter is remarkably fine and silky and I have little doubt but that a good lasting cloth might be made of the under wool, as well as hats. The whole is of a dark grey colour and perhaps could be dyed to no other²⁸ The bulls are fat in summer the cows in winter after the month of September the males collect in separate bands sometimes to above an hundred, The whole of the fresh meat of a good cow as we receive it from Indians or European hunters, are nine pieces consisting of 2 thighs 2 shoulders one Rump one Brisket 2 ribs & Ridge bone the whole weighing on an average from 330 to 420 lb but in general about 360 lb. The ridge bone above the shoulders is esteemed the most delicate part Those cows who have no calf are generally fat the whole year. The flesh of the buffalo killed in summer is generally made into Dry Meat for Trade tho' consisting only of the choice pieces as the ribs briskets &c. The beat or pounded meat is generally made after Christmas when the animals are becoming leaner 80 to an 100 lb generally afforded from one Cow of dry provisions exclusive of fat. The natives melt the fat & put it into bladders

[Fo. 4]

for convenience & carriage which on an average requiring 15 Bladders to every 100 lb. The prices generally given to Hunters in the district is 2 skins p[er] Cow & one for a bull on an average the skin with the Indians may be valued at the Invoice price of goods at less than one shilling but with Freemen at above 2 to 3 shillings & they generally take the greatest of their payment in dry goods as cloth Blankets shirts Kettles Guns axes &c. whereas the Indians generally take at least one half in mixed Rum, Three balls & 3 loads of powder is promised gratis by the Traders for every animal if they expend more it is charged to the Hunters account

The allowance of fresh meat for one man exclusive of Bone is 5 lb a Woman half that & for every child 1 to 1½ lb p[er] Day of dry provisions 2 lb 1 & ¾ respectively the same allowance of any other kind of provisions Fish 7½ lb p[er] day p[er] man but in general they have more when they can be got. The natives particularly the Stone Indians or Asiniboyne every winter when the Buffalo are

²⁸ In the early 1820s the Buffalo Wool Company, in Red River, made a failed attempt to create an export market for products made of "buffalo wool." Papers related to this enterprise can be found in HBCA F.34/1.

plentiful make ponds or strong fences of wood 6 feet high from 20 to 80 yds and square in each of the 4 sides into which the Buffalo are driven in droves sometimes as many as above 200 at one time they must then be every one killed before any one dares venture within the enclosure to cut the best of the animals in pieces for present use or make dry provisions for the trade with us when the Pond is so choked up with carcasses that those who enter in jump over the fence & escape the Indians leave it ~~who~~ and move some little distance where they erect another

The horns of the young bulls very probably might be valuable when made into drinking cups &c as they take a very fine polish and are all got black, and may be purchased from the Indians

[Fo. 4d]

in considerable quantities and at a small expense as 2 horns for one pint of Indian Rum which is Leward Island rum mixed with 3 or 4 times the same quantity of water Some Red Deers horns might be collected but they are so bulky & unweildly for carriage that they would not pay ~~not~~ the expense of carriage to the sea coast. The furs traded in this district 1813 to 1816 were generally rats²⁹ (now 1819) there is scarcely one to be seen. Wolves³⁰ also abound but they have been of in no repute these several years past so that the Indians are not desired to killed them in great numbers Red Foxes are tolerably plenty as also Kitt Foxes³¹ Beavers & Bears formerly plentiful now scarce the former owing to some disease coming among them about the beggining of this century which extended its baneful influence thro' this entire country we are acquainted with but about Moose [Factory] and East Main Inland that contagion seems not to have extended its baneful effects as in all other parts the Traders from Hudsons Bay frequent³² — Indeed this district has now very few valuable furs in it so that it will not cover its own expences but on account of the Atabasca being Settled dry provisions must be had and this and the Saskatchewan are the two principal places where every spring near 1000 bags of Pimigan of 80 lb each is traded from the Indians besides a very considerable quantity of dry meat. The price we give to the Indians

²⁹ Muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*).

³⁰ The gray wolf, or timber wolf (*Canis lupus*).

³¹ The red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is common in forested areas and forest margins while the kit fox, or swift fox (*V. velox*) was a creature of grasslands and desert. Kit foxes were extirpated in Canada, although they have been reintroduced.

³² The beaver (*Castor Canadensis*) and the muskrat are susceptible to tularemia, which is caused by a bacterium known as *Francisella tularensis*. While other animals, such as hares are susceptible to the disease, epidemics of tularemia can wipe out entire beaver stocks. Fidler discusses this die off again in his 1820 annual report of the Manetoba district. Other references to this epidemic can be found in the Edmonton House journals of May 1797 (Alice Johnson, ed., *Saskatchewan Journals*, 92, and in John Tanner's narrative in 802-3, John Tanner, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner* (Minneapolis, Ross and Haines, 1956), 89.

generally is for 20 lb dry provisions in Knives, Tobbacco, Amunition & all the other small articles may average $\frac{1}{2}^d$ per lb in Trade but several presents are always given such as near $\frac{1}{2}$ pint Lew^d Is^d Rum & one foot Tobbacco each man and those who bring in considerable quantities a Knive or two

[Fo. 5]

awl steel gun worm &c a longer piece of Tobbacco & more Rum.

The Red Deer³³ is the most numerous & large animal & constitutes in some seasons the principal part of the subsistence of Traders & Natives when the Buffalo is scarce they generally keep near woods a few grown Buck will weigh equal to a cow buffalo & they commonly keep in herds from 10 to above one hundred The females generally bring forth two at a time in spring the meat is tender but the fat hard the next animal which sometimes are numerous is the Jumping Deer³⁴ not above $\frac{1}{3}$ the weight of the Red Deer they frequent the Plains in large bands in summer (here) in winter they are much scarcer migrating to the Southward towards the Missouri & beyond Their flesh & fat is nearly similar to the Red Deer

Sturgeon³⁵ ascend the Red & Assiniboyne Rivers every spring and pass Brandon House on their way up about 10 or 14 days after the Ice breaks up which is about 23^d April some of them ascend as high as Shell River³⁶ they return about the middle of June towards Lake Winipeg & the natives generally make fences across the river to prevent their descent when they reserve and kill them when required the greatest part of the Summer for their subsistence they in general weigh from 30 to one hundred lbs. The wild Turnip is plentiful thro' the plains & frequently used by the natives both as a delicacy & means of subsistence

V. On the Climate Vegetation &c

The climate of this district is much milder than towards the north The winter commences or rather the river freezes over at Brandon House generally the first week in November last year 1817 which was very early the river froze over here

³³ American elk (*Cervus elaphus*).

