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Message from the President of the United States, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate concerning the fur trade and inland trade to Mexico.

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S. Doc. No. 90, 21st Cong., 1st Sess. (1832)

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MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN COMPLIANCE

With a resolution of the Senate concerning the Fur Trade, and Inland Trade to Mexico.

FEBRUARY 9, 1832.

Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

MARCH 5, 1832.

Ordered to be printed.

WASHINGTON, *February 8, 1832.*

To the Senate:

I transmit herewith a report of the Secretary of War, made in compliance with a resolution of the Senate of March 2d, 1831, requesting the President of the United States "to cause to be collected and reported to the Senate, at the commencement of the next stated session of Congress, the most authentic information which can be obtained of the number and names of the American citizens who have been killed or robbed while engaged in the fur trade, or the inland trade of Mexico, since the late war with Great Britain; the amount of the robberies committed, and at what places, and by what tribes. Also, the number of persons who annually engage in the fur trade and inland trade to Mexico; the amount of capital employed; and the annual amount of the proceeds in furs, robes, peltries, money, &c. Also, the disadvantages, if any, which these branches of trade labor under; and the means for their relief and protection."

ANDREW JACKSON.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,

February 8th, 1832.

SIR: In compliance with a resolution of the Senate of the United States of March 2, 1831, I have the honor to submit to you the following remarks concerning the Indian trade, and the inland trade to Mexico, and to trans-

mit therewith such information upon those subjects as this department has been able to obtain. I regret the want of accurate statistical details. They are not easily procured, partly, perhaps, from the unwillingness of some of those who are personally engaged in the more remote districts, and partly from the very nature of this uncertain and fluctuating traffic. Such, however, as have reached me, I lay before you.

The trade with the tribes upon our more immediate borders, that is to say, upon the Upper Lakes, the Upper Mississippi, the Lower Missouri, and the regions watered by these tributaries, is conducted now as it has been for the last century. Michillimackinac and St. Louis are the principal depots where the goods and furs are interchanged; and where all the arrangements are made for the adjustment of the affairs of one year, and for the prosecution of those of another.

From these points, adventurers enter the Indian country in every direction. In the latter part of the summer and the beginning of autumn, they receive from the capitalists who have provided the necessary goods, such supplies as may be wanted, as well for the trade, as for their own subsistence, and, with the requisite number of *engagés*, depart for their posts. These posts are established by the orders of the War Department, at such points in the Indian country as are deemed most favorable for the trade itself, and for the convenience of the Indians. Licenses are granted and bonds required, in order that the various provisions of the law may be enforced, and as much security as possible provided for the fair prosecution of the business. The *equipment*, as it is called in the language of the trade, is transported in batteaux, canoes, upon horses, and by the men, as the means at command, and the nature of the country require. The whole operation, and, in fact, the general course of the trade itself, is laborious and dangerous, full of exposure and privations, and leading to premature exhaustion and disability. Few of those engaged in it reach an advanced stage of life, and still fewer preserve an unbroken constitution. The labor is excessive, subsistence scanty and precarious; and the Indians are ever liable to sudden and violent paroxysms of passion, in which they spare neither friend nor foe.

After the trader reaches his destination, his first business is to give the necessary credits to the Indians dependant upon his post. It may be here remarked, that the usual opinion of the mode of life adopted by them is very erroneous. They do not live in permanent villages. Those are only occupied during the summer months, when a little corn is generally raised by the women, and immediately consumed with true savage improvidence. After this they separate, each family seeking its own hunting grounds, where they are employed until spring in hunting such animals as are valuable for food and furs. But before this annual migration, the trader must supply the family of each hunter with blankets, strouds, traps, powder, ball, tobacco, and a few other articles indispensable to their comfort or existence. The amount of these supplies in each case depends upon the character of the man for success in hunting, and punctuality in paying. But to all, some advance must be made, for without it no family could subsist, much less collect any quantity of furs to barter with the traders. This system of credit is one of the greatest burthens imposed upon the trade. It is a general understanding, that the hunter shall sell his furs only to the trader who makes the advance. But it may well be supposed, that in a business where no moral nor legal obligations are felt, there must be many exceptions to this

rule. And it is now a received canon of the trade, that an Indian debt, after the first year, is entirely desperate, and the Indians feel themselves absolved from their promises. This circumstance, together with the fluctuations in the value of furs, renders the trade a very uncertain one; and notwithstanding the high prices charged, it is doubtful whether the average profits are a reasonable compensation for the time, privation, and capital which this business requires. During the winter, the Indians are engaged in hunting, and the trader and his men in occasionally supplying them, and in collecting the furs as they are procured. In the spring, he returns to his place of departure, to sell his peltries, adjust his accounts, procure another *outfit*, and prepare for the round of labor and danger.

Such is the course of the Indian trade, and such the lives of those engaged in it. The tabular statements accompanying this report, will exhibit, as far as they can be exhibited with the means of this department, the capital embarked in this business, the value of the furs, the number of men, and generally the most important facts connected with this branch of the national commerce.

The intercourse between our citizens and the tribes of Indians upon the eastern declivity of the Rocky mountains, and beyond that barrier, is of a different character. Those Indians retain their primitive habits. Very few articles of civilized manufacture have been introduced among them, and these are not essential to their comfort or support. Among many of the remote Indians, the rifle has not yet supplanted the bow and arrow, nor the blanket the buffalo robe. Animal food is almost the only article of subsistence known to them; and nature, in the immense herds of buffalo, has provided an abundant supply during a considerable part of the year. The fur bearing animals, which have almost disappeared from the border country, are yet found in large numbers in those regions. Though even here, the advance of the white man has been marked by a diminution of the game. And the competition between British adventurers and those from our country, will, ere long, sensibly affect the means of subsistence furnished by that region. The direct trade with the Indians is not a concern of much *consequence*. Some arms and ammunition, tobacco, and a few unimportant articles, constitute all the supplies they require or receive from us. Owing to this cause, they take but few furs beyond what are necessary for their own use. But there are probably now in that region from five to six hundred white persons hunting the beaver and other fur bearing animals. Expeditions for this purpose are fitted out upon the frontier, and the men generally engaged for some years. During their continuance, they live in the same manner the Indians do, hunting, trapping, and providing their own subsistence. But they occasion an immense destruction of the animals, as they have more industry and perseverance than the aboriginal hunter, with equal skill; and do not graduate the quantity they procure by their own wants, but by the interest of their employers. This state of things will, before many years, lead to the entire destruction of the beaver, even in those remote regions, which have, till recently, been inaccessible to our citizens. It is calculated that the average annual returns of this business, give 200 packs of beaver, amounting in value to \$90,000. It is, however, a pursuit of a great fatigue and peril. Little dependence can be placed upon the promises or professions of the Indians. They are liable at all times to violent excitement, when lives and property are wholly insecure. The history of these adventurers is full of melancholy sacrifices, and of fortunate escapes. The men

associate in parties, under a leader, are well armed, and assume a military organization.

The inland trade from our western frontier to Mexico, is one of recent origin. It commenced in 1821, and has since been gradually augmenting.

The persons engaged in this business, assemble upon the frontier in the spring, and associate together with the view of protecting themselves against the dangers of the journey. They select the necessary officers, and provide the means of defence, and also of subsistence, till they reach the buffalo country. Their goods, consisting principally of domestic cottons, silks, hats, hardware, cutlery, &c., are transported in wagons and upon mules; and the whole journey, going and returning, usually occupies five months. The returns are principally in Mexican dollars, bullion, beaver, horses &c. The value of the trade for the present year is about \$300,000.

The dangers of the route result from the tribes of Panis and other Indians who occupy or roam over the intervening country between our border and the Mexican frontier. These dangers render it necessary for the parties to move cautiously, and to be upon their guard both by night and day.

This trade labors under two disadvantages. One is the peril to which I have just alluded; and the only remedy for this, is to restrain the depredation of these Indians by an exhibition of our strength, or by prompt chastisement. Should the bill for mounting a part of the army pass Congress, the Government would be enabled to make such a disposition of that force, as to produce the most salutary effects upon the Indians. Such a measure is required by the circumstances of that country. It is quite time that the United States should interpose, efficaciously, to put a stop as well to the depredations of the Indians against our own citizens, as to their hostilities among themselves. If this be not soon done, the evil will increase, and it will be more and more felt as the Indians east of the Mississippi migrate to the country west of that river. We shall be bound by every principle of duty to protect them; and as they will be placed in juxtaposition with the savage tribes of the plains, unless we restrain the latter, a perpetual border warfare will be the consequence.

The other impediment offered to the prosecution of this trade, is found in the exactions imposed upon our citizens after their arrival upon the Mexican frontier. These consist of apparently arbitrary, and certainly very heavy taxes and duties, both upon persons and property. The communication of Mr. A. Wetmore, accompanying this report, will fully explain the nature of these duties. A remedy can only be found in the direct interference of the supreme Mexican Government.

In a general view, the fur trade is declining. This result is, in some measure, owing to the rapid diminution of the animals which supply the most valuable furs. Increased activity and enterprize, however, by pushing adventurers into more remote regions, and opening new districts, where the game is yet abundant, will, in some measure, counteract this diminution—at a greater expense indeed, but still, for a time, with considerable effect.

But the greatest disadvantage under which this trade labors, is the duties upon blankets, strouds, and other imported articles which are used by the Indians. These are stated to amount to from forty to sixty per cent. The Indians are very inveterate in their habits, and it is difficult to induce them to change any article to the use of which they have been accustomed. The British fabrics are preferred, more particularly the machinac blanket, weigh-

ing about pounds, and admirably adapted to a people among whom that article is frequently house, bed, and clothing; protecting the wearer from rain and cold. The woollen articles, particularly used in this trade, are therefore imported.

It will be observed that along our whole frontier, extending west from the outlet of Lake Superior to the Rocky mountains, and embracing the most valuable régions for the finer furs, our traders are brought into contact with those of the Hudson's Bay Company. Their goods pay no duties, and consequently they are able to undersell us in the Indian market; and the difference is so great, that the Indians are induced to travel a long distance, especially with their best peltries, to seek the cheapest market. And the British establishments are, for that reason, found as near the line as possible, and very probably, in that remote region, south of it. But this is not all. Our traders pay heavy duties upon furs shipped to Europe, while the same article is duty free when imported into the United States. The practical operation, therefore, is, that the foreign trader is enabled to sell his goods cheaper to the Indians than our own; and to send his furs here or to England for sale, free of duty, as he finds the one market or the other preferable. Without some change, our trade must still farther decline.

Whether it be expedient to impose duties upon foreign furs, or to allow a drawback upon woollen goods imported for, and used in, the Indian trade, is for the wisdom of Congress to determine.

Accompanying this, will be found such letters and reports as have been received by the department upon this subject. From these and other documents heretofore on file, the annexed tabular statements have been compiled.

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

LEW. CASS.

To the PRESIDENT of the United States.

No. 1.

SUPERINTENDENCY OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

St. Louis, November, 20th, 1831.

SIR: In obedience to a resolution of the Senate of the 2d March last, and in answer to the several inquiries accompanying your letter of the 9th of September, (both requiring information relative to the fur trade and the inland trade to Mexico, &c.,) I have the honor to state, that I had at an early date, communicated the same to the Indian agents within this superintendency, and to individuals engaged in the fur trade, or acquainted with the subject of your inquiries; and that I have as yet received but very partial answers thereto. Such reports as have been received, however, will be transmitted to you herewith. Thrown thus, as it were, upon my own resources, I have notwithstanding endeavored to answer, in part, the first branch of your enquiries, by a statement showing the number of licenses granted to traders within the superintendency for the present year, the amount of capital and number of men employed by each, and the value of the returns, as far as known. This document is marked A, and is accom-

panied by a statement from the Indian agent at St. Peter's, showing the returns in furs, peltries, &c., of some of the traders within his agency. This statement is marked A, and is the only one of the kind received: and here it may be proper to remark that the obstacles thrown in the way of this inquiry have been much increased by the reluctance of some traders, and the entire failure of others, to state the amount or value of their returns. This difficulty, however, can in future be easily avoided by a mode which I will take the liberty of suggesting hereafter.

In elucidating the present condition of the fur trade in the frontiers of the United States, it will be seen to lie under many disadvantages; some of which, and not the least of them, may be referred to extraneous causes, which, although they perhaps cannot be immediately removed, yet can be checked by a countervailing policy on the part of our Government. I allude to the preference which the Indians themselves have always shown, and still continue to show, the English; a preference which I have never been able to account for on other grounds, than by viewing it as the effect of an intercourse, the manner of which has been prescribed, controlled, and enforced by their Government, which has executed its laws and regulations, in this respect, with, perhaps, a rather despotic yet salutary sway. Instances are within the recollection of persons yet living of the most rigorous measures pursued by the British Government against traders of their and our nation, whose intercourse had been marked by improper conduct towards the Indians; and whose wealth and standing could not prevent their exclusion for ever thereafter from the Indian country.

Another of the disadvantages under which this branch of our commerce labors, is clearly seen in the too successful competition of our British neighbors. The people who are the exclusive manufacturers of the principal articles used in this trade, can introduce them, it seems, into the Indian country, where they are required, free of duty, or any other charge than their first cost and transportation; whilst the American trader is not only dependant upon his competitor for the very articles themselves, but has to pay his own Government an average duty of about 60 per cent. for the privilege of importing them; and when it is recollected that, in addition to the advantages already enjoyed by the British trader, he is privileged to land and find a market for his furs and peltries, (the produce of his goods,) in the United States, free of duty, (which is not reciprocated by Great Britain,) it will be seen at once, that no enterprise, talent, or industry, can successfully compete in this trade under such disadvantages.

My views and opinions in relation to the fur trade in general, were communicated to the department on the 27th of December, 1828, in a joint report with Governor Cass, the present Secretary of War. To that report I would beg leave to refer you for the manner in which the fur trade is conducted, and for its general history. I have learnt nothing since which could enable me to throw any new light upon the subject, with the exception of a report very unfavorable to some of the traders; having relation to their furnishing spirituous liquors to the Indians; and which would show the necessity of an entire prohibition of that article in the Indian country.

The several laws regulating trade and intercourse with the Indian tribes, prohibit the selling, bartering, or giving spirituous liquors to Indians. By special authority vested in the Superintendent of Indian Affairs by the President of the United States, the former is "empowered to grant permits to traders, and to take into the Indian country, *whiskey* for the use of the

boatmen employed to assist in the trade, limiting the quantity to the number of hands employed, and the time they are to be absent; and taking bond that it is not to be sold, bartered, exchanged, or given to the Indians." Under this authority, and conformable thereto; permits have been granted to the traders. Relying on their good faith, it was not deemed necessary to examine their outfit, nor were their boats inspected by the officers of any of the military posts on their route: this delicate task was dispensed with.

The increased quantity of this article for which permits were required during the last two years, rendered the propriety of an exercise of the authority vested at least doubtful, in my opinion, particularly as certain *rumors* relating to the disposition of the article spoken of, had reached me. Within a few days past, however, I have received information on this subject, and from such a source as to place the matter beyond a doubt, and to convince me the privilege of taking whiskey for the use of the boatmen has been abused; that, instead thereof, and for the purpose specified; *alcohol* has been taken, which it seems, (after being reduced,) has been furnished to the Indians by the gallon and keg.

As those traders have evinced so little good faith, such disrespect to the Government as to violate its most imperative laws, and so little humanity toward the Indians themselves as to disregard the most sacred provision for their protection, I shall conceive it my bounden duty to recommend the total and entire prohibition of this article in the Indian country, under any pretence, or for any purpose whatever.

Should it be asked, why those violators of the law are not prosecuted? I would answer, that the institution of a suit on a trader's bond, with such an object in view, would be considered as a mere *farce*; as past experience fully shows that, in order to a successful prosecution, there are many things to be proven before a court having cognizance of the offence, which would not occur at the time to the witness testifying. It would prove nothing that he should have witnessed the process of reducing the *alcohol* in the trader's house, and the putting it into casks; that he should have seen the liquor drawn from these same casks, put into kegs, and delivered to Indians, who conveyed the same to their camps, which, after a few hours, exhibited a scene of the most frightful drunkenness:—he must be able to testify that he has *tasted* this liquor, and found it to be spirituous, in order to produce a conviction. And when it is considered that an individual seeking to qualify himself by these means to produce the conviction of the traders, would at once arouse suspicions which might result in the most serious consequences to himself, the difficulty attending it may be easily imagined.

Second branch of the inquiry.—The condition of the inland trade of Mexico, &c.

As the only means within my power to furnish you authentic information under this head, I have prepared the statement marked B, which exhibits the number and names of American citizens who have been killed or robbed whilst engaged in the fur trade, and in the inland trade to Mexico; the time and place when and where killed or robbed, by what tribes, and the value of the property taken.

The materials for this statement have been taken from the recorded claims in this office, with the exception of such part as has been furnished by Mr. Jedediah S. Smith, an intelligent, active, and enterprising citizen, who is since reported to have been killed, with several of his party; but as their number and names are unknown to me, I have not included them. This

statement, however, I suppose to fall far short of the actual loss of lives and property since the late war.

The inland trade to Mexico is supposed to have increased considerably within the last two or three years, notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers to which it is exposed. These consist chiefly in the expense of men and provisions in passing through the plains, and in the certainty of being robbed, if the party is not superior to the band of Indians which may happen to be then on the road. This superiority may sometimes depend more on the *temper* and *disposition* of the trading party (being well armed) than on their relative numbers. Instances are not rare in which small parties have been put to flight by a discharge of two or three fire arms near their camp at night, and when not even a man was hurt; leaving their horses, mules, furs, and camp equipage, to reward the bold cunning of a few indifferently armed savages, whose measures might have been entirely disconcerted by a show of preparation, or the least indication of intended resistance.

It will thus be seen that the safety of a trading party, either to Mexico or in the direction of the mountains, will depend principally on the *material* composing it. If they are men of great prudence and firmness, and withal have a sufficient knowledge of the Indian character, their chance of success is good; but if, on the contrary, the party is composed of raw young men, not only ignorant of Indians, but destitute of a common knowledge of mankind, and above all, if signs of fear are exhibited by them in presence of any party of Indians they may encounter, their destruction is certain.

The tribes who usually infest the route travelled by the Santa Fee traders, (and who reside within our borders,) are the Osages and Kansas, parties of whom are generally met with on their hunts between the Arkansas and Red river. These Indians seldom, at present, offer any greater violence than an attempt to pillage, or the stealing of horses. The greatest danger is from the Panis of River Platte, the Panis Picts, who reside south of Red river, and the Camanches, Kyawas, &c. These last named tribes have no idea whatever of the power of the United States, and unless some effectual mode should be speedily adopted to inform them on this subject, the injury to hundreds of our citizens will be severely felt; to say nothing of the effect produced on the Indians within our own borders, (not yet half civilized,) who witness the unchecked hostility of their roving neighbors, and who can scarcely refrain from an open expression of their contempt for a Government which could permit a few bands of half starved naked savages to prey upon so many of its citizens, to strip them of every thing they possess, and even to shed their blood with impunity.

With the manner in which this trade is conducted, I am not particularly acquainted. I have understood, generally, that the goods (consisting of the usual articles used by whites and by Indians,) are transported on horses, mules, and in light wagons to the Spanish settlements at Santa Fee, Trous, &c., and from thence taken to Chihuahua and other places in the interior, where they are exchanged for dollars, ingots of silver, and mules; and if the adventurers meet with trappers or traders who have beaver, a portion is thus invested at a pretty good advance, say from 100 to 200 per cent. on the first cost, which will then leave them a profit, clear of all expenses, of from 25 to 100 per cent. Many of the outfits from this place intended for the mountains pass, I am informed, by the way of *Tores*.

This trade may, by proper means, be placed upon a footing more per-

manently useful than the mere acquisition of furs, which, viewed by itself, is beginning to be already considered as scarcely worth attention. The exchange of our cotton goods alone, (the produce of the south, and their manufacture by other portions of our country,) for the articles already enumerated as received from the Mexicans, will give employment to thousands of our enterprising citizens.

It is not in my power to state even the *probable* amount of the capital employed in this particular branch of trade: many of the adventurers reside in the frontier counties on the Missouri, and others, (citizens of Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas,) also engaged in it, have proceeded to their destination without passports from this office: the claims of some of those individuals for remuneration for their losses, being the first intimation received by me of their adventure.

The very little information which it would be in my power to give, in relation to the facilities afforded to, or impediments thrown in the way of, our trade by the Mexican Government, would only embarrass the subject, without throwing sufficient light thereon to elicit positive facts. I would, nevertheless, conceive it my duty to suggest that our commercial relations with that Government should be so clearly and particularly defined as to enable our citizens to baffle every attempt at extortion, or to resist any illegal charges which the cupidity of some of those in power may induce them to exact.

3d. The condition of the trade in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains, and west of them.

The trade in the region of the mountains is believed to be declining. All the information received by me on the subject tends to establish the fact of a very perceptible decrease of the furred animals. This is attributed in part to the circumstance of their being hunted and trapped by the whites as well as Indians, but the principal cause of the disappearance of these animals is generally attributed to the proximity of the British traders and hunters. It is well known that a great portion of the furs received by them has been hunted on the American territory.

With respect to the mode of collecting and transporting the furs obtained in the mountains, either by trappers or traders, I can only state the information derived from others, that very few of the packs of beaver brought down the present year have been received in the way of trade with the Indians; the principal portion of them have been trapped by the men employed for that purpose, and who go out in different directions, in small parties, furnished with traps and some articles of trade. They are transported on horses and mules to the nearest depot, which is generally near some navigable water course. Those trading establishments on the Missouri, it is believed, receive most of their furs from the Indians themselves in the way of trade. As Major Dougherty and Mr. Pilcher and Mr. Gordon have made communications to the War Department on this subject, it will be unnecessary for me to dwell on it, particularly as the two last named gentlemen have been recently engaged in the business. Their statements may be implicitly relied on.

The measures which a reasonable protection of the fur trade and the inland trade to Mexico would seem to require, are—

Firstly. An entire abolition of the duties on such articles as are specially imported for this trade, (the fur trade,) and which are not manufactured

within the United States. They consist of blankets, strouds (blue and scarlet,) scalping or butchers' knives, vermilion, beads, &c., &c.

Secondly. The imposition of a duty on furs and peltries from foreign countries, equal to that imposed on those articles by the same countries.

Thirdly. The enlistment and equipment for service of a corps of mounted men. This corps, if organized with a view to an efficient protection of the interests now under consideration, should be composed of young men of respectable character, and approved habits. Their voluntary enlistment for the term required, (say three years,) should be regarded as a pledge of their future usefulness. Their officers should, in my opinion, be appointed and commissioned by the President, which would at least effect a prevention of that system of electioneering which is so justly considered the bane and ruin of a military corps, and which tends to the entire subversion of all authority. This force should be sufficiently respectable, (say 1,000 strong,) to admit of portions being *occasionally* detached on particular service; and, when united, and acting in conjunction with such portions of the infantry stationed at our frontier posts, on occasions requiring a *display*, would be productive of incalculable benefit, not only in the protection of the immediate interests for which it is designed, but as a means of preserving peace among the various tribes collected and collecting on our borders, and who are already beginning to require an interposition of the strong arm of the Government to quell their feuds. Being mounted and operating chiefly in a prairie country, it would be in the power of select detachments from this corps to move to the points requiring their presence with the utmost celerity imaginable. Their arms should be a rifle, Harper's Ferry pistols, sword, knife, and tomahawk. The rifle should be occasionally exchanged (at the depot,) for a musket and bayonet, which is known to be far superior to the former in a night attack, and when the men became acquainted with its superiority over their favorite weapon, they will cheerfully adopt it.

It is obvious that the force recommended to be raised for the protection of the fur trade, and inland trade to Mexico, can, if properly organized, not only be instrumental in saving the lives and property of many of our most valuable and enterprising citizens, but also be the means, probably, of preventing serious difficulties among the tribes on our borders, and between them and the exposed frontier settlers. And the appearance of a force of this description among the remote tribes of the Upper Missouri, would effect an object which has long been considered most desirable in this section of the Union.

Should the department approve the measure which I have recommended in relation to the prohibition of spirituous liquors in the Indian country, I would respectfully suggest that early instructions be transmitted to the officers of Government on the subject. The evil cannot be too speedily remedied.

The difficulties which have been experienced, and the little success which has attended my efforts to obtain *returns* from the *traders* of their annual outfits, admonishes me of the necessity hereafter (if approved,) of requiring them to file in the superintendent's office exact statements on oath, of the description required; and of making their compliance with this requisition a condition of their being permitted to trade: thus furnishing a means of ascertaining the real value of the fur trade, and of the degree of protection necessary to its prosecution hereafter.

I am sensible, sir, that the brief answers I am constrained to make to your inquiries, and the unconnected statements responding to the call of the Senate, may not prove as satisfactory as could be wished; yet surrounded as I am by hundreds of Indians, some emigrating from the northeast, and for whom a home is to be provided here, others from west of the Rocky Mountains visiting me, together with deputations from various other tribes, all expecting a satisfactory adjustment of their difficulties; and it being (exclusive of these interruptions,) a season of uncommon and incessant occupation, I hope I shall be excused from entering into details already furnished in the statements which accompany this report.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your most obedient servant.

The Hon. LEWIS CASS,
Secretary of War, Washington city.

No. 2.

JOSHUA PILCHER'S REPORT.

St. Louis, 1st December, 1831.

SIR: When at Cantonment Leavenworth a short time ago, I received your communication, under date of 9th September, accompanied by a number of queries relating to Indian trade. Immediately on my arrival at this place, I addressed to General Clark some very hasty answers to such of your interrogatories as I thought most important, and have now the honor to offer some further information. In doing this, I propose to confine myself to the following topics:

1. An account of the rise, progress; and present condition of the *Indian* trade west of the State of Missouri.
2. The condition of the fur trade along the base of the Rocky mountains, and west of them.
3. The inland trade to Mexico.

Owing to a want of enterprise on the part of the inhabitants of Upper Louisiana, and the selfish policy of the Spanish Government, the Missouri river, and the resources of the country by which it is watered, remained but little known until after the cession of that country to the United States in 1803. The successful voyage of Captains Lewis and Clark, a short time after that transaction, opened a new field for American enterprise; but it was destined to remain unexplored for a time, owing, in some measure, to the late war with England, and partly, as I have always thought, to the injudicious policy of the first adventurers from this country to the remote region watered by the Missouri and its tributaries.

