

29-old Presbyterian Mission
#235 Prince Albert

Saskatchewan

The Rev. Oct. 1. 1864

Wm Reid

Toronto, C. W.

My Dear Friend -

As I am still without information on the subject of the Conventions of the H. M. Com. I send this letter to you as I did one dated Aug. 27.

Had a letter been mailed immediately after the Meeting of Synod I might have had it long ago - as it is I shall not likely hear from the Com. till the arrival of the winter packet in Jan^y next, & that will of course be too late to be a guide to me in making my arrangements for another year. I told you in my last that I have had only one official letter from the Committee since I left Red River Settlement, & it places me in rather an awkward position. I have not yet got an answer to any question I have

put to the Committee, nor their opinion on any plan or proposal I have suggested. I have not allowed any opportunity of sending letters to pass without sending full details, to date but still I am left in ignorance whether these meet the approval of the Committee & the church.

I have no doubt at all but the expense of the mission thus far has been greater than was anticipated. It has been more than I expected it would have been; but this has arisen from the measure of success that it has pleased God to grant to our undertaking. Some may suppose that we might do with less extensive buildings, but were all the buildings completed that are now in progress our accommodation would be little enough even for our present company, & as yet we have not even collected materials for a school house or meeting house.

For the present the English & Indian children are being taught together; but if the Committee allow us to take all the Indian children that may be offered to us to be trained I expect we

shall soon be under the necessity of making a separation, & of having both an English and an Indian school. The Indians I would have taught in Cree except those who may be making progress in speaking English. The Indian boys & girls we have at present are beginning to speak English & are learning pretty well in school. Again, if we are allowed to receive any number of Indian children we would require to put up simple inexpensive buildings for dormitories &c separate from the boarding house for the English-paying-pupils - the latter will be accommodated in our own house: then too, we must be allowed to farm on a somewhat extensive scale to keep down the expense of provisioning for it will be far more expensive to provision a large number from the plains, than by the produce of a farm. The congregations would also require to bestir themselves & send us supplies of coarse warm clothing, or then we must import materials for the same from England or elsewhere. Besides all, if we wish to en-

courage Indians to settle - we must at the outset furnish them with seed, & help them to build little houses & plough the land. A considerable number have already spoken to us on this subject, & in all probability a beginning will be made next spring - & should all come who have spoken to us about it we shall be ill prepared to receive them. We may also lay our account for supporting aged & helpless Indians - of which we have one family already - & an old Man besides - but who is at present with his friends in the plains. Other applications of this kind have been made to us - which for the present we have been obliged to refuse.

Having such a variety of ways of doing good opened up before us, & all directly tending to spread the blessed Gospel, the Com. will not wonder that I am anxious to have instructions from them, & also that the church would furnish us with the means of doing as much as possible for the benefit of these poor wanderers.

Our English & American goods arrived only the week before last, hence we were obliged to

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get some goods from the Co^y -
with which to purchase dried
provisions in the plains. Mr.
Mc Kay made a very good trade
& brought home about double
the quantity of provisions he did
at the same time last year.
The purpases going to the plains
next week for green meat for
winter use.

We have resolved not to finish
the large house this fall as we are
very unwilling to put green wood
in the finishing of what we hope
to be a good house - so we are
making our present quarters
as comfortable as we can.

We have a small temporary
school house - which serves also
for a sleeping apartment for the
male boarders. We ^{are} also fitting
up a kitchen - which must
serve likewise for a bedroom
for the servant woman & the
Indian girls - the present kit-
chen will be winter quarters
for the Indian boys - at present
three in number.

We enjoyed the sacrament
of the Lords supper last sabbath.
There were nine at the table -
among these were an Indian
man & woman who were mem-
bers of the congregation of Mr.

Budd at the Neponewinn
Mission. One of their sons is
among the Indians boys we have
taken to bring up.

I am longing to hear if any ap-
pointment has been made of another
missionary for this quarter. I suppose
some one has been appointed for Fair-
field which was much required & I
hope it will have the effect of strength-
ening & extending our cause in the
settlement; but so long as I am alone
here one department of the work
can be very little attended to: I mean
the itinerating department, for al-
though there are not yet a great many
people here, it would not do to
leave the place often or for length-
ened periods without some one
to take charge. As it is I could only
leave the School-Master whose time
is pretty fully occupied with his own
work, & when he is not in the school-
room he is busy with something
or other about the Mission. If no
missionary is to be sent to the New-
Ibeldides surely the church can af-
ford to send one here.

I expected to have met with a large
band of the Fort Pitt Creeks at Carleton
this fall. Mr. McKay traded provisions
from them & they sent a message
for me to meet them there pro-
vided the Buffalo kept to the East-
ward of Fort Pitt - but the Buffalo
have gone West - & I have no hope

of seeing them this season.
Our Mission is favourably known
among the Indians all over the plains.
One old man came lately, 15 days' jour-
ney to see us. He had heard much
about us in the plains, but he wanted
to see for himself; he would like his
family & friends to become settlers, &
he wants to find a place where to spend
his remaining days - he seems to be
seriously enquiring after the truth,
attended all the meetings he could
while he was here & when he went
away he got a table to let him know
when each sabbath would be until
he come to us again in the spring.
He is the most sensible old Indian
that has yet visited us. That old
man told us that there are plenty of
Indians in the plains who would be
glad to send their children here to
be trained. We have had several
applications to which I have not yet
replied on account of lack of accom-
modation & of instructions from the
Committee.

I spared to write by the winter
packet I shall forward a financial
statement such I did last year.
As yet I have disposed of only three
of the oxen that were brought this
season - the Coy. would have bought
carts if we would give them over
also. We risked a good deal in the way
of provisions last year, & as we have
so many now dependent on us we

must not risk too much this season. Besides Mr McKay requires eight oxen to take to the plains & we always require some at the Mission. We have hay enough brought home to winter all the cattle we shall require to keep even though the trip to the plains should turn out well.

I have not yet had any information with regard to the time when my brother may be expected in Canada, but I hope to have the answer of the Committee on the request that I made soon.

With christian regards to all the members of the Committee & to yourself & family in which Mr. M. joins

I am

Yours very Truly
James Nisbet