³⁴ John Richardson, in 1836, noted that HBC traders used the term "jumping deer" to refer to both the mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), Richardson, *Fauna Boreali-Americana*, 1: 254. This is despite the fact that only the mule deer flees danger with a spectacular four-footed jump (known as a "stott") which makes it appear as if it is on springs. The white-tailed deer is the most common deer in Manitoba today, although it is possible that it was not common in the region in Fidler's time. The white-tailed deer has gradually expanded its range, and the mule deer contracted its range with the spread of agricultural settlement. Today the mule deer is listed as a threatened species in Manitoba.

³⁵ The Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) has declined significantly in Manitoba.

³⁶ The Shell River is just off Fidler's map. It flows into the Assiniboine River above its confluence with the Qu'appelle.

[Fo. 5d]

23^d oct^r some seasons it keeps open till the beginning of Dec^r the difference between winter & summer in the extreme in the extreme [sic] heats & colds is between 130° to 140 on the Farenheit scale descending to 44 below zero & rising to upwards of 94 above but the winter on average in general is seldom lower than 10 below the cypher & some few days in this period a slight thaw. The snow generally falls & remains in the month of December what falls before generally melts away. Rain sometimes fall in the winter which includes Dec^r & the three following months & the regular thaw generally commences about the 20th march and in less than 10 days all the snow is melted except in the thicketts and deep vallies but the whole is off by the first may even in those places The depth of snow that fell during the whole season from the first to the last average between 20 & 30 Inches but on level in the month of march it is generally from 10 to 16 Inches. The spring months have sometimes storms of wind & thunder even so early as march within these last 3 years the climate seems to be greatly Changed the summers being so backward with very little rain & even snow in Winter much less than usual and the ground parched up that all kinds of grass is very thin & short & most all the small creeks that flowed with plentiful streams all summer have entirely dried up after the snow melted away in the spring for these several years loaded craft could ascend up as high as the Elbow or Charlton House but these last 3 summers it was necessary to Convey all the goods from the Forks by land in carts one horse in each and dragging between 500 lb & 600 lb.³⁷

Wheat, Barley, & potatoes have been cultivated here a few years back to a considerable extent last summer a considerable quantity was sown & planted of the kinds above mentioned, but owing to the very dryness of the season not even a single

[Fo. 6]

stalk was reaped or potatoe taken up and here before when showery summers the wheat would produce above 40 Barley 45 and potatoes 50 fold. Even all the smaller kinds of vegetables failed from the same cause but the first week in Aug^t last clouds of Grasshoppers came & destroyed what little barley especially had escaped the drought These insects make their appearance in great numbers generally about every 18 years & come from the southward The corn is sown here about the first may & reaped first Aug^t the wheat requiring 3 weeks longer in coming to maturity The turnips generally

³⁷ The year 1816 is famous at the “year without a summer,” caused by what may be the largest volcanic eruption in thousands of years. On 15 April 1815 Tambora, a volcano in Indonesia erupted, killing about 10,000 people immediately, and producing incalculable misery around the globe in the next few years. The eruption threw enough ash and dust into the air to affect climate throughout the globe. Here and in other places in this report Fidler provides evidence of its effects on the weather in his region.

sown about the 20 to 30 June the hay is ready for cutting about the beginning of Aug^t but only low bottoms produce any quantity that is good There is a large purple flower that blooms in Ap^l generally springing up large even in a few days after the snow is melted.³⁸ The most prevalent winds in summer is from the South westward in Winter between north West & East several Turtle are found in the Red & Assiniboyne river shell of some above 12 Inches over³⁹

VI Advantages and Disadvantages

The principal advantage of this district is particularly in being able to procure a great quantity of dry provisions and Tallow. Also from the quantity of excellent oak good staves may be had for 10 gallon Rundlets to contain Rum &c and when the Colony is well established which I expect soon will be that in 3 years hence at farthest a sufficiency of Flour, meal, Pork & Rum may be made here to serve all the people of Trade belonging to the Honorable Company Tobacco might even be raised here in any quantity for the purpose of Trade if any people were here who understood the manufacturing it proper for trade, Salt & Mapple sugar can also be had in great quantities the former can be easily made by the Europeans & sugar by the Natives. Cordage also may be raised & made on the spot if persons qualified

[Fo. 6d]

were at the settlement. Coals are said to be found in Pambina hills 30 miles from Fort Dair in great quantities. There are also Lime & Ironstone in that vicinity so that even Iron might be produced in the spot. The principal Disadvantage is the small quantity of valuable furs to be procured in the district the Beaver being nearly extirpated & the country to open and clear of woods for proper places for the smaller fur bearing animals. In some seasons especially for these 3 last summers the water has been so shoal in Red & Assiniboyne Rivers more especially the latter that no loaded boat or canoe could ascend even so high as Brandon House whereas boats and canoes tolerably loaded have formerly ascended the north branch as high as Charlton House lately called ~~the Elbow~~ Fort Hibernia 20 miles above the Elbow where are settlements⁴⁰ The goods & men going overland nearly 120 miles from Swan River

³⁸ The prairie crocus (Anemone patens) is Manitoba's provincial flower.

³⁹ The Western Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*), the most common turtle in Manitoba rarely gets this large. The Common Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), which commonly gets this large, is also native to southern Manitoba.

⁴⁰ John Sutherland established the first HBC post at the Elbow in 1795. Fort Hibernia, itself, was probably built around 1800, due north of the Assiniboine River Elbow, sometimes called the Indian Elbow. This post was moved in 1807 about 14-20 miles higher up the Assiniboine, as Fidler notes. It was closed after the Union in 1821. In 1824, the HBC established a new post on the site of the first Fort Hibernia and named it Fort Pelly, after J.H. Pelly, Governor of the Company, or his cousin, R.P. Pelly, Governor of Assiniboia. It was in the NE corner of the Elbow of the Assiniboine

House at which place the Craft discharge their cargoes some part taken by land in the fall the rest dragged on sledges in winter and all the returns in furs & provisions have been till now taken by the same route at a great expense in provisions for dogs and men one dog consuming as much as nearly a man & the custom is to have always 3 in one sledge and seldom take above 250 lb at most what is called Company cargo. The Indians I believe are becoming more lazy than formerly they are also much more troublesome and daring were they more industrious many more furs might be got than is killed by them. Almost every spring the natives are obliged to collect in large bands for fear of their enemies the Sieux and other tribes who inhabit along the banks of the Missouri river. But there is little danger of them doing any injury to the settlers or settlement as they invariably wish to be on friendly terms with the Europeans. This district is subject in almost a constant periodical term of every 18 years to be greatly hurt by innumerable swarms of Grasshoppers that sometimes they scarcely leave a single green leaf but this is only partial in spots

[Fo. 7]

where such dreadful havoc is made by them.