Very soon after Lewis and Clark completed their memorable tour, an enterprising citizen of St. Louis fitted out an expedition destined for the Yellow Stone river. He headed it in person, and was accompanied by 50 or 60 men, for the double purpose of opening a trade with the Indians of that country, and of trapping beaver. His successful return the next year, induced others to turn their attention to the same business; and, in a short

time, a company was organized, with a capital sufficient to carry on a trade with the remote tribes on the Upper Missouri, and, at the same time, prosecute the trapping business on an extensive scale. This company set out from St. Louis in 1809, and established a post in the fall of that year at the Mandan Villages, leaving all the country below to the operation of small adventurers. The party was about 250 strong, and the post on the Yellow Stone, established by the first adventurer after the return of Lewis and Clark, was occupied by a part of this great company during the winter of 1810; and, in the spring of that year, one of the gentlemen concerned, accompanied by 60 or 70 men, crossed over to the Three Forks of the Missouri, built a fort, and fitted out his men in different parties for the purpose of *trapping*. They were soon discovered by what is commonly called the Blackfeet Indians: the parties were attacked in every direction, and some entirely defeated; and a short time convinced the gentleman in charge that he could not sustain himself in the country. He consequently assembled his remaining men, fell back upon the Yellow Stone, and, in the fall of 1810, crossed the Rocky mountains, and established a fort on Lewis' fork of the Columbia, where he passed the winter of 1810-1811. The latter end of the fall of 1810, and the spring of 1811, were occupied in trapping, without molestation, the party encountering none than the Snake Indians, who manifested no objections to their doing so. In the summer following, the gentleman abandoned his fort, recrossed the mountains, and returned to the Missouri. In his absence, the company had experienced some difficulty with the Mandans and *Grosventres*, which may have been produced by the influence of the Northwest Company, which, *at that time*, had an intercourse with those Indians. The American Company had abandoned this post in consequence of those difficulties, and established another about 150 miles below, near the Richara Villages. The gentleman from the Columbia came in under the expectation of returning, but found, on his arrival, that difficulties had arisen among the members of the company during his absence, which shortly after led to its dissolution, and consequently his views respecting the business west of the mountains were defeated. In the same year a company was fitted out by Mr. Astor, of New York, for the purpose of entering into the trade on the Columbia river. For the result of that undertaking, together with the present state of the trade in that country, I beg leave to refer you to a communication of mine addressed to the honorable J. H. Eaton in 1830.

The commencement of the war with Great Britain, in 1812, put an end to the trade in the remote parts of the Missouri; and, during its continuance, our citizens confined their intercourse to those tribes that inhabit the country immediately along our borders, seldom attempting to go farther west than the Council Bluffs. After the termination of the war, outfits were sent up as high as the Sioux, who inhabit the country, on either side of the Missouri, from the *Leau qui bour* to the Richara Villages; and a trade was opened with all the different bands, though not without such difficulties as are inseparable from an intercourse with all Indians who are unacquainted with the manners and customs of the whites. The trade was not confined to a single individual or company, but was divided among a sufficient number of persons to ensure supplies to the Indians on very reasonable terms. It continued thus until 1819, no attempt being made to extend it beyond the point above mentioned. In that year a company was formed in St. Louis for the purpose of entering into the trade, and had for its object the

establishment of a chain of posts from the western limits of the State of Missouri, across the country, to the Pacific ocean. Its means, however, were too limited for such an undertaking; besides which, it had to encounter a spirited opposition from another company. The third year after it commenced brought in a *second* competitor, and the trade, thus divided, resulted in annual losses instead of profits; and, as a matter of course, the Indians were benefitted in proportion. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, however, it had succeeded in extending its posts as high on the Missouri as the Mandan Villages, and had established one at the mouth of the Big Horn, on the Yellow Stone, which was intended as a depot for a party of hunters, who were defeated in the spring of 1823, near that place, by the Blackfeet Indians. This defeat, together with several other heavy losses previously encountered, and the annual losses resulting from an inveterate opposition, shortly after, led to its entire failure. About this time, the American Fur Company had turned their attention to the Missouri trade, and, as might have been expected, soon put an end to all opposition. Backed as it was by any amount of capital, and with skilful agents to conduct its affairs at *every point*, it succeeded, by the year 1827, in monopolizing the whole trade of the Indians on the Missouri, and has maintained that monopoly up to this time, and I have but little doubt will continue to do so for years to come, as it would be rather a hazardous business to small adventurers to rise in opposition to it. In answering some of your queries a short time since, I pointed out the different establishments of that company, together with their locality.

The value of the trade among those tribes upon our immediate borders, has greatly diminished within the last ten years, and, in a short time, will scarcely be worth attending to. I allude to those tribes who are dependant for their supplies on the post near the Council Bluffs, the Pawnees, Ottas, Missouries, Mohaws, Puncas, &c. But the company is more than compensated for this decline in the trade below, by its increased value in more remote parts of the country to which it has been recently extended.

I have sometimes thought that a monopoly of the trade, while it served as a means of controlling the Indians, would result eventually in as much benefit to them as could be derived from an opposition, *provided it were possible for such a thing to exist without abuse*; but when left unrestrained, it must always be attended with serious disadvantages to them, for it is not in the nature of man to forego the advantages held out by an uncontrolled monopoly in any business, much less one in which he has to encounter so many privations as are met with in the fur trade. The right of any individual or company to establish such a monopoly, when possessing the means, I do not pretend to call in question; but, at the same time, would respectfully suggest that any privileges, the abuse of which may tend to injure the Indians, should be studiously avoided; and that neither the wealth or standing of any man, or of any set of men, should afford impunity for the abuse of such privileges, or for an infraction of the laws.

Having briefly noticed so much of your enquiry as relates to the use and progress of the trade on the Missouri, I propose to give you a sketch of the *mountain business*, which is distinct from the regular trade of the country, and which should be called by no other than its proper name, that is, the *trapping business*.

You will have observed from my account of the *rise and progress* of the trade, that the practice of trapping had its origin with the first attempts that

were made to open an intercourse with the remote nations inhabiting the country adjacent to the waters of the Missouri. It, however, was never made the exclusive object of any company until the year 1822. In that year, an expedition was fitted out by a gentleman of St. Louis, avowedly for that purpose; a large party of men was employed for the service, as his partner ascended the Missouri as high as the Yellow Stone, and established a post there in the fall of that year. Additional men and means were sent up the following spring. Several causes, however, combined to confine the operations to the Missouri, below the Great falls, and to the waters of the Yellow Stone, until the spring of 1824, and, up to that time, I believe, the many disasters encountered by the company made it an unprofitable business. In the spring of that year, the gentleman in charge of the expedition crossed the mountains, and fell into the waters of the Colorado, (then supposed to be the Rio del Norte,) which, together with a large section of country to the west of them, were found to be very rich in furs. After remaining a short time, he left the party for St. Louis, for a supply of merchandise suited to the wants of men engaged in such a business, where he arrived in the early part of the fall, when his partner set out with a party of men and the outfit required, crossed the mountains in the spring following, and succeeded in finding the party that had been left in the country. Some of them were hired to the company, others were *freemen*, trapping on their own account, but having been equipped by the company, were probably under obligations to turn over their furs to it at the expiration of the hunt. They had been all successful; and, in the course of the hunt, had fell in with a gentleman of the Hudson's Bay Company, most of whose men had left him and joined the party in question, taking with them the proceeds of their hunt; and the gentleman from St. Louis, on meeting with these parties, was measurably compensated for former losses by a very advantageous trade. He returned to St. Louis, and, in the spring following, made another adventure, in which he was still more successful; and was then succeeded by others who had been attached to his interest and active in his service from the commencement of his business. They followed it up with equal good fortune for a time; but it was not to be expected that such a series of rich returns would fail to command the attention of others; nor did they. Other persons have turned their attention to the business; and I do not think it would be any exaggeration to say that there are, at this time, five hundred men engaged in the different sections of the mountains. They range across the country from the mouth of the Yellow Stone to the heads of the rivers Platte, Arkansas and Rio del Norte; over the mountainous region watered by the Colorado, and down that river to the Gulf of California, west of the Colorado, to the sources of the Multnomah and Bonaventura; and over all the country watered by the different tributaries of the Columbia, and the southern branches of the Missouri.

This may be considered the most valuable branch of the fur trade; but it must be admitted that it is distinct from the *Indian* trade; and it is proper here to state, by way of explanation, that when I said, in answer to your 12th query, "the furs are taken almost exclusively by our own hunters," I had allusion only to this business, and not to the regular trading establishments. It is true that persons who engage in trapping do not refuse to trade furs from the Indians, because it would neither be consistent with their interests nor sound policy to do so. But it is equally certain, that at least nine-tenths of the furs brought in from that country are taken by our own

hunters. How such a number of men got into that country for those purposes, may be difficult to comprehend by one unacquainted with the subject; but, to a person familiar with the fur trade, it is easily understood. Those disposed to embark in that business, generally apply for a license to trade, or for a passport to go through the Indian country to the Mexican territory. They comply with all the requisitions of the War Department, when the superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis is bound to grant such license or passport. They make that kind of arrangement with the men as best suits them; some are hired to *go out* with the condition that their employer shall equip them for a hunt when they reach the place of destination, and leave them in the country as *freemen*; others are employed to go out and return, but are sometimes left in the country; others again are engaged to serve out their time in the mountains, and then be permitted to remain; and many that are employed in the inland trade to Mexico, embark in this business after they arrive in the Spanish country. From this, it must appear that there has been an annual increase of numbers from the commencement of the system; and, although the fur bearing animals have greatly diminished, the inducements are still so strong as to leave no doubt but that the number will continue to augment. Most persons thus employed are called freemen, and rove about the country according to their own inclinations; but, as a measure of safety, they generally unite in parties strong enough to defend themselves against hostile Indians; and such parties are commonly conducted by the person who furnishes the supplies and receives the furs. Those traders generally have a sufficient number of hired men; a part employed in hunting, with the requisite number to guard their camp, take care of the surplus horses of those employed in hunting, skin and prepare the beaver, &c. For subsistence they are dependant entirely on the wild animals of the country. The police of their camp is necessarily rigid, to guard against a surprise by Indians, and to preserve their horses. For this purpose, sentinels are kept out during each night, nor are the horses suffered to run at large in the day time, without two or three men to watch them. When they set out on their fall hunt, if divided into different parties, they generally agree on some place of rendezvous, where they meet after the hunt is over and spend the winter. In the spring, the same plan is observed, and, after the completion of their *spring* hunt, they assemble and deliver the furs to their equipper about the first of July, who arrives in St. Louis in the month of September or October following, with the proceeds of his adventure. Those who remain in the country, employ themselves in hunting, for a subsistence, until the trapping season commences, say until September.

Gentlemen of respectability embark in this business, and have made fortunes at it, and many young men of good character engage *personally* in trapping, whose purpose it is to save their hard earnings; but a great proportion of them are men who seem to have no other object in view but a subsistence. They are composed of all nations; and it must be admitted, that the similitude between the life they lead, and that of the Indians, is so striking as to admit of no other distinction than that one is civilized and the other savage.

I am unable to state correctly the value of the returns, but think they have not fell short of 1,400 packs of beaver in the last 7 years; probably, if correctly ascertained, they would exceed that number. When the consent of the Indians is not asked and received in a formal manner, it is generally implied when they make no resistance; but such consent affords no protec-

tion to the hunter. The Indians of that country acknowledge no regular territorial boundaries. A section of country in which any tribe is commonly found, is called *theirs*, from the fact of their being able to sustain themselves in it against their enemies; but, at the same time, that country is not free from the incursions of their enemies, and consequently a trapper is as much exposed as if the Indians possessing or occupying the country were to make objections to his hunting.

Horses and mules are used in this business as well by those engaged in hunting as for the transportation of goods used in the trade and the fur returns. On one occasion, the outfit was taken in wagons, and the furs brought in by the same conveyance, but horses and mules are greatly preferable: indeed, they are indispensable to the successful prosecution of the business.

By reference to a statement accompanying my first answers to your queries, you will be able to form a pretty correct idea of the loss of life attending such pursuits. About nine-tenths of the persons mentioned in that statement were either immediately engaged, or destined for the business in question; and this part, together with the general history of the subject, might seem as an answer to your inquiry respecting the effect upon the Indians. I, however, will bestow a few additional remarks upon it, and close that branch of the subject. That the effects are unfavorable in a great degree, admits not of a doubt; nor can any man, who is at all acquainted with the Indian character, and whose judgment is not *biased by his interest*, hesitate for a moment to acknowledge it. My opinions on this subject had their origin with the commencement of my intercourse with the Indians west of the Mississippi, and are now bottomed upon the experience of twelve years constantly employed in the Indian country. During that time, I have had intercourse, *personally*, with almost every nation as far west as the foot of the mountains on the Columbia river, and with some of those tribes who inhabit the British possessions to the north of the 49th degree of latitude, and I have seen nothing during the time alluded to, that did not tend to confirm the opinions originally imbibed.

Upon the subject of the inland trade to Mexico, I can say but little, never having been engaged in it either directly or indirectly, and consequently am dependant for what I have to say upon the information of others. That this branch of commerce is rapidly increasing, there can be no doubt; and that it labors under serious embarrassments, which could be removed by the General Government, with a trifling expense, is equally true. Many years ago, some of our enterprising citizens opened a trade with the inhabitants of that country, and shortly after, an appropriation was made by Congress, and commissioners appointed to mark out a road. This work was executed, and the road has been in constant use from the time it was surveyed; and it is known, and has become the resort of thousands, nay, tens of thousands of wandering Indians, whose nature it is to regard all strangers as enemies, and who infest the route for the purpose of murdering and pillaging our citizens. One of our most enterprising citizens (Mr. J. D. Smith) fell a victim to some of those Indians, in the early part of last summer, while engaged in that trade; and I confidently look forward to the time when a whole *caravan* will share the same fate, unless some steps are taken to protect them.

Those engaged in that trade, generally, leave the western parts of this State in the latter end of the spring, according to information, and return in the fall, after having exchanged the merchandise taken out for dollars.

ingots of gold and silver, and for mules and beaver. I cannot state the value of the trade, nor do I know the description of goods taken out, but doubt not you will have received ample information on these points from persons possessing a better knowledge of the business than myself.

For the protection of this trade, I beg leave to suggest the establishment of a military post at some intermediate point between the western boundary of the State of Missouri and the Arkansas river—say about six companies of troops; at least one half of these should be mounted, and experience has long since proved the almost uselessness of infantry in operating against such an enemy as must be expected to be encountered in this country. By such a body of mounted men, the caravans could be safely escorted at least as far as the American limits; and I think it very probable that the Mexican Government would co-operate in such a plan, which would give entire security to the trade. When not employed upon this service, such a corps would be useful in preserving tranquillity upon our frontier; and all who are acquainted with the nature of the country, and the present state of our Indian relations, must admit that some measure of this kind will soon become necessary. Indeed, it has always been my opinion that a part of the troops at every post on our western frontier should be mounted, doubting, as I always have, the utility of a body of troops stationed in a country like that in question, without the means of making a prompt movement beyond the vicinage of their quarters.

What I have to say in relation to the protection of the mountain, or *trapping business*, is not elicited by the presumption that the Government will ever attempt it; for, putting good policy and justice out of the question, the nature and vast extent of the country over which our hunters range, will satisfy almost any man possessed of a knowledge of that country, of the impracticability of affording any general protection to people thus engaged. And almost every intelligent *practical* man will admit that the very nature of that business is such as to put its protection out of the power of any reasonable number of troops; and I hold the opinion, that the more numerous the troops employed in such service, the greater the difficulties to encounter. The first consideration in making an attempt of the kind, would be the *subsistence* of the troops employed—for that they would have to resort exclusively to the wild animals of the country—and that there would be an entire failure on such an adventure, there remains, upon my mind, not the shadow of a doubt. The first obstacle to be encountered would be *famine*; this would lead to a general revolt, separation, total defeat, disgrace to all concerned, and be the certain means of drawing upon the heads of every white man left in the country, and all who might afterwards go out either for the purpose of *trading* or *trapping*, the inveterate hatred and vengeance of thousands and tens of thousands of savages, who otherwise would remain *comparatively friendly*. That such would be the result, I hold to be as certain as any principle in nature. And, by way of *dismissing* this part of the subject, it may be well to observe, that, while any attempt at its protection would, in my opinion, be at open variance with every principle of justice and good policy, its entire prohibition is beyond the reach of our Government. This may be regarded as a very bold expression, but I think the nature and extent of country over which the hunters range, the character and habits of most of the individuals concerned, and the facilities afforded by its vast extent in getting into the country, justifies the opinion that it would cost more to stop it than the whole fur trade is worth.

In relation to the *Indian* trade on the Missouri river, I will just remark that I have long since discovered that it is generally a pretty good protection to itself, when once fairly opened and prudently conducted. Perhaps one exception to this principle will appear by reference to the reports of Major Sanford respecting one of the tribes in his agency; but should it ever be the pleasure of our Government to punish them for the repeated outrages committed upon our citizens, it can, in my opinion, as well be done by sending an expedition up for that purpose, as it could by the establishment of a post higher up the Missouri than Cantonment Leavenworth. This opinion is derived from the most impartial consideration of the subject, and a thorough knowledge of the whole country, and the Indians inhabiting it. Mounted troops, I conceive, are indispensably necessary for the protection of our inland trade to Mexico, to maintain tranquillity along our frontier, and for the fulfilment of our obligations towards the emigrating Indians, who certainly have strong claims upon the General Government to sustain them in their present homes. Whether such a corps should be supplied from the present military establishment, by an additional number of men enlisted expressly for that purpose, is a subject which I cannot undertake to give an opinion, not being sufficiently acquainted with the *actual* strength of the present army.

In making this communication, I have entered into lengthy details, for the reason that they were called for by the nature of your queries. In relation to the opinions advanced, I can only say that they are bottomed upon long experience, and have not been formed without giving to each subject the most deliberate consideration. Whatever weight they may be entitled to, remains not for me to say. I have felt a pleasure in complying with your requests—shall be gratified if any part of the information given will be useful; and beg leave to offer assurances of the consideration and respect with which I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient humble servant,
JOSHUA PILCHER.

Honorable LEWIS CASS,
Secretary of War.

No. 3.

ANDREW S. HUGHES' REPORT.

October 31st, 1831.

SIR: The queries presented by the War Department for my consideration, have been duly received, and by way of answer thereto, or so much thereof as it is in my power at this time to make answer to, I beg leave to submit the following views and opinions of my own, together with such information, as I have obtained from others, which I believe to be true. These queries seek a variety of information, which is not in my power to give; hence it is, that I shall confine my remarks mainly to that clause in the queries which says that "every thing bearing upon the subject will be useful." That our national as well as commercial relations with the Indians, are of increasing importance, none will doubt. The several tribes of Indians which reside within the territorial limits of the United States,

though at times treated with as if they were sovereign and independent nations; yet so it is, they are justly looked upon and considered as being within the sovereign control and power of the United States. To give *equal* protection to the red as well as the white man; to protect their natural, national, and commercial rights; to adopt laws, rules and regulations, as may be best calculated to insure peace between our citizens and the Indians, are subjects that should, at all times, command the most attentive consideration of Congress; and more especially this should be the case, as the Indian has now the power of making his own laws, and is compelled, by reason of his degraded condition, to trust in our law making for all their benefits. Experience has fully proved to me that the laws which are now in force, and which were intended to regulate Indian trade and intercourse, as well as to preserve peace on our frontier, are, in every important point, wholly inapplicable to our existing relations with the northwestern Indians. Entertaining the opinions I do, I am firmly in the belief that the major part of our Indian laws should be repealed, and an entire new system of Indian government established. What that system ought to be, I am not a competent judge, nor will I here venture an opinion, other than to say that I may give this subject a passing remark, in a subsequent part of this communication. To point out the defects and inefficiencies of these laws, would seem useless; because your own experience, as well as that of the honorable Secretary of War, affords each of you abundant proof. Yet I may be mistaken as to your opinion of the Indian laws now in force. Therefore, it might not be labor lost to take a short view of the effects and operations of those laws, when carried into the Indian country. Indeed it may be well said, and said of a truth too, that, to the unfitness of our Indian laws, many of the hardships and evils complained of, may be attributed. I will commence with those who are engaged in the trade with the Indians, and see how far the law can be made to bear on them, taking for granted that there is no *one found* in the Indian country, but those only who are duly licensed and authorized to cross the line, (which, by the by, is not the case, for there are very many in the Indian country who are not licensed, and, worst of all, we have not the means afforded of apprehending and pulling them out.) With a view, then, to point out some of the defects and deficiencies of the laws, I hope I shall be pardoned, for troubling these gentlemen a little, that you may take the better view, whilst I test them by the law, and the law by them. The traders that occupy the largest and most important space in the Indian country, are the agents and engagees of the American Fur Trade Company. Who are these persons? I answer, that the principal agents and traders, with but few exceptions, are the subjects of foreign powers, entertaining, as I know to be the fact, no sort of respect for our citizens, agents, officers, or the Government, or its laws, or general policy; notwithstanding part of them have went through the mere form of the oath of naturalization. It was because of the baneful influence of these very persons that Congress passed the law requiring all aliens to take the oath of abjuration, before they could be permitted to trade with the Indians residing within the territorial limits of the United States. Suppose any one of these traders, or all of them if you please, were in the constant habit of giving bad counsel to the Indians, or even *levying* war as it were against the agents and citizens of the United States, I would most respectfully ask, what are the efficient means (if there be any at all,) that are within the power of the agents and officers of Government to bring any such offenders to justice and punish.

ment, or even to rid the country of their presence? and the same question may be asked as to any outrage that may be committed by the Indians on our citizens, or even against others of their neighboring tribes, or nations. It is true, all violations and outrages of the laws, are at once condemned by the officers and agents of the Government, and the wrong-doers are threatened with severe punishment. But for all violations of the laws, from the highest to the lowest grade of offences, even down to the value of a *goose*, the agents are required to report to the superintendent, and the superintendent to the Secretary of War, that the will of the President may be had, upon which orders are issued to the superintendent to call on the military forces; and similar orders are given, requiring the military to co-operate with the superintendent, &c. &c. All these operations require much time, during which the agent is pointed at, and his power, as well as that of the Government, is laughed into scorn by the Indians and traders, (more particularly by those who have been the offenders.) At length a demand is ordered to be made of these outlaws, which is promptly done, accompanied with a threat of severe punishment to the whole nation if the fellows are not surrendered without delay. The chiefs readily assent to the surrender. But here is the *keenest and deepest cut of all*, because when the chiefs consent, it is seen in their countenances that, there is to be no surrender; for this, that the Indians, and all who have any knowledge of the force and means employed by Government, know full well that there is no *force*, at this time in the *service*, that would stand the least chance on earth to force obedience to any such order or demand. The fugitives are well *mounted*, and have fled the plains: and the rest of the nation have nothing to fear, because they see we have no troops equal to a successful pursuit. The same would be the unhappy result of any attempt that might be made by the officers and agents of Government to enforce the obligation of treaties between the various tribes or nations of wild Indians. It is not my wish to be understood as intending to charge any officer of either of the departments of Government, with neglect or want of promptness. Attention and promptness on their respective parts, I have witnessed with much pleasure. My object is to show the circuitous route which the law requires to be taken, as well as its weakness and inefficiency when it is made to apply to our northwestern Indians. Query: if it should be the purpose of the Government, to adhere to the present system of laws, might there not be some important amendments made? For instance, would it not be well to adopt a more summary mode, by which the smaller grade of offences and injuries may be more speedily redressed? Let the several agents have power to hear and determine all controversies between whites and Indians, which may relate to claims against the Indians for petty trespasses, as well as for property stolen or injured by Indians; let the agents be compelled to report the proceedings to the superintendent, and, if that officer shall approve of his judgment, let the payment be made as now provided for by law. I am well satisfied, some regulation of this kind would be beneficial; and would put an end to the many bitter contentions between our border citizens and the Indians. Your tables, &c. may be said to be groaning under the many claims, real and fictitious, that are pressed upon them. These views I submit to those whose judgments are better than mine. I have long and often thought that the liberties granted (or rather assumed,) by traders in the way, (and perhaps necessarily,) of counselling, &c. &c. with the Indians, or of bestowing presents, are productive of much injury and

inconvenience, as well as considerable mortification to the agents; and tending to lessen the dignity of the Government in the eyes of those over whom they are stationed. The destruction, in any way or shape, of the agent's influence, is a positive injury to the Government. All can see that; and all can see, who have been to these trading establishments, that intentionally or unintentionally, the agent's influence is made to succumb to that of the trader; because the agent has no means or power to enforce any rule, order, or law, whatever. His hands are empty, and that is quite sufficient to those who have no means of judging, but by ostensible facts. The agents are placed under too many and severe restrictions; their powers are too *limited* to perform any real benefit to their country, unless the annual distribution of a few inferior presents to the Indians can be called a service. The services required of an agent, are beyond often times his power; he is required to make demands, which he is utterly unable to enforce; and to fail in such a demand, is much worse than never to have made it. The impossibility of a chief ruling and regulating his tribe in every act, great and small, seeming never to have presented itself to the head of the department; but it is well known that Indians are only *governed by interest or fear*, and that obedience to agents as well as to chiefs is *bought*; particularly this is the case among the more northwestern tribes; and there is the great theatre of fur trading operations. It is there that the agent and trader meet, and it is there that the comparison is made resulting so much to the injury of the Government. Under the present laws and regulations, the agent must be supported by men, or wealth, to be of that use the law contemplates, especially when he comes in contact with large trading companies; or he is the innocent means of degrading the Government. A chief cannot execute a demand made by the agent, unless that demand is enforced in a respectable (strong) manner. There are many reasons for this inability; the tribe is a *democracy*, and the Indians always have their *demagogues*, who often humble the chief whose influence is not supported by the wealth, or goods, of a white man. If they do not come from the agent, they will from the trader. The tribes have powerful families among them, an individual of which a chief dare not seize, unless the seizure is purchased by the chief, or the white man's bayonet enforce it; and even then, under the best of regulations, it would be often difficult, so widely separated might the tribe be in differently scattered hunting parties.

There is one great point upon which I do think the Government is in fault; that is, in not providing by law for the employment of proper and efficient means for regulating and restraining intercourse between tribe and tribe; and more so, because the law indicates and authorizes such interference, which has since been confirmed by treaties made with and between the several tribes.

The strongest passion, probably, that the Indian possesses, is *revenge*. Nature prompts him; his education impels him to it; his reputation forbids him to rest under any injury; his erratic and wandering life, (at present,) leaves him little else to do: the very wife of his bosom, cries shame upon him, when he leaves a blow unreturned. Combine all his natural feelings, and acquired ideas, and they are all, without a single exception, pushing him on to revenge the least, as well as the greatest affliction. Still the Government *rightly wishes* to prevent their making war, and, by so doing, contend with their strongest passion. The Indians, on their part, contend that the United States ought not to attempt an exercise of this right; they say that we

treat with them as separate and independent nations, and by doing so, respect their minor rights and privileges *only* to enslave them, when they most feel their bondage; to bind them where the cords cut the deepest into the flesh. If I am not mistaken, they are more sensible on this point than any other; it certainly closes among them all the roads to national distinction. Thus it is, that you will readily perceive the very delicate posture in which an agent of Government is placed when his nation is stricken, and his duty requires him to restrain the injured party from seeking *revenge*: he can only restrain them by reminding them of their treaties, and the solemn promises of the United States to protect them, and to bring such offenders to justice and punishment; and a single failure causes the Indians to lose confidence in the agent and Government. The want of this confidence is destructive to the best interests of all parties.