The 3^d aug^t last at 2 PM innumerable swarms arrived at the settlement of Fort Douglass they seemingly came from the South West the same evening they attacked the barley & cut much down cutting the stem a little below the ear. At Birsay⁴¹ a village of some of the old servants of the H.B.C^o 20 miles above the Forks they appeared 3 days earlier and at Pambina a few days sooner a small caterpillar at times are also hurtful to the leaves &c

VII Number & situation of the Posts in the District

Begginning at Lake Winipee the first Post occupied by the Coy is 2 or 3 miles up Riviere au mort or Netly Creek on the west bank of the Red River for these several years the trade from there is very trifling since the rats & Beaver have become scarce. The second Post is at the Forks or junction of the Red & Assiniboine river on the north side established by us 2 years and by the N.W.C^o in 1811. Brandon House 6 miles above the Souris River on the south side and established in 1793.⁴²

River. Terry Smythe, Thematic Study of the Fur Trade in the Canadian West, 1670-1870 (Historic Sites and Monuments Board, 1968), 145. B.159/e/1, fo. 10.

⁴¹ Birsay Village was a settlement of former HBC servants, some of whom had come from Birsay, Scotland. It was located on the Assiniboine River some twenty to twenty-two miles west of the Forks. Birsay was settled in 1817-1818. The small settlement disbanded after the measles epidemic of 1819-20.

See Fidler map and Barry Kaye, "Birsay Village on the Assiniboine," *Beaver* (Winter 1981): 18-21.

⁴² The first HBC Brandon House was established by Donald MacKay in 1793. It was built on the north bank of the Assiniboine above the mouth of the Souris River. Peter Fidler abandoned that post and built a new one nearby in 1815.

The next post up the Assiniboine river is Beaver Creek⁴³ 20 miles by land from Riviere qui'appele House established in 1817. The other post is below the Turtle river about 15 miles by land above Pambina these are the different trading posts in the district inhabited this winter. 2nd Dead river House 3 very poor small Houses. At the Forts large buildings are beginning to be erected & to be enclosed with excellent oak piquets. Brandon House is in a ruinous state occasioned by the wabrules (or half breeds) in 1816 – a small new house was built here last summer 30 by 14 feet there are a smith & coopers shops also a Trading room Provisions store and 2 stables with Houses for the men & Indians when they come to the Houses to Trade. At Beaver creek there are several buildings as being a great place for the Stone Indians & enclosed with Poplar piquets about 35 yds square. 3^d the only place at present where there are gardens are at the Forts, Brandon House & Beaver Creek, At the Forks last summer about 2 acres in cultivation (purchased with

[Fo. 7d]

small house from a freeman) planted with potatoes a little wheat & Barley but the grasshoppers destroyed the whole of the latter. this spring. the ground is considerably enlarged making use of the plow. At Brandon House last summer the Barley was destroyed by the grasshoppers & the great & almost continuous drought entirely destroyed the potatoes turnips &c &c so that there was not the least benefit derived from the labor. Since 1812 there was always good crops of everything until 1816 when the dry summers commenced the land here under cultivation was upwards of 3 English acres at Beaver Creek about half an acre enclosed which produced a few potatoes & a few kegs barley with some other smaller vegetables but the dry weather greatly deteriorated the expected produce. This spring they are going to enlarge the garden a little but at present (22^d ap. 1819) the season has every appearance of being as dry as latterly. 4th The quality of the soil at Dead River is dark rich mould. at the Forks rather more sandy but produces good returns. At Brandon House still more sandy but in wet or rainy seasons produces abundant crops. Beaver creek better soil not so sandy as at Bⁿ House and generally tolerable crops. 5th Generally the spade & Hoe is used by turning over the soil in the spring when the seed is put in. At Brandon House the Plow is used, manure is seldom used except for raising Cucumbers, melons or onions, The wheat & Barley is cut down with the sickle & the potatoes taken up

Fidler presided over that post from 1815 to 1819. Fidler's Brandon House post journals are found in HBCA B.22/a/19-21.

⁴³ Beaver Creek House was located on the west bank of the Assiniboine River about two km upstream from Beaver Creek. It was a sub post of Brandon House. Beaver Creek itself, flowed into the Assiniboine River from the west just downstream from the confluence of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers near St. Lazare, Manitoba.

generally with the spade sometimes with the plow and are secured generally in cellars within the House well covered with grass to secure them as well as the turnips from the post. 6th Potatoes, at the trading establishments have generally been the most attended to which was first introduced into these parts about the year 1780 these with a few cabbage & Turnips constituted the whole produce of the gardens till within these 8 or 10 years wheat particularly Barley have been raised at several of the

[Fo. 8]

Trading posts.⁴⁴ (Excellent potatoes can be raised in the Atabasca as well as cabbage. Wheat & Barley very probably would not come to maturity there When I wintered at Atabasca Lake we had good gardens there in 1803-4 & 5 and the Canadians followed our example). The Wheat produce 40 the Barley 45 and the Potatoes about 50 bushels for one sown the Potatoes are generally put into the ground about 10th May & taken up middle oct^r but they are eatable after 25th July. Oats have as yet been tried but in very small quantities but they produced well & of a good body 7th The Cultivation of this ~~district~~ River may be extended with one additional hand to more than treble the ground under present culture. Millstones might also be had to reduce it into flour &c Where horses may be had as in this river several acres might be sown with wheat, Barley, &c but the few men generally left Inland would not be able to secure the whole crop that might be put in the ground in the Spring without any additional expence. 8th Sturgeon which passes by here (Brand. House) about 10th May every spring would afford a very ample supply for many people – some of them a seen as high as Shell river more than 800 miles by the River – The natives frequently make fences of wood to prevent their descent to Lake Winipeg and by this means preserve a constant and very ample supply for summer. The traders sometimes pursue this Indian method a few Burbot⁴⁵ or what is Commonly called here Cat fish about 8 to 12 lb each – There are also flat fish about 1/2 to 3/4 each besides 2 or three other kinds. Buffaloe are in general plentiful in this district particularly the Southern & Western parts of it also Red Deer and some moose Deer or Elk in the Turtle mountain which is like an island in the open plains about 25 miles long by near 10 wide very woody interspersed with numerous small Lakes & a few creeks which discharges itself into the Souri or sandy river, formerly plenty of Beaver in it now very few. as the country wherever I have been & by the invariable information of the different

⁴⁴ For examinations of the history of early agriculture in this region and period see D. W. Moodie, "Agriculture and the Fur Trade," in *Old Trails and New Directions*, 272-290; D. Wayne Moodie, and Barry Kaye. "Indian Agriculture in the Fur Trade Northwest," *Prairie Forum* 11 (1986): 171-183, and Moodie, D. W. and Barry Kaye. "The Northern Limit of Indian Agriculture in North America," *Geographical Review* 59(4) (1969): 513-529.

⁴⁵ The burbot or ling, (*Lota lota*) is the only fresh water member of the cod family.

[Fo. 8d]

Tribes I have enquired at agree that the country is becoming much drier than formerly & numbers of small Lakes become good firm land well covered with Timber of various kinds but generally Willows or Poplar or ash is the first produce. There are a number of small Lakes East of Brandon House that produce the *Zizina aquatica* or Wild rice a few years ago an Indian sowed some in 2 or 3 places on south side the assiniboyne which grew & multiplied where the water is too deep or the seasons too dry very slender Crops are brought to maturity⁴⁶

VIII On the men Employed in the District

The men employed last year in 1817-18 in this district at three posts viz: the Forks, Brandon House & Beaver Creek was upwards of 65 which was double the number absolutely required for the Companys business. Many of them were Meurons who came from Canada summer of 1817 and Canadians.⁴⁷ This season or 1818-19 there are employed 48 men which is still too numerous for the Indian Trade but this super abundance partly arises from the last summer having all the goods for the supply of the Colony to bring up from the Bay in addition to what is required for the Trade only.

At present it seems necessary to have a Trading Post at the Forts where 5 or even 4 men are sufficient to winter at after the necessary buildings are erected

At Brandon House 10 men may be required and at Beaver Creek 18 to 20 may be necessary on account of the great numbers of Stone Indians who Trade there. One Trading Post about Turtle river or near the entrance of the red Lake river or the grand Forks for the purpose of the Soteux Trade 12 men would be sufficient there. There winters at the Forks & the small outpost of 5 men at Dead River 18 men at Brandon House the same number and at Beaver Creek 22 men There are usually left Inland for the summer 5 each at the 2 Upper houses. 3 would be sufficient for the Forts after the necessary buildings are erected which are now in a fair way of being soon. M^r Duncan

⁴⁶ This is interesting evidence that Indigenous people deliberately introduced wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*) to new waters. It was given its scientific name by Linnaeus in 1753. Wild rice was the most important food plant among aboriginal people in the Great Lakes region. Wild rice grows best in water that is between about 45 and 90 centimetres (1.5 and 3 feet) deep. As Fidler observed, wild rice will grow poorly in places where the water depth fluctuates. Its natural range did not extend west beyond Manitoba. It is now grown commercially. Linnaeus gave this plant its scientific name in 1753. Fidler also mentioned wild rice in his annual report for the Manetoba district of 1820.

⁴⁷ Some members of the Swiss De Meuron regiment of mercenaries were brought to Canada during the War of 1812. After the war ended, the regiment was disbanded, and Selkirk hired 85 soldiers to accompany him from Montreal to Red River.

Graham⁴⁸ with 2 or 3 Canadian Clerks and about 20 men winter at the head waters of the

[Fo. 9]

Red River between the Sioux & Soteux Country where plenty of Beaver is said to abound being on the borders of those Tribes who are frequently at war with each other but altho' much is said to be there of Beaver as yet very little has been done but a very heavy loss incurred tho' pursued now 3 seasons. The masters or Traders who at present winter in this District beginning at Lake Winipee & ascending Westwards are at Dead River M^r John Stett⁴⁹ at the Forks M^r James Sutherland⁵⁰ chief of the Department & M^r Loutit⁵¹ writer with John Ram Kipling⁵² as Interpreter. at Brandon House M^r Peter Fidler with Charles Fidler⁵³ a coabrule Interp^r

⁴⁸ Duncan Graham (1772-1847) was born in the highlands of Scotland in 1772 and immigrated to North America in 1794. He worked as an independent fur trader on the St. Peters River and at Devils Lake. During the War of 1812, he fought on the side of the British and after the war he joined the HBC. He wintered in the Upper Red River district (probably south of the US border) in the winter of 1818-19, and at Lac Traverse, in Sioux Territory, in 1819-20. In 1820 he quit the HBC and joined the NWC. In 1834 he retired from the fur trade and moved to Wabasha, Minnesota. He died in 1847 at Mendota, Dakota. HBCA B.239/d/210.

⁴⁹ This is John Stitt. He came from Dumfriesshire, Scotland and worked for the XY Company in the early 19th century. When the XYC merged with the NWC, he worked for the new concern. By 1809, he was the post manager for the HBC at Pembina. He would work as a trader at posts around the Forks (Pembina, and Netley Creek) for the rest of his career. In 1815-16, he was considered "A weak unactive character." He was present at Red River during the Fur Trade Wars and was trusted by Chief Peguis. He represented the HBC at the Selkirk Treaty negotiations at Red River in 1817. He retired to the Red River Settlement in June of 1819. HBCA B.239/d/175-204; B.160/1-3; B.63/f/1, fos. 4d-5.

⁵⁰ James Sutherland (1778-1844) was born at Ronaldshay, Orkney Islands, and engaged with the HBC in 1797. He was stationed at Edmonton House as a writer (1798-1803), and then as a writer at Cumberland House and Green Lake. He became a Trader and Master at Cumberland House from 1808 to 1811, and then assigned to the Winnipeg District (1811 to 1813). He was put in charge of the Winnipeg and Western Winnipeg Districts (1814 to 1816). That is how he enters the story here. He was imprisoned by the NWC and Cuthbert Grant on 9 May 1816 while stationed in the Qu'Appelle. Thereafter he was put in charge of the Swan River District (1816-1818) and thereafter in charge of the Forks (1818-19) and Swan River (1819-21). After the merger of the HBC and NWC he was made Chief Factor of the Saskatchewan District (1821-22), and finished his career as Chief Factor at Severn (1823-25). Thereafter he was on medical leave and retired to the Red River Settlement in 1827. He married Jane Flett (1785-1835) with whom he had seven children. After Jane died, he married an "Indian woman." Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens (eds.), *The Hudson's Bay Company: Edmonton House Journals, Correspondence & Reports 1806-1821* (Calgary: Historical Society of Edmonton), 482; HBCA BS.

⁵¹ This is Henry Loutit/Louttit [A] from Stromness, Orkney Islands. He was born about 1799 and joined the HBC in 1817 as a writer. He was first posted to the Forks as a Clerk (1818-19) and then served in the Swan River District until 1820. In 1821 he was posted to Norway House in 1821. George Simpson remarked of him in 1821-22 that he was a steady and active young man, a good Clerk, but no trader. He was to be rehired at an augmented salary at the expiration of his contract, but he returned home in 1823. HBCA B.239/d/204-216a; B.239/f/12; B. 154/d/11&17.