Agents should be first protected by discretionary powers to punish the bad and reward the good: second, he should with the means of doing so liberally and effectually—I say liberally and effectually, and by these words I mean that, when a demand is made, it should be positively *enforced at all hazards, holding the agent highly responsible for its justness and utility*. When an agent makes a representation in relation to any fact, or conduct of any person in the Indian country, the law should provide for its *speedy* and satisfactory investigation. The present law does not seem to make ample provisions for many cases of this kind. When persons in the Indian country are known to be in the constant habit of exciting the Indians against the officers of Government, and against the Government itself; I beg leave to ask if the present laws provide amply for any such cases? By this, I mean, is there any law that can be made to operate on such persons? Be assured that the trade and traders would be greatly protected, if ample provisions were made by law for the cases just hinted at. If an agent reports an individual for misconduct, and the report is not acted on, it is at once known in the Indian country; the wrong-doer claims the victory, and the agent sinks into insignificance, and the consequence is very apt to be a repetition of the offence, and that too in a ten fold degree. The savages take courage from this, and feel free to commit outrages on our traders as well as our citizens. The agents should be placed beyond the power and influence of the traders in every shape and way.

The protection of our frontier as well as the Sante Fee, and perhaps the fur trade, would undoubtedly be more efficient as mounted men, than any other way. The nature of the country, the habits of the Indians, would be better preserved, and the interest of the Government, and dignity of the nation, stand a fairer chance to remain inviolate. The quantity of troops would not be so great, as their mobility would place a large extent of country under their control. Under the present laws and arrangements, a very small party of Indians have it in their power, mounted as they are, to approach our outer posts and garrisons, and commit any outrage or assault they may think proper, and escape with impunity, because our troops are on foot—a fact the Indians all well understand; hence the cause of their insolence. Indeed, sir, brave and experienced as our troops are, it does not seem to me that they afford any check whatever to Indian outrage in this section of the country. The Indians have no sort of dread or fear of footmen; such are the known advantages they have over them. It is my opinion that the army should be augmented by the addition of one thousand mounted men, to be raised and taken from our citizens, (or at least a part of the pre-

sent forces should be mounted;) thus, this addition of strength to the forces of the United States, would enable the whole to give complete protection to each and every branch of our inland trade, as well as to give certain protection to our frontier citizens from those petty outrages of the Indians, which so frequently occur; and best of all, our national flag would be seen with more clearness, and of course more highly respected. That the army, as at present organized, is of much importance in many points of view, no one will doubt; but still the same can be made more efficient and of greater importance by the proposed addition. The commerce of the high seas preponderates that of the inland; hence it is that, if one half of the number of our citizens had been captured and put to death, the whole energies of the American people would be directed towards avenging the wrong and punishing the guilty, and asserting our national rights; but it has not been so with the people who have witnessed, as it were, the robbery and murder of some of our most enterprising citizens, who were engaged in our inland commerce. The only reason which I can conceive of for this supineness is, that the latter is the lessor of commerce. As regards the protection of our fur trade, as matters now stand, it is the opinion of many that, when there is *no agent* and *no troops*, the trader feels the *best protected*, for then there is no check upon his influence or cupidity, if he has any. The Indians that will hang most heartily upon our people and Government, and with whom our relations now are, and continue to be, of the most importance, are those tribes or nations that reside on the waters of, and northwest of, the waters of the Mississippi river, extending to the Mexican borders, and embracing the waters of the Missouri and Columbia rivers. That a mounted force is the only efficient means of holding these savages in check, there is no one, who has any knowledge of the Indian character or Indian country, will pretend a doubt. The laws regulating Indian trade and Indian intercourse, were enacted at a period when our Indian relations were very different from what those are that now exist. It is to be regretted that our relations with those foreign tribes, have been measured and governed by the supposed analogy between those and the more southern or interior tribes of Indians, but experience has proved that the means of war, of battle, defence and subsistence of the wild Indians, vary very essentially from that of the Indians who reside in the States, or near the borders; the habits of these tribes, time has fashioned after those of the whites. Therefore it is very clear that the code of laws that might be suited to the government of the one, might not suit the other.

It is not in my power, with any degree of precision, to give the number of persons, or amount of capital, at present employed in the Indian trade. This query, the superintendent is better qualified to answer; but the capital must be very large, especially that portion which is employed in the annual purchase and transportation of whiskey and alcohol into the Indian country for the purpose of trade with the Indians. It is not to be believed that the superintendent is ever applied to for a permit for the one-hundredth gallon that is taken into the Indian country. This whiskey is sold to the Indians in the face of the agents. Indians are made drunk, and of course to behave badly. Indeed, so little are the means or power of the agent to prevent this, that Major Sandford, an agent for the Upper Missouri, was heard to exclaim that "he wished to the Lord that the traders would not sell or give whiskey to the Indians in his presence." I am well informed, that there is but little doubt, but a clear gain of more than fifty thousand dollars has

been made this year on the sale of whiskey to the Indians on the river Missouri; the prices are from \$25 to \$50 per gallon. Major Morgan, United States' sutler at Cantonment Leavenworth, says that thousands of gallons of alcohol has passed that post during the present year, destined for the Indian country, by other routes, is truly astonishing. The major furnished me with much more verbal, but highly important information, to whom I beg to refer the department; but it is very easy to come at the whole truth by making inquiry of all the Indian agents, especially those on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, to whom you are referred. If half be true, ought there not to be a stop put to those trading in whiskey, and all, and some new plan adopted? My object in mentioning these facts, is simply to show, that, whilst we are providing for the protection of our traders, (which is very proper,) it would be well to guard the Indians against this and other oppressions and injuries inflicted by the traders; and, if possible, to put a stop to the many serious evils that follow the shameful and unnatural practices of some of the traders in the Indian country, to which the loss of many valuable lives may be attributed. As regards the number of persons killed by the Indians within my sub-agency, I am informed that three persons have been killed by the Ioways since the late war, viz. Fielding Trammel, John Myers and James. The Indians were tried for this offence, and acquitted. The murder was committed on the 17th July, 1829, in the county of Randolph, State of Missouri.

I mentioned, in a preceding part of this communication, that "our system of laws were not suited to the condition and government of the north-western Indians:" I again repeat the assertion. If the United States intend to govern, as well as improve the condition of the Indians, very different measures and laws should be adopted, differing very materially from those which we have so long *attempted* to rule and govern them. A territorial or temporary government might be established over the northwestern Indians, or a part of them. This Government should be supported by the troops before mentioned; civil rule should be established and enforced; means should be adopted to enlighten the Indians, and to aid and instruct them in the arts of agriculture and domestic economy; a taste for individuality of property should be inculcated; the Indians should be limited in their range; they should be made to feel punishments when they deserve it; when, at the same time, they should be fully convinced of the determination and power of the Government to protect them in all their rights great and small. I am fully of the opinion that a few years of this government or civil rule in the Indian country, would improve their condition very much, by which our national and commercial relations with them, would be placed on a more solid and elevated posture; but, as the law now is, we have next thing to no government or rule in the Indian country. It is true, I am not much in favor of seeing twelve millions of souls that are free and sovereign supplicating a handful of Indians not to raise the war whoop; the government should control the Indians, and compel them to behave, as well as to extend the hand of justice and mercy to them.

If an agent or trader happens to be opposed to the superintendent, or to the powers that be, the consequence is a want of union and harmony; without which, no department of government can be of any sort of use. There is such an eternal jealousy among the agents, mixed in with the influence and operation of traders, as well as such different views on almost every subject that relates to the Indian trade or Indian affairs, there is no getting at

the proper information on any subject, especially if the correspondence of agents, &c. be resorted to as the only evidence, which, when examined, must be found to contain a mass of contradiction, to the widely scattered condition of the agents; and the means of obtaining information in relation to the same subject, or transaction, may be surely attributed the cause of these only. With a view to union and harmony, I proposed last spring to several of the agents that we should meet at St. Louis annually, and interchange our information and opinions in relation to the affairs of our respective agencies, and to unite in such reports as would keep the Government constantly advised of the course and operations of Indians and Indian affairs within the limits of this superintendency. It was then most heartily accorded by yourself and the agents that were there present, (with but one solitary exception,) that such annual meetings would be of the utmost importance to the service; but, for some cause or other, we have permitted this proposition to die. It would take almost a volume to point out the many goods that would result from these meetings: union and harmony would be firmly established, and, if the law permitted, (which ought to be case,) the superintendent and agents could regulate the prices of traders, similar to the course or mode adopted with the sutlers. These annual meetings would not cost the Government or agents one cent more, because the agents are compelled to attend at St. Louis in the spring of each year, to receive funds, purchase annuities, &c. &c. A plan for a similar meeting of the chiefs of the different tribes, to be held at different points in the nation, would be productive of much good; the expense of such meetings would be very trifling. In addition to which, agents should be required to correspond frequently and freely with each other. At the Indian meetings above spoken of, the chiefs could council and smoke, and strengthen the chain of friendship between them, and settle many little differences, make arrangements for the ensuing hunt, &c. &c. The form of government hinted at, would be admirably suited for the last mentioned purposes. That our Indian laws should be amended and strengthened, or a better and entire new system adopted, does seem to be clear; but what is best to be done, I do most cheerfully submit to the hands of others, who have a right to act, and whose experience and judgment are better than mine. I give it as my candid opinion, that the best and only means to be adopted, with a view to the procurement of *all* and the best information in relation to the condition of our Indian trade and Indian affairs, would be to summon, or rather order the superintendent and his agents to Washington city, and there let them each, face to face, give to the Secretary of War, or to such committee of Congress as may be designated, all the information in minute detail, each may possess, in relation to the course and operation of Indian affairs in their respective agencies or districts; because it cannot be well expected that all information touching this stupendous subject, can be embodied and given in the form of a letter communication. I have not the least doubt, but that, whenever the proper information is obtained, and a full investigation had thereon, that Congress will place the Indian department as well as the Indian trade, on a more solid and beneficial basis. My experience and judgment constrain me to say that, at this time, under the existing laws, the services of agents are of but little or no use to the Government or Indians. Whereas, under different regulations, they might be made of the utmost importance.

I have seen your and Governor Cass's views (in pamphlet form,) in relation to a change of our Indian laws. If those views could be thrown into the

form of a law, very many, indeed, if not all of the evils, would find speedy relief. I do most heartily concur with you, in the views therein taken, and take great pleasure in referring to, and recommending it as a valuable work, and should be much pleased to see the principles therein contained, adopted as the law of the land.

In relation to the prices charged the Indians for merchandise, &c. &c., there is a full test given to you by the chiefs of the Ioways, &c. which is on file in your office, a copy of which I refer to, and hope the same may be taken and annexed, as a part of this communication. This list of prices contains the truth. (See it marked A.) Be assured that it would be a matter of no small curiosity and information, to see a full statement of prices charged at the various trading establishments. This ought to be inquired into. There are many points which I might, and ought to have touched upon; but this letter is already too long to be read with any degree of good humor, or I might have added something more, but shall beg pardon for this.

I have generally given you, in a crude and irregular manner, my thoughts on the several subjects as they have occurred to me, (whilst writing.) If they, or any part or portion of them, can be made useful, I shall be glad; if not, the recollection that such was the intention of their recorder, must make you lenient towards them.

With high respect, I have honor to be,

Your very obedient servant,

ANDREW S. HUGHES.

To General WILLIAM CLARK,
Sup't Ind. Affairs, St. Louis, Missouri.

No. 4.

Mr. Gordon's report to the Secretary of War relative to the Fur Trade.

ST. LOUIS, October 3, 1831.

SIR: In answer to your letter and queries upon the *fur trade*, dated the 9th September, I have the honor to state that my personal knowledge and observation will enable me to answer to one branch of your inquiries, which is, the condition of the trade in the vicinity of the Rocky mountains, and west of them. I first went to the Rocky mountains to engage in the fur trade in 1822, and have been every year since engaged or connected with the business of the trade, either on the Upper Missouri river, or in the region of the mountains.

I have since been beyond the mountains, and have seen all the variety of operations to which our trade and intercourse with the Indians is there subject. In the year 1822, I was a clerk in an expedition conducted by Immel and Jones, for the Missouri Fur Company, and was one of those who escaped the massacre of that party when it was attacked, defeated, and robbed, by the Blackfoot Indians on the Yellowstone river.

The circumstances of that attack show some of our dangers in this business: about twelve days before the attack, we fell in with the party, about half mounted and half on foot, with dogs to carry their moccasins and provisions, which they packed on the backs of the dogs as we pack horses. We

were twenty-nine in number, all armed, had some goods, and about twenty packs of furs, which we had caught; our enterprise was friendly. We made them some presents, and parted in the kindest manner; but, suspecting their treachery, we set out for our rendezvous on the Yellowstone, being then on the three forks of the Missouri; the twelfth we were overtaken and ambushed at the foot of the hills, on the margin of the river, by about four hundred of these Indians, who had collected upon the information of the small party we had previously met. We were scattered half a mile along the river, and had seven killed and four wounded, and lost our goods, furs, horses, and traps. This was my first introduction to the dangers of this trade. I escaped by a run of about seven miles across a plain, pursued only by footmen, and returned at night to ascertain the extent of the mischief. I found the Indians encamped near the ground, and made off in the dark to provide for my own safety, and was received in a friendly way by a band of Crow Indians, with which I fell in about dark the next night. Of my companions, two were killed by treachery afterwards. The next spring, I was robbed by the Crows, a set of fellows with whom I had been all the winter, and treated with the greatest friendship, and made them many presents; but finding me alone, they could not miss the opportunity, and robbed me of every thing, even powder, lead, and tobacco, for my personal use. Since then, I was robbed a third time, and a fourth near the scene of the first, so that I know something of the dangers of the trade.

The fur trade, in and about the Rocky mountains, is carried on both by trading goods and hunting beaver. The hunters now out, I should suppose to be five or six hundred men, and are fitted out partly from Missouri and partly from Santa Fe. These are exclusive of the British, who also hunt constantly west of the mountains, and did hunt to the east of them until the American hunters became numerous there. The hunting is carried on nearly in the same way by all these parties. Two or three who have capital or credit, hire the hunters at so much per month, and equip them for the business. Trading is almost always united to hunting. The hunting is done with traps, and beaver the principal object.

None of our American hunters ever go to the south of the main Columbia, or to the north of the latitude 49 degrees, to what is considered British ground, nor do the British hunt themselves. They come to our side of the line, and mean to exhaust it first: so that the treaty privilege to hunt and trade on our side is of great value to them. It is universally considered unsafe to go on the country claimed by the British; and no American has ever ventured to do it; and I have no doubt would loose his life and his property if he did. All the hunting parties are on our side of the Columbia, and latitude 49. At present, I am of opinion that the Americans are taking most furs by hunting, but that the British have taken much the most in the whole country from the late war to the present time. The Indians in the mountains, and beyond them, do not object to this hunting, which, though strange, is not unaccountable, for they do not hunt themselves for beaver, and get presents from all the hunting parties, which serve as a purchase for the privilege. Another source of profit to the Indians, is stealing the hunters' horses, and restoring them for a reward—an operation so common, that it hardly interrupts friendship.

The Indians west of the mountains, on our side of the river, were not furnished with traps to catch the beaver. North of the line, they were furnished and are good trappers. Of late, the Indians east of the moun-

tains, and south of 49, have begun to get traps, and to hunt themselves, and, therefore, to object to white hunters. This I know to be the case with the Crow Indians, who now object to white hunters, though they did not when I first knew them. Hunting is the only way our citizens have to contend with the British on our ground in and beyond the mountains; their advantage in trading being so great as to put competition out of the question. They bring their goods from Hudson's bay, and from the mouth of the Columbia, without paying any duties, while ours, being imported through the United States, are subject to heavy duties, perhaps an average of 50 or 60 per cent. These goods are of the same kind, being made in England, and the Indians are good judges of their quality and price, so that the difference of 50 or 60 per cent. in their cost puts it out of the power of the American trader to compete with the British traders. The British, besides their permanent posts along the line of our frontiers, have temporary winter establishments on the American side of the line, where they trade with our Indians, and nearly monopolize the trade on account of their advantages. One of these establishments is, or was lately, on Medicine river, one of the northern branches of the Missouri, falling in above the falls. The principal tribes of Indians in the region of the Rocky mountains and their vicinity, with their dispositions, &c., are as follows:

1. The most numerous are the Snake Indians, of which I know three great bands, the Shawnees, the Tetaps and the Camanches, and many other smaller bands. Many of these go by a name which signifies root digger, because they live by digging roots, and are wretchedly poor, miserable, and thievish. They have no houses, no traps, no guns, and depend for safety upon hiding, and for subsistence upon roots, berries, insects, reptiles, and such game as their mode of life, and bows and arrows, enable them to kill. There are a great number of these bands all in the mountains, where they stay for shelter, seldom coming in the plains, except to steal, at which they are wonderfully expert. They are the most miserable human beings I ever saw; ignorant to the last degree, superstitious in the extreme, destitute of every thing necessary to even Indian comfort, but appear to be perfectly content with their situation, and will not avail themselves of the means in their power to better their condition.

2. The Blackfeet are the most dangerous, warlike, and formidable. They go in larger bodies than other Indians, and well armed with guns, chiefly obtained from the English: these Indians are trappers, having been supplied with traps by the British, and learnt the art from them. They have been almost always hostile to the citizens of the United States, and trade almost exclusively with the British. They reside principally on the head of the Saseatchirine, and make constant excursions for hunting and plunder on the waters of the Missouri.

3. The Flatheads inhabit the north branches of the Columbia, and have always been friendly to the citizens of the United States. They are not very numerous, say about five hundred families. They have never killed or robbed our citizens. This is their boast; they proclaim it continually, like the Chickasaws did formerly; and, in fact, we always feel safe among them. Some Americans have been living with them for many years, and have families among them.

4. Crows, about 500 families, say 1,000 warriors, live on the Yellowstone, and roam along the foot of the mountains. They are thieves at home and abroad, and spare no chance to rob us, but never kill. This they frankly

explain by telling us that if they killed, we would not come back, and they would lose the chance of stealing from us. They have no shame about stealing, and will talk over their past thefts to you with all possible frankness and indifference.

The best trade with them is in getting horses from them to carry on other operations. These horses are chiefly stolen from the Spaniards. They raise but few themselves; they have a great many mules and horses. I suppose I have seen ten thousand horses and mules feeding at their village. The children are learnt to ride from their earliest age. The infant is often secured on a board, which is hung on the horn of a saddle, and the horse turned loose to follow: as soon as it can sit up, it is tied on a saddle, and the horse follows. At four years of age, they will ride alone, and guide the horse; thus both male and female sex make no difference, and all become first rate riders.

5. Arrapahoes and Grosvantres. They are the same people; speak the same language, and have about 1,200 warriors. They inhabit the country from the Santa Fe trail to the head of the Platte. The Grosvantres are from Fort de Prairie, a British post on the Saskatchewan, and are very inimical. They harrass the Santa Fe traders, and those engaged in the fur trade.

With respect to the value of the furs obtained by hunting in the region of the Rocky mountains, I understand that the returns of this year are, and will be, as follows:

1. Sublett's company about	-	-	-	-	-	\$40,000
2. Dripps and Fontenelle	-	-	-	-	-	30,000
3. A detachment from the American Fur Company	-	-	-	-	-	30,000
4. Two companies of American citizens fitting out from Santa Fe, making their returns to St. Louis, about	-	-	-	-	-	50,000

\$150,000

I left the head of the Colorado of the west, where it issues from the Rocky mountains on the 10th of July last, and arrived at St. Louis the last of August. At the time I left the mountains, the above was understood to be the amount of the hunting or trapping branch of the business in and beyond the mountains.

The trade in furs, robes, &c., is not included, and will be better answered by others. With respect to the loss of lives, I will only speak of those killed since I have been engaged in the fur trade; and in the part of the country which was the scene, or nearly so, of my own operations. In 1823, forty-three persons were killed from the Arikeras to the mountains: about twelve of these were in General Ashley's employ, and seven with me at the defeat of Immel and Jones. The next year, 8 men were killed at one time by the Snakes, on the waters of the Colorado, who were in the employ of Provost and Lubro. Same year, eight of Nolidoux men were killed by the Camanches. Every year since, the deaths have amounted to ten, fifteen, or twenty, except the present year, of which I only know of four being killed, two of Dripps and Fontenelle's men, who were killed just before I left the mountains; and Mr. Smith and Mr. Winter, the first at the head of a party, and the last a clerk for Mr. Soublette. The two latter were killed on the Santa Fe trail by the Camanche Indians. The furs are diminishing, and this diminution is general and extensive. The beaver may be consider-

ed as extinguished on this side of the Rocky mountains; for, though few beavers may be taken, yet they are not an object for any large investment. Along the foot of the Rocky mountains, and down the watercourses which issue from them, and on and beyond the mountains they are yet in sufficient numbers to make it an object to hunt and trap them; but they are greatly diminished. The permission which was given to the British after the late war, to trade on our own country, has been most liberally used, and the country trappers kill, over and over again, young ones of six months old, the dams never being spared. At present, the trappers are only gleaning where the British have been reaping.

If the country was allowed to rest a few years, it would be replenished, but the treaty which grants the privilege to the British, leads to the ravaging of the country, as both parties do all they can to make the most out of the present time

The improvement and protection of the trade requires two things to be done, both of which are in the power of the United States, and are called for by every consideration of interest and humanity. The first of these things is to put the American trader on a footing with the British trader by releasing his goods from duties; and the next would be to secure him against danger of murder and robbery, by equipping the frontier military posts with horses, so that the soldiers, instead of being stationary on the frontiers, could visit the whole tribes of Indians, and demand and take satisfaction for the depredations they commit. These two measures, which the Federal Government could so easily adopt, would, in my opinion, put the *fur trade* on a footing to compete, successfully, with the British. And if the Government wishes the hunting and trapping discontinued, they ought surely to stop it first on the part of the British; and then the most effectual way for stopping it on the part of our own citizens, would be to enable them to substitute trading for trapping; to do which, the duties on Indian goods would have to be abolished, so that the American and British trader would be on a par as to the cost of their goods.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM GORDON.

To the Hon. LEWIS CASS,
Secretary of War.

No. 5.

Alphonso Wetmore's Report.

FRANKLIN, MISSOURI, *October 11, 1831.*

SIR: In reply to the queries transmitted under cover of your letter of the 9th ultimo, I have the honor to submit the following history of our trade to Mexico.

Early in the summer of 1821, several citizens of Boonlick made a small outfit at this place, and departed with the avowed purpose of visiting the settlements of New Mexico. The enterprise was, at the time, deemed one of infinite peril; and the pecuniary venture was accordingly limited in amount; and the articles of merchandise comprized in it, were suited either to Mexican or Indian taste. In the event of failure to reach the point of destination, it was a part of the plan of the adventurous party to remunerate themselves with the capture of wild horses, or, in the manly and ani-

mating sport of the buffalo chase: they returned the same season. In the spring of 1822, an increased number of adventurers packed on mules a small amount of merchandise (valued at \$ 3,000,) at this place, with the purpose of making a farther experiment in the Santa Fe trade. In pursuing the route, in their judgment the most direct, they fell upon a sandy desert beyond the Arkansas, where they suffered infinitely from thirst, for more than forty hours. They continued their route, and were remunerated for their toil and perils, with a profit of about two thousand per cent. Encouraged by this essay, in 1823, the trade assumed a more settled and regular character.

An additional number of respectable citizens, with increased capital, engaged in it, and wagons were employed this year, for the first time, in the transportation of merchandise. This company, too, suffered extremely in the passage of the great *Jornada*, or day's journey, from one watering place to another, beyond the Arkansas river. A safer route across the sands has been since traced out, and is now pursued with little or no inconvenience. The experiment of this year, gave encouragement for an increase of the trade, which has been progressive ever since; and its importance induced Congress to appropriate \$ 30,000 for laying out and making the route. This task had been previously performed by the traders themselves; and no advantage was derived from the expenditure of the money in the summer of 1824. The protection subsequently afforded in 1829 by the troops, is matter of record in the War Department. The whole number of lives lost in the Mexican trade up to this year, is eight souls, to which we may add two of the fur traders, who fell on or near the trace, while the caravan of this year, which has just arrived, was returning. In 1827, the robberies on the Santa Fe trace amounted to 130 head of stock; and, in 1828, the loss was estimated at 825 head of animals of all kinds. Since that year, the losses have been so inconsiderable, that no mention is made of the particulars. The Camanches and Panis are chargeable with these frays. In 1821, the caravan consisted of 21 men, and their merchandise was valued at \$ 3,000. The caravan of last spring numbered 260 men, with 135 wagons, and merchandise to the amount of \$ 270,000. Autumn is not the most favorable season for going through the unsettled tract of country of 800 miles, although it has been several times successfully attempted. A small company went out this fall. The dangers that are encountered in this trade, consist in the hostile operations against the caravans, of the Panis, Chians, Comanches, Kiawhas, and Arapaho Indians, all of whom hunt in and claim the country through which the Mexican road leads.

The Blackfeet Indians have this year, for the first time, made their appearance in great force on the trace.

To insure the safety of the caravans, it is the custom of the traders, on reaching the rendezvous on the western boundary of Missouri, to elect a caravan bachi, and other officers, who are invested with such authority as may be voluntarily conceded from day to day, or such as they may have the address to enforce. This is greater or less, as the dangers increase or diminish. When on the march, as night approaches, the wagons are thrown into a square, and made to resemble, with much aid of the imagination, a camp fortified by Roman legions. Guards are always set, and these watch or sleep, as their interest or love of repose may predominate. The capital employed in the trade this year, is about three hundred thousand dollars. The outfits consists of wagons, mule, and ox teams. The arms

carried, are generally rifles and pistols, with a light piece of artillery to each caravan. A small supply of provisions is laid in to subsist the company until they reach the buffalo country, where an abundance is always procured by hunting during the march. The returns consist of bullion, Mexican dollars, fine gold, beaver, and horses, mules, and asses. One hundred packs of beaver are embraced in this year's return. The time of departure from the rendezvous on our border, is settled at or about the middle of May, when the prairie grass is sufficiently advanced to forage the teams, and the return caravans reach the same point from the 1st to the 10th of October. The time employed in going, in effecting sales, and in returning, is less than five months.