⁵² Jack Ram Kipling was the native-born son of John Kipling from Bishopton Durham, England, who had joined the HBC in 1766 and worked on the Albany River district (Henley House, Gloucester House) for most of his career. He died in 1794 and was buried at Albany Factory. His son Jack Ram Kipling was born about 1788 and by the 1800s was employed by the HBC as a Labourer and Steersman out of Albany. By 1806 he was at Brandon House where he was based until about 1811 when he was posted to Pembina Post. He married Margaret Okanens before 1810. He was a steersman at Pembina in 1814-15 and an interpreter at Turtle River in 1815-16. He was at the Forks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers in 1817-19. He left the employ of the HBC in 1821 and was killed in a fight in 1836 at Fort Union. HBCA BS."

⁵³ Charles Fidler (1798-1886) was the son of Peter and Mary Mackegonne (a Native). Charles entered the employ of the HBC in 1812 as a Labourer, working his whole career in the Winnipeg and Red River Districts at Brandon House,

At Beaver Creek House Mr Duncan Finlayson⁵⁴ & Mr Jⁿ R^d Mackay⁵⁵ with Geo. Setter⁵⁶ as assistant and Francis Monjunii⁵⁷ as Interpreter for the Cree Language. We are miserably off in this River for the Stone Indians altho' this district has been established these 26 years not a single person has been able to acquire the Assiniboyne language never being sent to learn it so that we are always beholden to Indian women to act as Interpreters in that Language which is never so trusty and beneficial as our own people This year it is intended to send a man along with the Stone Indians for 2 years by that time he will have acquired a sufficiency of the language for every essential purpose. as all the particular papers are at the Forks I have it not in my power to specify every particular as to Character &c &c: which information will be

Curling River, and Fort Dauphin. He quickly became a Steersman and eventually took over from his father as the Master in charge of Fort Dauphin when his father became ill in 1819. After 1820, he retired to Red River with his wife, Anne Sanderson. He died in the RRS in 1886. HBCA BS.

⁵⁴ Duncan Finlayson (1795-1862), from Dingwall, Scotland, entered the HBC service in 1815, and served the next four years at the Qu'Appelle, Fort Hibernia, and Beaver Creek posts. He quickly caught the attention of his superiors and in 1820 became Colin Robertson's replacement as head of the Peace River District. His stature continued to rise as Clerk of Edmonton House (1821-24), and he became a Chief Trader in 1828 (Fort Garry), and a Chief Factor in 1821 (Columbia). In 1839 he became Governor of Assiniboia. He was a favourite of George Simpson, and became his brother-in-law when he married Isobel Simpson. He retired from the fur trade in 1859, but then became a member of HBC's London Committee. HBCA BS. Gerald Friesen, "Finlayson, Duncan," *DCB Online*. Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens (eds.), *Edmonton House Journals: Reports from Saskatchewan District Including the Bow River Expedition, 1821-1826* (Calgary: Historical Society of Edmonton, 2016), 346.

⁵⁵ John Richards McKay (1792-1877) was born at Albany Factory to John McKay Sr. and Mary Favel. He was educated in England and joined the HBC in 1808 as a writer at Albany Factory. In 1809 he joined his father at Brandon House and was then posted first to Pembina, and then to Riviere Qu'Appelle where he supervised its reconstruction in the fall of 1815. In 1816 he married Harriet Ballenden at Brandon House. In 1816-17, he was a Trader at Fort Hibernia, from 1817-19 a Clerk at Beaver Creek, and from 1819-24 he was posted to the Upper Red River district as Trader and Clerk. At the time of the Coalition of the NWC and HBC in 1821, he was in charge of Brandon House. In 1821-22, George Simpson noted that he was sober and honest, a tolerable Clerk and Trader, but somewhat too extravagant with Indians. He noted that he would be discharged the next season if he did not improve. McKay retired to the Red River Settlement in 1824, but rejoined the HBC in 1831. Thereafter, he served as a Clerk and Postmaster at Portage and Fort Ellice. He was dismissed in 1844, but rejoined the Company in 1846 and worked as Postmaster at Partridge Crop, Riviere Poule d'Eau, Shoal River, Touchwood Hills, and various Cree camps. He retired for the final time in 1859, and died in 1877 at Fairford Mission. He was buried at St. Clements in Red River. HBCA BS; B.239/d/165-216a; B.239/f/12. T.R. McCloy, "McKay, John Richards," *DCB Online*. R. Harvey Fleming (ed.), *Minutes of Council Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31* (London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 446-47.

⁵⁶ This is George Setter from Westra, Orkney Islands. He shows up in the Brandon House accounts first in 1810-11, and in 1814-15 is listed as a Bowsman there. In 1815-17 he was posted to Qu'Appelle and Fort Hibernia, and in 1817-19 as an Assistant Trader at Beaver Creek. He spends the rest of his career in the Winnipeg (Upper Red River) and Swan River Districts becoming an Interpreter in 1824 and a Postmaster in 1827. From 1832-34 he was posted to the HBC Experimental Farm and finished his career in the Swan River District as a Postmaster. He retired to the Red River Settlement in 1837. HBCA B.22/d/1-4; B.239/165-216a; B.239/g/2-16.

⁵⁷ This is Francois Monjeunier/Monjunier (*b.ca.* 1790 Rupert's Land). He is listed as a servant at Brandon House as early as 1810-11. In 1815-16, he was employed at Riviere Qu'Appelle as a Bowsman, and it was noted that he was sober and honest, and a good Interpreter. From 1816 to 1819 he was an Interpreter at Fort Hibernia and then at Beaver Creek. From 1819 to 1822 he was posted to the Red River district as an Interpreter. In 1823-24 he was noted as a Freeman, and in 1824-25 he was listed as a settler at Red River. In the 1827 Census of the Red River Settlement, he was listed as being 36 years old, a Protestant, and married with three sons and one daughter. HBCA B.239/d/165-216a; B.63/f/1; B.239/g/2-4; B.22/d/1-4.

found in the books there. But there is a census of the Free Canadians & others at the two periods of 1814 & 19.