Those traders who bring their operations within the compass of one season, never penetrate the settlements more than one hundred miles, visiting the towns of Santa Fe and Toas, and some small Pueblos, and Banchos, on Rio del Norte. Those who remain in the country, extend their operations throughout the State of Señora, and as far south as some of the most considerable towns of the State of Chihuahua, (Chiquaqua,) including the city of that name.

When any of these traders may have completed their sales at a season unfavorable for their return by the interior routes, they proceed to the port of Brazos Santiago, near the mouth of Rio del Norte, or Rio Grand, (as it is there called) and return to the United States in one of the New Orleans packets. They likewise travel home through Texas. Thus it is the practice to perform the whole route from Franklin, in Missouri, with wagons, and the same mule team, to the gulf of Mexico, a distance by the coach road of three thousand miles. There is a good coach road from Santa Fe through El Pasos, Chihuahua, El Bayo, Mapomis, Paras, Saltillio, and Monteroy, to Matamoras; the business town for the port of Brazos Santiago. It will be perceived that there is some connection subsisting between the Mexican (interior) and the fur trade. American mountain companies are annually fitted out at Santa Fe, and at Toas, after the arrival of the caravans at these towns; and our traders take into account this branch of business in laying in their goods. In responding to the inquiry "what are the facilities or impediments offered by the Mexican Government," we are led to the most interesting point to which this communication tends. There are no facilities afforded the merchants of the United States who trade to Mexico by the interior route. But great impediments have been always thrown in the way of this class of our citizens, who have, by their risks and daring enterprise, deserved much indulgence. The Mexican Government has always given a preference, strongly marked, to their own merchants. This cannot be objected to. But facilities are afforded to the merchants of Great Britain and France, that are denied to those of the United States. The most grievous exactions have been imposed on our merchants latterly in the form of a per diem tax, for keeping open retailing shops; and an arrival duty of ten dollars on each cargo, or mule load of merchandise, has been collected. State and federal enactments have sometimes conflicted, and these have tended to enhance the impositions.

The suggestion for a remedy for those evils cannot, I presume, with propriety, come within the compass of this communication. But, the merchants of the United States, trading to Mexico, by the interior, if allowed the advantage of debenture, will, on entering the market, be placed on an equal footing with those of all nations trading through the sea ports. With this change, the interior trade would assume an importance, which it has

never claimed'; and it would, probably, advance to several millions per annum. It might then be extended as far south as the city of Durango.

A heavy duty is now collected in our ports on many of the leading articles of the Mexican trade, to which the Mexican duty is added before the goods are offered in market. The articles of foreign manufacture chiefly in demand, and which are not contraband, in the States of Chihuahua, and Senora, and province of New Mexico, are French calico and cotton shawls, English calico, brown and bleached cotton shirtings, and cotton hose, India black silk handkerchiefs, and German linens. If it is in contemplation to do any thing for this trade, it is only necessary to allow drawback on all merchandise imported into the United States for the Mexican market, and actually exported by the interior, and our caravans will be strong enough for self defence.

With all the disadvantages which have been encountered, this trade has continued to increase steadily for a period of nine years, and the circulating medium of Missouri now consists principally of Mexican dollars. Many of our citizens are profitably engaged in the trade; horses, mules, and oxen, are employed in carrying it on; the farmers and mechanics derive advantage from the outfits, and our whole community is benefited by this interesting traffic. It has been remarked that the Government of Mexico evinces an unfriendly disposition towards the citizens of this country engaged in the trade; yet, in the personal intercourse I have had with the Mexicans in their own country, I find nothing to justify a belief that they entertain any but the most friendly, if not kindred feelings, for their republican friends of the north.

The commercial regulations of which we have a right to complain, have been always effected by the deep laid schemes of the English merchants resident in that country. They, too, may have retarded the negotiation of our commercial treaty with Mexico, and its ratification by that Government. The unsettled state of the Mexican Government gives encouragement, and insures success to the machinations of crafty men, who, perhaps, address themselves, on some occasions, to irresponsible and corrupt officers.

The accompanying letter from a respectable merchant in Chihuahua, is offered for the information of the War Department; but it would, perhaps, be impolitic to publish its contents.

With the existence of the kind feelings which the people and the Government of this country entertain towards the Mexicans, there can be no occasion for a hint, which, at this moment, occurs to me, but adopting the doctrine which may be applicable, if our just expectations are not realized, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," it may not be amiss to observe, that a field or battering train would encounter little or no obstruction between the place where I write and the city of Mexico. The provincial Government of New Mexico has sometimes facilitated the operations of our traders; and, in 1829, furnished the return caravan with an escort commanded by Colonel Biscarara, a very distinguished officer of the Mexican army.

The following extract from a diary which I kept while travelling from Missouri to New Mexico, may not be inappropriate, and it is accordingly offered for your perusal. In the memoranda made while pursuing my route from Santa Fe to the mouth of Rio Grande, I find nothing that relates to the subjects embraced in your inquiries, which I have not already noted or alluded to, and the extracts, therefore, end on reaching the former place.

DIARY.

MAY 28, 1828. Reached the Blue Spring, the rendezvous of the Mexican traders, in season to attend to the election of officers; *ourself* elected captain of the host. "There may be some honor in it," as the deacon remarked on his own promotion, "but not much profit." 29th. In preparation for departure, inspection of arms, fixing ammunition. 30th. The caravan moved at 7 o'clock, A. M. made 16 miles, and encamped early. Formed our wagons into an oblong square, and set a horse guard. 31st. Made ten miles at noon, halted, and prepared for the approaching storm; after dinner, the rain commenced, and continued until sun set.

JUNE 1. (Sunday,) a tempest just as we were ready to set forward, the mules disengaged from the wagons in haste, and *double reefs* taken in the wagon covers. All hands employed in detaining the mules, who are disposed to take leave of *nos amigos*. At 9 o'clock under way, reached the "Big Blue," all our spades in requisition to make the descent into the river practicable; the wagons eased down the bank by 20 men at a trail rope; encamped in the prairie beyond the river; met here two bee hunters; one of our hunters brought in a deer in the red, and lean of course; one prairie fly discovered to-day, alarming; my Mexican servant furnished with a gun, proud as Franklin was with his whistle. This character is to-day mounted on the *verbatim* copy of old Rosinante, caparisoned in character.

June 2. Set off early, and marched 14 miles, and encamped at the Round Grove.

3d. Our route to-day lies over a fine prairie country, timber at a distance on our right, and a little on the left; encamped at 20 miles distance from last night's camp, at a point of timber opposite Bel Mont. Found to-day a swarm of bees in our path.

4th. Moving smoothly forward, met an Indian moccasin track; encamped at a little grove on the left of the trace. Made 18 miles.

5th. The road to-day fine and the country beautiful; nothing wanting but timber; two irregular hills on our right, passed over corn hill, encamped on the right of the trace, one mile from timber. March of the day estimated at 18 miles.

6th. At 5 miles reached Elk creek, where we discovered the corpse of a wagon which had been left by the preceding caravan. O Temperance! O Ditch Water! Crossed Mari De Signe. Made 16 miles.

7th. At ten o'clock reached Rock creek, 8 miles; ate strawberries and caught fish; crossed two other small creeks, and, at 6 o'clock, encamped, after completing 18 miles.

8th. (Sunday) Passed three or four rocky fords, and over a thin rocky soil; rolling ground; took our siesta at an old Indian camp; picked up a soft-shelled turtle; saw fresh Indian signs. Made 18 miles.

9th. At 2 o'clock, A. M., thunder, lightning, and rain; in motion at ten o'clock; and at six miles arrested by high water. This, and the last stream, fell into the Arkansas river. Ate this morning bacon and goose eggs, and at noon turtle soup. Not an alderman present!!!

10th. Still waiting for the fall of the small water courses in our route.

11th. The small streams are down this morning, and we are in motion at the usual hour. Road muddy; reached Council grove; the creek Ni Osho too high to ford. Made 8 miles.

12th. Detained by high water; one mess breakfasting on ham and eggs, another dining on alderman soup; met here a return caravan.

13th. Made a bridge to the water edge and crossed the wagons in season to encamp before the storm; rain in the evening, and at midnight a thunder gust.

14th. Rain continues, which detains us until the middle of the day. Made only six miles, and encamped in time to reef wagon cover before a Noah-like tempest descended.

15th. Under way at 8 o'clock; made eight grievous miles, and encamped early at Diamond spring; a mutinous disposition repressed by *bandit logic*.

16th. With infinite labor, through mud, we reached 8 miles, and slept in the prairie at a spring; no fuel.

17th. In four hours' march made only 8 miles; found weeds and brush sufficient to boil coffee. Our route to-day is over a roundabout (Irish) cut off; encamped after marching 14 miles; not a tree in view; enough fuel procured to dress our suppers. These scanty gleanings consist of sumack brush. While suffering with extreme thirst, about the middle of to-day, one of the party discovered a spring, the water of which bubbled through white sands, at the head of a prairie ravine.

18th. Made a prairie bridge, and marched 12 miles, to Cotton Wood grove.

19th. After having proceeded 10 miles, halted at a place where there are "ferruginous appearances;" our mules found salt here on the surface of the earth. The antelope is a subject of speculation this morning, and one of our hunters has been occupied in decoying, with a flag, one of these nimble footed animals. He likewise attempted this ruse de guerre to draw a wolf within reach of his rifle: a piece of flesh on the end of his gun-stick would have been more effectual. We find buffalo grass to-day; and fresh traces of buffalo remind us of the approaching marrow-bone feasts that are to change the monotony of our meals. No fuel; made 18 miles.

20th. Our route to-day is over a fine tract of table-land; passed several branches of Turkey creek, which runs into the Arkansas; saw one wild horse and a few antelope; encamped at a little creek; without fuel; two men lost; fired a gun, and, late at night, they reached camp. This day's march extended 20 miles.

21st. A little before day light, the mules made an abortive attempt to raise a stampido; half an hour later an alarm was created by a shot from one of the sentinels, and the cry of Indians, aroused the whole camp. Killed and wounded, blank; alarmed, none.

22d. At 5 o'clock, A. M., after moving quietly forward three hours and an half, a team in rear of the caravan took fright, and, in an instant, more than twenty were coursing over the prairie with Olympic speed. Dined at twelve miles, and dressed our first meal over a fire made of dry buffalo ordure; marched six miles further, and encamped on the branch of Little Arkansas. An Irish sentinel of the horse guard, about 10 o'clock, mistook one of the company for an Indian; he fired, and then challenged. Several fish caught this evening.

23d. At six o'clock commenced a bridge, and completed it at ten. Several fine fish caught this morning; crossed, and put the caravan in motion at 2 o'clock. The road lies over a less fertile country than that which we have passed; a hot wind from the sand hills to the south, and on our left.

The ground here, in many places, covered with salt; made 12 miles, and encamped at a branch of Cow creek; timber on its banks.

24th. Dined at a difficult crossing of another branch of Cow creek, which we passed after an interesting entertainment of a wagon race. It is one of the *foibles* of mule teams, that, after they have travelled four or five hundred miles, and when it is supposed they are about to tire, to take fright from a profile view of their shadows, and run like the antelope of these plains. After marching 13 miles, reached the main branch of Cow creek, which is barely fordable. Bridged the crossing.

25th. Finished crossing at 10 o'clock; a good supply of fish caught last night and this morning. Reached the Arkansas at 4 o'clock, encamped and replenished our shot pouches. "Keep your eyes skinned now," said the old trapper. We are now entering upon the most dangerous section of the trace, the war ground of the Panis, Osages, and Kansas. This is likewise a fine buffalo country, but we have no hump! no marrow bones! and no tongues, except our own *parts of speech*. Our hunters have brought in an antelope. We have observed in the prairie, during the last six days, the sensitive plant, or, as our Englishman says, "the plant to try maids with." One of our hunters has filled the camp with "smiles" and buffalo meat: the first two buffaloes which we discovered are slain. Netty Bumpo himself would have granted an approving grin on such a hunt.

26th. Our route to-day lies up the left bank of the Arkansas river. Saw a hare, larger than the English animal of that name. We have bigger thunder here, too. Passed through several prairie-dog villages. Our hunters saw thirty buffalo, and selected two. Made 20 miles. We find the Walnut creek swimming.

27th. A fish resembling a shad caught this morning. Waiting for the high water to recede.

28th. Discovered a shallow ford, and crossed. The prairie on our right and left, and in front, speckled with buffalo. Encamped early near the Arkansas. Our hunters give tongue and hump meat: this our old trapper calls "strong" buffalo signs, and the old Englishman was heard to mutter something about one Sir Loin, whom he had seen once or twice in Cumberland. A strong gale of wind at night fall. Made six miles to-day.

29th. Fine short grass prairie; buffalo in immense herds on all sides; selected several fat ones, and encamped, after a march of 19 miles.

30th. At 8 miles, reached the Pani fork of the Arkansas, cut down and bridged the muddy banks, and passed over in a thundergust.

July 1st. Half the day spent in drying, and bringing up arrears of meals. Our route continued over a beautiful inclined plane 15 miles. During this day's march, the caravan bachi shot his own mule through the head in a buffalo chase. Stearne's lament over the dead ass repeated.

2d. Saw two small herds of wild horses; hunters killed five buffalo. Our road lies over a fine buffalo grass plane until noon, when we enter a rolling prairie country. Twenty-one miles to-day.

3d. Our march to day is through a plane and rolling prairie, surrounded with buffalo. A herd of these attempted to break through our column of teams. "It will take a smart skrimmage and a sprinkle of shots," said the old trapper, "to turn them aside," and the leader fell at the flash of his rifle. Marched 20 miles, and encamped without timber—our supper dressed as usual, over buffalo fuel.

4th. Continued our march over the finest natural road in the world, along the left bank of the Arkansas, 18 miles, to Anderson's caches. Saw here the grave of a white man and a broken swivel; two miles farther reached the ford of the river. Encamped.

5th. This day employed in preparation for passing the deep ford.

6th. Doubled teams, and passed the river. Here we take in water for three days' march.

7th. At 4 P. M. we entered *Jornada*. After passing the sand hills, a few buffalo were discovered, which is an indication of water, and at 5 and 7 miles, ponds were discovered: at the last we encamped for the night.

8th. We have found water at 3, 4, and 12 miles; all apprehensions are at rest. Wild horses have approached within four miles of our line of march. Made 22 miles, and encamped without water.

9th. Three miles from camp, on the trace, we observed water; sixteen miles further on several ponds of water were discovered, which had been indicated as we approached by herds of buffalo and swarms of musquitoes. Encamped, after a march of 19 miles.

10th. Water in abundance along the trace to-day. At the pool where we dined, a buffalo approached within gunshot, and was slain. This day's march is estimated at 22 miles.

11th. Our course to-day was parallel with the Semiron. Crossed Sandy creek, and, at 14 miles, halted. The Semiron here presents a fine view of water, and 8 miles further up, at our camp, not a drop of water appears in the channel. Our course from the Arkansas to the Semiron is generally southwest; along the left bank of the latter, it lies almost due-west.

12th. At 12 o'clock reached water. In the afternoon our course changed to south-southwest; about sunset a hill ahead and buffalo in view: both these indicate water. At 7 o'clock encamped at a small pond, after completing 22 miles.

13th. At 8 miles reached the Semiron, changed our course up the stream two miles, and dined at a spring which waters a small piece or parcel of *tierra calicante*. In the evening, proceeded up the stream 8 miles: the earth whitened with salt and saltpetre; thunder and wind; the earth thirsting, but not a drink obtained from the clouds. This day's march 18 miles.

14th. Advanced 11 miles up the left bank of the Semiron, and dined. In the evening marched 10 miles, crossing and recrossing the river. Saw two wild horses. Course southwest in the forenoon, and south-southwest in the evening. 21 miles, a stampido at night, with wind and rain.

15th. At 7 miles, reached the Willows, a noted land mark, and at the same time obtained a view of the Sugarloaf mound; the two middle mounds, and the table mound, all above and near the upper Semiron spring. At 12 o'clock, encountered an Indian and squaw of the Kiawa nation. Several teams tired; the road good, but the saltpetre along the river bottom weakens our animals. This might be avoided, by keeping out on the plains. Only 17 miles to-day.

16th. Crossed and filed off from the Semiron; and at 10 miles reached the upper Semiron spring, at the base of a very abrupt rocky hill, on the summit of which is a cross standing over the bones of two white men, who were slain while asleep by the *gallant, high-minded, persecuted, gentlemen, Indians*. Saw here the first timber in nine days' march.

17th. At 7 miles a creek; cedars in abundance on the neighboring cliffs; marched 8 miles farther, and encamped at water, in a drain: 15 miles.

18th. After two hours' march, discovered the Rabbit Ears, two high isolated mountains which rise above the plain; since we crossed the Arkansas, the soil is miserably poor; marched 10 miles over hilly ground. In the evening, our road lies up an inclined plane, towards the Rock mountains; seven miles to our camp, on the bank of a muddy pool, around which one hundred and sixty mules are pressing; a puddle is reserved for ourselves; which is deemed a luxury, after having drank unto pickling the salt waters of the Semiron; our long eared stoics opened their konks half an hour before we halted, inviting this humane measure. The chapter of untoward events to-day, are, the resignation, in disgust, of a guard sergeant, and a gun-broken head of a driver, who held a seditious rein of ill-governed ass colts: at 17 miles we halted, without timber.

19th. The road this morning over rolling ground six miles; to a dry creek; thence up the bed of the creek to a rocky basin of water; the videttes ahead. In the evening discovered three Kiawa Indians, who were at war with a buffalo bull; they hid themselves in cleft of a rock; when they came forth, they uttered all the Spanish they were masters of, bellowing lustily *amigo! amigo! friend! friend!* This day's march estimated at fifteen miles.

20th. The road to-day hilly until noon; in the evening over a plane; passed an excellent spring, and a small creek, *La Madre Loma*, (Mother hill,) in our view. Yesterday morning after we encamped, a small party of red gentlemen called on us; smoked, ate, drank, and slept with us; one of them, at the first setting, drank nine pints of water; he was probably a secretary of some cold water conventicle. The chief of this little band claimed the honor for them of being Kiawas. Through the medium of the Pani language, we learned that they had been on a gentleman-like horse stealing expedition against the Chians, in which they were at first successful, but when they believed they had escaped with their booty, the Chians were down upon them, and retook the cavalry and a few scalps. They had walked at double quick step for the last two or three days; finding themselves at ease and secure in our camp, they 'slept fast.' Our march of the day was 15 miles.

21st. This morning, we parted with our guests, with mutual expressions of esteem and good will; our old trapper told them that when he returned their visit, he would leave his card, meaning a ball cartridge. The soil to-day is improving as we advance. Saw wild horses, deer, and antelope; encamped four miles short of the Round Mound; 15 miles.

22d. Sent a party of 8 men ahead to-day to make arrangements for payment of duties; the supposed distance from Toas, the nearest settlement, is one hundred miles. This evening our road is fine, and lies over a plane, on all sides of which, detached mountains render the scenery extremely picturesque; a few wild horses in view; the buffalo have been banished their usual range in these plains, by the droughth of the seasons. Recent rains have afforded us a supply; and in the deep rocky branch near where we are to-night encamped, there is really a deficiency. Our mules, during the last few days, have been thriving.

23d. Reached this morning the summit of the ridge which divides the waters of the Semiron and Canadian branch of the Arkansas. From this point, we have a view of a spar of the Rocky mountains; we observe, like

wise, *Cievas las Gallinas*, (Chicken Hills,) which are situated not far from St. Magill. The atmosphere on this mountain region is so clear that we can, with the naked eye, take in incalculable distances; a hill that may seem within an hour's ride, proves to be ten leagues from us.

24th. After four hours' march, we find ourselves at the Point of Rocks. We were to-day gratified with a full view of the Rocky mountains ranging along to the right. When our Mexican, from a hill top, caught a distant view of the mountain, he leapt for joy, discharged his carbine, and exclaimed, "La luz de mis ojos, mi casa, mi alma;" light of my eyes, my house, my love. Such emotions as these, we call, in Spanish, *amor de la patria*. Marched 17 miles.

25th. In the morning, entertained with mule races by several teams; crossed the Canadian branch of the Arkansas; encamped after a march of 15 miles.

26th. Still encamped at the ford of Canadian river; the base of the Rocky mountains appeared to us not more than six leagues distant; the mountain tops are covered with snow. This evening when threatened with a famine, or a mule feast, two black specks appeared far off, up the ravine leading to the mountains; these were buffalo, and they cost us only two ball cartridges.

27th. Marched to-day twenty-five miles, and encamped at the *Pilot Knobs*. The only occurrence worthy of note, is a sample of sharp shooting by Maj. Nimrod; he attempted to create a wild mule, and shot him somewhere about the hips.

28th. Timber to the right and left, not far off; the soil sufficiently fertile for growing small grain. Our mules have been recently much benefitted by the *gramme grass*, the best pasturage between the Atlantic and Pacific ocean. A heavy shower of rain fell on us as we were about to renew our afternoon march; before we halted for the night, another shower; and, about 9 o'clock, a rain far hung over the hills on our right; the moon was up; encamped near a grove of pines, after completing 20 miles.

29th. At dawn of day the whole caravan of merchants and muleteers resolved themselves into a committee of tar makers, and long before night every tar bucket was filled. Ourselves here "bruised a serpent's head;" the snake measured 5 feet 3 inches in length, and one of the tar kill operators killed his brother or cousin, which measured 5 feet 4 inches, inclusive of rattles. This last had swallowed a prairie dog of mature age and full grown.

30th. Resumed our march, and crossed *el Moro* and *el Sapiote*. Timber in all the streams of this region of country.

31st. Waiting the return of our advance party. The Mexicans spinning rope yarn out of the foretops of buffalo.

August 1st. The caravan in motion at the usual time; at one mile from camp, "a horse loose in a cane brake," said the old trapper; turned around and saw twenty teams in full career; the mules had rested one day, and grateful for the indulgence, volunteered this entertainment. About noon saw a party of horsemen on the trace ahead; they were our advance party, with several Mexicans. Continued our march, and encamped at *Rio las Gallinas*.

2d. Left the caravan, which was within a day's march of San Magill, the first Mexican settlement through which the wagon road passes. A guide proposed to lead the light party which I had joined, by a direct route, in one day to Santa-Fe; he did so, but over Alps and Appenines. Before we

reached the summit of the mountain, in mercy to our mules, we were constrained to dismount. All marvellous, and some scientific, travellers write, "that, on ascending the summit of cloud-ridden mountains, they feel great difficulty in respiration, on account of a change in the atmosphere;" never bearing in mind that their impatience to reach the end of the journey, imposes on their lungs the double duty of a blacksmith's bellows.

End of extracts from the diary.

In expressing an opinion that the caravans are competent to self-defence, I have perhaps adopted the impression that prevails among men, with arms in their hands, and impelled by that fearless spirit which animates the people of this country.

But the loss of several valuable lives in this trade has occurred; and this evil may be extended, if the Black feet Indians and the Chians continue to infest the route of the traders. These tribes are numerous, warlike, and extremely hostile. Perhaps the War Department may suggest some mode of military protection to this trade, which will meet with the approbation of Congress, so as to prevent a recurrence of the disasters of 1826.

In the autumn of that year, the largest return caravan was repeatedly attacked, and two lives lost. A smaller company, which returned late in the fall, was defeated, with the loss of one man, all their horses and mules; and they were to a precipitate flight in the night, lighted on their way by the blaze of their wagons. Toiling under the grievous weight of their money packs, feeding on the herbage of the prairies, they marched in this manner more than three hundred miles to our frontier settlements.

The larger company was strong enough, and so prudent as to escape defeat, although two of their number were slain. One of these, with only the faint flickerings of life remaining, was borne along, with great care, two days' march; and when at length the caravan halted in the wilderness, to perform for him the last sacred office, the enemy appeared. A band of the same nation which had enacted the mischief, approached with friendly indications. The grief and indignation which were mingled, and strongly operating at the grave of their companion, rendered abortive all the conciliatory efforts of the commander of the caravan: not from the pipe of peace, but from fifty rifles, a volume of smoke arose. The bloody reprisal was complete; and when the traveller subsequently passed that way, he saw the wolf of the prairie

"Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him;
From a Panis' skull they had stripped the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when the fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull
As it slipped through their jaws, when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed."

Permit me to conclude this communication, which, perhaps, has been already extended beyond endurance, with the description of a surgical operation that was performed on the plains beyond the Arkansas. One of the traders had a dangerous gun-shot wound in the arm; he was reduced to the alternative of death or amputation. The last was attempted, with such instruments as could be found in the camp. The operation was performed by one of the hunters of the company, who had attained some celebrity in cutting out hump meat. A small cord twisted around the limb was the tour-

quiet; the cutis was separated from the muscles by the application of the sharpest butcher's knife in camp. The muscles were divided, and the bone was cut asunder with a carpenter's saw. It was not deemed necessary to take up the arteries, and a large wagon bolt was heated, with which the stump was seared so effectually as to prevent hemorrhage.

The whole operation was concluded by the application of a dressing from the nearest tar bucket. Not a groan nor a sigh was uttered during the operation, and the patient recovered.

This is a lively picture of the shifts to which human ingenuity is sometimes driven; and the fortitude evinced by the sufferer in this case, is a trait of character belonging to the pioneers of the perilous commerce.

I am, very respectfully,

Sir, your obedient servant,

ALPHONSO WETMORE.

HON. LEWIS CASS,
Secretary of War.

No. 6.

Mr. Schoolcraft's Report in relation to the Fur Trade.

INDIAN AGENCY,

Sault St. Marie, October 24th, 1831.

SIR: In reply to your communication of the 9th September, respecting the fur trade, I have the honor to enclose a statement showing the number of trading posts within this agency, the number of principals, clerks, and boatmen employed, the amount of capital, the number of men killed or lost in the prosecution of the trade, and other data calculated to aid in preparing a comprehensive report on the subject. Some of the information required, I have no exact means of furnishing, and your instructions have come to hand at so late a date, that very little time is allowed to supply these branches of inquiry from extraneous sources.

The history of the fur trade in this quarter, is intimately connected with the civil history of the country for about two hundred and fifty years after its discovery and first settlement. Dating its origin in 1534, with the arrival of Jacques Cartier in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, it may be traced through various modifications up to the surrender of the lake posts to the American Government in 1796. This momentous interval of 262 years, is fraught with incidents of a deeply interesting character, which it will be sufficient here to allude to. Through every change of things, the fur trade continued to be not only cherished, but formed one of the cardinal interests in the policy of the governments which France and Great Britain successively exercised over this portion of country. Under the French Government, the system was connected with military and missionary operations, in a manner which was peculiar to that Government. Licenses to trade were granted by the Governor General to superannuated officers, or other servants of the crown, by whom they were sold to enterprising individuals. These persons went inland to exchange their goods for furs, and first drew upon themselves the epithet of couriers du bois. Great irregularities, however, existed, and under Douéville the privilege of trafficking in brandy,

was interdicted, -owing to the representations of the Catholic priests that much of the evils complained of arose from this source.

The British Government authorized local agents to oversee Indian affairs, and, after serious interruptions, and a strenuous opposition from the Indians, including the period of Pontiac's war, the trade gradually resumed its old channels. Scottish enterprize carried it beyond Fort Bourbon and the ~~E~~askatcharine, when the French had left it, and the outposts were subsequently placed at the mouths of the Mackenzie's river and of the Columbia.

Mr. Jefferson's system of 1802 was not put into operation in this particular district of country so early as in more southerly and westerly positions. The monopoly of the Northwest Company, who had embraced the trade of this region, withdrew slowly from it. In 1806, Lieutenant Pike found them in indisputed possession of the Upper Mississippi; and, at the transfer of their posts to Mr. Astor, they made arrangements by which many of the persons, who before conducted the trade, were left to continue in it. Some naturalizations followed, particularly after the act of Congress of 1816, limiting the trade to American citizens. On arriving at this place in the capacity of agent in 1822, I found the system essentially in operation, and traders went inland under bond and license.

The remarks that follow relate more particularly to the region of Lake Superior, and the country extending west to the Mississippi, and northwest to its sources. This portion of country is chiefly supplied by an association of individuals under the name of the American Fur Company. They supply goods and provisions on a year's credit to clerks and principals of a department, so called. These clerks pay an advance of 81½ per cent. on the sterling cost of blankets, strouds, and other English goods, to cover the cost of importation, and the expense of transportation from New York to Mackinac. Articles purchased in New York are charged with 15½ per cent. advance for transportation, and each class of purchasers is charged with 33½ per cent. advance, as profit on the aggregate amount.

Provisions are purchased in Ohio on contracts deliverable at Mackinac; iron and steel are brought up in bulk, and manufactured into small axes, traps, and other articles necessary in the trade; boats are also built at Mackinac. As many of the men fail through age, or from other causes become unable to renew their engagements, a fresh supply of men is annually brought up from Montreal, for which purpose the company has an agent in that city.

Tin and brass kettles, silver work, wampum, shot, ball, bar lead, powder, rifles, guns, tobacco, and domestic cottons, are, among the manufactures of the country, supplied to the Indians. To these, the wants of trade render it necessary to add oilcloths, tents, mess baskets, duck-hats, socks, shoes, ready made clothing, clay pipes, plumes, and several other articles of fancy, as necessary for the men.

The principal articles imported are strouds, blankets, list cloths, green and scarlet cloths, molton, Indian calico, gartering, ingrain and colored worsted, vermilion, nett thread, needles, thimbles, awls, fire-steels, colored thread, ribbons. The cost of these articles in England is indicated in the annexed list of prices, marked B.

The first cost of provisions, during the current year, has been as follows: fine flour \$3 85; prime pork \$8 56; tallow 9 cents; lard 7 cents; white flint corn 60 cents; whiskey 21½ cents: these prices are exclusive of the per centages above referred to. Goods are furnished to the traders at Mackinac gen-

erally between the 1st of July and middle of August. Each clerk or trader employs his own interpreter and boatman: the wages of a boatman may be put at \$100 per annum and his subsistence; the pay of an interpreter, when he is specially employed as such, is various: generally the clerks act as interpreters. Their wages, when hired as clerks, varies according to their capacity for trade, and the importance of the post they are to occupy. Some of them take as wages one-half of the profits they may make on the outfit, others, relying on their enterprise and good management, assume the business wholly on their own account.

These arrangements are frequently changing: the posts are definitely assigned to each one before leaving Mackinac; and there is no interference of one clerk with the trade of another, unless it arises from outfits elsewhere made.

The goods are transported in boats to the posts on Lake Superior; traders going further, leave their boats at the mouths of the principal rivers, and divide the freight into separate portions, which are put into canoes, and managed by the boatmen with paddles and poles. When they reach the head of the river, the goods are carried across the country to the head waters of the next navigable stream or interior lake, and so on from stream to stream, and lake to lake, until they reach the place of trade or wintering ground. In this way, the most remote parts of the interior are penetrated, and every principal village is supplied with a trade. Goods are thus pushed to the north-western verge of our national limits, where they come into contact with the traders of the Hudson Bay Company, successors of the Northwest Company: a fierce opposition is carried at these points.

It is customary for the trader to give out his goods and provisions on credit to the Indians when they depart for their hunting grounds; the boatmen are employed in chopping wood, fishing, and other economical labors, and in visiting the hunting camps of the Indians, to procure payment of them. A watchful eye is thus kept upon them. Small packs of goods are carried in these excursions to supply such as may require it; these journies are made on snow shoes, sometimes with the aid of dog trains. Provisions must be taken to last the journey, and to supply the Indians, and keep them at their hunts; and the men are often subject to distresses from want, and the severity of the climate. The list of men lost in the trade, which I forward, distinguishes between those who were frozen, drowned, and killed. Men, and even clerks, carried off by foreign opposition, I have not the means at present of naming, nor the number of Indians who have been temporarily, either by force or persuasion, carried across the lines, to prevent their furs from being sold to American traders. In the winter of 1824, persons in the service of the Hudson Bay Company carried off in trains the band of Chippeways, living near old Grand Portage, (Lake Superior,) after the arrival of an American trader (Mr. Johnston) on the ground.

The collection trips, made by boatmen, acting as runners, do not prevent the Indians themselves from coming in to the posts for the purpose of general trade. The prices which they are allowed, on bartering their furs for goods, are perhaps sufficiently uniform to permit general deductions. A chief from the Upper Mississippi, who visited the agency in 1828, and brought a letter from the principal of that department of trade, recommending him as the most respectable man in the Chippeway nation, gave the following rates: A three point blanket, or cloth for a capot, at 50 muskrats; a two and a half blanket, 40 muskrats; a Montreal gun, 100 muskrats; a gill

of powder, or 25 bullets, 1 *plus*; a beaver trap, 30 muskrats; a rat trap, 15 muskrats. A *plus*, for which there is a specific term in the Chippeway language, is equivalent to a beaver skin: by "Montreal gun," a northwest gun is probably intended. At this post (St. Mary's) the rate of barter may be stated thus: For a three point blanket, 2 *plus*; for a northwest gun, 4 *plus*; for a beaver trap, 2 *plus*; for a fathom of strouds, 2 *plus*; for a fathom of superfine cloth, 3 or 4 *plus*; for a bag of flour, 2 *plus*. In adjusting the account, a beaver, an otter skin, or a beaver of the third year, are counted, respectively, 2 *plus*; 10 muskrats or 3 martens, 1 *plus*.

The articles which are purchased of the northern Indians, in addition to furs and skins, are wild rice, ready made canoes, or canoe bark, gum, and wateess, and maple sugar. The proportion which the rice and sugar bears to the general stock of subsistence for the clerk and his men, cannot be stated. It is, however, so much as to be always relied upon by the trader, and when the rice crop fails, as it did in 1830, scenes of suffering ensue, both to the traders and the to Indians. Potatoes are raised by the traders at all the posts; and fish and game are more or less relied on.

When spring arrives, and the streams open, the furs are embarked, and the trader and his men proceed back to Mackinac (or whatever be the place of outfit) to sell his furs, and renew his supplies. The furs are received, examined, and generally assorted into three lots, denoted prime, out of season, and bad. During the present year, the following prices were paid at Mackinac: for the first lot, beaver, \$5 per lb.; bears, \$7 per skin; cubs, \$3; muskrat, 22 cents per skin; martens, \$1 25 per piece; minks, 40 cents; fishers, \$1 50; red foxes, 80 cents; cross foxes, \$2; lynx, \$1 35; otters, \$6; cactorum, \$7 per lb.

Estimated according to these rates, a pair of three point blankets or a gun costs on the Upper Mississippi \$22; a gill of powder, a gill of shot, or 25 bullets, \$5; (estimating the *plus* at 1 pound;) a beaver trap, \$6 60; a rat trap, \$3 50. At this post, a pair of three point blankets, a fathom of superfine cloth or a gun, estimated by the same rule of equation, costs \$20. There are, however, certain articles which are seldom or never sold to the Indians, but presented to them, as flints, fire steels, gun worms, awls, needles, thimbles, thread, tobacco, &c.; in addition to which, the trader has to bear a heavy expense in collection, and heavy loss in bad debts. There are many idle Indians at the posts, whom it requires address to keep out of debt without giving offence. And, during seasons of famine, the trader sustains a relation to the Indians of this post, which leaves him no other option but that of discrimination as to time, quantity, and person, in the application of food. Credits not paid the first year by the Indian, are doubtful, and after the expiration of the second, may be deemed desperate. It seldom happens that a hunter has ability to do more than to meet the actual wants of himself and family; and it is only in cases of extraordinary luck that he is able to hand over any skins applicable to old credits. Some of the boatmen and some of the petty clerks, particularly those having a mixture of Indian blood, engage in hunting, but not generally, without the consent of the Indians, and not without the procedure partaking, in some measure, of the character of injustice. Discharged boatmen, or *freedmen*, as they are called, are not permitted to hunt or trap, when the instances are reported and known.

The animals constituting the object of the fur trade, may be divided into the large class of quadrupeds, many of whom subsist entirely on herbs, as

deer and bison, and the small fur bearing species, including the amphibious, who derive their nourishment in part from shell or common fish; the former require a large range of uncultivated country, and very soon diminish before the advance of a hunter or agricultural population. Most of the fur bearing animals shelter themselves in marshy grounds and streams, but as their food is chiefly on land or shore, and the most valuable (the beaver) must have the bark of trees, this class of animals is also driven out or destroyed in the process of settling a country. Their diminution is, therefore, founded in very obvious causes, even where they are not much sought on account of their furs: the failure of food, and interruption of habits, would cause a rapid declension; a sterile country, with an ungenial climate, is so far favorable to their increase, as it still yields them the means of subsistence, and deters the advance of settlers: such is a considerable portion of the country north and northwest of Lake Superior. It is also found that northern latitudes yield furs of a blacker color and fine pelt; that this principle should take place in most of the smaller quadrupeds, as the arctic fox, is one of those appearances in nature where the fact is undoubted, while the cause itself, though apparently connected with the phenomena of light, is obscure.

I have had the honor to answer, in these details, many specific branches of your inquiry. Other data will appear in the accompanying statements. The whole number of trading posts within the Sault Ste. Maria agency is thirty-three, for which, the present year, fifty traders, principal and subordinate, are licensed. There are, besides, 190 interpreters and boatmen. Indian goods to the amount of \$ 33,675 have been taken inland, according to the invoices. This sum is exclusive of the provisions, which are never bonded for.

It is, however, considered, by those conversant with the trade, that the expense of men, boats and provisions, is equal to the amount of dry good purchases. Assuming this to be true, the actual investment and responsibility then is \$ 67,340. No enumeration of the Indian population has been made since 1824.

The number of Chippewas at the various posts reported that year was 7,324. These were distributed over a very large surface of country, and in very unequal masses. The largest village contained 1,700 souls, and the smallest 60. Assuming this enumeration to be correct, and every seventh soul to be a paying hunter, there then would be a series of data, which I have employed, to an amount of \$ 48 34 in goods and provisions, at cost prices, as the average annual supply of each hunter, or \$ 6 90 to each soul. What the total returns are from this district of country, I have no official or certain data for deciding. . Supposing the foregoing to be a sufficient approximation to the truth, to be used as data, and that an advance of 100 per cent. is paid by the Indians on the cost prices of goods and expenses of the outfit, the annual returns would but little vary from one hundred and ten thousand dollars.

In stating "any disadvantages under which the trade labors" in this quarter, I would direct the attention of the Government exclusively to the frontiers, where American citizens are brought into contact and competition with foreigners. This frontier may be assumed to commence at Old Grand Portage, on the north shores of Lake Superior, and to extend, uninterruptedly, to the mouth of the Columbia on the Pacific. There is no part of this extensive line, where furs are found or Indians exist, which is not the scene

of a constant, strenuous and desperate opposition. And these scenes are so remote from our settlements, courts, and even military posts and agencies, that the enterprising class of our citizens who resort there for the purpose of trade, are compelled to adopt measures for their own safety, which are unnecessary elsewhere; and the Government is indebted to them, not only for sustaining its authority at these points, but for all the actual authority which it there exercises. The lives and property of our citizens are freely hazarded in these efforts. It would be but justice that, in return for these sacrifices, they should, at least, receive protection; and this can only be rendered by advancing the line of our military posts and agencies, as early, and as far, and by changing them as frequently as there may be necessity.

Whatever tends to keep the Indians and the foreign and domestic traders at peace, operates as a direct encouragement to the trade, by leaving the Indians to devote their time to hunting, and relieving the traders from the posture of belligerents. Both these effects will flow from the advance or the increase of the posts. The Hudson's Bay Company occupy the north of the whole of the frontier line above referred to. This company are systematically organized; they operate with the advantages of being the local sovereignty of the country. All their efforts are, therefore, in harmony, and there is no internal opposition to contend with.

I have, for many years, been of opinion, that the trade of Lake Superior and the Upper Mississippi, extending north to the 49th parallel of latitude, would be essentially benefitted, and the traders exempted from the tax of a harrassing commercial warfare on the line of the frontiers, by the erection of two small military stockade at such points as would put an end to the insidious smouldering and cruel warfare between the Chippewa and Sioux nations; and the taking possession of, and raising our flag at, Old Grand Portage, (L. S.) long the seat of the commercial and political power wielded over the north by the Northwest and the X. Y. Companies.

This post might be occupied as a summer encampment, by a part of the troops from Fort Brady, and be left by them before the setting in of bad weather.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT, *I. A.*

Hon. LEWIS CASS, *Sec. of War.*

P. S. Lapoint, or the mouth of the Brule, on Fond du Lac, would offer the best sites, should a position on the south of the lake be decided on.

H. R. S.

No. 7.

Mr. Pilcher's answers to queries relating to the Fur Trade, &c.

ANSWER TO QUESTION,

1st. The posts of the American *Fur Company* on the Missouri are as follows: House at the Blacksnake hills, fifty miles above Cantonment Leavenworth; Otto post, six miles below Fort Atkinson; Fort Tecumshe, three miles above the mouth of Teton river; a small house, about seventy miles above the Rickara villages; Mandan post, at the Mandan villages; Fort Union, near the mouth of the Yellow Stone river; and a post near the mouth

of Maria's river. In regard to the amount of capital employed at each post, the various articles, and their cost and selling prices, &c., the amount of the returns, I am not able to give any satisfactory information. In a future communication, however, I may refer to this subject again, and notice particularly *one* article which is used in the trade, and its peculiar influence in that business.

2d. The exact number of men employed at each post, I am not prepared to state. The average wages of men employed on the Missouri service is about \$ 130, for wintering; say for 10 or 11 months' service.

3d. The quantity of provisions consumed at any one post cannot be correctly stated. They are supplied, in part, from St. Louis; some are procured from the Indians; and others by hunting. Both merchandise and furs have been transported, heretofore, in keel boats and batteaux, and it is still the case in part; but, in addition to these, a steamboat was employed for the purpose last summer, and succeeded in ascending the Missouri about 1200 miles, and might have continued on as far as the Yellow Stone, 1900 miles above St. Louis, without any obstruction.

4th. The men are employed in different ways; such as procuring fire wood, building houses, sawing plank, building boats, farming, running from one post to another, travelling through the country for the purpose of aiding those who have charge of goods, in collecting furs and peltries, and furnishing the Indians with goods: the latter, however, resort frequently to the posts for their supplies.

5th. Goods are sometimes delivered upon credit, for which the Indian is expected to pay at the termination of his hunt, or when sent to for that purpose. A part of those credits are frequently lost, but when given with prudence never in such quantity as to effect materially the results of the outfit. A debt of the kind among the Ottoes, Missouris and Mohaws, may be considered desperate, if not paid in the course of the year. Indeed, I have always regarded it as a desperate business, at war with the interest of the trader, of no real benefit to the Indians; but, on the contrary, in an eminent degree, destructive to their morals, if I may allow myself the use of such an expression in speaking of them. I believe the practice has never extended to any of the Indians of the Upper Missouri, with the exception of those above mentioned. The number of men dependant on the Otto post, near the Council Bluffs, are the Mohaws, - - - 500 men.

Ottoes and Missouris,	-	-	-	200
Pounes,	-	-	-	1800

2,500

These, together with their families, would amount perhaps to 10 or 1200 souls. Outfits for the Missouri leave St. Louis from the 1st to the 20th of July, and generally arrive at their place of destination from the 10th of September to the 1st of November. The time of arrival is decided of course by the locality of the post for which the outfits are destined. The returns generally reach St. Louis in the month of June following.

6th. The quantity of provisions furnished by the Indians, who live chiefly upon Buffalo, is considerable, and consists of meat dried in fleeces sometimes, and, at others, in pounded meat and grease, prepared for making *pemecan*.

7th. The fur bearing animals are diminishing rapidly, owing, as well to the encouragement given to Indians to destroy them, as to other causes, which I shall notice when I take up this subject again.

8th. The greatest disadvantage under which the trade labors, is the enormous duties with which all the principal articles used in that business are loaded. The advantages given to our immediate neighbors, the British, by continuing such duties, both in trade and influence, must be obvious to every one who has spent a thought upon the subject. And when I reflect upon the liberal policy of our Government towards the Indians, and its constant exertions to ameliorate their condition, I am forcibly struck with the singular contradiction involved by the imposition of such duties upon articles which experience proved cannot be equalled or fairly imitated by American manufactures, and which are so essential to the comfort of the Indians. Truly, it seems to present the strange anomaly of a Government making war upon its own policy.

9th. Time will not permit me to enter into details respecting the rise, progress and present condition of the trade. I should suppose that your office would afford better information respecting the amount of capital employed, at least for the last seven or eight years, than could be derived from any other source. In relation to the whole number of persons now engaged in the different branches of the *fur trade* upon the American territory, I should suppose it almost impossible to ascertain correctly; nor can I undertake to state the value of the returns in any one year, or the average value for a given number of years, aware, as I am, that no single individual can furnish a statement upon which the least reliance can be placed. On reviewing a memorandum which was put into my hands a short time since by Maj. Dougherty, I find that he estimates the whole amount of returns from the Missouri, from 1815 up to the present year, at \$ 3,330,000. This was a random guess on his part, and the returns may have greatly exceeded that amount; possibly, they may have fell short of it, if they could be correctly ascertained. He thinks the amount of capital employed for that time will not exceed \$ 1,665,000. In this I am satisfied that he has fell short of the amount by upwards of half a million of dollars.

10th. The number of persons killed on the Missouri and its waters, in the Rocky Mountains, and on the Mexican road, since 1819, will be seen by reference to a statement herewith enclosed. I doubt not that this exhibit falls far short of the actual number killed during the time alluded to. It is the result of a few hours' reflection, and I am well satisfied that many have escaped my memory, murders and robberies being occurrences so common in the country in question as to leave but little impression on the mind of those who are not immediately interested. I cannot state, with certainty, the amount of robberies committed in the country during the time referred to, but feel perfectly secure in saying that the amount of robberies, connected with the murders in question, does not fall short of one hundred thousand dollars, and that the whole amount of robberies committed, including those unconnected with murders, are equal to two hundred thousand dollars from 1819 up to the present year.

11th. The inland trade to Mexico I am unacquainted with, never having been personally engaged in it: but, in a future communication, I shall give my views respecting it, which, of course, must be bottomed upon the information of others.

12th. I regret very much the want of time to enter more fully into the subject embraced by this question, but must decline it for the present, in order to fulfil your immediate wishes. It may be proper, however, in answer to one branch of the inquiry, to state, that the furs are taken almost exclusively by our own hunters.

LIST of prices paid for Indian goods in England, with the cost of importation, and the selling prices to traders; also, of domestic goods and provisions.

Articles imported.	Quantity.	Sterling cost.	Domestic articles.	Quantity.	Cost in Federal money
Blankets, 4 points	- per pair	£00 24 8	Tin kettles	- per nest	\$13 50
Do. 3 "	- "	1 11	Brass kettles	- per lb.	48
Do. 2½ "	- "	12 6	Powder	- 7 kegs	9 00
Do. 2 "	- "		Rifles	- each	10 20
Do. 1½ "	- "	6 5	N. W. guns, 3 p.	- "	4 37½
Do. 1	- "	6	N. W. guns, 3½	- "	5 60
Blue strouds	- pr. piece	2 18	Mackinac beaver traps	- "	2 30
Save list cloth	- pr. yard	26 to 3½	rat traps	- "	75
Grey list	- "	3 to 6 4	Bar lead	- per lb.	07
Scarlet	- "	2 to 1½	Mess buckets	- each	5 00
Blue lion skin	- "	3 3	Clay pipes	- pr. gross	60
White molton	- pr. piece	40	Wampum, black	- pr. 1000	2 50
Worsted ingrain	- pr. hank	3 8	Wampum, white	- "	2 62½
Worsted colored	- "	2 10	Sea shells (courier)	- each	15½
Gartering, Scotch	- pr. gross	13 4	Hawks' bells	- pr. paper	37½
Do. scarlet & stripe	- "	10 8	Finger rings	- pr. gross	1 75
Do. Highland	- "	7 8	Silver ear bobs	- pr. pair	08
Do. col'd Highland	- "	6 10	Broaches No. 4	- "	30
Tow cloth	- pr. yard	6 ½	Broaches No. 5	- "	36
Real milled caps	- pr. doz.	5 4	Sturgeon twine	- pr. lb.	40
All colored thread	- pr. lb.	2	Foxtail feathers	- pr. doz.	2 50
Net thread	- "	2	Cock feathers	- "	3 25
Scalping knives	- pr. doz.	3 5	Country socks	- "	3 00
Brass inlaid knives	- "	6	Calico shirts	- "	1 00
Do. thimbles	- pr. gross	2 4	Common cotton shirts	- "	1 00
Fire steels	- pr. doz.	1 7½	Printed cotton	- pr. yard	14½ to 25½
White chappel needles	- pr. 1000	4 6	Navy blue prints	- "	12½ to 16
Gun flints	- "	7 3	Satinett	- "	60 to 65½
Beads (seed)	- pr. lb.	1	Flannel, red	- "	29
Brass collar wire	- "	1 ½	Flannel, yellow	- "	38
			Flannel, white	- "	33
			Tobacco	- per lb.	10
			Shot	- "	6
			Oil cloths	- each	12 00
			Tents-traders	- "	24 00
			Provisions	- "	
			Fine flour	- pr. barrel	3 85
			Prime pork	- "	8 56
			White flint corn	- pr. bush.	60
			Yellow flint corn	- pr. lb.	9
			Lard	- "	7
			Whiskey, gallon	- pr. gall.	21½
			Add 15½ per cent. trans- portation, and 33½ per cent. advance.		

The above is drawn from the best authorities at my command.

HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT, *Indian Agent.*

STATEMENT in relation to the Fur Trade.

Place of license.	No. of licenses.	No. of posts.	Names of posts.	Furs.	Fishing.	No. of principal clerks and interpreters.	No. of boatmen.	Amount of capital employed.	No. of men killed or lost in the trade.	Pay of clerks and boatmen; amount of cost of provisions; where purchased, and what proportion furnished by the Indians, price of selling, and amount of returns, and their kind.	Total amount traded within the agency of Sault Ste. Marie.
Sault Ste. Marie	1	1	Grand Islands	1		1	1	-	-	Facts not required by any acts of Congress, and do not appear on the record of this office.	\$3,614
"	2	1	L'ance Kenoyweenan	1		3	16	\$3,614	-		
"	3	1	Ontonque	1		3					
"	2	1	Lapoint	1							
"	2	1	Montreal river	1							
"	1	1	Lac Chetee	1							
"	1	1	Snake river	1							
"	2	1	Yellow river	1		27	26	6,988	-	-	6,988
"	1	1	Lac Courtenelle	1							
"	1	1	Lac Vasil	1							
"	3	1	Chippewa river	1							
"	2	1	Lac du Flambeau	1							
"	1	1	Metagonga	1		8	14	2,500	-	-	2,500
"	2	1	Ousconsin	1							
"	1	1	Fond du Lac	1							
"	1	1	Sandy Lake	1							
"	3	1	Leech Lake	1							
"	1	1	Lac Plat	1							
"	1	1	Lac Trabeese	1							
"	1	1	Lac Winnessie	1							
"	2	1	Red Lake	1							
"	1	1	Pambenaw	1							
"	1	1	Lac des Revier	1		26	65	13,065	-	-	13,065
"	1	1	War Roads	1							
"	1	1	Vermillion Lake	1							
"	1	1	Leaf river	1							
"	1	1	Crowing river	1							
"	2	1	Mille Lac	1							
"	1	1	Grand Portage	1							
"	1	1	Rainy Lake	1							
"	1	1	Full Lake	1							
"	1	1	The two rocks near the falls of St. Croix	1		5	13	6,708	-	-	6,708
"	4	1	WhiteFishPoint	1		4	28	800	48	-	800
	50	33		32	1	77	163	\$33,675	48		\$33 675

Abstract from official records.

HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT, *Indian Agent*

No. 8.

From Mr. Dougherty, with statements relating to the Fur Trade, &c.

UPPER MISSOURI AGENCY,

Cantonment Leavenworth, Oct. 25, 1831.

SIR: In compliance with your instructions relative to a resolution of the Senate of the United States, of the 2d March, 1831, a copy of which you done me the honor to transmit, I will, with much pleasure, endeavor to give you such answers to the queries therein contained as I possess.

I have been so constantly engaged among the Indians of my agency ever since I received your first notice on this subject, that it will not be in my power to furnish you with as much, nor as satisfactory information concerning it, as I at first anticipated. Soon after receiving the resolution, I wrote to several of the principal fur traders, enclosing them copies, and requesting certain information touching the subject, which no one but a trader can give correctly: I mean the exact amount of capital employed, and the amount of the proceeds in furs, robes, peltries, money, &c., but am sorry to say, that, owing to some cause unknown to me, I have not been favored. Despairing of any further information at present, and seeing that the meeting of Congress is fast approaching, I will now, in haste, proceed to lay before you, so far as my memory will serve, such facts as my long residence in this country has possessed me of. Statement marked A, herewith enclosed, will show you, as near as I can recollect, the number of American citizens who have been killed by Indians since the late war with Great Britain, while engaged in the fur trade and the inland trade to Mexico, when and where killed, and by what tribes. Statement marked B, also enclosed, will show the amount of robberies, when, where, and by what tribes committed. I remember very distinctly the number, time, place, and whose employ these citizens were in when killed and robbed, but a considerable number of their names have escaped my recollection. I can, however, vouch with safety, I believe, as to the number of persons who annually engaged in the inland trade to Mexico, the amount of capital employed, and the amount of the proceeds in furs, &c. &c. I am not sufficiently well acquainted with the different branches of that trade to justify me in giving even an opinion on the subject; I will therefore leave this part of the matter to others better qualified.