[Fo. 9d]

A List of Free Canadians &c In Red River District									
District	Name	3 March 1819				14 Feby 1814			
		Men	Wom	Boy	Girl	Men	Wom	Boy	Girl
Qu'Appelle	Francis Dechamps Sen ^r	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	
Qu'Appelle	Francis Dechamps Jun ^r	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	
Qu'Appelle	Jos. Dechamps or Gros Tate	1	1		2	1	1		
Qu'Appelle	Humphrey Favel - Trader	1	1	4	2				
Qu'Appelle	Thomas Favel - Trader	1	1	3	2				
Qu'Appelle	David Sanders - Trader	1	1						
Brandon House	Andre Trocher Sen ^r (Trottier)	1	1	4	3	1	1	2	
Brandon House	Andre Tocher Jun ^r (Trottier)	1	1	3	1				
Brandon House	Michel Francis	1	1	2	4				
Brandon House	Jos. Bonneaux Sen ^r	1	1	4	3	1	1	3	2
Brandon House	Pierre Bolleaux	1	1						
Brandon House	Antoine Azure	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Brandon House	Jos. Azure	1	1	2					
Brandon House	Antoine Fannier (Fournier)	1	1	4	1	1	1	2	
Brandon House	Annie Poetras, his mother & sister	1	2						
Brandon House	Jos. Vivier	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	2
Brandon House	Jos. Faller-Deaux	1	1	1		1	1		1
Brandon House	Baptiste LaDeaux	1	1	3	1				
Pambina & Forks	Jos. Botteneaux	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	5
Pambina & Forks	Antoine Tranchemontagne	1	1	3	1	1	1	4	1
Pambina & Forks	Jos. Dauphine	1	1		2	1	1		2
Pambina & Forks	Old Adam	1	1	1	1	1		1	1
Pambina & Forks	Bell Gaurde	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	
Pambina & Forks	Louis Belahemare	1		1	1	1		1	1
Pambina & Forks	Lagemoniere	1	1	3	4	1	1	2	4
Pambina & Forks	Jos. Ducharme	1	1		1				
Pambina & Forks	Pierre Ducharme	1	1	1	3				
Pambina & Forks	Menasem	1	1			1	1		
Pambina & Forks	Old Amill	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Pambina & Forks	Jos. La Plante	1	1	3	2				
Pambina & Forks	Cattena La Plante	1	1		1	1	1		2
Pambina & Forks	Antoine Marsellais	1	1	2	4	1	1	1	1
Pambina & Forks	Baptiste Marsellais	1	1	2					
Pambina & Forks	Antoine Pelletier	1	1	3	3	1	1	2	1
Pambina & Forks	Bostonais Pangman	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
Pambina & Forks	Colish Ducharme	1	1	2	1				

Pambina & Forks	Baptiste Le Roy	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	2
Pambina & Forks	Bazil Bellhanger	1	1			1	1		
Pambina & Forks	Jos. Hamelin	1	1	4	4	1	1	4	3
Pambina & Forks	Antoine Bercier	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fo. 10									
Pambina & Forks	Jos. Loosey	1				1			
Pambina & Forks	Jos. Langee	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Pambina & Forks	Mine	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pambina & Forks	Jos. Caddotte	1			2	1			2
Pambina & Forks	Angus McDonald	1	1	2	1	1		1	1
Pambina & Forks	Laverdure	1	1	2	4	1	1	2	3
Pambina & Forks	Nicholas Ducharme	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	2
Pambina & Forks	Baptiste Demarais Stony Interpreter	1	1	4	5	1	1	3	4
Pambina & Forks	Delorme	1	1	3	3	1	1	3	3
Pambina & Forks	Dubois	1	1			1	1		
Pambina & Forks	McKay	1	1	4	3	1	1	3	2
Pambina & Forks	Vandal	1	1			1	1		
Swan River	Antoine Ducharley	1	1	2	2				
Swan River	Antoine Pluff	1	1	2	1				
Swan River	Lamere	1							
Swan River	Montrai	1	1	3	2				
Pambina 1814	Monteour					1	1		
Pambina 1814	Lafevere					1	1		
Pambina 1814	Charles Hesse					1	1		
Pambina 1814	Baptiste					1			
Pambina 1814	Fausseneuve					1	1		
	In 1814					43	37	49	52
	In 1819	57	54	103	95				
Settlers (servants of the H.B.C. lately)									
	Magnus Spens ⁵⁸	1	1	4	4				
	John Spens								
	James Sandison Sen ^r								
	Robert Sandison								
	James Spens ⁵⁹								
	Oman Norquay ⁶⁰								
	Whitford ⁶¹								
	James Monkman ⁶²	1	1	2	3				
Fos. 10d									

⁵⁸ Magnus Spence was born in Birsay, Orkney Islands in 1764 or 1765.

⁵⁹ Probably James Spence who was born around 1779 in Orphir, Orkney Islands, and joined the HBC in 1797 as a tailor. He retired and went to the colony in 1818. He married Jane Morwick, the widow of Oman Norquay, in 1822.

⁶⁰ Oman Norquay (c. 1773-1820), from South Ronaldshay, Orkney Islands, is an ancestor of John Norquay, premier of Manitoba from 1878 to 1887. He died in the measles epidemic of 1819-1820.

⁶¹ Probably Peter Whitford who was married to Christina Spence, the daughter of Magnus Spence.

⁶² Probably James Monkman (1775-1865) who entered the HBC service in 1793 and went to the Red River settlement in 1816.

IX Of the Indians

In this district the stone Indians are by far the most numerous. They inhabit generally between Brandon House and below the Elbow or Fort Hibernia on the South side [of] the Assiniboyne River 4/6th of them Trade at Qui Appelle & Beaver Creek 1/6 at Fort Hibernia & the other 1/6 at Brandon House. They are estimated in the whole who visit these three posts at upwards of 540 Tents each Tent generally containing on average 2 married men with at least 3 woemen as many of them have two wives & some few of them as high as six with generally 3 children may be safely taken on an average for every married woman so that the whole population of the stone Indians or Assiniboynes ~~for~~ who frequent this side may be taken at a tolerably near estimate at 1080 men 1620 woemen & 4860 children of different ages & sexes. Tho' the females are about the proportion of 6 to 4 1/2 men or nearly one half more females than men being in a greater proportion than is generally in Europe. The various tribes of the scieux speak the same language so that on the whole they are by far the most numerous of any other Indian nation we are acquainted with; They are of a bold warlike disposition and great thieves & like all other Tribes in these parts keep their woemen under a great submission they doing all the drudgery the men only killing the animals for subsistence The rest wholly devolving on their helpmates, They are kind to their children & never correct them by blows for any fault they may commit. 2^d Their condition on the whole is such that I believe they consider themselves happy. The men have a great turn to gaming especially in the summer months which they consider the most pleasant period of the seasons. At which time but more particularly after the snow is melted away. They are after being confined in some measure during the winter to their homes much more bold daring & mischievous than in the fall or Winter

[Fo. 11]

since the Traders have had communication with them which has been for more than century past they are neither so happy & comfortable as before The great fondness for spirituous Liquors & the frequent Intemperance they commit makes them appear old before their time. It is a great pity strong liquors were ever introduced among them, as they would be much happier without it & should such a step be taken by the Company in absolutely prohibiting it the Trade would suffer very little if any after the first year or two 3rd the names of the Stone Indian Chiefs are at Beaver Creek⁶³

⁶³ Fidler has left about two lines blank here.