I am well aware, however, that this branch of trade is of great importance to our country, and that it is laboring under serious disadvantages, which I will endeavor to point out to you before closing this communication; and also what I conceive to be the only but sure means of affording relief and protection to this, as well as the fur trade, in, along, and beyond the Rocky mountains. In relation to the number of persons who annually engage in the fur trade, the amount of capital employed, and the amount of the proceeds in furs, peltries, &c. &c., I will, notwithstanding I have not been engaged in that business as a trader since the year 1819, venture to give a statement, marked C, herewith enclosed likewise, which I feel persuaded is sufficiently correct to justify me in troubling you with it. Previous to the year 1819, I was engaged in that trade some nine or ten years, and, since that time, I have resided constantly in this country, seeing, visiting, and conversing with all the different tribes on the Missouri every summer and fall, while on their way with their men and goods to their different trading posts, and every spring also, when they descend the river with their

furs and peltries to St. Louis. The knowledge I have acquired of this trade, from these opportunities, assures me that statement C, already mentioned, is not far wrong. I have taken up, as you will perceive, the last fifteen years, which leads us back to the termination of the late war with Great Britain, and have thrown them into an annual average, the result of which is shown in statement C, already referred to.

The serious disadvantages under which the inland trade to Mexico, and the fur trade in the Rocky mountains, are laboring, arises entirely from the hostile disposition, and consequent depredations of the numerous and warlike tribes of Indians who inhabit the country between the State of Missouri and Santa Fe, along and in the Rocky mountains. Nor will the unfortunate disadvantages ever be less than they are so long as we continue our present mode of intercourse with these tribes. They have no fixed or permanent white traders among them: indeed they are, as yet, unacquainted with the benefits resulting from commercial intercourse with civilized men. They look on us, when they meet with our citizens travelling through their country, as they would upon war parties of their most common enemies. This being the case, it is not at all strange that they should kill or rob our people whenever it is in their power to do so. These tribes are too numerous, hostile, and powerful to admit of an individual trader, or even an ordinary company, to establish themselves in that country, without the aid and protection of the Government.

The country in and along both sides of the Rocky mountains, over which these savages roam, is, I have no doubt, by far the richest in furs and peltries that is to be found on this continent.

For the purpose of relieving the inland trade to Mexico of the disadvantages under which it is laboring along the Santa Fe road, and to give life and safety to our fur traders, and encourage the traders to enter into the recesses of the Rocky mountains, and open trade with all the tribes who inhabit the head waters of the rivers Arkansas, Colorado, Columbia, Missouri, Yellow Stone, Big Horn, and the Great Platte, all of which take their numerous sources in these mountains, and which are all full of beaver towards their heads, and covered with buffalo. Lower down, I would suggest that the Government establish a military post, to consist of five or six companies, on the Arkansas river, at or above the point where the Santa Fe road crosses it. One of these companies should be mounted.

A post of this kind once established, would, besides affording protection to that road, check and control the Indian tribes in that quarter; it would soon become a place of general deposite for a very valuable and extensive fur trade in and beyond the Rocky mountains, prevent the encroachment of the tribes already alluded to upon the Indians who have gone and may emigrate to the west of the Mississippi. In a word, from its central and commanding position, such a post would be a home and rendezvous for our citizens trading with the Mexican provinces, for the Mexicans trading with us, for the fur traders from Missouri, Arkansas, and elsewhere, whose intercourse with these roving tribes would preserve peace and harmony among them; that the Government would be establishing and protecting an invaluable commerce with the Mexicans and Indians, and maintaining peace and tranquillity along that extensive and exposed frontier.

The fur trade on the Missouri river, as high up as the Omaha village, has already dwindled down to a mere nothing when compared with what it was ten years back, the furred animals and game of all kinds having almost en-

tirely disappeared; but, from that village to the Rocky mountains, Missouri still abounds in rich furs and peltries, and is well worth the protection of the Government.

I am of the opinion that a small military post, say two companies, located some three hundred miles above Cantonment Leavenworth, would afford very great facility and protection to the fur trade on the Upper Missouri; nor is this all the good which I conceive would be derived from a post of that kind. In addition to protecting the fur trade, it would give safety and tranquillity to the northern frontier of the State of Missouri, which extends nearly one hundred miles in advance of the only military post on the Missouri river, and is open to the inroads of all the Indian tribes who reside between that river and the Mississippi.

I have the honor to be, most respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,
JNO. DOUGHERTY, *Ind. Agent.*

To Gen. WM. CLARK,
Sup. Ind. Affairs, St. Louis.

The Fur Trade on the Missouri and its waters, including the Rocky Mountains, commencing 1815, and ending 1830.

Dr.					
1830.	For pay of 20 clerks, at \$500 per year,	\$10,000.	15 years	- -	\$150,000
	For pay of 200 men, at 150 per year,	30,000.	15 years	- -	450,000
	Indian goods, &c., at \$100	- -	- -	- -	1,500,000
	Total amount of expenditures	- -	- -	- -	2,100,000
	Profit	- -	- -	- -	1,650,000
					<u>\$3,750,000</u>
Cr.					
1830.	By 2,600 buffalo robes, per	15 years, \$390,000, at \$3 each		-	1,170,000
	By 25,000 lbs. beaver,	do. 375,000, at \$4 per lb.		-	1,500,000
	By 4,000 otter skins,	do. 60,000 skins, at \$3 each		-	180,000
	By 12,000 koon skins,	do. 180,000 skins, at 25 cts. each		-	45,000
	By 150,000 lbs. deer skins,	do. 2,250,000 lbs. at 33 cts. per lb.		-	742,500
	By 37,500 muskrat skins	do. 562,500 skins, at 20 cts. each		-	112,000
					<u>\$3,750,000</u>
	Profit brought down	- -	- -	- -	\$1,650,000

No allowance for risk or loss has been taken into consideration in making the above calculations, believing that the high advance put upon certain articles of Indian goods, &c., after they are taken into the Indian country, and with which the pay or salaries of most of the hired men, and many of the clerks, are principally paid, will more than balance all risk or loss sustained by the fur traders. These are calculations, however, which no one can enter into minutely without having access to the books and accounts of the traders, which privilege it is believed many of them would be unwilling to grant.

THOMAS J. DOUGHERTY, *Indian Agent.*

UPPER MISSOURI AGENCY, *Camp Leavenworth, October 25, 1831.*

No. 9.

Wm. M. Gordon to Gen. Clark, answering inquiries relative to the Fur Trade.

ST. LOUIS, October 27, 1831.

SIR: In answer to your inquiries relative to the fur trade, I have the honor to state, that my personal knowledge and observations will enable me to answer only a part of them—my operations in the business having been chiefly confined to the Upper Missouri, and in the Rocky mountains. The number of trading posts on the Missouri, above the Council bluffs, which are maintained and kept up during summer, amounts, I believe, to only six or seven.

These are the *principal depots*, whence a great number of wintering posts are established, and called in again in the spring at the termination of the winter's trade.

These principal depots have generally an investment in goods, say to the amount of from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars, and the branches which they establish, temporarily, are given an amount ranging from five hundred to two or three thousand dollars; woollen goods of coarse fabric, such as blue and red strouds, blankets, &c., constitute the principal and most costly articles of trade. They are almost exclusively of English manufactures, and, though coarse, are good.

The Indians are good judges of the articles in which they deal, and have always given a very decided preference to those of English manufacture. Knives, guns, powder, lead, and tobacco, are also among the primary articles, some of which are of American manufacture. Whiskey, though not an *authorized* article, has been a principal, and I believe a very lucrative one, for the last several years. Though I consider it as deleterious in its effects, generally, as regards the welfare of the Indians, and dangerous in the hands of unprincipled men, who might, by possibility, be engaged in the trade.

Of the first cost of the goods, I think it unnecessary for me to say any thing, as that can be ascertained from others better calculated to give you the information you desire.

The goods are exchanged for buffalo robes and beaver skins, and, at the place of exchange, would give to the trader a great ostensible profit upon the primary cost, say from 200 to 2,000 per cent. The real profits, however, fall far short of even the minimum states, owing to the very heavy expenses which the trader has to incur in carrying on his business. The expenses incident to the prosecution of the fur trade are immense, and far beyond those of any other business that American citizens are engaged in according to the amount of capital employed; hence many are deterred from engaging in it that would otherwise do so.

Not only does the trader have to supply himself with the number of hands which ought to be necessary to carry on his business, but he has, in most instances, to have two or three times that number to serve as a protection to himself and property. This unnatural expenditure has to be borne by the Indian, as it produces the necessity of selling to them at much higher rates when it is of no advantage to the trader. The only means which suggests itself to me to correct this evil, would be for the federal government to adopt some more efficient means for the protection of the fur trade than has heretofore been done, and from my intimate acquaintance with the ex-

tensive region of country to which these remarks are applicable, I feel warranted in presenting to you my views of what I would consider efficient protection. For this purpose, there should be five or six hundred United States' troops stationed somewhere in the interior of the Indian country, and the nearer the base of the Rocky mountains the better. Those troops, to be efficient, should be mounted: footmen can do no good against the Indians of that country, who are always mounted, and can evade infantry without subjecting themselves to the least inconvenience. An arrangement of that kind would have a most salutary effect upon the interest, not only of the white trader, but of the Indian himself, because at present the intercourse between the parties depends but too often for profit on their relative strength; taking alternate advantage of each other; hence a spirit of mutual bad feeling obtains, alike injurious to both parties. By affording this, or some other adequate protection to the trade, an additional number of persons would be led immediately to engage in it, and the consequence would be, that the unnecessary expenses of the trader would be reduced, and the profits, if not so great, would be more certain, and benefitting a larger number of persons. In those districts, where the American has to compete with the British trader, the latter occupies a very great and striking advantage over the former, owing to the privilege he enjoys of introducing his goods free of duty, while the former pays a duty of from 40 to 60 per cent. on almost all the principal articles. The number of men at each of the principal posts amount to from 15 to 20, and at the temporary wintering posts to from 3 to 6; dried or fresh buffalo meat constitutes the almost exclusive article of provisions, and is mostly procured of the Indians. The diminution of furs in the Upper Missouri and in the Rocky mountains, is general and extensive, and has been very great since my first adventures to those countries ten years ago. Indeed, to the east of the mountains, they are not any where in sufficient quantities to authorize the expense of an expedition exclusively in search of them. The buffalo robe trade is, perhaps, in a more flourishing condition than at any former period, and promises, I think, to continue valuable for many years.

The foregoing remarks contain all the information I am able to afford you touching the subject of your inquiries, and is respectfully submitted.

I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

WM. M. GORDON.

To Gen. WILLIAM CLARK,
Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

No. 10.

Answers of Messrs. Farnham and Davenport, to inquiries on the subject of the Fur Trade.

The following are answers to sundry questions propounded to us by the Secretary of War, through the honorable Thomas H. Benton, United States' Senator from the State of Missouri, viz.

1st. The trade with the Sacs and Fox Indians is transacted and carried on by us at the following posts, viz. the Dirt Lodge, on the river Demoiné; Flint Hills, and at or near Rock Island, on the Mississippi river; at a post

on Ioway river, and one on Rock river; and with the Ioway Indians at a place on the Missouri river, called Black Snake Hills.

2d. The trade at these posts has been transacted by ourselves for the last seven years, and we have employed a capital of from thirty-three thousand to sixty thousand dollars per annum, embracing the expense of clerks, traders, and common hands.

3d. The various articles supplied we deem it unnecessary to detail here, because we have, by a regulation of the superintendent of Indian Affairs, furnished invoices of our goods each year to him, wherein the names of the goods are specified, and the cost given at the same time.

4th. In regard to the prices we have charged at selling our goods to the Indians, we have to say these have been various. The most of our sales have been on a credit to them in the fall of the year, for the purpose of enabling them to make a hunt, and support their families. On prominent articles, such as blankets, strouds, &c. &c. we have charged an advance of 25 to 50 per cent., and on minor articles at something more; and when goods have been sold for prompt pay, they have not averaged us more than 12½ to 25 per cent. These prices relate to the Sacs and Foxes. The prices charged the Ioways have been higher, because they have seldom paid more than fifty cents in the dollar of their credits, and frequently nothing at all.

5th. The articles received from the Indians in exchange for our goods, embrace beaver, muskrat, raccoon, deer, and otter, with some few other kinds of skins, few in quantity, and of minor importance. The value of these articles always depends on the demand in our eastern markets, which are at last regulated by foreign markets.

6th. The number of men employed at all the posts mentioned, will average about thirty per annum, and their cost will be about nine thousand dollars.

7th. The modes most common in transporting articles to and from the Indian country, so far as we are concerned, are steam, keel, and Mackinac boats and horses.

8th. The goods are generally sold the Indians at the different posts, but the furs and peltries are often collected by our men at a great distance from them, and brought in thereto by our means.

9th. Our credits to these Indians, for the last seven years, have amounted to \$136,768 62, and we have collected of that sum, \$83,498 74, leaving a balance due us, on transactions with them in that time, of \$53,269 88. This balance we do not yet consider desperate, because the Indians have obligated themselves, and promised to pay us whenever enabled so to do.

10th. The Sac and Fox nations furnish about 600 hunters, and there are from three to four hundred families dependant on these hunters for the necessaries of life; and the former are dependant on the trader to supply him the means of sustaining the latter.

11th. The parties destined for the trade in the interior part of the country, depart for their posts in the month of September, and return in the month of April following, with the proceeds of their trade.

12th. We have, from time to time, from the Indians, as provisions, venison, bear, and turkies' meat, as they have it to spare.

13th. We think furs have somewhat diminished.

14th. The fur trade labors under disadvantages, from the location of the posts being continued at the same places from year to year. The Indians, changing their hunting grounds every year, the trader should be allowed

to follow them, and erect his post where the Indians hunt, or as near as possible, not only for his own advantage, but that of the Indians. Another disadvantage the trader is subject to, is, the high duty on such articles as are not manufactured in the United States, and the permission by the Government to import furs from abroad entirely free of duties.

In regard to the questions relative to the trade with Mexico and the Rocky Mountains, we have no answers to give, not being engaged in either of those branches of the fur trade.

In conclusion, we would remark that the Indians we trade with live on the western borders of the Mississippi river; and the eastern border being settled with whites, communication with each other is easy, and very often had much to the detriment of the Indians. When we first knew them, they were sober and industrious. Now, in consequence of the ease with which they acquire ardent spirits, from their contiguity to the whites, they have, in many instances, become drunken and worthless. We would barely suggest the propriety of removing them into the interior, by purchase of their lands, to such distance as would prevent such frequent communication with the white inhabitants, to whom they part with not only their arms and ammunition, but even their clothing, for strong drink.

All which is respectfully submitted.

FARNHAM & DAVENPORT.

ST. LOUIS, *November 22, 1831.*

No. 11.

Thomas J. V. Owen to Governor Porter.

CHICAGO, *October 10th, 1831.*

SIR: Under date of the 13th of June last, I received from his excellency Governor Cass, late superintendent of Indian affairs, a communication, enclosing a resolution of the Senate of the United States of March 2d, 1831, requesting the President to cause to be collected and reported to the Senate, at the commencement of the next session of Congress, the most authentic information which could be obtained of American citizens who have been killed or robbed while engaged in the fur trade, since the last war with Great Britain; the amount of the robberies committed, and at what places, and by what tribes; also the number of persons who engaged annually in the fur trade, the amount of capital employed, and the amount of proceeds in furs, robes, peltries, and money; also the disadvantages, (if any,) under which these branches of trade labor, and the means for their relief and protection.

It is proper for me, I presume; to confine my inquiries to the limits of this agency. I therefore communicate all the information which I have been able to obtain upon these several subjects.

In relation to the number of persons killed, I have not been able to learn that any American citizen engaged in the fur (or Indian) trade has been killed by the Indians since the late war with Great Britain. Two robberies have been committed, one upon a gentleman by the name of James Kenzie, and the other upon a Mr. Claude Laframbole; the former of goods to the amount of \$1,000, whilst trading on Mel-welk-ee river, and the

latter of goods to the amount of \$500, whilst engaged in trade on the Illinois. Both of these robberies were committed by bands of the united tribes of Pottawatomies, Ottawas and Chippeways. The number of persons who now annually engage in the Indian trade, exclusively, is much diminished, there being not exceeding six persons engaged this season within the limits of this agency, and the amount of capital employed is about \$15,000. The proceeds, consisting almost entirely of furs and peltries alone, I am informed, will average about 50 per cent. advance upon the capital employed. I do not conceive that the fur trade of this region can be better promoted by any new arrangement than under the present regulations.

The foregoing information is perhaps very imperfect, having been derived from inquiry of persons who have been, for some years, engaged in the Indian trade, and this class of persons are generally not very intelligent, and being an entire stranger here myself, I have been compelled to rely upon information derived from others.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

T. J. V. OWEN, *Ind. Agent*

His Excellency GEORGE B. PORTER,
Governor of Michigan Territory.

No. 12.

Major Riley's report on the Fur Trade and men killed, to Gen. Clark

JEFFERSON BARRACK, 28th Sept., 1831.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, calling upon me for the number and names of the men killed on the Santa Fe expedition in 1823, and it gives me great pleasure to answer, as follows: On the 11th of July, the traders left my camp on the Arkansas river, and proceeded on their journey. When about six miles from me, they were attacked by several hundreds of the Camanicoes, Amphoes, and Kioways Indians, and Samuel Craig Lamb was killed. Mr. Lamb was a merchant of Liberty, Missouri.

2d. George Gordon, a discharged soldier from granadier company of artillery, 6th regiment of the United States' army, left my camp on the Arkansas river, on the first of August, in company with three other discharged men, for the purpose of returning to the settlement; when proceeded about ten or twelve miles from me, they were attacked by about thirty of the above named Indians, when George Gordon was killed.

3d. My camp on the Arkansas river was attacked by the same Indians on the 3d of August, and Samuel Arrison, a soldier of granadier company of artillery, 6th regiment of the United States' army, was mortally wounded, and died in an hour or two.

4th. Corporal William Nation and Corporal Aster were despatched by General Leavenworth with an express to me, on the Arkansas river; when, on the 23d of July, they were attacked by the above named Indians, and William Nation was mortally wounded, and died a few days after he arrived in my camp. Aster was slightly wounded in the wrist by an arrow.

5th. On the 11th, my camp was attacked by the within named Indians, and Matthew King, a soldier of the granadier company of artillery, 6th regiment of the United States' army, was killed. The circumstances of his death are too well known to need comment.

It is necessary here to state that Nation and Aster were robbed of their horses, the mail, and all their baggage. Gordon and the rest of the discharged men were robbed of all their baggage. Lamb and King was robbed of their arms and ammunition.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

B. RILEY,

Major U. S. Army.

To Gen. WM. CLARK.

No. 13.

Letter from G. St. Vrain to General Clark.

ROCK ISLAND,

Indian Agency, Oct. 16, 1831.

RESPECTED SIR: Yours of the fifth instant is received. The only information which I have been able to obtain, in regard to the resolution of the United States' Senate of 2d March last, on the subject of the fur trade, &c., is from the licenses which I have granted to traders. I have given you a list of the principal persons who were engaged in the fur trade the last winter and spring, with the number of men employed by each; also the amount of capital, with part of the returns, viz.

	Clerks and Boatmen.	Capital.	Am't rec'd in furs.
Farnham and Davenport,	34	\$30,000	\$27,000
Stephen Phelps & Co.,	8	6,000	
Edwin Stocking,	4	4,500	
	46	\$40,500	\$27,000

James K. Hamit did not trade, having declined after obtaining the license. You will perceive that I have not mentioned those to whom I granted license this last spring and summer; they got license for this fall, and ensuing winter. There is no doubt that a larger capital will be employed in the fur trade within my agency, this year, than was the last year.

I have heard of no traders being killed or robbed within my agency. There is a disadvantage under which our traders labor, in consequence of being compelled to trade only at established posts. It is evident the Indians do not hunt every year at the same place, and sometimes go from one to two hundred miles from any established trading posts, which frequently compels the Indians to travel that distance to get powder, lead, or some other article, without which they could not continue their hunt. The mode which I shall offer to remedy the evil, is to grant a general license to trade with the tribe or tribes of Indians under the agency of the person granting them.

The statement of Farnham and Davenport, which shows a deficiency of three thousand dollars, does not prove that they have met with a loss, for they had considerable goods remaining on hand, which they did not dispose of in the course of the time.

I have employed Charles D. St. Vrain, as agriculturist for the Sac and Fox Indians. He is now, with two hands, preparing to establish a farm in the Indian country near Rock Island.

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,
FELIX ST. VRAIN, Indian Agent

Gen. **WILLIAM CLARK,**
Supintendent Indian Affairs, St. Louis.

No. 14.

A. P. Chouteau to the Secretary of War.

WESTERN CREEK AGENCY,

November 12, 1831.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor, dated 9th September last, and beg leave to return my thanks for the flattering manner in which you have propounded the various questions relative to this section of country.

It would have afforded me infinite satisfaction, were it in my power to comply fully with your request. I, however, am prevented from so doing, in consequence of my having abandoned, since 1817, all expeditions up the Missouri, and towards the head of the Arkansas river and River Platte, in which I had been engaged for several years, with the view of trading with the Indians; having confined myself to my trading establishments on the Neosho and Verdigris rivers; and which trade is principally confined to the Osages, Cherokees, Muscogeas, (Creeks,) with whom I have little or no difficulty. Shortly after the war, I went upon a trading expedition on the head of the Arkansas, and was taken by the Spaniards. When I was near Santa Fe, I was invited by them to visit that place. Convinced of my own innocence, and believing the invitation to be an act of hospitality, I unhesitatingly accepted what I believed was intended as a mark of respect. Immediately upon my arrival in town, I was arrested, thrown into prison, charged with revolutionary designs, my property confiscated; and, after having undergone an examination in which my life was endangered, I was discharged, without any compensation for my property which had been taken by violence.

Upon my return home, I determined to abandon a trade that was attended with so much risk, until the time when the United States' Government would extend its protection to those citizens who embarked their capital, and risked their lives, in a trade that ultimately must produce advantage to the citizens of the United States, and, in a political point of view, cement the bonds of friendship between the Government of the United States and Mexico.

With respect to the western trade, its difficulties, &c., I think General Ashley has given the best expose that I have read. He is a gentleman of

great experience and veracity; much dependence may be placed upon his statements, as from my knowledge I believe his opinions to be correct.

One of your questions is—"Are the furs diminishing?" In answer I have to state, that such is the fact. The principal cause, in my opinion, is the eternal war that exists between the wild Indians near the Rocky mountains, and those who reside east of them; and, from my knowledge of the different tribes, and the policy best calculated to remedy the evil, I would suggest that commissioners should be appointed to restore peace between the different tribes, in such manner as may be suggested by the department.

Should peace be restored, the different tribes would turn their attention altogether to hunting; consequently, the Arkansas river would become as valuable a highway as the Mississippi and Missouri, for the transportation of furs and other articles of Indian trade.

It is an acknowledged fact that the nearest and best route to Santa Fe, is up the Arkansas river. The safety of navigation must, however, be secured by treaties with the wild Indians, or else the lives of traders would be in imminent danger.

I would cheerfully give my opinion upon the general subject of your inquiries, but as I feel well assured there are gentlemen who have been engaged in the western Indian trade subsequent to my embarkation in the same, that their information will be of much more importance than any I have in my power at present to communicate. I therefore decline any farther remarks for the present.

I have the honor to remain,

Your obedient servant,

A. P. CHOUTEAU,

To the Hon. LEWIS CASS,
Secretary of War.

No. 15.

John Jacob Astor to Colonel Benton.

NEW YORK, 29th January, 1829.

SIR: I understand Congress have it in contemplation to make some change in the system of our Indian affairs. If so, I hope nothing will take place to embarrass our trade with them, that the duty of public officers and agents may be so defined as not to leave room for constructions, which may authorize acts which subject and embarrass the traders. If any change is contemplated, I would esteem it a favor if you would advise me what it is.

Our traders labor under very great disadvantages when they come in competition with the British, and which I wish to bring before you, in the hope that you may bring the matter to the consideration of Congress.

It is known that none of the woollen goods fit for the Indian trade, such as Indian blankets, strouds, and cloths of particular descriptions, are as yet manufactured in this country: we are, therefore, obliged to import them from England; and it so happens, these are the articles paying the heaviest duty. The English traders have theirs free of duty, which enables them to bring their goods 60 per cent. and more, cheaper than we pay; and they are there-

by enabled to under sell us. Their furs and skins cost them little more than half as much as we have to pay for ours. But this is not all: they are by these means enabled to send their furs here, and actually do come and undersell the American traders. It is unaccountable that they should be permitted to bring their furs free of duty, and we, if we send any to British dominions, are obliged to pay 15 per cent. duty. In Russia, where we used to send some of our furs, a duty has been laid so high, as to amount to prohibition. This was done some years ago to protect their fur company; nor can we send any of our furs to any country without paying duty, while every nation on earth can send their furs, and do send them to this country, free of duty. To this is owing, in a great measure, that, so many companies of Indian traders have been ruined, and I very much fear, that unless a duty is imposed on foreign furs, the American Fur Company, the only respectable one of any capital now existing in this country, will be obliged to suspend their operations.

I believe I am safe when I say, that all our Indian traders for these 20 years past, with very few exceptions, have been losing time and property in that trade.

The Government lost, I presume, millions of dollars by the Indian trade. When I engaged in it 20 years ago, I was promised by the administration the protection of Government, and, in fact, more, but I regret to say that hitherto nothing has been done. Will you be so good as to take the matter under consideration?

The British traders have also an exclusive right under the charter of the Hudson Bay Company; not an individual dare to enter the Indian country for trade but themselves; whereas with us, the country is open, as it ought to be, to all its citizens, which constantly creates opposition in the trade. The Hudson Bay Company's people come on our frontiers, and, by means of selling goods cheap, and giving spirituous liquors, draw our Indian trade for hundreds of miles from us to them. I think, sir, a duty of 15 or 20 per cent. on all furs ought to be laid, and I do think that, unless this is done, we must give up our trade with the Indians, which I am authorized to say, has by great exertions and expense, been put, and is at present on a respectable footing, much more so than it has been.

The American Fur Company have for years past, and do now employ a capital of a million or more of dollars. They have not yet been able to declare a dividend; they require the protection of Government, which I hope will no longer be withheld, and to the obtainment of which, I take the liberty to call on you for your good aid. I ask it on account of the many young enterprising men engaged in the trade.

The Hudson Bay Company divide 10 per cent. per annum, and have a large surplus on hand. Their stock is at a premium of 150 per cent. above par. This arises not from superior management, or greater exertions on the part of their people—none can be more so than our citizens; but it is solely owing to the great advantages which they have, and which I have stated.

I am, most respectfully,

Your humble servant,

JOHN JACOB ASTOR.

No. 16.

Statement of the location or posts for trade with the several Indian tribes within the Superintendency of Indian Affairs at St. Louis.

UPPER MISSOURI AGENCY.

For the Ottos, Missouris and Mahas.—At a point on the south side of the Missouri, called Bellevue, and running up said river two miles, and one mile back from the river, making a space of two square miles; at a point on same side of the Missouri, a quarter of a mile below what is called Boy's Grave, and running up with the river a fourth of a mile above the trading house of Pratte, Cabanne & Co., and running out from the river one mile, at the Dirt village of the Mahas, at the Papillion, not exceeding two miles square.

For the Grand Panis, Loup and Republican Panis.—At their present Dirt villages, two on the Loup fork of the Platte, and one on the Republican fork of the Kansas.

For the Poncas.—A tract of country not exceeding two square miles, commencing at the mouth L'eau qui Cours, and running up with the Missouri two miles.

For the Yanctons, Tetons, Angallas, Saones, (Wannaton) Crow, Feather, and Arrapapas, (Fire hearts) bands of the Sioux nation.—Eight tracts of country, viz. First commencing on the south side of the Missouri river, half a mile below the present trading house of Pratte & Co., a short distance below the big bend, called fort Lookout, and running up the river two miles, and back one mile, making a space of two square miles; a tract of country not exceeding three miles square, within the forks of White river; a tract of country not exceeding three miles square, at a place called Hollow Wood, on the Teton river; a tract of country same space at the mouth of Teton river; four others of same space, viz. at the mouth of Cheyenne river; at a place where the Fire Heart's band usually procure lodge poles; at the mouth of Swann river; and at the mouth of Turtle creek of the river Lacques.

For the Cheyennes.—A tract of country not exceeding three miles square, at the mouth of Cherry river, about forty miles from the Cheyenne.

For the Arichards.—A tract of country not exceeding three miles square, including their present Dirt village.

For the Mandans, Gros-ventre, or Minatarees.—A tract of country commencing on the Missouri, two miles below the present Mandan village, and running up with the river to a point one mile above Knife river, and one and a half miles back from the Missouri, so as to include the five villages of the Mandans, &c.

MANDAN SUB-AGENCY.

For the Gens de Paise and Tete Coup bands of Sioux.—A tract of country not exceeding three miles square, opposite the mouth of Heart river.

For the Gros-ventres.—Gros-ventres villages.

For the Crows.—At the junction of the Little Horn with the Big Horn.

For the Blackfeet.—At the Quamash flats of Lewis fork of the Columbia.

For the Snakes, Flat Heads, and other tribes in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains.—At Camp Defiance, on the supposed waters of the

Bonaventura; at Horse Prairie, on Clark's river of the Columbia; and at the mouth of Lewis fork of the Columbia.

For the Essinaboins, Kinstencaux and Sotues.—At fort Union, on the east side of the Missouri, six miles above the mouth of Yellow Stone.

ST. PETER'S AGENCY.

For the several bands of Sioux within this agency.—At Lac Traverse; at Lac qui Parle; at the Traverse des Sioux; at the Little Rapids, on the St. Peters; at the entry of the St. Peters; at the Mountain in the water; at the forks of the Red Cedar river; at a place a little south of Point au Sable, on the west shore of Lake Pepin, on Cannon river, within thirty miles of the village of the Wahpacootas (Sioux); at the junction of the Chippeway river with the Mississippi; at the Grand Fork of Red river, S. W. of said river.

OSAGE AGENCY.

At a point on the Neosho, six miles from White Hair's village.

PRAIRIE DU CHIEN AGENCY.

For Wabasha's band.—At the Mountain in the water, on the Mississippi, above Prairie du Chien.

For the Menominees.—Two miles square, including the falls of Black river.

For the Winebagoes.—Two miles square at the portage of the Wisconsin.

For the Winebagoes, on the head waters of Rock river.—At a place three miles above the mouth of Sugar creek.

SAC AND FOX AGENCY.

At the Flint Hills, on the Mississippi; at the Dirt Lodges, on the De-moine; at a little prairie on an island in the Mississippi, opposite the entrance of the Little Mokakety, at a point fifty miles up Rock river, at a place chosen by the Winnebagoes.

For Shawanoes.—On the Kansas river, opposite the old half-breed establishment of the Kansas, about twelve miles from the mouth.

For Kickapoos.—At a point about three miles above the mouth of Pomeda Terre, on the south side of the Osage river.

For Kansas.—At a point on the Kansas river, between the present two upper villages of the Kansas, within their lands.

For the Pottawatamies, Chippeways, and Ottoways, of Illinois river.—On Fox river, (a branch of the Illinois,) at a point north of the boundary line, from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi.

For Ioways.—At the Black Snake hills, at a point within one mile of the village of the Ioways.

St. Louis, November 28, 1831.

A LIST of the various articles for Indian trade, and their prices, taken from the invoices furnished by the Traders at the Superintendency St. Louis, within the year 1831.

1,000	pairs 3½, 3, 2½, 1½, and 1 point blankets, av.	-	-	-	-	\$6 50	\$6,500	
40	ps. blue stroud,	-	-	-	-	25 00	1,000	
6 160	" sav. list, grey do., scarlet and blue cloth,	-	-	-	3,192 yds.	1 44	4,596 48	
9	" flannel, assorted colors,	-	-	-	414	39	161 46	
24	" domestic plaids, do.	-	-	-	720	16¾	120	
28	" fancy calico, do.	-	-	-	784	28	219 52	
18	" salem pores, do.	-	-	-	324	30	97 20	
70	" ribbons, 3, 4, and 6,	-	-	-	-	75	52 50.	
12	doz. mittens and gloves, woollen,	-	-	-	-	3 50	42	
12	" Scotch caps, per doz.	-	-	-	-	3 25	39	
10	" woollen socks,	-	-	-	-	3 00	30	
200	scarlet cloth chiefs' coats,	-	-	-	-	8 00	1,600	
60	blue and grey cloth capots,	-	-	-	-	4 50	270	
76	pairs pantaloons, assorted,	-	-	-	-	3 50	266	
604	mens' flannel and cotton shirts,	-	-	-	-	1 00	604	
48	vests, (mens)	-	-	-	-	1 87½	90	
36	lb. colored and white thread	-	-	-	-	1 00	36	
								\$15,724 16
200	doz. paper covered looking-glasses	-	-	-	-	37½	75	
6	" Indian sashes,	-	-	-	-	16 50	99	
126	" Wilson butcher-knives,	-	-	-	-	2 75	346 50	
995	" scalping knives,	-	-	-	-	2 16	2,149 20	
75	" combs,	-	-	-	-	62½	46 88	
100	" fire steels,	-	-	-	-	75	75	
50	" worn hoes,	-	-	-	-	4 66	233	
50	groce Indian awls,	-	-	-	-	1 75	87 50	

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LIST—Continued.

100	groce coat buttons,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$200	
25	"	gun worms,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	85	21 25
300	papers hawk bells,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44	132
61	lb. house	do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55	33 55
20	m. gun and rifle flints,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	350	70
										\$3,568 88	
4,500	lb blue and white pound beads,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62½	2,812 50
25	"	fine seed,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 56	39
280	"	bunches dark blue,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	70
317	"	"	agate, assorted	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 00	634
200	N. W. guns,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9 00	1,800
25	rifles,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15 00	375
10	do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25 00	250
300	beaver traps with chains,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 50	1,050
1,000	half axes,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75	750
300	tomahawks,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37½	112 50
48	American felling axes,-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 75	84
20	battle-axes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 75	35
										8,012 00	
24	men's fur hats,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 25	54
150	groce finger rings,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 50	225
16	m. brass nails,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 25	20
4	"	needles,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 62½	6 50
75	doz. files, assorted,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 00	225
600	lb. vermilion,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 18	708
200	"	verdigris,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	37½	75
150	copper kettles,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62½	93 75
300	brass	do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62½	187 50

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1,240	sheet iron do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	248
30	nests of tin do. 8 per nest	-	-	-	-	-	-	5 50	165
8	doz. tin do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	5 50	44
16	groce clay pipes	-	-	-	-	-	-	75	12
2,100	lb. nails, assorted,	-	-	-	-	-	-	12½	262 50
10,000	" Dupont's gun powder,	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	2,800
20,000	" lead,	-	-	-	-	-	-	2½	575
12,000	" tobacco,	-	-	-	-	-	-	6½	750
3,000	" bar iron,	-	-	-	-	-	-	6½	187 50
200	" rod do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	20
600	" English Crowley steel,	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	126
200	" blister do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	36
300	" German, do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	54
18	ps. silk handkerchiefs, assorted,	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 34	114 12
25½	doz. cotton do. do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 68	67 67
463	cotton and silk shawls, assorted	-	-	-	-	-	-	88	407 44
13,850	yds. domestic cotton, do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	13½	1,852 43
25	muskrat traps,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 00	25
2	doz. vests,	-	-	-	-	-	-	22 50	45
25	lb. assorted colors worsted yarn,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 50	52 50
50	doz. playing cards,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 87½	93 75
1,400	pairs of ear bobs,	-	-	-	-	-	-	12½	175
50	" wheels	-	-	-	-	-	-	62½	31 25
20	" hair knobs	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 25	25
20	" hat bands	-	-	-	-	-	-	4 25	85
10	" arm do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	6 50	65
12	" " do.	-	-	-	-	-	\$1	4 75	57
15	" wrist do.	-	-	-	-	-	2	1 50	22 50
70	" embossed broaches,	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	30

2,063 75

4,811 00

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LIST—Continued.

10 setts pierced broaches,	-	-	-	-	-	-	5 50	\$ 55	
10 " gorgets do.	-	-	-	-	-	-	5 83	58 30	
100 tomahawks, -	-	-	-	-	-	-	37½	37 50	
150 lb. pewter -	-	-	-	-	-	-	33½	50	
									\$3,349 46
Steamboat Yellow Stone, and equipments,	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	12,000 00
7 groce gartering,	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 91	27 36	
lb. candle wicks,	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	84	
5½ doz. scissors,	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 08	11 45	
11½ " brass cocks,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 36	2 13	
12 " fox tail and cock feathers,	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 25½	39 03	
47 ladles,	-	-	-	-	-	-	9 49	446	
7½ doz. bridles, -	-	-	-	-	-	-	18 93	148 68	
31 nests seal and morocco trunks,	-	-	-	-	-	-	7 50	232 50	
5 groce Indian awls,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 51	7 55	
62,250 yards of Wampum,	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 33⅓	176 04	
2 corn mills,	-	-	-	-	-	-	10 50	21	
									1,112 58
									\$50,641 83

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No. 18.

STATEMENT of prices of merchandise sold to the Sac, Fox, and Iowa Indians of Missouri, by traders belonging to the American Fur Company.

One white blanket, 3 point	-	-	-	-	-	\$8
One red or blue do 3 do	from 9 to	\$10, and sometimes higher	-	-	-	10
One white do 2½ do	-	-	-	-	-	6
Do do 2 do	-	-	-	-	-	4
Do do 1½ do	-	-	-	-	-	3
Blue stroud, 1½ yards	-	-	-	-	-	6
Scarlet do 1½ do	-	-	-	-	-	8
Calico, per yard, from \$1 to	-	-	-	-	-	2
Butcher knives, small wooden handles	-	-	-	-	-	1
Do 4 square do	-	-	-	-	-	50
Powder, per lb.	-	-	-	-	-	2
Flints, fifteen for	-	-	-	-	-	1
Lead, per lb.	-	-	-	-	-	50
One black silk handkerchief	-	-	-	-	-	2
One rifle	-	-	-	-	-	30
One shot gun	-	-	-	-	-	25
One pint salt	-	-	-	-	-	1
One trap, if purchased	-	-	-	-	-	8
if borrowed for the season	-	-	-	-	-	4
Three strands of wampum	-	-	-	-	-	1
Brass kettles, from 6 to 8 gallons	-	-	-	-	-	30
Do smaller, from \$25 to	-	-	-	-	-	22
One pound of vermillion	-	-	-	-	-	8
One common bridle (tin snaffle)	-	-	-	-	-	2
One stiff bit do	-	-	-	-	-	3
One double-reined bridle and martingale	-	-	-	-	-	10
One set silver wrist bands for women	-	-	-	-	-	3
Do arm do	-	-	-	-	-	10
One 2½ gallon iron kettle	-	-	-	-	-	12
Do tin do	-	-	-	-	-	8
Small ones in proportion.						
One pair common stirrup leathers	-	-	-	-	-	2
Tobacco, five small twists for	-	-	-	-	-	1
One common blue surtout coat	-	-	-	-	-	6
One large copper horse bell	-	-	-	-	-	3
One small do	-	-	-	-	-	2

The above prices were stated by the undersigned chiefs of the Sacs and Foxes of Missouri.

PA-QUA-PEE,	his x mark. (Fox.)
MATTAI-WEE,	his x mark. (Fox.)
MATUSH SHE,	his x mark. (Sac.)
NOCLU-WA-TA-SAI,	his x mark. (Sac.)
NOTA-NO SHUK,	his x mark. (Sac.)

In presence of JACQUES MOOTE, *Interpreter.*

Extract of a letter of Thomas Forsyth to the Secretary of War.

ST. LOUIS, October 24, 1831.

"SIR: In compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 9th ultimo, I have the honor to give the following answers to your queries.

"I am sorry to say, that these answers are not so complete as I would wish them to be; but it seems impossible to collect more detailed or comprehensive information in this country, on the subject of the trade from this place to Mexico, and to the base and west of the Rocky mountains. For several persons with whom I have conversed, and who have decidedly the best knowledge of the subject, are unwilling to say any thing about it; while others, who pretend to much knowledge of the business, are too ignorant to give even a plain common account, but will tell so many wild stories; and deal so much in the marvellous, that it appears unsafe to depend on any thing they relate.

The Fur Trade on the Frontiers.

"The fur trade of the countries bordering on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, as high up the former river as the falls of St. Anthony, and the latter as the Sioux establishment, some distance above Council bluffs, is carried on now in the same manner as it ever has been. This trade continues to be monopolized by the American Fur Company, who have divided the whole of the Indian country into departments, as follows:

"Farnham and Davenport have all the country of the Sac and Fox Indians as high up the Mississippi river as Dubuque's mines, (without including the Fox Indians, who reside at that place;) as, also, all the Winnebago and other Indians, who reside on the lower parts of Rocky river; also, the Iowa Indians, who live at, or near, the Snake hills, on the Missouri river.

"The division of Mr. Rolette includes all the Indians from Dubuque mines to a point above the falls of St. Anthony, and up the St. Peter's river to its source; as, also, all the Indians on the Ouisconsin and the upper parts of Rocky river.

"Mr. Cabane, (who is a member of the American Fur Company,) has, in his division, all the Indians on the Missouri as high as a point above the Council bluffs, including the Pawnee Indians of the interior, in about a southwest direction from his establishment.

"Mr. Auguste P. Chouteau has, within his department, all the Indians of the Osage country, and others who may visit his establishment, such as Cherokee, Chickasaw, and other Indians.

"Messrs. McKinzie, Ludlow, and Lamont, have, in their limits, the Sioux Indians of the Missouri, and as high up that river as they choose to send or go.

"The American Fur Company bring on their goods annually, in the spring season, to this city, from New York, which are then sent up the Missouri river to the different posts, in a small steamboat. At these places the furs are received on board and brought down to St. Louis, where they are opened, counted, weighed, re-packed, and shipped, by steamboats, to New Orleans; thence, on board of vessels, to New York, where the furs are unpacked, made up into bales, and sent to the best markets in Europe, except some of the finest, (particularly otter skins,) which are sent to China.

“Mr. Rolette procures his goods, &c., at Mackinac; takes them on in Mackinac boats to Prairie des Chiens, (by way of Green Bay, the Fox, and Ouisconsin rivers,) where he assort them. They are then forwarded, (by clerks hired for the purpose,) with the same boats and men, to the different trading posts.

“Farnham and Davenport take up their goods, &c., from this city to the Indian villages in keel boats, with their clerks and men. Mr. Cabane and McKinzie & Co., take up their goods, &c., in the American Fur Company’s steamboat, as before stated. The goods of Mr. A. P. Chouteau are transported, by water, in keel boats, as high up the Osage river as the water will admit; from thence they are carried, in wagons, to his establishment in the interior of the country. In the spring of the year, when the Arkansas is high, Mr. Choteau sends his furs down that river to New Orleans, from whence they are shipped to New York.

“By the time that the Indians have gathered their corn, the traders are prepared with their goods to give credit to the Indians. The articles of merchandise which the traders take with them to the Indian country, are as follows: blankets, 3 points, 2½, 2, 1½, 1; common blue stroud, do. red; blue cloth, scarlet cloth, calicoes, domestic cottons, rifle and shot guns, gunpowder, flints, and lead; knives of different kinds; looking glasses, vermilion, verdigris; copper, brass, and tin kettles; beaver and muskrat traps; fine and common bridles and spurs; silver works, needles and thread, wampum, horses, tomahawks, and half axes, &c.

“All traders at the present day give credits to the Indians in the same manner as has been the case for the last 60 or 80 years; that is to say, the articles which are passed on credit, are given at very high prices. Formerly, when the opposition and competition in the Indian trade was great, the traders would sell in the spring of the year, payment down, for less than one half of the prices at which they charged the same articles to the same Indians on credit the preceding autumn. This was sometimes the occasion of broils and quarrels between the traders and Indians, particularly when the latter made bad hunts.

“The following are the prices charged for some articles given on credit to the Indians, (Sacs and Foxes) whose present population exceed six thousand souls, and who are compelled to take the goods of the traders at their very high prices, because they cannot do without them; for if the traders do not supply their necessary wants, and enable them to support themselves, they would literally starve.

“An Indian takes on credit from a trader in the autumn,

a 3 point blanket at \$10,

a rifle gun at \$30,

a lb. of powder \$ 4,

Total Indian dollars, \$44.

The 3 point blanket will cost, in England, say 16s. stg. per pair.

1 blanket at 100 per cent. is equal to \$3 52

A rifle gun costs in this place, from \$12 to 13 00

1 lb. of powder, 20

\$16 72

\$4 18

Add 25 per cent. for expenses,

\$20 90

“Therefore, according to this calculation, (which I know to be correct,) if the Indian pay all his debts, the trader is a gainer of more than 100 per cent. But it must be here observed, that the trader takes, for a dollar, a large buckskin, which may weigh six pounds; or two doe skins, four muskrats, four or five racoons; or, he allows the Indian three dollars for an otter skin, or two dollars per pound for beaver. And, in my opinion, the dollar which the trader receives of the Indian, is not estimated too high at 125 cents; and perhaps, in some instances, at 150 cents each. In the spring, the trader lowers his price on all goods, &c., and will sell a 3 point blanket at five dollars, and other articles in proportion, as he receives the furs down in payment; and as the Indians always reserve the finest and best for the spring trade.

“In the autumn of every year, the trader carefully avoids giving credit to the Indians on any costly articles, such as silver works, wampum, scarlet cloth, fine bridles, &c.; as, also, a few woollens, such as blankets, strouds, &c., unless it be to an Indian whom he knows will pay all his debts. In that case, he will allow the Indian, on credit, every thing he wishes. Traders always prefer giving credits on gunpowder, flints, lead, knives; tomahawks, hoes, domestic cottons, &c.; which they do at the rate of 3 or 400 per cent; and, if one-fourth of the price of those articles be paid, he is *amply* remunerated.

“After all the trade is over in the spring, it is found that some of the Indians have paid all for which they were credited; others, one-half, one-third, one-fourth, and some nothing at all; but, taken altogether, the trader has received, on an average, one half of the whole amount of Indian dollars, for which he gave credit the preceding autumn, and calls it a tolerable business; that is, if the furs bear a good price, the trader loses nothing; but if any fall in the price takes place, he loses money. If he gives to the Indians \$6,000 credit in the autumn, and they pay one half, the balance remains due on the trader's books, which may or may not be afterwards collected.

“Those debts have accumulated on the books of Farnham & Davenport such an extent, that they say the amount due in 1829 from the Winnebago, Sacs, and Foxes, was \$40,000, and perhaps this year it is 50 or \$60,000.

“I presume, without knowing, that Mr. Cabane and McKinzie & Co. have equally as much on their books against the Indians with whom they trade.

“Auguste P. Chouteau must have a greater amount due to him from the Osage Indians in this way, as he has been trading with them for a greater number of years. Mr. Rolette has also, no doubt, a very large amount against the Winnebago, Sioux, and Menominee Indians; and, if there is ever another treaty with those Indians, he will doubtless trump up another account, as he did in 1829 at Prairie des Chiens.”

“It is impossible for me to form any idea of the amount of goods annually taken into the Indian country by the aforementioned persons as traders. But, as every trader applies to an agent or superintendent for a license to trade with the Indians, and before he can have such license, he is obliged to exhibit an invoice of the articles to be used in such trade, as, also, a list or the number of men to be employed by him; and, as I am informed that a transcript of those invoices and lists of men are forwarded from the office of the superintendent in this city to the War Office, I would refer your attention to those papers, as containing the best information to be had, relative both to the amount of goods sent into the Indian country, and the number of men employed in that trade.

“It is also impossible for any person to know the first cost of goods imported from Europe, without he sees the original bills of parcels; nor can any one know the amount of furs brought down to this place from the different posts on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, without having access to the books of the American Fur Company, which they would not allow.

“The traders of whom I have been speaking, employ their men during the winter season in collecting debts due by the Indians to the different establishments, and in performing such other work as may be needed; but they are never sent out to hunt for furs. McKenzie & Co. may have hunters employed, for what I know to the contrary, in collecting buffalo, elk, and other meats for themselves and their people; but their main object is food in those cases, and not furs.

“I must here mention what seems a frivolous and unnecessary system, viz. that of designating places for the location of traders. This regulation, I clearly think, ought to be done away, because it gives the Indians much trouble; and what difference is it to the Government if a trader buys furs at one place or another, provided the Indian is satisfied? On this subject, I would refer to my letter, dated Rocky Island, 30th September, 1824, written to Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of War. On my arrival here during the following October, the superintendent of Indian affairs at this place told me (verbally) that he had received a letter from the Secretary of War, wherein the Secretary mentioned that permissions might be given by the agents to traders, allowing them to visit the Indian camps, to collect their credits, and supply the Indians with their immediate wants in goods. Ever after that period, I, as Indian agent, always gave the traders permission to visit the Indians at their camps for the above purposes; but I am informed, that last summer the superintendent of Indian affairs refused like permission to Farnham and Davenport.

“That the furs are diminishing near our frontiers, there can be no doubt. In my opinion, there are two reasons for it. 1st. All traders do every thing in their power to keep peace and quietness among the different tribes, encouraging them (by means of presents at times) to hunt, for the purpose of paying their overloaded debts. The Indians exert themselves; and some years, when every thing is quiet, they kill and destroy all before them. Being very successful one year in hunting, and in paying a portion of their debts, they obtain of the traders greater credits the next year, with the expectation of making another great hunt; but having destroyed the game the year previous, they are unable to procure a sufficiency of furs to pay their debts, or to compare with the returns of the former year. 2d. It is well known that the deer, elk, bear, and buffalo, travel south as the cold weather approaches. The deer, elk, and bear, travel within the limits of this State; but the Indians cannot follow them as formerly, on account of the interference of the white people, (the most of whom are settled on public lands,) who will not allow any Indian to cross the line.

The trade to and west of the Rocky Mountains.

“I visited this country as early as April, 1798; and, in many conversations I had with the French people of this place, all that they could say on the subject of the Indian trade was, that there were many Indian nations inhabiting the country bordering on the Missouri river, who were exceedingly cruel to the white people that went among them. The highest point then known up the Missouri river was Cedar island, which was somewhere in the Riccaree country. The Riccaree, Mandan, Blackfeet, Crow, Arrapahoe, Assinaboin, and

other Indians, were well known in those days (1800) to the Hudson Bay and North West Companies. Clerks belonging to those companies, with their men, would visit the Missouri annually, at different places, for the purpose of trading with the Indians.

“After the arrival of Lewis and Clark from the Pacific, a company was organized at this place, for the purpose of trading with the Indians up the Missouri river to its forks, and higher, if necessary. The men were also directed to hunt. That company did not exist long, as it appeared that they were deficient in management and understanding of their new business. After their dissolution, a Mr. Manuel Lisa carried on a trade with the natives, as high up as the Sioux Indians. He afterwards, with others, formed a company, who extended their trade up the Missouri river as high as the Mandan villages. Mr. Manuel Lisa appeared quite sanguine of success, having the sole management of this company; and it is supposed, by some people, that if he had been well assisted by his partners, he might have done something; but all his endeavors fell to the ground, and he died some years ago insolvent.

“Mr. Manuel Lisa and partners followed the custom of employing men to hunt in the Indian country.

“After the war with Great Britain commenced, our Indian trade almost ceased to exist, except where it was continued by a few hunters, who got up among the Indians, and would, in the spring season, bring down a few furs. Yet, the Hudson Bay and North West Companies, at the same time, extended their trade, and sent hunting parties to different points on the Missouri river, as also to the Rocky mountains. This kind of trade or business of hunting was conducted on a small scale, until Gen. Ashley took it in hand, about the year 1821 or 2, when he took a number of hunters up towards the mountains, as also some goods, to trade with the Indians.

“In 1823, Gen. Ashley was attacked by the Riccarees; he then descended the Missouri river to Council Bluffs, when Col. Leavenworth went up, (Gen. Ashley and party being in company,) and severely punished the Indians for their audacity. After which, Gen. Ashley took more men as hunters, and more goods, &c. up towards the base of the Rocky mountains. About this time, (say 1824-5,) Gen. Ashley was nearly \$100,000 in debt, as I have been informed, since which he has paid off all his debts, and has now an independent fortune.

“Some years back, Gen. Ashley extended his trade and hunting excursions west of the mountains; but he has since sold out to Messrs. Jackson, Sublette, and Smith, and now has nothing more to do with the business, either of hunting or trading about the mountains. He brings on goods, &c. from the eastward to this city, and furnishes Jackson, Sublette, and Smith, with all they require, and receives annually from them their furs in payment. Sublette & Co. transport their goods by water from this place up the Missouri, to the Little Platte; thence in wagons to a given point on the Missouri river, east of the mountains, as also round a spur of the mountains to the waters of the Columbia.

“From what I can learn, there is but little trading done on either side of the mountains by Jackson, Sublette, and Smith. It is altogether by hunting, that they collect so many furs.