But tho' they are the heads of sometimes 50 to 80 tents they receive very little homage except they are good friends with the Traders from whom they receive presents twice a year both to encourage them to hunt provisions &c &c to keep their young men quiet not to steal our Horses &c but still we are obliged to be continually on our guard every summer. 4th the local situation of their hunting grounds are generally between the Assiniboyne and Souris river or the height of land which separates the waters that fall into the Hudsons Bay or the Gulf of Mexico Some of the Stone Indians extend even near the Rocky Mountains north of the Saskatchewan in a thick woody country & have been detached from the main body who frequent the plains at no distant period on account of quarrels amongst themselves very few or any visit the Forks or ever Pambina River. Tho' the old Indians say at the former place in their boyish days great numbers resorted but have since been gradually advancing more Westwards. 5th It does not appear that any of the separate Bands of stone or other Indians have hunting grounds peculiar to them but every one kills an animal or anything else wherever he chuses & not the least notice is taken of it tho' it would not be well liked if any other tribe who spoke a different language should

[Fo. 11d]

hunt along in their accustomed places

6th as more of us know the names of the 20th part of the Stone Indians men who trade with us or at either House for no credits are given them now they are such cheats only to a few the more particular men we know the names of (which are who Trade with us⁶⁴

The Crees or southern Indians next to the stone Indians in number are about 130 Tents who Trade at the different Posts on the Assiniboyne River between the Forks & Fort Hibernia Those proportion of woemen & Children are a trifle under the estimate of the Stone Indians so that the Crees may be rated at 200 men able to bear arms 260 woemen & 800 children

They are a more miserable Tribe than the Stone Indians owing to their immoderate fondness for Spirituous liquors when in a state of inebriety they will dispose of almost every thing they have They are a bold set of people & good Warriors but latterly become Indolent & kill but few furs their principal hunting ground is on the south side [of] the assiniboyne between Brandon House & Riviere Qui appelle some few winter on the north side which is more woody but fewer Buffaloe so on this account but a small proportion reside there

⁶⁴ Fidler has left a blank space here.

Thumbby or Aspek is our principal chief he showed himself in a brave manner for us at Qui appelle 1815 in the fall when Alex^r MacDonnell by means of his Brules wished to drive us from that place which is the principal provision Post & so distress or rather prevent us from having provisions to carry on the Atabasca Trade which they so very much wish to monopolize. When McDonell had sent two separate messages

[Fo. 12]

to M^r McKay our Master to depart within 24 hours several Crees happened to be then at the Houses Thumbby immediately sent away the Woemen & Children & the men all instantly prepared for war The NWCo seeing the determination of the Natives refrained from putting their tremendous threats in execution so we remained till May unmolested Yorstones Guide or the Little Rattlesnake or Mechet aque thaw is the NWCo principal Chief – a young resolute strong man and of a bad disposition This is the reason they made him a chief & just at the time they plundered our settlement in 1816 that they might have with his followers his assistance in any dirty work they intended to commit, But notwithstanding the frequent presents of Chiefs Clothing Rum & various other articles he was never induced to commit any violence toward what the NW term the English. It has been a constant custom to advance credits to ~~them~~ these Ind^s every fall in particular but they have so very frequently cheated those who furnished them that since last year only a very select few are advanced any thing & it is fully intended to advance none this fall by either party by this means I believe the Trade will be better at least cheaper had. and when the Indians find no advances made they will be more induced to exertion to procure them. The Crees formerly wintered on the North side & below this place towards the Manetoba Lake. They very seldom go farther South than the Turtle mountain to Hunt.

X The Bungees or Soteaux are about 80 Tents who Inhabit this district the greater part of them in the lower part of it about the settlement and some up the Red River above Fort Dair Their estimated numbers of men Capable of

[Fo. 12d]

bearing arms is 150 men about 170 married woemen & between 4 & 500 Children They go very dirty in the winter in particular the woemen. In summer the Young men are very dressy & clean. They usually were good Fur Hunters but latterly their exertions in that respect has been slender particularly since the colonists arrived in this quarter as they receive manny presents which enables them to live without that

exertion they had been accustomed to. 40 years ago there was scarce a single Bungee in this district they have come from Rainy Lake & that quarter & finding the country much more plentiful in provisions than their own preferred remaining here formerly they were rigidly honest in paying their Credits but now they are become free as great cheats as the rest of their neighbours. Piguis or the Cut nose Chief only made by Captain Macdonald in 1812 on the first arrival of the Colonists who happened with a few others to be present on the first coming of the settlers was the cause of his being first particularly noticed He has always been very friendly to the Colonists & his band which is annually augmenting from at first only about half a dozen to now more than 4 times that number He is looked on as the first chief by the settlers but the Premiere an older man late from Rainy Lake is considered by the natives as the greatest chief but his influence is declining very fast even among his countrymen He is sly insinuating & on the whole a bad character Whereas Piguis is open & generous ever ready to render the colonists any assistance he can.⁶⁵ The black man an other Soteaux Chief who generally resides higher up the Red River towards the Lake of that name he is an elderly man of a gentle

[Fo. 13]

& open disposition and friendly to all the Whites Black Cat another newly made chief but not deserving that distinction generally resides about Portage De Prairie

These chiefs all received medals from the Colony last fall along with their annual present of Rum Tobacco ammunition & Clothing Altho' the agreement⁶⁶ signed by Lord Selkirk & the 5 Chiefs only specify that the Soteaux shall annually receive as a quit Rent 100 lb Tobacco & the Crees the same quantity but the Crees have not as yet received any part No proper officer having been sent to meet them at the Portage De Prairies belonging to the Colony but next October it is fully intended that the Crees shall have the stipulated quantity distributed amongst the 2 or 3 principal men of that Tribe

⁶⁵ Chief Peguis (c.a. 1774-1864) was a Saulteaux Chief born around 1774 near the Sault Ste Marie area. His name is also spelled here as Pigwis and is sometimes referred to as the Cut Nose Bungee Chief, as his nose had been bitten off in 1812. He was the son of an Anishinaabe woman and a French fur trader and as a young man led a group of Saulteaux westward to the Red River, where they established themselves at Netley Creek. He was a friend the Europeans in the area as evidence here, and in 1816 warned Governor Semple of the plans of the NWC to destroy the Red River Settlement. He was one of the five chiefs to sign the 1817 Selkirk Treaty with the Cree and Saulteaux of the Red River Region. In 1832, he was persuaded by the missionary William Cockran to settle in a community just north St. Andrew's, which by 1836 was known as St. Peter's. He was baptized into the Anglican Church in 1840, and took the name William King, and his children used the last name Prince. He died in 1864.

⁶⁶ This is the Selkirk Treaty of 18 July 1817.