“In the Hudson Bay settlements on Red river, there are many half-breeds, who are altogether brought up to hunting. They were formerly provided with an outfit to hunt by some of the Hudson Bay trading estab-

ishments, so that they became well acquainted with all the country on each side of the Rocky mountains. From them, the Hudson Bay Company collected much fur. But Gen. Ashley (as I have been told) has had the address to gain over many of the half-breeds to the American concern, by which means the returns of furs to the Hudson Bay Company have been much curtailed.

“Messrs. McKinzie, Ludlow, and Lamont, are three young Scotchmen; the two former were once in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company. But when that company and the North West Company joined their concerns together, about 900 clerks and men were dismissed that service. McKinzie and Ludlow were among that number; and, coming to St. Louis, they formed a connection with Lamont and others, calling themselves the Columbian Company, and trading under that firm. They were unsuccessful at the commencement, and at one time were 40 or \$50,000 in debt; but one fortunate season enabled them to pay off all their debts, leaving much money for themselves. After which they made arrangements with the American Fur Company for goods, &c. and have been doing a good business ever since, so as now to be wealthy.

“Messrs. McKinzie & Co. send goods and hunters up the Missouri river from their establishments towards the mountains, and from the knowledge McKinzie and Ludlow obtained (during their employment in the Hudson Bay Co.) of the country and Indians, they now trade with the Blackfeet and other Indians, who always, heretofore, were in favor of the Hudson Bay Co. Perhaps it would not be exceeding the truth to say that half a million of dollars in furs are now annually brought down the Missouri river that formerly went to Hudson's Bay; and that it is the enterprising spirit of General Ashley which has occasioned the change of this channel of the trade.

“All traders procure as much wild meat as possible from the Indians; but where this article is scarce, they have the precaution to take provisions with them in the fall of the year, as they go into the Indian country.

“I am informed that Mr. A. P. Chouteau has a very large farming establishment in the Osage country, where he raises every article of necessary food, and in greater abundance than is necessary for himself, his very numerous family, and followers.

“Messrs. McKinzie & Co. have some domestic animals at their establishment; but the buffalo, elk, bear, and deer, (particularly the buffalo,) are so numerous that they are never in want of provisions of the meat kind. Their corn they can obtain in abundance of the Riccaree and Mandan Indians, and they can be supplied with a little flour from St. Louis, so that they can never be in want.

“It is said, that Sublette, Jackson, and Smith, take with them some horned cattle, which they drive with their wagons, and which serve for provisions until they reach the buffalo country.

“It is impossible for me to ascertain the number of lives that have been lost on the routes to and from the Rocky mountains and Mexico. In the Indian country bordering on our frontiers, no lives have been lost, according to my present recollection, for the last fifteen years, except Findley and 2 others, on Lake Pepin, in the summer of 1824, and 2 men by the Winnebagoes, near Prairie des Chiens, in the summer of 1828. Smith (the partner of Sublette and Jackson) was killed the past summer, on his way to Santa Fe, he having gone that way with some goods, &c. I have no doubt that, in most of the misunderstandings which have taken

place between the whites and the Indians in the interior of the Indian country, the fault is with the white people, except among the Camanches, or Hietans, as some call them. They are a roving, plundering, murdering nation.

“The following are the names of the different nations of Indians who inhabit the country between this and the Rocky mountains, and west of the Mississippi, viz. Sacs, Foxes, Sioux, Ottoes, Ioways, Mahas, Pawnees, Padochas, Snakes, Shawnees, Delawares, Peorias, and Kickapoo, and there may be others that I have never heard of, or, having heard of, have forgotten.

Trade to Mexico.

“The trade to Mexico from this country is carried on by individuals. Sometimes two, three, or more individuals, will join their small adventures together, either at St. Louis or on the route, and sell them to the best advantage at Santa Fe or other places in Mexico.

“During the winter months, those people who are inclined to go to Mexico, prepare by purchasing goods, wagons, mules, and horses, and hiring men. The whole Cavalcade rendezvous at Independence, Clay county, in this State, about the month of May. They then move off together, after having formed such regulations among themselves as are deemed beneficial to the whole, which regulations continue in force on the whole route from this State to Santa Fe.

“From what I can learn, there is little or no danger between this and the supposed line dividing Mexico and the United States, except the cavalcade fall in with a war party of Pawnees or Padochas on their way to war against the Camanches or Hietans; and then, if the party of whites have in number, say 100 or 150 men, the Indians will not attack them, but will try every stratagem to steal their horses and mules; because those Indians know that when they have once got the horses and mules, the white people cannot get their wagons away, but will abandon them, whereby the Indians will get much booty. By this mode, they have succeeded in more than one instance, and, after carrying away what they can, they destroy the balance, both of the goods and the wagons. In May last, upwards of 200 men left Independence for Santa Fe, and, from what I am informed, they did not meet with any difficulty either in going or in returning. This was told me by a few who have returned.

“It appears that, after the line above mentioned is crossed, (in going upwards,) the white people are more apt to fall in with the Hietans, who follow the buffalo near the base of the mountains to the northward during the spring and summer months, and to the southward during the autumn.

“Parties from this place, on their arrival in the mountains, hide their goods, &c.; and then they go into the settlements to make the necessary arrangements; after which, by means of bribes, their goods are smuggled in: they then sell them, so as to be here again about this (October) or the ensuing month with the returns, whatever they may be.

“I cannot form any idea, neither can I gain any information as to the amount of goods taken, or the number of men employed in the annual trade to Mexico; and I am equally uninformed as to the amount of returns from that place.

"In August last, Mr. Charles Bent set out from St. Louis with a number of wagons, loaded with goods, &c., for Santa Fe, and drawn by oxen. His party consisted of from 30 to 40 men, and, if he succeeds with his ox wagons, the oxen will answer the tripple purpose of, 1st, drawing the wagons; 2d, the Indians will not steal them as they would horses and mules; 3d, in cases of necessity, part of the oxen will answer for provisions."

Extracts of a letter from William B. Astor to the Secretary of War.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY,

New York, 25th November, 1831.

SIR: With each of the three subdivisions of our Indian trade, say Michilimackinac, Detroit, and St. Louis, this office keeps only a general account of receipts and expenditures. The details of the business are only to be found at these three depots, and I am, consequently, unable to answer the minute portion of your queries.

Herewith you have a statement of the annual returns of our whole Indian trade, embracing, also, purchases from persons we do not supply with goods, at Michilimackinac, Detroit, and St. Louis, made up from an average of the three last years; but the value of scarcely a single article is sufficiently steady, and uniform, to authorize my naming any price for these returns. For instance, raccoons, which, five years since, were worth only about 25 cents per skin, sold in Detroit, in July last, at near 70 cents each.

Every other kind of skin partakes, more or less, of this incessant change in its value, and from these fluctuations you will see at once the impossibility of saying, correctly, what any description of goods is really worth. You may, however, estimate our annual returns at about half a million of dollars.

The capital we annually employ in the trade of the interior, including the inventories of merchandise remaining on hand at the depots and different trading houses, at the close of each season, boats, and other means of transportation, buildings, provisions, &c. is about

780,000

Amount annually employed in the purchase of skins at New York, and elsewhere, not from the Indians, nor at either of the three principal depots,

140,000

And in dull times, when we cannot dispose of our furs and skins, at fair prices, we have to increase our means according to circumstances; but may be put down at

100,000

\$ 1,020,000

Say, upwards of one million of dollars capital.

On the frontiers, the deer and other large animals have nearly disappeared, and, in that region, a great reduction is also visible, in the number of those which are valuable for their fur. But, in what may more properly be called "the Indian country," there is but little diminution of late years, and what the advance of the whites annually takes away, is almost made good by the extension of our trading posts, more particularly towards the Rocky mountains; so that, if we have less of one thing, we have more of another; and the annual value of our aggregate returns is pretty much the same."

Copy of a statement, furnished by William B. Astor, Esq., of the average returns of the American Fur Company, for the years 1829, 1830, and 1831.

17,509 lbs. beaver,	1,715 cub bear skins.
348,582 muskrat skins,	9,213 otter do.
32,609 small do.	3,566 fisher do.
112,669 raccoon skins,	19,198 marten do.
4,966 rabbit do.	16,266 mink do.
25,333 buffalo robes,	1,216 Lynx do.
687 dressed deer skins,	3,132 wild cat do.
73,932 shaved do.	805 wolf do.
28,491 red do.	8 wolverine do.
17,113 grey do.	13 panther do.
149 elk skins,	161 badger do.
1,686 red fox skins,	26 polecat do.
57 cross do.	11 squirrel do.
2,164 grey do.	25 opossum do.
5 silver do.	53 swan do.
227 prairie do.	179 lbs. castorum.
3,965 bear skins,	

NEW YORK, 25th November, 1831.

A TABULAR STATEMENT showing the number of licenses issued to persons to trade with the Indians, in the years 1824, '5, '6, '7, '8, '9, '30, and '31; the amount of capital employed; with the value of the returns, as far as it can be ascertained.

By whom issued.	1824. Capital.	No. of Licenses.	1825. Capital.	No. of Licenses.	1826. Capital.	No. of Licenses.	1827. Capital.	No. of Licenses.	1828. Capital.	No. licenses.	1829. Capital.	No. licenses.	1830. Capital.	No. licenses.	1831. Capital.	No. of Licenses.	1831. Returns.	Remarks.
Sup't Ind. Aff's, Detroit	\$5,500	6	7,808 45	12	19,689 82	37	13,283 81	24										
Agent, Fort Wayne	5,000	7	3,900	4	13,000	6	31,000	11	25,100	11								
Do Chicago	11,600	9	11,200	9	8,500	6	11,600	5							15,000	6		
Do Greenbay	8,626	6	8,344 55	14	11,617 90	15	13,126 40	16	9,756 50	16								
Do Sault St. Mary	20,048	19	30,042 64	26	18,634 15	22	31,143 24	18	30,714 22	7			25,833 55	51	31,961 98	55		
Do Creeks	10,094	10	7,000	8	37,500	30	11,500	7	4,000	3			7,000	3				
Do Cherokees	7,000	8	-	-	2,500	2												
Bonds,	3,000																	
Do Red River	10,500	4	14,000	4	11,000	3	5,000		4,800	3								
Sup't Ind. Aff's, St. Louis	41,499	13	94,019 64	10	140,960 31	19	62,869 69	11	87,879 95	15			118,399 75	12	131,735 54	8		
Ag't, Shawnees	23,568	5	20,693 58	8	12,737 37	4	5,971 40	5	16,939	6			4,272 15	1				
Do Council Bluffs	65,695	5																
Do Prairie des Chiens	14,000	7	-	-	2,200	2	11,986 65	7	6,424	5			Bds. 8,000	4	16,608 83	8		
Bonds,									1,000	1								
Do Mackinac			44,342 83	27	67,408 16	34	28,265 57	23	9,104 87	7			6,195 45	8	22,598 59	16		
Do Osages					30,706 72	31	Bds. 5,000	1	5,540	1					10,000	1		
Do Ft. Armstrong			18,127 19	6	15,547 72	5	15,237	7	4,374 63	3								
Do St. Peter's					46,324 13	25	29,668 63	11					34,117 88	13	42,659 34	14	38,794	Partial reports.
Do Rock Island															40,500	3	27,000	Do.
Do Choctaws			18,500	10	24,500	9	19,000	6					" 16,000	6				
	226,130	99	277,978 88	138	462,826 29	250	294,652 39	154	205,633 17	78			219,918 78	98	311,064 18	111	65,794	

Number of men employed in the Indian trade within the Superintendency of St. Louis, 502
 Do. do do within the Agency of the Sault Ste. Marie, 240

ABSTRACT of returns made by the traders within the Agency of L. Taliaferro, Indian Agent at St. Peters; the furs peltries, &c., from the 1st day of September, 1830, to the 1st day of September, 1831; showing the amount and kinds of furs obtained; the value of each, and the amount of capital employed in the trade.

No.	Names.	Where made, or where located.	No. of buffalo robes.	No. of bear skins.	No. of muskrats.	No. of pounds of deer skins.	No. of pounds of beaver.	No. of marten skins.	No. of mink skins.	No. of fisher skins.	No. of raccoon skins.	No. of otter skins.	No. of lynx skins.	No. of fox skins.	No. of swan skins.	Am't of capital.	Am't of returns.
1	A. Culbertson -	Entry river St. Peters -	-	96	12,450	2,500	40	200	220	175	-	200	100	-	-	\$4,177 50	\$6,550 00
2	Alexis Bailey -	Do.	-	60	15,000	1,800	80	100	500	225	500	120	60	10	-	5,481 37	4,560 00
3	A. Faubault -	Cannon river -	50	25	39,080	2,050	125	130	1,100	130	663	331	25	5	-	3,753 37	10,000 00
4	J. B. Faubault -	Little rapids -	-	51	14,000	1,200	9	300	200	300	500	110	25	30	-	2,461 93	4,000 00
5	J. B. Brown -	Chippusay river	-	32	2,000	1,000	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	24	68	50	142	27	17	-	-	1,517 63	1,000 00
6	Haren Mooers -	Lac Traverse -	690	40	18,700	50	34	10	233	92	194	75	87	92	40	5,684 78	6,734 00
7	Jos. Renveille -	Lac qui Paille -	-	104	5,000	630	40	40	230	180	560	180	30	15	-	4,785 75	3,000 00
8	Louis Provencalle	Traverse des Sioux -	-	4	6,600	900	10	57	215	96	330	144	48	13	-	3,000 00	2,950 00
																\$30,862 33	\$38,794 00

The above is only a partial report. Mr. T. says six or seven of the traders could not be heard from. No other similar report has been made to this office.

A TABULAR STATEMENT, showing the number and names of the American citizens who have been killed or robbed while engaged in the Fur Trade, or the Inland Trade to Mexico, since the late war with Great Britain; the amount of robberies committed; at what places, and by what tribes.

Date	No.	Names.	Where killed or robbed.	By what tribe.	Value of property taken.	Description of goods.	Remarks.
1815	1	Antoine	Omaha village	Yanktons	-	-	In the employ of M. Lisa.
"	1	John Wells	On the Arkansas	Osages	\$42 00	Powder, blankets, &c.	
"	1	M. Rodriguez	Do	Do	166 00	Beaver traps, rifle, &c.	
"	3	J. & W. Lemmon, and T. Leck	Do	Panis			
"	1	Baptiste Dardenne	Do	Osages	175 00	Horses, powder, &c.	
1816	1	Louis Letourneaux	Returning from Santa Fe	Yanktons	381 00	Indian goods.	
"	1	Robert Kirkendall	Returning from Mexico	Osages	7,087 00	63 horses and mules.	
"	1	Jean Jardelais	High up the Arkansas	Do	228 00	Horses, powder, &c.	
"	1	J. Derouisseau	Do	Do	402 00	Do.	
"	1	Pierre Parthuis	Do	Do	520 00	13 horses.	
"	1	Jos. Duchassiu	Do	Do	40 00	1 horse.	
"	1	Francois Laruse	Do	Do	80 00	2 horses.	
"	1	Ant. Duchassiu	Do	Do	80 00	Do.	
"	1	E. Vasseur	Do	Do	471 00	9 horses, powder, &c.	
"	1	Bernard Bonne	Do	Do	206 00	Horses, powder, &c.	
1817	1	John Wells	Waters of the Arkansas	Do	111 00	Horse, saddle, &c.	
"	2	Demure & Chouteau	Returning from the mountains	Kansas	167 00	Horses, kettles, &c.	
"	1	Francois Lapiege	Returning from Mexico	Osages	25 00	Sorrel horse.	
"	1	Charles Bellegarde	Do	Do	25 00	Bay horse.	
"	1	Philip Adam	Do	Do	80 00	Horse and mare.	
1818	1	John Wells	Waters of the Arkansas	Do	24 00	Beaver traps, &c.	
"	-	Aug. Friend	Do	Do	125 00	Beaver, horse, powder.	
"	-	Peter Tyler	Do	Do	250 00	Horse and mare.	
"	2	Demure & Chouteau	Do	Do	240 00	6 horses.	
"	1	Belthazar Latour	Do	Do	90 00	2 horses.	
1820	2	S. Pratte and B. Vasquez	Above Council Bluffs	Sacs	1,098 00	Mules, horses, furs.	

STATEMENT—Continued.

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Date	No.	Names.	Where killed or robbed.	By what tribe.	Value of property taken.	Description of goods.	Remarks.
1820	2	Popon & St. André	Above Fort Atkinson	Sioux	.	.	Missouri Fur Company.
"	1	A. Lecompte	aha village	Sacs and Foxes	.	.	Of S. Pratte's Company.
"	1	Rivet	On the Platte river	Chayennees	.	.	A free man } not connected with any company, or in the employ of any one.
"	1	Not known	Do	Do	.	.	
1821	1	James Huff	Auricara village	Sieux	.	.	Missouri Fur Company.
"	1	J. Lorency	On the Platte river	Arrapahoes	.	.	A free man.
"	1	Not known	On the Mexican road	Panis	.	.	In the Mexican trade.
"	1	W H McMurtree	Returning from Santa Fe	Osages	430 00	Horses, skins, &c.	
"	1	James Williams	Going to Council Bluffs	Ottoes	192 00	Horse and gear, &c.	
"	1	Samuel Forest	Do	Do	403 00	4 horses, &c.	
"	1	James Ross	Do	Do	338 00	Merchandise.	
"	1	Stephen Donohoe	Do	Do	409 00	Do.	
"	1	Seth Botts	Do	Do	136 00	Use of wagon, &c.	
"	1	Martin Marrs	Do	Do	128 00	Do.	
"	1	John McCorkle	Do	Do	20 00	Damages.	
1822	1	John McKnight	On the Arkansas	Camanches	.	Do.	Free man. In the Mexican trade.
"	-	Not known	From the Rocky Mountains	Blackfeet	2,000 00	Horses and mules	Missouri Fur Company.
1823	-	Do	Do	Do	13,445 00	Horses, mules, merchandise	This party sent out by the Missouri Fur Company, was at the mouth of the Big Horn, on the Yellow Stone, a principal depot, formed in 1822, when attacked.
"	2	J. Knight & J. Embre	From Santa Fe	Osages	110 00	Horse and mule.	
"	1	Raymond & Garcia	From Chihuahua	Kansas	166 00	Mule and camp equipage.	
"	2	R. A. & J. G. Heath	From Mexico	Do	350 00	Horses, mules, &c.	
"	5	Ant. Barraque	Between Arkansas and Red rivers	Osages	661 00	4 white men, and 1 negro.	{ Killed. Camp equipage and skins lost.

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"	-	Not known	From Rocky Mountains	Blackfeet	1,540 00	Horses and merchandise.	Henry & Ashley's Com'y.
"	-	Do	Do	Assinaboins	1,850 00	Do.	Do.
"	14	Do	Do	Auricarees	2,265 00	Do.	Do.
"	-	Do	Do	Sioux	420 00	Do.	Do.
"	4	C. Mayo, Lemai, Jyo, and one not known	Mouth of Smith's river	Blackfeet	.	.	{ (Mr. Gordon writes that 43 persons were killed this year —1823).
"	7	J Anderson, A. Neil, Deharte, Tremble, and two not known	On the Yellow Stone	Do	15,500 00	Beaver, horses, &c.	
"	9	Not known	Fork of the Missouri	Do	.	.	Missouri Fur Company.
"	4	Plaude, Le Blanc, Lemerc, P. Berry	On the Yellow Stone	Do	.	.	Do.
1824	-	Paul Baillis & Co.	From Santa Fe	Osages	427 00	Merchandise, silver ware.	
"	1	W. M. Burch	From Mexico	Kansas	304 00	Cash, horse, &c.	
"	1	Benjamin Cooper	Do	Do	64 00	Mule and blankets.	
"	1	Fred. Hicks	Do	Do	20 00	Blankets.	
"	2	Stvenson & Cramer	Mouth of Cannon Ball river	Sioux.	.	.	
"	7	Not known	Reta Lake	Snakes	.	.	
"	8	Do	West of the Colorado	Do	.	.	Provost & Le Clerc's Com- pany.
"	2	Simo & Adamoso	On the Mexican road	Camanches.	.	(Pratte & Co's. Company.)	Mr. Gordon designates this party as "Robideaux men."
"	2	Not known	Fork of the Yellow Stone	Gros-Ventres	.	.	
1825	1	Ewing Young	From Santa Fe	Osages	216 00	Horses and mules.	Ashley & Henry's Com'y.
"	2	McClure & Marmaduke	Do	Do	295 00	Do.	
"	1	M. Marmaduke	Do	Do	38 00	1 mule.	
"	1	Keys Pasquez	Do	Do	35 00	Do.	
"	1	Raymond Garcia	Do	Do	423 00	11 horses, 1 mule.	
"	1	James Pursley	Do	Do	35 00	1 horse.	
"	1	M. S. Escudero	Do	Do	817 00	19 horses, 4 mules.	
"	1	B. Hardiman	Do	Do	108 00	2 horses, 1 mule.	
"	1	William (a black)	Do	Do	35 00	1 horse.	
"	1	J. P. B. Gratiot	Do	Do	38 00	1 mule.	
"	1	Wm. Remick	Do	Do	350 00	10 horses, 1 mule.	
"	1	W. D. McRae	Do	Do	560 00	16 horses, and mules.	
"	1	Raymond Garcia	Do	Do	213 00	Indemnity for losses.	
"	1	M. S. Escudero	Do	Do	80 00	Do.	

STATEMENT—Continued.

Date	No.	Names.	Where killed or robbed.	By what tribe.	Value of property taken.	Description of goods.	Remarks.
1825	2	S. & L. Switzer	From Mexico	Kansas	\$65 00	A horse and mule.	
"	1	Nathaniel Symmes	From Santa Fe	Do	50 00	A horse.	
"	1	Bird B. Smith	Do	Arrapahoes	2,800 00	70 mules, jacks, & mares.	
"	1	— Clyman	Head of the Colorado	Blackfeet.			Free men.
"	3	Not known	On Platte river	Auricarees			Do.
"	1	Do	On the Colorado	Arrapahoes			Deserter fr. Missouri Fur Co'y.
"	1	Do	On the Missouri	Sioux			Free men.
"	2	Do	Do	Do			Columbian Fur Company.
1826	2	Boilou & Vinsin	Mouth of Heat river	Do			Free men.
"	8	Not known	On the mountains	Blackfeet			
1827	1	Henry Conolly	From Mexico	Kansas	75 00	A Spanish jennett.	
"		D. Cunningham					
"		Silas Goble					
"		F. Dérammé					
"		Wm. Campbell					
"	10	B. Brown	On the Colorado	Ah-muck-a-bees	15,000 00		{ Smith, Jackson, & Sublette's Company.
"		G. Ortogo					
"		J. B. Ratelle					
"		Palo, Pelite & Robi- seau					
"	1	Pierre (an Iroquoia)	Head of the Missouri	Blackfeet.			
"	4	Bell, Scott, Logan, and O'Hara	Big Salt Lake	Do	3,000 00	Beaver, horses, &c.	
"		T. Virgin					
1828	7	T. Marshall	Mo. of the Umpquas	Umpquas			{ Smith, Jackson, & Sublette's Company.
"		Joseph Lapointe					
"		Joseph Palmer					
"		J. Marion					
"		H. G. Rodgers	On the Umpqua.	Do.			Do-
"		Martin McCoy					

	Peter René								Smith, Jackson, & Sublette's Company. (General Clark, in his report, states, that the losses of Messrs. S. J. & S. in 1826, '7, '8, '9, and '30, of 480 horses and mules, merchandise, &c., amounted to \$48,560.
	John Gaiter								
	John Hanna								
8	Abraham Laplante	On the Umpqua	Umpquas						
	Emanuel Lazaro								
	Thomas Daw								
	Charles Swift								
	1 not known								
1	E. Moore	Platte river	Auricarees.						
1	A. Chapman								
2	Johnson & Godain	Bear river	Blackfeet.						
1	J. Cotté	Godair's river	Do.						
1	Boileau	Little Lake	Do.						
3	P. W. Sublette	Port Neuf river	Do.						
	B. Jeandron, Rosiet								
2	Cabane & Lemerc	Platte river	Crows					J. Pilcher's Company.	
2	Means & Lamb	On the Mexican road	Camanches	7,500 00	300 mules			In the Mexican trade.	
1	Not known	Do	Do					Do.	
2	S. Cole and W. Scott	Below Santa Fe	Osages	315 00	Horses, beaver skins.				
1	Francois Guerin	Red river	Panis	490 00	Mules, beaver skins, &c.				
	Not known	Santa Fe road	Arrapahoes	17,500 00	700 mules			Collins & Co.	
1829	David Waldo	From Santa Fe	Osages	30 00	1 mule.				
1	F. S. Samuels	Do	Do	25 00	1 horse.				
1	Manuel Lopez	Do	Do	50 00	1 mule.				
1	Manuel Teal	Do	Do	640 00	16 mules.				
1	Lorenzo Lopez	Do	Do	1,800 00	17 mules, 28 horses.				
	Ezekiel Abel								
4	P. Spoon, Adam, L. Lorimer	Bad Pass of the Big Horn	Blackfeet					Free men.	
3	Not known	Wind river	Do						
1	Not known	Auricara village	Auricarees					Dripps & Fontenelle's Comp'y. American Fur Company.	
	Samuel C. Lamb								
5	George Gordon	On the Arkansas	Camanches					Belonging to Major Riley's command.	
	Samuel Arrison								
	William Nation								
1	E. Marlow	Fork of the Columbus	Cotones					A free man.	
3	F. Tramel, John & James Myers	Randolph county, Missouri	Ioways					Citizens of Missouri.	
1830	1 Bouchier	Mouth of Heat river	Auricarees					Pepier & Co's Company.	

STATEMENT—Continued.

Date	No.	Names.	Where killed or robbed.	By what tribe.	Value of property taken.	Description of goods.	Remarks.
1830	2	Not known	Mouth of Heat river	Auricarees	-	-	Pepier & Co's Company.
"	1	Not known	Madison's Fork, Missouri river	Blackfeet	-	-	American Fur Company.
"	1	Josline	Punkaw creek	Yanktons	-	-	Do.
1831	2	Richard & Durham	Madison's Fork, Missouri river	Blackfeet	-	-	Dripps & Fontenelle's Comp'y.
"	1	Winter	Pani village	Kansas	-	-	American Fur Company.
"	1	J. S. Smith	On the Santa Fe road	Comanches	-	-	Firm of S. Jackson & Sublette.

RECAPITULATION.

Number of persons killed or robbed - - - - - 234.
 Amount of property lost - - - - - \$149,374.

The reports made to this office do not enable the department to present an exact account of the number of persons killed distinct from the number of those robbed. Of the above total 234, 150 were killed, according to the best information.