XI Account of the Canadians or NW Company

1st Their Establishments at present in this district are the first 12 miles from Lake Winipeg only built last fall M^r Harrison Master & perhaps 3 or 4 men & who receive as well as our Post lower down very little from the Indians. Their next Post⁶⁷ is at the Forks of the Red & assiniboyne River on the left bank first built in 1811, pulled down June 1816 by Governor Semple⁶⁸ & M^r Robertson⁶⁹ that the N.W. should find as shelter as the year before to annoy the Colonists they began in July 1817 to rebuild it & have inclosed the whole with excellent sawn oak piquets 14 feet above ground set very close together like a continued wall about 100 feet square Their large dwelling House is not yet built but to be this summer a M^r McKenzie a young clerk is master there this winter with about 4 or 6 men. At Pambina

[Fo. 13d]

River close to Fort Dair they have an other establishment where M^r or one Eyed Grant a partner is master there this winter with about 6 men to 8 & has made there about 40 Packs of Furs; at present they have no other post in this district higher up. M^r Graham & partner being at the height of land, have no Canadian opponents up the assiniboyne River the first post is Brandon House called by them Riviere la Souri where M^r Pootras with 12 to 14 men resides, it is on the left bank whereas ours is just opposite on the other side. They have made here this season 20 packs of Furs & Dresst Moose, Deer & Buffaloe skins & about 210 bags of Pimigan. The next Post occupied by the NWC^o is at River Qui appelle about 20 miles from the assiniboyne on the south side. This is their principal place: and Posts in this river & I believe in any

⁶⁷ Fort Gibraltar

⁶⁸ Robert Semple (1777-1816) was born in Boston, Mass., and during the American Revolution he and his parents moved back to England. He became a merchant, travelling around the world. In 1815, Lord Selkirk arranged his appointment as governor of the HBC territories. Also in that year, he travelled with this contingent to the Red River Settlement arriving at York Factory in August 1815. He travelled to the recently re-established colony later in fall and left Colin Robertson in charge of the settlement. He spent the rest of the year travelling to the various posts of the HBC in the region, but in 1816 returned to the colony. He then led a contingent of HBC men and settlers to interdict the Metis led by Cuthbert Grant who had been sent by the NWC to destroy the settlement on 19 June 1816. Semple was killed in this battle, known as the Battle of Seven Oaks. Hartwell Bowsfield, "Semple, Robert," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB) Online*.

⁶⁹ Colin Robertson (1783-1840) was born in Perth, Scotland, and entered the service of the NWC in 1803. In 1809 he left their service and in 1814 entered the service of the HBC with the goal of expanding the HBC presence in the Athabasca. As he passed Jack River in 1815, however, he found the dispersed Selkirk Colonists there and agreed to escort them back and re-establish the Red River Settlement which he did in September of 1815. In March of 1816 he captured the NWC Fort Gibraltar at Red River and arrested Duncan Cameron. In June of 1816, prior to the Battle of Seven Oaks, he left the colony after a dispute with Governor Semple. Thereafter he travelled to York Factory to return to London, but the ship he was travelling on, the *Prince of Wales*, got caught in the ice and he was forced to winter at Moose Factory. In June of 1817, he left Moose Factory for Canada, where he would be tried and acquitted for his actions in 1816. He stayed in the HBC until 1840, when he died. See Ted Binnema and Gerhard J. Ens (eds.), *Edmonton House Journals, Correspondence & Reports, 1806-1821*, 480.

part of the Country I know M^r McBain a partner Winters there with near 20 men They have a custom & I believe a good one that they hire Brules & freemen for the Winter only to well man their Houses & in spring they are free again at liberty By this means they have less wages to pay than by keeping them the whole year round & fewer men can bring up the goods than what is necessary at the Houses in the winter season

Their returns from Qui Appelle are the most considerable this year they will have at least 1200 pieces of Provisions & perhaps near 20 Packs of Furs. They have been alone there these 3 last Winters & summers & the Indians have been so very troublesome & daring that this spring they are going totally to abandon it & erect new buildings at Beaver Creek within 200 yards of our House as not a man of them

[Fo. 14]

would agree to remain Inland at their old place.

The Indian scalped last summer & otherwise wounded 3 young persons belonging to the NWCo The post at Qui' Appelle has been established near 40 years but the buildings have been removed 2 or 3 times to other spots in that Interval on acc^t of the fire wood being so far to fetch.

2nd The men employed at their 5 different Posts this Winter is about 48 to 52 men. Proprietors Clerks & Interpreters included. In the summer this generally leaves 8 to 10 at Qui Appelle 4 at Brandon House 3 at the Forks & perhaps the same number may be left at Pambina altho' none remained there last Season Nobody remains at the Posts below the Forks in summer.

3rd The NWCo generally bring here into the district 8 loaded canoes & one half loaded with the Head master The whole quantity of Trading Goods may amount to between 170 & 190 pieces but the far greater proportion is Rum perhaps not 250 yds cloth in the whole department for the Indian Trade

4th Their returns principally consist in Pimigan & Buffaloe Robes The provision trade is very uncertain in some seasons they have brought from Qui Appelle alone upwards of 700 bags of Pimigan of 85 each. And at other times their whole Trade from the same place would not amount to 400 bags. This season as well as the last has been abundant in Provisions These they may have 25 Packs of Furs of all descriptions principally Wolves & from 4 to 600 Buffalo Robes. also near 100 Bales dry meat Some seasons at

[Fo. 14d]

Pambina a considerable quantity of ~~Provisions~~ Pimigan is made more than 200 bags But the Seauteaux are much dearer to Trade with than the Stone Indians.

XII On the Trade The amount of provisions & Furs in this district this Spring 1819 collected at the following places. Viz belong^g the HBC^o

	Men	Bags Pemigan 80 lbs	Bales Dried Meat 100 lbs	Fat lbs	Tongues & Bosses	Packs of Fur	Drest Skins	Buffalo Robes
Beaver Creek	23	873	60	4129	1800	278	14	232
Brandon House	18	300	68	612	727	31	26	16
Forks	13							
Dead River	5							

2^d Trade in Furs cannot be increased in this quarter even when the men & goods doubled There are even to many men at present employed for the value of the Trade procured & were it not from the absolute necessity of having dry provisions to carry in the Athabasca Trade all the furs in this district might be collected with less than half the number of men at present employed in it as I believe all out other Establishments to the South of Isle a la Crosse could be carried on effectively without a single pound of provisions being taken from this District. along the height of land which divides the waters that fall into the ~~mississippi~~ Gulf of Mexico & Hudsons Bay between the Sieux & Soteaux & Cree country there are a considerable number of Beaver but on the borders of; the different Tribes are afraid to go to kill them M^r Graham has been there this 3 Winters but has had little success in procuring Beaver tho' he has had a great supply of Men & goods on the whole were the Colony to fetch up their own goods from the Bay & the Athabasca intirely & firmly established there would not be

[Fo. 15]

the least occasion for half the number of men as at present in this River to purchase and Carry away everything valuable

PFidler

[Fo. 15d]